



# Watchman Prayer Alert

On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; All day and all night they will never keep silent. – Isaiah 62:6

## A Present for the Crucified King

A long time ago in a land far away lived a people not so different from you and me. Full of traditions, they loved to celebrate, just like we do. The sacred time of Passover was fast approaching, and all the preparations were in full swing. Little did these folks know that this Passover was the pivot point of history, the demarcation point, the fullness of all time itself. Jesus, the Passover Lamb, was about to lay down His perfect life to make atonement for the sins of the entire human race.

As that fateful day approached, an unlikely set of characters walked across life's stage, making cameo appearances in the story that was captured by the four gospel writers. Each of these characters, some who aren't even named, offered a gift to Jesus prior to His death. Let's look at some of these people and the gifts they presented to the Master. Take some time to review each story in the Word as we go through this exercise.

### ***A Donkey Ride***

Read Matthew 21:1-7, Mark 11:1-11 or Luke 19:28-44.

A week before Passover, Jesus came to the Mount of Olives. He instructed two of his disciples to go to the village and bring a donkey that was tied up there. When the disciples were leading the donkey away, the owner asked what they were doing. The disciples said, "The Master has need of it." The owner allowed them to take the donkey.

The owner might tell the story this way: "I observed a couple of strangers untying my donkey and leading it away. Of course, I was concerned, but they said the Master needed my donkey. I knew they were talking about Jesus, the most amazing Healer and Prophet of our time. Sure, I could have told them to pound salt, but what did I have to lose, besides a donkey?"



Somehow, I knew that this was my gift to the greatest Man who ever walked this planet. I gave Him my donkey. The Son of God rode into Jerusalem on my donkey that day."

### ***Pure Nard***

Read John 12:1-11.

John records that six days before Passover, Mary and Martha and Lazarus hosted a banquet in Bethany. Mary poured a pint of pure nard on the feet of Jesus and wiped it with her hair. Spikenard (nard) was a precious and fragrant essential oil that would have filled the room with its aromatic perfume. It was incredibly valuable, representing a full year's wages.

If you asked her, Mary might speak to us: "I wanted to present to the Master something precious and extravagant. I didn't know how much time we had left with Him, and I wanted to make it count. This was my act of worship for Jesus who I know is the Messiah, the Savior of our planet. I was saving this nard for my own burial, but it seemed like the perfect thing for Jesus. Anointing His feet was an act of love. That's it. I just love Jesus."

## ***The Alabaster Vial***

Read Matthew 26:6-13 or Mark 14:1-9.

Two days before Passover, at a party in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, an unnamed woman broke an alabaster vial of very costly perfume and poured it on Jesus' head, the way someone would anoint a high priest or a king.

This precious worshipper might say: "The chief priests who are our leaders have been incredibly hostile toward Jesus lately. I think they are conspiring against Him. But, you can't imagine how He has changed our lives. Some of us were healed of incredible infirmities, some of us had broken relationships, and some of us were just trapped in sin, and He set us free. Free! How can you adequately express gratitude for such a thing? I broke the vial and poured out the entire contents on Jesus' head. The perfume I poured on His head was a very expensive manifestation of gratitude. I took some heat from at least one of His disciples who thought my extravagance was wasted. He thought I should have sold the vial and donated the cash. Jesus understood though. He said I anointed Him for His burial. It was my simple expression of gratitude for the Savior I adore."

## ***An Upper Room***

Read Mark 14:12-16 or Luke 22:7-13.

On the first day of Passover, Jesus sent two disciples to Jerusalem to prepare the Passover meal. They were instructed to look for a man carrying a pitcher and follow him and ask the owner of the house for a place to prepare the meal. They did as they were told and the owner showed them to an upper room where they prepared the last Passover meal for Jesus.

The man with the water pitcher might tell the story in his words: "I know it's not customary for a man to carry water, for that is typically women's work. On this particular celebration day, though we needed more water and I made the trip myself. I noticed a couple men following me, so I led them to the master of the house. If you've never been here at this time of year, you can't understand how crowded Jerusalem can be during Passover week. There's no room anywhere in the city. It was a bold request they made. They wanted a room for their private

celebration. Unbelievably, the owner led them to the upper room. He gave them a suite for Jesus and His twelve."

## ***Crown of Thorns***

Read John 19:1-3.

After a dramatic arrest, a bogus trial, a visit with Pilate and a brutal flogging, a group of soldiers made sport of Jesus. They made a crown of thorns and placed it on Jesus' head, and they draped a purple robe over His bloody shoulders.

If one of those soldiers could talk with us now, he might tell this story: "I thought He was just one of the riff raff, another one claiming to be the Jewish messiah. I'm not sure what came over us as we taunted him. Those thorns are long and razor sharp. He thought He was a king, so we thought He should have a crown. Mercilessly we pressed the crown into His sacred brow, cursing when the same thorns scratched us. Yet, the condemned never spoke a word. He took our abuse without even uttering one cross word. I've seen a lot of condemned, but never one like this. This Man was different. I began to wonder if there was more to this story than meets the eye. I followed Him to the cross, and I watched Him die. Truly, this Man was not just a King. Jesus is the Lord of all Creation. I taunted Him in His darkest hour, and I watched Him die. God forgive me, too."

## ***Epitaph***

Read John 19:19-22.

After the Jewish leaders demanded Jesus' execution and Pilate's charade of justice, Pilate condemned Jesus to death on a cross, the most brutal form of execution ever invented by mankind. Almost an afterthought, Pilate wrote an inscription in three languages which hung on the cross over Jesus' head as He died. Generally, the inscription described the lawbreaker's offenses. Pilate wrote, "King of the Jews."

Looking back on the events of the day, Pilate might tell us: "Ruling well means making tough decisions. Even my wife warned me to have nothing to do with this Man, for she had a dream the night before. But, a man of authority doesn't have the luxury of a woman's superstitions. I am tasked with keeping peace in my region, and this has always been a hot bed for rebellion. It was one man. In the end,

I was convinced there was no fault in Him, but my duties require I maintain order. Yes, I sentenced Him to death. The Jews didn't like what I wrote, but what I have written, I have written. I saw no reason to change it for anyone. He was the King of the Jews. I figured that would be the end of Him, but I was wrong. I will forever regret my conviction decision that day."

### ***New Tomb and 100 Pounds of Nard***

Read Matthew 27:57-60, Mark 15:46-47 or John 19:38-40.

After the crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea approached Pilate and boldly asked for the body of Jesus. Nicodemus, a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews, brought 100 pounds of nard and aloes, burial spices. Together he and Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in linen with all the spices, and they buried him in Joseph's new tomb that had been carved out of rock.

Joseph might tell us his story: "I am Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jews which condemned our Christ. I did not agree with the decision and was unable to stop the momentum. What else could I do, but stand with Him in His death? It was not my right to ask for the body. Legally, I should not even have approached Pilate with such a request. Being Passover, it was also not lawful for Nicodemus and me to touch a dead body. But, sometimes a man must take a stand. I gave Jesus my tomb that was reserved for my own burial. It was not a cave with myriad passage ways throughout. It was cut out of the stone just for my burial. Once it is secured, there is no way in or out. It was an expensive burial plot fit for a king. It was only right that I should surrender it to my Lord."

Nicodemus has a few words for us, too: "I first came to Jesus by night, because I was afraid to be seen with Him during the daytime. I found His



thoughts so compelling and convicting. As the months passed, I found myself drawn to Jesus and His straightforward approach to life. Like Joseph I couldn't stand idly by when we condemned Him to die. I brought all the spices for burial, a hundred pounds of them. It represented a sizable chunk of cash, but I gave it willingly to Jesus. May He forgive my sin and welcome me into His Kingdom one day."

### ***Easter Approaches***

Three days after His burial Jesus conquered the grave, rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples and many others. We celebrate this resurrection every Easter. This Easter, let's consider what kind of gift we will present to the Master. Will it be an ignorant or sarcastic attempt to mock the Creator we do not comprehend? Will it be a gift you will regret for years to come? Or, will it be an act of sincere worship? Will it be an expression of gratitude? Will we meet the physical needs of another person as a way of honoring Christ? Will it be an expression of genuine love?

How we choose to live our life is a glimpse of our view of our Maker. The gifts we offer to Him are directly related to gratitude we feel for the sacrifice He made for us. What is it that you will present to Jesus this Easter?

