

**THE STORY of THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST****Lesson 21****John 19.25-27****“Take Good Care of Your Mother”**

Sometime during that awful night when Jesus had been arrested and brought to trial, somebody had to take word to his mother. Most likely it was John. Peter was the only one of the remaining eleven disciples who even followed the Lord Jesus as far as the courtyard of Caiaphas. But, then, he had denied any association with Jesus and had fled away also himself in utter disgrace and shame.

We believe John was a close family kin to the Lord Jesus, maybe even as close as a first cousin. When John records those who later made their way to the foot of the cross, he names several women who were there with himself.

(1) **Mary, Jesus’ mother;**

(2) **His mother’s sister** (this woman is surely not the same one who is named next, “*Mary, the wife of Clopas*”. It is highly unlikely that two sisters would both be named Mary. So, His mother’s sister, was most probably Salome, the mother of James and John and the wife of Zebedee. That would make James and John Jesus’ cousins.)

(3) **Mary, Mrs. Clopas;**

(4) **Mary Magdalene.**

(Many first names were very common and given to many children. “Mary” was certainly one of those names.)

John also identifies himself as being there as **“the disciple whom (Jesus) loved.”**

Why do we identify this **“Jesus’ mother’s sister”** with Salome, the mother of James and John?

(1) We know that Salome was the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee. ***Matthew 27.56 and Mark 15.40.***

(2) We know also that she was in this same company of women who not only followed the Lord Jesus throughout His Galilean ministry, but also provided for many of their financial and practical needs. ***Mark 15.41; Matthew 27.55-56.***

(3) These same women also followed the Lord Jesus to His crucifixion and burial. ***Mark 15.40; 16.1***

(4) We also know that this same Salome is not mentioned by name in John’s account, but only as **“His mother’s sister.”**

All of this is not just historical trivia, but bears with weighty significance on what Jesus said to them from the cross and the arrangements for Mary’s care He is going to make.

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As we have said, John is probably the disciple who carried the disturbing message about Jesus’ arrest and trials to his own mother (Salome) and to Mary, Jesus’ mother. We can be sure none of them slept at all that night. They kept track of what was happening to Jesus the best they could by secret surveillance and by what word they could overhear on the street.

When they received the distressing news that Jesus had been formally condemned to be crucified, they made their own way to Golgotha. They wouldn’t have been able to get too close to the actual site of the crucifixion because of the press of the crowd...and all the commotion surrounding the cross while the crucifixion was getting underway. And, it would have been hopeless to try to intervene in any way, and they would have certainly physically jeopardized their own lives...to no practical benefit.

But, after the crowds had satisfied their initial curiosity and they had made their demonstrations against Jesus, they slowly began going back to their own holiday festivities. Luke will tell us (*especially after the miraculous physical signs which accompanied the crucifixion*) that many of those who watched this debacle were suddenly sobered into second guessing and having serious second thoughts about the propriety of what they had just done. **And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. Luke 23.48.**

But, as the crowds began to thin, John and Mary and the other women felt it was safe to more closely approach the cross. This was probably toward the end of the first 3-hour period, maybe shortly before noon when the darkness descended upon the scene.

We must admire, not only her love and commitment to her Son, but also the indomitable courage with which she took her stand to support Him in whatever ways she could. “The sorrow and pain such a sight would cause His mother is unfathomable. And yet instead of shrieking and crumpling in hysteria, turning and fleeing in terror, or falling into a faint at the horrible sight, she stood. She is the very model of courage.” (John MacArthur)

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This was just one of the many times in Mary’s lifetime as Jesus’ mother that Simeon’s prophecy had come to pass. **Luke 2.34-35: Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against <sup>35</sup>(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”**

Mary’s baby Child would not only grow up to be the Judge of every person’s destiny, but her own heart would break with grief many a time along the way. Mary didn’t always fully understand the significance of her own Son’s character and calling. More than one time, Mary would have to ponder and meditate upon things that Jesus said and did (**Luke 2.19, 50, 51**). Jesus’ commitment to His calling would create division in their family. More than one time, they would misunderstand Him, be embarrassed by His “excesses”, and try to rescue Him from going too far. **Mark 3.21, 31-35.**

But, none of those conflicts and stresses she had suffered over the years could even come close to the painful sword of grief which pierced and twisted in her heart at this moment. Every feeling she had was being crushed by the sight of her Son whom she had borne, nursed, and reared -- and by what all these wicked, evil people were doing to Him. Nobody knew any better than she did just how perfect and absolutely sinless He was -- and how He had done absolutely nothing wrong...ever!

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When Jesus looked down from the cross and saw them standing there, He was moved with appreciation for them...and also with thoughtfulness and concern for Mary. His heart went out to her. His first impulse was to be sure she was taken care of after His departure. (He knew He was going to come back after His resurrection, and He could have taken care of these arrangements then; but He thought it was most fitting to take care of this matter now.)

So, He looked down from the cross and picked out Mary and John especially. **When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!”** He wasn’t referring to Himself. He probably nodded toward John. “John will assume the role of your son, and will assume the responsibility of caring for you.” **Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.**

The Lord Jesus was not above the law...and He didn't live apart from the law. He came to fulfill every righteous requirement of God's holy will and law by perfectly obeying every detail of every command. *Matthew 5.17-20; Galatians 4.4.*

And, one of the requirements of the law (in fact, one of the Ten Words of the law written by God's own finger) is that we should honor our father and mother. That means: **to see to it that they are taken care of for as long as they live.** *1 Timothy 5.8.* Honor means more than just sentimental feelings and affections toward them, or even respect you feel in your heart toward them. The root meaning of HONOR is "to pay." Or, "to fix the value of something and give that price" (*e.g. 1 Corinthians 6.20*).

Jesus sternly rebuked those who spun the true teaching and meaning of the fifth commandment in such a way that they could create loopholes and wiggle out of their responsibility to take care of their fathers and mothers by simply saying they had otherwise committed those funds as a gift to the temple. *Mark 7.9-13.* **IT IS YOUR FIRST RESPONSIBILITY TO OBEY GOD BY TAKING PROPER CARE OF YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.** That is your first and best service to God.

So, Jesus is going to practice what He has preached to others. He has come to do the Father's will, and the Father's will is that He make the necessary arrangements to see that His mother is taken care of.

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This is an awesome demonstration of Jesus' obedience to His Father in every respect of His Father's will. And also just how deep and complete and unconditional is His personal love for us. Even while He was still suffering under the most excruciating and painful anguishes of death, He turns His attention to those who are standing at His side. He is giving them His attention and concern.

And while, at the same time, He is occupied with accomplishing redemption for all His people from all the ages and fulfilling the demanding commitments laid upon Him by the Triune God's eternal covenant of grace, He is also remembering to make earthly provisions for the needs of one woman whom He loved dearly, His mother. **"Oh, what love!"** No wonder we sing, **"I stand amazed in the Presence of Jesus, the Nazarene, and wonder how He could love ME, a sinner condemned, unclean...HOW MARVELOUS, HOW WONDERFUL IS MY SAVIOR'S LOVE FOR ME!"**

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Now, when we noted John's most probable familial relation to Mary (his aunt, his mother's sister), then it would have most likely fallen to John to assume her care anyway.

**But, THE QUESTION WILL INEVITABLY COME UP:  
WHY DID JESUS CHARGE JOHN WITH MARY'S CARE,  
AND NOT HIS OWN HALF-BROTHERS?**

It looks like they would have been more immediately responsible to assume her care. And, they probably were. But, under those present circumstances, Jesus was not sure they would have been the most willing to assume it and properly fulfill it.

I'm sure you are well aware that Joseph and Mary had several other children after Jesus was born. Joseph was not Jesus' father. *Matthew 1.25* makes it very plain that Joseph and Mary had not engaged in sexual relations when Jesus was conceived. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Joseph knew that, and so did God the Father. But, Joseph and Mary had several children of their own after Jesus was born. In fact, we know His half-brothers' names: **James, Joses (Joseph), Simon, and Judas** (*Matthew 13.55*). There were also several sisters. *Matthew 13.56.*

Joseph appears to have been dead by the time Jesus began His public ministry. He is never mentioned again following the trip to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12 years old (*Luke 2*). Jesus assumed the headship of the household and the care of His mother and the family who remained at home.

When Jesus began His public ministry, He moved His mother and the family He was caring for a few miles NE from Nazareth to Capernaum. *Matthew 4.13*. This was a very practical move for at least two reasons (besides fulfilling the prophecies concerning where He would live): (1) His first disciples would come from that region; and (2) Jesus' mother's sister, Salome, lived not too far from Capernaum in Bethsaida. So, she would be close to her family while Jesus was traveling for the next 2 ½ years or so. (*John 2.44; Matthew 4.18-22 and Luke 5.9-10*)

But, even His own brothers didn't believe in Him as Israel's Messiah. They give evidence that they were jealous of Him, they resented Him, and there was an intensified sibling rivalry against Him because of His distinctive claims to be the Son of God. *John 7.5* even says that on one occasion of the Feast of the Tabernacles, they actually mocked His claims to be the Messiah and taunted Him to go on to the Feast and do some more showing off of the works He was doing. **“For even His brothers did not believe in Him.”**

(We have also previously noted how they came on at least one occasion and tried to forcibly take Him back home. *Mark 3; Luke 8*)

So, Jesus' brothers at this time, anyway, did not share in Mary's faith in Jesus as the Christ.

**Mary, by the way, did not share in Jesus' sinlessness, nor did she ever even think that she would be some kind of co-redemptrix or co-Mediator with her Son, the Christ. From the beginning of her relationship with Jesus, she confessed that she was a sinner and that her own Son whom she would bear in her womb and deliver into the world WOULD BE HER REDEEMER AND SAVIOR ALSO. *Luke 1.47***

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But, His brothers would later believe, and not only believe, but go on to become strong, faithful leaders in the churches that Jesus Christ established.

*Acts 1.14* tells that sometime immediately following Jesus' death and resurrection, His brothers converted to believing in Him and trusting Him as their Lord and Savior. They were praying together with the apostles and with their mother and other followers of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus' half-brother James became an influential pastor and leader in the Jerusalem church. *Acts 15.13; Galatians 1.19*. This is the same James who wrote the New Testament epistle of James.

Jesus' brother Judas (Jude) is the same one who wrote the book of Jude. **Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James...**

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**So, we can be sure that not only did John, the apostle, take her to his own home and care for her as Jesus had instructed him, but her own sons would have assumed their Scriptural responsibility as well.**

**Mary was loved and nurtured until she died also and went to join her Son who died this death to take her to Paradise to be with Him.**