

**TFTD 23.40. EASTER EVE April 8**

**Matt 27.51-66**

**A rock-cut tomb**



**Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut in the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. Matthew 27.59-60.**

**What happened when Jesus died? Matthew describes what happened on two levels — cosmic, and human.**

**First, Matthew uses symbolic language to describe Jesus' death as an event of cosmic significance (vv.51-54). The veil of the Temple, the curtain that hid the Holy of Holies, is torn in two from top to bottom. Jesus' death opens up the way for sinful humanity to enter into the presence of God. And the tombs were opened. This rather bizarre detail (only in Matthew) is a way of saying that when Jesus died, death itself lost its power and its captives were released.**

**But Matthew also describes the human significance of Jesus' death, its effect on those who knew him. For them, it's a time of great calm, the calm of exhaustion after the storm, the calm of emotional emptiness after the violent events of the past 24 hours.**

**Three women, watching from a distance (v. 55). They had followed him all the way from Galilee, and now they stand, still faithful, in silent witness to the end of all their hopes.**

**Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy supporter with the right connections to persuade the governor to release the body for burial (vv.57-61). A rock-cut**

tomb, newly prepared, to receive the body and lay it to rest — and a great stone to roll across the doorway.

And in the distant corridors of power: eddies of disquiet, memories of a prophetic voice, a sense that we haven't heard the last of this Jesus — enough to persuade the governor to seal and guard the tomb (vv.62-66).

This is the still centre of Holy Saturday (Easter Eve), the point where all is at rest, as with the women we keep silent watch over the tomb (v.61). Watching — and waiting — for Easter's dawn.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who at this evening hour lay in the tomb, and so hallowed the grave to be a bed of hope for all who put their trust in you: give us such sorrow for our sins, which were the cause of your passion, that when our bodies lie in the dust, our souls may live with you for ever.  
**AMEN**



And this is the last of our Lenten reflections for 2023. Many thanks to the wonderful TFTD team: Robin, Nick, John and Rachel. And thanks to all of you for your support. We look forward to welcoming you at one of our Easter services.

Happy Easter!

God bless,

Loveday