It was about three o’clock on Good Friday afternoon when Jesus died. At that moment God sent some miraculous signs. The thick, heavy curtain that hung in the temple ripped from top to bottom. The earth shook, and heavy rocks split apart. In addition, graves opened up, and many believers who had died came back to life. When he saw the earthquake and some of the other miracles, the Roman captain in charge of the crucifixion said, “Surely this was the Son of God.”

The Sabbath Day would begin at sunset, and the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies of Jesus and the two criminals hanging on the crosses during the Sabbath. So they asked Pilate to order his soldiers to break the legs of the crucified men. That way they would die more quickly, and their bodies could be taken down.

Pilate gave the order, and his soldiers went to Calvary. There they used heavy clubs to break the legs of the two criminals. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But just to make sure that Jesus was really dead, one of the soldiers took his spear and stabbed it into Jesus’ side. Blood and water flowed out from the wound. In this way two Old Testament prophecies about the Savior were fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken” and “They will look on the one they have pierced.”

Now there were a few Jewish leaders who believed in Jesus as the Savior, but they had been afraid to follow him openly. One of these secret believers was Nicodemus. He was the man who had come to Jesus one night and talked to him about the kingdom of God. Another was a rich man named Joseph, from the town of Arimathea.

Joseph went to Pilate and boldly asked him for permission to bury Jesus. Once Pilate granted his request, Joseph and Nicodemus took Jesus’ body down from the cross and prepared it for burial. They wound long strips of linen cloth around the body, layer after layer. Between the layers they put sweet-smelling spices. Then they wrapped a separate piece of cloth around his head.

Joseph owned a new tomb that had been carved out of a hillside. It was located in a garden very close to Calvary. Joseph had planned to use it for his own burial, but now he and Nicodemus buried Jesus there. This fulfilled the Scripture prophecy that said, “He was given a grave with the wicked and buried with the rich.” After the two men had placed Jesus’ body in the tomb, they rolled a large stone in front of the entrance.

Mary Magdalene and some other women who were followers of Jesus watched everything that happened. They had wanted to help bury
Jesus, but it was too late in the day to bring more spices to finish the burial. No more work could be done until the Sabbath was over. So they left the tomb, planning to prepare some spices and return on Sunday morning to finish burying Jesus’ body properly.

It was still dark on Sunday morning when the women started out for Jesus’ tomb. As they walked along, they wondered, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance to the tomb for us?”

The sun was just rising as they entered the garden. When they got within sight of Jesus’ tomb, they stopped and stared. The heavy, round stone had been rolled away. The entrance to the grave was wide open! What could have happened? Mary Magdalene immediately turned and ran back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples about this!

The other women entered the tomb and looked around. They were shocked to see that the body of Jesus was not there! Suddenly two angels stood before them. They were dressed in white clothes that gleamed like lightning and dazzled the women’s eyes. The women were terrified, and they quickly bowed to the ground.

Then one of the angels said to them, “Do not be afraid. You are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. But why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here. He has risen from the dead, just as he said he would. Come here and look at the place where they put his body. Then go quickly and tell Peter and the other disciples that Jesus has risen from the dead!”

Then the women remembered that Jesus had told them he would rise from the dead. They were frightened but at the same time were filled with great joy. They hurried from the tomb and started back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples the news: Jesus had risen!

The miraculous signs at Jesus’ death, the fulfillment of Scripture, and his resurrection all show that Jesus is God’s Son, the Savior.

Pray Together
Dear God, thank you for your Word, which shows us clearly that Jesus is your Son and our Savior. Teach us never to think of Jesus as just a good teacher who helped others. Lead us always to praise him as our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Memory Treasures

Romans 3:24
Romans 8:1
Colossians 2:9