

Grace Tidings

A Newsletter of Avalon Grace Church



APRIL 2026

Who Were the Women at the Cross?

Throughout the centuries, women have walked in the shadow of Eve's curse, pronounced upon her by God Himself: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Genesis 3:16).

Today in many cultures women are subjugated to lowly positions simply because they were born female. And mothers can certainly relate to the pain and sorrow that can accompany childbirth and child-rearing. But the Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ brings us all - male and female, black and white, old and young, rich and poor - on the equal ground when we kneel at the foot of the Cross.

When our Lord Jesus Christ hung on the Cross, paying the price for our sin and bridging the great divide between God and mankind, women who loved Him stood nearby, watching and weeping. Though these women realized Jesus was different from anyone else who had ever lived, it seems even His mother may have questioned the reason for the horrific event they witnessed at Calvary. Here are the Scriptural accounts of these women at the cross:

SALOME

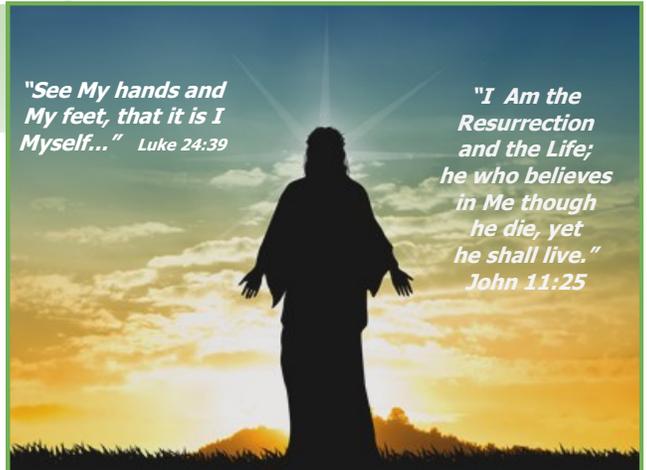
Salome, wife of well-to-do fisherman Zebedee and mother of the "Sons of Thunder," James and John, was one of those women who stood watch during that cruel execution. How she must have rehearsed her many memories of Jesus and the interaction they had over the years! (Mark 15: 40-41) *"There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto Him); and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem."*

It is believed that Salome, whose name means "peaceful," and her family were friends of Jesus even before He began His public ministry at the age of thirty. Very possibly Jesus visited them in their home, where Salome cooked for Him. And when Jesus did begin His public ministry, Salome gave up a life of relative comfort to follow Him, serving Him both in actions and financial support.

She believed in Him to the point that she interceded with Him on behalf of her sons, asking for a special place for them in His future Kingdom. (Mark 20: 20-21) *"Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him." And He said unto her, 'What wilt thou?' She saith unto Him, 'Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom'".* (continued on Page 2)

"See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself..." Luke 24:39

"I Am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in Me though he die, yet he shall live." John 11:25



AVALON GRACE CHURCH

3801 GUILFORD ROAD

NAPLES, FLORIDA 34112

(239) 774-4214

avalongracechurchofnaples@gmail.com

www.avalongracechurch.com

Pastor Phillip McClellan, Jr.

Pastor Emeritus Arthur Sims

Kathleen Smith, Editor

All Are Welcome!

Sunday Worship 10:30 AM

Sunday Messages available on website:

(www.avalongracechurch.com)

Children's Sunday School 10:45 AM

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: . . ."

- Ephesians 3:9

Who Were the Women at the Cross?

(Continued from Page 1)

MARY MAGDALENE

And then there was Mary Magdalene, the woman who loved so much because she was forgiven for so much.

Many have mistakenly identified her as a prostitute before she came to Jesus, but there is no biblical evidence to prove that claim. In fact, there is ample evidence that a confusion of the many "Mary's" of the Scripture led to this common misconception. Mary Magdalene is clearly identified in the Scriptures as the woman from whom Jesus cast out seven demons. (Luke 8:2) *"And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils . . ."*

How grateful Mary must have been, and how quickly and completely she loved and followed her Deliverer! Mary Magdalene is not only seen at the foot of the Cross, maintaining her devotion to her Lord to the end but following to the sepulcher to confirm where He was buried.

Then, on that great Resurrection morning, Mary Magdalene was the first to arrive at the open tomb early in the morning and then to proclaim to the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead:

(Mark 16: 9) *"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."* (See also John 20: 1-2). Her joy must have been so great - but her grief was still overwhelming as she stood vigil on Golgotha.

MARY OF NAZARETH

And then there was Mary of Nazareth, wife (and most likely a widow by the time Jesus was crucified) of Joseph the carpenter and the chosen mother of Jesus. What woman's broken heart could begin to compare to that of the woman who had carried the very Son of God in her womb and brought Him forth into the world in a lowly stable in Bethlehem?

This grieving mother had raised her firstborn Son to adulthood, knowing that He was unique and yet anticipating the fulfillment of the prophecy that a sword would pierce her soul and now the time had come. How could she bear to stand on that blood-soaked ground and watch the agony of her beloved Child, knowing there was nothing she could do or say to help Him?"

(Luke 2:35): *"Yes a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."*

And yet, despite the anguish of these three women, they were there at the cross. Were others present as well?

Only a handful is mentioned by name in the scriptural accounts. The "disciple whom He [Jesus] loved," believed by many to be John, the younger son of Zebedee and Salome, was there and was commissioned by Jesus Himself to care for His mother, Mary, after His death.

(John 19:25-27) *"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple*

standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

Mark 14: 27-50 recounts how that after the Passover supper with the twelve, Jesus and the twelve went to the garden to pray. There Jesus was arrested and the twelve fled for fear of being arrested as well.

We are not told if the women were there in the garden while Jesus prayed. Likely they had remained at the house and may have fled later when the men returned and told them what happened. It may have been that the women weren't as likely to be arrested. Regardless, they were there and they remained faithful...not just until Christ's death, but even afterward.

On Sunday morning, they showed up at the sepulcher, ready to anoint the Lord's body, but instead found that the huge stone that had sealed the tomb was rolled away. Jesus was no longer in the grave, but had risen...just as He said!

The women who had mourned His death would now have the privilege and joy of announcing His Resurrection: (Mark 16: 2-8)

"And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, 'Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.' And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulcher; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid."

Women, living in the shadow of Eve's curse; redeemed by the promise and fulfillment of Christ's Resurrection! From the Garden of Eden to the hill of Golgotha to the empty tomb and to our very hearts comes the Resurrection message that Christ has risen, that forgiveness of our sin is paid for by the Lord Himself; salvation is a free gift by God's grace through faith in the Son of God (Ephesians 2: 8-9) and (1 Corinthians 15: 1-4) and our eternal home in heaven is sealed by the Blood of Jesus Christ for all eternity.

Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2).

In Christ, Pastor Phil

Did You Know?

Robert Lowry, the composer of the hymn, "Christ Arose" that we love to sing here at Avalon Grace Church, was born on March 12, 1826 in Philadelphia, PA - that is 200 years ago!!

"UP FROM THE GRAVE HE AROSE!"

His fondness for music was exhibited in his earliest years. As a child he amused himself with the various musical instruments that came into his hands. At the age of 17 he joined the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, and soon became an active worker in Sunday School as teacher and chorister. At the age of 22 he gave himself to the work of the ministry, and entered upon a course of study at the University of Lewisburg, Pa. At the age of 28 he was graduated with the highest honors of his class. In the same year of his graduation, he entered upon the work of the ministry. During the following 45 years he held a number of pastorates in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

He became a popular writer of gospel music in the mid-to-late 19th century. His best-known hymns include "Shall We Gather at the River", "Christ Arose!", "How Can I Keep from Singing?" and "Christ Alone" often titled, "Nothing But The Blood Of Jesus".

From 1868 he acted as 'Hymnal Editor' to Biglow and Main Publishing, the country's leading publisher of gospel and Sunday School music at that time; under his supervision more than 20 hymnals were produced by the firm, many of wide and enduring popularity to the 21st century.

Despite his protestations that preaching was his main vocation and that music was merely a sideline, it is as a hymn writer and composer that Lowry is chiefly remembered, ranking with such composers as William Howard Doane and Ira D. Sankey, as one of the originators of a musical tradition that has lasted until today and that we sing from our hymnals!

A reporter once asked Robert Lowry what was his method of composition - "Do you write the words to fit the music, or the music to fit the words?" His reply was:

"I have no method. Sometimes the music comes and the words follow, fitted insensibly to the melody. I watch my moods, and when anything good strikes me, whether words or music, and no matter where I am, at home or on the street, I jot it down. Often the margin of a newspaper or the back of an envelope serves as a notebook."

"My brain is a sort of spinning machine, I think, for there is music running through it all the time. I do not pick out my music on the keys of an instrument. The tunes of nearly all the hymns I have written have been completed on paper before I tried them on the organ. Frequently the words of the hymn and the music have been written at the same time."



(March 12, 1826 – November 25, 1899)

Rev. Robert Lowry, died at his residence in Plainfield, NJ on November 25, 1899; he was 73 years old. His sermons in gospel song are still heard and sung in worship today.

Dr. Lowry was a humble man, and his life, well spent, is highly worthy of a place among the world's greatest gospel song and hymn writers in all Christendom. ♥

How do I know?

By Eugene M. Harrison

How do I know that Christ is risen?
What proof have I to give?
He touched my life one blessed day
And I began to live!

How do I know He left the tomb
That Easter long ago?
I met Him just this morning,
And my life is all aglow.

How do I know that endless life
He gained that day for me?
His life within is proof enough
Of immortality!

How do I know that Christ still lives
Rich blessings to impart?
I know it's true because He lives

"It is only when we begin to appreciate the holiness and righteousness of God that it dawns upon us that our condition is hopeless without a Savior." - C. R. Stam (1909-2003)

*"An empty cross + an empty tomb = a full salvation."
- Author Unknown*



"The blood of Christ is our eternal life insurance policy which has a rider guaranteeing our future resurrection!"

- Pastor Paul M. Sadler

April Reflections . . .

Object of His Love and Care

By Lori Verstegen

Everybody wants to be loved by somebody. But do you realize that you are already infinitely loved by the One who matters most—God. How can you be sure of, how can you know, His great love for you? Because He demonstrated it clearly and powerfully at the cross!

 He left His Father's throne above
So free, so infinite His grace.
Emptied Himself of all but love
And bled for Adam's helpless race.
Amazing love? How can it be? 
That Thou, my God, hast died for me?
(Charles Wesley)

Yes, amazing love—that He knew me with all my sin and faults—yet He loved me. Not just as part of the world at large, but *me* personally, and *you* personally: He “loved me and gave himself for me.”

Galatians 2:20: “ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. “ As Wesley’s hymn says, “For when He was on the cross, I was on His mind.”

If you ever feel alone, if you ever feel unloved, if you ever doubt God’s love for you, look to the cross. It is the eternal testimony of “the great love wherewith he loved us.” Ephesians 2:4:

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.” And because He loves you, God desires you to enjoy His fellowship.

You can talk to God anytime and anywhere. He listens and He cares. He is with you, and He is

in you in every situation. Live your life with the constant awareness that God loves you.

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

Come See the Empty Tomb

By Christina Joy Hommes

Come, see the empty tomb and hope
For death has been defeated,
The chains of sin are broken through,
And pardon is completed.
Come, see the empty tomb and trust
In Christ alone to save you,
Believe and call upon His Name
To claim the gift He gave you.
Come, see the empty tomb and live
For resurrection power
Will work in you and make you new
To walk with Him each hour.
Come, see the empty tomb and go
To tell of God’s salvation;
The work is done, the triumph won!
Tell every tribe and nation.
Come, see the empty tomb and sing
To Jesus our Redeemer,
With loving thanks now worship Him
Our glorious King and Savior.

RAISED WITH HIM

A Joyful Toon by Mike Waters



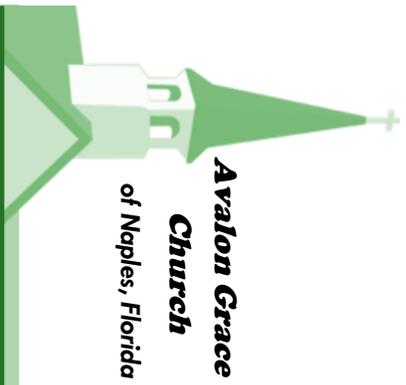
Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.
— COLOSSIANS 2:12 KJV

www.joyfultoons.com © 2013 Michael D. Waters

Coloring for Jesus



“Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.” - Mark 16: 9-10 KJV



April 2026

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

			1	2	3	4
			PASSOVER Begins At Sundown	PASSOVER	GOOD FRIDAY	



APRIL

- 1st Pat Crim
 - 5th Ben Scholz
 - 8th Willard Hedden
 - 11th Susan Anderson
 - 14th David Anderson
 - 16th Teri Forsberg
 - 27th James Crim
- COMING IN MAY 2026**
- 3rd 9:45 AM Sunday Breakfast
 - 10th Mother's Day

5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10:30 AM Sunday Worship 10:45 AM Children's Sunday School						
RESURRECTION SUNDAY Potluck Luncheon in Fellowship Hall						

12	13	14	15	16	17	18
10:30 AM Sunday Worship 10:45 AM Children's Sunday School						

19	20	21	22	23	24	25
10:30 AM Sunday Worship The LORD'S Supper Observed 10:45 AM Children's Sunday School						

26	27	28	29	30		
10:30 AM Sunday Worship 10:45 AM Children's Sunday School						