Mary's New Caregiver
Scripture: John 19
Code: BQ7111

But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household. (John 19:25–27)

The adversative conjunction **but** introduces a sharp contrast between the callous indifference of the soldiers (v. 25*a*), who were gambling for Christ's clothes (and, by implication, the sneering hatred of the rulers [Luke 23:35] and the mocking contempt of those passing by [Matt. 27:39–40]), and the compassionate love of a small group of loyal followers. They were **standing by** (*para*; "beside," or, "alongside") **the cross of Jesus,** close enough for Him to speak to them. (Later, either driven away by the soldiers, or unable to bear any longer the sight of Christ's suffering at such close range, they retreated some distance away to where a larger group of Christ's followers was standing [Luke 23:49].) Their love for Jesus overcame their fear (cf. 1 John 4:18), and they came to Him.

The number of women in the group is disputed, but there were most likely four. Jesus' **mother,** Mary, was there. This was the time that Simeon had warned her long ago would come, when the sword would pierce her soul as she watched her Son suffer (Luke 2:35). Of the three lists of women (cf. Matt. 27:55–56; Mark 15:40–41), John's is the only one that mentions the presence of Jesus' mother. Her omission by Matthew and Mark is in keeping with her low-key role in the New Testament—and in striking contrast to the significant role assigned to her in Roman Catholic theology.

The only man among the group gathered at the foot of the cross was John himself, the disciple whom Jesus loved (cf. 13:23; 20:2; 21:7). His presence led to an important relationship established by the Lord. **When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!"** Even as He was dying, bearing man's sin and God's wrath, Jesus selflessly cared for those whom He loved (cf. 13:1, 34; 15:9, 13). Evidently His earthly father, Joseph, was already dead. The Lord could not commit Mary into the care of His half brothers, the children of Mary and Joseph, since they were not yet believers (7:5). They did not become believers in Jesus until after His resurrection (Acts 1:14; cf. 1 Cor. 15:7, though the James referenced in that verse may be the apostle James). Therefore He entrusted her to John; he became as a **son** to her in Jesus' place, and **from that hour** he **took her into his own household.** This may seem a very mundane thing to be concerned about

in the hour of His greatest sacrifice, but the beauty of the Savior’s love and compassion for His widowed mother, in the midst of His own excruciating pain, reflects His love for His own (cf. John 13:1).

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