

A photograph showing a crown of thorns and the wooden beams of a cross lying on a stone surface. There are several bloodstains on the stone and the wood. The background is a bright, hazy sky.

But he was pierced
for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement
that brought us
and with his wounds we are healed.
– Isaiah 53:5

The Way of the Cross

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ was lifted high up the cross so that he might draw the whole world to himself. Grant that we, who glory in this death for our salvation, may also glory in his call to take up our cross and follow him, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

1. Jesus Prays Alone

Luke 22:39–46

And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. 40 And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” 41 And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” 43 And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, 46 and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

*Were you there when they couldn’t watch one hour?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they couldn’t watch one hour?*

2. Jesus Is Arrested

Matt. 26:47–56

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” ⁴⁹ And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. ⁵¹ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” ⁵⁵ At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. ⁵⁶ But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.

*Were you there when a kiss betrayed our Lord?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when a kiss betrayed our Lord?*

3. Jesus’ Trial before Sanhedrin

Mk 14:61–65

But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” 62 And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” 63 And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? 64 You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death. 65 And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” And the guards received him with blows.

*Were you there when they asked, “Are you the Christ?”
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they asked, “Are you the Christ?”*

4. Jesus' Trial before Pilate

John 18:33-37

So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" ³⁵ Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." ³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

*Were you there when Pilate called him King?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when Pilate called him King?*

5. Pilate Sentences Jesus to Death

Mark 15:6-15

Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked. ⁷ And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. ⁸ And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them. ⁹ And he answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" ¹⁰ For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. ¹¹ But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. ¹² And Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" ¹³ And they cried out again, "Crucify him." ¹⁴ And Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him." ¹⁵ So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

*Were you there when the crowd cried, "Crucify!"?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when the crowd cried, "Crucify!"?*

6. The Crown of Thorns

John 19:5

So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!"

*Were you there when he wore the crown of thorns?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when he wore the crown of thorns?*

7. Jesus Carries His Cross

John 10:17-18

“For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

*Were you there when he laid his own life down?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when he laid his own life down?*

8. Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

Luke 23:26

And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus.

*Were you there when Simon bore the cross?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when Simon bore the cross?*

9. Jesus Speaks to the Women

Luke 23:27-31

And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. ²⁸ But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ ³¹ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

*Were you there when the women wailed and wept?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when the women wailed and wept?*

10. Jesus Is Crucified

Luke 23:33-34

And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.

*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

11. The Criminals Speak to Jesus

Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!"⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."⁴² And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."⁴³ And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

*Were you there when he promised paradise?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when he promised paradise?*

12. Jesus Speaks to Mary and John

Jn 19:24b-27

So the soldiers did these things,²⁵ but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

*Were you there when Mary lost her Son?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when Mary lost her Son?*

13. Jesus Dies upon the Cross

John 19:28-34

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst."²⁹ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.³⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.³¹ Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would 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.³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him.³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

*Were you there when the Lord said, "It is done."?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when the Lord said, "It is done."?*

14. Jesus Laid in the Tomb

John 19:38-42

After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. ³⁹ Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. ⁴⁰ So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴² So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?