

CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION & BURIAL

THE LIFE OF CHRIST WITH SAINT LUKE



THE CRUCIFIXION

Luke 23:26-49

Christ was led to Golgotha, which means, “The Place of the Skull.” This is where He was nailed to the cross and died. He voluntarily died to conquer death by death in order for each and every one of us to have the opportunity to spend eternity with Him.

Crucifixion was a method of execution used by the Roman Empire for the worst

1

GOAL

Learn to read iconography through the Gospels

2

AT CHURCH

Holy Friday and Sunday of the Myrrhbearing Women

3

AT HOME

We wear a cross and we are anointed with holy oil



Sepulchre:
a tomb or burial place



Joseph of Arimathea:
was a member of the Sanhedrin, a good and just man, and provided the unused tomb for Christ



Myrrhbearing Women:
those who brought perfumes & oils for Jesus' burial

of the worst criminals. They intended this punishment to be excruciatingly painful and a publicly shameful way for a person to die.

Typically, the Romans would write on a plaque placed above the head of the person being crucified - publicly declaring the crime of the person. On the plaque above Christ's head, Pilate wrote, "This is the King of the Jews." The Jewish authorities believed that Jesus was falsely claiming to be the Messiah, but in fact, He was the King of the Jews.

The youngest of all the disciples, John, stayed by Christ at the foot of the cross. One of his many titles is - John, the Beloved. (*Others are: St. John the Evangelist, the Theologian, and he is one of the "sons of thunder"*) The Theotokos, also, stayed by her Son, along with others, such as, the myrrh-bearing women. (*Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Salome, Mary the wife of Clopas, Susanna, Mary and Martha of Bethany*)

THE BURIAL

Luke 23:50-56

After Christ died, Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and got permission to take Jesus off the cross and to bury Him. Joseph was a "just and good man" and although he was a member of the



Sanhedrin, "he had not consented to their decision and deed." (Luke 23:50-52) St. Joseph of Arimathea and St. Nicodemus were also part of the myrrh-bearers who brought myrrh and aloes to prepare Christ's body for burial. Additionally, St. Joseph of Arimathea provides the tomb where they will place Christ's body for burial.

ICONS

The Crucifixion

We are going to learn about three depictions of the crucifixion of Christ:

EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Crucifixion of the King of Glory by Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou

The Gospel of Luke: Good News for the Poor by Fr. Lawrence Farley

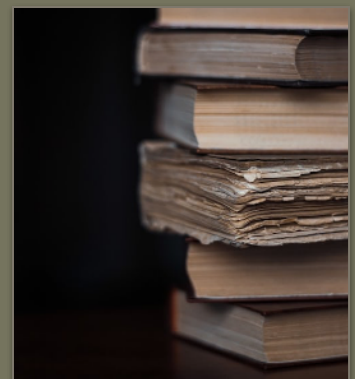
The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Luke by Blessed Theophylact

GOARCH - [Learn: Holy Friday](#)

Orthodoxwiki: [Myrrh-bearing women](#)

Orthodoxwiki: [Joseph of Arimathea](#)

Orthodoxwiki: [Nicodemus the Righteous](#)



1.



Oftentimes, icons will not depict every single person present at an event. For example, the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 - the iconographer does not depict every single person present but rather shows a large group who represent everyone who was there. Keep this in mind when you are looking at icons about the crucifixion.

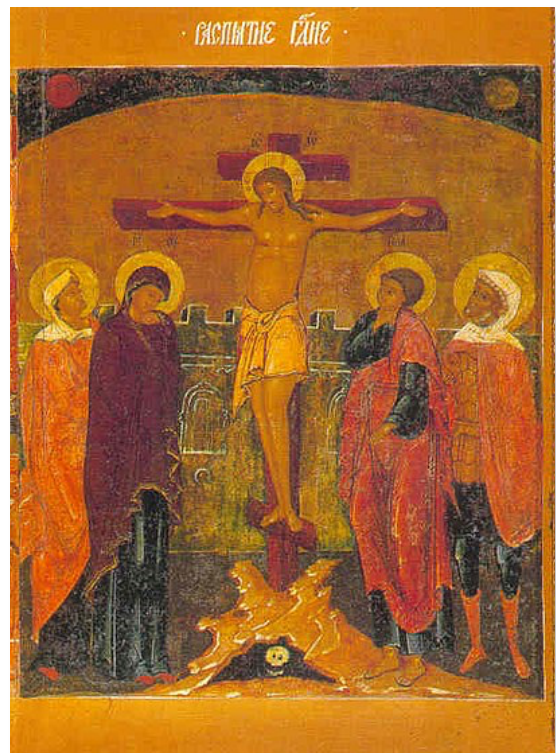
Above, you see the Theotokos and some of the myrrh-bearing women depicted on the left side of the icon. Christ is depicted as the main focal point in the center. On the right side of the icon, you see St. John the Theologian (left) and the Centurion, St. Longinus (right).

Some icons of the crucifixion, like the one shown here, will have the background black to show that “there was darkness over all the earth.” (Luke 23:44-45) Other icons will show a darkened sun (Remember how the sun looked during our recent total solar eclipse?) and a red moon. (During a lunar eclipse, the moon will appear red in the sky.) In this instance, the iconographer is also depicting that darkness covered the earth.

There is a wall behind Christ, representing the city wall of Jerusalem. Jesus was crucified just outside the city. Below Christ is a mound representing the place of His crucifixion, Golgotha, and the skull depicts that Christ conquered death by death on the cross.

Do a search on your computer or phone for “icon crucifixion of Christ” and look through the images that pull up. You will see the difference styles of the iconographers, but you will also quickly see that the iconographers will always place Christ in the center, the women on the left, and the men on the right. If you know who to look for in this icon, you can read each of the different version of this icon with ease.

Here is another example:



2.



As you search online for additional icons of the crucifixion, you will also come across icons with only three people depicted - Christ (center), Theotokos (left), and John (right).

This icon is depicting the moment when Christ asks St. John to take care of His mother after He dies. “When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.” (John 19:26-27) Even though Jesus was in excruciating pain, He lovingly made sure that His mom would be cared for after His death. At this point in time, women did not have the ability to work like we do today. They needed the support of their husband or son.

Christ entrusted the care of His mother to St. John. This is one of the reasons why we pray to the Theotokos to intercede on our behalf - Christ loves her oh so dearly and listens to her.

Here is another example:



3.



This icon is depicting the crucifixion of Christ in far greater detail than the other icons. We’ve already learned about the center portion of this icon through the previous icons. Now, let’s learn about the additional events being shown as we read the gospels.

Again, the sky is shown as darkened. We see several angels on the icon as well. The two thieves are shown on either side of Jesus: “Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.” John 19:31-33

On the bottom left side of the icon, we see people coming out of the graves: “Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” Matthew 27:51-53

To the left of Jesus, we see a Roman soldier: “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.” John 19:34

To the right of Jesus, we see another Roman soldier: “Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop and put it to His mouth.” John 19:29

On the bottom right side of the icons, we see several Roman soldiers sitting down: “Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet - ‘They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.’ Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.” Matthew 27:35-37

The Descent from the Cross

Joseph of Arimathea had gone to Pilate and gotten permission to remove Jesus’ body from the cross and then bury Him.



Center of the icon: Christ, being held by the Theotokos and Joseph of Arimathea.

Left side of the icon: Myrrh-bearing women

Right side of the icon: John (oftentimes he is depicted holding or kissing Christ’s hand in the icon of the descent from the cross or the burial of Christ) and Nicodemus is removing the nails from Christ’s feet

The Burial of Christ

This icon is located inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.



Left: The Theotokos is lovingly holding the head of Christ.

Upper left: The myrrh-bearing women

Center right: John

Upper right: Nicodemus

Right: Joseph of Arimathea

CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION & BURIAL

AT HOME

FOR PARENTS

There was darkness over the whole earth.” One of the most extraordinary details of the day Christ died was the strange darkness that covered the earth. We are not certain what time Christ was crucified, although usually we say about noon. Jews marked the time of day beginning with sunrise, which they referred to as the ‘first hour,’ about six a.m. All evangelists agree that the Lord died at the ninth hour, or three p.m., after a prolonged period of inexplicable darkness that began at noon, the sixth hour, when the sun would have

been at its highest point. ‘It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour’ (Luke 23:44; Matt. 27:45; Mark 15:33).

A popular explanation for the darkness is that it was a solar eclipse, but that is a demonstrable mistake, for a number of reasons. An eclipse is a natural occurrence, but this was an unnatural darkness. An eclipse does not last for three hours as this darkness did.

Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou
The Crucifixion of the King of Glory
pages 253-254

HOME ACTIVITY #23

Trisagion Films: [The Icon of the Myrrh Bearing Women](#)

YouTube: [Jerusalem, Tomb of Jesus at Night. Church of Holy Sepulchre](#)





