

Good Friday

Readings: Isaiah 52:13–end of ch. 53

Hebrews 4:14–16, 5:7–9

John 18:1–end of ch. 19

Today's reading of the Passion encompasses all that is most holy and precious to us. Jesus is arrested, beaten, and crucified.

'Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." ...it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."



The sign was so much more than a simple label to identify Christ – or, indeed, a deterrent to others to make such bold claims. Written in Hebrew (or Aramaic), the local language, the community would have been able to read it. Greek was almost universal, as English is to us today, and Latin was the language of the Roman Empire. The sign proclaims the truth to all nations; Jesus is Israel's Messiah to all the world.⁶

Points for reflection

Jesus	Ye-ho-sjoe-a
of Nazareth	Ha-na-zoe-rai
the King	Wa-melek
of the Jews	Ha-je-hoe-diem



Look at the first four letters of the sign's Hebrew translation... 'YHWH'. When Moses asked God for a name to take to the Israelites, God replied 'I am' (Exodus 3:14); 'YHWH', or Yahweh. What Pilate had written, he had written - and he wasn't willing to change it.

Today, join with services broadcast on TV or online. Take time to ponder over today's readings, and pray as you feel moved by the Spirit. Ensure you look after yourself, call a friend, or the church office number if you'd like to talk to clergy.

◆ Lord, I realise that what I see of your love is only the beginning. One drop from the whole ocean. And, like the sea, moving, surging. All-embracing. Seeking to surround me, not to overwhelm, to drown, but to hold me, buoy me up. A love with room to spare. No rejections. No high-tide mark of rubbish, pushed up and thrown aside. I wish Judas could have known that. I wish that somehow in his own agony in the garden, so different, Lord, from yours, so like to mine, he could have reached out from the depths of his despair and felt your hand. There's nothing I can do about that. I leave it with you, Lord, as I leave so much. You've got strong hands.⁷

⁶ Tom Wright, John for Everyone Pt. 2: SPCK (2002), p.126.

⁷ Eddie Askew, in Angela Ashwin (ed), The Book of a Thousand Prayers: Zondervan (1996) p.337