

MYSTERIES OF THE MESSIAH

Mini-Vol. 11: Units 14, 15 & 16

William H. Heinrich

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***“It is good to be highly educated; it is better to be educated from on high;
but it is best to be both.”***

- Author Unknown

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Unit 14 The Passion Mid-Week

Chapter 01 Prophecies Of His Crucifixion And Return



14.01.00.A. JUDAS BETRAYS CHRIST by Giotto (c. 1267-1337). Judas, who surrendered himself to the devil, betrayed Jesus to the religious leaders.

Jesus told His disciples of the events that would occur in the near future, but they could not comprehend His words. They could not understand how a Messiah who healed the sick, raised the dead, and fed multitudes would die.

14.01.01 Mt. 23:37-39

JESUS LAMENTS OVER JERUSALEM.

³⁷ “Jerusalem, Jerusalem! She who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, yet you were not willing! ³⁸ See, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹ For I tell you, you will never see Me again until you say,

‘He who comes in the name of the Lord is the blessed One!’” (Ps. 118:26).

Throughout the long history of Jerusalem, God has often warned His people, and they have often rejected His messengers and killed them.¹ Many times God desired to protect His people, but they refused to listen. Protection offered as a bird protects its young is a common Jewish image in ancient writings.² So at this point, Jesus looked into the future saw the coming destruction of the temple and city that He loved, and He applied the common figure of speech that was familiar to everyone.

Jesus saw souls lost in eternity and the persecutions future generations would endure. He not only envisioned all the suffering they would face, but also the false messiahs they would pursue, only to be disappointed.³ For example, Rabbi Akiba (or “Akiva) was the religious leader of the second major revolt (132-135) and declared Simon bar Kokhba as the messiah. It is an irony that Bar Kokhba means “Son of the Star.”⁴ This alludes to the Old Testament prophecies (Num. 24:17, Isa. 60:3) concerning “star.” By this time though, the Romans had enough of Jewish nationalism, and Emperor Hadrian destroyed Jerusalem, decreeing that it was illegal for any Christians or Jews to live in the city. He then placed a curse upon the Jewish land by renaming it *Philistinia*, in honor of the enemies of the ancient Jews, the Philistines. This is the popularization of the name which

1. Deut. 28-32; Hosea and Ezekiel 16.

2. Deut. 32:11; Ps. 17:8; Isa. 31:5; 2 *Baruch* 41:3-4.

3. See also Richard Horsley. “Popular Messianic Movements around the Time of Jesus.” *Catholic Bible Quarterly*. Vol. 46. 1984. 471-495.

4. Pasachoff and Littman, *Jewish History in 100 Nutsbells*. 95-97.

today is known as *Palestine*.⁵ The Jews were so greatly disillusioned with messianic dreams that any discussion of a messiah was suppressed for the next twelve hundred years. Most scholars believe the time of the Gentiles began with the temple destruction and First Revolt. However, complete dispersion of the Jews from Jerusalem occurred in A.D. 135 as the result of Simon bar Kokhba. They wandered aimlessly without a country for centuries until 1948 when the state of Israel was re-established.⁶

“As a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.” Jesus’ desire to be protective of His people again demonstrated that His love for them remained unchanged. That refutes the theory that the church eventually replaced Israel in God’s plan for humanity, and He does not care for them as a nation. His emotions were extreme. On one hand, He was dealing with anger concerning the corrupt religious leaders while on the other hand He had the deepest compassion for the common people. He wept for them with an understanding that eventually future judgment would meet them.

Decades later, near the end of the first century, a righteous Jew lamented over the city of Jerusalem in the wake of the Roman destruction. The imagery of his words is quite similar to those of Jesus, which underscores the use of colloquialism among the common people. Since the author was not a messianic Jew, it is highly unlikely that he quoted or paraphrased Jesus, but rather, simply expressed his heavy heart.

Thus says the Lord Almighty: “Have I not entreated you as a father entreats his sons or a mother her daughters or a nurse her children, that you should be my people and I should be your God, and that you should be my sons and I should be your father? I gather you as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. But now, what shall I do to you? I will cast you out from my presence. When you offer oblations to me, I will turn my face from you; for I have rejected your feast days, and new moons, and circumcisions of the flesh. I sent to you my servants the prophets, but you have taken and slain them and torn their bodies in pieces; their blood I will require of you,” says the Lord.

4 Ezra 1:28-33⁷

5. The name originated centuries earlier, possibly by the Greeks, as a mockery or degrading name for the Jewish land. However, it was never popular until Hadrian made it the “official” name of the country.

6. Pasachoff and Littman, *Jewish History in 100 Nutsbells*. 95-98.

7. Scholars debate on the classification of *3rd Ezra* (a/k/a *1 Esdras*) and *4th Ezra* (a/k/a *2nd Esdras*). Sometimes these are listed in the Apocrypha (see 02.02.03) and other times they are listed in the Pseudepigrapha (see

Some scholars have argued that this passage was not written by a Jew, but is the creation of a Christian who inserted this passage into the apocryphal book. That might be true, but since other Jewish writers reported similar sentiments, the objective here is not to authenticate the origin, but simply to illustrate the similarity of ideas.

14.01.02 Mk. 12:41-44 (See also Lk. 21:1-4)

THE RIGHTEOUS WIDOW

⁴¹ Sitting across from the temple treasury, He watched how the crowd dropped money into the treasury. Many rich people were putting in large sums. ⁴² And a poor widow came and dropped in two tiny coins worth very little. ⁴³ Summoning His disciples, He said to them, “I assure you: This poor widow has put in more than all those giving to the temple treasury. ⁴⁴ For they all gave out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she possessed — all she had to live on.”

“Temple treasury.” The treasury chamber was located by the Court of the Women that was surrounded by beautiful colonnades. It was there where people gave their sin and peace offerings.⁸ They placed them in one or more of the thirteen designated trumpet-shaped treasury boxes (*shopharoth*)⁹ and two chambers into which charitable contributions were placed. These funds were used for charity, temple repairs, and other necessary temple functions. Each box had a dedicated purpose, as follows:¹⁰

1. Temple taxes for the current year
2. Temple taxes for the last year
3. Offering of two birds
4. Other bird offering

02.02.24). The reader is reminded that quotations from non-biblical sources are not to be understood as being of equal authority with the biblical narratives. See 01.02.04.

8. Josephus recorded an account when King Agrippa, who was given a golden chain by Gaius, offered it to the Temple by hanging it over the treasury. It was hung there for all worshipers to see, rather than being placed secretly inside. *Antiquities* 20.6.1.

9. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 741.

10. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 1:220-25.

5. Offering for altar work
6. Offering for the purchase of frankincense
7. Offering for the purchase of gold for the Holy of Holies
8. Anything remaining for sin sacrifice
9. Guilt offering
10. Left over money for women (childbirth)
11. Offering for the Nazarite vow
12. Leper offering
13. For burnt offerings

A poor woman came and gave everything she had. According to the Talmud, it was into one of these containers the poor woman had placed her “two peruths” (or “mites”), the least amount even a poor person was required to give.¹¹ By giving everything, she placed her entire faith in God for her well-being. Jesus and His disciples watched her carefully. He did not speak to her any words of encouragement or a prosperity sermon, for He was abundantly aware that this righteous Jewess lived by faith and He knew what treasures awaited her in heaven. Conversely, the wealthy man had no need of faith with the large reserve of wealth that he retained. Jesus is not so much concerned with what one gives as He is with what one retains.

“Two tiny coins worth very little.” The proverbial “widow’s mite,” as in the King James Bible, was the smallest denomination minted in Roman currency. It was known as the *lepta*. Two *lepta* equaled a *quadrams*. Sixty-four *leptas* equaled a *denarius*, which was a typical day’s wage for a working man needed to support a small family.¹² Hence, the two coins the widow gave were, in fact, a very small sum of money, yet Jesus was impressed with her gift.

11. Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Bathra* 10b.

12. *Tobit* 5:14-15; Smith, *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: Matthew*. 236.

14.01.03 Mk. 13:1-2 (See also Mt. 24:1-2; Lk. 21:5-6) Leaving the Temple, Tuesday**JESUS PREDICTS THAT THE TEMPLE WILL BE DESTROYED**

¹ As He was going out of the temple complex, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, look! What massive stones! What impressive buildings!”

² Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here on another that will not be thrown down!”

**14.01.03.A. HERODIAN ASHLARS OF THE WESTERN WALL.**

Herod the Great created his own unique face edging design on the large stones he used in his buildings. Known as Herodian ashlar, the Western Wall and the southeast corner of the Old City Wall have some of the largest stones ever used in ancient world construction. These were not part of the temple building, but part of the retaining wall that supported the temple court yard. Photograph by the author.

The disciples were stunned when Jesus told them that the temple would be destroyed to the point that not a single stone would remain upon another. Yet Jesus was hardly the first to predict its destruction – others questioned how long God would permit His

corrupted temple to stand.¹³ The massive cretaceous limestone blocks required thousands of men and heavy construction equipment to move and place into position to build walls. Shown above (14.01.03.A) are some of the smaller ashlar of the retaining wall commonly known as the Western Wall, which part of the complex Josephus described as the most prodigious work that was ever heard of by man.¹⁴ To destroy the temple would be a formidable task, yet that is precisely what happened in A.D.70.

“What massive stones!” Beginning in 20 or 19 B.C. Herod the Great intended to build one of the wonders of the world, and his dream was completed decades after his death, in A.D. 63, only seven years before its destruction. The magnificent temple truly was an ancient wonder, with its massive limestone blocks,¹⁵ nine gates overlaid with silver and gold, and the tenth gate was of solid Corinthian brass. Carved in the walls by the gates were grape clusters, with each cluster being the size of a man. Inside were two towering 25-meter gilded menorahs, stately pillars, and surrounding porches that invoked a sense of awe in anyone.¹⁶ The plates of gold reflected the rays of the morning sun with a dazzling brightness that overpowered the eyes.¹⁷ This incredible beauty was carved in white limestone, but not in the hearts of men. Josephus said that when approaching Jerusalem the temple appeared like a snow-capped mountain.

The foundation stones uncovered at the temple site are the largest building stones found anywhere in the world. These massive stones were laid by Herod the Great in the first three years of the reconstruction and remodeling of the temple. After his death, no one built with such huge stones (known as *ashlars*) anymore. Unfortunately, the temple, like these leaders, had become a symbol of extreme hypocrisy.

“What magnificent buildings!” The temple complex was the pinnacle of architectural achievements built by Herod the Great. At least two ancient writers described this magnificent building: Josephus and Philo. First are the words of Josephus, who had visited the temple many times.

13. Righteous Jewish writers who believed the temple leadership was unfaithful, and therefore, placed the nation at risk predicted the temple destruction in *Testament of Levi* 15:1; *Testament of Moses* 6:8-9; Dead Sea Scroll 1QpHab 9:6-7; and even Josephus wrote of it later in *Wars* 6.5.3. (301).

14. Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.11.3.

15. According to Leen Ritmeyer, an architectural archaeologist, some of these massive stones, known as “ashlars,” are up to 35 feet long and weigh over 70 tons. One door lintel was nearly 27 feet long and 7 feet high. See Kathleen and Leen Ritmeyer. “Reconstructing Herod’s Temple Mount in Jerusalem.” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 15:6. (Nov/Dec, 1989). 23-45.

16. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 358-61.

17. Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.8; *Wars* 5.5.6.

Now the outward face of the temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's minds or their eyes, for it was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and, at the first rising of the sun, reflected back a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But this temple appeared to strangers when they were at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow, for, as to those parts of it that were not gilded, they were exceeding white. On its top, it had spikes with sharp points to prevent any pollution of it by birds sitting upon it. Of its stones, some of them were forty-five cubits in length, five in height, and six in breadth.¹⁸ Before the temple stood the altar, fifteen cubits high and equal both in length and breadth each with of which dimensions was fifty cubits.¹⁹ The figure it was built in was a square and it had corners like horns, and the passage up to it by an insensible acclivity. It was formed without any iron tools, nor did any such iron tool so much as touch it at any time.²⁰

Josephus, *Wars* 5.5.6 (222-225)²¹

The Jewish philosopher Philo described the glory and magnificence of the temple to the Roman Emperor Caligula in his work, *On the Embassy to Gaius* (37).

But why need I invoke the assistance of foreign witnesses, when I have plenty with whom I can furnish you from among your own countrymen and friends? Marcus Agrippa, your own grandfather on the mother's side, the moment he arrived in Judea, when Herod, my grandfather was king of the country, thought fit to go up from the seacoast to the metropolis (Jerusalem), which was inland. And when he had beheld the temple, and the decorations of the priests, and the piety and holiness of the people of the country, he marveled looking upon the whole matter as one of great solemnity and entitled to great respect, and thinking that he had beheld what was too magnificent to be described. And he could talk of nothing else to his

18. Forty-five cubits in length, five in height, and six in breadth is equal to approximately sixty-seven feet in length, seven and a half feet in height, and nine feet in breadth. Some foundational stones that are still in their original position, have a weight in excess of three hundred tons, in comparison, the largest stone in the Egyptian pyramids is only fifteen tons.

19. Fifteen cubits high is equal to approximately twenty-two and a half feet. The altar was fifty cubits square, or seventy-five feet by seventy-five feet.

20. Iron was the symbol of war, death, and punishment, whereas the altar was where sacrificial offerings were made to God; hence it was to be a holy place of divine love, mercy, and grace.

21. Josephus wrote an incredible description of Jerusalem in *Wars* 5.4.1-4 and of the temple in *Wars* 5.5.1-8.

companions but the magnificence of the temple and everything connected with it.

Philo, On the Embassy to Gaius 37

Therefore, every day that he remained in the city, by reason of his friendship for Herod, he went to that sacred place, being delighted with the spectacle of the building, and of the sacrifices, and all the ceremonies connected with the worship of God and the regularity which was observed, and the dignity and honor paid to the high priest and his grandeur when arrayed in his sacred vestments and went about to begin the sacrifices.

What again did your other grandfather, Tiberius Caesar do? Does not he appear to have adopted an exactly similar line of conduct? At all events during the three and twenty years that he was emperor he preserved the form of worship in the temple as it had been handed down from the earliest times, without abrogating or altering the slightest particular of it.

Philo, On the Embassy to Gaius 294-296, 298²²

The Greeks and Romans always mocked the Jews for what was deemed to be a superstitious religion. The Gentiles could not imagine worshiping a god they could not see. However, as Herod's remodeling progressed and the reputation of the beautiful structure spread, Gentiles gave Judaism a greater level of respectability. Among ancient buildings, the Jewish temple was equal to what today would be called a "skyscraper." But whatever honors the Jewish people enjoyed from their temple and neighbors, was short lived.

"Not one stone will be left here on another." The words of Jesus most certainly were not shocking to all rabbis who eventually heard them. There were a number of righteous rabbis who recognized the deteriorating condition of the Jewish leadership in the temple, and concluded that divine judgment was at hand. Note the following comments which were written *before* the destruction:

Therefore, the sanctuary which the Lord chose shall become desolate through your uncleanness, and you will be captives in all the nations.

22. Elwell and Yarbrough, *Readings from the First-Century World*. 83.

Testament of Levi 15.1

After his death there will come into their land a powerful king of the West who will subdue them, and he will take away captives, and a part of their temple he will burn with fire. He will crucify some of them around their city.

Testament of Moses 6.8-9

The unknown Essene writer wrote prophetically in his description of the Sadducees and the temple elitists. He said that they would accumulate riches and plunder the people. However,

...In the last days their riches and their loot will fall into the hands of the army of the Kittim. (Blank) For they are *Hab. 2:8a* “the greatest of the peoples,” *Hab 2:8b* for the human blood [spilt] and violence done to the country, the city and all its occupants.

Dead Sea Scroll, *Habakkuk Pesher 1QpHab 9.6-7*²³

Extra-biblical comments as these present the very real possibility that God was also moving in the hearts and minds of righteous rabbis of the time. Clearly they recognized the proverbial “writing on the wall.”²⁴

Jesus did not curse the temple, but gave a prophecy of its future. This is a striking contrast between the Old Testament Covenant, which can never be broken (Jn. 10:35), and the temple which will be destroyed. The rejection of Jesus by national Israel, that is, the official Jewish leadership, would be the cause of the temple’s destruction. These words, “Not one stone...” were spoken as He left the temple for the last time.

23. Cited by Bock and Herrick, *Jesus in Context*. 148. See also <http://www.angelfire.com/md/mdmorrison/nt/1qphab.html> and https://books.google.com/books?id=ZR57AwAAQBAJ&pg=PA436&lpg=PA436&dq=1QpHab+9&source=bl&ots=auBR0BGkKN&sig=pAdIG9xlijTgU2pN78EnasaNAI8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=-_ujVKL3C8iVNvLSgNAJ&ved=0CDAQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=1QpHab%209&f=false. Retrieved December 11, 2014.

24. Righteous Jewish writers who believed the temple leadership was unfaithful, and therefore, placed the nation at risk predicted the temple destruction in *Testament of Levi* 15:1; *Testament of Moses* 6:8-9; Dead Sea Scroll 1QpHab 9:6-7; and even Josephus wrote of it in *Wars* 6.5.3. (301).

Decades later, when General Titus and the Tenth Roman Legion came to Jerusalem, Titus asked his commanders if the temple should be destroyed, for he too appreciated the beauty of the architectural wonder and considered its destruction as shameful. The commanders, however, encouraged the destruction for it was rumored that gold was hidden in the walls. Whatever gold found would become booty for those who uncovered it. Therefore, the destruction came with great anticipation and excitement although no gold was ever found within the sacred walls. The rumor was not without merit, since there was an abundance of gold throughout the massive building. Centuries later the Talmud recorded that:

It used to be said: He who has not seen the temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building.... He originally intended to cover it with gold, but the Rabbis advised him not to, since it was more beautiful as it was, [the stones] looking like the waves of the sea.

Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Bathra* 4a²⁵

Of the ten measures of beauty that came down to the world, Jerusalem took nine.

Babylonian Talmud, *Kiddushin* 49b

Later, in A.D. 135, Jerusalem was destroyed again by the Romans and this time all the Jews were expelled from the Holy City. With these two destructions, they realized that their proverbial “fence around the Torah”²⁶ had failed. Yet the early church did not consider these two destructions of Jerusalem (AD 70 and 135) as being the prophetic fulfillment of judgment known as the “Day of the Lord.”²⁷

After Jesus gave the warning of the pending destruction (Mt. 24), He led His disciples across the Kidron Valley and they rested upon the Mount of Olives. Ironically, a prophecy concerning the destruction was essentially a threat to Rome, as that would obviously entail a huge riot and massive social unrest.²⁸ To threaten a destruction of the

25. See also Babylonian Talmud, *Succah* 51b.

26. See video 02.02.16.V by Messianic Rabbi John Fischer who discusses the term “fence around the Torah” from a first century Jewish perspective.

27. For example, see Zech. 14; Acts 2:20; Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10.

28. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor’s Manual*. Class 24, page 12.

temple was a capital crime, but evidently, those words never went beyond the inner circle of disciples.

Obviously, by this time the disciples realized some changes were about to occur, so they asked Him about the future. His response in Matthew 24 is often referred to as either the “Olivet Discourse,” “the Synoptic Apocalypse,” or “the Little Apocalypse,” in which He discussed the signs that would occur prior to His return.²⁹ While He mentioned these events, He never indicated precisely *when* He will return. His advice was to be aware, be watchful, and be faithful. The focus of prophecy, as this is, has always been on Jesus and how to respond to Him. Prophetic words were also a source of comfort as they confirm the knowledge that God alone knows what the future holds.

The Olivet Discourse (below) has parallels with the book of Revelation. For example, Matthew 24:4-8 has a parallel theme in Revelation 6. Since the Revelation of Jesus, as recorded by John is clearly an apocalyptic event, this suggests to critics that the words of Matthew represent futuristic occurrences that are far more intense or severe than those of the past. Matthew 24:9-14 describes the second half of the Tribulation. In essence, it will be a time of widespread deception, persecution, and death. The “Beast” will be the persecutor of those who fail to worship him (Rev. 13:7). Yet those who faithfully withstand the cruelty of the times will be saved (Mt. 24:13). While the Antichrist (or Beast)³⁰ attempts to blot out the Christian faith, the gospel will be preached throughout the world (Mt. 24:14).

Four disciples, James and his brother John, and Peter and his brother Andrew, asked Jesus a question in response to the Jewish request for the Messiah to come. Jesus was seated, as a teaching rabbi would teach his students, and responded with the following discourse.

14.01.04 Mk. 13:3-7a; Lk. 21:11b; Mk. 13:7b-12; Mt. 24:12; Mk. 13:13; Mt. 24:14-15; Lk. 21:20-24; Mt. 24:20-31; Lk. 21:25-28; Mt. 24:32-35 The Olivet Discourse

DISCIPLES ASK ABOUT HIS RETURN

Mk. ³ While He was sitting on the Mount of Olives across from the temple complex, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, ⁴ “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign when all these things are about to take place?”

29. Wenham, “Olivet Discourse.” 2:1116.

30. See Appendix 26.

⁵ Then Jesus began by telling them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁶ Many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and they will deceive many. ^{7a} When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, don’t be alarmed;

Lk.^{11b} ... and there will be terrifying sights and great signs from heaven.

Mk.^{7b} [And]...these things must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁸ For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹ “But you, be on your guard! They will hand you over to sanhedrins, and you will be flogged in the synagogues. You will stand before governors and kings because of Me, as a witness to them. ¹⁰ And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations. ¹¹ So when they arrest you and hand you over, don’t worry beforehand what you will say. On the contrary, whatever is given to you in that hour — say it. For it isn’t you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. ¹² Then brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise up against parents and put them to death.

Mt. ¹² Because lawlessness will multiply, the love of many will grow cold.

Mk. ¹³ And you will be hated by everyone because of My name. But the one who endures to the end will be delivered.

Mt. ¹⁴ This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come. ¹⁵ “So when you see the abomination that causes desolation (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place” (let the reader understand),

Lk. ²⁰ “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that its desolation has come near.

²¹ Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains!

Those inside the city must leave it,
and those who are in the country
must not enter it,

²² because these are days of vengeance

to fulfill all the things that are written.

²³ Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days, for there will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. ²⁴ They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Mt. ²⁰ Pray that your escape may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. ²¹ For at that time there will be great tribulation, the kind that hasn't taken place from the beginning of the world until now and never will again! ²² Unless those days were limited, no one would survive. But those days will be limited because of the elect.

²³ "If anyone tells you then, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'Over here!' do not believe it! ²⁴ False messiahs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ Take note: I have told you in advance.

²⁶ So if they tell you, 'Look, He's in the wilderness!' don't go out; 'Look, He's in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ Wherever the carcass is, there the vultures will gather.

²⁹ "Immediately after the tribulation of those days:

The sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not shed its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the celestial powers will be shaken (Isa. 13:10; 34:4).

³⁰ "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Lk. ²⁵ "Then there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars; and there will be anguish on the earth among nations bewildered by the roaring sea and waves. ²⁶ People will faint from fear and expectation of the things that are coming on the world, because the celestial powers will be shaken. ²⁷ Then

they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ But when these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near!"

Mt. ³² "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: As soon as its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ In the same way, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near — at the door! ³⁴ I assure you: This generation will certainly not pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.

The Olivet Discourse describes future events that will be horrific upon all humanity. Matthew 24:4-14 indicates that the tribulation will arise and many will be led astray from faithfully following Jesus. Verses 15-31 provides additional insight in two areas:

1. It clarifies the focus on the coming great tribulation.
2. It describes the desolating sacrilege and the propaganda of false Christs and false prophets.
3. It clearly indicates that the tribulation is not the final event for believers, but in the end Jesus will gather His faithful to be with Him for ever.

This discourse is a brief form of what John would later write in his book of Revelation. After Jesus gave His disciples the apocalyptic news of a coming destruction, they asked Him when it would happen, and what would be a sign of His return. It would have been easy to give a simple formula, as there would be no responsibility of life and ministry. Rather, what Jesus told them would have to be understood in a context of totality and lived out by faith. What is meant by "totality" is that all the prophecies of Jesus would have to be fulfilled, as many of them have been fulfilled repeatedly since these were spoken. Jesus wanted His disciples to spread the gospel throughout the world, and did not want them to become dormant, nor fail to do their assigned task. Jesus told them there would be signs, among the most significant of which would be the cosmic signs, as opposed to those of the Roman-Jewish politics and conflicts.³¹

Those who heard Jesus preach these words probably believed they would see all these events happen in their lifetime. Below is a brief listing of some of the events they either experienced or heard about in the forty years between the time the prophecy was given

31. Wenham, "Olivet Discourse." 2:1116-17.

and when the temple was destroyed.³² However, many scholars also believe that current global events suggest that many prophecies relative to the second return of Jesus are now in the process of fulfillment. See Appendix 22 for more details. Events reflective of the prophecy that occurred in the first century after Jesus are as follows:³³

Wars, Revolts, and Rumors of Wars³⁴

1. Alexandria, Egypt in A.D. 38
2. Seleucia in A.D. 38, 50,000 Jews killed in a revolt.
3. Jamnia, A.D. 38 or 39.

Earthquakes:³⁵

1. Crete in A.D. 46 or 47.
2. Rome in A.D. 51
3. Apameia, in Phrygia in A.D. 60
4. Laodicea, in Phrygia, in A.D. 60
5. Pompeii in A.D. 62.³⁶
6. Campania, in A.D. 63.

32. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:222-23.

33. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 144-47.

34. See 13.01.05, Lk. 19:41-44 for details to the Roman siege.

35. See <http://israel-tourguide.info/2011/01/10/earthquakes-history-archaeology/> Retrieved August 25, 2014. The Jordan valley is one of the most active earthquake zones in the world. There have been hundreds of minor earthquakes and major ones have dammed the Jordan River repeatedly, sometimes for days, in 1160, 1267, 1534, 1834, 1906 and 1927. At such times, the river often redirects itself as a new riverbed is formed. See Reuven, "Wooden Beams from Herod's Temple Mount: Do They still Exist?" 42.

36. Pompeii was destroyed in A.D. 79 when the nearby Mount Vesuvius erupted. The city and surrounding area was buried in 4 to 6 meters (13 to 20 ft.) of volcanic ash and pumice.

Famine

1. During the reign of Claudius, A.D. 41-54 four famines occurred;
 - a. Rome, A.D. 41-42
 - b. Judaea A.D. 44 (Acts 11:28-30).³⁷ At this time, Queen Helena of Adiabene, who converted to Judaism and built a palace in Jerusalem, imported large quantities of grain from Egypt and figs from Cyprus to feed the masses.³⁸
 - c. Greece, A.D. 50
 - d. Rome, A.D. 52

Storms

1. A hurricane destroyed the entire wheat harvest in A.D. 64 or 65.³⁹ As a result, the price increased thirteen times, so that a small quantity of wheat, called an *issaron*, (about 3.94 liters or 7.5 pints), that was more than a man's wages for a day of labor.⁴⁰

There is an interesting observation to be made at this point: The fact that Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; then He discussed wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, etc.; then He said “**watch out,**” and the coming of false messiahs *before* His return, all this suggests that another temple would not be built until the era of His return.⁴¹ The term conveys the meaning of *alertness* and *observation* as well as *caution* and is reflective of the temple guards. The priests guarded three gates⁴² while the Levites

37. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 129.

38. Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.2.5 (51). It should be noted that during the famine of 25-24 B.C., Herod the Great, at a huge personal expense, also imported grain to feed the starving masses; Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.9.2 (305-07).

39. Tacitus, *Annals* 16:10-13; Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.2.2 (28).

40. Some scholars place this famine in the years 47-49; Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 123.

41. It may be of interest to the reader to know that the Temple Institute in Jerusalem has reproduced all the vessels needed in the next temple. The Temple Mount Faithful, founded by Gershon Solomon, has the architectural plans completed and the significant cornerstone for the next temple. At no time in history since the temple was destroyed has so much time, effort, and money been spent for the future third temple.

42. The names of the gates were Beth Abtines, Beth Nitsots, and Beth Mokad.

guarded 21 other gates.⁴³ If a guard was found sleeping while on duty, he was either beaten or his clothes were set on fire (a horrible way to wake up). That is the background to the words of John in Revelation that reads,

“Look, I am coming like a thief. The one who is alert and remains clothed so that he may not go around naked and people see his shame is blessed.”

Revelation 16:15⁴⁴

It has always been an essential part of a prophet’s calling to warn people not to go astray. It is a subject mentioned by the prophet Zechariah (13:1-2) concerning the last days of Jerusalem as well as the Apostle Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonian church (2:3-42). Here Jesus repeated the warning.

“Many will come in My name.” This warning was repeated in Matthew 24:24 because it was a major concern for Jesus. The first “sign” of His return in the Olivet Discourse is deception among the believers. While there have been false teachers (Jude 3; 1 Jn. 2:18-23), there were also those who considered themselves to be the political messiahs who would deliver Israel from Roman oppression.⁴⁵ A partial listing is found in the writings of Luke and Josephus of those who lived during or shortly after the time of Christ.⁴⁶ In fact, in the two first centuries (B.C. and A.D.), there were more than sixty claimants of the title arose to persuade would-be followers.⁴⁷

No other people group within the Roman Empire had so many leaders who fought for freedom. These multiple insurrectionists were one of several reasons the Romans destroyed the temple and most of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.⁴⁸ Yet in A.D. 132, Simon bar

43. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 3:200.

44. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 3:200-01.

45. An interesting side note must be added at this point. Both Christianity and Judaism have been plagued with false prophets and teachers throughout history. In the late 1800s, when Theodore Herzl and the World Jewish Congress were making plans to establish a Jewish state, the most hostile words they received came from rabbis. The reason was that so many false prophets and teachers had presented false hopes and dreams in the past that the rabbis did not want to have their people to be deceived again. Clearly history of the past two centuries confirms the words of Jesus. See *The Jewish Encyclopedia* Vol. 12, pages 673-74, and Mills and Michael, *Messiah and His Hebrew Alphabet*. 83-86.

46. See Appendix 25 for a listing of false prophets who had messianic expectations and for a partial listing of revolts and social disturbances from 63 B.C. to A.D. 70.

47. Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 2:114.

48. Josephus, *Wars* 6.54.

Kokhba was declared by Rabbi Akiva⁴⁹ to be “the messiah.” His birth name was Shimon ben-Kosiba, but he was renamed as Simon bar Kokhba, meaning “son of a star” (Num. 24:17) by the rabbi.⁵⁰ This declaration led to a revolt which led to the destruction of Jerusalem three years later. The Romans were so incited by the rabbi, that they slaughtered him and sold his flesh in the market. The Jews later gave Simon bar Kokhba a new name, “bar Kozeba,” meaning “son of disappointment.”

“But the end is not yet.” After giving these predictions of the end time events, Jesus clearly stated that the end is still to come. He continued to give additional predictions of horrific events. Finally, He said that after the budding of the fig tree (Mt. 24:32) His disciples will know the end is near. Nearly all of them believed He would return shortly after His ascension. Had they listened to Him carefully, they would have realized that there had to be a greater time span than a few decades.

“These are the beginning of birth pains.” In Hebraic literature, birth pangs and birth stools are often connected with eschatological events. Note the following examples:

Distress has surrounded me, like a woman who sits on the birth stool and has no strength to give birth and so is in danger of death; a band of abusive men has terrified me.

Targum Psalms 18.5

On the day of judgment all the kings, governors, the high officials, and the landlords shall see and recognize him – how he sits on the throne of his glory and righteousness is judged before him, and that no nonsensical talk shall be uttered in his presence. Then pain shall come upon them as on a woman in travail with birth pangs – when she is giving birth (the child)⁵¹ enters the mouth of the womb and she suffers from childbearing.

1 Enoch 62:3-4

49. After the destruction of the temple, Rabbi Akiva (A.D. 50-135) was the founder of a great learning center in Jaffa and today is considered to be the father of rabbinic Judaism. He was killed by the Romans for supporting the messianic figure Simon bak Kokhba.

50. For further study, see Yigael Yigael, *Bar-Kokhba*. New York: Random House. 1971.

51. Parenthesis by Charlesworth.

The phrase “**birth pains**” referred to a future event that is beyond human comprehension; when the Son of Man will personally rule and reign upon this earth.⁵² Again there is evidence to suggest that the Spirit of God spoke to some rabbis during the Inter-Testamental period. Those to whom Jesus was speaking knew exactly what He meant – persecution was promised to them.

14.01.04.Q1 What is the Jerusalem Syndrome?

The Jerusalem syndrome is the distorted state of mind acquired by a few individuals, who, when in Israel, believe they are a reincarnation of a biblical figure such as Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, or the Virgin Mary. Several of them came to Jerusalem, especially in the late 1990s, thinking they would usher in the new millennium. Psychologists have labeled their mental illness as the “Jerusalem Syndrome.”⁵³ These super-spiritual and deceived people are generally harmless, although a few have attempted to destroy the Dome of the Rock so the new temple can be constructed. However, the label applies only to individuals when they are in Israel, and not elsewhere.

14.01.04.Q2 What was the difference between Jewish and Roman scourges?

The Jewish scourging consisted of thirty-nine stripes such as those that Paul received.⁵⁴ The scourging whip the Jews used consisted of three long, thin, leather strips that had knots and the victim received thirteen lashes with it. When Jesus said, “**they will hand you over to sanhedrins, and you will be flogged,**” He probably had this in mind, which correlates with Revelation 6:9-11. However, it was not the same flogging instrument used by the Romans who cared little for Jewish laws and did not consider any limitations. The leather strips of Roman scourges had wooden splinters, lead balls, and metal hooks that tore the flesh of prisoners who would be crucified.⁵⁵ Jewish law forbade such torture. Many early Gentile Christians and Messianic Jews endured various forms of Roman persecution, including the scourge and crucifixion.

52. 1 *Enoch* 62:7.

53. Gorenberg, “Warning! Millennium Ahead!” 14.

54. For the scourging Paul received, see 2 Cor. 11:23-24. For the Jewish tradition, see Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.8.21.

55. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 2:277.

The Romans had two levels of scourging.⁵⁶

1. The *fustigation* was the lightest scourging and was usually ordered by a local magistrate as a warning against potential future crimes.⁵⁷
2. The *flagella* was the severest form of scourging and was generally associated with another form of punishment such as crucifixion.⁵⁸

“Good news must first be proclaimed to all nations.” Before Jesus returns, the entire world will have had the opportunity to hear and receive the good news of salvation. While Revelation 7:1-8 refers to a time when 144,000 Jewish men will preach on a global scale, it has also become evident that within the past century the gospel has been broadcasted worldwide by various forms of electronic media. At no time in the history of the church have so many heard the good news of Jesus as they have today.

“Because lawlessness will multiply.” The exponential increase of sin and violence is further mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7. Many scholars believe that this cultural decline appears not only during the Tribulation, but also in the time leading up to it.

“The abomination that causes desolation. This phrase is somewhat mysterious in that it is difficult to define, yet it clearly forecasts a horrific event. The term abomination (Gk. *bdelugma*, 946) denotes *an image of disgust* that will be set up by the anti-Christ.⁵⁹ It was a prophecy given by the prophet Daniel in 9:27; 11:31; and 12:11 during his captivity in Babylon (early 500s B.C.) and is also defined as *the profanation that appalls*.⁶⁰ It denotes the highest level of moral and religious disgrace,⁶¹ is equal to idol worship,⁶² and is in sharp contrast to the real character of God Almighty.

In the second century B.C., a Syrian-Greek dictator, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, appeared

56. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*. 27-28, 40.

57. It should be noted that Peter and Paul were punished by beatings by the Sanhedrin in Acts 41-21 and 5:17-40, and then released. As stated previously, while the Jews had beatings and scourgings, these were not as severe as what was practiced by the Romans. However, there is a case where the daughter of a priest was accused of adultery and therefore, burned to death after a trial before a Jewish tribunal. It is believed this occurred shortly before A.D. 70. See Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*. 40-41.

58. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 387.

59. Vine, “Abominable, Abomination.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:4.

60. Barclay, “Mark.” 309.

61. See 2 Chron. 15:8; Jer. 13:27; Ezek. 11:21; Dan. 9:27 and 11:31.

62. See Deut. 7:26; 1 Kings 11:17 and 2 Kings. 23:13.

to fulfill that definition. He conquered Jerusalem in 167 B.C., erected an altar to the Greek god Zeus Olympus, and sacrificed a pig on the Jewish altar (see 03.04.17). Evidently the Jews of the time believed that the sacrifice was the abomination predicted by the prophet Daniel. Therefore, the phrase appears in the second century (B.C.) book of *I Maccabees* (1:54 and 6:7). It reads like an ancient newspaper account. This moral sense of the term appears also in the New Testament.⁶³ But there was more to come.

1. The Sadducees corrupted the temple so severely that Jesus had to cleanse it twice. While their actions may not have been seen as an abomination by all the Jews, it certainly was an incredible offense.⁶⁴
2. Herod once set a great eagle above the façade of the temple.⁶⁵
3. Pilate placed legionary eagles throughout the Holy City⁶⁶
4. In A.D. 37-40, Emperor Caligula attempted to erect his own image in the sanctuary.⁶⁷
5. When General Titus conquered Jerusalem, before he destroyed the temple he brought ensigns into the temple.⁶⁸

However, Jesus is pointing to an additional fulfillment in the future. Most scholars interpret the words of Jesus to mean that the Anti-Christ (2 Thess. 2) will desecrate the temple in a manner similar to Antiochus IV Epiphanes.⁶⁹ They have a number of theological opinions concerning the term “abomination.”⁷⁰ They are,

1. A reference to pagan worship,

63. Lk. 16:15; Rev. 17:4-5 and 21:27.

64. See 05.05.04 and 13.02.02 concerning the two cleansings.

65. Josphus, *Antiquities* 17.6.2 (151)

66. Josphus, *Antiquities* 18.3.1 (55)

67. Josphus, *Antiquities* 18.8.2 (261)

68. Josphus, *Wars* 6.6.1 (316)

69. Wenham, “Olivet Discourse.” 2:1116.

70. Beasley-Murray, “Abomination of Desolation.” 1:74-75.

2. A reference to the future sacrifice of a pig in the future third temple?
3. Was it the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70?
4. Or is the abomination of desolation an apostate or spiritual condition.

Regardless of the answer, it appears that it will be in a time of severe civil unrest and turmoil; worse than has ever been experienced in Israel's history. The fact that Jesus spoke of it as a future event is demanding proof that the prophecies of Daniel were not fulfilled by the horrors of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. With His statement, **“Spoken of by the prophet Daniel,”** Jesus clearly reflected upon the prophet Daniel who foresaw the desecration of the temple when Antiochus IV Epiphanes sacrificed a pig on the holy altar in 167 B.C.⁷¹ Clearly, the horrors of that time will be repeated, if not worse, when the desecration predicted by Jesus will be fulfilled (2 Thess. 2:3-4). The fact that an emphasis was placed on Daniel 9:27, the “seventieth week” will occur after the covenant the Antichrist⁷² makes with Israel is broken.⁷³ Premillennial Christians call Daniel's seventieth week the “Great Tribulation Period,” which is a time of incredible persecution against believers.⁷⁴

“Let the reader understand.” Both gospel writers (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14) refer to the “reader.” This was the person who stood before the congregation and read the Scripture (cf 1 Tim. 4:13). This phrase was used by Jesus and Paul for two reasons:

1. It underscored the importance of the lesson Jesus was teaching and,
2. It was the public reader's responsibility to insure His words were accurately

71. See 03.04.17, “176-164 B.C. Antiochus IV Epiphanes, King of Syria Controls Jerusalem.”

72. See Appendix 26.

73. For further study, see Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 342-44.

74. However, critics have questioned the dating of the book of Daniel, which has historically been attributed to the prophet Daniel in the early 6th century B.C. They have said that Daniel 11:5-39 is too detailed concerning third and second centuries B.C. events. Therefore, they say, it is a historical book written by a ghostwriter in the second century B.C. who made it appear prophetic. The major problem with this opinion is that Jesus referred to a real prophet named Daniel, not to an imaginary historical figure. Furthermore, if the book of Daniel was truly written in the second century (B.C.) as critics have claimed, why did other second century writers have difficulty understanding it? For example, the unknown author of the *Sibylline Oracles* (3:391-400) written about 140 B.C., quoted and obviously failed to understand Daniel. Another of the same era was the author of *1 Enoch* (14:18-22), who also had difficulty interpreting the prophetic text. Such misunderstandings would not have existed had the prophetic book been written when critics claim. Jesus affirmed the accuracy of Daniel's prophecy, knowing that one day it would be challenged.

communicated.

Written words in biblical times were not divided by spaces nor were there punctuation marks. Therefore, only an educated person could read smoothly and passionately. While most men and a few women had basic reading skills, only a few had the proficiency required to read the text in public.⁷⁵ Likewise, the Apostle Paul expected his letters to be read before the congregation.⁷⁶ Finally, John, in his last work, wrote, “Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near” (Rev. 1:3).

“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies.” This prophecy was a warning that led to the survival of thousands of Jewish believers in the early months of the siege on Jerusalem. When they saw that the Romans were forced to retreat for a short time, they fled east to the mountains of the Decapolis cities.

The history of the Jews is filled with ironies that boggle the imagination. Nearly three decades after the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, there was another Jesus who warned of the coming destruction to the Holy City. The passage below by Josephus is all that is known of him. He went around the city of Jerusalem crying a warning of impending destruction for four years before the Roman attack in A.D. 66. Once the siege began, he continued for nearly three and a half years until a stone missile killed him. During that time he was beaten, ridiculed, and severely punished for his eccentric announcements. Yet his words came true as if he was a divine prophet.

But what is still more terrible there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus (Ananas),⁷⁷ a plebeian and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom for everyone to make tabernacles to God in the temple. He began on a sudden cry aloud,

“A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and brides, and a voice against this whole people!”

This was his cry, as he went about by day and by night, in all lanes of the

75. Martin, *Worship in the Early Church*. 68-71.

76. Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; Phil. 2.

77. Insert mine because both spellings are common.

city. However, certain of the most eminent among the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his, and took up the man, and gave him a great number of severe stripes; yet did he not either say anything for himself, or anything peculiar to those that chastised him, but still he went on with the same words which he cried before. Hereupon our rulers supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator; where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare. Yet he did not make any supplication for himself, nor shed any tears, but turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was,

“Woe, woe to Jerusalem!”

And when Albinus (for he was then our procurator) asked him who he was, and whence he came, and why he uttered these words, he made no manner of reply to what he said, but still did not leave off his melancholy ditty, till Albinus took him to be a madman, and dismissed him.

Now during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near any of the citizens nor was seen by them while he said so; but he every day uttered these lamentable words as if it were his premeditated vow,

“Woe, woe to Jerusalem!”

Nor did he give ill words to any of those who beat him every day; but this was his reply to all men and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come.

This cry of his was the loudest at festivals; and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months without growing hoarse, or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege when it ceased. For as he was going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force,

“Woe, woe to the city again and to the people, and to the holy house!”

And just as he added to the last, - “Woe, woe, to myself also!” There came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately;

and as he was uttering the very same presages, he gave up the ghost.⁷⁸

Josephus, *Wars* 6.5.3 (300b-309)

The unknown Jesus made frequent use of the term *woe*, which is a dirge, a lament for the dead.⁷⁹ It suggests a plea for repentance, as judgment is about to fall. The words of Jesus, the son of Ananus – not related to the priesthood family – gave warning to the Jewish believers of the pending destruction for seven years. Josephus did not say whether he was a Christian, although his warnings are nearly identical to those given by Jesus prior to His crucifixion in Matthew 23 and 24. How did he know what was to happen? How influential was he in encouraging the Jewish believers to flee the city when news arrived of the coming Roman army? There is no record of his influence, but obviously thousands of people escaped the horrible destruction and slaughter.

There are four interesting points to consider in this account:

1. When reconciling this event with the calendar, it is evident that Jesus, son of Ananus prophesied the coming destruction⁸⁰ shortly after the Apostle Paul was arrested in Jerusalem and taken to Caesarea.
2. Jesus, the son of Ananus, gave specific warnings concerning the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, and advised the people to flee.

78. The phrase “a stone came out of one of the engines,” is a reference to a stone thrown by a catapult. On February 5, 2004, *National Geographic News* (NGN) reported that ancient engineers designed and built catapults (or “belopoietics” as the Greeks and Romans called them) that could accurately throw a 60 pound rock a distance of 500 yards – that is more than a quarter mile! The NGN report was reprinted in *Artifax* “Catapults were Ingenious.” 19:2 (Spring, 2004) 12.

79. Smith, *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: Matthew*. 157, 274.

80. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*. 377-78.



14.01.04.A. A RECONSTRUCTED ROMAN CATAPULT. This reconstructed catapult is believed to be similar to the ones used in the destruction of Jerusalem and Masada in the First Revolt (A.D. 66-73). The one pictured was used in the 1980 film *Masada*. Photograph by the author.

3. This Jesus was sounding the warning of pending doom at least three years before Josephus arrived.
4. Josephus was in Jerusalem when it was destroyed. While some critics have said this narrative is a fraud, they have no evidence to support that opinion, but the historian's vivid description of the punishment Jesus received suggests that he was a witness. He was also on Mount Scopus with General Titus when the prophet was killed by a missile discharged from a catapult.

<p>Mystery Unveiled</p>	<p>Amazingly, Jesus, the son of Ananus, warned Jerusalem for seven years of a pending destruction, but the people would not repent.</p>
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“Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains.” The context of this phrase is that the Jews will flee to the mountains during the time of Jacob’s Troubles, also known as the Tribulation. More specifically, some scholars believe they will hide in the Jordanian mountains of the ancient city of Petra.⁸¹ However, these words were taken seriously by first century Jewish Christians when they saw the Roman army encircle the Holy City in A.D. 66-67. Two years later they they had a brief moment to flee to the eastern side of the Jordan River to the city of Pella.⁸² In doing so, they escaped the starvation and torture that fell upon those who remained behind. The observant words of Eusebius, who also endorsed the historian Josephus, reported that,

The whole body, however, of the church at Jerusalem having been commanded by a divine revelation given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city and lived at a certain town beyond the Jordan called Pella. Here, those who believed in Christ removed from Jerusalem, as if holy men had entirely abandoned the royal city itself and the whole land of Judea.

The divine justice for their crimes against Christ and his apostles finally overtook the Jews, totally destroying the whole generation of these evildoers from the earth. But the number of calamities then overwhelmed the whole nation; the extreme misery to which particularly the inhabitants of Judea were reduced; the vast numbers of men, women, and children who fell by the sword, famine, and innumerable other forms of death; the numerous and great cities of Judea that were besieged; the great and incredible distresses that those experienced who took refuge at Jerusalem as to a place of perfect security; these facts, as well as the whole tenor of the war and each particular of its progress when finally, the abomination of desolation according to the prophetic declaration, stood in the very temple of God, so declared of old but which now was approaching its total downfall and final destruction by fire; all this, I say, anyone who wishes may see accurately stated in the history written by Josephus.

Eusebius, *Church History* 3.5.3-4

81. Hab. 3:3; Isa. 34:1-7; 63:1-6.

82. Pella continued to be a thriving city until it was destroyed on January 18, 749, by a massive earthquake that destroyed Capernaum and many other villages and cities throughout the Jordan Valley.

A similar account was also preserved by Epiphanius⁸³ and the *Ascension of Isaiah* that not only mentions the Jewish believers fleeing to Pella,⁸⁴ but they were going from place to place in the region of Gilead and Bashon with the hope that Jesus would return soon.⁸⁵ The early Christians expected Jesus to return at any moment.⁸⁶ However, after the destruction they realized that they needed to return and rebuild the city. In the meantime, the thousands of traditional Jews who remained in the city suffered horribly under the iron hand of the Romans.⁸⁷



14.01.04.B. CHURCH RUINS IN PELLA. Pella was a Decapolis city located in modern Jordan. Thousands of Christians fled Jerusalem in A.D. 68-70 to escape the Roman slaughter and destruction of the city. These believers felt certain that they witnessed the fulfillment of prophecies

83. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 29.7.7; 30.2,7; See also Pixner, “Mount Zion, Jesus, and Archaeology.” 316.

84. Flusser. “The Jewish-Christian Schism (Part II).” 30-32.

85. *Ascension of Isaiah* 3.21 – 4.13; Pixner, “Mount Zion, Jesus, and Archaeology.” 317.

86. Geldenhuys, 141; Gilbrant, “Luke.” 613.

87. Some scholars have argued against the accepted opinion that the Jewish believers lived in Pella because no archaeological evidence was uncovered to prove their existence there. However, since they stayed there only for a brief period – a couple of decades at most – no archaeological evidence would have been created or left behind.

described in Matthew 24, and hence, believed they would see the return of Jesus. However, some stayed and, as the Christian faith spread, built churches such as this one. Photograph by the author.

The highly feared *Legio X Fretensis*, a/k/a the Tenth Roman Legion, surrounded Jerusalem and prevented food and other supplies from entering. It was an attempt to force surrender by starvation. The resulting famine caused great violence in the city, exposing the depraved nature and desperation of its citizens. Josephus, who was an eyewitness, recorded the human horrors. His words not only verify the prophetic accuracy of the words of Jesus, but also those of Moses. After the ancient prophet gave God's promise of reward for obedience (Lev. 26:1-13), he then gave these words concerning disobedience which appear to have been partly fulfilled at this time.⁸⁸

²⁷ “And if in spite of this you do not obey Me but act with hostility toward Me, ²⁸ I will act with furious hostility toward you; I will also discipline you seven times for your sins. ²⁹ You will eat the flesh of your sons; you will eat the flesh of your daughters. ³⁰ I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and heap your dead bodies on the lifeless bodies of your idols; I will reject you. ³¹ I will reduce your cities to ruins and devastate your sanctuaries. I will not smell the pleasing aroma of your sacrifices. ³² I also will devastate the land, so that your enemies who come to live there will be appalled by it. ³³ But I will scatter you among the nations, and I will draw a sword to chase after you. So your land will become desolate, and your cities will become ruins.

Leviticus 26:27-33 (see entire passage of 26:14-46)

It was an attempt to force surrender by starvation. But many Jews believed the messiah would come to save them in the heat of battle. A similar opinion was shared by the Essenes, which is why they had no weaponry.

Once the city was captured and the temple burned, the soldiers dismantled the entire building stone by stone in an attempt to search for hidden gold that was said to have been hidden inside the walls. Archaeologists identified a few remaining stones, but the vast majority of them were reused for later construction projects. The retaining wall that supported the courtyard of the temple, known today as the Western Wall, has remained undisturbed.

88. The complete fulfillment occurred in A.D. 135 at Emperor Hadrian's destruction of Jerusalem.



14.01.04.C. STONES OF THE RUINED TEMPLE. A large pile of stones from the temple lay on the pavement beside the retaining wall of the former temple complex. These stones represent the literal fulfillment of the prophetic words of Jesus. Notice the large Herodian ashlar that comprise the wall. Photograph by the author.

“Fulfill all the things that are written.” What things? The difficulty of this phrase is that there is no passage in the Old Testament that *specifically* refers to this subject. It is one of several generalizations that Jesus made.⁸⁹ Yet the audience understood what was meant, especially since so many Jewish prophetic and apocalyptic writings are full of horrifying themes of a future “end time.”⁹⁰

There are numerous interpretations as to when **“the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”** The first issue is the debate over the *beginning* point of the “times of the Gentiles.” There are two points to consider:

1. Some have suggested that this period began when King Nebuchadnezzar first overthrew Jerusalem in 605 B.C. After the Jews were permitted to return from Babylon, they remained under foreign domination by the Persians, the Greeks, the

89. A partial list of other problematic passages is listed in Appendix 13.

90. For example, see Isa. 13:9-10; 24:18-20; 34:4; Ezek. 32:7-8; Joel 2:10, 30-31; 3:15; Hag. 2:6, 21. *1 Enoch* 80; *Testament of Moses* 10:5; *2 Baruch* 70; 72:2.

Romans, briefly by the Parthians in 40 B.C., and again by the Romans (during the time of Jesus). However, since King Nebuchadnezzar, there was about a century of true independence from Gentile rule was the century following the Maccabean Revolt (165-63 B.C.). Even though some of their rulers were just as wicked as the Gentile tyrants, they at least were not in the “times of the Gentiles.”

2. The second issue then is when the “times of the Gentiles” will end. Again, there are various opinions.

- a. Some say this period ended in 1948 when Israel became a political entity.
- b. Others say it ended with the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israel took control of the temple Mount (even though in a matter of months it was returned to Muslim control).
- c. Most scholars believe that the “times of the Gentiles” will continue until the second advent of Jesus to the earth. Upon His return, He will conquer the Anti-Semitic Gentile rulers with an iron scepter and break them into pieces like pottery (Ps. 2:9). Only then will this period end and Jesus will reign in His kingdom of the Lord forever.

While this subject (“times of the Gentiles,” “end times” etc.) is beyond the scope of this study, the following worth consideration. According to this theory, a common interpretation of the apocalyptic words of Jesus is that Matthew 24:4-8 is the first half of the Tribulation and Matthew 24:9-14 is the second half.⁹¹ The entire seven year period is the seventieth “week” of Daniel, and is what Jeremiah called “the time of trouble for Jacob” (Jer. 30:7). Jesus referred to it as “birth pains” (Mt. 24:8). Among the signs that will appear are false messiahs (Mt. 24:5), reports of wars (Mt. 24:6-7), and natural catastrophes, such as earthquakes, famines, and celestial events (Mt. 24:7). All these were previously discussed, especially since so many occurred in the first century. When the gospel writer John wrote his Revelation on the Island of Patmos, he said that Jesus described judgments that would fall during this time (Rev. 6), meaning, at the end of the age. Signs were given to Israel to warn them of the pending judgment.

Jesus also gave signs to the second half of the Tribulation Period. There will be global persecution and death for believers (Mt. 24:9). To avoid such a horrific event, many will leave the faith and worship the supreme dictatorial false messiah. John referred to him as

91. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 399-401.

“the beast” (Rev. 13:1-10) and the Apostle Paul referred to this dictator as the “man of lawlessness” (2 Thess. 2:1-4). During this time, many false prophets and teachers will appear and convince many to leave their Christian faith for another doctrine. Some will have incredible mystical power and will deceive many true believers. While the prophet is enticing people to his perverted religion, the “beast” will obtain global dictatorship. During this time there will be 144,000 Jewish evangelists who will preach the good news of the Kingdom of God throughout the entire world (Rev. 7:1-8). At the end of this period, Jesus shall return to the earth with His army (the raptured church), end the fighting, and reign for a thousand years.⁹²

“In winter or on a Sabbath.” The times of the end will be horribly violent and many will feel trapped and under great duress. Winter is the rainy season when the normally dry riverbeds become dangerously flooded making nearby roads incredibly muddy and impassable.⁹³ The Jordan River will frequently be flooded over farmland and travel will be extremely difficult.

Orthodox Jews who observe the Oral Laws are limited to activities and can only go as far as a “Sabbath’s day journey” on the day of rest.⁹⁴ The phrase, “in those days” refers specifically to the violent times that will be the hallmark of the end of the age,⁹⁵ when violence and terrorism will bring massive social and civil unrest, terrorism, wars, destruction and death.⁹⁶

“False messiahs and false prophets will arise.” The deep concern Jesus had for His church was repeated in Mark 13:6. Throughout the Old Testament era there were numerous false prophets and teachers whose messages appealed to their listeners.⁹⁷ Ancient literary works, many of which are borderline heresies, prove that false Christs (*pseudochrists* 5580),⁹⁸ prophets and teachers had left their mark wherever Judaism and

92. Theologians have three views of when the rapture will occur.

93. Mishnah, *Taanith* 1.3

94. An excellent resource for further Sabbath study is Hagner, “Jesus and the Synoptic Sabbath Controversies.” 270-88.

95. Jer. 3:16, 18; 31:29; 33:15-16; Joel 3:1; Zech. 8:23.

96. Some have suggested that the spread of radical Islamic militants could be those who will bring forth the predicted massive social and civil unrest, terrorism, wars, destruction and death.

97. See 02.02.10 as well as 10.01.06 for the warning by Jesus in Matthew 10:16-33 concerning the “whispers” and “secrets,” that were common teachings by Gnostic, Cynic and Stoic philosophers.

98. Vine, “Christ.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:101. See also “Antichrist” in Appendix 26.

Christianity spread.⁹⁹ Josephus mentioned one of them who promised a supernatural divine deliverance as the temple was about to be destroyed. His message was proclaimed as the Roman soldiers were slaughtering Jews throughout the city, buildings were on fire, chaos and destruction was falling upon the Jewish state.

A false prophet was the reason for these people’s destruction. He made a public proclamation in the city that same day that God commanded them to get up upon the temple, and there would receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. There were also a great number of other false prophets seduced by the tyrant [the first false prophet] to impose upon the people....Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers...and did not give credit to the signs that were so evident and so plainly foretold their future destruction.

Josephus, *Wars* 6.5.2-3 (287b-288a)¹⁰⁰

The historian continued to say that as Jerusalem burned, the false prophets, messianic pretenders,¹⁰¹ and their followers were either killed by the sword or committed suicide by jumping headfirst into the blazing fires below them. They preferred to believe in a lie. However, those who obeyed the words of Jesus (Lk. 21:20), when they saw the Roman armies surround Jerusalem and heard the warnings of Jesus, son of Ananus,¹⁰² they escaped to Pella east of the Jordan River and were saved from the horrors of Roman destruction.

As stated elsewhere in this study, during the six decades after the destruction of Jerusalem, the city was rebuilt. Then came the most famous false prophet, Simon bar Kokhba. His revolt led to another destruction of the Holy City in A.D. 135, after which Emperor Hadrian renamed the land *Palestina*.¹⁰³ For the next several centuries any talk of a messiah was quickly subdued by the rabbis. Nonetheless, many have appeared in

99. See Appendix 24; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 37-39.

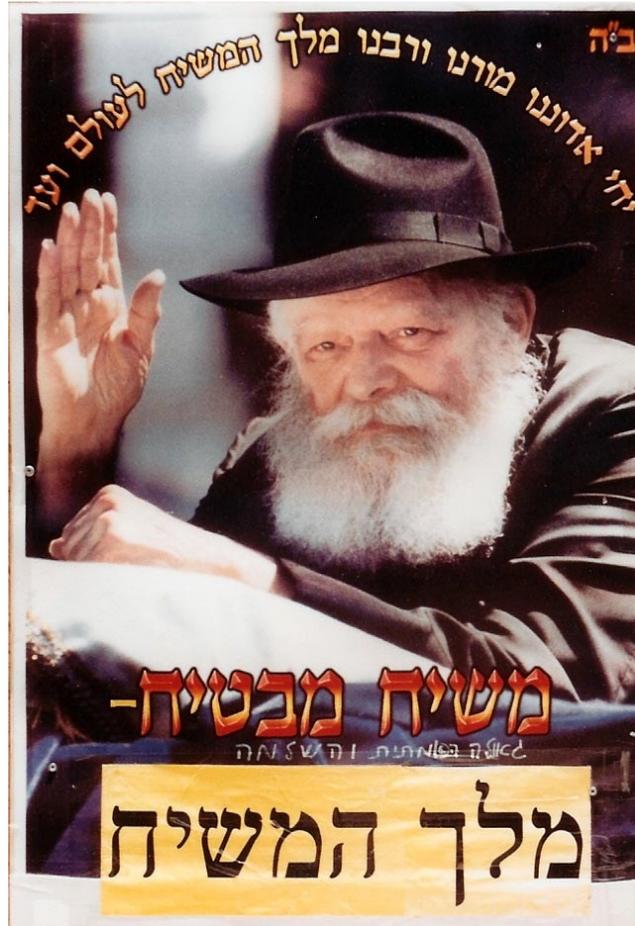
100. See also Richard Horsley. “Popular Messianic Movements around the Time of Jesus.” *Catholic Bible Quarterly*. Vol. 46. (1984). 471-495.

101. For a partial listing of false prophets and false messiahs, see Appendix 25: “False Prophets, Rebels, Significant Events, And Rebellions That Impacted The First Century Jewish World.”

102. Josephus, *Wars* 6.5.3 (300-301); Farrar, *The Life of Christ*. 377-78.

103. It is from the Latin name “Palestina,” from which the modern English word *Palestine* is derived. The name is not in any biblical passage although it often appears on Bible maps so readers can associate biblical places with modern political land divisions.

various Jewish communities, but possibly the most famous “messiah” in the modern era was Rabbi Menachem Schneerson (1902-1994). While he never claimed to be the messiah, he never denied it either. His Hasidic followers pray faithfully that their beloved “Lubavitcher Rebbe,” as they affectionately call him, will resurrect from the grave and usher in world peace.

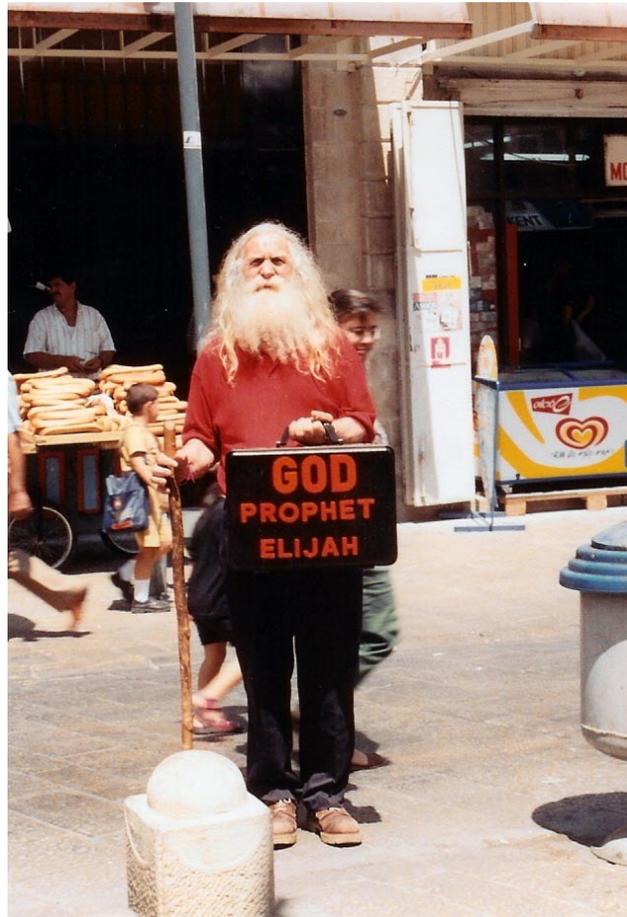


14.01.04.D. A MODERN JEWISH FALSE MESSIAH. While some Jews today are expecting their Messiah to come, others believe he has already arrived. One such group of Hasidic Jews believes that their deceased rabbi, Menachem Schneerson was, or is, the messiah.¹⁰⁴ They believe he will return to life and, therefore, his picture is often seen on billboards throughout Israel, especially in Jerusalem, welcoming his return. Photograph of a wall poster by the author.

This writer once had the fortunate opportunity to talk with and photograph the prophet

104. Staff, “Moshiach (Messiah) is Coming,” *The Chosen People Newsletter*. 2-3.

Elijah – or at least someone who seriously believed he was Elijah. He said that repentance was needed because Jesus was going to return at the end of 1999. Obviously, his eschatological calendar was slightly off. So many people with either spiritual or mental delusions have come to Jerusalem with the belief that they were the messiah, Jesus, John the Baptist, or other significant prophet, that the Israelis have a name for this condition: “Jerusalem Syndrome.”¹⁰⁵



14.01.04.E. THE GENTILE “ELIJAH.” This former California building contractor informed this author that he was Elijah and that his calling was to tell the world to repent for the coming of the Messiah. He was encouraged to leave Israel in December 1999 by the Israeli government. There seems to be no shortage of prophets or messiahs from either Jewish or Christian sources. Photograph by the author.

Concerning the teachings of the early church, pastors called the false prophets “antichrists,” since they were neither the true Christ nor did they give true teachings of

105. See “Jerusalem Syndrome” in Appendix 26.

Jesus.¹⁰⁶ One example is the words of church father Cyril of Jerusalem.

This Jesus Christ who is gone up shall come again, not from earth but from heaven: and I say, “Not from earth,” because there are many antichrists to come at this time from earth.

Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*¹⁰⁷

“The coming of the Son of Man.” This phrase is commonly known as the *parousia*, which can mean *arrival* or *presence*. It has a technical meaning of the *second coming* or return of Jesus.¹⁰⁸ This phrase is hardly mentioned in the gospels with the exception of Matthew 24, verses 3, 27, 27, and 39, but is found more frequently throughout the New Testament (i.e., 1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4). There are several considerations to notice concerning this phrase.

1. The future coming is a certain event. While the time of the *parousia* is unknown, the fact that it will occur is as certain as the morning sunrise. Just as there was a specific beginning to this age, there will be a specific end to this age after which Jesus will rule and reign upon the earth.
2. The statement is the ultimate victory of Jesus and the defeat of the armies of the earth, followed by the demise of Satan and his angels.
3. It gives believers incredible hope during times of stress and distress, knowing that through Christ Jesus there will one day be a victorious celebration for all who remain faithful to the end.
4. As stated previously, and this point is critical, the phrase *Son of Man*, or *Bar Enosh* in Aramaic,¹⁰⁹ in the book of *Enoch* is a figure who is waiting in heaven until God sends him to earth where he would establish his kingdom and rule over it. This book was common knowledge to the Jewish people, so when Jesus used the phrase “Son of Man” about Himself, He was clearly claiming to be the long-

106. See “Antichrist” in Appendix 26.

107. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Patristic Quotations: From 50 – 750 A.D.* 252.

108. Barclay, *A New Testament Wordbook.* 90-91.

109. Wijngaards, *Handbook to the Gospels.* 44.

awaited Messiah. Therefore, the expressions of “Son of Man” and “Son of God,” when referenced to Christ do so to express His deity.¹¹⁰

“Wherever the carcass is, there the vultures will gather.” The language Jesus used was one of absolute certainty. These “vultures” are more accurately known as *griffon vultures*, that are much larger than eagles and when they fly in a circular pattern it is a sure sign that a carcass is somewhere below.¹¹¹ Likewise, Jesus said that certain signs would appear before His return.

“The sign of the Son of Man.” The term *sign* refers to an *ensign* or *standard* used by the military to indicate a point where soldiers gathered to reorganize and to receive additional commands. Matthew used the phrase to indicate that the Kingdom of God was complete and a gathering point for the people of God.¹¹²

There is an interesting paradox concerning the sign of the return of Jesus. He tells of the events that will occur *before* His return, but not of anything that will occur *before* the rapture. Furthermore, prior to His return, there will be a dramatic increase of earthquakes, wars and rumors of wars, and an apostasy from the faith, etc.¹¹³ Men will be able to *estimate* His coming by the signs, but these are all without any specific dates. Verses 36-41 specifically state that no one will know the *specific hour* or day of His return and, therefore, all are to be ready, working for the Kingdom, and watching.

“Your redemption is near.” At this point the disciples did not understand that the coming death of Jesus would be payment for their sins – the death would pay the price of the penalty of their sin. In the everyday life of a first century citizen, an example of redemption was to purchase a slave at the slave market and let him go free. Jesus applied the same meaning to the matter of sin and its consequences. Redemption for the believer is in these areas:

1. From the penalty of the Law - Jewish believers (Gal. 3:13)
2. From the Law itself - Jewish believers (Rom. 6:14, 7:24; Gal. 4:4-5)
3. From the power of sin - both Jews and Gentiles

110. Jn. 3:13; 5:27; 6:27; cf. Mt.26:63-64; Tenney, *The Gospel of John*. 105.

111. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:130.

112. Carson, “Matthew.” 8:505.

113. These events are described in more detail in 14.01.04.

4. From the power of Satan. (Gal. 2:15; Heb. 2:15)

5. Believers are guaranteed future, final redemption from all evil which will occur with the resurrection of the body (Lk. 21:28; Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14, 4:30).

“Learn this Parable from the fig tree.” The fig tree that was cursed by Jesus quickly died; symbolic of what was about to happen to national Israel. But Jesus went on to say the tree would blossom again (ref. to Isa. 66:8), which most scholars believe was the day of Israeli Independence on May 14, 1948. There is no question that the Jews of the first and second centuries understood the symbolic meaning of the fig tree to be their country. Evidence of this is found in the writings of a Jewish Christian, dated to about A.D. 110, previously mentioned and titled *The Apocalypse of Peter* chapter 2.¹¹⁴

Critics have long theorized that since Jesus said that He would return imminently, His audience expected Him to return within their lifetime. The Apostle Paul believed that Jesus would return at any moment according to 1 Thessalonians 4. However, since Jesus failed to come, critics say that the first century church leaders had to modify their theology or they would have lost power.¹¹⁵ From this point on, skeptics and many Reconstructionists have presented alternative interpretations, many of which conclude that the gospels are in error. One of the primary issues is the phrase, **“this generation will certainly not pass away.”** There is no question that it has been the fuel for various interpretations and debates.

However, there is a point that can be easily missed. This narrative cannot be isolated from the parables that follow, because Jesus did not say this as a stand-alone statement as has been interpreted.¹¹⁶ Those who say that the historical events in the gospels were created to establish a religious theology have difficulty with this passage, because anyone rewriting history would not make a statement that would be so controversial. Some have gone so far as to claim that the passage (Mk. 13:5-27) is a “Jewish apocalypse with a Christian ending.”¹¹⁷ Nearly two thousand years have passed since these words were

114. See 13.02.01.

115. Among the most influential scholars to promote the so-called errors of the gospels, was the German theologian Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965). In 1908 he published *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, translated in English as *History of Life of Jesus Research*, but better known as the *Quest for the Historical Jesus*.

116. Other German theologians, besides Albert Schweitzer, who promoted errors in Scripture were Wilhelm Bousset (1865-1920), P. W. Schmidt (1868-1954), Heinrich Weinel (1874-1936). While they examined the literature and social culture of the first century, they failed to prioritize their sources.

117. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*. 125.

spoken, so obviously, there must be another explanation other than a first century return. In fact, there are three possible explanations:

1. Some have suggested that the word “generation” could refer to every generation since Christ, because the world has witnessed considerable turmoil ever since then.
2. Another suggestion is that the Greek word *genea* should be translated as *race* or *kind of people* rather than *generation*. If that is the case, then Jesus is stating that the Jewish people will be present in the Promised Land at His second coming. He affirmed the promise given to the prophet Jeremiah.

³⁵ **This is what the LORD says:**

**The One who gives the sun for light by day,
the fixed order of moon and stars for light by night,
who stirs up the sea and makes its waves roar —
Yahweh of Hosts is His name:**

³⁶ **If this fixed order departs from My presence —
this is the LORD’s declaration —
then also Israel’s descendants will cease
to be a nation before Me forever.**

³⁷ **This is what the LORD says:**

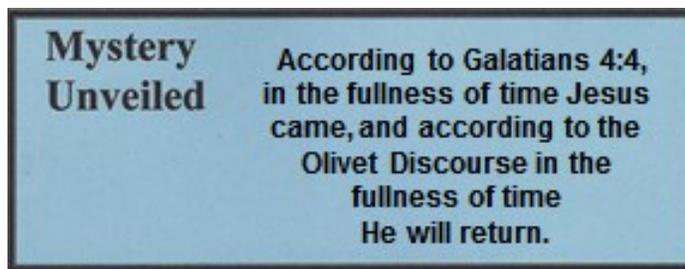
**If the heavens above can be measured
and the foundations of the earth below explored,
I will reject all of Israel’s descendants
because of all they have done —
this is the LORD’s declaration.**

Jeremiah 31:35-37

3. The best interpretation is that the generation, who will witness all the events listed in the previous verses of chapter 24, will be the same generation who will see the return of Christ. In every generation people have been confronted with wars, rumors of wars, famine, floods, and other disasters. These events are normal in a fallen world. However, the predicted events mentioned will be so dramatic;

so horrible, that they will make these “normal events” look like nothing. No one has ever witnessed all of them *in dramatic severity* at the *same time*. Those who witness these climatic events are said to be the generation Jesus mentioned. Yet there will be times of weddings, festivals, plowing, and other normal events of life.

Simply stated, even though the Church Age has witnessed horrific events in the past, these were nothing when compared to what is to come (or may now be coming). The fact that the believer can read and see Scripture being fulfilled is a powerful witness to the reality of God and the close of the Church Age. Prophecy was given so the future can impact the lives of those in the present. Just as God’s Word is true to every “jot” and “tittle,” so every prophetic word spoken by Jesus will come true and He will return.¹¹⁸ Those who see the coming of this apocalypse will see the Son of God. Galatians 4:4 states that in the fullness of time Jesus came; and in Matthew 24 Jesus essentially said that in the fullness of time He will come again.



14.01.05 Mt. 24:36-44; Lk. 21:36 (See also Mk. 13:32-33)

EXACT TIMES OF HIS RETURN UNKNOWN

Mt. ³⁶ “Now concerning that day and hour no one knows — neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son — except the Father only. ³⁷ As the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. ³⁸ For in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah boarded the ark. ³⁹ They didn’t know until the flood came and swept them all away. So this is the way the coming of the Son of Man will be:

**⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field:
one will be taken**

118. Carson, “Matthew.” 8:507; Wenham, “Olivet Discourse.” 2:116-17.

and one left.
⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill:
one will be taken
and one left.

⁴² Therefore be alert, since you don't know what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this: If the homeowner had known what time the thief was coming, he would have stayed alert and not let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ This is why you also must be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Lk. ³⁶ But be alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place and to stand before the Son of Man."

In this parable, Jesus said that when He returns, the people of this earth will be like those in the days of Noah, doing all the daily activities and people normally do. Then suddenly, there is a day of reckoning: the saved will be delivered and the unsaved will be judged. The two men in the field, the two women at the grinding stone, the sheep and the goat, etc., are all common metaphors found in Jewish literature.¹¹⁹

Jesus presented four different parables to emphasize the differences between those who are faithfully obedient and believed and those who do not.¹²⁰ This is not a contrast between those inside and those outside the church, but of those within. Bible prophecy is not to scare believers, but to prepare them for the uncertain future.

<p>Mystery Unveiled</p>	<p>The metaphors by Jesus, such as two women at the grind stone and two men in the field, were not directed at the world, but at those within the church.</p>
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“Now concerning that day and hour no one knows.” Again Jesus reflected upon the typical Jewish wedding tradition when only the fathers of the bridegroom and bride

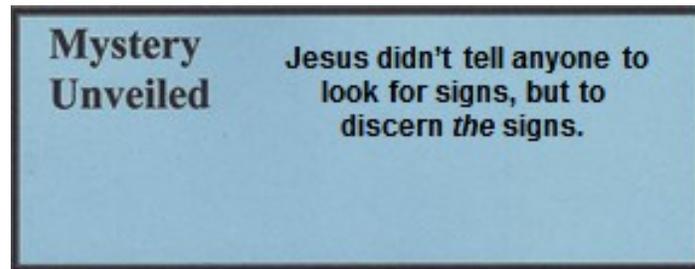
119. Joel 2:9; 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15.

120. See the following: 1) the Parable to encourage Watchfulness (14.01.05; Mk. 13:33-37); 2) the Parable of the Faithful and Evil Servant (14.01.05; Mt. 24:45-51); 3) the Parable of the Ten Virgins (14.01.07; Mt. 25:1-13), 4) and the Parable of the Talents (14.01.08; Mt. 25:14-30).

knew when the young man could “capture” his bride.¹²¹

A previously stated, this phrase clearly demonstrates that no one will know *the exact time* of His return. Jesus did, however, go to great lengths to describe *the season* of His return. When “all hell breaks loose” it is time to rest in the comfort of His words. He predicted the future and, obviously, knows what will happen prior to the end of the age.

An interesting interpretation was originated by messianic scholars. They have studied the meanings of the seven God-ordained feasts, and believe there is a strong prophetic significance relative to the Feast of Tabernacles, which includes the Feast of Trumpets, concerning His return.¹²² Since all seven feasts in some manner point towards Jesus, they have concluded that the Feast of Trumpets could be the time of the rapture of the church. This interpretation is not set in the proverbial concrete, but is considered to be a strong possibility.



Prophetically the Feast represents the ingathering of all saints at the close of the age.¹²³ The celebration of the Feast came after grain crops were ripe. The farmers took their sickles to the field, cut their wheat and barley, and brought the harvest home. John used this identical imagery in his Revelation in which an angel said to him who was sitting on a cloud,

“Use your sickle and reap, for the time to reap has come, since the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

Revelation 14:15

121. The significance of the messianic banquet was very important to Jesus (Heb. *Yeshua*). The wedding imagery between Himself and His church as it was reflected in a first century Jewish wedding is discussed by Dr. John Fischer, a messianic scholar and rabbi at 09.03.04.V1 and Professor John Metzger in video 14.02.05.V2. See the following as well: Wedding garments needed at the wedding in Mt. 22:1-14 (13.03.07); discussion of the “best place” in Lk. 14:7-14 (12.02.05); the great messianic banquet in Lk. 14:15-24 (12.02.06); the wise and foolish virgins in Mt. 25:1-13 (14.01.07); the preparation of a new home in Jn. 14:1-4 (14.02.14).

122. See Appendix 5.

123. Mt. 13:39, 24:31; Jn. 14:3; 1 Thess 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:52; Rev. 14:14.

John used the imagery of the farm harvest to explain the gathering of the saints by Christ Jesus. That is parallel with the imagery of the feasts that reveal the prophetic plan of God the Father through His Son Jesus, so it may be possible that Jesus will gather His saints at the time of the Feast.¹²⁴ This is underscored by the fact that the feasts were *not* Jewish feasts, but belonged to God for He said, “These are My appointed feasts” (Lev. 23:2). The church and all the saints of the old era will be with Him during the marriage feast of the Lamb, after which time He will return with the heavenly hosts to reign upon the earth for a thousand years. During the millennium reign, the Feast of Tabernacles will be observed in Jerusalem with excitement and dedication by both Jews and Gentiles.¹²⁵ The Feast of Tabernacles was designed by God for both Jews and Gentiles (Zech. 14:16) and in the 1980s it was reinstated in Israel by a Christian ministry known as the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. Jesus urged His disciples to be careful of future events. He gave several parables that emphasized watchfulness, readiness, and encouraged labor for the Kingdom of God.

14.01.06 Lk. 21:34-36; Mk. 13:34; Mt. 24:45-51; Mk. 13:35-37

JESUS URGES WATCHFULNESS

Lk. ³⁴ “Be on your guard, so that your minds are not dulled from carousing, drunkenness, and worries of life, or that day will come on you unexpectedly ³⁵ like a trap. For it will come on all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ But be alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Mk. ³⁴ It is like a man on a journey, who left his house, gave authority to his slaves, gave each one his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to be alert.

Mt. ⁴⁵ “Who then is a faithful and sensible slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give them food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ That slave whose master finds him working when he comes will be rewarded. ⁴⁷ I assure you: He will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But if that wicked slave says in his heart, ‘My master is delayed,’ ⁴⁹ and starts to beat his fellow slaves, and eats and drinks with drunkards, ⁵⁰ that slave’s master will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know. ⁵¹ He will

124. Some believe that the rapture will occur at the Feast of Trumpets, when the trumpets will be blow and the church of Jesus will rise to meet Him in the air. This is a plan of God the Father and Jesus does not know when it will happen.

125. Garr, *Restoring Our Lost Legacy*. 150-52.

cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Mk. ³⁵ Therefore be alert, since you don't know when the master of the house is coming — whether in the evening or at midnight or at the crowing of the rooster or early in the morning. ³⁶ Otherwise, he might come suddenly and find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to everyone: Be alert!"

Jesus said there will be a time when tremendous suffering will come across the entire earth to all humanity. This is now understood to be the time of the great Tribulation. However, there are considerable differences of opinion as to whether Christians will go through the Tribulation, or if they will be raptured prior to it. What is agreed upon is that even prior to the Tribulation and rapture, persecution will become global. In today's world, persecution of believers is not only at an all-time high, but is nearly global. It has often been said that more Christians were martyred in the 20th century, than were killed in all the 19 previous centuries combined. And the trend is only escalating.

“He will cut him to pieces.” This phrase reflects a time of violent history, when a Roman slave owner could legally and literally cut a slave into pieces for being disobedient.¹²⁶ This phrase was a figure of speech since the practice was illegal in Judaism, but was common in neighboring cultures as still is among some radical Islamic groups today.

A few scholars believe the context of this passage is that Jesus addressed those who will follow Him, but will continue to live like the pagans. His words clearly are of rejection imagery,¹²⁷ and those who waste their lives will be cast out into utter darkness (hell). Just like the five foolish virgins, they will have no part of eternal life or the messianic Banquet.¹²⁸

“In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” This expression is a specific reference to a real and painful eternal hell, the lake of fire for those who reject Christ. Again Jesus warns for the consequences of living an ungodly life.

126. 1 Sam. 15:33; Heb. 11:37; Sus 55; cf SBK 4:698-744.

127. See the discussion of rejection imagery at the end of 12.01.02.

128. For further study, see Pagenkemper, “Rejection Imagery in the Synoptic Parables.” 179-198.

14.01.07 Mt. 25:1-13**THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS**

¹ “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like 10 virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. ² Five of them were foolish and five were sensible.

³ When the foolish took their lamps, they didn’t take olive oil with them. ⁴ But the sensible ones took oil in their flasks with their lamps. ⁵ Since the groom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶ “In the middle of the night there was a shout: ‘Here’s the groom! Come out to meet him.’

⁷ “Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ But the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, ‘Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ “The sensible ones answered, ‘No, there won’t be enough for us and for you. Go instead to those who sell, and buy oil for yourselves.’

¹⁰ “When they had gone to buy some, the groom arrived. Then those who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut.

¹¹ “Later the rest of the virgins also came and said, ‘Master, master, open up for us!’

¹² “But he replied, ‘I assure you: I do not know you!’

¹³ “Therefore be alert, because you don’t know either the day or the hour.

Jesus, the Master Teacher, followed the rabbinic pattern of teaching which often left the listener wondering how a story ended. The primary difference is that He added God’s perspective to the stories. The same is true in this parable which raises the following question:

14.01.07.Q1 Who or what do the five foolish virgins of Matthew 25:1-13 represent?¹²⁹

One of the best known symbols of the Bible is a woman who represents a religious entity. Two righteous “woman” symbols are

1. Israel who is the “wife of Jehovah.”
2. Church who is the “bride of Christ.”

Two demonic “woman” symbols are

1. The great harlot (Rev. 17)
2. Jezebel (Rev. 2:20)

Throughout church history, the imagery of the wise and foolish virgins has been problematic since virgins are considered synonymous with the pure unspotted bride of Christ. Consequently, there are multiple interpretations of this parable. At issue, the foolish virgins have a most unhappy ending; a stark contrast to the bright eternal future the bride of Christ is to enjoy.

The primary problem is that five virgins lacked sufficient oil. But the focus is not the lamp, torch, or even the bride since she is not mentioned. In first century, oil was such a frequently used commodity that no one would ever forget it, much less five young bridesmaids. This was a matter of willful neglect.¹³⁰ The primary message is, as with the parable of the talents preceding it, that the believer should always be ready for the return of Christ (v. 44). People are held responsible for their actions. The foolish virgins (bridesmaids) allowed their lamps to run out of oil, but believers ought not to be lacking in their responsibilities to the faith. Those who had sufficient oil symbolize believers with a pure heart and righteous standing with our Lord. They will be admitted into Christ’s millennial kingdom. Those who had insufficient oil symbolize the unprepared or unsaved individuals who desired to enter, but were excluded. It is a parable of separation. All the virgins are believers, but some are prepared to meet their Lord, and others are ill prepared as having interests and pleasures in the world more than in Christ. The essential point is

129. See video 09.03.04.V1 by Messianic Rabbi John Fischer who discusses first century wedding imagery, and video 14.02.05.V2 by Professor John Metzger who discusses the Passover, the Last Supper and its implications to the Messianic Banquet.

130. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 789; Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 2:450-51.

that Jesus will return for a bride who is faithful, obedient, and watching for His return.

The parable of the virgins has a parallel in rabbinic literature. From the Talmud is this story of those who are wise and others who are foolish.

Rabbi Yochanan, the son of Zakkai, told a parable: “It is like a king who invited his servants to a feast and did not set a time for them to arrive. The wise adorned themselves and waited by the door of the palace, for they said, ‘Is there anything lacking in the palace?’ The foolish continued working, for they said, ‘Is a feast ever given without preparation?’ Suddenly the king summoned his servants. The wise entered the palace adorned as they were, but the foolish entered in their working clothes, and the king said, ‘Those who adorned themselves for the feast shall sit down and eat and drink; but those who did not adorn themselves for the feast shall stand and look on!’”

Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbath* 153a

In this Talmudic parable, as with the parable told by Jesus, the servants, or attendants, had to be prepared to meet their king. Jesus again used a story motif that everyone knew. In the phrase, “**Virgins who took their lamps,**” the word “lamp” is *not* the small clay vessel that fits snugly in the palm of the hand. Rather, it was probably a wooden stem with a cloth at one end, soaked in olive oil, and was essentially a torch.¹³¹ The typical household clay lamp would blow out at the slightest breeze and, therefore, would not have been used outside. However, the focus is not on the lamp, which is a Western perspective, but on the light it produced, which is a Jewish perspective. Jesus is the light of the world – and that is the key point.

Mystery Unveiled	The focus of the parable of the ten virgins is not on the lamps – a Western perspective, but on the light the lamps produced – a Jewish perspective. Jesus is the light of the world.
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However, an explanation of the first century Jewish wedding is necessary, especially since the imagery of a wedding was used several times in the teachings of Jesus. Weddings and the feasts that followed were major social events. It was at a wedding where Jesus performed His first miracle, turning water into wine. It is through wedding

131. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:131; Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 349-50.

imagery that He spoke of the future. Therefore, to understand the messianic prophecies, it is important to understand the cultural setting of a first century Jewish wedding. In this case, there can be little question that the wedding banquet narrative gives a hint of the coming messianic banquet in which Jesus will be the central figure and His saints will be the guests.

In the first century, marriages were frequently, but not always, arranged by the fathers. It was common for a girl to be betrothed as early as twelve and a boy at age thirteen. However, a young man had the option of selecting any bride of his own choosing. The formality began when he came to her home and presented a formal, legally binding contract known as a *katuvah*.¹³² This covenant stated the marriage proposal and the sum of money the groom would pay to the bride's parents to have her as his wife. The purpose was to insure the understanding that she was not free but was precious and costly to him. If the terms of the contract were accepted by both families, it was signed at the synagogue and the couple celebrated by sharing a cup of wine together. Only then was the covenant sealed and they were considered betrothed.

The couple was considered husband and wife, although the marriage was not consummated until after the wedding. If either one died prior to the wedding, the surviving partner while still a virgin, would be known as a widow or widower. If the betrothal was broken other than by death, the bride would receive a divorce decree. If she were found to be unfaithful, technically, she could be put to death, but the practice was seldom instituted. During this time she would wear a veil whenever in public to affirm to any other possible suitors that she had made a commitment. When Joseph learned of Mary's pregnancy, his consideration of a quiet divorce reflected his sense of mercy and kindness, when, in fact, he could have legally demanded her death, as well as a refund of his money paid at the signing of the marriage contract.

The wedding was generally held in the following year. During this time, the bride prepared herself for her new home, whereas the bridegroom would build the house itself. Frequently, this structure was simply another room added onto the existing home of the father of the bridegroom. The young bridegroom constructed it, no doubt with the help of family and friends. His father then declared its completion. It was during the one-year period of Mary's betrothal that Jesus was born.

As the house was being finished, the preparation of the wedding feast was in process. The feast would last between three and seven days, depending on the financial resources of the families. Weddings always required a large quantity of food and wine. Middle

132. The marital contract is further described in 04.03.03.A and 08.02.01.

Eastern hospitality in ancient times, as today, demanded that only the best be presented to guests. When everything was completed in detail, the father gave permission to his son to “capture” or “kidnap” his bride. It was a game and, to add to the suspense of the event, the “capture” usually occurred at night.

“**All became drowsy and fell asleep.**” The word *sleep* often suggests death, but not in this case. In this parable the terms *drowsy* and *sleep* simply emphasize that the delay would be for a long period of time.¹³³

“**The door was shut.**” At this point Jesus takes the cultural norm and adds a profound twist. When there was a wedding, the door was *never* shut. The late comer was always invited to join the festivities. But when Jesus said “**the door was shut,**” He captured everyone’s attention. For those in the church who are “left behind,” repentance is not possible after His coming.¹³⁴

This is clearly a statement of rejection imagery,¹³⁵ and the foolish virgins will have no part of the Messianic Banquet.¹³⁶ The wedding feast of this parable depicts the future messianic wedding banquet in heaven¹³⁷ that, some say, will occur during the same period while the earth is experiencing the Great Tribulation. The point of the parable is that every believer has to be fully prepared; fully obedient and committed to Jesus; fully at work for the Kingdom of God. This is not a statement of legalism, but of a lifestyle of dedication to His honor and glory.

As stated previously, there is a constant danger for modern Bible students to read a meaning *into* a parable that was not intended by the gospel writer. In this case, there is no indication whether the foolish virgins were able to obtain oil and, if they did, whether they returned. In this culture, the world rested at sundown and it was impossible to purchase anything at night. In the context of telling a story, however, there is nothing wrong in saying that the foolish virgins went out to buy more oil even if the stores were closed. That is not the theme, but only a minor point that adds color to the narrative. Simply stated, these women had not prepared themselves diligently for the feast.¹³⁸ The

133. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 349-50.

134. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 350.

135. See the discussion of rejection imagery at the end of 12.01.02.

136. For further study, see Pagenkemper, “Rejection Imagery in the Synoptic Parables.” 179-198.

137. See Isa. 25:6-8; Mt. 8:11; 22:1-14; Lk. 12:37; 14:15-24; 15:23-24; 22:36; Acts 10:41.

138. Cf. Hosea 13:3; Amos 3:2; Nahum 1:7; Jn. 10:14; 2 Tim. 2:19.

message of the parable is that one is to be watchful and prepared for the return of Jesus. The concept of the Messiah as being the bridegroom also appears in 2 Corinthians 11:2. This is a new concept that is not found in any rabbinic literature and, most certainly originated with Jesus. The focus of the narrative is not their marital status, but rather that there were ten of them and their use of oil. The number ten was often used as a convenient round number in illustrations.¹³⁹

There are several similarities between first century weddings and the imagery Jesus used to describe His relationship with those who believed in Him; those whom He called His “bride.” Just as in ancient times, a young man left his home and went to the home of a young woman where he offered her and her father a contract of marriage (*katuvah*), Jesus left His home in heaven, came to earth, the home of humanity, and offered humanity a contract of marriage – the New Testament.

<p>Mystery Unveiled</p>	<p>Just as a man offered a katuvah to the bride he desired to marry, Jesus offers a “katuvah” to the bride He desires to marry. That katuvah is the New Testament.</p>
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When the young man was seated at the dinner table with the parents of a young woman, he would offer the young woman a cup of wine. He never asked the question, “Will you marry me?” If she accepted the proposal, she would indicate so by accepting the cup and drinking the wine. Likewise, Jesus poured the cup at Passover and told His disciples to drink the wine (communion). The young man paid a price to the bride’s father because her family was losing a worker and the young man had to show that his bride was not cheap, but valuable to him. Jesus paid the ultimate price for His bride; it cost him His life.

When the young woman accepted the invitation of marriage, her bridegroom had to leave and build a home for himself and his bride. However, it was his father who determined when it was completed, to insure a quality home and that the eager young man would not build a flimsy shack. Likewise, Jesus went to prepare a place for His bride and God the Father will determine when it is completed. Neither the bride nor her groom would know when the father would say it’s time to “steal” her. He worked hard to build the wedding chamber and she prepared herself for that special day.

When the bridegroom’s work was approved by his father, the young man would gather

139. Ruth 4:2; Lk. 19:13; Josephus, *Wars* 6.9.3; Carson, “Matthew.” 8:512-13.

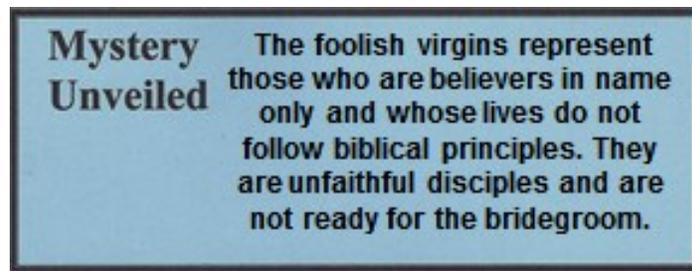
his friends to “steal” the bride from her home. This was always a festive time and the parents played along with the game. The group would sneak up to the bride’s home in the middle of the night. The parents of the bride and her brothers ignored the game of thievery while sharing in her excitement. But he most certainly could not rush into her bedroom, as that would have been considered so rude that it would be a shame he could never outlive. Rather, he would give a shout outside the home and then enter, giving her only a few minutes to make herself presentable and light her lamp.

A steward was in charge of the feast and it was his responsibility to insure there was sufficient food. He also metered out the wine. He ascertained that only those who wore the special wedding garments would enter the house of the bridegroom’s father and join the celebration.¹⁴⁰ Thereafter the bride removed her veil and was considered a married woman. Likewise, when Jesus comes for His bride, she needs to be ready. There will be a shout and the church will be “captured” by Him.

The wedding tradition of “stealing” the bride continues to this day. For instance, late one evening in Haifa, Israel, this author was reviewing his sermon notes when he heard a strange commotion outside. He opened the door to see fifty to sixty young men cheering, singing, and clapping hands to bongo drums as they marched past his apartment. In the front of this procession was one very happy young man who was being carried on the shoulders of his friends. Immediately behind them followed an equal number of young women, also cheering, singing, and clapping hands. The procession passed by and went around the corner and this author returned to his studies.

After fifteen minutes, he could again hear the bongo drums, clapping, and singing faintly in the distance. The noise of the crowd grew louder as the young people were returning, and once again, the author stepped to his door and noticed that this time the female delegation was somewhat larger. The young men were still carrying a certain young chap on their shoulders, filled with the joy of his life, and beside him was an equally delighted young woman. There was obviously a wedding for a bridegroom and his friends had “stolen” his bride and her attendants. Soon they disappeared down the dark street and the bongos, singing, and clapping faded into silence. This author immediately reflected upon this passage, which had just sprung into blazing life, and thanked God for bringing this experience into his life. The modern Middle East is still a treasure of biblical traditions. God demonstrated a live performance of His Word, a very unexpected gift of divine graciousness.

140. See video 09.03.04.V1 by Messianic Rabbi John Fischer who discusses first century wedding imagery, and video 14.02.05.V2 by Professor John Metzger who discusses the Passover, the Last Supper and its implications to the Messianic Banquet.



Finally, the parable of the ten virgins is not unlike the history of Israel. Throughout Israel's history, the greater portion of people chose not to believe or follow God's commandments while the smaller portion did. The majority were the idolaters and often practiced the occult rituals of neighboring communities. In essence, the minority were the true "remnant" of God's people. Ethnically, they are the same but, spiritually they are not identical. The classic example is found in 1 Kings 19 where only seven thousand were faithful to God. While all the Israelites were God's Chosen People, only those who were faithful to Him were defined as being His "remnant."¹⁴¹ Likewise with the parable of the ten virgins – five were foolish and five were His remnant. Since this parable can be applied to the church, obviously not all who hold church membership are true followers of Jesus. The essence of the message is that one day Jesus Himself will judge His church and separate the true believers from those who claim to be His followers and have not lived by faith and obedience.

The Church fathers who authored the *Didache* made a similar comment concerning the spiritual condition of the believer at the return of Jesus:

Keep vigil over your life. Let your lamps not go out and let your loins not be weak but be ready, for you do not know the hour at which our Lord is coming. You shall assemble frequently, seeking what pertains to your souls, for the whole time of your belief will be of no profit to you unless you are perfected at the final hour.

Didache 16:1-2

14.01.08 Mt. 25:14-30

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS (EMPHASIZING LABORING)

141. Adapted from Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 5, page 8, 10.

¹⁴ “For it is just like a man going on a journey. He called his own slaves and turned over his possessions to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents; to another, two; and to another, one — to each according to his own ability. Then he went on a journey. Immediately ¹⁶ the man who had received five talents went, put them to work, and earned five more. ¹⁷ In the same way the man with two earned two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master’s money.

¹⁹ “After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five talents approached, presented five more talents, and said, ‘Master, you gave me five talents. Look, I’ve earned five more talents.’

²¹ “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master’s joy!’

²² “Then the man with two talents also approached. He said, ‘Master, you gave me two talents. Look, I’ve earned two more talents.’

²³ “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master’s joy!’

²⁴ “Then the man who had received one talent also approached and said, ‘Master, I know you. You’re a difficult man, reaping where you haven’t sown and gathering where you haven’t scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground. Look, you have what is yours.’

²⁶ “But his master replied to him, ‘You evil, lazy slave! If you knew that I reap where I haven’t sown and gather where I haven’t scattered, ²⁷ then you should have deposited my money with the bankers. And when I returned I would have received my money back with interest.

²⁸ ““So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has 10 talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ³⁰ And throw this good-for-nothing slave into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

This parable is similar to Luke 19:11-27, which is a different discussion with the same theme. In Luke, the servant who kept the master's money in a cloth (19:20) viewed his master as being less than honorable – so much so, that when an account was required, the master was very angry. It was a matter of self-fulfilling prophecy. Had he invested successfully, he would have received a similar blessing as the others.

In Matthew 25:14-30 is a similar parable with the same theme; one where an individual chose to bury his investment money rather than invest it. The Mishnah states that this method of keeping money safe was a common practice.¹⁴² Again the servant is described as being wicked, not only because he failed to invest the funds, but he also saw his trusting master in a negative light.

In various cultures throughout the ancient Middle East, it was common to have slaves/servants hold highly responsible positions. In modern thinking, slaves are often seen as those deprived of all dignity and human rights and required to perform demeaning and labor-intensive tasks. Failure to perform as required would result in imprisonment, scourging, or fighting the professional gladiators, who would surely kill them. Another example is of those condemned to be oarsmen in the bottom of a Roman galley ship, who were thrown overboard to the sharks when they failed to perform. While this was true for many and makes for dramatic Hollywood movies, this was hardly the case for all slaves. Many were entrusted with important responsibilities such as accountants, scribes, teachers, doctors, and business managers.¹⁴³

In this parable, Jesus again used a real life situation to give a teaching to which His listeners could relate. The servant in the parable was a slave who held the position of a business manager. His owner not only trusted him with his money, but did not even worry that he might run away. Why? Trusted slaves who had a professional education frequently lived very comfortably but running away could lead to poverty or have deadly consequences. The story is unique in that the master gave every slave a certain amount of money to invest - as much as he believed each slave could manage. The point is that God has given each person certain abilities, as He deemed he or she could handle, to be used in a lifelong service for Him.

“Five talents.” This was a huge sum of money entrusted to the slaves, yet not unusual

142. Mishnah, *Baba Mesi'a* 3.11.

143. Gilbrant, “Matthew.” 547.

for the extremely wealthy of the first century.¹⁴⁴ The meaning, therefore, of the five talents¹⁴⁵ is that the slave invested his entire life's work for the benefit of his master.¹⁴⁶

“Well done, good and faithful slave!” These words ought to be the end goal for every believer. There will come a day when every person will kneel before Almighty God to be judged for a life of deeds - both good and bad. It is a great comfort to know one's sins have been washed away by the sacrificial blood of Jesus. It behooves people then to commit their lives to His service. That commitment will lead the Blessed Savior to say these words. The purpose of the parable is not that the disciples are watchful; that was assumed, but rather, that watchfulness is to lead to working for the Kingdom of God and not become passive idleness. Furthermore, men may not be equal in talent/skill, but they are called to be equal in effort. God expects His people to apply their best efforts to whatever talent (not to be confused with the monetary term “talent”) they have. The condemnation of the man who buried his talent was based on the fact that he failed to do anything with his investment; he didn't lose it – he didn't even try. The essential point is that Jesus will return for a bride who is faithful, obedient, and watching for His return.

“Deposited my money with the bankers” With this statement Jesus provided clear proof that a banking system of some kind was functioning at this time. See 05.05.04 for further details.

As to the interest rate on investments, that varied throughout the empire in relation to the economic health. It appears to have been in the single digits at this time, but examples of twelve and twenty-four percent have been found.¹⁴⁷ Josephus recorded that Herod Agrippa borrowed 20,000 drachmas from the Jewish aristocrat named Alabarch in Alexandria at a rate of 8 percent or 2,500 drachmas.¹⁴⁸

14.01.09 Mt. 25:31-46 Application of Parables

144. One denarius was the approximate wage for a common laborer for one day of work. One talent, on the other hand, represented about fifteen years of work and five talents was more than a lifetime of employment. See Appendix 20 for more details.

145. A talent was not a coin, but a weight. It's value was dependent upon the metal, but obviously represented a huge value. See Barclay, “Matthew.” 2:322; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 227; See Appendix 20 for more details. Today the word “talent” is incorrectly interpreted as one's ability or strength. While those natural attributes should be dedicated to our Lord, the original passage did not refer to those human attributes.

146. Gilbrant, “Matthew.” 547.

147. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 792-94.

148. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.6.3. Alabarch was a Jewish leader who held Roman citizenship and had social ties with the Sadducees of Jerusalem.

THE COMING JUDGMENT OF THE GENTILE NATIONS

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

³⁵ For I was hungry
and you gave Me something to eat;

I was thirsty
and you gave Me something to drink;

I was a stranger
and you took Me in;

³⁶ I was naked
and you clothed Me;

I was sick
and you took care of Me;

I was in prison
and you visited Me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or without clothes and clothe You? ³⁹ When did we see You sick, or in prison, and visit You?’

⁴⁰ “And the King will answer them, ‘I assure you: Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.’ ⁴¹ Then He will also say to those on the left, ‘Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels!

**⁴² For I was hungry
 and you gave Me nothing to eat;
 I was thirsty
 and you gave Me nothing to drink;
⁴³ I was a stranger
 and you didn't take Me in;
 I was naked
 and you didn't clothe Me,
 sick and in prison
 and you didn't take care of Me.'**

⁴⁴ "Then they too will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or without clothes, or sick, or in prison, and not help You?'

⁴⁵ "Then He will answer them, 'I assure you: Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me either.'

⁴⁶ "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Jesus told this story with some poetic elements, but it is not considered to be a parable even though there are some parabolic elements such as the shepherd, sheep, goats, and a separation of the latter two. It is simplistic up to the point concerning the final judgment of humanity.

When one is about to face death, the usual conversation between that person and their family often is related to the most important issues of life. For this reason, Jesus tells His disciples of the impending judgment that will one day fall upon the Gentile nations – an amazing parallel to Joel 3:1-3. Jesus said there will be a judgment in which the righteous and the unrighteous each will receive their rewards. Those who placed their faith and salvation in Him are righteous (Mt. 25:37) and will be placed at His right hand, and are affectionately called His “sheep.” Those who elected to live their lives in their own way and rejected His call and holiness will be on His left side and are called “goats.” Those who reject Jesus will be cursed into everlasting darkness of fire reserved for Satan and his angels (Mt. 25:41). The symbolic imagery of right side and left side is evident again. The right hand of a king was always symbolic of blessings, authority, and prosperity, while the left hand was symbolic of the hand of cursing.

“Eternal punishment ... eternal life.” Jesus again clearly stated that there is definitely a place for eternal punishment and another place for eternal life.

14.01.10 Lk. 21:37-38 At the Temple (After the Olivet Discourse)

JESUS TEACHES AT THE TEMPLE STEPS

³⁷ During the day, He was teaching in the temple complex, but in the evening He would go out and spend the night on what is called the Mount of Olives. ³⁸ Then all the people would come early in the morning to hear Him in the temple complex.



14.01.10.A. THE TEMPLE'S SOUTHERN STEPS. The original southern steps of the temple upon which Jesus preached, are still in place. This is one of the few original structures of the Second Temple Period that remains intact and identifiable. Tour guides joyfully comment that it is a miracle that no church has been built upon it, as has been done at nearly

every other site where Jesus was in Israel. Photograph by the author.

It was the custom of the time for sages and rabbis to sit on the temple steps to teach their disciples and anyone else who would stop to listen. Undoubtedly, Jesus visited these same steps when He was twelve years old. At that time He looked ahead toward the Jewish leadership; now He was looking back and at the leadership who rejected Him. Fortunately, there were many others who accepted Him and they became the early church.

14.01.11 Mt. 26:1-5 (See also Mk. 14:1-2; Lk. 22:1-2) Tuesday

JESUS FORESEES HIS CRUCIFIXION

Mt. ¹ When Jesus had finished saying all this, He told His disciples, ² “You know that the Passover takes place after two days, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, ⁴ and they conspired to arrest Jesus in a treacherous way and kill Him. ⁵ “Not during the festival,” they said, “so there won’t be rioting among the people.”

Caiaphas and the chief priests and the elders made definite plans *not* to execute Jesus during Passover, but a conspiracy was in progress. The plan was to arrest Him quietly by stealth and kill Him quietly “**so there won’t be rioting among the people.**” Why would there have been rioting among the people? Because they wanted to make Jesus their king and they had heard rumors that the religious establishment wanted to kill him. So why do the Scriptures say later that *all* the people cried “crucify Him, crucify Him?” (Mt. 27:22-23; Lk. 23:20). They didn’t, as will be explained.

The popularity of Jesus increased with intensity. Certainly the disciples were looking forward with excitement and anticipation of what He would do next, namely, if He would declare Himself as the messiah. Clearly, the religious leaders acknowledged His immense popularity to the point that they were fearful of Him. Tradition said the messiah would declare himself as such on the temple steps, which is why the Romans stationed soldiers in the Antonia Fortress that was located adjacent to the temple.



14.01.11.A. THE TEMPLE AND ANTONIA FORTRESS. In this model, the temple is in the foreground and the Antonia Fortress is shown behind and to the right of the temple. The Praetorian Guard was always stationed in the Fortress in the event someone should announce that he was the messiah who would deliver the people from Roman oppression. Photographed in 1998 by the author.

Herein lays another irony in the life of Jesus: When Jesus was twelve years old, the rabbis were full of wonder at the boy-genius who challenged them on the temple steps. Now He was the man who revealed their corruption and, hence, they wanted to kill Him.

Many believed if Jesus was not the messiah, then He most surely was a prophet. They had not heard from a prophet for nearly four centuries until John the Baptist. Now here was one in their midst more powerful and stunning than any previous prophet. His death by their leadership would most certainly cause an uprising, as was clearly attested to by the Pharisees and Sadducees.

14.01.11.Q1 Is the account in Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9 the same as in Luke 7:37-38?

In Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9 Simon is a leper, but in Luke 7:37-38 he is the Pharisee. John (12:1-8) did not give him a name, but the account seems to have taken

place in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.¹⁴⁹ It should be noted that the name Simon, like Jesus, was a common name and there are ten Simons in the New Testament. The real issue is whether the story recorded by Luke is the same as recorded by the other gospel writers. There is a good possibility that these are two different but similar events. After all, Jesus performed so many miracles that all the books could not have recorded every one of them.

According to one of the Dead Sea Scrolls,¹⁵⁰ Bethany and Bethpage were two villages east of Jerusalem, where lepers lived. Because of their diseases, known as “impurities,” they were not permitted to enter the holy structure (Lev. 13:45-46). However, the location of Bethany is higher than the temple area, which gave them some consolation as they could look into the holy place and think of a future time with God. This may be why Jesus brought comfort to them, as evidenced when He enjoyed a meal with Simon the leper.¹⁵¹

14.01.12 Lk. 22:3-4; Mt. 26:15; Lk. 22:6 (See also Mk. 14:10-11)

JUDAS PLANS THE BETRAYAL OF JESUS

Lk. ³ Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, who was numbered among the Twelve. ⁴ He went away and discussed with the chief priests and temple police how he could hand Him over to them.

Mt. ¹⁵ and said, “What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over to you?” So they weighed out 30 pieces of silver for him.

Lk. ⁶ So he accepted the offer and started looking for a good opportunity to betray Him to them when the crowd was not present.

A turn of events suddenly occurred. The Sanhedrin was planning to execute Jesus after Passover, when the crowds would be gone and there would be little possibility for public outrage. Judas, however, came to them unexpectedly with a generous offer of betrayal for only thirty pieces of silver.¹⁵² That was just too good to pass up; they could not afford

149. Barclay, “Matthew.” 2:329.

150. The Temple Scroll, 11Q Miqdash 46.16 - 47.5.

151. Pixner, *With Jesus in Jerusalem*. 56.

152. Each “piece of silver” was a silver Tyrian half-shekel that was also used to pay the annual half-shekel temple tax. See 11.02.03.A.

to miss this opportunity. In the process, **“Satan entered Judas.”** The word *entered* would be better defined *as took control of* or *Satan-possessed*.¹⁵³ This was possible because Judas made a willful decision, otherwise, it would have been impossible for Satan to do this. To expedite the matter they would attempt to have Jesus executed prior to the Passover. This meant preliminary trials would have to be held at night and some procedural matters would have to be set aside because time was of the essence.

“30 pieces of silver.” A piece of silver was a reference to a silver half-shekel.¹⁵⁴ Thirty pieces of silver was equal to about one hundred twenty drachmas (or Roman denarii), the price of the common slave laborer.¹⁵⁵ It was equal to four months’ wages for a day laborer.¹⁵⁶ Other slaves who were educated accountants, doctors, and teachers and were extremely expensive (See Mt. 27:3-10; Acts 1:18b-19). But the price given to Judas was for a common servant slave.¹⁵⁷

14.01.12.Q1 Why was Judas *needed* to betray Jesus when everyone so easily recognized Him?¹⁵⁸

The Sanhedrin had been observing Jesus intently for more than three years. Members of the high court had debated Him and were frequently humiliated before their constituents. They knew all too well what He looked like and certainly did not need anyone to identify Him, even in the dark night. What made the offer of Judas so enticing was that he was willing to fulfill one of the legal demands – they needed an accuser. The irony is that they abandoned so many laws, yet this one they honored. They could bypass some of their own procedural laws, but to sidestep Roman law was a different matter. However, possibly the most important reason Judas was needed was because, under Roman law, Pilate could not send out a Roman cohort to arrest anyone unless...

1. Someone first appeared before a Roman governor to state that a crime was committed that was punishable under Roman law. That someone was Judas.

153. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 414.

154. See the Tyrian Silver Half-shekel at 11.02.03.A.

155. Gilbrant, “Matthew” 573.

156. Smith, *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: Matthew*. 303.

157. See the video “Insights into Selected Biblical Difficulties” 04.04.06.V.

158. Be sure to see 15.02.06.Q1 “Why would Judas have *wanted* to betray Jesus?”

2. That same person would then serve as the prosecutor's key witness of the crime. By that time Judas had committed suicide, however, the Sadducees had the wheels of injustice in motion to have Jesus crucified.

Judas was very much aware that the Jews had no legal authority to impose capital punishment, so if Jesus was going to die, it would be at the hands of the Romans. His betrayal confirmed by the arresting Roman soldiers would have met the requirements of the law. Caiaphas and the supreme counsel knew the trials would begin in the Jewish court and would end in the Roman court. They had only one opportunity to rid themselves of Jesus and they could not afford any mistakes. To Caiaphas it was most important that the trial and execution be completed as quickly as possible and in secret, before His followers, who previously greeted Him with palm branches, became aware of what was happening.

During festivals the Romans maintained a cohort¹⁵⁹ in the Antonia Fortress to quell any possible civil unrest or capture any Zealot who claimed to be the messiah. But for someone as significant as Jesus, Caiaphas and other Sadducees called upon their own temple guards, in addition to the Roman soldiers. This Roman cohort in the Antonio Fortress was not led by a centurion, but by Chiliarch (Jn. 18:12), who was one of the six tribunes attached to the Tenth Legion.¹⁶⁰ Hence, his high official position gave the Sanhedrin more clout for an arrest, a speedy trial, conviction, and execution. It is interesting that no charge was ever spoken against Him at the time of His arrest.

It should be noted that the high priests and Romans were so closely aligned in their control of the Jews that priestly garments for temple worship were secured in the adjacent Antonia Fortress, not in the temple. Josephus commented the following concerning the vestment storage,

... At the command of the Emperor ... they should lay up the long garment and the sacred vestment, which it is customary for nobody but the high priests to wear, in the tower of Antonia, that it might be under the power of the Romans, as it had been formerly.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.1.1 (6)

159. A cohort at full strength consisted of approximately 600 soldiers, although the word was also used for a *maniple* that is a detachment of 200 soldiers. Some scholars believe there was more than a single cohort stationed in Jerusalem on high holy days such as Passover. See Harrison, *A Short Life of Christ*. 199. Historians seem to disagree on the size of cohorts and legions. See comments on the size of cohorts and legions in 08.05.02.

160. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 848.

The significance of the garment storage is that this is clear evidence of the close relationship the Sadducees had with the Romans. So when Judas put his plan into action, it took only moments for the Sadducees to gather some Roman soldiers, and along with the temple security, they went to capture Jesus.



14.01.12.A. THE MAGDALEN PAPYRUS. The “Magdalen” Papyrus of Matthew (P. Magd. Gr. 17 = P64) was found in Egypt in 1901. These three small pieces, written on both sides, reveal portions of Matthew 26:7-8, 10, 14-15, 22-23, and 31-33. However, the pieces are so small that scholars debate on its date of origin (2nd century?). Unfortunately, academic opinions are often based more upon the theological beliefs held by those performing the research. If authentic, these demonstrate that the gospel message traveled faster to other nations than was previously thought. Courtesy of Magdalen College library, Oxford.

14.01.12.Q2 Why was a conspiracy needed to kill Jesus?

The conspiracy and night trials were needed because Jesus remained extremely popular and both were needed to prevent a riot from breaking out. This is the

strongest argument against the common belief that *all* the Jewish people wanted to see Jesus crucified. Only the Jewish leadership wanted Him dead. The crowds wanted Jesus to declare Himself as the political-messiah who would overthrow the Roman Empire and rebuild the historic Davidic Empire.

Unit 14 The Passion Mid-Week

Chapter 02 Encouragement And The Final Passover



14.02.00.A. THE LAST SUPPER by Benjamin West. The last Passover meal, as celebrated by Jesus, reflects upon the past when God saved the Israelites from the Egyptian onslaught. It is a remembrance of the sacrificial atonement of Jesus, and reflects upon the future marriage Supper of the Lamb.

14.02.01 Jn. 12:37-43

NON-BELIEVERS FULFILL PROPHECY

³⁷ Even though He had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in Him. ³⁸ But this was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet, who said:

**Lord, who has believed our message?
And who has the arm of the Lord
been revealed to? (Isa. 53:1)**

³⁹ This is why they were unable to believe, because Isaiah also said:

**He has blinded their eyes
and hardened their hearts,
so that they would not see with their eyes
or understand with their hearts,
and be converted,
and I would heal them (Isa 6:10).**

⁴¹ Isaiah said these things because he saw His glory and spoke about Him.

⁴² Nevertheless, many did believe in Him even among the rulers, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, so they would not be banned from the synagogue.

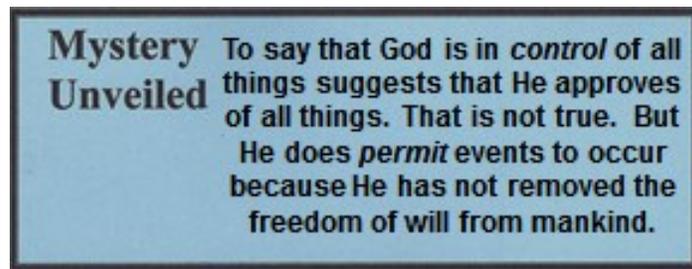
⁴³ For they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts.” It seems horrible and grossly unjust that God would prevent anyone from coming to Him. Furthermore, it appears to be a contradiction of character that God would send His Son to save humanity and then cause unbelief in their hearts. How can this be explained? Throughout both Testaments there are numerous individuals who refused to obey God or believe in the words and works of Jesus.¹⁶¹ The explanation is that while God pursues mankind, He also gives people free will to do as they please. Eventually He decides that “enough is enough,” and He gives them what they want. In doing so, He hardens their hearts so they cannot hear His voice and they continue to pursue their desires as they had previously determined to do.

It is often said that God is in *control* of all things, but it is better said that He *permits* many things and events to happen. To say that God is in *control* suggests that He approves of all events that occur. That clearly is not true. Yet while some men pursue evil, there comes a time when God intervenes to curb their actions or answers the prayers

161. See Mt. 13:14-15; Mk. 4:12; Lk. 8:10; Rom. 11:8; 2 Cor. 3:14; and Acts 28:27.

of His saints.



In this narrative, the religious leaders refused to believe Jesus even after they witnessed many profound miracles and heard Him teach. Therefore, God granted to them their heart's desire: He closed their understanding to the truth so they could not believe. They had committed the unpardonable sin of rejecting God once too often. At one time they had a choice; now they had only His condemnation. But in reality, they condemned themselves because decisions determine destiny.

14.02.02 Jn. 12:44-50

FINAL APPEAL TO HIS BELOVED PEOPLE

⁴⁴ Then Jesus cried out,

“The one who believes in Me
Believes not in Me
but in Him who sent Me.

⁴⁵ And the one who sees Me
Sees Him who sent me.

⁴⁶ I have come as a light

into the world,

so that everyone who believes in Me

would not remain in darkness.

⁴⁷ If anyone hears My words and doesn't keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects Me and doesn't accept My sayings has this as his judge: The word I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on My own, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a command as to what I

should say and what I should speak. ⁵⁰ I know that His command is eternal life. So the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”

The essential message in the Fourth Gospel is that God sent His Son to save the world, not to condemn it. This message was not initiated by the wrath of God, but by His compassionate love. Yet the coming of the Savior involves judgment for those who defiantly refuse His gift of love and eternal life. The character and love of Jesus is portrayed exceptionally well in John 13:1-17 and in His high priestly prayer recorded in John 17.

“Light ... darkness.” Light (Gk. *phos*) is associated with the knowledge of God while darkness (Gk. *skotos*)¹⁶² is associated with the lack of that knowledge which is unbelief that eventually leads to death. These phrases were common figures of speech, well known throughout Judaism. The Essenes used these motifs in poetic style in their Manual of Discipline:

**All who practice righteousness
are under domination of the Prince of Light
And walk in the ways of light.**

**Whereas
All who practice perversity
are under the domination of the Angel of Darkness
And walk in the ways of darkness.**

Dead Sea Scroll Fragment, 1QS 3:20¹⁶³

The Essene phrase “Prince of Light” was not a reference to Jesus, but to one of their two expected messianic figures.¹⁶⁴ The words “light,” “true light,” and “glory” had messianic connections in the Hebrew Bible and to the Essenes.¹⁶⁵ Everyone knew that.

Jesus now gave a final appeal to His beloved people, a warning that a day of judgment is coming. The urgency of that warning has not changed after two thousand years. At the

162. Barclay, *Jesus*. 264.

163. Santala, *The Messiah in the New Testament*. 66.

164. The Essenes could not reconcile the biblical descriptions of a suffering servant and a victorious servant, so they concluded there would be two messiahs. See “Essenes” 02.01.06.

165. Gen. 1:3; Ps. 36:10; Isa 49:6, 60:1; and Dan. 2:22.

end of every life there will be a judgment day when everyone will have to give an account for his or her life.

“The Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a command as to what I should say.” This statement greatly angered the religious elitist, because in their thinking, Jesus equated Himself with God. The significant issue here is not what the Father commanded Jesus to say, but that Jesus claimed to have the privilege to speak personally with God. They believed God was not, nor could He become a person and, likewise a person could not become God. However, this phrase not only affirmed the deity of Jesus, but He also stated that if they rejected His words, they would be rejecting God. This compounded the problem for them, as they believed in only one deity according to Deuteronomy 6:4, known as the *Shema*.

“Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One.

Deuteronomy 6:4 (the *Shema*)

They could not understand how Jesus could be God and yet speak to God. The idea that created a sense of repulsion is that they remembered all too well the Greek dictator, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, of the second century B.C. who claimed to be a god. But they also realized that Jesus fulfilled a number of prophecies and His kindness and compassion was unlike anyone else they had ever known.

14.02.03 Lk. 22:7-13; (See also Mt. 26:17-19; Mk. 14:12-16) Upper Room

DISCIPLES MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR PASSOVER

⁷ **Then the Day of Unleavened Bread came when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.**

⁸ **Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover meal for us, so we can eat it.”**

⁹ **“Where do You want us to prepare it?” they asked Him.**

¹⁰ **“Listen,” He said to them, “when you’ve entered the city, a man carrying a water jug will meet you. Follow him into the house he enters. ¹¹ Tell the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks you, “Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover with My disciples?”’ ¹² Then he will show you a large, furnished room upstairs. Make the preparations there.”**

¹³ So they went and found it just as He had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

“Go and prepare the Passover meal.” In the first century, as today, the “men making preparations” is more of a formal ritual than actual cleaning. Truth be told, it was the responsibility of the woman of the house to prepare for the Passover meal, but since the husband/father is the spiritual head of the family, he made a ritual cleaning. Therefore, when Jesus told his disciples to prepare the meal, they were not going to clean house or become master chefs, they performed the ritual obligation that every family man had to perform.¹⁶⁶ The location of the upper room is seldom questioned even though scholars claim two possible locations:

1. The Syrian Orthodox Church of St. Mark (minority view), and
2. Mount Zion. This site is almost universally agreed upon (see 14.02.01.Q1 below)

The word “preparations” meant extensive house cleaning to remove any yeast, which is in this case, symbolic of sin in the typical Jewish home. In essence, the meal was eaten in a state of Levitical purity (Jn. 13:10; Num. 19:19). Anything related to any kind of grain had to be removed and an example of this regulation is found in the Mishnah.

These must be removed at Passover: Babylonian porridge, Median beer, Edomite vinegar, and Egyptian barley-beer; also dyer’s pulp, cooks’ starch-flour, and writers’ paste. Rabbi Eliezer says: Also women’s cosmetics.

Mishnah, *Pesahim* 3.1

What Jesus meant for them to do when He said “Go and prepare the Passover meal” is unknown, because some things may have been done by the host. An abbreviated list is as follows:

1. Select and care for the sacrificial lamb. Most certainly the disciples did not follow Jesus all over town with a little lamb. The host probably cared for it on their behalf.
2. They inspected and cleaned the house of every crumb of leavened bread (Mt. 13:33, 16:6, 11-12)

166. Nelesen, *Yeshua; the Promise, the Land, the Messiah*. (Video Tape 2).

3. They purchased the wine,¹⁶⁷ herbs, spices, bread, and other foods.
4. They had to furnish the triclinium table and the rest of the room
5. After the ritual slaughter at the temple, they had to roast it at the home where they were going to observe the Passover Feast/Last Supper.

The number of days Passover was celebrated has not changed over the centuries. It has always been combined with the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of First Fruits, creating an eight-day celebration. In the course of time, all three festivals became known simply as the festival of “Passover.”¹⁶⁸

Josephus presented two slightly different versions of the festival. The festival according to Moses was for seven days when they were to eat bread made without yeast. On the first of those eight days, the yeast was to be removed from their homes. No work was to be done during this celebration, with the exception¹⁶⁹ of food preparation. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated on the day God brought the Israelites out of Egypt (Gen. 12:15-17). According to Josephus, somewhere in the course of history the Day of Preparation was considered as sacred as the other days of the festival, thereby creating an eight day celebration. Other times it was not. Hence, he recorded two slightly varying accounts concerning the length.

In memory of the want we were in, we keep a feast for eight days, which is called the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 2.15.1 (317)

The Feast of Unleavened Bread succeeds that of the Passover, and falls on the fifteenth day of the month, and continues seven days, wherein they feed on unleavened bread.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 3.10.5 (249)

At the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was the Passover Feast which culminated in

167. They could not have used grape juice because there are no grapes ripening in the spring of the year.

168. See Appendix 5.

169. 2 Kgs. 11:5; 1 Chron. 9:25; 24:19; Josephus, *Antiquities* 7.14.7; See also Simmons, “The Origin of Christmas and the Date of Christ’s Birth.” 321-22.

the sacrificial offering of the lamb (Lk. 22:7). To Christians this feast became known as the Last Supper. Jesus never intended this sacred meal to be a celebration of a historic event, even though that is how every Jew recognized it. Rather, it pointed to the future and would only be recognized after His death and resurrection. The elements of the meal pointed to the cross and the cup of wine pointed toward the future messianic wedding banquet. In the interim Jesus discussed the unity of the church.¹⁷⁰

“A man carrying a water jug.” It was, and still is, common in this part of the world for women to carry water. It was one of the accepted domestic tasks of women – to carry water from the village well to their homes. An example is found in John 4, the story of the Samaritan woman whom Jesus met at the well. For a man to carry a jar of water was highly unlikely, except in Jerusalem for these three situations:

1. In the temple, so much water was used for various sacrificial rituals, as well as washing the temple floors, altars, etc., that men were assigned to carry the heavy jars.¹⁷¹
2. Josephus said that water sellers sold water in pitchers or “standard measures” during times of drought.¹⁷²
3. Such men were employed by wealthy home owners. While homes had cisterns where rain water stored, that water became stagnant or stale throughout the long, hot, dry summer months. Homeowners then either carried fresh water from one of the Jerusalem pools or purchased it from a water seller.

Even after the temple was destroyed and the city was rebuilt, some men continued to function as professional water carriers serving private homes.¹⁷³ Therefore, for Jesus to tell His disciples to look for a man carrying water, this was not as much of an oddity as modern students think it would have been.

170. See also 1 Cor. 11:17-34.

171. Avi-Yonah and Kraeling, *Our Living Bible*. 288.

172. Josephus, *Wars* 5.9.4 (410).

173. Toynbee, *The Crucible*. 221.



14.02.03.A. A SIXTH CENTURY (B.C.) MOSAIC OF A MALE WATER CARRIER. This Byzantine mosaic was found in Beth-Shean. The custom of carrying water was generally the task of women, with the exception of a few men who were employed as professional water carriers. Those of wealth could afford to have water carriers deliver fresh water from an aqueduct to their home all year long.



14.02.03.B. A RELIEF OF A MALE WATER CARRIER. One of the oldest biblical images found in Rome is of a man carrying water at the wedding in Cana. A man was probably shown because the vessels would have been too heavy for a woman to carry. Second or third century A.D.

“A large, furnished room upstairs” The term *room upstairs* is from the Greek word *anog*, that is also translated as *upper room*. Furthermore, some translations use the word “couches” rather than “furnished.” The term *anog* appears three times in the gospels,¹⁷⁴ including the incorrect translation as *inn* in the infancy narratives (Lk. 2:7).¹⁷⁵

174. Lk. 2:7; 22:11; Mk. 14:14.

175. See 04.03.10. For more information on a typical upper room, see video 04.07.01.V2; Cosby, *Interpreting Biblical Literature*, 10, 14.

On occasion, a family with some financial means would build a room on the flat roof of their house. That room was normally not used as a dwelling area, but for storage. It could, however, be quickly converted into a guest room for visitors. One church tradition states that the upper room was on the second floor of the home of John Mark, where the disciples gathered later to pray (Acts 1:12-14).

14.02.03.Q1 On what day did Jesus celebrate the Passover (Lk. 22:7-13)?

There has been considerable debate among scholars concerning the day that Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples. As a Jew who was faithful to the law, to have it a day early would be unthinkable. Yet He could not have celebrated on the 14th day of Nissan as prescribed by religious law, because on that day He was to be crucified.

In the western part of Jerusalem was an Essene community and, as not to be identified with the Pharisees and Sadducees, they observed all Jewish feasts on their own calendar, which in this case would have been a day early. Therefore, the upper room was already prepared for Jesus and His disciples and all that was needed was the ritual cleaning before the gathering for the Passover *Seder* (Heb. *order*).¹⁷⁶ The practices of the Essenes were not revealed until the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered between the years 1947 and 1952.¹⁷⁷ Scholars have always wondered how Jesus could have observed the Passover a day earlier than other Jews, and the mystery has been resolved.¹⁷⁸ Jesus did not endorse Essene theology, but this time He did use their calendar.

However, some interesting questions arise, the answers of which may never be unveiled. They are:

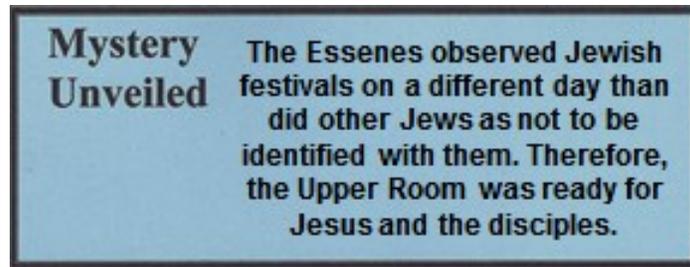
1. Since Jesus was an observant Jew who followed the Mosaic Law faithfully, did the disciples ever ask why they were observing Passover a day early?
2. Since the Passover lamb was killed at the temple, did the priests question why they were observing the Passover early? The priests knew the disciples were not Essenes. Or did they accept the Essene practice?
3. Jesus was without question the most observed Person in the land. The religious

176. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 22, page 5.

177. See 02.02.06.

178. Nelesen, *Yeshua; the Promise, the Land, the Messiah*. (Video Tape 2).

leaders and Herodians observed His every move. If His lamb was sacrificed a day early in the temple (assuming the Essenes did so), was He seen by those who planned to kill Him?



4. Yet another interesting question remains: Where did the Essene community in West Jerusalem kill their Passover lambs if not in the temple? To complicate the potential answer, the Essenes believed the Sadducean establishment would corrupt their sacrificial lambs. Some scholars believe they may have sacrificed their lambs somewhere off the temple grounds, but that raises even more questions.

Any attempt at clarification is complicated by the fact that there was a variation between Galilean and Judean Passover observances. John's gospel implies that the Last Supper was held the evening prior to the Passover feast while the synoptic gospels indicate that it was celebrated at the same time as the traditional Passover.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, John states (19:14) that Jesus was condemned by Pilate on the "Day of Preparation of Passover." If Jesus had celebrated Passover earlier, there clearly would not have been a conflict here, as the "Day of Preparation" would have been the time most other Jews were getting ready to sacrifice their lambs, and Jesus was going to be the sacrificed Lamb of God.¹⁸⁰

According to Jewish tradition, some weeks had two Sabbaths, with the first of the two being known as the "Day of Preparation." Some scholars believe this would have made it impossible for Jesus to be crucified on Good Friday, which was the day of Passover, therefore, there had to be some variation of calendar dates.¹⁸¹ Other scholars have stated that Jews living in Dispersion observed Passover on Friday while those in Jerusalem observed it on Saturday.¹⁸² What is known is that the Last Supper was a monumental

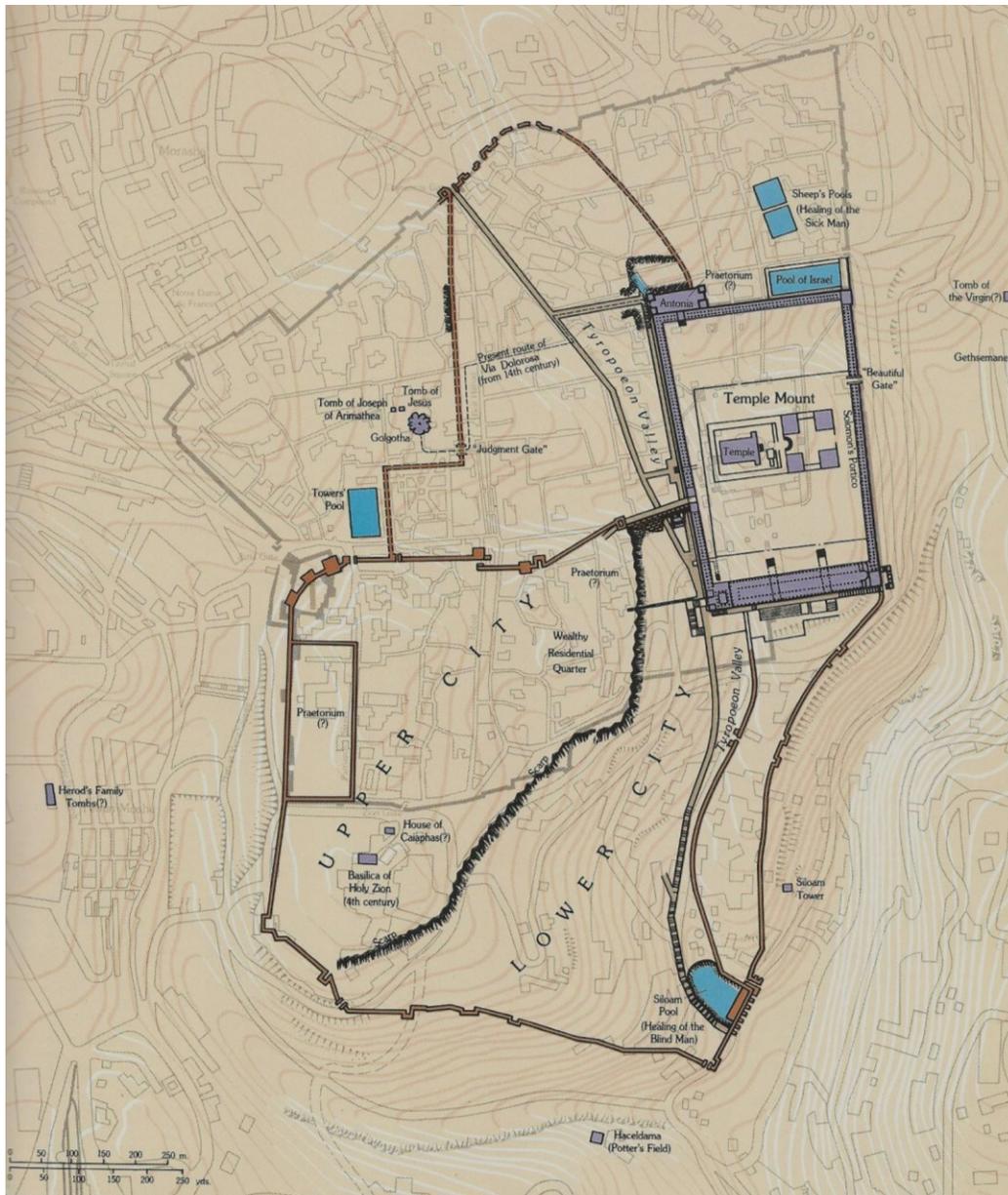
179. Mt. 26:17; Mk. 14:12; Lk. 22:7; For an excellent study on the various interpretations of this subject, see Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*. London: SCM, 1966, 15-88.

180. See Appendix 6 concerning Old Testament sacrifices and Jesus; Appendix 9 outlines the New Testament plan of salvation as presented in the Old Testament.

181. Tenney, *New Testament Times*. 174.

182. Shepherd, "Are Both the Synoptics and John Correct About the Date of Jesus' Death?" 123-132.

event, and while some of its historical details are confusing or unknown, the plan of God is most certainly known. All gospels agree that Jesus died on Friday, the fourteenth day of Nissan.



14.02.03.Z. Map of Jerusalem as it was at the Time of Jesus. The Essene quarter of Jerusalem was extremely close to the home of Caiaphas and where the disciples met for the Last Supper. Map courtesy of Dan Bahat.¹⁸³

183. Bahat. *Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*. 55.

14.02.03.Q2 How authentic is the site of the Upper Room?

This is an interesting topic because scholars are rather certain that the location of the Upper Room, a/k/a *The Cenaculum*, has been authenticated although the structure was destroyed centuries ago.¹⁸⁴ A listing of significant events, as recorded by ancient witnesses, is placed in chronological order below. Sub-titles are given for clarity. But even among reliable sources there are at times conflicts: some reports indicate that all of Jerusalem was destroyed in the First Revolt of A.D. 70, while other writings claim to be witnesses of the building that once was the site of the Last Passover.

Post-Ascension of Jesus

It has been suggested that the historical events that transpired where the Upper Room once stood are reflective of the relationship between the Christians of Jewish and Gentile background. Not only did Jesus meet His disciples there for their Passover/Last Supper, but they returned to this room after His ascension to pray until the promised Holy Spirit fell upon them on the Day of Pentecost and where Peter preached his famous sermon of Acts 2.

Scholars consider two possible sites as to where the building once stood.

1. The home of John Mark (minority view)
2. A home on Mount Zion in the western part of Jerusalem (majority view)

This writer agrees with the overwhelming majority view, although some good friends believe otherwise. Visitors to Mount Zion today are informed that it was also the tomb of King David.¹⁸⁵ Some scholars believe that due to the loss of temple records (A.D. 70) and the deaths of key sages (A.D. 135), the precise location of the tomb is unknown.¹⁸⁶ Yet shortly after the crucifixion Peter said this concerning the tomb of David:

²⁹ “Brothers, I can confidently speak to you about the patriarch David: He is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

184. Notley, *In the Master's Steps*. 66.

185. Since the Romans destroyed the temple in A.D. 70, the Jews wanted to honor their ancient King David who was born in Bethlehem. So they honored him in Bethlehem because they referred to the village as the “City of David.” Consequently, for centuries it was believed that David and Solomon were buried in the little hamlet town south of Jerusalem. Several ancient writers made reference to this historical error as fact. However, the truth is that King David was buried within the city of Jerusalem according to 1 Kings 2:10.

186. Schmalz, 20-21.

Acts 2:29

However, Peter said “His tomb is with us to this day,” that statement does not necessarily identify location. Obviously, the apostle knew precisely where the tomb was, because it was adjacent to the site of the Last Supper and the Pentecost event.¹⁸⁷ After Pentecost, the Upper Room became the center of the Judeo-Christian synagogue in Jerusalem.¹⁸⁸ Scholars frequently refer to the first century congregation as a “church,” when, in fact, everyone who attended was Jewish and their worship service was a slightly modified version of the traditional synagogue service. They did not lose their Jewish culture or traditions because they became followers of Yeshua (Jesus).¹⁸⁹ This can be seen in Acts 1:12-13 when the Jewish believers honored the tradition of a “Sabbath’s Day walk” and went to the Upper Room.

Peter’s comment reflects the facts of biblical history, as well as the evil works of Herod the Great. At one time Herod attempted to rob the treasures from the tomb of King David. According to Josephus, he sent several grave robbers who successfully removed some of its wealth. Upon their return to the tomb, two of the men met sudden death by a flame of fire. The horrific news quickly spread throughout the city and frightened Herod so much that he immediately constructed a monument to honor the deceased King.¹⁹⁰ When Peter referred to King David, he most certainly was thinking of this event and the monument built by Herod.

The first churches, or messianic synagogues, were gatherings in homes and assembly halls. They carried the same Greek name *synagogue* meaning *assembly*, that in Hebrew is *knesset*.¹⁹¹ In later years, Gentile Christians used the word *ekklesia*, or *ecclesia*, which also means *assembly*, for their place of gathering. Every home was called a *domus ekklesia*, or *church house*.¹⁹² However, some scholars argue that the English word *church* was not accurately derived from *ekklesia*, but from the Greek *kyriake* meaning *belonging to the Lord*.¹⁹³ Early Jewish believers did not see themselves as a separate religious

187. Schmalz, 21-22.

188. For more information on a typical upper room, see video 04.07.01.V2.

189. Mills and Michael, *Messiah and His Hebrew Alphabet*. 7.

190. Josephus, *Antiquities* 16.7.1; 7.15.3. (Don’t you just love an attitude adjustment from God?)

191. The same word as modern Israel’s legislative body.

192. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*. 103, 112.

193. Pixner, “Church of the Apostles Found.” 24.

movement, but as a part of Judaism. Since the Jewish religion was a legal religion recognized by Rome, the Jewish believers were seen as being within Judaism and they did not always receive the persecution that Gentile believers received.

However, there is today a growing opinion that some synagogues did become messianic congregations – fellowships that followed a worship format similar to traditional synagogues but with the focus of Yeshua (Jesus). Just because Acts 2:46 says the believers “broke bread from house to house,” that does not mean they didn’t meet also as congregations. With such an explosion of believers it is most difficult to think that some synagogues did not change. While there is no existing written evidence of a first century messianic synagogue, scholars debate the archaeological evidence uncovered in Magdala to support the possibility of a first century messianic synagogue at that site (see 08.05.07.D).¹⁹⁴

In the meantime, the Romans always had considerable difficulty understanding Judaism, so Christianity was beyond their comprehension. They could understand a god becoming human because they had similar stories of such in their mythologies. But to have a God become a man, suffer, be crucified, and rise from the dead was beyond their imagination! They could not understand why anyone would want to worship that kind of God.

A.D. 66-70 First Revolt

There is no question that the destruction of Jerusalem at Passover during A.D. 70, precisely forty years after the crucifixion of Jesus, was a judgment from the Divine. For more than fifteen centuries, from the time of Moses until Titus, no enemy ever attacked the Jewish people during the celebration of their festivals. The defeat and destruction was understood by Gentile Christians as punishment of the Jewish leaders. The city and temple had been built like a super-fortress by Herod the Great, a paranoid monarch, because he constantly feared Queen Cleopatra and the Egyptians to the south as well as the growing Parthian Empire to the East. The huge stones and massive walls were a profound challenge for the ancient Roman war machines. Amazingly, Titus recognized this and actually gave credit to God for his victory for the ability to destroy the fortified city.¹⁹⁵ His profound statement was preserved.

“We have certainly had God for our assistant in this war, and it was none other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications; for what could the hands of men, or any machines do towards overthrowing these towers!”

194. Pixner, “Church of the Apostles Found.” 24-26; See also “First Century Synagogue Found.” *Israel Today E-Newsletter*. January 15, 2013.

195. Titus was not about to miss any gods for his victory. He also traveled north to Caesarea Philippi and offered sacrifices to the god Pan in thankful celebration.

Titus, quoted by Josephus, *Wars* 6.9.1 (411)

After the Romans left the city in ruins, the Jews rebuilt it. But they still had a passion for a messianic deliverer which, unfortunately, led to another destruction.

A.D. 132-135 Second Revolt¹⁹⁶

The celebrated Rabbi Akiva (Akiba)¹⁹⁷ gave a messianic pretender, Simon bar Kokhba, the name “Son of the Star” and announced to the Jewish world that he was the long awaited messiah. Bar Kokhba then led a rebellion against the Romans in A.D. 132, but the Romans defeated him and his army, destroyed Jerusalem, and renamed the land *Palestina* – a curse word from where the modern name “Palestine” is derived.¹⁹⁸

By this time, the Romans were so exasperated with the Jews that Hadrian evicted all of them, traditional Jews and “Nazarenes” by imperial decree. Bar Kokhba was killed and the Rabbi Akiva’s body was literally butchered and his flesh sold in the Jerusalem market. Hadrian also attempted to eradicate all signs and significant sites (i.e. the crucifixion site) that pertained to the new Jewish sect known as Christianity. Today scholars debate whether the Church of the Apostles survived Hadrian’s destruction. What is known is that so many the Jewish church leaders were killed that the leadership went into the hands of Gentile believers. With new Gentile leadership in the church, Jewish roots, idioms, and customs were soon forgotten. Furthermore, the Gentile leaders believed God permanently destroyed the Jewish state in His eschatological plan and all promises given to Abraham were transferred to the church. This idea became known as “replacement theology,”¹⁹⁹ and by the year 324, Church-sponsored anti-Semitism was firmly established. This horrific doctrine formulated how the church would treat Jews for centuries to come – and the treatment was utterly shameful.²⁰⁰

196. A/k/a Simon bar Kokhba Revolt.

197. After the destruction of the temple, Rabbi Akiva (A.D. 50-135) was the founder of a great learning center in Jaffa and today is considered to be the father of rabbinic Judaism. He was killed by the Romans for supporting the messianic figure Simon bak Kokhba.

198. For further study, see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*. 4:6; Dio Cassius, *Roman History*. 69:12-14.

199. See “Replacement Theology” in Appendix 26.

200. See William Heinrich, *In the Shame of Jesus: The History of Church-Sponsored Anti-Semitism*.

110-180 Hegesippus (A.D. 110-180)

Evidently the Upper Room had a lasting legacy. The historian Hegesippus²⁰¹ said that prior to the eviction of all Jews from Jerusalem by Emperor Hadrian there had been 15 Hebrew Christian bishops in the Holy City.²⁰² The fellowship that met previously in the Upper Room synagogue became known as the Church of the Apostles,²⁰³ although others believe the Upper Room became known as the Holy Zion Church (Latin: *Coenaculum*).

155-235 Cassius Dio Cocceianus (A.D. 155-235)

According to the Roman historian Cassius Dio Cocceianus, the monument built by Herod the Great that honored the tomb of King David survived the destruction of Titus, but collapsed during to the Second Jewish Revolt (A.D. 132-135).²⁰⁴

Late 3rd Century Eusebius of Caesarea (A.D. 265-340)

The famous early church father Eusebius of Caesarea wrote in his *Demenstratio Evangelica* that the western hill was known as Mount Zion from which the gospel went throughout the world. Undoubtedly, the Upper Room was where the Jerusalem Council met two decades later (Acts 15:1-29; Gal. 2:10). Today the Dominion Abbey of the Greek Orthodox Seminary is upon the Mount Zion as well as the alleged Tomb of David. Eusebius said,

This is the word of the gospel, which through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the apostles went out from Mount Zion and was spread to every nation. It is a fact that it poured forth from Jerusalem and Mount Zion adjacent to it, on which our Savior and Lord had stayed many times and where he taught much doctrine.

Eusebius, *Demonstrations of the Gospel 265-340*²⁰⁵

201. Saint Hegesippus was an early church theologian and historian who wrote against the heresies of the Gnostics and Marcion.

202. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 7.

203. Pixner, "Church of the Apostles Found." 24-26.

204. Dio Caccius, *Roman History* 69:14. <http://orion.it.luc.edu/~avande1/jerusalem/sources/cassiusDio-69.htm> Retrieved November 25, 2012. Cassius Dio Cocceianus (Dio Caccius), in A.D. 222, described how destructive Emperor Hadrian was toward the Jewish people. The historian said 580,000 men were killed, 985 villages destroyed, and the number who died from famine and disease could not be counted.

205. Eusebius quoted by Schmalz 22; Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica* 1.4 ; Baldi, *Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum*. 728, 474.

330 Epiphanius (310-403)

Around the year 330, Sanctus Epiphanius Constantiensis, commonly known as Epiphanius,²⁰⁶ traveled to Jerusalem. He wrote of a small church building in western Jerusalem that survived Hadrian's destruction of Jerusalem as follows,

Hadrian found the city completely leveled to the ground and God's temple treaded down, except for a few houses and the church of God, which was quite small. To it the disciples returned after the Savior's ascension from the Mount of Olives. They went up to the Upper Room, for it had been built there - that is, in the part of the city called Zion, which part was exempted from destruction, as also were some of the dwellings around Zion and seven synagogues, the only ones which existed in Zion, like monks' cells. One of these survived until the time of Bishop Maximus and King Constantine. It was like a tent in a vineyard, to quote the Scripture.

Epiphanius, *De Mensurie et Ponderibus* 14²⁰⁷



14.02.03.C. THE TRADITIONAL UPPER ROOM. The Upper Room

206. Epiphanius was a monk in Egypt and Palestine and eventually became the Bishop of Salamis, Cyprus. He was known for being a strong defender of orthodoxy.

207. Mackowski, *Jerusalem City of Jesus*. 143; Baldi, *Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum*. 733, 478.

seen by visitors today was rebuilt in European Gothic style by the Crusaders. The original one was destroyed by Hadrian's Roman army in A.D. 135. Tradition says this is where Jesus met with His disciples for the Last Supper and where the Holy Spirit came upon the 120 believers on the Day of Pentecost. Photograph by the author.

Video Insert >

14.02.03.V *The Upper Room as an Early Church*. Dr. Petra Heldt discusses the location of the Upper Room and its possible use as an early church. Click here if Internet connection is available.

Mystery Unveiled

The early Greek and Syrian churches believed the Upper Room was in the home of John Mark, while Western churches and ancient writings suggest it was located on Mount Zion.

348 Saint Cyril (ca. 313-386)

The status and location of the Upper Room Church continues to be a matter of discussion for scholars. For example, Saint Cyril who, in the year 348, wrote that on the Feast of Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended from heaven “in the Upper Church of the Apostles” in Jerusalem.²⁰⁸ Yet the question lingers as to whether the building survived the destructions of the city. Note the words of the first century historian,

And now the Romans set fire to the extreme parts of the city and burnt them down and entirely demolished the walls.

Josephus, *Wars* 6.9.4 (434b)

However, this phrase may have been literary license to illustrate how massive the destruction was. Scholars know, for example, that not all the perimeter walls of the city were destroyed. The three towers that were built by Herod the Great and a portion of the western city wall were also excluded from the destruction.

208. Baldi, *Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum*. 730, 475.

Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and temple but should leave as many of the towers standing as were of the greatest eminency; that is Phasaelus, and Hippicus, and Mariamne, and so much of the wall as enclosed the city on the west side This was the end which Jerusalem came to by the madness of those that were for innovations; a city otherwise of great magnificence and of mighty fame among all mankind.

Josephus, *Wars* 7.1.1 (1)

6th Century Madaba Map

However, a major argument for the Mount Zion location is the 6th century Madaba Map that features the Upper Room.²⁰⁹ This room was supposedly destroyed in the First Revolt and rebuilt facing the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which suggests that the builders were Christian.²¹⁰ However, scholars debate this orientation and who the builders may have been after the First Revolt.²¹¹ Clearly, the consensus of ancient writers is that the site of the Upper Room was in the western section of Jerusalem – an area also known from other sources to have been occupied by many Essene Jews.

209. The mosaic Madaba Map is in the village of Madaba, located about 20 miles south of Amman, the capital of Jordan. It measures approximately 51 feet (north to south) by 19 feet (east to west) totally about 969 square feet that contained about 1.1 million *tesserae*, which are the small colored mosaic tiles.

210. See “Madaba Map” in Appendix 26; See also 14.02.03.D and 05.02.03.Z. There is a common opinion that synagogues were built facing the temple. However, archaeological surveys on many of the 200 synagogue ruins reveal that pre-destruction synagogues did not face the temple. Only after the temple was destroyed, were synagogues built facing the Holy City. For further study, see Hachlili, Rachel. “Synagogues: Before and After the Roman Destruction of the Temple.” *Biblical Archaeology Review*. 41:3 (May/June 2015) 30-38, 65.

211. Zondervan *New International Version Archaeological Study Bible*. (2005 ed.) 1654.



14.02.03.D. Jerusalem as depicted on the A.D. 542 mosaic Madaba Map. Wikipedia Commons.

14.02.04 Lk. 22:14-16 Upper Room (The “Last Supper”)

IMPORTANCE OF OCCASION

14 When the hour came, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, “I have fervently desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

Jesus and the disciples gathered to celebrate a feast that was ordained of God since the foundations of the earth. All seven of the so-called Jewish festivals are, in fact, God’s festivals (Lev. 23). They are “types and shadows” of Christ, meaning that, in some way, they illustrate His characteristics.²¹²

While the Jews continued to observe all the feasts, scholars believe the Jewish believers observed the Passover. In fact, scholars believe that all churches observed Passover as

212. See “Levitical Feasts as Prophetic Reflections of Jesus” in Appendix 5.

affirmed by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23.

¹⁶ Therefore, don't let anyone judge you in regard to food and drink or in the matter of a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of what was to come; the substance is the Messiah.

Colossians 2:16-17

The Passover observation ended with the rise of Constantine to power. He clearly separated Judaism from Christianity in every way possible.²¹³

“When the hour came.” Passover was observed in the evening, immediately after sunset when the first two or three stars were visible in the sky (about 6:00 p.m.).²¹⁴ At that time, from the highest point of the temple, there was a three-fold blast from the silver trumpets.²¹⁵ The anticipated hour had arrived because this was a solemn moment in the life of every Jew, but even more so for Jesus and His disciples.²¹⁶ For Jesus, it was time to observe the Passover; for most other Jews, it was Preparation Day for Passover. No doubt they wondered why Jesus and His disciples were celebrating this sacred event a day early.

“He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him.” This private feast had a clear theological purpose: to bring the *past* vividly into the present, so that the imagery of the sacrificial lamb of Passover, celebrated for some fifteen centuries, would be recognized as representing none other than Jesus Himself.

The Last Supper was not, as most modern Christians tend to believe, simply bread and red wine (or grape juice). Rather, as stated previously, it was a full meal in Passover style with the Communion elements integrated into it. The group probably would have been seated around a triclinium table with one or two servants serving them. The typical social setting was for men and women to recline at a table and lean on their left elbow. This was a custom adopted from the Greeks centuries earlier and continued throughout the Roman Period. The only purpose of reclining was to enjoy a meal together.²¹⁷ They

213. See William Heinrich, *In the Shame of Jesus: The History of Church-Sponsored Anti-Semitism*.

214. See discussion on “evening” in Appendix 16. Vine, “Even, Evening, Eventide.” *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:108.

215. See “Divisions of the Day” 19.16.00.A; Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 2:96-97.

216. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 425; Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 813.

217. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*. 374.

would eat only with their right hands. Using the left hand to pass or get food was highly offensive, as it was the hand of personal hygiene and cursing.



14.02.04.A. A RECREATED TRICLINIUM COUCH. In this recreated setting, a triclinium is a low couch that is in the shape of a letter “U.” Guests laid on pillows or mats and leaned on their left elbows while using the right hand to eat. Servants would be able to walk in the center of the “U” to provide beverage and food for everyone. However, some scholars believe this is an *incorrect representation* and that the triclinium around a square or circular table. Photographed at the Pilgrim Center in Jerusalem by the author.

In ordinary home life, people sat on chairs. But on festive events they reclined on low couches that were set in a “U-shaped” configuration around a rectangular table. This layout was known as a *triclinium*. Reclining was symbolic of freedom and wealth as opposed to the enslavement their forefathers endured in Egypt. Rabbi Levi said, around the year A.D. 300, that,

Because slaves eat standing, here [at the Passover meal] people should recline to eat to signify that they have passed from slavery to freedom.

Jerusalem Talmud, *Pesachim* 10:37b²¹⁸

At any special gathering such as Passover, the host was always the rabbi and his disciples were reclining, not seated, around the triclinium.²¹⁹ The rabbi of the group, who in this case was Jesus, was always the host.



14.02.04.B. A 6th CENTURY DEPICTION OF THE LAST SUPPER.

This illustration depicts Jesus (seated on the left) with His disciples around a triclinium. This Roman-Greco custom of fine dining was adopted by the Jews and nearly all other Middle Eastern cultures. It represented freedom, dignity, and wealth. This scene is part of the Rossano Codex, a parchment manuscript of the Gospels preserved in Rossano, Italy. Scholars believe it is the work of Syrian or Byzantine scribes.

218. See also <http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/Tyndale/staff/Instonerever/prepub/Sanhedrin%2043a%20censored.pdf>. Retrieved May 26, 2013.

219. Some scholars believe that the triclinium consisted of three couches positioned on three sides (“tri” means 3) of the table, and was not the U-shaped table itself.

Video Insert >

14.02.04.V *The Triclinium of the Last Supper.* Gordon Franz discusses the triclinium couch, the seating arrangement of Jesus and the disciples at the Last Passover, also known as the Last Supper. [Click here if Internet connection is available.](#)

14.02.05 Lk. 22:17-20 (See also Mt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25) The Upper Room

A MEMORIAL TO JESUS

¹⁷ Then He took a cup, and after giving thanks, He said, “Take this and share it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

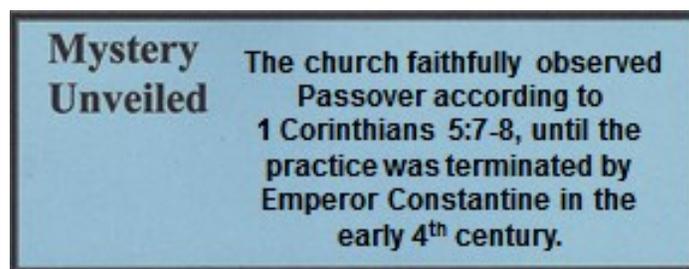
¹⁹ And He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, “This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.”

²⁰ In the same way He also took the cup after supper and said, “This cup is the new covenant established by My blood; it is shed for you.”

The Last Supper, or Passover, pointed to three eras or events:

1. **Past:** It memorialized the Exodus and the passing of an old era. This meal reflected upon the protective sacrifice that afforded deliverance and protection to the Israelites at the Exodus (Ex. 12).
2. **Present:** Jesus introduces new meaning even though He is about to face death. This meal points to His death that will also deliver and afford divine protection. The Passover continued in the early church as directed by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7. The Christian celebration, although without a lamb, was eventually terminated by Emperor Constantine in the early fourth century.
3. **Future:** Finally, the fact that Jesus said that He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes, means that He will not partake of it until the great Messianic Banquet (cf. 1 Cor. 11:26). In essence, the Passover meal is the “katuvah celebration” between Jesus and His church, similar to the

katuvah celebration when a young man and his bride were betrothed some two thousand years ago.



14.02.05.Q1 How was the Passover Seder observed (Lk. 22:17-20)?²²⁰

The Passover Seder in Jerusalem had to be observed with ten men, although in some other areas, such as Galilee, it was observed with ten people of both genders. The order of the service varied from area to area, but the Seder itself was held in the late evening²²¹ or night.²²² It was the custom of the time for people to eat two meals a day. The first was mid-morning, reckoned to modern time of 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. and the second was late afternoon. The Passover meal had to be observed in the evening, which some sources state was about 4:00 P.M. but most say after sundown.²²³ It was a full meal with a religious ritual, rather than a regular mealtime event.²²⁴ This particular celebration, truly a Passover meal,²²⁵ observed remembrance of the miracle that God provided for the Israelites when He delivered them from the bondage of Egyptian slavery. As part of the observance a lamb was killed in the temple. When it was offered upon the altar, its blood flowed and some was collected to be taken home and sprinkled on the lintel and doorpost of the Jewish home. A part of the lamb would be offered for sacrifice while the rest of it was wrapped in its skin and taken home where it became a part of the Passover meal.²²⁶ When the death angel passed over the homes of the Hebrew children (later called “Jews”) and saw the blood, the life of the eldest child was spared.

220. See video comments by messianic scholar Timothy Hegg in 01.01.02.V.

221. See discussion on “evening” in Appendix 16.

222. 1 Cor. 11:23; Jn. 13:30; Mk. 14:17; Mt. 26:20.

223. Ex. 12:8; Mk. 14:17; 1 Cor. 11:23.

224. Stein, R. *Jesus the Messiah*. 203.

225. Mt. 26:2, 17-19; Mk. 14:1, 12, 14, 16; Lk. 22:1, 7-8, 13, 15.

226. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 423-23.

The Passover meal included unleavened bread – bread without yeast. It has three symbolic meanings:

1. It is “unleavened” because when the Israelites left Egypt, they were in such a hurry that there was not time for the bread to rise.
2. The unleavened bread is symbolized as “the bread of affliction” in Psalm 80:5 that they suffered in the days of their slavery.
3. This bread is in sharp contrast to the better food that will be enjoyed at the Messianic banquet.

Jesus was about to be killed and His blood was to be shed for the sins of humanity. Those who would accept His forgiveness and follow His ways would have their lives spared from the bondage of sin and death. In memorial to Him the Passover meal, a/k/a the Last Supper, was probably according to this order of service:²²⁷

1. A benediction
2. A cup of red wine
3. Hands of all present were ceremonially washed as the host passed the water basin and recited a prayer. It was a time to remember tears and sorrows as well as the crossing of the Red Sea. Passover was a personal event – as if God did that incredible sacrifice for every one present.
4. Bitter herbs dipped in a hot sauce and eaten.
5. A benediction (a blessing, not an ending of a service)
6. A second eating of bitter herbs was a reminder of Egyptian bondage.
7. A second cup of red wine followed by questions and answers that pertained to the original Passover meal.

227. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 427; Stein, R. *Jesus the Messiah*. 204-05. It is not surprising that scholars may have differences of opinion on how the Passover was celebrated. Even in the first century, there were variations throughout the Mediterranean area. A slightly different *Seder* order of service is presented by Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 22, pages 5-13.

8. Singing the first part of the Hallel (Ps. 113 - 114)²²⁸
9. A benediction
10. The hands of the host are washed. A sop is made by wrapping a bit of lamb with unleavened bread in bitter herbs and dipping it in sauce. Thereafter, everyone followed in turn. The unleavened bread was a reminder of the haste that was made to leave Egypt, so there was no time for bread to rise.
11. Each person can eat as much as is desired, finishing the meal with a piece of lamb. However, since lamb is not mentioned and this event occurred *before* the regularly scheduled Passover meal, some scholars have suggested that there was no lamb served during the Last Supper.
12. Again the washing of hands
13. The third cup of red wine.
14. Singing the second part of the Hallel (Ps. 115-118) which was the conclusion.
15. The fourth cup of red wine.

During the Passover, four cups of wine were part of the celebration.²²⁹ The “fruit of the vine” is a Jewish technical term meaning Passover wine that was naturally fermented, not fermented artificially with added sugar or dried fruit. These four cups reflect upon the “I wills” of Exodus 6 and 7, and are as follows:

1. The first cup of wine was known as the Cup of Sanctification, a/k/a the Cup of Separation with Thanksgiving, and is based on Exodus 6:6-7. Jesus, as the host, picked up the first cup and gave the ceremonial blessing over the wine by praying, “Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.” After this the disciples partook of their cup of wine and Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me” (Jn. 13:21).

Most likely it was at this time that the four traditional questions were asked by the youngest as to the reason for the celebration. A brief account should be given of the bondage that the Israelites had suffered in Egypt centuries past. This must

228. For identifying the connections of Jesus with the Hallel (Ps. 114-118), see 04.06.01.

229. Stahler, “The Four Cups.” 14-16; Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 1:216-18.

have had a powerful impact, as the disciples would realize that Jesus was applying the Passover motif to deliverance from the bondage of sin. Then Judas realized his sin was discovered.²³⁰

2. The second cup of wine was known as the Cup of Deliverance and Praise, based on Exodus 6:6 (cf Rom. 6:15-18). At the first Passover the Israelites praised God for their deliverance from Egypt. Since then, they were delivered from the Babylonians, Medo-Persians, Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the Greeks, and from numerous other foreign powers. While many suffered, amazingly, there has always been a remnant that survived. No other people group has a parallel history.²³¹

3. The third cup of wine is known as the Cup of Redemption, based on Exodus 6:6.²³² First, the host of the Passover Seder holds up the unleavened bread, known as the *afikomen* and prays, “Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.” Jesus then took the unleavened bread, broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, “This is my body given to you” (Mk. 14:22; Lk. 22:19), and “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you” (Lk. 22:20).²³³

The group continued through their Passover meal. He then said, “Do this in remembrance of me.” Believers know this Cup of Redemption as The Communion Cup, because Jesus is their Redemption. The Apostle Paul referred to this cup as “The Cup of Blessings” (1 Cor. 10:10), because of the special blessing that was spoken over it at the end of the Passover meal.²³⁴ By the practice of this ordinance, believers are to remember His suffering death and promised return.²³⁵

In a similar manner when a young girl accepted the marriage proposal and the *katuvah* was signed.²³⁶ The next cup of wine would be on their wedding day.

230. Pixner, *With Jesus in Jerusalem*. 93.

231. Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 1:218-222.

232. See also Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Gal. 4:4-7.

233. See interesting comments by Messianic scholar Timothy Hegg concerning the third cup in 01.02.01.V.

234. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 827.

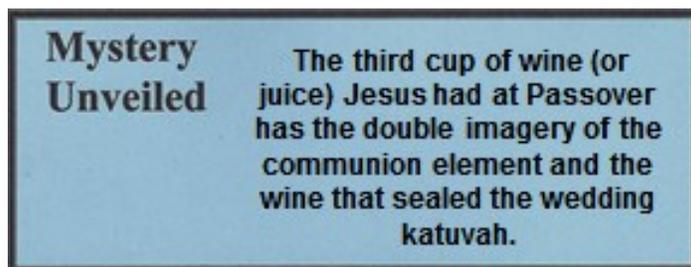
235. Other references that pertain to Holy Communion are Lk. 22:19-20; Mt. 26:26-28; Mk. 14:22-25; Jn. 6:48-58; 1 Cor. 11:23-39.

236. The marital contract is further described in 04.03.03.A and 08.02.01.

When a young man proposed marriage to his future bride, he said,

Be thou betrothed to me with this cup of wine.

Mishnah, *Kiddushin* 2.2



4. Finally, the fourth cup of wine is known as the Cup of Acceptance or Cup of Anticipation, a/k/a the Cup of Ultimate Salvation. It is celebrated at the close of the Passover and is close to the Cup of Praise, based on Exodus 6:7. Jesus said specifically that He would not partake of this cup until He and all of His believers are together at the heavenly Messianic Banquet.²³⁷ He told everyone to partake as this was the blood of the covenant which was poured out for many (Mt. 26:27-29; Mk. 14:24).²³⁸ The phrase “poured out” or “shed” is a clear reference to the blood covenant of Exodus 24:4-8 that made God (Heb: *Yahewh*) the God of Israel.²³⁹ This moment must have been stunning for the disciples.

However, the fourth cup of wine has the double meaning of being the cup that will be served at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, when Jesus and His bride celebrate their wedding. In essence, it is an integral part of the katuvah celebration.

The imagery of Passover – the sanctification, the praise, the redemption, and the acceptance or anticipation – is all within communion when properly understood. All four elements are critical to every believer’s life, but are seldom acknowledged at communion because the Jewish roots of the Christian faith is seldom known, even to experienced pastors.

Concerning wine – the ancients had no method for removing the alcohol content of the

237. See 1 Cor. 15:50-55; 2 Cor. 5:17-21.

238. Mendenhall, “Covenant.” 1:722.

239. Guhrt, “Covenant, Guarantee, Mediator.” 1:365-66.

wine, but they did dilute it with water. According to the Oral Tradition even the poorest man was to have no less than four cups of “mixed” wine.²⁴⁰ The wine represented the blood of the Passover lamb and was the ancient symbol for joy.²⁴¹ It should be noted that both “spiked” wine and drunkenness were not tolerated and were highly condemned.²⁴²

The Passover lamb was purchased four days prior to the sacrifice during which time it was tenderly cared for in the home. There it was loved and nurtured, winning the affection of everyone, especially the children. On the fourteenth day of Nisan, a massive slaughter of the Passover Lambs took place inside the temple. It was always painful to see the cute and affectionate lambs get slaughtered, but the object lesson was obvious: The price of sin is always painful and costly.

At the blast of the silver trumpets, the sacrificial lamb was killed by the head of every Jewish family. At all other times the priests slaughtered the sacrifices. A Levitical priest then removed the fat, and burned it. If a bone was broken in this process, the Oral Law demanded that the Levite receive one less than forty stripes, indicating that great care was taken in the punishment/ritual process.²⁴³ During the sacrificial killing, the Levitical choir chanted the Hallel as the congregation repeated the first line of each Psalm after the choir sang it. On the final Psalm (118), verses 25 and 26 were repeated by the congregation.

Its blood was poured out at the foot of the altar. After chanting praises to God, the lamb was taken home to be roasted and consumed as the Passover observation continued in the privacy of a family setting.²⁴⁴ Technically, according to the Jewish calendar, the lamb was killed one day (before sundown) and eaten the next (after sundown).²⁴⁵ There were so many men coming to the temple to sacrifice their lambs, that Josephus recorded that the temple gates were opened until after midnight to accommodate the crowds.²⁴⁶

It is from the observance of this Passover that the church celebrates Christ in a rite known

240. Mishnah, *Pesabim* 10:1-2, 4, 7.

241. Rosen and Rosen, *Christ in the Passover*. 50-51.

242. “Spiked wine” was wine with added sugar or dried fruit that increased the alcohol content, and was known as “strong drink.” See Appendix 26.

243. Mishnah, *Pesabim* 7:11.

244. Rosen and Rosen, *Christ in the Passover*. 46-48.

245. Bloch, *The Biblical and Historical*. 101. Sunset was deemed to be the end of one day and the beginning of the next day.

246. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.2.2.

as “Communion” or “Eucharist” (Gk. *give thanks*).²⁴⁷ There are noticeable parallels between the ancient Passover ritual and the introduction of Communion by Jesus.

The Passover

God remembered His covenant.

Slavery in Egypt remembered

Deliverance from Egypt

Blood of the Passover Lamb atoned for sins

Interpretation of the Passover elements

Call for continued celebration

The Lord’s Supper

A new covenant is introduced.

Freedom of slavery to sin

Forgiveness of sins (Mt. 26:28)

The Passover Lamb was symbolic for the blood of Jesus that removed sins.²⁴⁸

Interpretation of the Lord’s Supper elements

Call for continued celebration

Scholars also debate the influence of a community of Essenes in western Jerusalem near the Essene Gate. Josephus identified its location, which assisted archaeologists in uncovering it, but the historian said little else of it.²⁴⁹ Most scholars believe that Jesus and the disciples celebrated their Passover in an Essene home. There are several considerations for this opinion:

1. Some believe that, since the Essenes had separated themselves from mainline Judaism by celebrating Passover a day early, Jesus and His disciples made use of such a facility.²⁵⁰ They had their own community in the western edge of Jerusalem on Mount Zion.
2. There were numerous theological differences and Jesus most certainly would not have been in agreement with the Essenes on many issues.

247. Stein, R. *Jesus the Messiah*. 205.

248. See 1 Cor. 5:7; Jn. 1:29, 36.

249. Josephus, *Wars* 5.4.2 (145).

250. Hoffman, “The Bread of Sacrifice.” Vol. 2 Part 4.

3. Since the Passover meal was only between Jesus and His disciples, the observance could have been held anywhere.

4. It was most important for Jesus to die on the cross at the same time that Passover lambs were sacrificed in the temple. Therefore, Jesus and His disciples had to have had their Passover lamb early, since it was impossible to observe Passover without a lamb in the Second Temple Period.

There is another debate among scholars as to whether the name of this Essene gate was derived from Essenes residents or from the road leading from the gate to Qumran where a number of Essenes lived. Frequently, a gate was named for the distant city to which the road from the gate led. For example: the road from the Damascus Gate led to Damascus and the road from the Jaffa Gate led to the seaport town of Jaffa.²⁵¹ However, not all gates have such honors, such as the Dung Gate or the Sheep Gate. In all probability, this gate was named because there were Essenes living in the adjacent area as well as the road that led to the Qumran community by the Dead Sea.

Video Insert >

14.02.05.V *The Last Passover and Possible Connection to the Essene Calendar.* Dr. Paul Wright discusses the “biblical difficulty” of Jesus celebrating the Passover the day *before* most other Jews celebrated it. Did Jesus observe the Passover according to the Essene Calendar? Click here if Internet connection is available.

As previously stated, there were regional variations of the Passover observances. The Mishnah, for example, states that on the 14th day of Nisan the people of Judea worked until noon, while in Galilee there was no work to be done at all.²⁵² Finally, the early church celebrated Passover (without the lamb) and communion for three centuries, until the practice was decreed to be illegal by Constantine the Great, who was also largely responsible for removing the last traces of Jewishness from Christianity. Until the year 325 the church fathers understood the words of Paul to be taken literally when he said,

251. Those who oppose the position that Jesus celebrated Passover in the Essene community of western Jerusalem cite that there is no archaeological evidence that the Essenes lived there. However, the Essene lifestyle was such that there would not have been any identifiable differences of a material nature or archaeological evidence. As to the date or location of the Passover, they are resolved that it remains a mystery.

252. Mishnah, *Pesachim* 4:5.

Therefore, let us observe the feast, not with old yeast or with the yeast of malice and evil but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

1 Corinthians 5:8

These Passover-observing Christians were called the *Quartodecimians* or *Fourteeners*, by Hellenistic Christians who had no understanding of the significant meaning of Passover in Jews' or Christians' lives.²⁵³ In so doing Paul implied the apostles should maintain the liturgical Jewish calendar.²⁵⁴

There are two final thoughts to be discussed. Throughout history whenever the Jews observed the Feast of Passover and recalled their flight from Egypt, they did not use terms such as “our forefathers,” “our ancestors,” or “them.” They used the personal pronoun “us,” and, thereby, identified themselves as the recipients of God’s deliverance. In fact, they personalized the Bible as if it was written specifically for each family. Likewise, Jesus affirmed and continued the personalized element of the Passover/Last Supper Communion celebration.

Not everyone who claimed to be a believer was permitted to participate in the Lord’s Supper, that is, the Communion / Eucharist. It must be noted that Matthew 7:6 (08.04.04) quickly became a significant guidepost for admitting some and prohibiting others from attending the sacred ritual. Church growth was exploding and many false teachers entered various congregations causing chaos and confusion. Tertullian complained that popular false teachers and heretics permitted everyone to our Lord’s Table, similar to “Open Communion” practiced by many churches today. He said,

That which is holy they will cast to the dogs, and pearls to swine.

Tertullian, *De Praescriptione* 41

The early church not only underscored the exclusiveness of the Lord’s Table, but also made a reference to Matthew 7:6 as follows.

Let no one eat and drink from your Eucharist but those baptized in the name of the Lord: to this, too, the saying of the Lord is applicable, “Do not give to dogs what is sacred.”

253. Garr, *Restoring Our Lost Legacy*. 143-45.

254. Garr, *Restoring Our Lost Legacy*. 155-56.

Didache 9:5²⁵⁵

The early church did not observe “Open Communion,” whereby anyone who said they were a believer could participate. Being a Christian was too dangerous to permit any stranger be part of the believer’s circle. The gospel message was available to everyone. However, to become a part of the inner-circle of believers and partake of the Communion Table, one had to show evidence of a changed and consecrated life. While the *Didache* states that all those who participate in Communion should be baptized, the cultural context of the entire passage restricts Communion to only those who were baptized *and* live an obedient lifestyle.²⁵⁶ It has been said that the challenges that the first century church faced immediately after Jesus returned to heaven will be the same immediately before He returns. If so, then church leaders today may need to re-evaluate their open communion policies.



14.02.05.A. SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD SEAL CERTIFIED TEMPLE SACRIFICE. In 2011 archaeologists excavating at the Robinson’s Arch section of the Temple Mount, discovered a small clay seal with the inscription “Pure for God.” It is believed that when a worshiper had his sacrificial offering inspected and approved, he was given a seal like this one to carry with his sacrifice to a priest at the

255. The *Didache* is a book on church order that was written within a century of the life of Jesus. For more information, see 02.02.08.

256. Pilch, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible*. 94.

altar.²⁵⁷

While the theme and basic structure of the Passover Seder (Passover Service) was standardized, there were regional variations. There is no consensus on the format of a first century Passover and, quite possibly, this is because of variations that existed within Judaism. Jewish scholars have cataloged more than 1,600 forms, three basic elements have remained consistent:

1. The bread is unleavened,
2. The bread is striped, and
3. The bread is pierced.

Jesus was symbolized in the bread in that He was sinless (unleavened), He was scourged with a Roman whip (striped), and He was pierced with a Roman sword and nails. Two writers of antiquity preserved valuable details – first Josephus followed by one of the writers of the Mishnah:

In the month of Xanthicus, which is by us called Nissan, and is the beginning of our year on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, when the sun is in Aries (for in this month it was that we were delivered from bondage under the Egyptians), the law ordained that we should every year slay that sacrifice which I before told you we slew when we came out of Egypt, and which was called the Passover; and so do we celebrate this Passover in companies, leaving nothing of what we sacrifice until the following day. The feast of unleavened bread succeeds that of Passover and falls on the fifteenth day of the month and continues for seven days, wherein they feed on unleavened bread. On every one of which days two bulls are killed and one ram and seven lambs. Now these lambs are entirely burnt beside the kid of the goats, which is added to all the rest, for sins. For it is intended as a feast for the priest on every one of those days. But on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth for before that day they do not touch them. And when they supposed it proper to honor God, from whom they obtain this plentiful provision in the first place, they offer the first fruits of their barley, and that in the following manner: They take a handful of the ears and dry them, then beat them small and purge the barley from the bran. They then bring one-

257. <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/news/jerusalem-seal-gives-evidence-for-temple-ritual/?mqsc=E3013909> Retrieved December 27, 2011.

tenth deal to the altar to God, they leave the rest for the use of the priest and after this, it is that they may publicly or privately reap their harvest. They also at the participation of the first fruits of the earth, sacrifice a lamb as a burnt offering to God.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 3.10.5 (248-251)

On the eve of Passover, from about the time of the Evening Offering a man must eat nothing until nightfall. Even the poorest in Israel must not eat unless he sits down to table, and they must not give more than four cups of wine to drink, even if it is from the (Pauper's) Dish.

After they have mixed him his first cup, the School of Shammai says: he says the benediction first over the day and then the Benediction over the wine. And the School of Hillel says: he says the Benediction first over the wine and then the Benediction over the day.

When (food) is brought before him he eats it seasoned with lettuce, until he is come to the breaking of bread; they bring before him unleavened bread and lettuce and the haroseth (the mixture of nuts, fruit, and vinegar), although haroseth is not a religious obligation. Rabbi Eliezer ben Rabbi Zadok says: It is a religious obligation. And in the holy city, they used to bring before him the body of the Passover-offering.

They then mix him the second cup. And here the son asks his father (and if the son has not enough understanding his father instructs him how to ask), "Why is the night different from other nights? For on other nights we eat seasoned food once, but this night twice; on other nights, we eat leavened or unleavened bread, but on this night all is unleavened; on other nights we eat flesh roast, stewed, or cooked, but this night all is roast." And according to the understanding of the son his father instructs him. He begins with the disgrace and ends with the glory; and he expounds from a wandering Aramean was my father ... until he finishes the whole section (Deut. 26:5-11).

Rabban Gamaliel used to say; "Whoever had not said (the verses concerning) these three things at Passover has not fulfilled his obligation. And these are they: Passover, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs: 'Passover' - because God passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt; 'Unleavened bread' - because our father was redeemed from Egypt; 'Bitter herbs' - because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our fathers in Egypt. In every generation a man must

so regard himself; as if he came forth himself out of Egypt, for it is written: “And you shall tell your son in that day saying, ‘It is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt. Therefore are we bound to give thanks, to praise, to glorify, to honor, to exalt, to extol, and to bless him who did all these wonders for our fathers and for us. He brought us out of bondage to freedom from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning to a festival-day, and from darkness to great light, and from servitude to redemption, so let us say before him the Hallelujah.

How far do they recite (the Hallel, i.e. Ps. 113-118) the School Shammai say: “To a joyful mother of children” (end of Ps. 113). And the School of Hillel says: “To a flintstone into a spring well” (end of Ps. 114).²⁵⁸ And this concluded with the Ge’ullah (a benediction). Rabbi Tarfon says: “He that redeemed us and our fathers from Egypt and brought us to this night to eat therein unleavened bread and bitter herbs.” But there is no concluding Benediction. Rabbi Akiba adds: “Therefore, O Lord our God and the God of our fathers, bring us in peace to the other set of feasts and festivals which are coming to meet us, while we rejoice in the building - up of your city and are joyful in your worship; and may we eat there of the sacrifices and of the Passover-offerings the wall of your altar and let us praise you for our redemption and for the ransoming of our soul. Blessed are you, O Lord who redeemed Israel.”

After they have mixed for him the third cup he says the Benediction over his meal. (Over) a fourth (cup) he completes the Hallel and says after it the Benediction over song. If he is minded to drink (more) between these cups, he may drink; only between the third and the fourth cups he may not drink.

After the Passover meal they should not disperse to join in revelry.

Mishnah, *Pesahim* 10.1-8²⁵⁹

It should be noted that both the circumcision and Passover symbolized the covenant God had with the Israelites. The Passover is the memorial of when God saved the lives of Jews as He led them out of Egyptian bondage and, eventually, into the Promised Land.

258. Today Bibles have the convenience of chapter and verse divisions. Most historical sources credit Stephen Langton (1150-1228) for placing chapter divisions in the Vulgate Bible in the year 1228. Therefore, the ending of these readings was indicated by the quotation.

259. Insertions by Danby, ed., *Mishnah*.

Circumcision was symbolic of the covenant relationship between God and man, which was to be passed on from generation to generation, because the promises of God were to Abraham and to all of his descendants. Therefore, no uncircumcised Jew or non-Jew was permitted to participate in the Passover event (Ex. 12:48). It appears that both rites were suspended during the forty year desert wandering, but resumed when the Israelites entered the land of Canaan (Num. 9:2). No explanation was given for its forty year discontinuance. It should also be noted that there was no sacrificial lamb during the previous exilic times. But by the first century so many Jews were living hundreds of miles from Jerusalem that the rabbis decreed every Jew needed to visit Jerusalem only once in a lifetime.²⁶⁰

“For I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine.” By this statement Jesus said He would wait for His bride until the Kingdom of God is completed. The imagery of this cup of wine was that of a bridegroom offering a cup of wine to his bride, when the *katuvah* was signed (a new covenant). The couple shared the third [Passover] cup of wine on their wedding day. The fourth cup of wine is the last of the Passover cups and has the double meaning of being the cup that will be served at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, when Jesus and His bride celebrate their wedding. This Passover meal concluded with a dramatic change from the customary closing. Jesus offered bread and wine to His disciples and stated that these elements were to be symbolic of Him, the new covenant, and in remembrance of Him. In later years, the observance of wine and bread became known as “Communion” or “Holy Eucharist.”

In the timeline of God, there are “Three Great Passovers” to be considered, and understanding these provides full meaning of this special and sacred observance.

1. The Passover of Egypt when God brought His people out of Egyptian slavery and out of the environment of Egyptian gods.
2. The Passover of the Last Supper when Jesus not only connected His life to the first Passover, but also “sealed the marriage *katuvah*” with his bride.²⁶¹
3. The Messianic Banquet is not a Passover, but there are clear resemblances to a Passover as well as to a first century wedding.

The term the “Lord’s Supper” is used only once in the New Testament (1 Cor. 11:20). It

260. Bloch, *The Biblical and Historical*. 104, 106, 109.

261. The marital contract is further described in 04.03.03.A and 08.02.01. See also the video 09.03.04.V1 by Rabbi John Fischer who discusses first century wedding imagery.

reflects the special nature of the event in the early church. The common word *eucharistic*, meaning *thanksgiving*, was not used until the time of Ignatius in the early second century.²⁶² While the Eucharist / Communion is certainly something to be revered and be thankful for, unfortunately, the church has lost the full meaning of it.

Video Insert >

14.02.05.V2 *Imagery of the Passover and Last Supper in the Messianic Wedding Banquet.* Professor John Metzger discusses the purity of the (L)lamb during the Passion Week and the related imagery of the bride and groom to the Messianic Wedding Banquet. Click here if Internet connection is available.

“This is my body.” The Passover bread was the emblem, or representation of His body that is a figure of speech. In essence, bread is the all inclusive term meaning all that is required to live – the substance of life is Jesus.²⁶³ A similar literary style is found in Deuteronomy 32:4. Other examples are these: In that passage Moses said the “He is like a rock,” the pictorial imagery of the Hebrew Law becomes quite evident. In John 15:5 Jesus said that “I am the vine and you are the branches,” obviously not literally, but represented by the vine and branches. In this passage, Jesus represented His “body” and “blood” with the emblems of bread and wine (or grape juice). Israel had been the vine, into which all people had to connect to worship God. But when Jesus said, “I am the vine,” He clearly stated that He was the only way to God the Father and eternal life in heaven.

Throughout church history the phrase has been defined as “this represents my sacrifice,” as well as “this is myself.”²⁶⁴ These words are a metaphor, as underscored by the Apostle Paul: “This is my body which is for you; do this as my memorial.” The blood of Jesus was a clear reflection upon the first Passover, when Moses sprinkled the blood of a lamb on the door openings of the Jewish homes, so that the death angel would pass over them. He said, “This is the blood of covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words” (Ex. 24:8). If the words of Jesus were taken literally, they would

262. Wigoder, “Last Supper.”

263. Cranefield, “Bread.” 37.

264. Some Christian denominations believe that the bread and wine literally and miraculously turn into the flesh and blood of Jesus.

state that the church is an extension of the incarnation, which is obviously not true.²⁶⁵

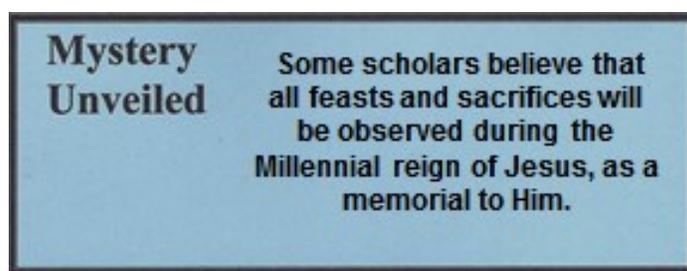
Holy Communion consists of bread and wine (or grape juice). In the Old Testament, bread was symbolic of God's provision to His people and wine was symbolic of His joy for those who would be in the Messiah's kingdom. The imagery was the same during the Passover celebration.²⁶⁶ In the millennial reign Israel will offer sacrifices as memorials of the death of Jesus (Ezekiel 46:13-25), while the church will memorialize the death with the breaking of bread and drinking from the cup, as described by the Apostle Paul:

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when He was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, ²⁴ gave thanks, broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

²⁵ In the same way, after supper He also took the cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant established by My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

²⁷ Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 11:23-27



Here lies an interesting illustration between the proverbial "old law" of the Hebrew Bible and the "new law" of the New Testament. The Apostle Paul said the believer was to come to the communion table with a pure heart (1 Cor. 11:27). Anyone who comes to partake of the bread and of the fruit of the vine is to first resolve all conflicts with his fellow man, before he can come into the presence of God. When a Jew came to the

²⁶⁵. Kaiser, Davids, Bruce, and Brauch. *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. 449; Farrer, "Body of Christ." 1:203.

²⁶⁶. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 432.

mikvah, he or she immersed in the water before entering into the presence of God in the temple.²⁶⁷ The Jews, however, also recognized that the ritual bath was symbolic of what was to be in the heart, for the twelfth century rabbinic scholar Maimonides said, “Now ‘uncleanness’ is not a matter of mud or filth which water can remove, but is a matter of scriptural decree and dependent on the intention of the heart.”²⁶⁸ So likewise, prior to coming to the communion table, believers are to resolve their differences before entering into the presence of our Lord in their fellowship. Finally, it is interesting that there is no mention of a Passover lamb in the gospel narratives. Most certainly there was a lamb or it would not have been a true Passover. The reason for the omission maybe that the last supper would be continued under the name of “communion” wherein Jesus is worshiped for being the Passover Lamb who was sacrificed for the sins of the world.

“This cup is the new covenant established by My blood; it is shed for you.” The Greek word for covenant in this phrase, *diatheke* is not the word used when there is an agreement between equals (which is *suntheke*), but the word for covenant between a superior benefactor and his inferior servant.²⁶⁹ A *diatheke* covenant is the type of covenant whereby a group of people will bind themselves to a king or protector. This *diatheke* covenant is the fulfillment of the prophecy given by Jeremiah.

“Look, the days are coming”— this is the LORD’s declaration — “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”

Jeremiah 31:31

The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:25, where he quoted Jesus, that the commemorative communion, is the new covenant. It also looks back into history upon the sacrifice of Jesus and His death and resurrection, while it looks forward to the marriage feast (a covenant feast celebration) in the heavenly Kingdom of God (Mt. 26:29).

Covenants were strong and powerful agreements between two partners and were made with the promise of death to the one who would break it. Jesus made the new covenant and then died on our behalf, because believers break covenants daily. The phrase “My blood, which is poured out for you,” or **“My blood; it is shed for you,”** is reflective of

267. Zondervan’s *New International Version Archaeological Study Bible*. (2005, ed.). 1562.

268. Maimonides. *Book of Cleanness*. 526., quoted by William Sanford La Sor in “Discovering What Jewish Miqva’ot Can Tell Us About Christian Baptism.” 52, 84.

3317. Ladd, *Biblical Expositor*. 3:67; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 356; Barclay, *A New Testament Wordbook*. 30-32.

the covenant established between God and Moses on Mount Sinai (Ex. 19-24). After Moses encountered God, he and the people built an altar at the foot of the mountain and sacrificed an animal. Moses poured out half of the blood upon the base of the altar and the other half he sprinkled upon the people.²⁷⁰ The Last Supper was and continues to be a perfect “type and shadow” of the sacrificial offering made by Moses fifteen centuries earlier (cf Ex. 19-24; Heb. 8:8-12).²⁷¹

When Jesus referred to “His blood,” He used the phrase figuratively just as bread was used figuratively concerning His body. It was not blood which they drank, as is evident from the fact that later he called it “the fruit of the vine.” The wine or grape juice was the emblem of His blood which was soon to be shed for many.

14.02.06 Lk. 22:21-32

JESUS HINTS OF HIS BETRAYER CAUSING DISCIPLES TO ARGUE

²¹ But look, the hand of the one betraying Me is at the table with Me! ²² For the Son of Man will go away as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”

²³ So they began to argue among themselves which of them it could be who was going to do this thing. ²⁴ Then a dispute also arose among them about who should be considered the greatest.

²⁵ But He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles dominate them, and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’ ²⁶ But it must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever is greatest among you must become like the youngest, and whoever leads, like the one serving. ²⁷ For who is greater, the one at the table or the one serving? Isn’t it the one at the table? But I am among you as the One who serves. ²⁸ You are the ones who stood by Me in My trials. ²⁹ I bestow on you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one on Me, ³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom. And you will sit on thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

270. For a study of Jewish covenants from a messianic Jewish perspective, see Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*.

271. Saldarini, *Jesus and the Passover*. 60. See Appendix 6 concerning Old Testament sacrifices and Jesus. Appendix 9 reveals the New Testament plan of salvation as presented in the Old Testament. See Appendix 3 for a comparison of Moses as a prophetic picture of Jesus. See also “type and shadow” in Appendix 26.

³¹ “Simon, Simon, look out! Satan has asked to sift you like wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

As they gathered for the Passover meal, His ministry was approaching its climax. For over three years the disciples had traveled with Him, and during that time He had told them of His impending suffering and death (Lk. 22:14). But what did their discussions focus on now? It was a concern as to who would be the greatest among them (Lk. 22:24). Obviously, they failed to grasp what was most important to Jesus.

Their questions concerning power and authority had perplexed them on several occasions.²⁷² Jesus had given ample teaching on leadership and now was the time for one last lesson.

14.02.06.Q1 Why did Jesus wash the disciple’s feet (Lk. 22:21-32)?

As in any ancient Middle Eastern city in or near a desert, the streets of Jerusalem were covered with manure and raw sewage. The dry Sirocco winds blow in dust from the northern edge of the Arabian Desert located east of the Jordan River.²⁷³ In this environment, people frequently walked barefoot or wore simple leather thongs on their feet. Obviously, one did not have to travel far before his or her feet became filthy, sore, and tired. As a result, it was the custom for slaves to wash the feet of a guest upon entering a home or prior to eating with a host family. It was cleansing and refreshing.

Likewise, it was the custom of disciples to care for the needs of their mentors and rabbis. They provided his food, all his worldly cares, and made his life as comfortable as possible. That included washing his feet – a relaxing pleasure at the end of a day’s journey. In return, the rabbis taught them the Scriptures, in particular, the application of the Torah to the daily issues of life. At this Passover, everyone already had their feet washed when they entered the house. So why did Jesus wash the disciples’ feet? There are two possible answers:

1. The traditional interpretation which is taught elsewhere in Scripture is that service to others should be done with humility and in the name of Jesus.

272. Mt. 18:1-5; 20:20-28; Mk. 9:33-37; 10:32-45; Lk. 9:46-48.

273. Levy, *The Ruin and Restoration of Israel*. 89. For a study of historical maps of this region, see Nebenzahl, Kenneth. *Maps of the Holy Land*. New York: Abbeville Press. 1986.

2. But a few scholars have suggested that when the rabbi felt that one or more of his disciples were ready to “graduate,” he would wash their feet. Little did they know that soon they would no longer be disciples, but rabbinic apostles. The feet washing was both a ritual to teach humility and a commissioning service to man and God.²⁷⁴ The difficulty with this viewpoint is that there is no written hint of a commissioning service – yet Jesus often said that He would soon die in Jerusalem. Had they considered what they might do after that? Apparently not.

They had just completed their last Passover together in which Jesus connected the significance of the ancient exodus from Egypt and the wedding imagery of the cups of wine to the future marriage of the Lamb. The significant point is that their service to others would be with the humility of a slave. While they were to teach and demonstrate the Kingdom of God, their lives were to be ones of humility and service. As Jesus was sent by the Father,²⁷⁵ so likewise He sent out the seventy disciples (Lk. 10:1) and then the twelve.²⁷⁶

14.02.07 Jn. 13:1-10 The Upper Room

JESUS HUMBLY WASHES THE APOSTLES' FEET

¹ Before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

² Now by the time of supper, the Devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, to betray Him. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had given everything into His hands, that He had come from God, and that He was going back to God. ⁴ So He got up from supper, laid aside His robe, took a towel, and tied it around Himself.

⁵ Next, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel tied around Him.

274. While some scholars believe that a foot washing service was a graduating or commissioning event among some rabbis, it is important not to “read that into this text.” The genuine commissioning into ministry occurred on the Day of Pentecost. Yet the foot washing event must have made the disciples think in a broader context of their own ministry.

275. Mt. 15:24; Mk 9:37; Lk.9:48; Jn. 3:17; 5:36; 6:29.

276. Mt. 10:5; Mk. 3:14; 6:7; Lk. 9:2; Jn. 4:38.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who asked Him, “Lord, are You going to wash my feet?”

⁷ Jesus answered him, “What I’m doing you don’t understand now, but afterward you will know.”

⁸ “You will never wash my feet — ever!” Peter said.

Jesus replied, “If I don’t wash you, you have no part with Me.”

⁹ Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.”

¹⁰ “One who has bathed,” Jesus told him, “doesn’t need to wash anything except his feet, but he is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you.”

¹¹ For He knew who would betray Him. This is why He said, “You are not all clean.”



14.02.07.A. FOOT-WASHING BASIN. A pottery basin similar to the ones that may have been used for foot washing in the first century. Basins found in wealthier homes were made of metal, such as lead or copper.²⁷⁷

277. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 375.

Photographed by the author at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem.

“Took a towel, and tied it around Himself.” A towel around the waist was the common dress of a slave. Jesus had taken off His more expensive outer clothing, put on the garment of a slave – the lowest kind of slave – and became a servant to the disciples.²⁷⁸ Household servants had no honor, dignity, or position. Jesus made Himself into the lowest human form. The Apostle Paul said Jesus made Himself nothing and took on the very nature of a servant (Phil. 2:6-8).

“Began to wash His disciples’ feet.” How interesting it is that, immediately after the disciples argued as to who would be the greatest in the kingdom of Jesus, their leader began the most humbling act of the evening. The head of the household would never perform such an act. Therefore, when Jesus began to wash the feet of His disciples, He broke all the cultural traditions with His message of servanthood.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, the disciples already had their feet washed when they entered the house. The act by Jesus was an object lesson of humility and servanthood. This act is parallel to the “first shall be last and the last shall be first” teaching. His values are essentially upside down from what the world considers to be logical and normal.

14.02.08 Jn. 13:12-17

JESUS EXPLAINS WASHING

¹² When Jesus had washed their feet and put on His robe, He reclined again and said to them, “Do you know what I have done for you? ¹³ You call Me Teacher and Lord. This is well said, for I am. ¹⁴ So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done for you.

¹⁶ “I assure you:

**A slave is not greater
than his master,
and a messenger is not greater
than the one who sent him.**

278. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 51.

279. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 375.

¹⁷ If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

“And a messenger is not greater.” The English word *messenger* is translated from the Greek word *apostolos*, which is more frequently translated as *apostle*.²⁸⁰ An apostle is one who is sent forth to act on a particular matter, as in the case of the Apostle Paul who was sent forth to preach the Kingdom of God to the Gentiles. This passage is a clear indication that the disciples would become apostles.

14.02.09 Jn. 13:18-21 (See also Mt. 26:20-21; Mk. 14:17-18)

JESUS PREDICTS HIS BETRAYAL

¹⁸ I’m not speaking about all of you; I know those I have chosen. But the Scripture must be fulfilled: The one who eats My bread has raised his heel against Me.

¹⁹ “I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He. ²⁰ I assure you: Whoever receives anyone I send receives Me, and the one who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”

²¹ When Jesus had said this, He was troubled in His spirit and testified, “I assure you: One of you will betray Me!”

“The one who eats My bread.” To share food with someone from a common bowl was symbolic of a most trusted friendship. It was equal to the loyalty of a blood relative. These words became the fulfillment of Psalm 41:9, as Jesus clearly stated to everyone that the traitor was identified.

⁹ Even my friend in whom I trusted,

one who ate my bread,

has raised his heel against me.

Psalm 41:9

280. Campbell, “Apostle.” 20-21.

An example is the friendship and act of loyalty extended by King David who invited Mephibosheth to eat at his table (2 Sam. 9:7-13). Mephibosheth was the last surviving member of King Saul's family and David had, by cultural tradition, every right to kill him. But instead, David accepted him into his own family. Another example is found in 1 Kings 18:18-20 where the prophets of Baal ate at the table of Jezebel.

Whenever a meal was shared with someone, there was a special bonding and trust for which there is no parallel in Western society. That is why the Pharisees were extremely incensed with Jesus when He ate with tax collectors, prostitutes, and other sinners. The depth of affection, loyalty, love, and bonding expressed at the gathering of the disciples for communion is profound. Conversely, to share a meal with someone and then betray him is a travesty of the highest order. The Apostle Paul said anyone who shares communion in an unworthy manner sins "against the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:27) – an equal travesty.

<p>Mystery Unveiled</p>	<p>In biblical times, sharing a meal with someone was symbolic of a most trusted friendship. There is no parallel in Western culture today of this important friendship and significance.</p>
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14.02.10 Mt. 26:22-24; Jn. 13:22-27a; Mt. 26:25 (See also Mk. 14:19-21; Lk. 22:22)
The Upper Room

THE BETRAYER IS IDENTIFIED

Mt. ²² Deeply distressed, each one began to say to Him, "Surely not I, Lord?"

²³ He replied, "The one who dipped his hand with Me in the bowl — he will betray Me.

²⁴ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

Jn. ²² The disciples started looking at one another — uncertain which one He was speaking about. ²³ One of His disciples, the one Jesus loved, was reclining close beside Jesus. ²⁴ Simon Peter motioned to him to find out who it was He was talking about. ²⁵ So he leaned back against Jesus and asked Him, "Lord,

who is it?”

²⁶ Jesus replied, “He’s the one I give the piece of bread to after I have dipped it.” When He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son. ^{27a} After Judas ate the piece of bread, Satan entered him.

Mt. ²⁵ Then Judas, His betrayer, replied, “Surely not I, Rabbi?”

Amazingly, again and again Jesus demonstrated *His* love and loyalty to Judas; again and again Jesus tried to encourage him from his planned action of betrayal – but as with everyone else, Jesus permitted him to exercise his free will.

“As it is written about Him.” Where? What was written? If the disciples had not understood what Jesus meant, they would have asked for a clarification. It may have been a reference to Isaiah 53. This is another comment about a general theme rather than a specific quotation.²⁸¹

“When He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son.” This phrase clearly indicates that Judas sat beside Jesus in a seat of honor, close enough for Jesus to place a piece of bread in a bowl and give it to him. Although Jesus knew that it was Judas who was going to betray Him, He offered him a seat of honor, giving him every opportunity to repent and not commit his intended crime. The offer was rejected. The highest honor was rewarded with the greatest treason. So Jesus then told him to be quick at his task, and only Judas understood what that meant.

“Satan entered him.” Until this time, Jesus accepted Judas, even though He knew His beloved disciple was a thief and was committed to his goal. But this was a turning point and Jesus no longer accepted him. Even though he would imply (next statement) that he would not betray the Master, his decision was final. God’s righteousness demands that believers, in order to maintain purity, break fellowship with anyone under satanic possession.

Satan entered Judas because the former disciple had an evil conspiracy in his heart and chose not to repent. The act of Satan entering his soul was simply the fulfillment of Judas’ desire. He apparently served Satan for some time and desired to live for him. It could be said that Judas hardened his own heart in a manner similar to Pharaoh, which was followed by God hardening both hearts, for this was their desire (cf. Ex 8:15).

281. A partial list of other problematic passages is listed in Appendix 13.

In a related matter, the New Testament church is instructed to maintain purity and holiness, and those who live a sinful lifestyle are to be removed from the fellowship (cf 1 Cor. 15:33; Jam. 2:1-4). Acceptance of those who remain active in non-biblical lifestyles has its limits.

“Surely not I, Rabbi?” Judas realized that Jesus was aware of his intentions, yet he chose not to repent. It has been said, at times, that he was a puppet of a sovereign God predestined for wrath and not mercy because he was needed to bring Jesus to the cross. Not so! Judas made his own decisions. However, Jesus, in His foreknowledge of all humanity, knew what decisions Judas would make in the same manner that Jesus knows what decisions we will all make tomorrow. Judas *chose* to become a disciple of Satan and Jesus was aware of that. He did not have to choose an eternal Hell and even been given had the opportunity to repent but chose not to. This account demonstrates the *total* sovereignty of God, who is in control of the whole world, while mankind has *total* freewill and responsibility of his eternity. Only God could make such an irony function perfectly in the life of every person.

“You have said it,” He told him. Until now Caiaphas and his conspirators believed Jesus was unaware of their plans. However, when the high priest became aware that Jesus identified Judas as the betrayer, he was forced to accelerate plans for the trials and possible execution. Caiaphas simply could not imagine that Jesus would be willing to die. Rather, the religious leaders assumed that Jesus and the disciples would try to escape, possibly fight, or use supernatural miraculous powers to escape death and then overthrow the temple system. Therefore, the trials and death sentence had to be immediate, even if it fell on Passover. In legal terms, “time was of the essence.”

14.02.11 Jn. 13:27b-30

JESUS SENDS JUDAS OUT

^{27b} **Therefore Jesus told him, “What you’re doing, do quickly.”**

²⁸ **None of those reclining at the table knew why He told him this.** ²⁹ **Since Judas kept the moneybag, some thought that Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the festival,” or that he should give something to the poor.** ³⁰ **After receiving the piece of bread, he went out immediately. And it was night.**

At this point it is evident that the disciples had no idea of what Judas was about to do. He must have been the ideal actor because, if they knew – then they would probably have

killed him immediately. Peter and Simon, the former Zealot, would probably have been the first to pounce on him.

“Since Judas kept the moneybag.” Judas was the financial manager of the group and evidently, he was less than honest since John labeled him as a thief (Jn. 12:6). Most certainly he looked toward the day when, in his thinking, Jesus would establish an earthly kingdom and He would be the kingdom treasurer. Judas went out to betray Jesus to the Sadducees and, most likely never returned to the Upper Room. He knew the habits of Jesus and therefore, expected Jesus and the disciples to be going to Bethany for the night. He caught up with them in the olive grove of Gethsemane.

14.02.12 Jn. 13:31-35

JESUS COMMANDS LOVE FOR THE BROTHERHOOD

³¹ **When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. ³² If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself and will glorify Him at once.**

³³ **“Children, I am with you a little while longer. You will look for Me, and just as I told the Jews, ‘Where I am going you cannot come,’ so now I tell you.**

³⁴ **“I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

“Now the Son of Man is glorified.” The glorification of Jesus was His death on the cross and resurrection. The reason Jesus said “Now the Son of Man is glorified,” is that everything was now a “done deal,” meaning, that everything was set in motion and there was no turning back. The last requirement was fulfilled.

14.02.12.Q1 Was the new commandment of John 13:34 really new if it was written in Leviticus 19:18?

At issue is the statement by Jesus, who said, **“I give you a new command.”** There are two words in the Greek language that mean *new*, and they have slightly different

meanings. The Greek word *kainos* (2537) means *new* in terms of a revival of something that is already in existence. Something *which is new in its own way*.²⁸² The other Greek word is *neos* (3501) and it means new in terms of it having never existed previously; *brand new*.²⁸³

In this case, Jesus used the word *kainos*, meaning that He placed a new awareness on Leviticus 19:18. It reads, “Do not take revenge or bear a grudge against members of your community, but love your neighbor as yourself, I am Yahweh (God).”²⁸⁴ In essence, people should be able to identify Christians by the love they have for others. This type of “God-love” is not necessarily emotional, but seeks the highest and best good for others. It is encouragement. It will give a caring rebuke when needed. It is an honest concern for the welfare of a brother or sister, while it maintains discernment. This concept was not a “new” idea, but was a common teaching in Jewish history and appeared in some pre-Christian writings.²⁸⁵

Throughout the Second Temple Period, Jewish men wore “signs” that identified them – not for identity reasons, but as reminders of God. The phylactery worn on the forehead and left arm were two of those signs.²⁸⁶ Observance of the Sabbath and kosher foods also identified any person as being an observant Jew.²⁸⁷ Jesus now said there was to be a sign of love in the fellowship and the love of God flowing in and through His faithful followers that would identify them as Christians.

The eleven disciples now confronted Him with several questions. They wanted to know where He was going and why they couldn’t go with Him. These questions would have been quite normal, if the future would have been totally within the physical realm. However, Jesus was about to transcend into the spiritual world; He would conquer death and return for a brief time. No matter how well this would have been explained, such a discussion would lead only to more questions and possibly, confusion. Nevertheless, Jesus answered them, knowing that understanding would elude them. But after the resurrection they would fully comprehend His dynamic work.

282. Haarbeck, Link, and Brown, “New.” 2:670; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 52.

283. Haarbeck, Link, and Brown, “New.” 2:674.

284. See also Galatians 5:14.

285. Two examples are found within three books of *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*. They are *The Testament of Dan* 5:3; *The Testament of Zebulon* 5:1; and *The Testament of Issachar* 7:6.

286. Thompson, “Phylactery.” 4:586-87.

287. Hellenized Jews did not always observe kosher dietary laws.

14.02.13 Jn. 13:36-38; Lk. 22:31-34**PETER MAKES A REQUEST**

Jn. ³⁶ “Lord,” Simon Peter said to Him, “where are You going?”

Jesus answered, “Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you will follow later.”

³⁷ “Lord,” Peter asked, “why can’t I follow You now? I will lay down my life for You!”

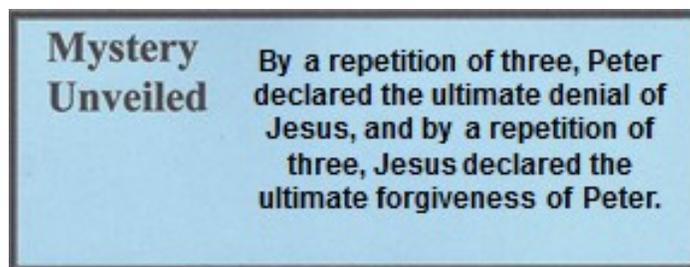
³⁸ Jesus replied, “Will you lay down your life for Me? I assure you: A rooster will not crow until you have denied Me three times.

Lk. ³¹ “Simon, Simon, look out! Satan has asked to sift you like wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

³³ “Lord,” he told Him, “I’m ready to go with You both to prison and to death!”

³⁴ “I tell you, Peter,” He said, “the rooster will not crow today until you deny three times that you know Me!”

The disciples finally realized a dramatic change was about to take place; one that would be radically different from what they had been anticipating. Jesus told them He was going to leave, and that He was going to die. According to their thinking, this was not what a Messiah would do! They were confused and fearful with thoughts of being deserted, and simply did not understand what Jesus was telling them. Yet their worst nightmares are about to come to pass. The declaration by Peter that he would die for Jesus was precisely opposite of what was about to happen. However, Jesus had a deeper knowledge of Peter than Peter had of himself. From when Peter denied Jesus three times until Jesus forgave him three times, there was not one iota of self-sufficiency in him. There was no greater emphatic way of denying or affirming anything other than to repeat it three times. Peter declared the ultimate denial and Jesus declared the ultimate forgiveness. Peter realized all of his devotion was human devotion. Only later did he receive the Holy Spirit empowered devotion.



14.02.14 Jn. 14:1-4

JESUS TO PREPARE A HEAVENLY PLACE²⁸⁸

¹ “Your heart must not be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also. ⁴ You know the way to where I am going.”

The phrase “**to prepare a place for you**” is wedding imagery that everyone in His audience understood. Verse 4 is the typical “stealing of the bride” when the bridegroom came with his friends to “capture” the love of his life and the entire group then went off to the wedding feast. But before that happened, a first century bridegroom would prepare a place adjacent to his father’s house or nearby where he and his bride would live side-by-side with or close to his father.²⁸⁹ Visitors to the Middle East today will frequently see the house of an extended family, where parents live and several children have built additions to the home when they were married. Likewise, Jesus will prepare “an addition,” or to use the biblical term, “a room,” or “an abode,” (Gk. *mone*, 3438) in heaven for each of His believers,²⁹⁰ which are more accurate descriptions than the term “mansions,” as used in some translations.²⁹¹

288. The significance of the messianic banquet was very important to Jesus (Heb. *Yeshua*). The wedding imagery between Himself and His church as it was reflected in a first century Jewish wedding is discussed by Dr. John Fischer, a messianic scholar and rabbi at 09.03.04.V1 and Professor John Metzger in video 14.02.05.V2. See the following as well: Wedding garments needed at the wedding in Mt. 22:1-14 (13.03.07); discussion of the “best place” in Lk. 14:7-14 (12.02.05); the great messianic banquet in Lk. 14:15-24 (12.02.06); the wise and foolish virgins in Mt. 25:1-13 (14.01.07); only the father knew Mt. 24:36 (14.01.05).

289. Harrison, E. *A Short Life of Christ*. 180; Packer and Tenney, eds., *Illustrated Manners*. 434.

290. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 214; Vine, “Mansions.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:392.

291. Vine, “Abide, Abode.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:2, and “Mansion.” 2:392.

14.02.15 Jn. 14:5-7

THOMAS WANTS TO KNOW THE WAY.

⁵ **“Lord,” Thomas said, “we don’t know where You’re going. How can we know the way?”**

⁶ **Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”**

⁷ **“If you know Me, you will also know My Father. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him.”**

Great men of the Hebrew Bible often spoke of the *way* by which men ought to live and the *ways* of God.²⁹² Jesus used this illustration to declare that He is the only *Way* to be redeemed unto the Father. He is the only Resurrection that bridges the chasm between death and the new life. He is the only *Truth* (Ps. 86:11), that reveals to mankind the nature of his spiritual condition and how to deal with it and, thereby, only He offers eternal *Life* (Prov. 6:23) with the Father.²⁹³

“No one comes to the Father except through Me.” The difficulty of this statement lies in its simplicity. How could anyone misunderstand a statement of such immense clarity? Did Jesus really mean all those who lived before Him would never see the Father? Or how about those who live in distant lands, such as America, and would not hear the gospel until centuries later? Are they all lost through no fault of their own? Could a heavenly Father of love, justice, and mercy condemn both of these groups into an eternal lake of fire?

These theological questions are beyond the scope of this work, yet the phrase cannot go untreated. In essence, God expects people to respond to His calling and they will be responsible for the amount of knowledge they possess. Therefore, one who has heard the Word of God and has rejected it will be accountable for his decision, as opposed to someone who has never heard the Word, but realizes that there must be a God and lives accordingly. In this case, Jesus is speaking of those who had heard His message. Nowhere in Scripture is anyone condemned because they did not hear the Word of God, but they are condemned because they rejected it.²⁹⁴

292. For example, see Deut. 5:32-33; 31:29; Isa. 30:21; 35:8; Ps. 26:3; 27:11; 86:11; 119:30.

293 For further study on the significance of the physical resurrection of Jesus, see Geisler, Norman L. “The Significance of Christ’s Physical Resurrection.” *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 146:582 (Apr-June, 1989). 148-70.

294. Kaiser, Davids, Bruce, and Brauch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. 500.

14.02.16 Jn. 14:8-14

PHILIP WANTS TO SEE THE FATHER

⁸ “Lord,” said Philip, “show us the Father, and that’s enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been among you all this time without your knowing Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on My own. The Father who lives in Me does His works. ¹¹ Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. Otherwise, believe because of the works themselves.

¹² “I assure you:

The one who believes in Me
will also do the works that I do.
and he will do even greater works than these,
because I am going to the Father.

¹³ Whatever you ask in My name,
I will do it
so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

¹⁴ If you ask Me anything in My name,
I will do it.

“The one who believes in Me.” Another rendering of this phrase is “Anyone who has faith in Me.”²⁹⁵ The English words *believes* and *faith* are both translated from the Greek term *pisteuo*, meaning *complete faith, trust, and belief*. None of these terms carry the modern idea of an “opinion” as is often associated with *believe* today, but rather, the Greek word affirms a solid and secure knowledge and trust. It is not the *quantity* of faith, but the *quality* of faith. With that as a foundation, Jesus used these expressions to emphasize what could be done in His Name:

1. A mountain could be tossed into the sea (Mk. 11:22-23)

295. New International Version (1984) translation.

2. A mulberry tree could be tossed into the sea (Lk. 17:5-6). Unfortunately, faith is often quantified, meaning that if one had more faith as in Luke 17:5, then God would respond. Neither the disciples nor anyone else can acquire faith, as in “faith dollars,” and then spend those “faith dollars” for whatever is desired. The passage of John 14:8-14 assumes that one understands God’s will and desire and expects God to respond in His time and His way.

3. Anyone will be able to perform greater miracles than what He did (Jn. 14:12)

“Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it.” The context of this phrase is that the believer is completely engulfed in the will (desire) of the Father and, therefore, will ask only in accordance with the divine will of God. Furthermore, the previous statement, **“so that the Father may be glorified in the Son,”** is the central focus of the speech, as illustrated on the central line when written in the style of Hebrew poetry. Obviously, not all of *our* prayers will be answered, but only those prayed in *His Name*.²⁹⁶

Jesus prayed this as He was facing the agony of the cross. He was deeply and painfully concerned about a humanity choosing the road to Hell. Compare that request with the typical prayer, that modern Christians would ask for various comforts of life with little concern about the lost, the dying, the sick, the broken hearted, and the other casualties of life. This is not to say that God has no interest in the welfare of His believers, but there clearly is a disproportionate concern for materialism over the real eternal issues of life.

Note carefully the two parts of His message.

1. These are directed only to believers: those who have repented from their old lifestyle and are living a life directed by Scripture and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2. The context indicates the believer will ask according to the will and desire of the Father. This means that, like the phrase in our Lord’s Prayer, the believer’s request is identical to the desire of the heavenly Father.

This passage affirms that believers are to pray to God by the authority of Jesus Christ. Once one has accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior and lives a lifestyle that emulates Jesus as our Lord of their life, that person’s life has come under His authority. Therefore, prayers that end with the phrase, “in the name of Jesus,” will be meaningful and authentic; these reflect the believer’s faith and authority as one who is in covenant with Jesus. To pray “in the name of Jesus” is not a formula or magical phrase for any desire.

296. Barclay, “John.” 2:165-66.

The Lord will respond according to His desires, which may or may not always be the same as the believers' (see 2 Cor. 12:8 concerning Paul and his thorn). It is imperative that the believer is fully committed to Christ and Christ is in him (Jn. 15:1-8). Only then will the petitioner pray a prayer in the will and desires of God, which He can answer.

14.02.17 Jn. 14:15-21

JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY SPIRIT

¹⁵ **"If you love Me, you will keep My commands.** ¹⁶ **And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.** ¹⁷ **He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive Him because it doesn't see Him or know Him. But you do know Him, because He remains with you and will be in you.** ¹⁸ **I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you.**

¹⁹ **"In a little while the world will see Me no longer, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live too.** ²⁰ **In that day you will know that I am in My Father, you are in Me, and I am in you.** ²¹ **The one who has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me. And the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father. I also will love him and will reveal Myself to him."**

"If you love Me, you will keep My commands." This is a basic concept in ancient near eastern thinking. To love or believe in Jesus and not do what He commands is an oxymoron – two opposites. If a person professes to truly believe in Him, he will do as Jesus desires, if he loves Christ he will obey Him.

"He will give you another Counselor." At this point Jesus made His first reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit.²⁹⁷ But the disciples did not understand until the Spirit came (Jn. 20:22) upon them. Yet it wasn't until the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 that the Spirit came upon them "in power."²⁹⁸

Various translations translate *Counselor* as *Comforter* or *Helper* (Gk. *parakletos* 3875 literally, *called to one's side*), attributes by which Jesus obviously referred to the *Holy*

297. cf Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15.

298. When God created Adam, He gave him the "breath of life" which in Hebrew is *ruach* and in Greek *pneuma*. Both words mean both *breath* and *spirit*. Therefore, the *Spirit* of Acts 2 is often seen as giving life of a "second creation."

Spirit. The word *parakletos*,²⁹⁹ is essentially untranslatable. The closest understanding of it is *Someone who is called in*. However, this word is to be associated with the question “Why?” someone is called in. Again, the English language has its limits because the word *Comforter* is generally associated with sorrow or mourning. Rather, while the word includes that element, it is also associated with *victory* concerning challenges believers face, especially as the result of being faithful.³⁰⁰ That is why Jesus said He would not leave us as orphans (Gk. *orphanos* 3737), meaning *desolate* (Jn. 14:18) or *without a father* (Jas. 1:27).³⁰¹

“I will not leave you as orphans.” The role of the father was extremely important in biblical times and, unfortunately, Western culture has lost its significance. The term *father* (Gk. *pater* 3962) is from a root word that signifies *a nourisher, protector, and upholder*.³⁰² Jesus desires to function as the loving father for all humanity, and He will not leave His children as orphans. The term *orphans* is from the Greek term *orphanos* (3737; Jas. 1:27) but is sometimes translated as *desolate* (Jn.14:18). A term used for one who had no genealogical record is *agenealogetos* (35), meaning *orphan*, as in Hebrews 7:3.³⁰³ The role of the father was so important, that a child whose father was dead was considered to be an orphan even if his mother was still alive (Job 24:9).³⁰⁴ For that reason, Jesus said that He would not leave us as orphans – *unprotected, forgotten, and desolate*. As to a genealogical record, the names of all believers are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

14.02.18 Jn. 14:22-24

APOSTLE JUDAS QUESTIONS JESUS

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it You’re going to reveal Yourself to us and not to the world?”

299. Vine, “Comfort, Comforter, Comfortless.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:110; Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 2:243-44; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 135.

300. Barclay, “John.” 2:166-68;

301. Barclay, “John.” 2:168; Vine, “Fatherless.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:229.

302. Vine, “Father.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:227.

303. Vine, “Genealogy.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:262.

304. Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman, eds., “Orphan.” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. 615.

²³ Jesus answered, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ The one who doesn’t love Me will not keep My words. The word that you hear is not Mine but is from the Father who sent Me.

“**Lord, how is it You’re going to reveal Yourself to us and not to the world?**” The disciples had lived with Jesus for at least three and a half, possibly four and a half years. They were with Him every day except for those brief times when He secluded Himself to pray. Still, they did not fully comprehend His mission nor would they until after the resurrection. This question reveals that they were still expecting Him to be the political-messiah who would come to the temple steps, reveal his identity, deliver them from Roman occupation, and re-establish the kingdom of David. The concept of a Messiah who would deliver them from the bondage of sin was still not in their thinking.

14.02.19 Jn. 14:25-31

JESUS PREDICTS HIS RETURN

²⁵ “I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit — the Father will send Him in My name — will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.

²⁷ “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Your heart must not be troubled or fearful. ²⁸ You have heard Me tell you, ‘I am going away and I am coming to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ I have told you now before it happens so that when it does happen you may believe. ³⁰ I will not talk with you much longer, because the ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over Me. ³¹ On the contrary, I am going away so that the world may know that I love the Father. Just as the Father commanded Me, so I do.

“Get up; let’s leave this place.

The disciples, in effect, attended the best Bible college that ever existed. Yet there would be times when they did not have the appropriate answers when confronted with questions of faith. To this, Jesus said the Holy Spirit would teach them.

“But the Counselor ... will teach you all things.” This passage has at times been taken to mean that those entering the ministry need not study. This is hardly the case. Those who argue this point forget the length of time the disciples spent with Jesus. Today,

some may think they have no need for further training, yet the Apostle Paul was a scholar of Hebrew studies and told Timothy, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). The phrase, “handling accurately the word of truth” is a Hebraic idiom for “study.”

The most significant feature of this passage is the promise of the Holy Spirit for the believer. Even though Jesus had given them the apocalyptic forecast of horrendous events that were to come, yet He said that He will be with each of His followers regardless of the hostility or situation that should arise. Through Him there is victory for every believer.

“Peace I leave with you.” The Hebrew word *shalom* meaning *peace* may be one of the most difficult words to translate. It includes an understanding of *wholeness*, *completeness*, and *soundness*.³⁰⁵ While it certainly contains all of the definitions of Western understanding, it also encompasses a sense of comfort and even salvation. It was and still is used as a common greeting and farewell, but for first century Jews, it had messianic overtones because of the words of Isaiah.

**For a child will be born for us,
a son will be given to us,
and the government will be on His shoulders.
He will be named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.**

Isaiah 9:6

This sense of *shalom* peace was emphasized again when the Apostle Paul spoke of the peace that transcends all understanding – a *shalom* of God in Philippians 4:7.

14.02.19.Q1 Was Jesus equal or less than the Father in heaven (Jn. 14:28)?

The question is, of course, centered on this statement: “**The Father is greater than I.**” This phrase reveals the fact that Jesus functioned in a subordinate role to the Father during His limited capacity as a human being. It is difficult to understand this in light of the number of times He said He was equal to the Father (Jn.1:1, 18; 5:16-18; 10:30;

305. Pilch, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible*. 3.

20:28). This matter is compounded by the fact that Jesus clearly stated His dependence upon the Father (Jn. 4:34; 5:19-30; 8:29; 12:48-49). Since these two themes are presented a number of times by the same gospel writer, it can be safely assumed that John not only understood them, but by repetition he emphasized their importance. The parallel themes are dependence and equality.

It should be noted that John 14:28 is not to be interpreted that Jesus was/is a lesser God. Two thousand years of church history has not only rejected this concept, but the doctrine was at one time known as Arian heresy. For Jesus to hold this “lesser God” position would contradict all other biblical concepts of God and, most notably, introduce polytheism.

The dependency of Jesus upon the Father was only while He was in human form. In that sense and time frame, God the Father was greater than He, as Jesus left His glory and some of His divine attributes to live among men. However, in the broad space of eternity, He and the Father are one and the same, being equal in all things. Finally, it is impossible for mortal men to understand an immortal God and even more so, to understand the Holy Trinity.

14.02.19.Q2 Why was the omniscience of Jesus sometimes clearly noticeable and other times it wasn't?

Prior to answering this question, it is important to examine the theological term “omniscience.” It means to have full knowledge or to be “all knowing;” to have infinite awareness. Jesus was 100% human and 100% man. That is known as the hypostatic union, and is a concept that is impossible for any mere human to understand. Jesus took on a human nature and submitted the use of His divine attributes to the will of His Father. Therefore, there are times when His “full knowledge” or “omniscience” is clearly recognizable.³⁰⁶ However, there were other times when it was hidden or veiled by His humanity (Mk. 13:32).

14.02.20 Lk. 22:35-38

FULFILLMENT OF ISAIAH'S PROPHECY

³⁵ He also said to them, “When I sent you out without moneybag, traveling bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?”

306. Mt. 9:4; Jn. 2:24-25; 4:17-18; 11:11-14; 16:30.

“Not a thing,” they said.

³⁶ Then He said to them, “But now, whoever has a moneybag should take it, and also a traveling bag. And whoever doesn’t have a sword should sell his robe and buy one.”

³⁷ For I tell you, what is written must be fulfilled in Me: And He was counted among the outlaws (Isa. 53:12). Yes, what is written about Me is coming to its fulfillment.”

³⁸ “Lord,” they said, “look, here are two swords.”

“Enough of that!” He told them.

“And whoever doesn’t have a sword should sell his robe and buy one.” This passage is a difficult to understand for two reasons.

1. There is the historic opinion that Jesus was a conscientious objector and, therefore, was opposed to any form of violence.
2. Jesus had previously sent His disciples out on a missionary journey without any supplies and now He was sending them out fully equipped and armed. Why was there a difference? In verse 35 Jesus reminded His disciples that God had provided for all their needs on a previous missionary journey (ies), but now things had changed (v. 36). Jesus realized that the political winds were about to change and the provisions needed for future ministry would be supplied by God in a different manner. The people whom they would meet along the way, would not be as giving.³⁰⁷

Why did Jesus tell them to get a sword? What purpose did He have in mind? The answer is that, when traveling, it was common practice for every man to carry a short sword, known as a *gladius*.³⁰⁸ It was easily worn under the outer garment or on the side. Josephus reported that the Essenes carried swords to protect themselves from bandits, when they traveled to the homes of other Essenes. Note the words of the historian, Josephus,

307. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 365-66.

308. Dixon and Southern, *The Roman Calvary*. 48.

They have no certain city but many of them dwell in every city; and if any of their sects come from other places, what they have lies open for them, just as if it were their own; and they go into such as they never knew before as if they had been ever so long acquainted with them. For which reason they carry nothing with them when they travel to remote parts, through still they take their weapons with them, for fear of thieves.

Josephus, *Wars* 2.8.4 (124-125a)

14.02.20.Q1 Did Jesus approve of His disciples carrying weapons?

This question is difficult to answer, especially in light of the fact that it is impossible to think of Him as needing a weapon. Does this mean, however, that He forbade His disciples to carry them? No one would ever have thought of traveling anywhere completely defenseless; traveling was always dangerous.³⁰⁹ If thieves did not threaten travelers, then the Sicarii (as the Romans called them) or the Zealots (as the Jews called them), or a host of wild animals such as the Syrian brown bear (05.02.03.D) and the caracal lynx (05.02.03.E) would threaten and possibly kill them.

As previously stated, the disciples had traveled with Jesus for more than three years. It was the custom that a master would closely mentor his disciples similar to a parent-child relationship. This is an important point, because most certainly, the disciples understood how Jesus felt about such things as weapons. If these were not to be a part of their lives, He would certainly have told them long before now.

The *gladius* was as common in ancient times as the Boy Scout pocket knife once was in America. For a man to carry a short sword was nearly as common as walking with sandals. A *gladius* was a convenient tool that could clean a fish, sever firewood, create a spark with a flint for a cooking fire, or be used in self-defense against bandits or animals. Note that Jesus did not forbid the use of swords, nor forbid His disciples to carry them. This does certainly not mean He taught any type of military or armed conflict. Later He would tell them that those who live by the sword shall die by the sword (Mt. 26:52), which is hardly a command that would be spoken by a political revolutionary.

Finally, in verse 38 Jesus said, **“Enough of that!”** The difficulty with this passage is that the ancient writings had no quotation marks, exclamation marks, or other indicators to identify emotions, quotations, or questions. Therefore, readers were left with the task of

309. Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.6.1(118); *Wars* 2.15.6 (232).

creating an educated guess as to how the phrase was originally stated. It is the opinion of this writer that this was not a calm sentence, as if to imply that no additional swords were needed. Jesus knew all too well what the next few days were going to be like and another missionary journey was not on the agenda. At the thought of having more swords, Jesus emphatically said, “THAT IS ENOUGH!”³¹⁰ Ironically, Jesus embodies the paradox of uniting Jews with Christians and separating Jews from Christians.

14.02.21 Mt. 26:30-32 (See also Mk. 14:26-28; Lk. 22:39) The Upper Room

SINGING THE HALLEL

³⁰ **After singing psalms, they went out to the Mount of Olives.**

³¹ **Then Jesus said to them, “Tonight all of you will run away because of Me, for it is written:**

**I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.**

³² **But after I have been resurrected, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.”**

“**After singing psalms.**” In typical Jewish fashion, the psalms³¹¹ called the Hallel, meaning *Praise God*, are from the book of Psalm. As the celebration of the Passover came to a close, the disciples stood around the table and sang the second half of the Hallel, also known as the Egyptian Hallel (Psalm 113-118). Psalm 113 is a general praise psalm while chapters 114-118 refer to the actions of Jesus during the Exodus.³¹² These verses are not to be confused with Psalm 136, which are often known as the “Great Hallel.”³¹³ These psalms were as sacred as a national anthem would be to any patriot. Yet some of these psalms were also prophetic in nature. For example,

¹⁷ **I will not die, but I will live**

310. Kaiser, Davids, Bruce, and Brauch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. 486-88.

311. For the purpose of clarification, psalms are individual verses in a book titled Psalm. Reference to an individual psalm is not capitalized, but if a reference is made to the name of the book, it is capitalized.

312. For the identifying connections of Jesus with the Great Hallel (Ps. 114-118), see 04.06.01.

313. Barclay, “Matthew.” 2:342.

and proclaim what the LORD has done.

Psalm 118:17

After three days Jesus came out of the grave and for the following forty days He explained to His followers what He had done and what they were supposed to do. Most notably the words of Psalm 118:25-26 that they sang were also the psalms the people sang and shouted as Jesus rode into Jerusalem. The hymn was sung antiphonally: Jesus, as the host of the group, would have sung the lines and the disciples would respond with “hallelujah.” Little did they realize at this time that these hymns were actually about Him!³¹⁴

Later, when the disciples reflected upon the last Passover, they realized the depth of meaning of the psalms and their privileged part in the plan of God.³¹⁵ Other scholars have suggested the hymn to be a song of gratefulness concerning God’s deliverance and provision known as the *Dayeinu*. The words are as follows:

**If he had rescued us from Egypt,
But not punished the Egyptians
It would have been enough (*Dayeinu*)**

**If he had punished the Egyptians,
But not defeated their gods,
It would have been enough.**

**If he had given us the Sabbath
But not led us to Mount Sinai,
It would have been enough.**

**If he had led us to Mount Sinai,
But not given us the Torah
It would have been enough.**

**If he had given us the Torah,
But not brought us into the Land of Israel,
It would have been enough.**

314. Tenney, ed., “Hallel.” 6:792; For the identifying connections of Jesus with of the Hallel, see 04.06.01.

315. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 387; Taylor, “Hymn.” 2:676; Carson, “Matthew.” 8:539; Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*. 255-62.

**How much more, then, are we to be grateful to God
For all of these things which he has indeed
Done for all of us!**

*Dayeinu Lyrics*³¹⁶

It is unknown with certainty whether this song, or a variation of it, was commonly used in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus. What is known is that it appeared in a church sermon in the second century and in Jewish writings in the eleventh century. Since the earliest church services were patterned after the synagogue services, scholars have concluded that the *Dayeinu* could have been part of the Passover celebration.³¹⁷

14.02.22 Mt 26:33-35 (See also Mk 14:29-31)

PETER ANNOUNCES HIS LOYALTY

³³ Peter told Him, “Even if everyone runs away because of You, I will never run away!”

³⁴ “I assure you,” Jesus said to him, “tonight, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times!”

**³⁵ “Even if I have to die with You,” Peter told Him, “I will never deny You!”
And all the disciples said the same thing.**

14.02.22.Q1 Concerning the number of rooster crows, how does Matthew 26:34 reconcile with Mark 14:30?

Matthew recorded that before the rooster crowed Peter would deny Jesus three times and Mark said the denial would come before the rooster crowed twice. Again, this is a matter of interpretation. The disciples were not at all concerned how often the so-called rooster crowed, especially when several crows in succession were considered a single crow. At issue is the phrase, “**before the rooster crows.**” Some Bibles use the more accurate

316. Spangler and Tverberg, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus*. 111-12, 244; Werner, “Two Hymns for Passover and Good Friday.” 127-48.

317. Spangler and Tverberg, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus*. 111-12, 244; Werner, “Two Hymns for Passover and Good Friday.” 127-48; <http://www.bing.com/search?q=dayeinu&q> Retrieved October 24, 2014.

phrase, “cock crow,” or “rooster crow.” But as already been hinted, it probably was not a rooster that crowed! The phrase has two possible interpretations.

1. Jesus could have referred to a literal rooster crowing early in the morning. But Jewish writings clearly indicate that chickens were not permitted inside the Holy City. The Oral Law states,

They may not rear fowls in Jerusalem because of the Hallowed Things, nor may priests rear them [anywhere] in the land of Israel because of [the laws concerning] clean foods.

Mishnah, *Baba Kamma* 7.7

A rooster crowing outside the city walls might have been heard inside the city. However, this is highly unlikely.

2. Jesus, most likely, referred to the “rooster crow” as the trumpet blast that signaled the end of the third watch (3:00 a.m.) and the changing of military guard throughout the city.³¹⁸ That trumpet call was known in Latin *gallicinium* which means *cock crow*, and in Greek as *alektorophonia*.³¹⁹ The first “cock crow” was the midnight trumpet blast at the end of the second watch, and the second “cock crow” was at the end of the third watch (3:00 a.m.).³²⁰

Most scholars believe that Jesus was referring to the third watch trumpet blast because

1. The 3:00 a.m. trumpet blast *alektorophonia* is earlier than a natural rooster’s call
2. This call permitted time for the illegal judicial proceedings to occur.

Two priests stood at the upper gate ... with two trumpets in their hands. At the cock crow they blew a sustained, a quavering and another sustained blast. When they reached the tenth step they again blew a sustained, a quavering and

318. Vine, “Cock, Cock-Crowing.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:107-08.

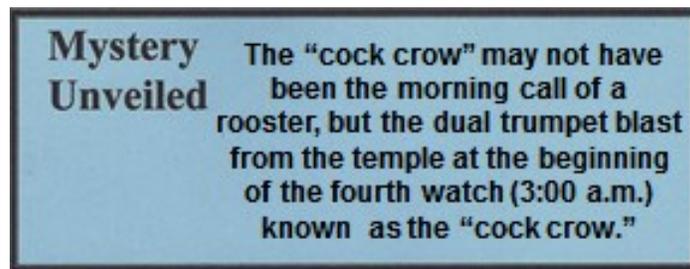
319. Barclay, “John.” 2:230 and “Matthew.” 2:347. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 3:436-37. See Appendix 16.

320. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor’s Manual*. Class 22, page 12.

another sustained blast. When they reached the Court [of the Women] they again blew a sustained, a quavering and another sustained blast.

Mishnah, *Sukkah* 5.4³²¹

Concerning the differences between Matthew and Mark, Mark evidently referred to the two trumpets that blew while Mathew probably referred to the number of trumpet blasts. It is a logical matter of perspective. Later, three trumpet blasts marked the end of the fourth watch (6:00 a.m.) and the beginning of a new work day.



14.02.22.Q2 How do the Synoptic gospels reconcile with the gospel of John on the Passover Narrative?

The apparent difference between the gospel of John and the synoptic gospels has been the fuel for much discussion. Since Gentile church leaders did not know the symbolic relationship between the Passover sacrifice and the timing of the death of Jesus, they had difficulty reconciling the three day event, as well as compressing the six trials into a time frame of less than twelve hours.

There are several ancient documents from the third and fourth centuries that reflect this incorrect interpretation. Adding to the error is the fact that the church at this time counted days as beginning at midnight. It should be noted that the purpose of these documents was to support the existing Gentile church doctrines and interpretations, which distorted the biblical narrative. The third century teachings of the Apostles, titled *Didascalia Apostolorum*, from Syria, comment:

While he (Jesus) was still with us, before he suffered, when we were eating the Passover with him, he said to us: "Today in this night one of you will betray me." And Judas came with the scribes and the priests of the people

321. Parenthesis by Danby, ed., *Mishnah*.

and betrayed the Lord Jesus.

When we had eaten the Passover on Tuesday evening, we went to the Mount of Olives. And during the night they arrested our Lord Jesus. And on the following day, on Wednesday, he remained imprisoned in the house of the High Priest Caiaphas. And on the following day again, on Thursday, they took him to the Procurator Pilate.³²² But when Friday commenced they accused him vehemently before Pilate. And they were unable to produce anything truthful, but gave false witness against him. And they urged Pilate on to kill him. And they crucified him on the same day.

Didascalia, *Apostolorum*³²³

Clearly, this is incorrect, but it demonstrates how lack of knowledge of Jewish culture attributed to inaccurate conclusions. Another Gentile church father was Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis (ca. 380) whose writings gave details on the month of April of the Gregorian calendar.

He (Jesus) suffered the thirteenth of the Kalends of April. Before that time they ate the Passover, as the Gospel testifies and we have declared many times. They celebrated the Passover meal two days before the official day, that is on Tuesday in the evening.... Further on that day, in the evening of Tuesday, he was taken prisoner. The Day of Preparation was on the 14th, the Sabbath the 15th; hereafter the Sunday lit up which illuminated the underworld, the world and the heaven with its light.

Epiphanius, *Panarion* 51, 26³²⁴

To observe the Passover the Savior withdrew to the Mountain (Mt. Zion), where he ate the Passover, which he had, as he said, so much desired (Lk. 22:15). It was there that he ate the Jewish Passover meal; he himself did not do it in any other way, but in the same fashion as they did, so that the Law

322. The title of Pontius Pilate was always thought to be “procurator.” However, in 1961 an inscription was discovered in Caesarea that has his title as “Prefectus Judaea” (see 16.01.06.B). The explanation of so-called error is that beginning from the time of Emperor Claudius (reigned 41-54), the title of the ruler of Judaea was *procurator*. Josephus and Tacitus who decades later wrote of Pilate used that title rather than his real one – *prefectus*, in Latin. See also Billington, “Was the Palace of Herod where Jesus was Tried?” 9.

323. Quoted from Pixner, *With Jesus in Jerusalem*. 78.

324. Quoted from Pixner, *With Jesus in Jerusalem*. 79.

should not be abolished but accomplished (cf. Mt. 5:17).

Epiphanius, *Panarion* 51, 27³²⁵

The Ethiopian apocryphal *Book of Adam*, (ca. the fourth century) related the days Jesus was arrested and crucified, and has a reference to Mark 2:20 concerning fasting. The author wrote,

God speaks to Adam; “Adam, you have established beforehand the days on which suffering shall come over me, when I shall have taken up flesh, namely Wednesday and Friday.”

***Book of Adam*³²⁶**

The author of *Adam* said the Passover was on Wednesday and that Jesus died on the following Friday. Again, there was a constant struggle to reconcile the biblical accounts.

The Judeo-Christians celebrated Passover-communion known as *Pascha*, which in the fourth century became known as *Easter*.³²⁷ According to the church historian Eusebius, the fourteenth day of the moon (Nissan) was still associated with the day Jesus was crucified, and He arose on the first day of the week (Lord’s Day). He discussed the fact that the church practiced fasting in observation of the Savior’s Passover in Asia.

The church of all Asia, guided by the remoter tradition supposed that they ought to keep the fourteenth day of the moon for the festival of the Savior’s Passover, in which day the Jews were commanded to kill the Paschal Lamb; and it was incumbent on them, at all times, to make an end of the fast on this day on whatever day of the week it should happen to fall.

Eusebius, *Church History* 5.23.1

The date that Jesus was crucified on Friday, the 14th day of Nissan, is well established. However, the events preceding the crucifixion remain somewhat problematic.

325. Quoted from Pixner, *With Jesus in Jerusalem*. 79.

326. <http://www.pseudepigrapha.com/pseudepigrapha/TheBookOfAdam.htm>. Retrieved March 30, 2013; Quoted from Pixner, *With Jesus in Jerusalem*. 79.

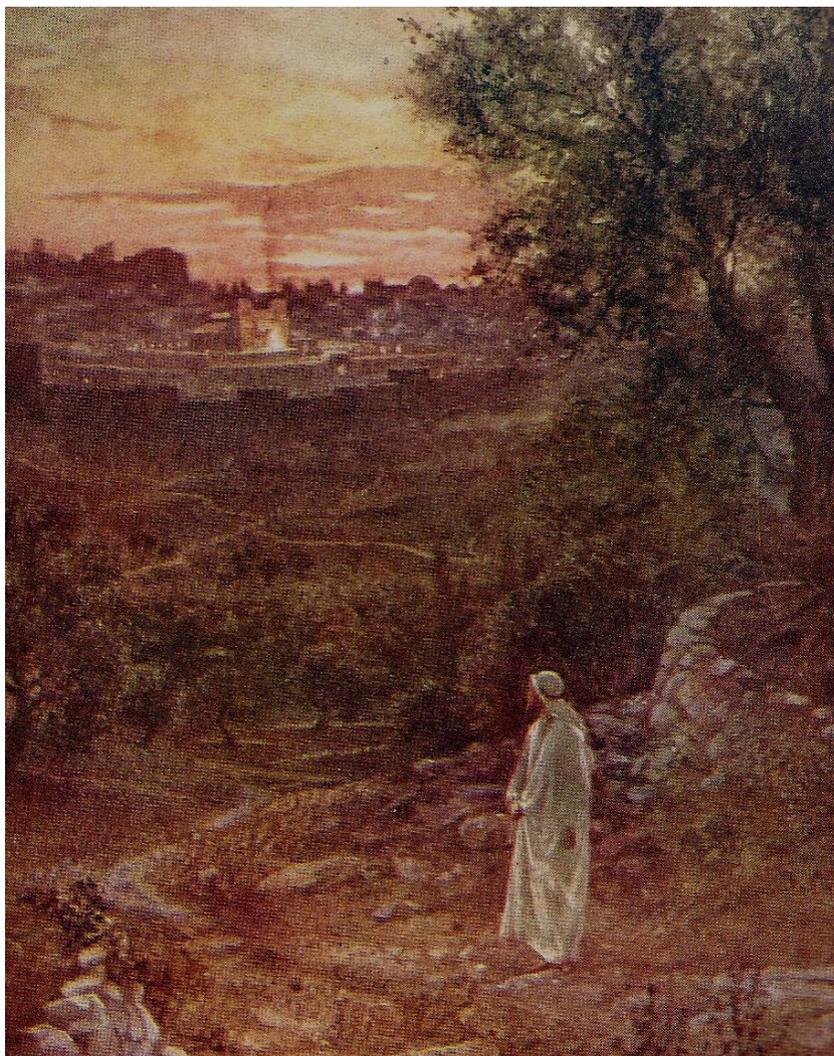
327. Rosen and Rosen, *Christ in the Passover*. 59.

Unit 15

The Passion Escalates

Chapter 01

The Final Discourse



15.01.00.A. JESUS LOOKS MOURNFULLY OVER THE CITY OF JERUSALEM. Artwork by William Hole of the Royal Scottish Academy of Art, 1876. Alone on the Mount of Olives, Jesus looks westward across the Kidron Valley toward Jerusalem and the temple. His heart is sorrowful as He ponders the future of His people and His nation,

yet He must prepare His disciples for the events that are about to transpire.

The time had come for the climax in the life of Jesus. The primary concern of the gospel writers was that the world would understand the meaning of His life, and especially, the dramatic events of the Passion Week. As previously mentioned, chronology was not as important to these writers as the work of Jesus that was about to unfold. This section begins with John who writes the portion of the discourse in which the major theme is the relationship of the believer with Jesus.

15.01.01 Jn. 15:1-8

IMAGERY OF VINE AND BRANCHES

¹ **"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vineyard keeper. ² Every branch in Me that does not produce fruit He removes, and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me.**

⁵ **"I am the vine;
you are the branches.**

**The one who remains in Me
and I in him
produces much fruit,
because you can do nothing
without Me.**

⁶ **If anyone does not remain in Me,
he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers.
They gather them, throw them into the fire,
and they are burned.**

⁷ **If you remain in Me and My words remain in you,
ask whatever you want
and it will be done for you.**

⁸ **My Father is glorified by this:
that you produce much fruit and prove to be My disciples.**

While salvation through Christ Jesus is free, if one is truly saved there will be clear evidence of that salvation. In this passage Jesus used the analogy of a vine branch to a believer. There are four interpretations of the unfruitful branches in verse 2:

1. They represent Christians who turned away from their faith and, therefore, lost their salvation.
2. The unfruitful branches represent the plans and events of a believer's life that God changes (or prunes), so that person will become a more productive servant.
3. They represent people who said they were believers, but they were never truly born again.
4. They represent believers who were unfruitful in their lives and were disciplined by means of death.

The first and second viewpoints are traditional ones while the third and fourth viewpoints arose out of Calvinism.³²⁸ While this is obviously a theological subject, it must be noted that James said that believers are not saved by works, but good works are proof of genuine faith (James 2:17). The proverbial "bottom line" is that Jesus loves every believer to the point that He will administer discipline or correction when needed.

Cast of Characters

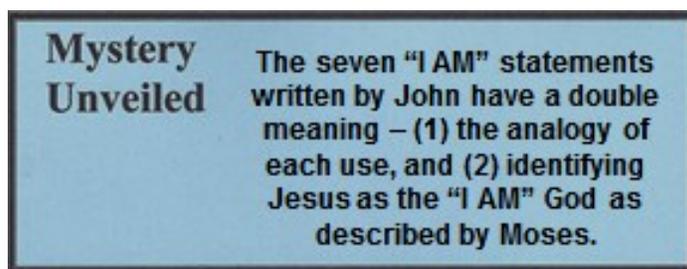
True Vine = Jesus
 Branches = His people who are "in Him."

Jesus again expressed spiritual ideas with Hebraic pictures, as in this phrase, "**I am the true vine.**" To this day, the grapevine remains a symbol of Israel as it did in the Hebrew Bible.³²⁹ The imagery was one in which God was the vine trunk and the Jews were the branches that received life from that trunk. Israel had been the vine, into which all people had to connect to worship God. But when Jesus said, "I am the vine," He clearly stated that He was the only way to God the Father and eternal life in heaven. In this profound statement, Jesus, in essence, stated that He was God. Statements of this nature were extremely difficult for the disciples to accept, and impossible for anyone else to accept because all rabbinic teachings said that a man could not be God nor could God be a man. In essence, they could not comprehend the deity of Jesus. This is more than a symbolic identification with a vine; it is also a reflection of the famous "I am" statements of God

328. For Further study, see Derickson, "Viticulture and John 15:1-6." 34-52.

329. See Ps. 80:8-16; Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 2:21.

that were given by Moses. In essence, the seven “I am” statements of John’s gospel have a double meaning.³³⁰



The prophet Isaiah revealed God’s purpose for the nation with the figurative description of a vineyard (Isa. 5:1-7). Israel was God’s chosen vineyard. Therefore, it is only natural that Jesus would refer to His disciples in the same motif. He told them that without Him, they could do nothing, but with Him, they could perform greater miracles than He had performed. In essence, Jesus was and continues to be the vine while the apostles, disciples, and believers were the branches. They were “yoked” together to produce fruit.

The disciples could not miss the imagery of the conversation they had with Jesus in the temple. Over the entrance door was a large grapevine, carved in stone. It had been covered with gold, paid for by wealthy contributors who had their names inscribed in the gold leaves.³³¹ The vine was an object of incredible beauty. However, the aristocratic leadership of Israel had become an unfruitful vine. Their limited evangelistic efforts did win converts, but those converts quickly became equally unfruitful. That is why Jesus referred to Himself as the “true” vine.

On an interesting side note, the term “vineyard keeper” is better translated as “gardener” as it is translated from the Greek term *georgos*, meaning farmer. It is God, the Farmer, who prunes (meaning to “cleanse”) the vine from dead and useless branches.³³²

“Every branch in Me that does not produce fruit He removes.” Grapes have two kinds of branches – those that produce fruit and those that do not. The unproductive

330. The Seven “I AM’s”: Bread of Life (Jn. 6:35, 41, 48, 51); Light of the World (Jn. 8:12); Door of the Sheep (Jn. 10:7, 9); Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:11, 14); Resurrection and the Life (Jn. 11:25); the Way, the Truth, the Life (Jn. 14:6) and the True Vine (Jn. 15:1, 5).

331. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 25.

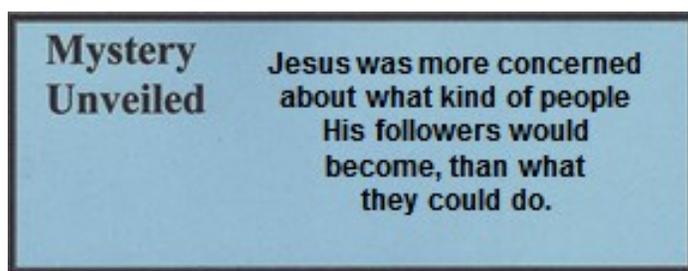
332. Interestingly, the Greek term *georgos*, is the origin of the English name “George.” See also Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 295; Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*. 410 n1.

branches are pruned back in December and January as not to drain strength from the productive branches. Pruned branches are then used for cooking fuel.

“Throw them into the fire, and they are burned.” Jesus clearly spoke of eternal death for those who refused His words and work.³³³ He is the only way, the only life, and the only truth that leads to eternal life. There are two kinds of people Jesus was probably thinking of in this discussion.

1. The leading Jews who were actively opposing Him
2. Those people in the future who would claim to be His followers but their deeds will not reflect any commitment to Him. Clearly a fruitless life leads to destruction.

“You produce much fruit.” The difficulty with this passage in John 15:8 is the interpretation of the word “fruit.” The Western cultural understanding suggests work or employment that would advance the Kingdom of God. And while that is an honorable goal, it is not the meaning of this term. Rather, it is a reference to the fruit of the Spirit, as further described in Galatians 5:22-23 as “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (cf. Eph. 5:9; Phl. 1:11). This fruit is the major element in one’s life, whereby he becomes renewed in the image of God that was nearly destroyed at the fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden. This fruit cannot be self-produced; it can only come from above. As the Holy Spirit prunes the lives of the believers, new spiritual growth can come forth to produce this fruit (cf. Jn. 15:6; 1 Cor. 3:11) and in this way the Father honored and glorified.



Jesus spoke these words as they looked upon the temple and saw the colossal golden vine and branches that decorated the temple gates. The origin of the vine is also from Isaiah

333. The term “fire” was frequently used by Old Testament prophets: Isa. 29:6; 66:15; Ezek. 38:22; Amos 1:4; 7:4; Zeph. 1:18; 3:8; Mal. 3:2; 4:1. The term is also found in numerous extra-biblical books such as *Jubilees* 9:15; 36:10 and in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

and it became the focal point of the conversation. Josephus described the temple symbolism:

As to the holy house itself, which was placed in the midst of the inmost court, that most sacred part of the temple, it was ascended to by twelve steps; and in front its height and breadth were equal, and each a hundred cubits.... Its first gate was seventy cubits high and twenty-five cubits broad, but this gate had no doors for it represented the universal visibility of heaven, and that it cannot be excluded from any place. Its front was covered with gold all over and through it the first part of the house that was more inward did all of it appear; which, as it was very large, so did all the parts about the more inward gate appear to shine to those that saw them. But then as the entire house was divided into two parts within, it was only the first part of it that was open to our view. Its height extended all along to ninety cubits in height, and its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty. But that gate which was at this end of the first part of the house was, as we have already observed, all covered with gold, as was its whole wall about it. It had also golden vines above it from which clusters of grapes hung as tall as a man's height; but then this house, as it was divided into two parts: the inner part was lower than the appearance of the outer, and had golden doors of twenty-five cubits altitude, and six in breadth. But before these doors there was a veil of equal largeness with the doors. It was a Babylonian curtain embroidered with blue and fine linen, and scarlet, and purple, and of a contexture that was truly wonderful. Nor was this mixture of colors without its mystical interpretation but was a kind of image of the universe. For by the scarlet there seemed to be enigmatically signified fire, by the fine flax the earth, by the blue the air, and by the purple the sea; two of them having their colors this foundation of this resemblance. But the fine flax and the purple have their own origin for that foundation, the earth producing the one and the sea the other. This curtain had also embroidered upon it all that was mystical in the heavens, excepting that of the twelve signs representing living creatures.³³⁴

Josephus, *Wars* 5.5.4 (207-214)

334. The twelve signs represent the signs of the Zodiac.



15.01.01.A. RELIEF CARVING OF VINE AND BRANCHES. Vine and branches has long been an icon for Israel, as well as a promise of prosperity by God. This carved stone door header of a home was found near Capernaum. Photograph by the author.

In another book, the first century historian said these words concerning the decorative vines:

The temple had doors also at the entrance, and lintels over them, of the same height as the temple itself. They were adorned with embroidered veils, with their flowers of purple, and pillars interwoven: and over these, but under the crown-work, was spread out a golden vine, with its branches hanging down from a great height, the largeness and fine workmanship of which was a surprising sight to the spectators, to see what vast materials there were and with what great skill the workmanship was done.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.11.3 (394-395)

The faithful rabbis, who recorded the description of the temple and its services, wrote this description:

A golden vine stood over the entrance to the Sanctuary, trained over posts; and whosoever gave a leaf, a berry, or a cluster as a freewill offering, he

brought it and [the priests] hung it thereon.

Mishnah, *Middoth* 3.8

Incidentally, the crown-work was a memorial for four individuals involved with the construction of the temple (Zech. 6:14). Every time they entered the temple they saw the vine carved in its gates, the symbol of true Israel. How fitting then that Jesus said He was that vine, not only symbolically, but also concerning the reality of the believer to Himself. Jesus is the source of life for all who desire it.

15.01.02 Jn. 15:9-17

COMMAND TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER

⁹“As the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you. Remain in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commands you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commands and remain in His love.

¹¹ “I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. ¹² This is My command: Love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I do not call you slaves anymore, because a slave doesn’t know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from My Father. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. ¹⁷ This is what I command you: Love one another.

Evidently, John’s later years were spent in Ephesus, before he was banished to the island of Patmos. While in Ephesus, even as his health began to fail in old age, he continued to remind the believers to love one another as recorded by Jerome. John apparently thought this was an important teaching he had to pass on to the church.

When the blessed evangelist John, the apostle, had lived in Ephesus into his extreme old age and could hardly be carried to the meetings of the church by the disciples anymore, and when speaking he could no longer put together many words, he would not say anything else in the different meetings but this: “Little children, love one another!” When at last the disciple and

brothers present got tired of hearing the same thing again and again, they said, “Master why do you keep saying the same thing?” John replied with a saying worthy of him: “Because it is the Lord’s command, and it is enough if it is really done.”

Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians*³³⁵

“I do not call you slaves anymore...friends” The Hebrew word *doulos* is at times translated as *slave* although *servant* is a better word. Furthermore, it is a slave or servant of the highest honor. For example, Moses was a *doulos* of God (Deut. 34:5).³³⁶ Jesus now calls His closest disciples and other followers *friends* because friends have a choice to whom they give their affection and loyalty, slaves do not. The word *friends* is translated from the Greek term *philon*, which represents more than a passing friend; it is a *dear friend*, a *cherished friend*, as someone special to the heart.³³⁷ This is a unique concept in that no longer are believers servants of God, but they hold a cherished position of being a friend of God as did Abraham (Jas. 2:23) and Moses (Ex. 33:11).

15.01.03 Jn. 15:18-16:4

JESUS WARNS OF THEIR PERSECUTION

¹⁸ **“If the world hates you, understand that it hated Me before it hated you.** ¹⁹ **If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you.** ²⁰ **Remember the word I spoke to you: ‘A slave is not greater than his master’ (Jn. 13:16). If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.** **If they kept My word, they will also keep yours.** ²¹ **But they will do all these things to you on account of My name, because they don’t know the One who sent Me.** ²² **If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin. Now they have no excuse for their sin.** ²³ **The one who hates Me also hates My Father.** ²⁴ **If I had not done the works among them that no one else has done, they would not have sin. Now they have seen and hated both Me and My Father.** ²⁵ **But this happened so that the statement written in their scripture might be fulfilled: They hated Me for no reason (Ps. 35:19, 69:4).**

335. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Patristic Quotations: From 50 – 750 A.D.* 164.

336. Other examples are Joshua in Joshua 24:29, David (Ps. 89:20), the Apostle Paul (Titus 1:1), and James (Jas. 1:1).

337. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus.* 229.

²⁶ “When the Counselor comes, the One I will send to you from the Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father — He will testify about Me. ²⁷ You also will testify, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

¹ “I have told you these things to keep you from stumbling. ² They will ban you from the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God. ³ They will do these things because they haven’t known the Father or Me. ⁴ But I have told you these things so that when their time comes you may remember I told them to you. I didn’t tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you.

“If the world hates you.” The word *world*, as John used it, means a *human society organizing itself without God*.³³⁸ The goals of life and worldviews of those who do not know God will always be vastly different from those who love Him and are committed to His calling and lifestyle.

“If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” Jesus gave clear warning that persecution would be coming upon the disciples, instigated by the same religious leaders who were persecuting Him. This prophecy was fulfilled as Jewish anti-Semitism rose, traditional Jews rising up against Judeo-Christian Jews. Such hatred was usually spread in worship services, as evidenced by the twelfth benediction of the Eighteen Benedictions that were recited in every synagogue on Sabbath.³³⁹ It has a pointed statement concerning heretics, including the Nazarenes, meaning those who followed Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus warned His disciples of pending persecution. He presented four reasons why men would hate and try to kill them.

1. Before they came to faith, the believers were a part of the world, but when they accepted Christ, they came out of the world. For this reason they were hated (Jn. 15:19).
2. Jesus has a special relationship with those who are dedicated to Him, for which they are persecuted (Jn. 15:14, 20).
3. The world does not know the Father (Jn. 15:21) and, therefore, does not know Jesus.
4. Finally, the Word of God condemns the world, since those of the world choose

338. Barclay, “John.” 2:185.

339. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*. 94, 106; See also “The Eighteen Benedictions” in Appendix 18.

not to accept Him, and, therefore, they hate all those who did accept Him (Jn. 15:22).

If there was ever a prophetic warning that was to be fulfilled quickly, this was it. Two historians, Suetonius and Tacitus did not waste a moment to make their comments about the so-called troublesome Christians. Suetonius quoted Emperor Claudius (reigned 41 – 54) who said that the followers of “Chrestus” (meaning “Christ”) were,

“A race of men who belong to a new and evil superstition.”

Suetonius, *Life of Claudius* 25.4

At this point it is important to restate the fact that the Romans believed all religions were ancient and, therefore, placed them under a legal protection. They even went out of their way as not to offend the Jews, whose religion certainly confused them more than any other. That is, until Jesus came. The followers of Jesus believed that God had done a new work – and that, obviously, was not ancient. So in Roman thinking, Christianity was not a religion, but a superstition, and superstitions had to be removed from the Roman society. That gave grounds for government sponsored persecution.³⁴⁰ For that reason, the Roman historian Tacitus referred to the members of the church as,

“The notoriously depraved Christians (as they had been popularly called).”

Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome* 15.41

Other reasons why early Christians were persecuted were numerous. Note the following examples of the popular myths that were said of them:

1. They were disloyal to the Roman Empire at the best and insurrectionists at worst because they refused to claim that “Caesar is Lord.”
2. Christians were said to be cannibals because they continued to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus. Even though Jesus was long past crucified and buried (and ascended), superstitious people were easily convinced this accusation was true.
3. Since the early church had a weekly fellowship meal called the *Agape* (Love

340. Mellowes and Cran, Producers. *From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians*. (DVD). Part 2.

Feast) and they greeted each other with a *kiss of love*,³⁴¹ also known as a *holy kiss*, believers were accused of practicing immorality. This was an astounding accusation in light of the lifestyle of the pagans who had few, if any, objections to immorality.

4. Early Christians were said to be incendiaries because they believed that when Jesus returns He will bring fire and destruction upon the earth.

5. Christians were destructive to families, because converts to the new religion broke up families and marriages. Of all the charges, this one was noteworthy because often children became believers and the parents didn't; or the wife became a follower of Jesus and the husband didn't, and therefore, left her. In essence, Jesus was right when He said He didn't come to bring peace, but to bring the sword (Mt. 10:34).

Both Suetonius and Tacitus were modest in their comments about Jesus and the early believers. To make matters worse, wherever pagans spread these accusations, the Jewish leaders "confirmed" the so-called truth to ignorant listeners. It was concerning situations like these that Jesus said spoke of the Holy Spirit who would minister to the believers during difficult times.

"Scripture might be fulfilled." The words *Law* and *Scripture* are usually a reference to the Torah, but in this case, it is applied to the entire Hebrew Bible. It is interesting that Jesus always referred to the Scriptures as "your law," "their law," or "the law," but never as "our law." Jesus was the author of the law and, therefore, is not subject to it. He never disobeyed it, but came to fulfill its intended meaning.

"The Counselor ... the Father ... Me." The Trinity is clearly identified as the Holy Spirit, God the Father, and Jesus. The Persons of the Trinity are not distinguished by their relationship to a common essence, but by their relations of origin to the Father. There was subordination of Jesus to the Father for the sake of His mission on the Earth, but not in terms of eternal relationship. The ancient Hebrews spoke of God as they experienced Him as a Unity (cf. Deut. 6:4). The church, however, experiences the Unity as a Trinity.

15.01.04 Jn. 16:5-15

THE NECESSITY OF JESUS LEAVING

341. It is called a "holy kiss" or "kiss of love" in Paul's epistles as well as in 1 Peter.

⁵ “But now I am going away to Him who sent Me, and not one of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ ⁶ Yet, because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send Him to you. ⁸ When He comes, He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: ⁹ About sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see Me; ¹¹ and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

¹² “I still have many things to tell you, but you can’t bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak whatever He hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, because He will take from what is Mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ Everything the Father has is Mine. This is why I told you that He takes from what is Mine and will declare it to you.

The prophets Joel (2:28) and Ezekiel (36:27) predicted that the Holy Spirit would someday dwell among His people. Jesus said that day was about to arrive. However, for the Spirit to come Jesus would have to leave. It was the ministry of Jesus to reveal the Father to humanity. Now it would be the ministry of the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus to humanity, that they might believe and accept Him and the Kingdom of God. Only the Spirit could do this.

“**He will convict the world.**” John used the Greek term *elegchein* that is frequently translated as *convict* or *convince*. While there is no perfect translation of this term, both English words appear to present the best clarity of John’s statement.³⁴²

The cultural meaning of *righteousness* has always been to hold the biblical code of ethics, such as giving to the poor or expressing kindness, especially in situations when it would not be expected. Righteousness (Gk. *dikaioyne*) is defined by a number of terms such as *uprightness, upright, just acquitted*³⁴³ or better said in a simplified manner, *as if I never sinned*. But Jesus introduced a new definition of *righteousness* – that is to have an *ongoing relationship* with God.

342. Barclay, “John.” 2:191-94.

343. Brown, “Righteousness, Justification.” 3:352-54.

The conviction of sin in one's life does not necessarily lead one to repentance. It does, however, bring one to the knowledge of their condition before God Almighty. Conviction occurs when the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to show a sinner his guilt. The acknowledgment of sin is a necessary prerequisite to true repentance. Therefore, while the Holy Spirit brings the conviction of sin to one's mind, the actual request for forgiveness must result by one accepting forgiveness and grace. Only then can righteousness begin to grow within an ongoing relationship with God.

15.01.05 Jn. 16:16-24

PROMISE OF JOY OUT OF SORROW

¹⁶ **“A little while and you will no longer see Me;
again a little while and you will see Me.”**

¹⁷ **Therefore some of His disciples said to one another, “What is this He tells us: ‘A little while and you will not see Me; again a little while and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father’ ?”** ¹⁸ **They said, “What is this He is saying, ‘A little while’? We don’t know what He’s talking about!”**

¹⁹ **Jesus knew they wanted to question Him, so He said to them, “Are you asking one another about what I said, ‘A little while and you will not see Me; again a little while and you will see Me’?”**

²⁰ **“I assure you:**

**You will weep and wail,
but the world will rejoice.
You will become sorrowful,
but your sorrow will turn to joy.**

²¹ **When a woman is in labor
she has pain because her time has come.
But when she has given birth to a child,
she no longer remembers the suffering
because of the joy that a person has been born into the world.**

²² **So you also have sorrow now.
But I will see you again.
Your hearts will rejoice,
and no one will rob you of your joy.**

²³ In that day you will not ask Me anything.

“I assure you:

Anything you ask the Father

in My name,

He will give you.

²⁴ Until now you have asked for nothing

in My name.

Ask and you will receive,

so that your joy may be complete.

Verses 19 to 24 form a unique parable. The disciples failed to understand, but Jesus knew what they were thinking (v. 19) and answered their thoughts. He presented an event from daily life to express a spiritual truth – a teaching method He used many times. He said that He would be dead for only a very brief time, but would then return. They would suffer horrible grief at His death, but that deep sorrow would become overwhelming joy at His resurrection. Just as a woman giving birth anguishes in pain, she is overwhelmed with joy at the new life.³⁴⁴ Here again, no matter how much Jesus could have explained the future; everyone had immense difficulty understanding Him. They were trapped in thinking about a personal Friend and their physical land, whereas Jesus was speaking of transcending into the spiritual world and returning.

“She no longer remembers the suffering.” The Greek word for *suffering* is *thlipsis*, which would be better translated as a *great anguish* or a *great tribulation*, definitely more severe than suffering.³⁴⁵ Yet this narrative is not about the anguish or tribulation that Jesus would suffer, but the agonies of the disciples at the end of the Passion Week. All those horrific events, however, will seem pale in light of the coming resurrection and the future life with the Holy Spirit. Victory is waiting for the overcomers (Jn. 16:33). This is further discussed in the next section below.

“I assure you.” Some translations, such as the King James Version, translate this phrase as *verily, verily* or *truly, truly*.³⁴⁶ The meaning is to assure the listener of the certainty of the message, as is the word *amen*. In fact, the word *amen*, often seen as *truly* or *verily* in

344. Isa. 26:17-19; 16:7-14; Hos. 13:13-14; Jn. 16:21.

345. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 35-36.

346. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 279. See also 05.04.02 and 11.02.26.

some translations of the gospels.³⁴⁷ The term *amen* (Gk. *amen*, 281)³⁴⁸ is a confirmation of truthfulness. When numerous Old Testament passages are examined, *Amen* is said by God to mean, *it is and shall be so*, and by men, *so let it be*.³⁴⁹

15.01.06 Jn. 16:25-33

EXPLANATIONS WILL BRING UNDERSTANDING

²⁵ “I have spoken these things to you in figures of speech. A time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in My name. I am not telling you that I will make requests to the Father on your behalf. ²⁷ For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸ I came from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”

²⁹ “Ah!” His disciples said. “Now You’re speaking plainly and not using any figurative language. ³⁰ Now we know that You know everything and don’t need anyone to question You. By this we believe that You came from God.”

³¹ Jesus responded to them, “Do you now believe? ³² Look: An hour is coming, and has come, when each of you will be scattered to his own home, and you will leave Me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. ³³ I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.”

Jesus told them that in the near future they would understand His words. But first they would suffer, and then have victory because He has “conquered” the world. Coupled with this information, He told them they would have free access to the heavenly Father. Therefore, when they prayed, they could pray directly to the Father for their needs and petitions.

347. <https://mail.google.com/mail/?shva=1#inbox/135861d7fcd9d> Retrieved February 22, 2012. See also Green, *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*; Berry, *Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament*; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 279.

348. Vine, “Amen.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:25.

349. Vine, “Amen.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:25.

“You will have suffering ... I have conquered the world.” In this passage is the same Greek term *thlipsis* that is often translated as either *suffering* or *troubles*, although *great anguish* or a *great tribulation* is clearly the preferred description. Jesus did not speak about the sufferings and troubles of life that come with revolts and social upheaval that would occasionally break out. He was speaking of the intense pressure concerning life and death situations. In that context He said that He *conquered* the world, a word that comes from the Greek term *nenikeka*, rooted in *nike* that means *victory*.³⁵⁰

After the tribulation experience of the crucifixion; the huge loss, and sense of lostness and loneliness of Jesus dying, then the incredible resurrection, John later wrote to the early believers and said,

You have conquered them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

1 John 4:4

John went on to say that those who overcome the persecutions, temptations, and challenges of this life, to them Jesus will give the right to enjoy the food from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God (Rev. 2:7). Little wonder then, that the Apostle Paul said that believers are more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37).

Throughout history, many Christians have suffered for their convictions. While “the cup” that Jesus took cannot be compared to the worst of suffering by His saints, many have considered it an honor to die for their Savior. Church tradition says that Peter believed this and, when he was crucified, he asked that it be upside down because he was not worthy of an ordinary crucifixion. Today, the connection between the sacrament of Communion and sharing in Christ’s suffering is clear to those living under Islamic and Communistic rule. As they gather to share in the Holy Rite, they also participate in His sufferings at the hands of their oppressors. In doing so, they witness for Jesus and invite their persecutors to remember the death of Jesus and accept the gift of eternal life that He offers.³⁵¹ Finally, in the passage, Jesus identified Himself as the One who brings peace and the One by whom His believers have already secured ultimate future victory.³⁵²

350. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 36.

351. Nettleton, “The Cup of Suffering in Nigeria.” 3-4. For more information on today’s persecuted church see, *The Voice of the Martyrs*, a ministry that aides the persecuted church through practical and spiritual assistance while leading Christians in the free world into fellowship with them.

352. See “Jesus, the Fulfiller of Selected Names of God” in Appendix 32 for additional attributes.

15.01.07 Jn. 17:1-5**JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF**

**¹ Jesus spoke these things, looked up to heaven, and said:
Father, the hour has come.**

**Glorify Your Son so that the Son may glorify You,
² for You gave Him authority over all flesh;
so He may give eternal life to all You have given Him.**

**³ This is eternal life:
that they may know You, the only true God,
and the One You have sent — Jesus Christ.**

**⁴ I have glorified You on the earth
by completing the work You gave Me to do.**

**⁵ Now, Father, glorify Me in Your presence with that glory I had with You
before the world existed.**

The chiasmic structure is explained in the following manner:

- A Father, glorify the Son (v. 1c)
- B The Son will glorify the Father (v. 1d)
- C Those given by the Father to the Son (v. 2a-c)
- D Eternal life (v. 2d)
- D' Eternal life (v. 3a)
- C' Those who know the Father and the Son (v. 3b)
- B' The Son glorified the Father (v. 4)
- A' Father glorify the Son (v. 5)

John 17 is the high priestly prayer of Jesus. He not only prayed for Himself, His disciples/apostles, and for His followers, but with this prayer He is seen in transition from Prophet to Priest. Throughout His life, prayer was a necessity and He regularly withdrew to a quiet place for private prayer (Mk. 1:35, 6:46; Lk. 5:16). Luke made notation that Jesus prayed before every major decision or event (3:21; 6:12, 9:18, 29, 22:32, 34, 23:6).

The quiet olive orchard of the “Garden of Gethsemane” was only a few hundred yards from the temple and was a favorite place where He prayed (Lk. 22:39). When Jesus prayed for Himself, He asked His Father to “glorify your Son.” It was the crescendo of His ministry to save humanity from the death of sin; to restore the image of God in those who would trust Him. It was for this purpose He desired to come from the beginning of the world. It is noteworthy that in verse 5, and elsewhere in the New Testament, the divinity of Jesus is clearly stated.³⁵³

15.01.08 Jn. 17:6-19

JESUS PRAYS FOR DISCIPLES

⁶ I have revealed Your name to the men You gave Me from the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷ Now they know that all things You have given to Me are from You, ⁸ because the words that You gave Me, I have given them. They have received them and have known for certain that I came from You. They have believed that You sent Me.

⁹ I pray for them.

**I am not praying for the world
but for those You have given Me,
because they are Yours.**

**¹⁰ Everything I have is Yours,
and everything You have is Mine,
and I have been glorified in them.**

**¹¹ I am no longer in the world,
but they are in the world,
and I am coming to You.**

Holy Father, protect them by Your name that You have given Me, so that they may be one as We are one. ¹² While I was with them, I was protecting them by Your name that You have given Me. I guarded them and not one of them is lost, except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture may be fulfilled. ¹³ Now I am coming to You, and I speak these things in the world so

353. For passages that refer to the deity of Christ, see Mt. 1:18-25, 3:17, 17:5; Lk. 3:22; Jn. 1:1, 14, 18, 33-34, 3:16-18; 1 Jn. 4:9; Isa. 9:6; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:15; 2:9.

that they may have My joy completed in them. ¹⁴ I have given them Your word.

**The world hated them because they are not of the world,
as I am not of the world.**

**¹⁵ I am not praying that You take them out of the world
but that You protect them from the evil one.**

**¹⁶ They are not of the world,
as I am not of the world.**

**¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth;
Your word is truth.**

**¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world,
I also have sent them into the world.**

**¹⁹ I sanctify Myself for them,
so they also may be sanctified by the truth.**

“I have revealed Your name.” The term *name* is not the sound or word by which one is identified, but in the Hebrew Bible it reflects one’s character. This is especially true of the name of God, and there are more than a hundred names of God. For example Psalm 20:7 clearly describes the trust one can place in God. Yet the name of God was deemed so sacred that it was not mentioned. When Jews spoke of the name of God, they used a four-letter symbol called a “tetragrammaton,”³⁵⁴ which was “YHWH.” It represents the name *Jahweh* or, in English *Jehovah*, which is the word for *Adonai*, meaning *Lord*.³⁵⁵ Only the high priest said it once when he entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. The name Elohim is the name of God associated with strict judgment while the name YHWH is associated with mercy, love, compassion, and forgiveness. The characteristics of YHWH are demonstrated in Exodus 20:6, Psalm 103:17-18, and John 14:15. Jesus came as YHWH – full of grace, love, and mercy, but when He returns, He will rule as Elohim, yet His characteristics of YHWH will be present.³⁵⁶

Nonetheless, when Jesus said that He revealed the name of God, He referred to His character and personality. It was His glory that men could see His special relationship with God, and that relationship was available for anyone. He prayed for His disciples, those who knew Him, and for those who would believe in Him in the future. He prayed

354. See Appendix 26.

355. Barclay, “John.” 2:209-11.

356. Chumney, Eddie. “Understanding John 1:17.” Hebraic Heritage Ministries Int’l. Newsgroup Email Newsletter. June 10, 2004. See also 15.01.08 Jn. 17:6-19.

for two important issues:

1. He prayed for their preservation (Jn. 17:9-15), since there would be times of extreme difficulty and anxiety.
2. He prayed for their sanctification (Jn. 17:16-19).

“I have revealed you.” This phrase could also be translated to say, “I have manifested your name.” In Hebrew the word “name” is not singular but a plural in the sense that God has many names, each of which reveal His character. Jesus revealed God the Father by love and compassion, as well as concern for justice. Furthermore, the terms “lift up” and “glory” as found in the Old Testament account of Joseph point to this time in the life of Jesus.³⁵⁷ His character and personality revealed the character and personality of God.

“So that the Scripture may be fulfilled.” What Scripture? At times Jesus spoke of the broad sense of a passage rather than a specific quotation. Ironically, in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 the Apostle Paul implies this, even though that passage was not written at this time. This proves that the Apostle Paul had the same thought as did Jesus.³⁵⁸

15.01.09 Jn. 17:20-26

JESUS PRAYS FOR BELIEVERS

²⁰ I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in Me through their message.

²¹ May they all be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You. May they also be one in Us, so the world may believe You sent Me.

**²² I have given them the glory
You have given Me.
May they be one as We are one.**

**²³ I am in them and You are in Me.
May they be made completely one,
so the world may know You have sent Me
and have loved them as You have loved Me.**

²⁴ Father, I desire those You have given Me to be with Me where I am. Then

357. See video comments by messianic scholar Timothy Hegg in 01.01.02.V.

358. A partial list of other problematic passages is listed in Appendix 13.

they will see My glory, which You have given Me because You loved Me before the world's foundation.

²⁵ Righteous Father! The world has not known You. However, I have known You, and these have known that You sent Me. ²⁶ I made Your name known to them and will make it known, so the love You have loved Me with may be in them and I may be in them.

“I am in them and You are in Me. May they be made completely one.” John 17 is often referred to as the “high priestly prayer” of Jesus. Its significance is that it reveals His love and concern for those who will believe in Him in future generations. This phrase in verse 23 clearly identifies the loving relationship Jesus has with his Father in heaven as well as with the unity of His people with Him.³⁵⁹ In this passage Jesus identified Himself with Jehovah (17:23) and is Jehovah God Almighty.³⁶⁰

359. See “Jesus, the Fulfiller of Selected Names of God” in Appendix 32 for additional attributes.

360. See Appendix 32 and Evans, *Praying through the Names of God*. 15-16.

Unit 15

The Passion Escalates

Chapter 02

The Betrayal And Arrest



15.02.00.A. THE BETRAYAL OF JESUS. Artwork by William Hole of the Royal Scottish Academy of Art, 1876. The betrayal by Judas and subsequent arrest of Jesus took place in the quiet olive tree grove on the Mount of Olives that was part of Gethsemane.

15.02.01 Introduction

As Jesus and His disciples were enjoying their Passover Seder in peace, fellowship, and sweet communion, the disciples were probably wondering what events the coming days would bring. Following this peaceful moment, they walked through the crowded city streets, through the Eastern Gate, and across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives that is today called the “Garden of Gethsemane.”³⁶¹ At this time the “garden” was a large orchard of olive trees that may also have had a vineyard, as was typical of olive tree orchards. It is assumed that along the small stream of water in the Kidron Valley were cedar trees, since the terms *Kidron* and *the brook Kidron* (literal translation of Jn. 18;1) both mean *cedar* from the word *cedron*.³⁶²

Near the lower edge of this orchard is the Cave of Gethsemane that was large enough to contain an olive press. That cave was cool during the heat of the day and was protective and private at night. It is very probable that it was here where Jesus was arrested.³⁶³ The name Gethsemane is from the Hebrew and Aramaic term *Gat-semani*, meaning *oil press*. Clearly, for an area to acquire a name as this, the Mount of Olives was probably a center for commercial olive oil production for sale and temple use.



15.02.01.A. THE CAVE OF GETHSEMANE. This cave has also been known as the Cave of Christ’s Teaching. Adjacent to the modern Garden

361. The phrase “garden” does not appear in the gospels except in John 18:1.

362. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 3:413.

363. Taylor. “The Garden of Gethsemane: Not the Place of Jesus’ Arrest.” 32-35.

of Gethsemane is the Cave of Gethsemane. Thousands of visitors see the Garden but few are even aware of the cave. Photograph by the author.



15.02.01.B. ILLUSTRATION OF A BEAM OLIVE PRESS. After olives were crushed with a millstone (11.02.05.A) they were placed in a beam olive press. The method of extracting olive oil was (1) to place the crushed olives in flexible baskets, (2) place a stone on top of the baskets, (3) stone weights hung on the end of the beam to increase the pressure on the olives. The pressure forced the oil out of the olives and it flowed into the stone vat below the baskets, from where it was later collected. Illustration by the author.

In the meantime the leading Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, scribes, elders, the retired chief priest and business tycoon Annas, and his conniving son-in-law Caiaphas, were all dreading the possibility that Jesus would destroy their religious system. Most likely, this motley crew gathered in the palace home of Caiaphas to plan a strategy to destroy their common Enemy. Careful planning was necessary to prevent a riot because this would most certainly have invited a crushing Roman military response. Were that to happen, the result could be just as financially damaging as if Jesus were to become the political-messiah. Tensions were of volcanic proportions.

Thousands of people came to Jerusalem every year for Passover and many of them slept in the Mount of Olives orchard under the starry skies. The night was quiet, except for the crying of many lambs that were about to be sacrificed. But while the mountains of Jerusalem were at peace and multitudes slept, Jesus was in the midst of the turmoil of spiritual warfare. It was so intense that prayer became agonizing. He struggled far more

than did His ancestor, Jacob, whose prayer was a “type and shadow” of what Jesus endured this night.³⁶⁴ For what Jesus was about to experience was more deadly than death itself. Matthew underscored the significance of Jesus’ praying when he stated that the Master prayed three times.³⁶⁵

15.02.02 Jn. 18:1; Mk. 14:32-34 (See also Lk. 22:40; Mt. 26:36-38)

THE AGONY OF GETHSEMANE

Jn. ¹ After Jesus had said these things, He went out with His disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, and He and His disciples went into it.

Mk. ³² Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and He told His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” ³³ He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be deeply distressed and horrified. ³⁴ Then He said to them, “My soul is swallowed up in sorrow —to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake.”

Jesus was very much aware of His purpose and destiny. He would not only have to face the cruel execution process, but spiritually He would die a sacrificial death for all the sins of humanity. The thought that His crucifixion was just hours away caused profound emotional stress and agonizing pain. As He was engulfed in prayer, He perspired blood, yet remained faithful to His purpose and destiny. Every ounce of His human nature wanted to live, while His divine nature required that He surrender His life so that mere mortals might live to escape the crushing pain. Hence, He was obedient, not to His human will, but to God’s plan for His life, which ultimately was His as well.

364. See “Type and shadow” in Appendix 26.

365. The fact that Jesus prayed three times, and that His praying is mentioned as such, is not a coincidence. To understand the significance of words or actions repeated three times, see 04.02.02.Q4 “Why did Matthew divide the list of names into three groups?”



15.02.02.A. THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE. The Garden at the time of Christ was an olive orchard with a possible vineyard. Scholars believe it covered an estimated area of eight to ten acres, a major portion of the Mount of Olives. These trees were already hundreds of years old when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. However, olive trees are known for their enduring root systems, and the trees seen today sprouted from the old root system after the destruction. Photograph by the author.

There are three traditions as to where Jesus stayed on the Mount of Olives:

1. Either with friends,
2. In the Cave of Gethsemane near the foot of the Mount, or
3. The Cave of Eleona near the summit.³⁶⁶ The term *Eleona* comes from the Greek term meaning *olive grove*.³⁶⁷

Since Jerusalem is at the edge of the Judean Desert where the climate is semi-arid, the caves are generally dry all year long, as well as warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Caves were often used as shelters for domestic animals, part of a house, or a

366. Pixner, *With Jesus in Jerusalem*. 66.

367. [http://orthodoxwiki.org/Church_on_the_Mount_of_Olives_\(Eleona\)](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Church_on_the_Mount_of_Olives_(Eleona)). Retrieved March 5, 2015.

temporary shelter for travelers and pilgrims.

“Gethsemane.” The name means *oil press* in Aramaic, the common language of the Jewish people.³⁶⁸ Olives were picked from the trees, crushed with a giant millstone (see 11.02.05.A), and then placed in flexible baskets. Just as the weights of an olive press beam multiplies the pressure upon the olives (see 15.02.01.B), so the sins of humanity and the pending hour of death multiplied the pressure upon Jesus. It was in this orchard where Jesus experienced the incredible pressure of what was before Him: the official rejection by the Jewish leaders, the agony of the cross, the burden of taking the sins of humanity upon Himself, and finally death itself.

The Gethsemane experience illustrates two significant points:

1. His incredible emotional agony and spiritual warfare before the actual physical torture was implemented, and
2. His determination to obey God the Father for the salvation of humanity.

Centuries earlier, God told Moses and Joshua to establish six cities of refuge. Anyone involved in an accidental killing could run to a city of refuge to escape blood revenge (Num. 35:6 ff.; Jos. 20), prior to trial. The priests in the cities of refuge were to be the advocates for the accused before God and the people. Now, however, the priests were the accusers of Jesus before God and remained hidden from the people. They did not want anyone to learn of their evil deeds; there was no city of refuge for Jesus.

“My soul is swallowed up in sorrow.” The word *sorrow* means *to be pressed upon*,³⁶⁹ as to emphasize the extreme emotional pressure He experienced. Jesus alludes to three verses in Psalm (42:5, 11; 43:5), thereby revealing for the first time, that these are Messianic prophecies. He did not quote them, but to the listeners, the message would soon be understood.

15.02.03 Mk. 14:35-36; Lk. 22:43-45; Mt. 26:40-41 Mount of Olives

JESUS PRAYS IN AGONY AS THE DISCIPLES SLEEP

Mk. ³⁵ Then He went a little farther, fell to the ground, and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. ³⁶ And He said, “Abba, Father! All things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me.

368. Maier, *The First Easter*. 38.

369. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor’s Manual*. Class 23, page 16.

Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.”

Lk. [⁴³ Then an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. ⁴⁴ Being in anguish, He prayed more fervently, and His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.] ⁴⁵ When He got up from prayer and came to the disciples, He found them sleeping, exhausted from their grief.

Mt. ⁴⁰ Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping. He asked Peter, “So, couldn’t you stay awake with Me one hour? ⁴¹ Stay awake and pray, so that you won’t enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

In this first of three prayers, Jesus simply unburdened His heart to His Father. He understood what He was about to face, but the disciples seemed to be failing continuously. It is not only significant that Jesus prayed three times, but also that it was recorded three times. When a word, phrase, or event is recorded three times, it is a Hebraic method of underlining its maximum significance.

“Abba, Father.” This Aramaic word for father is equivalent to the English word *daddy*. It is reflective of an affectionate loving relationship.³⁷⁰ With this use (cf. Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15) believers can come to the Father God and call Him “Daddy.” This is the name used by a child for his earthly father. There is no evidence in rabbinic writings that the Jews ever addressed God with this term of endearment – it was a new revelation for the disciples.³⁷¹

“This cup.” Jesus understood the price He would have to pay for those whom He loved. It is difficult to understand the enormous courage it took for Jesus to walk toward His death, not to mention the incredible suffering and shame He endured. He clearly understood what was before Him, which underscores the significance of His courage. There are two significant elements to the cup:

1. The cup represents all the pain, bitterness, and sins of humanity for which He would be the sacrificial lamb, and therefore die in the place of those who place their faith and trust in Him.
2. The cup represents the wrath of God upon sin, so it would be upon Jesus and not on those who faithfully obey and trust Him.

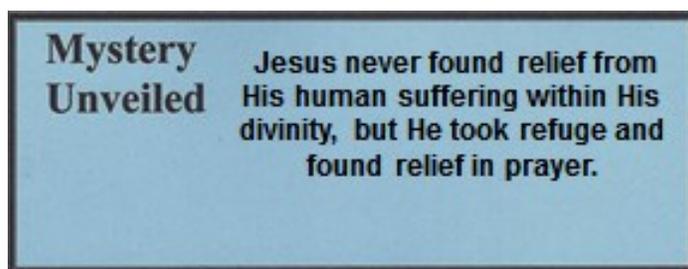
370. Neusner and Green, eds., *Dictionary of Judaism*. 2.

371. Martin, *Worship in the Early Church*. 35; Barclay, “Matthew.” 2:349.

There are also two incorrect interpretations of the cup.

1. Some have said that Jesus ment His physical death, but that is disproved in John 10:17; Luke 19:10 Philipians 2:8 and Hebrews 10:5-9.
2. Other scholars have said the cup referred to His premature death, but that is disproved in Luke 22:46 and John 10:18.

Jesus wanted both the *hour* (Mk. 14:35) and the *cup* (Mk. 14:36) to pass. For a fleeting moment He wanted to escape the agony of the cross, but this thought evaporated, for it could not be avoided. The Father's will had to be completed and Jesus was faithful to accomplish it. The temptation here was greater than anything He had ever experienced. Some scholars believe the cup is an allusion to the third cup of the Passover, which was a cup of redemption, salvation, life, and covenant. Others say the cup is symbolic of the divine wrath that Jesus would bear for the sins of others.³⁷² The phrase also reflects Satan's temptation to prevent Jesus from fulfilling His mission.



“Being in anguish.” The aorist participle suggests that this agony was one growing in intensity.³⁷³ This was common for those dying on a cross. Luke used the word “agony” in 22:44, meaning *conflict*.³⁷⁴

“His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.” This rare phenomenon occurs when someone is under extreme stress and blood capillaries in the sweat ducts burst. Blood is then mixed with the perspiration and is known in modern Greek medical term as *hematidrosis*.³⁷⁵ The heavy fluid loss coupled with the lack of sleep, the

372. See also references in Ps. 11:6; 75:8; Is. 51:17, 22; Jer. 49:12; Rev. 14:10; 16:19; 17:4.

373. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:425.

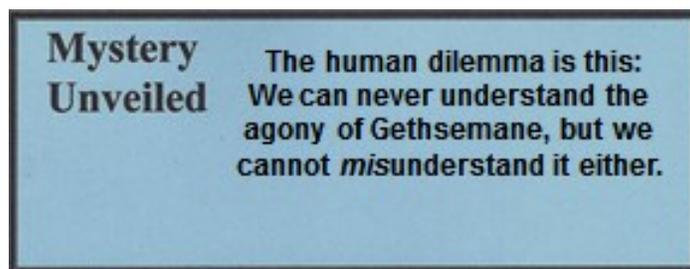
374. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 23, page 16.

375. Edwards, Gabel, and Hosmer. "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ." 1456; Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 23, page 16. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 364.

emotional and physical fatigue, began the dehydration process that would culminate with His death on the cross.³⁷⁶

Nineteenth century critics have long said this would be impossible, yet human history records such rare events. Church history records that this medical condition occurred again in the sixteenth century when the French king sentenced two men to their deaths. Saint Bartholomew and the other person, both of whom were accused of being a thieves, sweated drops of blood before being executed by the papal court of justice.³⁷⁷

As the Son of God, Satan could not touch Him. But as the Son of Man, Jesus was in a fierce battle and this was to be Satan's last onslaught against Him. Jesus did not fear death on the cross; He feared that He might not succeed as the Son of Man. While He understood that His sacrifice would be for all the sins of humanity, He also understood that He was capable of failing.



“He found them asleep” Jesus did not find just one or two of His disciples asleep, but all of them. This was a huge failure on their part, even if they were exhausted. The code of conduct between a disciple and his rabbi was that the disciple cared for and protected his rabbi. A rabbi was considered to be closer than one's father. All twelve failed miserably at a very basic code of conduct, for which there is no parallel in today's Western culture. They had been told several times of the events that were about to unfold, yet they failed to understand. Now, when Jesus needed them most, they failed and He was all alone. They were nearby physically, but distant emotionally and spiritually.

15.02.04 Mt. 26:42

JESUS PRAYS A SECOND TIME

Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot

376. Dauer, *How Jesus Died: The Final 18 Hours*. (Video).

377. Major, Manson, and Wright, *The Mission and Message of Jesus*. 288.

pass unless I drink it, Your will be done.”

Again they failed! It was as if they didn't even care! It is difficult to comprehend that they would fall asleep at such a desperate time as this. It reveals their complete lack of understanding of the struggles Jesus was experiencing. Certainly, the expectations of the crowds and the excitement of the Passover would have encouraged them to stay awake. Then, possibly for these same reasons, they were exhausted. Previously when Jesus asked them to stay awake to experience the Transfiguration (Mt. 17), they had fallen asleep then, as well (Lk. 9:32).

15.02.05 Mt. 26:43-46 (See also Mk. 14:40-42)

JESUS PRAYS A THIRD TIME

⁴³ And He came again and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open.

⁴⁴ After leaving them, He went away again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more. ⁴⁵ Then He came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the time is near. The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Get up; let's go! See, My betrayer is near.”

The issue is not that they fell asleep again, but that they did so three times. Essentially, the number three indicates that they emphatically said they didn't care to understand the struggle Jesus was enduring.

Just as Elijah had done centuries earlier (1 Kg. 17:21) and Paul would do later (2 Cor. 12:8), Jesus prayed a third time. The Gethsemane experience was the preparation for Calvary, but before He could yield His body as a sacrifice for sin on the cross, He had to yield His will and desire to the Father. Only then was He ready to die. While the shed blood, death, and resurrection of Jesus is the salvation for those who believe, the agony of Gethsemane is often overlooked. These events, including the last Passover Seder, should be seen as a single event, but as progressive sacrificial event for the salvation of humanity that Jesus created and dearly loves.

15.02.06 Jn. 18:2-3; Mk. 14:43-44; Lk. 22:47-48; Mk. 14:45 (See also Mt. 26:47-50a)

JUDAS BETRAYS JESUS

Jn. ² Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with His disciples. ³ So Judas took a company of soldiers and some temple police from the chief priests and the Pharisees and came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

Mk. ⁴³ While He was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, suddenly arrived. With him was a mob, with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. ⁴⁴ His betrayer had given them a signal. “The One I kiss,” he said, “He’s the One; arrest Him and take Him away under guard.”

Lk. ⁴⁷ While He was still speaking, suddenly a mob was there, and one of the Twelve named Judas was leading them. He came near Jesus to kiss Him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

Mk. ⁴⁵ So when he came, he went right up to Him and said, “Rabbi!”— and kissed Him.

“A company of soldiers ... temple police from the chief priests and the Pharisees”

While John did not make a distinctive identification of the soldiers, it is almost certain that he was speaking here of Roman and temple soldiers.³⁷⁸ A company or detachment consisted of 200 to 600 men, depending on the interpretation of the Greek word *speira*, meaning a detachment of Roman soldiers.³⁷⁹ The commander was probably an *archegos* (747) who was in charge of the praetorian cohort.³⁸⁰ The chief priests called for the *sagan* (from *strategos* 4755), a deputy or captain of the temple, who in turn brought forth every available temple guard (Levites) to arrest Jesus.³⁸¹ The temple police, or *huperetas*, had limited authority outside the temple, but moved Jesus within the temple where the Roman soldiers could not enter.³⁸² The passage implies that Pilate was awake and waiting for Jesus to be brought to him, as only Pilate had the authority to send a

378. Scholars believe it was a Roman cohort of approximately 600 Samaritan soldiers, headed by a *Chiliarch*, or commander. No Jews were permitted in the Roman military.

379. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 368.

380. Vine, “Captain.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:88.

381. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 367-68; Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 3:415.

382. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 369-70.

detachment of soldiers. Furthermore, Pilate was not permitted to send soldiers to arrest anyone, unless there was a charge made against that person. Clearly, Caiaphas was at work behind the scenes to insure that all requirements for a Roman trial were met, as both Roman soldiers and temple guards came to arrest Jesus. They came with torches and lanterns, as no priest could walk safely in this area at night since area was filled with tombs, and it was believed that walking over one would cause defilement and prevent service in the temple. But at this point, a very Hellenistic Caiaphas didn't care about tombs – he had a very important mission to accomplish.

The Sadducees and the leading Pharisees were passionately concerned about the reaction of the public to their plans, once these became known. Likewise, they were fearful that Jesus might use His incredible power against them. Hence, they came to the Garden of Gethsemane with a detachment of soldiers. When Jesus realized they were coming, He could have slipped away as He had done in Nazareth, but He didn't. Yet in light of all the miracles everyone had seen Jesus perform, it is amazing that the religious leaders believed their soldiers could overpower Him. But maybe there were other reasons for the all those soldiers – and two possibilities are as follows:

1. That the leaders feared Jesus might join the Zealots and attempt an overthrow of Roman domination, or
2. The greater possibility was that the massive crowds would awaken and come to the defense of Jesus and the disciples. The popularity of Jesus was still at fever pitch.

The Sadducees and leading Pharisees were aware that a revolt was highly possible. In this assessment they were, in fact, accurate, but the fact that Pilate could find no fault in Jesus caught them by surprise.

“Came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.” Few passages of the gospels reveal the fear the leading Pharisees and Sadducees had, better than this one. Everyone was well aware of the character of Jesus and His disciples, so why were weapons needed? They weren't. Yet those who traveled in fear and evil did not take any chances and came fully armed. They also came with lanterns and torches – strips of resinous wood tied together to burn brightly.³⁸³

Passover is celebrated only when there is a bright full moon and when the rainy season is over. Therefore, the sky is always bright and clear in Jerusalem on Passover. This writer

383. Vine, “Lantern.” *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:352.

has often enjoyed full moon evenings when it was bright enough to walk outside without a flashlight. After twenty minutes outside in the dark, the eyes adjust to the moonlight. No doubt lanterns and torches were brought in case Jesus and the disciples were hiding in a cave. Whatever the reason, they were absolutely determined to rid themselves of Jesus even if it meant bringing along equipment and troops that were not needed.

“The One I kiss.” To give a kiss on the cheek was, and continues to be, a common greeting in many Middle Eastern countries. It is called a “holy kiss” or “kiss of love” in Paul’s epistles as well as in 1 Peter. But on this night it was Satan’s kiss of betrayal. The phrase has lost its meaning in Western culture.

15.02.06.Q1 Why would Judas have *wanted* to betray Jesus (Mk. 14:43-45)?³⁸⁴

The possible reasons are as follows:³⁸⁵

1. Judas may have become disillusioned with Jesus as the messiah, since He was obviously not the expected military-messiah who would overthrow the Romans. Ironically, if the Jews would have accepted Jesus as their Messiah, then the one-world government of the Romans would have been overthrown.
2. Judas had witnessed Jesus perform many miracles and never considered the possibility that the real Messiah would die on a Roman cross. This would be especially true, since it was well known that anyone who died on a tree was cursed.
3. Some have argued that Judas betrayed Jesus out of greed. Suppose Jesus did not rise from the grave. Judas would then have clout and status with the religious leaders beyond anything he had experienced in his life. Thirty pieces of silver would not have been worth the effort, but status among the religious leaders would have been priceless.

“Are you going to betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” The betrayal becomes more significant when the Greek word for *kiss* is examined. The normal Greek word is *philein*, but Matthew used the word *kataphilein*, which means to kiss repeatedly and fervently as with deep affection.³⁸⁶ It is the same word used of the tender caress of our

384. Be sure to see 14.01.12.Q1 “Why was Judas *needed* to betray Jesus when everyone easily recognized Him?”

385. See also 15.03.12.Q3 “Why did Jesus choose Judas for a disciple?”

386. Barclay, “Matthew.” 2:290; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 367.

Lord's feet by the woman in the Pharisee's house (Lk. 7:38), of the father who kissed his prodigal son (Lk. 15:20), and the farewell kiss the elders of Ephesus gave to the Apostle Paul when he left them (Acts 20:37). When Jesus called Judas "friend," He did not use the usual term *philos*, meaning *friend*, but Jesus referred to him as a *comrade* or *companion*, with the Greek word *hetairos*.³⁸⁷

A kiss on the cheek was a sign of the discipleship a man had with his mentor and rabbi. It was the symbol of the highest degree of devotion and trust. As such, when Judas approached Jesus, he placed both hands on the shoulders of Jesus. Therefore, the kiss of Judas was not an ordinary greeting between friends who have not seen each other for a time, but a kiss of betrayal of the highest order that, in today's Western culture, has no equal.³⁸⁸ When Jesus asked the question, He extended love to him that he might repent.³⁸⁹

15.02.07 Jn. 18:4-9

DISCIPLES SAFETY INSURED

⁴ Then Jesus, knowing everything that was about to happen to Him, went out and said to them, "Who is it you're looking for?"

⁵ "Jesus the Nazarene," they answered.

"I am He," Jesus told them.

Judas, who betrayed Him, was also standing with them. ⁶ When He told them, "I am He," they stepped back and fell to the ground.

⁷ Then He asked them again, "Who is it you're looking for?"

"Jesus the Nazarene," they said.

⁸ "I told you I am He," Jesus replied. "So if you're looking for Me, let these men go."

387. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 367.

388. Barclay, "Luke." 273.

389. The proverbial "kiss of betrayal" was known among all people groups in the ancient Middle East. See Gen. 27:26ff; 2 Sam. 15:5; Prov. 7:13; 27:6.

⁹ This was to fulfill the words He had said: “I have not lost one of those You have given Me” (John 6:39).

“Who is it you’re looking for?” This brief, but interesting, question had a specific purpose. By their answer, “Jesus of Nazareth,” Jesus assured His disciples that they would not become victims of the coming cruelty. It also made everyone witness the betrayal and arrest. So important was this issue that the question was repeated.

15.02.08 Mk. 14:46; Lk. 22:49; Jn. 18:10-11; Mt. 26:52-54; Lk. 22:51; (Mk. 14:47)

PETER CUTS OFF THE SERVANT’S EAR

Mk. ⁴⁶ Then they took hold of Him and arrested Him.

Lk. ⁴⁹ When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they asked, “Lord, should we strike with the sword?”

Jn. ¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. (The slave’s name was Malchus.)

Mt. ⁵² Then Jesus told him, “Put your sword back in its place because all who take up a sword will perish by a sword.⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot call on My Father, and He will provide Me at once with more than 12 legions of angels?⁵⁴ How, then, would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?”

Lk. ⁵¹ But Jesus responded, “No more of this!” And touching his ear, He healed him.

15.02.08.Q1 Was it Peter’s intention to cut off the servant’s head (Jn. 18:10)?

NO! The passage reads, **“then Simon Peter ... cut off his right ear.”** Was this a sign of the rebellion that the Sanhedrin, Pilate, and the soldiers so greatly feared? Absolutely not! Had that been the case, the disciples would have been slaughtered immediately, along

with Jesus.³⁹⁰ The Romans and Sadducees had absolutely no compassion for anyone who might stir a rebellion. The healing saved the life of Peter, who, at that moment, was obviously not a highly favored Jew in the eyes of the arresting soldiers.

Had Jesus ridden into Jerusalem on a horse, or if they sang nationalistic songs such as *A Psalm of Solomon, with Song, the King*, which had phrases like “destroy the unrighteous rulers” and “drive out the sinners,” then Jesus and all of His disciples would probably have been immediately killed. But for more than three years the Romans, Hellenistic Jews, Herodians, and the Jewish leaders had been carefully watching Him and the huge crowds that followed. He never hinted at a nationalistic word.

However, if it was not Peter’s intention to kill Malchus, what was his intention? Malchus was not an ordinary temple servant, but chief assistant of Caiaphas, the official position known as the *segran hacothaneem*.³⁹¹ Since John was an acquaintance of the family of Caiaphas, he would have known the name of the servant. Malchus, most likely, did not lose his entire ear, but only a small portion, such as his ear lobe, because any injury would have had two results:

1. It would have caused great shame for the temple administrator.
2. More importantly, the injury would have disqualified him from any temple service (Lev. 21:18-21). No one with a physical handicap or imperfection was permitted to enter the most sacred area of the temple.

Peter was not the first to have vented his anger in this manner; he merely acted out a cultural custom. Josephus preserved a similar account that occurred during the early reign of Herod the Great, when Hyrcanus II desired to become the high priest against the wishes of one called Antigonus. So Antigonus “disqualified” his rival from service in the office of priesthood.

Antigonus himself also bit off Hyrcanus’s ears with his own teeth, as he fell down upon his knees to him so that he might never be able, upon any mutation of affairs, to take the high priesthood again; for the high priests that officiated were to be complete and without blemish.

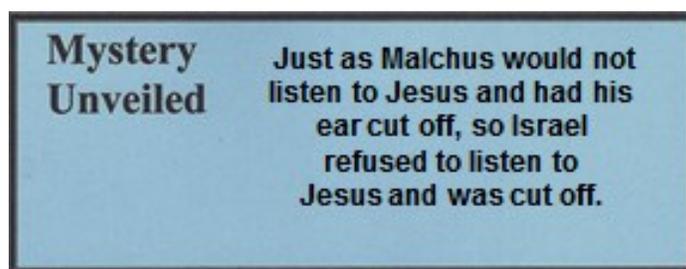
Josephus, *Wars* 1.13.9 (270)

390. See Appendix 25 for a partial listing of false prophets, rebels and rebellions that impacted the world of Jesus.

391. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 25; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 368.

“Malchus.” Malchus was a personal servant of the high priest, Caiaphas. His name was derived from the Hebrew word *melech*, meaning *king*. The event is quite interesting, as the “servant king” was pierced and healed by the Servant King who died and then was pierced.

Ironically, just as Israel had rejected Jesus, they no longer desired to hear Him, they had their hearing, or “ears” cut off. As such Malchus, was a “king” of the high priest who was responsible for leading the charge to have Jesus crucified, was symbolic of national Israel. At times, even the smallest events in the life of Jesus, have incredible depth of meaning.



“All who take up a sword will perish by a sword.” This proverb is hardly a call to pacifism since Jesus told Peter to place the sword back into its sheath. He did not rebuke Peter or any other disciple for having one, nor did He tell them to get rid of their swords. Men commonly carried them for protection from bandits and wild animals because both were very common (see 05.02.04.D and 05.02.04.E). Short swords were essentially long knives used to prepare meals, cut firewood, and a variety of other household tasks. Concerning wild animals, the Oral Law stated that,

The wolf, the lion, the bear, the leopard, the panther, and the serpent rank as an attested danger.

Mishnah, *Baba Kamma* 1.4

Another interpretation of this event is that, since Peter and John had been sent to prepare the Passover sacrifice, they naturally would have had two ceremonial swords for cutting the Passover lamb. At this time, they still had these in their possession.³⁹²

“12 legions of angels.” The number of soldiers in a Roman legion varied throughout history, but at this time, it consisted of approximately 6,000 men. This underscores the point that Jesus laid down His life, no one took it or killed Him without His permission.

392. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 432.

“Would the Scriptures be fulfilled.” What Scriptures? And what was the prophecy? Twice Jesus made a reference to prophetic Scriptures being fulfilled (verses 54 and 56). Since there is no *specific* Scripture, the answer may lie in Zechariah 13:7, but in all probability Jesus made a reference to the overall tone of prophetic Scripture rather than a specific verse.³⁹³

“And touching his ear, He healed him.” Jesus healed the ear of the servant of the high priest. In doing so, Jesus restored him to his position in the temple because anyone with a physical handicap was not permitted to enter the temple, much less serve there. There can be no question that this report reached Caiaphas, who would soon be the primary individual responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus.

15.02.09 Lk. 22:52-53; Jn. 18:12; Mt. 26:56b; Mk. 14:51-52

JESUS CHIDES ARREST

Lk. ⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests, temple police, and the elders who had come for Him, “Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a criminal?” ⁵³ Every day while I was with you in the temple complex, you never laid a hand on Me. But this is your hour — and the dominion of darkness.”

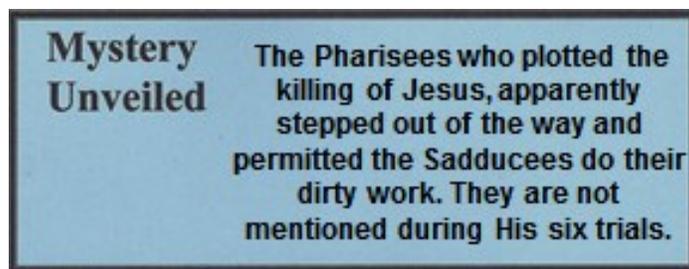
Jn. ¹² Then the company of soldiers, the commander, and the Jewish temple police arrested Jesus and tied Him up.

Mt. ^{56b} Then all the disciples deserted Him and ran away.

Mk. ⁵¹ Now a certain young man, having a linen cloth wrapped around his naked body, was following Him. They caught hold of him, ⁵² but he left the linen cloth behind and ran away naked.

“The chief priests.” It appears that the leading Pharisees handed the issue of Jesus over to the chief priests because there is no mention of the Pharisees in connection to His arrest, the six trials, and the crucifixion. From this point on, they are out of the biblical record and the Sadducees apparently took control of the crucifixion process.

393. A partial list of other problematic passages is listed in Appendix 13.



The complete absence of the Pharisees is altogether highly probable according to Josephus, who recorded a previous historic event that is similar to this account. As the story goes, evidently, Jonathan, a member of the Sadducees, desired to punish a certain Eleazar by capital punishment, but the Pharisees extended mercy and chose a lesser punishment. According to Josephus, the discussion concluded as follows:

So the Pharisees made answer, that he deserved stripes and bonds (scourging and chained to prison columns) but that it did not seem right to punish reproaches with death; and indeed the Pharisees, even upon other occasions, are not apt to be severe in punishments.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 13.10.6 (249b)

The Sadducees, on the other hand, were known for their stern and heartless cruelty, even toward their own peers who served as priests.³⁹⁴ Josephus said they were hated by the people.³⁹⁵ These elitists were so bad, that shortly before the destruction of the temple; they stole the tithes that were reserved for the other priests, thereby forcing them into starvation. Josephus recorded the horrific account.

About this time king Agrippa gave the high priesthood to Ishmael, who was the son of Fabi. And now there arose a sedition between the high priests and the principal men of the multitude of Jerusalem.... And such was the impudence and boldness that had seized on the high priests, that they had the hardness to send their servants into the threshing floors to take away those tithes that were due to the priests, insomuch that it so fell out that the poorer sort of priests died of want. To this degree did the violence of the seditious prevail over all right and justice.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.8.8 (179, 181)

394. Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 2:71-72.

395. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.1.3-4.

However, the greatest probability for the reason that the leading Pharisees are not mentioned in the trial of Jesus is that they were not permitted to vote in capital cases.³⁹⁶ The Mishnah preserves this portion of the Oral Law:

In non-capital cases concerning uncleanness and cleanness (the judges declare their opinion) beginning with the eldest, but in capital cases they begin from (them that sit at) the side. All (of the family stocks) are qualified to try non-capital cases; but all are not qualified to try capital cases, but only priests, Levites, and Israelites that may give (their daughters) in marriage into the priestly stock (can try capital cases).³⁹⁷

Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 4.2³⁹⁸

As much as the Pharisees had planned to kill Jesus, when the hour came to do the act they were forced to allow the Sadducees to act out the intentions of their heart. They might have been before Pilate shouting, “Crucify him, crucify him” (Mt. 27:22-23; Lk. 23:20), and felt innocent about it, since they were not physically involved in His death or judicially involved. In their way of thinking, they were innocent, since murder to them was not a condition of the heart, but only of a completed action.

<p>Mystery Unveiled</p>	<p>According to the Mishnah, <i>Sanhedrin</i> 4.2, the Pharisee members of the Sanhedrin were not permitted to vote on the execution of anyone, which would have included Jesus.</p>
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Throughout the centuries, the Pharisees have been accused of the crucifixion of Jesus. Clearly, they plotted His death numerous times, yet, from the time His arrest, trial, condemnation, and crucifixion, they appear to be nowhere in the gospel narratives. They vanished from the pen of the gospel writers to be replaced by the Sadducees, scribes, and elders. Could it be that they passionately coveted His death, but also feared the actual execution of a man who did good and performed miracles? In comparison with other judicial decisions by the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Pharisees often demonstrated more

396. For further study, see James C. McRuer, *The Trial of Jesus*. Toronto: Clarke Irwin Ltd. 1964.

397. Last parenthesis mine.

398. Other parenthesis by Danby, ed., *Mishnah*.

compassion than did their rivals. While the Pharisees most certainly desired to rid themselves of Jesus, they did not want to be directly involved with His execution. As strange as it seems, this was consistent with their legalistic thinking. As previously stated, they believed that if they were not physically involved in His death, they were not guilty of any sin, regardless of their attitudes.

Amazingly, while Jesus was taken through the Jewish and Roman courts, the disciples were never taken into custody. It is a mystery that not a single one of them was asked to come forward and testify on behalf or against Jesus; neither were they accused of being “co-conspirators.” If the Romans would have had the slightest thought that Jesus was a political revolutionary, He and all the disciples would have been slaughtered immediately. But the disciples remained safe and were not even asked to appear in court.

“Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a criminal?” Some translations read, “Am I leading a rebellion?” The implication of the political background is that criminals were generally also revolutionaries, because they supported themselves by criminal activities. There were thirteen rebellions between the time when Pompey entered Jerusalem in 63 B.C., and when the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70. Some historians say there were three major revolts that overshadowed dozens of smaller ones. But on this evening, the Romans were not worried about any attempt by Jesus to overthrow them. The Herodian spies kept Herod Antipas and Pilate well informed of their activities. As previously stated, Jesus was so extremely popular (Mk. 12:37) that they continued to fear an uprising would occur if His arrest became public knowledge. Hence, the soldiers were sent as an additional measure of security and insure the peace.

“Every day I was with you in the temple complex.” Jesus emphatically stated that He was teaching daily in the temple courts. It was the custom of the day for rabbis and sages to teach in this manner throughout the temple courts or on the Southern Steps. Jesus said that He was simply following the custom of His peers; He did absolutely nothing unusual or His enemies could have challenged Him in broad daylight. Instead, they chose to do their evil work in the darkness of night. Jesus remained extremely popular with the crowds throughout the Passion Week. The reason He was *not* arrested in the temple courts is that the masses would have revolted against the arresting forces. Those who claim that *all* the people turned against Jesus have failed to provide any type of evidence or suggestion as to why thousands of people, who loved Jesus, would have suddenly turned against Him.

“A linen cloth.” Some scholars believe the word *linen* is a derivation from *Indian*. India was the primary source for the finest fabrics. Furthermore, it is believed that Indian cloth

was used to wrap dead bodies and possibly the body of Jesus as well.³⁹⁹

15.02.09.Q1 Concerning Mark 14:52, was a certain young man who ran away really naked?

This is a classic example where the definition of a word in one culture has a different meaning in another culture. In verse 52 are the phrases, “**a certain young man ... ran away naked.**” Nearly all commentators agree that this young man was none other than John Mark, who in later years wrote one of the gospels. The arrest of Jesus not only frightened the disciples, but did so especially for John Mark. Evidently someone tried to capture him, but he slipped out of his outer garment and escaped. To be without the outer garment was deemed naked.⁴⁰⁰ The English word *naked* is translated from the Greek root word *dyo*. It is closely linked with *gymnotes*. To have been naked was to have been *without an outer garment but wearing loin cloth, or poorly dressed,*⁴⁰¹ a completely different definition from modern Western understanding of the word. On a side note, military definition of naked was to be without armor, not without clothing.⁴⁰² The disciples knew all too well that the arrest of a leader usually meant imprisonment, slavery, or possibly execution for everyone affiliated with him. John Mark was not about to take any chances. An explanation of the word “nude” is found in this rabbinic writing concerning the capital punishment of stoning:

When he (the condemned man)⁴⁰³ was four cubits from the place of stoning, they stripped off his clothes. A man is kept covered in the front and a woman both in front and behind....The sages say: “A man is stoned naked but a woman is not stoned naked.”

Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 6.3-4

Clearly, both men and women wore minimal clothing when stoned to death, but were still considered to be “naked.” As previously stated, modesty in the ancient Jewish world was of great importance. When the Greeks and Romans controlled Judaea, the Jews were

399. See also Mt. 27:59; Mk. 15:46; Lk. 23:53; Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:228.

400. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 57.

401. Weigelt, “Clothe, Naked, Dress, Garment, Cloth.” 1:312, 315; Vine, “Naked, Nakedness.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:425.

402. Josephus, *Antiquities* 8.14.2

403. Parenthesis mine.

horrified with the immodesty of their Gentile overlords and neighbors. That is one reason they called Gentiles “dogs.”



15.02.09.A. AN OLD ILLUSTRATION OF TWO MEN FISHING “NAKED.” Fishing “naked” did not mean fishing without any clothing, but fishing in what would today be known as “underwear” or a small “swim suit.” Since fishing was done at night in the middle of the Sea, it was not an issue. Furthermore, hauling fishing nets into a boat usually meant the fishermen got rather wet.

A person’s garments always consisted of an under layer and outer or upper layer. As previously stated, when the outer layer was removed, he/she was said to be “naked.”⁴⁰⁴ In this narrative, Isaiah took off his outer layer that was known as a *cetoneth* and sandals and preached repentance to the people. He obviously caught their attention, and probably their criticisms, but he told them of pending divine judgment. On the other hand, if one were to say today that Isaiah preached in his underwear, that interpretation is both right and wrong. It is right from the ancient Jewish account, but again wrong in western thinking because “ancient under-garments” were far more modest than today’s fashions.

404. Vine, “Naked, Nakedness.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:425, and “Clothing, Cloths, Clothes, Cloke, Coat.” 2:105-06.

Since Isaiah was dressed as one who had been robbed or a prisoner of war, he personally became an object lesson of his sermon.⁴⁰⁵

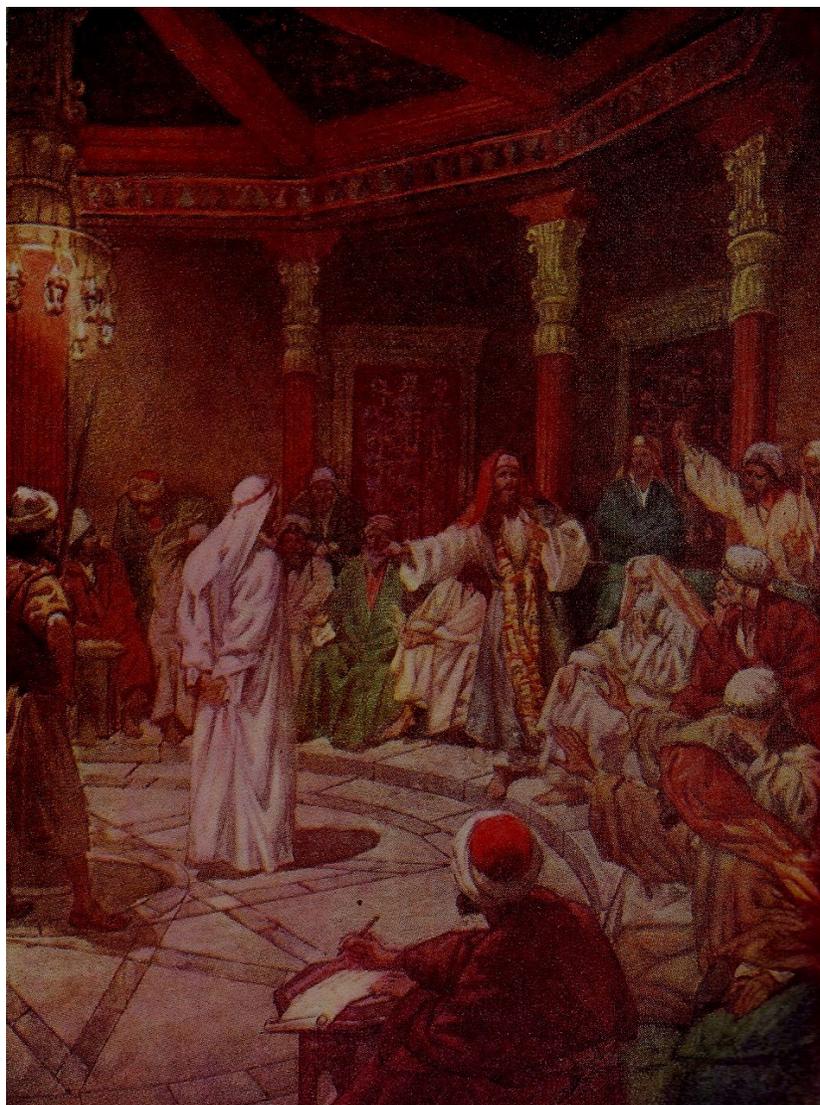
405. Keil and Delitzsch. *Commentary on the Old Testament*. 7:242.

Unit 15

The Passion Escalates

Chapter 03

The Three Jewish Trials



15.03.00.A. JESUS IS EXAMINED BY CAIAPHAS. Artwork by William Hole of the Royal Scottish Academy of Art, 1876. Members of the Sanhedrin were seated in a semi-circle, similar in size to that of a threshing floor as Caiaphas stands to accuse Him. It was there where Jesus told them who He was, and it was the high court, representing the nation

of Israel that rejected Him.

15.03.01 Introduction

As stated previously, the Supreme Court was comprised of twenty-four Sadducees (chief priests), twenty-four Pharisees (Elders), twenty-two scribes (Pharisees) and one high priest, but the Pharisees were not permitted to judge capital cases. While the membership was seventy-one, only twenty-three of a “Small Sanhedrin” was needed to conduct a trial. Therefore, the term “whole Sanhedrin” or “entire court” has a reference to the minimum number required for a trial, not the full membership of the court. Of the twenty-three, eleven votes were needed to acquit and thirteen votes were needed for conviction. The number of court members present at the trial of Jesus is unknown.

For centuries, the Sanhedrin was the institution that shaped the religious life of all Jews. It was renowned for its compassion, fairness, and mercy. In 30 B.C., Rabbi Hillel became the President of the Supreme Court. He was one of the most influential religious leaders of the Second Temple Period and his name has been associated with the best rabbinic schools in Jewish history. His presidency, of four decades, was likewise known for compassion and wisdom. He probably was in this office when Herod the Great questioned rabbis and the magi as to where the Christ was to be born (Mt. 2:3-5). Hillel was also the grandfather of Gamaliel, the teacher of Saul of Tarsus, who became known as the Apostle Paul. However, shortly after his death, Annas was appointed to the presidency and the moral character of the sacred institution collapsed. The Sanhedrin continued to be in a moral free-fall during the time of Jesus, and because of high court’s condemnation of Him it would lose its reputation, and eventually fade from history.⁴⁰⁶

15.03.01.Q1 What 25 rules of justice were broken by the Sanhedrin when the high court condemned Jesus to death?

The religious aristocrats had no shortage of reasons to execute Jesus.⁴⁰⁷ In their desperate process to have Jesus executed, they violated a host of oral laws of jurisprudence, as recorded in the tractate “Sanhedrin” of the *Mishnah*.⁴⁰⁸ Note the following violations:⁴⁰⁹

406. The Sanhedrin was dissolved in 358 but resurrected later for a short period of time in 1806 by Napoleon where it functioned near Paris. It was discontinued with the rise of anti-Semitism. But the high court was finally re-established in Israel in October of 2004.

407. See 12.04.08.Q1 What were the 12 reasons the Jewish leadership planned the death of Jesus?

408. The complete judicial procedure for the high court is found in the Mishnah, *Sanbedrin* 4.1 through 5.5.

409. Mishnah, *Sanbedrin* 4:1.

1. There was to be no arrest by ecclesiastical authorities that was influenced by a bribe (Ex. 23:8).⁴¹⁰
2. There was to be no trial after sunset (after three stars appear in the sky).
3. No judges were permitted in the arrest of the accused, so as to keep judges unbiased.
4. No trials were to be held before the morning sacrifice.
5. No trials were to be held on the Sabbath or on the eve of the Sabbath.
6. All trials were to be public. Secrecy of any form was forbidden.
7. Trials were to be held only in the Hall of Judgment (Chamber of Hewn Stone).
8. Judges were not to argue for a conviction of the accused.
9. Every accused person was to have at least one defender.
10. Capital cases had to be tried over a minimum of two days.
11. The high priest (Caiaphas) was not permitted to tear his clothing.
12. Charges against the accused could not originate with the judges.
13. Once a trial began, no additional charges could be added to the original charge.
14. The charge of blasphemy was applicable if the accused applied the Name of God (YHWH) to himself or if the defendant pronounced the name of God.
15. The accused could not be condemned by his testimony alone, but had to be in perfect agreement with two or three witnesses (Deut. 17:6).
16. Judges were not permitted to question the accused, only the witnesses.

410. Judas was paid a bribe of thirty pieces of silver.

17. If a guilty verdict was to be pronounced, it had to be given on the day following the trial.

18. The condemned was not permitted to be executed on the same day as his sentence was pronounced. (Since Herod the Great decreed that the authority of capital punishment be removed from the Sanhedrin – except for Gentiles who entered the holy areas of the temple – this exception was in force prior to Herod’s decree.)

19. Any judge who had a personal interest or conflict with the accused had to remove himself from the judicial process.

20. Among the judges, the youngest had to vote first as not to be influenced or persuaded by the older and more experienced judges.

21. No *Baal-Rib*, or legal counsel, was appointed to defend Jesus.⁴¹¹

22. No witnesses were called to defend Jesus.

23. The proper procedure for a trial was,

a. First the accusation

b. Then the defense

24. A defendant could not be beaten, tortured, or scourged prior to the trial.

25. Judges were to be kind and humane to the defendant.

Concerning any final decision of the Sanhedrin:

1. If a trial was concluded with a favorable verdict, it could be concluded on the same day as it began.

2. If an unfavorable verdict was given then it must be concluded on the following day.

3. No announcement was to be given at night.

411. Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 2:517-18.

These rules were intended to protect the accused and prevent any possible error of an inaccurate verdict. Therefore, no such trial could legally have been held on the day prior to a Sabbath or festival. The three Jewish trials of Jesus would fail on every count, and be uniquely different from any other.⁴¹²

15.03.02 Jn. 18:13-14 Jerusalem

FIRST JEWISH TRIAL: JESUS LED TO ANNAS

¹³ First they led Him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. ¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was advantageous that one man should die for the people.

Annas was the high priest from A.D. 6 to 15 and a devoted Sadducee. There is, at times, some difficulty identifying the high priest.⁴¹³ Acts 4:6 identifies him as holding the position, while Luke 3:2 appears to identify both Annas and Caiaphas as holding the position jointly. The difficulty is resolved by understanding that a former high priest was still called by his title as an honor, even though he no longer functioned in the office of priesthood. In a similar manner today, a retired president of a nation continues to be addressed as “Mr. President.”

History reveals that Caiaphas was in the official position. However, his retired father-in-law, Annas, was still respected in an unofficial capacity, as he had been deposed by procurator Valerius Gratus, who held the rulership position prior to Pontius Pilate.⁴¹⁴

The high priest, who was to represent the people before Almighty God, was the single most important destructive influence to kill Jesus. Both men were delighted to see Jesus tied, bound, and in court. Caiaphas remembered all too well the trouble Jesus caused him previously – the two cleansings of the temple caused financial losses, not to mention the humiliation he and his fellow Sadducees received. For him this day was long overdue. He finally had the opportunity to apply revengeful justice, as he desired. His corruption in the temple was so well known, that centuries later when the Talmud was written, his name was associated with the sacred sites being converted into a “market-house” and

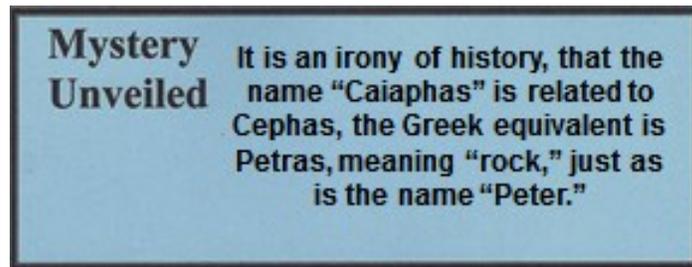
412. See Appendix 21 for the seven proclamations of the innocence of Jesus.

413. See 03.06.21, 03.06.22, and 03.06.26 as well as the terms of service in Appendix 1.

414. See terms of service in Appendix 1.

“den of robbers.”

“Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews.” Caiaphas was the official supreme leader of Judaism. As the high priest of the temple, he gave direction in the affairs of the faith. The Greek equivalent is “Petras,” which means “rock.” It is the same name Jesus gave to Peter (Jn. 1:42), indicating that His testimony would build a church. Ironically it is also the same root name that in Hebrew means Caiaphas, who would try to kill Him.⁴¹⁵ Evidently, God the Father agreed. IN all probability, Satan never had a more trusted friend in the temple than he had in Caiaphas.



Finally, it is interesting that Caiaphas “advised” his fellow supporters on the question. In fact, the attendees of this court were selected men whom he controlled and manipulated. They all owed him favors, as he was the wealthiest and most powerful Jew in the country. Everyone present was successful, to some measure, in religious or business enterprises, due all or in part to Caiaphas. It was time now for Caiaphas to collect on his many favors and gifts. The judges of the Supreme Court were in fact purchased and paid for by its president.

A profound statement uttered by Caiaphas was, **“it was advantageous that one man should die for the people.”** That was precisely why Jesus came, but obviously not in the manner Caiaphas understood. He desired to have Jesus put to death to protect his own position in the temple and end the onslaught of insults. More importantly, he was afraid Jesus might cause the Romans to take tighter military control of Jerusalem. He was aware that any collision with Roman authorities would endanger his powerful position, which had afforded him and his extended family extreme wealth and luxury. Beginning at this point, the trial of Jesus was illegal in every manner possible.

15.03.03 Jn. 18:15-17

PETER’S FIRST DENIAL

415. Kennedy, “Christ’s Trials and Ours.” 6.

15 Meanwhile, Simon Peter was following Jesus, as was another disciple. That disciple was an acquaintance of the high priest; so he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard. 16 But Peter remained standing outside by the door. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the girl who was the doorkeeper and brought Peter in.

17 Then the slave girl who was the doorkeeper said to Peter, "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?"

"I am not!" he said.

"Simon Peter was following Jesus, as was another disciple." Peter has often been criticized for his betrayal of Jesus, yet he and another disciple were brave enough to follow Him when all others deserted Him. Most scholars believe that the other disciple was John, an "acquaintance of the high priest" because according to Acts 4:6, he, as a kinsman of the high priest could enter the home of the high priest. However, Peter did not have that status, so he had to wait outside. On another occasion (Jn. 20:5), John and Peter ran to the tomb of Jesus. When they arrived, Peter went right in, but John had to wait outside for a moment. Why? According to Jewish law, John would have become defiled if he entered the tomb where there was a dead body, since he was a member of the family of priests.⁴¹⁶

Peter's lack of strength and boldness to be a true and faithful witness underscored his human weakness and the dire need for Pentecostal power. After the Pentecost event however, he was a completely transformed man; from a disorganized disciple who had the profound gift of saying the wrong things at the wrong time, to a dynamic apostle who spoke with profound wisdom and closed his life as a martyr in Rome.

"That disciple was an acquaintance of the high priest." The fact that John was a relative of the high priest Caiaphas, underscores the religious divisions that existed within some families. John came from a relatively orthodox family of Pharisees while Caiaphas was of the Hellenistic Sadducean dynasty. No two people could have been extreme opposites. However, since John was a relative, he had access to the inner circles related to Caiaphas.

15.03.04 Jn. 18:19-23

JESUS BEFORE ANNAS

416. Moseley, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church*. 24.

¹⁹ The high priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and about His teaching.

²⁰ “I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus answered him. “I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple complex, where all the Jews congregate, and I haven’t spoken anything in secret. ²¹ Why do you question Me? Question those who heard what I told them. Look, they know what I said.”

²² When He had said these things, one of the temple police standing by slapped Jesus, saying, “Is this the way you answer the high priest?”

²³ “If I have spoken wrongly,” Jesus answered him, “give evidence about the wrong; but if rightly, why do you hit Me?”

Jesus asked him, **“Why do you question me?”** According to Oral Law, the Sanhedrin was not permitted to ask the accused any questions, but only to hear the testimonies of two or three witnesses. Just as Jesus was being cross-examined by the leading religious leaders, Josephus expressed the same idea but used the term “principal men” in his description of those who were responsible for accusing Jesus before Pilate.⁴¹⁷

Jesus now stood before Annas, the retired high priest who had previously been an unofficial agent of the Roman Empire as his priestly position was secured by an appointment. He was actually “president emeritus” of the Sanhedrin. Sitting in this judicial position, he was clearly acting illegally. The trial should have begun with an accusatory charge and witnesses. The fact that Annas asked Jesus various questions reveals his failure to follow judicial procedures.

Questions concerning the disciples were important because other messianic pretenders,⁴¹⁸ as well as the Zealots, also had disciples and attempted to overthrow the empire. His questions then focused on the doctrine. Jesus simply stated that He had spoken many times in the synagogues, at the temple, and in an open forum; He held no secrets. However, apparently one of the officials did not appreciate some of His answers and consequently struck Him. To this Jesus responded, “If I said something wrong, testify as

417. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.3.3.

418. A partial listing of an estimated 60 messianic pretenders is found in Appendix 25 “False Prophets, Rebels, Significant Events, And Rebellions That Impacted The First Century Jewish World.”

to what is wrong. However, if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” With this, Jesus won His case and the next illegal trial was before Caiaphas.

15.03.05 Lk. 22:54 (See also Mt. 26:57-58; Mk. 14:53-54 Jn. 18:18-24) Second Jewish Trial

TO CAIAPHAS THE HIGH PRIEST

They seized Him, led Him away, and brought Him into the high priest's house. Meanwhile Peter was following at a distance.

Now, before Caiaphas, there was a notable change in His speech. Jesus was not defending Himself, but rather, was making a series of “I” statements such as “I am,” “I always taught,” and “I said.” With calm meekness He answered His accusers so they might know, without a doubt, His identity – in doing so, Jesus extended mercy to them and showed that He was their Messiah.

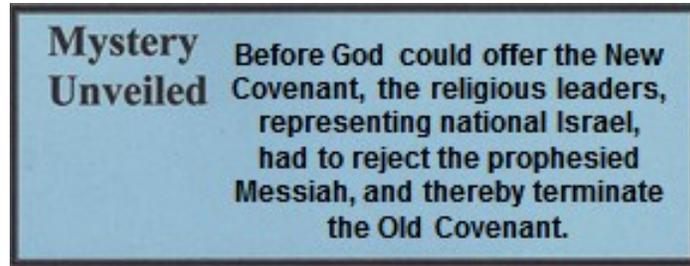
It was a busy night for the Sadducees to do their work of execution. Following the first trial came a speedy second one to insure that His popular followers could not demand His freedom. Some scholars have questioned whether Caiaphas was the central figure who desired Jesus dead or if he simply did the dirty work for Annas. However, since Caiaphas held the official office, he was primarily responsible for the direction and decisions of the Sanhedrin.

15.03.05.Q1 What is the significance of the Jewish leadership condemning Jesus?

The significance lies in the *covenant* God had with His people. (Technically, the Romans crucified Jesus, but did so at the insistence of the Jews.) In the Old Testament days, God established His covenant with the *nation* of Israel, whereas the new covenant is not with a nation, but with individuals in many nations. The life of Jesus was entirely within the Old Testament setting. The New Testament era did not begin until after the resurrection (some believe it was on the Day of Pentecost). Before the New Covenant/New Testament could be enacted, God permitted the religious leaders, representing *national Israel*, to reject Him as their Messiah. God, knowing the wicked hearts of the Sadducean and Pharisaic leadership, closed the Old Covenant, permitted the destruction of His temple to end the sacrificial system, and spread the good news that the New Covenant was available to anyone who desired it.

The Romans permitted the Jews to maintain their own temple military unit and religious judicial system. Hence, the Sadducees had the authority to arrest and detain anyone in the

restricted areas of the temple and areas around it. However, capital punishment was reserved for the Roman courts, except in the event a Gentile entered the restricted area of the temple.⁴¹⁹



15.03.06 Lk. 22:55-57; Mt. 26:69-72 (See also Mk. 14:66-70a; Jn. 18:25)

PETER AGAIN DENIES JESUS

Lk. ⁵⁵ They lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, and Peter sat among them. ⁵⁶ When a servant saw him sitting in the firelight, and looked closely at him, she said, “This man was with Him too.”

⁵⁷ But he denied it: “Woman, I don’t know Him!”

Mt. ⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant approached him and she said, “You were with Jesus the Galilean too.”

⁷⁰ But he denied it in front of everyone: “I don’t know what you’re talking about!”

⁷¹ When he had gone out to the gateway, another woman saw him and told those who were there, “This man was with Jesus the Nazarene!”

⁷² And again he denied it with an oath, “I don’t know the man!”

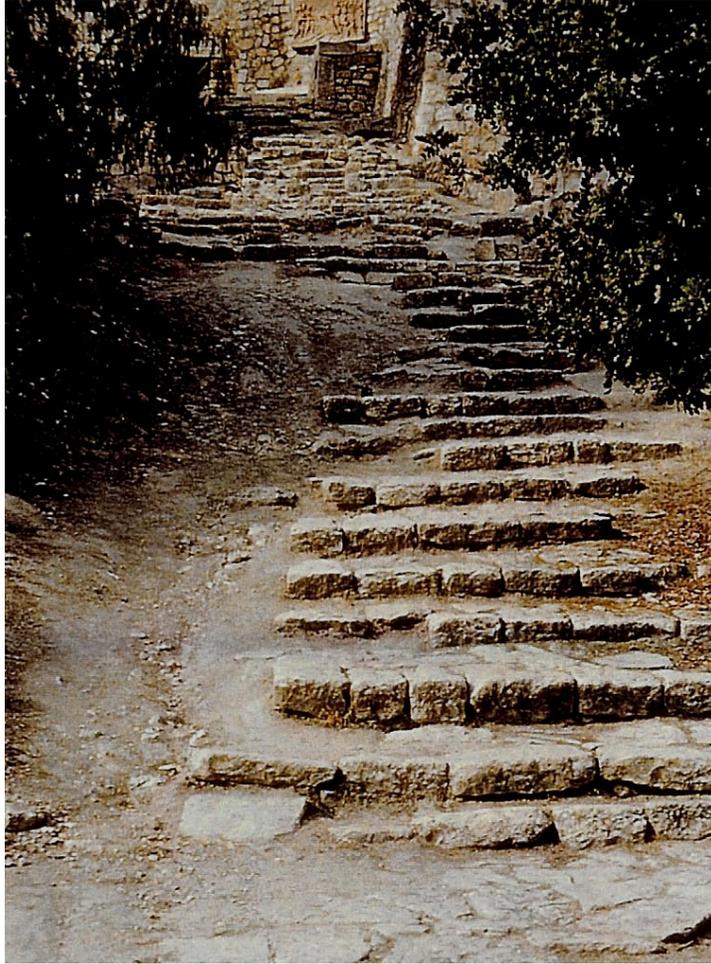
419. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 415.



15.03.06.A. A MODEL OF THE PALACE OF CAIAPHAS THE HIGH PRIEST. The palace of Caiaphas was located within the Old City walls during the Second Temple Period, but is outside today's Old City walls.

The opulent homes of the Sadducees were only a short distance from the temple. They enjoyed so much political favor with the Romans that a private road was constructed from the temple to their homes. It was also built so they would not become “defiled” by the common people. Therefore, the distance they forced Jesus to walk was relatively short. Their planned execution of Jesus was under way, with only a minimal sense of legal procedure. Night trials, even if held in a private home, were illegal under both Jewish and Roman laws.⁴²⁰

420. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 415.



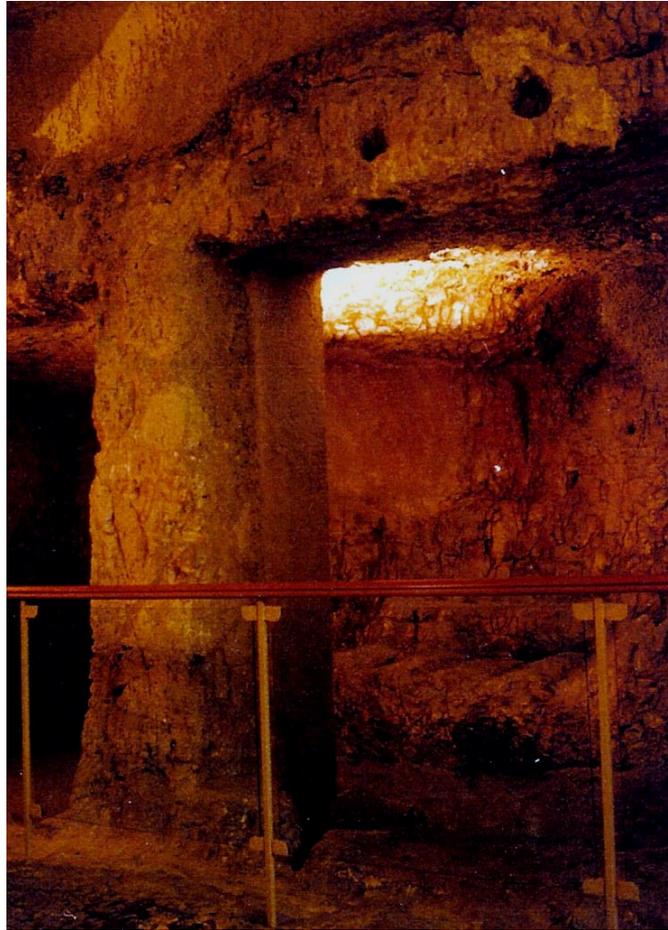
15.03.06.B. THE STEPS TO THE HOUSE OF CAIAPHAS. Scholars believe these steps date to the first century or earlier and, therefore, Jesus would have walked on them.⁴²¹ It is very possible that this walkway was the route taken by Jesus to the prison basement under the home of the high priest.⁴²² Photograph by the author.

421. However, recent scholarship seems to conclude these are A.D. 4th century steps over a previous walkway.

422. Torrance, "Cross, Crucifixion." 1:343.



15.03.06.C. A WALL SCULPTURE DICTING JESUS ARRESTED AND TAKEN TO CAIAPHAS. The sculpture depicts Jesus being beaten as He is taken to the home of the High Priest. It was the intent of the Sadducees not only to kill Him, but to destroy the royal honor the crowds gave Him when He entered the city on a donkey. Photograph by the author.



15.03.06.D. THE PRISON BASEMENT OF CAIAPHAS. In the palace basement of Caiaphas, one can see the holes in the stone pillars and header through which chains were placed to hold prisoners – it was a private prison. Today the site is honored by the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu (Latin: *at the Cock's Crow*). Photograph by the author.

It was common in ancient times for those in religious and government authority to have prisons in the basements of their homes. These prisons did not always have iron bars, but rather, had holes in walls and columns to which prisoners were chained. Jesus would have been chained to one of these columns and possibly beaten.⁴²³ In A.D. 333, the Pilgrim of Bordeaux, whose personal identity remains a mystery, made this comment about the ruins of the house of Caiaphas:

From there one ascends to Zion and there appears to be where stood the house of Caiaphas the priest, and the column is still there, on which they

423. Liefeld, "Prison, Prisoner." 4:870; Knapp, "Prison." 3:975.

flogged Christ.

Pilgrim of Bordeaux⁴²⁴

The prophetic words of the Psalm writer most certainly reflected the thoughts of Jesus as He was in the dungeon (cistern) prison. The painful pressure that caused perspiration of blood was still upon Him. His agony continued as He pleaded to His heavenly Father.

¹ LORD, God of my salvation,

I cry before You day and night.

² May my prayer reach Your presence;

Listen to my cry.

³ For I have had enough troubles,

and my life is near Sheol.

⁴ I am counted among those going down to the Pit.

I am like a man without strength,

⁵ abandoned among the dead.

I am like the slain lying in the grave,

whom you no longer remember,

and who are cut off from Your care.

⁶ You have put me in the lowest part of the Pit,

in the darkest places, in the depths.

⁷ Your wrath weighs heavily on me;

You have overwhelmed me with all Your waves. *Selah*

⁸ You have distanced my friends from me;

You have made me repulsive to them.

I am shut in and cannot go out.

⁹ My eyes are worn out from crying.

Psalm 88:1-9a

424. Quoted by Baldi, *Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum*. 729.

15.03.07 Mk. 14:55-60; Mt. 26:63; Mk. 62b-66

SECOND JEWISH TRIAL: BEFORE CAIAPHAS

Mk. ⁵⁵ The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but they could find none. ⁵⁶ For many were giving false testimony against Him, but the testimonies did not agree. ⁵⁷ Some stood up and were giving false testimony against Him, stating, ⁵⁸ “We heard Him say, ‘I will demolish this sanctuary made by human hands, and in three days I will build another not made by hands.’” ⁵⁹ Yet their testimony did not agree even on this. ⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up before them all and questioned Jesus, “Don’t You have an answer to what these men are testifying against You?”

Mt. ⁶³ But Jesus kept silent. Then the high priest said to Him, “By the living God I place You under oath: tell us if You are the Messiah, the Son of God!”

Mk. ^{62b} Again the high priest questioned Him, “Are You the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

⁶² “I am,” said Jesus, “and all of you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

⁶³ Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “Why do we still need witnesses?”

⁶⁴ You have heard the blasphemy! What is your decision?”

And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

Jesus no longer remained silent as to His identity. He spoke of Himself as the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Almighty One, an allusion to Psalm 110:1. He also spoke of returning one day on the clouds, an allusion to Daniel 7:13. These were no idle words, but they underscored His claim of divinity. While Jesus was enduring the second illegal trial, Peter was experiencing great stress and turmoil that would lead him to deny Jesus three times.

“The whole Sanhedrin.” This judicial system was organized during the Babylonian exile, but its biblical foundation is based upon Numbers 11:16, where Moses gathered

seventy men to help him rule Israel.⁴²⁵ If only twenty-three members were present, the Court was known as the Small Sanhedrin.⁴²⁶ The term “whole Sanhedrin” is problematic if applied only to the counsel of seventy-one members, because it was known that some of its members believed Jesus to be the Messiah (i.e. Nicodemus). However, the term was also applied to the Small Sanhedrin. When this group assembled, the high priest personally selected a group of Sadducees, elders, and scribes, and this entire (or “whole”) group determined that Jesus would die. The Small Sanhedrin was considered the quorum of the larger body and met regularly on the second and fifth days of the week.⁴²⁷ Hence, Caiaphas was able to quickly assemble twenty-three selected men who would conspire with him to perform illegal trials and have Jesus executed.

“Many were giving false testimony against Him.” To maintain some resemblance of legality, at least two or three witnesses had to be called to testify against the accused (Deut. 17:6; 19:15-18). It is interesting to note that there was not a single “witness” of those who were healed or raised from the dead. Lazarus, who lived hardly a half-hour’s walk from the court, was not asked to appear. In fact, these same leaders contemplated his death (Jn. 12:10). There was a deliberate attempt to leave out those who would testify on behalf of Jesus, not only in the form of witnesses of those who were healed, but also the Sanhedrin members who were sympathetic to Jesus (i.e. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea).⁴²⁸

On an important side note, another member of the Sanhedrin who evidently was not under the control and manipulation of the House of Annas and Caiaphas, was a staunch Pharisee named Gamaliel. In Acts 5:33-34 Gamaliel expressed concern that Peter and John might be of God. Clearly he would not have approved of the trial of Jesus.

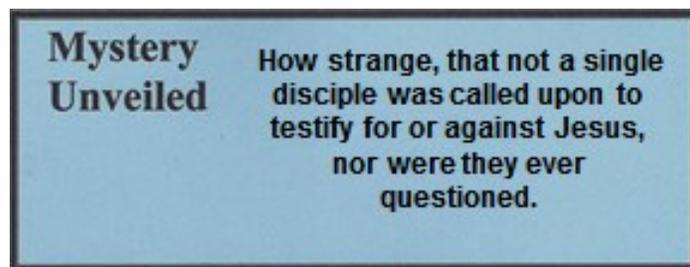
The phrase, **“Many testified falsely against him,”** is a powerful indictment against the religious establishment. It was obvious that there was a Jewish conspiracy against Jesus, for if there wasn’t, then He and all of His disciples would have been arrested and tried by the Romans, not the Sadducees. The irony is that the Jews had extremely harsh punishments for those who gave false testimony. Yet it was the only kind that the Sadducees were able to generate in their mock trial. Their own laws provide an awesome sentence against them.

425. Mishnah, *Sanbedrin* 4:1; Tompson, “Sandedrin.” 3:1390-91.

426. Mishnah, *Sanbedrin* 4.1.

427. Mishnah, *Sanbedrin* 4.1.

428. One Jewish scholar informed this writer that the Talmud says that Joseph of Aramathea was the younger brother of Heli, the grandfather of Jesus. It is this writer’s opinion that this is doubtful, but the subject could be an interesting research for another student.



According to the Jewish method of scourging, those who were found guilty of a crime deemed worthy of scourging, such as giving a false testimony, were tied to a pillar with chest and back bare. They were whipped no more than forty times (Deut. 25:1-3) with a third of the floggings upon the chest and two-thirds upon the back.⁴²⁹ This is the same kind the Apostle Paul endured five times. However, those who were false witnesses received eighty scourges. While this form of punishment was harsh, the Jews went to great lengths to write rules and regulations for its use. For example, a false witness who was responsible for anyone else receiving a scourging was subject to eighty stripes.

We testify that such-a-one is liable to suffer the forty stripes’, and they are found (to be) false witnesses, they must suffer eighty stripes by virtue of the law “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor” (Ex. 20:16) and also by virtue of the law, “Then do to him as he intended to do to his brother” (Deut. 19:19).

Mishnah, *Makkoth* 1.3

Furthermore, a false witness who was instrumental in causing a death would receive punishment of death, not eighty stripes. According to the Oral Law instituted by both the Pharisees and Sadducees, the punishment would be as follows:

If others came and proved false the evidence of these others, and yet others came and proved their evidence false, even if (there came) a hundred (pairs of witnesses to prove false the evidence of them that went before), they must all be put to death. Rabbi Judah says: This would be a conspiracy: but the first pair alone is put to death.

Mishnah, *Makkoth* 1.5

429. See also 2 Cor. 11:24 and Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.8.21, 23; See also 14.01.04.Q2 “What was the difference between Jewish and Roman scourges?”

It can be safely assumed that those who testified against Jesus never received any punishment. The Jewish scourging was far less cruel than the Roman method. Whereas a scourging was simply a whip with a number of leather strips, sometimes with knots, a Roman flagellum had pieces of iron or bone in the leather strip to increase the torture.⁴³⁰

“I will demolish this sanctuary made by human hands.” The false witnesses could not agree with each other, nor did they quote Jesus accurately (Jn. 2:19). This statement was repeated when Stephen was martyred (Acts 6:14). Jesus never said that *He* would destroy the temple but said that if *they* would destroy the temple, after three days He would raise it. Of course, He was referring to the temple of His own body. Regardless of how the phrase was understood, either as a metaphor of His body or the physical building (which it wasn't), clearly Jesus indicated He had superhuman power. However, such a statement always had a powerful impact as seen with the prophet Jeremiah. When he predicted the destruction of the temple he was threatened with death (Jer. 26:1-9).

As previously stated, it was the policy of the Sanhedrin that once a trial began, new charges were not permitted. In addition, no person could be condemned by his confession alone. His accusers and false witnesses had become entangled in a web of lies that would have left them guilty of perjury in any other court. Jesus listened quietly as one false witness hopelessly confronted and contradicted the testimony of another. The overriding goal of the Court was not justice or protection of the sacred Scripture, but to condemn Jesus to death. In the hysteria of the moment, they broke whatever laws, codes, and traditions necessary in order to achieve their end. To use the modern idiom, they believed that “the end justifies the means.”

<p>Mystery Unveiled</p>	<p>The religious leaders were horrified when Jesus spoke of a new temple, because they knew their temple was not Ezekiel's temple. That meant destruction for their temple and fortune.</p>
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“Don't You have an answer to what these men are testifying against You?” This phrase in the original language is not only a demanding question, but also reminds Jesus

430. Greenberg, “Scourging.” 4:245-46; See also 14.01.04.Q2 “What was the difference between Jewish and Roman scourges?”

that He is under oath.⁴³¹

“But Jesus kept silent.” Silence was an incredible response – one they never expected. What did His silence mean? Was it a confession of guilt? Yet the mockery of the trial and the conflicting testimonies against Him were all worthless. Furthermore, His miracles and skill in verbal debates were well known and now, suddenly there were no miracles and no debates that could save His life. Certainly some who were present must have questioned, why. Only later would they realize that they witnessed responses that were the fulfillment of prophetic plans.

“By the living God.” This is an amazing statement by Caiaphas, who accused Jesus of blasphemy. The reason is that simply to say the Divine Name was considered blasphemy; therefore, what Caiaphas accused Jesus of doing, he did himself.⁴³² There are several Jewish references to the prohibition of speaking the name of “God,” such as,

The blasphemer is not culpable (guilty) unless he pronounces the Name itself.

Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 7.5⁴³³

Another example of the Jewish custom to avoid using the name of God is to substitute the word “glory” for “God.”⁴³⁴ This custom continues among some Jewish sects today, while others spell the name as “G-d.” Josephus gave a brief but concise consequence that falls upon those who violate the name of God.

He that blasphemeth God, let him be stoned, and let him hang upon a tree all that day, and then let him be buried in an ignominious and obscure manner.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.8.6 (202)

In bold language the historian said that one who does not speak the name of God in a sacred manner will suffer three consequences.

431. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 463.

432. Bock, “Blasphemy and the Jewish Examination of Jesus.” 610-11; Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 373-74.

433. See also Philo, *Moses* 2.203-6.

434. For example, in the Mishnah, *Yoma* 6.2 is the statement, “Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom forever and ever!” Obviously the term “glory” was substituted for the name “God.” Another substituted term is “Blessed One,” is found in *1 Enoch* 77:2 and in the Mishnah, *Berakoth* 7.3.

1. He will be stoned to death.
2. His body will be hung on a tree because that is an eternal curse (Deut. 21:22-23).
3. He will not be buried in a family tomb, but will be disconnected from his family forever.

Obviously the accusation of blasphemy was quite serious.

“I place You under oath.” In modern American courts a witness has the opportunity to not “swear under oath,” but rather, to “affirm,” that his statements are true. In the Jewish Court this option did not exist. In a Jewish court an oath was upon the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whereas in a Roman or other Gentile court an oath was upon the name of a pagan deity.⁴³⁵ An example of the latter would have been when Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem and Joseph had to take a Roman oath concerning his family in the census count. Now Caiaphas placed the oath upon Jesus, and therefore, anything Jesus said was under oath. The purpose was to have Jesus testify against Himself, another violation of Jewish jurisprudence.

“Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” To this, Jesus responded by turning the statement to Caiaphas, making him responsible for the violation of due process. Matthew’s account (26:63) of this statement reads, “By the living God I place You under oath: tell us if You are the Messiah, the Son of God!” This question is significant in that not only did Jesus give an affirmative answer, but He did so under oath. Clearly this gives credibility that oaths can be made in judicial situations. Even though He previously stated (Mt. 5:33-37) that, in general conversation, oaths should not be made at all.

As to the next subject, the idea that the temple would be rebuilt was revolting. It meant that the existing temple would be destroyed, and to add tension to the tense discussion, everyone knew that the existing structure did not resemble Ezekiel’s temple. That opened the opportunity to examine the words of the prophet Zechariah who said that the temple would be rebuilt (6:12-15). In the first century there were two opposing opinions as to who would rebuild the temple:

1. God Himself would rebuild the temple, and
2. The Messiah would rebuild it.

435. Link and Tuente. “Swear, Oath.” 3:737-43.

Therefore, Caiaphas probably reflected upon the words of Zechariah and the discussions among the rabbis when he asked Jesus, “Are you the Messiah?” There are three points to be considered in this matter:

1. Caiaphas knew that many believed Jesus to be the m/Messiah
2. Caiaphas knew that Jesus did not decline the name, but rather, in a number of conversations Jesus justified the use of it.
3. Caiaphas knew that thousands saluted Jesus as the m/Messiah when He rode into Jerusalem in a symbolic manner representing a king.

Therefore, Jesus began with a sophisticated answer that would lead to another question: “If I ask you, will you not answer?” From now on the Son of Man will be seated on the right hand of the “Power.” That leads Caiaphas to ask, “Are you the Son of God?” Jesus very carefully went from a political issue to a theological one with Old Testament reflections, namely, Genesis 14 (Abraham and Melchizedek) and Psalm 110, “The Lord said to My Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.” This was connected with the words of judgment in Daniel 7, “The Son of Man.” Isaiah also referred to this when he said, “He will be seated at the right hand of the Power” (Isa.10:33; Lk. 22:69). This is called a hypostatic term.⁴³⁶ The “son of man” figure is found in some Jewish writings as one who had authority in the final judgment (*I Enoch* 37-71), so the language was not new to the Sanhedrin court.⁴³⁷

“The Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power... clouds of heaven.” In this statement, Jesus did not refer to Himself as the “Son of God,” nor did He refer to the “right hand of God” – both statements would have been considered blasphemy according to the Oral Law and as later recorded in the Mishnah, chapter titled *Sanhedrin*, section 7.5 (see above). Yet Jesus did clearly speak of His divine nature. He alluded to the opening of Psalm 110, which was divine in character. Furthermore, Isaiah 9:5 hints at a human child as being a “wonderful counselor, mighty God.” When Jesus used the term “Power,” He clearly reflected upon the term “mighty God” in Isaiah 9:5. This is theologically known as the “hypostatic union,” the union of Christ's humanity and divinity in a single individual existence.⁴³⁸

436. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*. 558. A hypostatic term is one that is associated with the hypostatic union. The “union” refers to Christ as being totally diVine, while also being totally human.

437. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 374.

438. Flusser, “At the Right Hand of the Power.” 42-43, 45.

Now Jesus was before judges who were about to take His earthly life. By this statement, He warned them there would be a time when they would be before Him. This was a clear statement of His divinity and His claim to have power over their eternal destiny. In the book of *Enoch*, there are numerous references to *the Son of Man* as one who is from heaven and comes to earth. In fact, the terms *Son of Man* and *Son of David*⁴³⁹ became synonyms for *Messiah* by the first century.⁴⁴⁰ The expectations were that this “Son” would excel David’s triumphs.⁴⁴¹ Furthermore, the phrase *clouds of heaven* is a direct quotation from Daniel 7:13. This statement not only announced that Jesus was the Messiah, but that He was also equal to God. The term *Power* was another term used to refer to God, similar to today’s use of the term *the Almighty*.⁴⁴²

The response was predictable – the Sadducees were enraged to the point of hysteria. **“The high priest tore his robes.”** It was the custom for people to tear a small section of their clothing to show deep sorrow and mourning. However, according to the Mosaic Law, it was strictly forbidden, under punishment of death, for a high priest to do likewise. According to the Oral Law, it was symbolic of a guilty verdict.⁴⁴³ For this action, the high priest who should have been condemned to die, instead announced the death sentence on the One who gave life. The right to exercise capital punishment was removed from the Jews, with the exception of any Gentile who would enter the most sacred place of the temple. But in general, all executions were controlled by the Romans.⁴⁴⁴ To Caiaphas, the crucifixion of Jesus would solve a political problem, so it had to be done. To God, the crucifixion of Jesus would solve a sin problem, so it had to be done.

“Why do we still need witnesses?” The fact is that there were no other witnesses. The testimonies of the disciples were not desired (they were absent) and those whom Jesus healed and taught were unaware of this miscarriage of justice. Therefore, Caiaphas used the words of Jesus against Him. Caiaphas functioned as chief accuser, chief witness,

439. The messianic title “Son of David” appears in the following three groups of passages in the gospels where it is always reflective of the Davidic Covenant: 1) In various healings by Jesus – Mt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; Mk. 10:47-48; Lk. 18:38-39. 2) In connection of the harassment the religious leaders gave Jesus – Mt. 22:42-43, 45; Mk. 12:35, 37; Lk. 20:41, 44, and 3) The praise the crowds gave Jesus at His entry into Jerusalem – Mt. 21:9, 15; Mk. 11:10. See Rogers, “The Davidic Covenant in the Gospels,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Part 1 of 2. 158-78.

440. Richardson, “David.” 59-60.

441. *Psalm of Solomon* 17; *ben Sirach* 47:11; *1 Macc.* 2:57.

442. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 374 n81.

443. Mishnah, *Sanbedrin* 7:5.

444. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 406-08.

prosecutor, and judge. He would also have been the chief executioner, if the Romans permitted him. Everyone present was intimidated by his control and with the threat of excommunication, loss of wealth, or even death (Jn. 12:10; Acts 9:2).

“You have heard the blasphemy.” The English word *blasphemy* or *blaspheme* is from the Greek term *blasphemia*, meaning *to insult*. But it also suggests that the one who blasphemes has placed himself in the place of God and thereby, degrades Him.⁴⁴⁵ That includes insulting Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit as well. Hence, it is a profoundly serious charge. It is truly difficult for modern students to comprehend the powerful condemnation that was associated with blasphemy in the biblical era. The first time the gospels record the Pharisees insulting God was when they accused Jesus of casting out demons with the demonic power of Beelzebub (Satan).⁴⁴⁶ That was true blasphemy and a turning point in the ministry of Jesus.



15.03.07.A. THE BURIAL OSSUARY OF CAIAPHAS. In 1990 construction workers accidentally uncovered the family tomb of Josephus

445. Barclay, *A New Testament Wordbook*. 51.

446. See 09.01.03.Q1.

bar Caiaphas⁴⁴⁷ south of Jerusalem's Old City. Inside was the most elaborate ossuary or "bone box" ever found in Israel that contained the skeletal remains of a sixty year old man. There is complete certainty that these are the remains of the high priest Caiaphas, as his full name was recorded on the ossuary in the same manner it was recorded by the historian Josephus.⁴⁴⁸ See also the ossuary of Miriam (04.03.01.A).

Because of the writings of Josephus, archaeologists in 1990 were able to identify the ossuary of the renowned high priest.⁴⁴⁹ The historian recorded the full name of the High Priest "Josephus Caiaphas,"⁴⁵⁰ or more properly stated, "Joseph who was called Caiaphas of the high priest-hood."⁴⁵¹ The name "Caiaphas," as used in Scripture strongly appears to have been a popular nickname, whereas the formal name on the ossuary is "Joseph bar Caiaphas."⁴⁵² The discovery of his ossuary and family tomb are unique for several reasons.

1. While the tomb had the appearance of an attempted break-in, the would-be grave robbers were never successful. Therefore, the tomb of the most aristocratic religious family of the time of Christ remained secured.
2. The floral and geometric patterns on the ossuary are typical of the Greek cultural influence upon Judaea that was acceptable to the Jews. The custom originated with the Greeks, but the reason is unknown. Nonetheless, the Romans appreciated the custom and continued the practice. Beautifully carved stone ossuaries, such as the one shown above, could be afforded only by the affluent and were used for about a century.⁴⁵³
3. There were sixty-three individual skeletons placed in a dozen ossuaries and laid to rest in this family tomb. Some scholars believe this is a high number of ossuaries for a single tomb, but then, this was a very wealthy family.

447. Reich, "Caiaphas Name Inscribed on Bone Boxes." 38-44.

448. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.2.2 and 18.4.3.

449. Reich, "Caiaphas Name Inscribed on Bone Boxes." 41.

450. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.2.2; Shanks, *In the Temple of Solomon and the Tomb of Caiaphas*. 36; Crossan and Reed, *Excavating Jesus*. 2, 240-44; Greenhut, "Burial Cave." 31-33.

451. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.4.3.

452. Hachlili, *Jewish Funerary Customs, Practices and Rites in the Second Temple Period*. 205-10.

453. Crossan and Reed, *Excavating Jesus*. 238-45.

Of particular interest is the ossuary of a woman who was a member of the Caiaphas household, and her bone box reveals how Hellenistic the Sadducees really were. Among the House of Caiaphas ossuaries were the remains of a woman identified as “Yehochana, daughter of Yehochanan, son of Thophlos, the high priest.” When her bones were examined, a bronze coin, dating from King Agrippa (A.D. 42-43) was found in her skull. This incredible discovery attests to the idolatrous practices and beliefs of this high priestly family. According to Greek mythology, when someone died, he or she would have to cross the River Styx to enter paradise. However, the river flowed into hell (literally, the *hell of fire*),⁴⁵⁴ and could not be crossed without help. That person was a ferryman named Charon to whom the deceased had to pay a fee to take him or her across the river to enter paradise and avoid an eternity in hell. When this woman died, a coin was placed in her mouth, so her soul could make payment to Charon.⁴⁵⁵

The coin found in Yehochana’s skull reveals two significant insights of the Sadducees.

1. It illustrates how deeply Hellenism had become entrenched in the Sadducean community.
2. The Sadducees had always prided themselves in not believing in an afterlife, but apparently some did not want to take any chances in case they were wrong.

The high priest Caiaphas and his family were to represent themselves and the Jewish people before their Creator. Ironically, the house of Caiaphas instead was the most vile and pagan imaginable. Evidently this practice was common among the Gentiles as well as the Hellenized Jews. Another first century (A.D.) tomb was discovered in Jericho which contained a skull with a coin. The coin date is the sixth year of Herod Agrippa’s reign.⁴⁵⁶ This was only a couple of decades after Jesus who paid the price for eternal salvation.

Among Christians today there is another mythical story. Some have said that the act of entering the Holy of Holies was so sacred that the high priest had a rope tied to his ankle in case God would kill him if there was sin in his life. The rope would have permitted other priests to pull the body out of the sacred sanctuary. However, rabbinic writings, which describe the details of temple worship services, fail to mention this rope. Rabbis in Jerusalem today, who have reconstructed many second temple vessels, likewise do not

454. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:40.

455. Crossan and Reed, *Excavating Jesus*. 244; Greenhut, “Burial Cave.” 35-36.

456. Gathercole. “The Gospel of Thomas: Jesus said What?” 56.

recognize the rope story.⁴⁵⁷ Furthermore, if the story was true, then God failed miserably to place His judgment of death on Annas and Caiaphas because they were possibly the two most corrupt high priests in Jewish history.

15.03.08 Lk. 22:63-65 (See also Mt. 26:67-68; Mk. 14:65)

JESUS IS ABUSED

⁶³ The men who were holding Jesus started mocking and beating Him. ⁶⁴ After blindfolding Him, they kept asking, “Prophecy! Who hit You?” ⁶⁵ And they were saying many other blasphemous things against Him.

The mistreatment of Jesus, mocking Him as a pseudo-king, may seem like an indignity or insult in today’s Western culture. But in the first century where honor and respect were high virtues, to hit, spit upon, and slap someone with an open palm were high indignities punishable by heavy fines.⁴⁵⁸ In the past Jesus often embarrassed the leading religious leaders when they tried to trap Him, and He told them the truth about their lives. Now it was pay-back time. A similar game was played by the Greeks, according to an account found in the *Onomasticon*, authored by Pollux.⁴⁵⁹ These humiliations were similar to the modern children’s game called Blindman’s Buff.

The Sanhedrin blindfolded Jesus and mocked Him and His prophetic ministry. He often demonstrated His divine insight into the lives of other people, knowing the inner secrets of men and women. How strange that they would say, “Prophecy! Who hit you?” since this mockery itself was a fulfillment of prophecy. They were so engulfed with hatred that they did not recognize themselves fulfilling the same prophecies they taught to their own students. Furthermore, it was illegal to hit an accused person and the violator was subject to a two hundred denarii fine; to spit on the accused was worthy of a four hundred denarii fine.

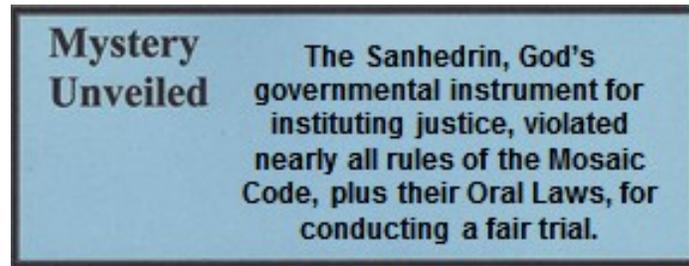
These mockers were the men who sat in the judgment seat. They understood it was a sin

457. The Temple Institute, a Jewish organization in Jerusalem, has reproduced most of the vessels of the Second Temple Period. Many of these can be seen at the Temple Treasures Institute (across from the Western Wall), 24 Misgav Ladakh Street, Jerusalem. According to information given to this writer personally in November, 1999, these items were made with extreme care for the sole purpose that when the messiah comes, they will be available for His use in the new Temple (cf. Ezek. 40-48).

458. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor’s Manual*. Class 24, page 8.

459. Pollux, *Onomasticon* 9.113; The *Onomasticon* is a list of Greek names of places and people, with explanations noted that was authored by Julius Pollux about the year A.D. 180.

for a Jew to physically harm another Jew, but now they had stirred up so much uncontrolled hatred among themselves that any sense of justice was totally removed. It should be noted, however, that some men, such as Nicodemus, were not a part of this violation of dignity against Jesus.



“Prophecy! Who hit You?” The striking of Jesus was, no doubt, for two reasons:

1. To slap anyone in this honor-focused culture was huge insult. To strike a king was always worthy of capital punishment.
2. However, there was a children’s game that was centuries old. In Greece, the second (A.D.) century writer Pollux described the game called *Kollabismos*. In his work, titled *Onomasticon*, he describes how one child covered his eyes with the palms of his hands while another hit him and asked him to identify which hand was used to strike the blow.⁴⁶⁰

A pictorial of a similar game was uncovered in a 4,000 year old tomb in southern Egypt. Beni Hassan was a high ranking government official (c. 1892 B.C.) whose tomb has many wall pictures.⁴⁶¹ One of those images portrays a player on his knees while two others, unseen by him, hit or pretend to hit his back with their fists.⁴⁶² Whether this was a child’s game is unknown.

Therefore, the cultural message of slapping or striking of Jesus was not only an insult, but also a humiliating action reflecting child’s play.

460. Pollux, *Onomasticon* 9:129.

461. <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2009/09/09/the-beni-hasan-asiatics-and-the-biblical-patriarchs.aspx>. Retrieved September 6, 2014.

462. Cited by Flusser. “Who is it that Struck You?” 31-32.

15.03.08.Q1 What were the reasons the Jewish leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy?

There were a number of reasons, some more serious than others. But when combined, these provided a strong argument for their rejection of Him. The reasons are:

1. Jesus forgave sin, and as such, He claimed to be God because only God can forgive sin.
2. He spoke with His own authority. Rabbis often spoke on the authority of one or more other rabbis, but Jesus spoke as if He was the final authority.
3. Jesus said that His miracles were signs of Divine power. While the Jewish leaders believed that the messianic miracles that Jesus performed were certain identifiers of the messiah, they rejected them and Him.
4. Jesus referred to God as *Abba*, or *Abba Father*,⁴⁶³ just as He probably used the endearment term *imma* for *mamma*.⁴⁶⁴ They could not accept any person refer to God in such an affectionate manner.
5. Whereas previous prophets warned the people of God's judgment, Jesus said they would be judged on how they responded to His words. This in effect, was a statement that He was God.
6. At times Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of God. Since a son was seen equal to his father, the words of Jesus were understood that He was equal to God.
7. Jesus supposedly said that He would destroy the temple (He didn't say this, but His accusers claimed that He did). Twice before Jesus had cleansed the temple and the merchants quickly went back to business as usual. They could hardly tolerate the cleansings, but the words of destruction were too much for them.

There can be no question that those who rejected Him did so for very profound reasons – reasons that believers understood, especially after the resurrection, and reasons they died for.

463. While the term *abba* has often been defined as a child's expression of *daddy*, language scholar James Barr has suggested that *abba* was a solemn adult address to *father*. See Pilch, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible*. 2; Mould, *Essentials of Bible History*.

527; Vine, "Abba." *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:1.

464. Smith, *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: Matthew*. 110.

15.03.08.Q2 Where was Annas during the trial?

Annas, the godfather of religious crime and corruption, was not always present during the trials of Jesus. Why? Scholars believe that he was probably performing the Passover duties in the temple that normally would have been performed by Caiaphas. But due to the urgent nature of the moment, Caiaphas had to run the Sanhedrin and get rid of Jesus before the people discovered what happened and before the Passover officially began. Otherwise, a riot was destined to occur.

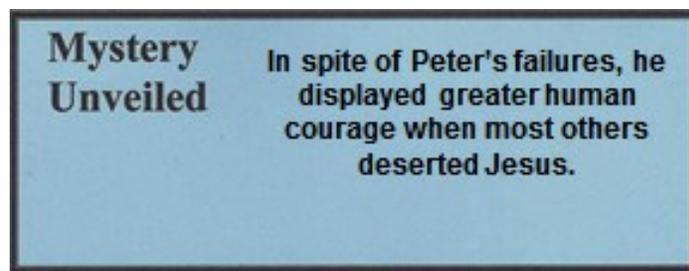
15.03.09 Mt. 26:73-74a; Jn. 18:26-27a

PETER DENIES JESUS AGAIN

Mt. ⁷³ After a little while those standing there approached and said to Peter, “You certainly are one of them, since even your accent gives you away.” ^{74a} Then he started to curse and to swear with an oath, “I do not know the man!”

Jn. ²⁶ One of the high priest’s slaves, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, “Didn’t I see you with Him in the garden?”

^{27a} Peter then denied it again.



While Jesus was on trial, Peter was denying Him. The first denial appears to have occurred at midnight and the denial was given in a casual and simple manner. The second denial was probably at 3:00 a.m. at which time Peter swore under oath that he did not know Jesus. Obviously, his emotional pressure was intensifying. Sometime thereafter someone recognized him by his accent at which time he cursed Jesus. This detail is preserved in the Greek language, but is often lost in translation.⁴⁶⁵

465. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 24, page 9.

“Your accent gives you away.” There was a strong difference in dialect between Jerusalem and Galilee. In fact, the Aramaic language spoken in Galilee, a/k/a Galilean Aramaic, was a branch of Middle Western Aramaic and clearly different from the Aramaic of Jerusalem.⁴⁶⁶ Scholars believe this was due, in part, to the many Jews who returned from Babylon and settled in the province of Galilee in the second century B.C. When Ezra and Nehemiah returned from Babylon, there is no mention (in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah) of anyone settling in Galilee or Perea, only in the tribal areas of Judah and Benjamin as well as in Jerusalem. By the first century, the difference of voice inflections was so significant that some priests from Galilee were not permitted to speak words of blessing in the temple because their pronunciation of the gutturals was misleading.⁴⁶⁷ The following comment refers to priests from three northern towns. In this quotation, the purpose of a priest lifting his hands was for pronouncing a blessing. This *ark* was not the lost Ark of the Covenant, but a piece of furniture called an “ark” in which the Torah scroll was kept.

A priest from Haifa or Beth Shean should not lift up his hands. It has been taught to the same effect; ‘We do not allow to pass before the ark either men from Beth Shean or from Haifa or from Tib’onim because they pronounce *alif* as ‘*ayin* and ‘*ayin* as *alif*.... If you were a Levite, you would not be qualified to chant, because your voice is thick.

Babylonian Talmud, *Megillah* 24b

The gospel narrative gives a great deal of difficulty to critics who claim that this gospel is a fabrication, because Peter is shown to be a coward and liar. The once brave man, who was willing to die for Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, now denied Him repeatedly. He could not be placed in a more degrading light than he is portrayed by Matthew and John. No creative fabricator would have placed the hero in this position. When examining the Pseudepigrapha books, the heroes are always individuals who were victimized by others but never guilty of their sins (i.e. *Testament of the Patriarchs*). In the gospels, Peter is one of the central figures in the life of Christ and has a reputation of making embarrassing comments, hasty decisions and, in this case, the ultimate sin of denying knowledge of Jesus. The gospel writers were determined to record the truthfulness of the events, no matter how shameful one individual or another would appear. Peter, no doubt, was very much alive when this was written, yet after the

466. Cohen, “Galilean Aramaic: Its Linguistic and Historical Significance.” 53.

467. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 1:168-69, 171.

resurrection, his life was profoundly changed (see Acts). This account, which reveals some of the failures of the disciples, is another Testament to the accuracy of the gospel writers.

15.03.10 Jn. 18:27b; Lk. 22:61-62

THE ROOSTER CROWS AND PETER WEEPS

Jn. ^{27b} Immediately a rooster crowed.

Lk. ⁶¹ Then the Lord turned and looked at Peter. So Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.” ⁶² And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Even though Peter denied Jesus three times, later Jesus would deal tenderly and lovingly with him to bring him to a point of confession, forgiveness, and renewal (Jn. 21:15-17). As the Good Shepherd, Jesus carefully attended to the frustrated and broken heart of Peter and raised him up to be a significant church father.

15.03.11 Lk. 22:66-71; Mt. 27:1 Daybreak, third trial: final Jewish ratification.

THIRD TRIAL: SANHEDRIN CONDEMNS JESUS

Lk. ^{66a} When daylight came, the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the scribes Mt. ^{1b} convened, plotted against Jesus to put Him to death, Lk. ^{66b} and brought Him before their Sanhedrin. ⁶⁷ They said, “If You are the Messiah, tell us.”

But He said to them, “If I do tell you, you will not believe.” ⁶⁸ And if I ask you, you will not answer. ⁶⁹ But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the Power of God.”

⁷⁰ They all asked, “Are You, then, the Son of God?”

And He said to them, “You say that I am.”

⁷¹ “Why do we need any more testimony,” they said, “since we’ve heard it ourselves from His mouth?”

Before the sun was about to rise, they led Jesus into the temple complex, and into the

Hall of Hewn Stone⁴⁶⁸ which was the Sanhedrin council chamber.⁴⁶⁹ The Jews desperately desired to convict Jesus of any charge that would carry the death sentence. Therefore, they asked, **“If You are the Messiah, tell us.”** Jesus responded with the most obscure answer – nothing that resembled a confession – **“If I do tell you, you will not believe.”** Some scholars have said this as an affirmative and rhetorical response which the Sanhedrin immediately seized as a confession, especially since Jesus did not deny it.

A brief historical review at this point should aid in understanding the events. When Herod the Great secured power in 37 B.C., one of his first acts was to kill all the members of the Sanhedrin who had previously opposed him. Consequently, future members of the high court were obviously not inclined to rule against their dictator. After Herod’s death, his wicked son Herod Archelaus ruled Jerusalem and not only abused his power, but also manipulated the Sanhedrin. So by the end of his reign (A.D. 6), the legal powers of the court were greatly weakened by Rome, so that capital punishment could only be carried out if approved by the Roman ruler (i.e. Pilate). Annas and Caiaphas were agents of the Roman puppet-king but had no capital punishment authority. Caiaphas and his court did nothing other than to ratify the decision of Caiaphas. Those who might have disagreed would certainly not have come to the defense of Jesus.

15.03.11.Q1 What did Jesus say that caused the Sanhedrin to condemn Him?

This interesting question has stirred much discussion over the years. The first conclusion might be that He was found guilty of claiming to be the Christ, the “Anointed One,” the Son of God (Mt. 26:63). That seems to be an iron clad answer, except that a century later Simon bar Kokhba also declared himself to be the messiah (a political-messiah), with no charge of blasphemy. In fact, many followed him to their deaths by Roman swords in A.D. 135, which raises a number of questions.

1. Did their attitude regarding the messiah change in the interim?
2. Did Simon bar Kokhba claim messiahship without deity? That would have made him popular with the Jews who had difficulty with the words and deeds of Jesus.

468. The name “Chamber of Hewn Stone” was derived from the square pavement stones – the only chamber in the temple with such fine smooth floor. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 3:431.

469. <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13178-sanhedrin> Retrieved February 22, 2014; Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 3:30-31.

3. Did the words of Jesus about sitting at the right hand of God offend the Sadducees, in addition to His claim to be the Christ?
4. Did the “I am” statement of Mark 14:62 offend them since it was reflective of the voice of God in Exodus 3:14?
5. Was it because of the right He claimed to forgive sins? This was paramount to blasphemy.

By definition, the word “blasphemy” in the Oral Law technically was *only* the speaking of the sacred name “YHWH.”⁴⁷⁰ When the Sadducees pronounced Jesus guilty of blasphemy, they used a broader definition that was in common use at the time. Consequently, they broke their own laws in order to execute Him, but that did not matter. Clearly, while Matthew 26:63 is an integral part of the condemnation, it is not the complete story. The condemnation was the result of Jesus revealing His deity.

15.03.11.Q2 Were *all* members of the Sanhedrin in favor of Jesus’ death?

Absolutely not! The high court consisted of 70 members plus Caiaphas,⁴⁷¹ but only twenty-three were needed for a capital case and the high priest/president. Caiaphas carefully selected the voting members and many Sadducees probably owed him political favors. He may have known that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus appeared interested in Jesus, which would have been a good reason *not* to have them present. Furthermore, Gamaliel, who in Acts 5:38b-39 was concerned that the actions of Peter and John might be of God, would not have approved of the illegal trial of Jesus. Clearly, any members of the high court who showed any signs of accepting Jesus as the Messiah would not have been invited to the trials. In fact, some of them eventually became followers of Jesus. Finally, at this point a brief but important summary is in order. There is an irony of two points to be considered:

1. Jesus provided the testimonial information that led to His conviction, and ultimately, His death. He even supplied information that false witnesses could not provide.

470. Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 7:5.

471. The Sanhedrin consisted of 24 chief priests who were Sadducees, 24 elders who were Pharisees, 22 scribes who were Pharisees, and Caiaphas, who was a Sadducee and president of the court; Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor’s Manual*. Class 24, page 6.

2. The Sanhedrin attempted to hold a trial that would convict Jesus and negate His claim of Divine authority. The court's intent was so passionate, that no one realized in reality it was the court and the Jewish nation that was on trial and it was Jesus who would be their judge. In fact, Jesus publically declared this: that He is the Christ, that He is the Son of God and that He possesses the judgment authority of the Son of Man.

Caiaphas and his evil band within the Sanhedrin carefully plotted and executed Jesus in the best and most efficient way possible. Yet God knew this would happen from the foundations of the earth and allowed the sacrifice of His Son to open the door of salvation for all humanity.

15.03.12 Mt. 27:3-5; Acts 1:18b-19; Mt. 27:6-10

JUDAS COMMITS SUICIDE

Mt. ³ Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was full of remorse and returned the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. ⁴“I have sinned by betraying innocent blood,” he said.

“What’s that to us?” they said. “See to it yourself!”

⁵ So he threw the silver into the sanctuary and departed. Then he went and hanged himself.

Acts ^{18b} He fell headfirst and burst open in the middle, and all his insides spilled out. ¹⁹ This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that in their own language that field is called *Hakeldama* (that is, Field of Blood).

Mt. ⁶ The chief priests took the silver and said, “It’s not lawful to put it into the temple treasury, since it is blood money.” ⁷ So they conferred together and bought the potter’s field with it as a burial place for foreigners. ⁸ Therefore that field has been called “ this day. ⁹ Then what was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled. They took the 30 pieces of silver, the price of Him whose price was set by the Israelites, ¹⁰ and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord directed me (cf. Zech. 11:12-13; Jer. 19:1-13; 32:6-9).

15.03.12.Q1 How does one explain the obvious disagreement concerning the suicide of Judas as recorded in Matthew 27:5 and Acts 1:18?

Matthew 27:5 records that Judas hanged himself, while in Acts 1:18 he fell forward (headlong) and his bowels spilled upon the ground. Some have attempted to explain that the traitor first hung himself from a tree and when the rope broke, he fell forward on the ground, causing his stomach to open. While this makes common sense to the modern reader, it is highly doubtful. Others have stated that Matthew emphasized the remorse of Judas while Luke, in the book of Acts, emphasized the judgment of God. This may be true, but it fails to satisfactorily answer the question.

The ancients used several methods of execution: stoning, crucifixion, burning, death by lions or gladiators, or impalement upon a sharpened stake which was commonly used by the Assyrians, who were the cruelest and most feared people of antiquity.⁴⁷² The method almost never heard of was death by hanging with the use of a rope (a possible exception was Hanan in the book of Esther). Of all these, impaling oneself upon an impaling stick could have been the choice of death, resulting from an impulsive decision demanding immediate results, considering the emotional turmoil of Judas. By definition, a cross is an upright stake upon which one could be hung, bound, or impaled.⁴⁷³ Papias supported this, an early Church father who said that Judas hung himself upon an impaling stick. If such a horrific death were completed, the Matthew 27:5 would not contradict Acts 1:18. The Code of Hammurabi (1754 B.C.) states that if an upper class woman causes the death of her husband, she shall be impaled upon a stake (see example 15.03.12.B below).⁴⁷⁴ The stake of Hammurabi and the Assyrians evolved into the post with a cross beam of the first century. In fact, the word for *stake* was also used for *cross*.⁴⁷⁵

472. Caba. "Crucifixion: History and Practice." 12-14.

473. Taylor, "Cross." 57.

474. The Code of Hammurabi No. 153.
http://courses.cvcc.vccs.edu/history_mcgee/courses/his101/Source%20Documents/wc1d01.htm Retrieved January 28, 2015.

475. Robinson. "Crucifixion in the Roman World: The Use of Nails at the Time of Christ." 34-35 n34.



15.03.12.A. RELIEF CARVING OF ASSYRIANS IMPALING ISRAELITES.

In 701 B.C., the Assyrians impaled live Israelites on poles during an attack on Lachish, one of forty-six cities conquered by the Assyrian King Sennacherib. The impaling pole is believed to have been the predecessor to the cross. It is also possible that when Judas “hung” himself, he probably impaled himself and, thus, hung on the impaling pole. If so, this would reconcile the two different biblical accounts of his death. Photo courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

The phrase “hung on a tree” is more accurately translated as “impaled on a stick,” or “impaled on a pole.”⁴⁷⁶ If Judas impaled himself, then there is no disagreement between the accounts in Matthew and Acts.⁴⁷⁷

Judas had evil in his heart, but still shared the Passover and first communion with Jesus and fellow disciples. His suicide ought to bring incredible awareness to every believer of the importance of resolving conflicts, anger, or resentment before taking part in

476. *New International Version Study Bible* footnote on Deut. 21:22; Tzaferis, “Crucifixion – The Archaeological Evidence.” 48.

477. Another explanation states that Judas hung himself, but due to the late hour of his suicide, there was no time to bury his body prior to Passover. Therefore, it was simply tossed over the city wall and when it fell upon the rocks of the Hinnom Valley, his abdomen spilled out. It was buried after the Passover ended. The difficulty with this suggestion is that if great efforts were made to bury the body of Jesus who was crucified outside the city walls, why could a hasty burial not have been provided for Judas? This writer believes this argument is interesting but holds little merit. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor’s Manual*. Class 24, page 13.

communion. Failure to do so could bring judgment on one's self; it brought a curse according to the words of the Apostle Paul, because...

²⁷ Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ So a man should examine himself; in this way he should eat the bread and drink from the cup. ²⁹ For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.

1 Corinthians 11:27-29

When Judas realized he was guilty of a horrific crime, he condemned himself in accordance with the Mosaic Law.

²² “If anyone is found guilty of an offense deserving the death penalty and is executed, and you hang his body on a tree, ²³ you are not to leave his corpse on the tree overnight but are to bury him that day, for anyone hung on a tree is under God’s curse. You must not defile the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Deuteronomy 21:22-23

Three New Testament authors, Luke, Paul, and the unknown author of 1 Peter, all used the phrase of “hung on a tree” when describing the death of Jesus. Obviously, the word “hung” does not have reference to the use of a rope. In addition to Deuteronomy 21:22-23 above, note these passages:

1. **Acts 5:30** “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had murdered by hanging Him on a tree.”
2. **Acts 10:39** “We ourselves are witnesses of everything He did in both the Judean country and in Jerusalem, yet they killed Him by hanging Him on a tree.”
3. **Acts 13:29** “When they had fulfilled all that had been written about Him, they took Him down from the tree and put Him in a tomb.”
4. **Gal. 3:13** “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written: Everyone who is hung on a tree is cursed.”

5. 1 Peter 2:24 “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness.”

The word *tree* can mean a literal *tree*, a *pole*, or a *Roman cross*, but also had the double meaning of *to be cursed by God*.⁴⁷⁸ If the word “hanging” in Acts 5:30; 10:39; and 13:29 refers to crucifixion of Jesus on a cross and not a conventional rope hanging, why have some scholars insisted that Judas hung himself with the use of a rope? Maybe they envisioned him hanging from a tree in a manner similar to that of captured horse thieves and bank robbers in America’s wild, wild, west who were executed by hanging from tree. That is hardly the case. When the Romans had a shortage of nails, many rebels were hung on a cross with their elbows tied with a rope to the cross beam.⁴⁷⁹ If the definition of the word “hanging” had some latitude, then it should not be of restricted use relative to Judas. Interestingly, both Jesus and Judas died carrying the curse of death.

15.03.12.Q2 Could Judas have asked for forgiveness?

Most theologians say “no.” One can only come to our Lord by responding to the call of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, once his evil deed was done, Judas forgot all the teachings of Jesus concerning love and forgiveness, and focused his attention on his actions and the damned eternity waiting for him. There is a huge difference between his sin and that of Peter’s. Peter denied Jesus; Judas betrayed Him. Saint Augustine had the following comments about the differences between the denier and betrayer:

It is this difference in their sins which separate Judas the betrayer from Peter the denier: not that a penitent is not to be pardoned, for we must not come into collision with that declaration of our Lord ... but that therein connected with that sin is so great, that he cannot endure the humiliation of asking for it, even if he should be compelled by a bad conscience both to acknowledge and divulge his sin. For when Judas had said, “I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood,” yet it was easier for him in despair to run and hang himself, than in humility to ask for pardon.

Augustine, *Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount*⁴⁸⁰

478. Elgvin, “The Messiah Who was Cursed on the Tree.” 34.

479. See illustration 16.01.11.B.

480. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Patristic Quotations: From 50 – 750 A.D.* 259.

In the first century, rabbis taught that there were three kinds of eternity.

1. There was heaven for observant Jews.
2. There were those who went to a hell that was not eternal, but terminated in a form of death.
3. There was an eternal never-ending death that was reserved for the severest sins, such as betrayal of a friend to the enemy.

Judas betrayed a fellow Jew and thereby caused one of his own to be crucified. For this, he believed that he was about to receive the worst eternal damnation. The thought of his deed and its consequences were so painful, that he could not endure living any longer and thereby, he hastened his arrival into the eternal flames. The seriousness of betrayal was preserved in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls known as the Temple Scroll. A portion of it reads as follows,

If ⁷ a man informs against his people, and delivers his people up to a foreign nation, and does harm to his people, ⁸ you shall hang him on the tree [Deut. 21:22-23], and he shall die. On the evidence of two witnesses and on the evidence of three witnesses ⁹ he shall be put to death, and they shall hang him on the tree. (Blank) And if a man has committed a crim[e] punishable by death, and has defected ¹⁰ into the midst of nations, and has cursed his people [and] the children of Israel, you shall hang him also on the tree ¹¹ and he shall die. And their body shall not remain upon the tree all night, but you shall bury them the same day, ¹² for those hanged on the tree are accursed to God and men; you shall not defile the land which I ¹³ give you for an inheritance.

Dead Sea Scroll, *Temple* 11Q 64:6-13⁴⁸¹

The realization of this horrific sin must have had an incredible illuminating power to Judas. But the question is, why did he not pray for forgiveness? No doubt, in the passion of the moment, he thought that such an option was no longer available for him, considering the severity of his deed. He was filled with remorse (Mt. 27:3), he confessed his sin (Mt. 27:4), but he failed to ask for forgiveness. No doubt, this is probably due to the cultural context of the day, where it was believed that there was no forgiveness for any Jew who was responsible for the death of another Jew.

481. 64:6-13 = Column 64, lines 6-13.

The theological question of any possible forgiveness for Judas is beyond the scope of this study, but a brief response is this: Some will say that, by this time he had committed the unpardonable sin and the Spirit of God no longer called him to repent. Others have suggested that, just as other demonically possessed men were delivered from demonic powers, Judas could have been likewise delivered. Still others say he could have waited until Jesus arose and then asked Him for forgiveness; but at that time who would have thought that Jesus was going to return to life? However, in his mind, forgiveness was impossible considering the travesty of his betrayal. Therefore, no options were possible; there was no possible forgiveness. For thirty pieces of silver he not only sold Jesus, but in reality, he sold himself into hell. The prophets predicted his action centuries earlier, yet he freely *chose* this action. This clearly illustrates that,

1. God has complete foreknowledge,
2. He is always in control of personal situations and of this world, but
3. He does not control individuals. He permits people to be independent free moral agents.

The transforming power of Jesus enabled Simon, a revolutionary Zealot, and Matthew, a Roman tax agent, to live and minister peacefully together. During the years Judas was a disciple he acted and played the part of a true disciple. No doubt, there may have been times when he was very sincere about following Jesus. But somewhere in time, he made a willful decision to become a defector, yet he still acted and spoke like a true disciple. He was the proverbial tare in a wheat field.⁴⁸² Jesus experienced firsthand the pain of a trusted friend, who became an apostate, hardened his heart, and stood against God. Judas made his decision, but it is God who determined the consequences. It was his was eternal damnation (Acts 1:25).

15.03.12.Q3 Why did Jesus choose Judas for a disciple?

This question has fueled many debates. Critics have said this is evidence that Jesus made mistakes which were not written in Scripture. Others claim Jesus was unable to build trust and loyalty among His disciples. Still others say Jesus did not have the divine foresight that was normally attributed to Him.

482. It is a point of interest that the Jews considered a tare to be a degenerated wheat plant — precisely the description of Judas.

Only Jesus knows the answer, but consider this possibility: It is inconceivable that Jesus would have made Judas a disciple if there had not been some honest and noble enthusiasm in him, and some attachment to Himself. He was probably a man of superior energy and administrative ability which is why he was chosen to be responsible for the funds of the group, rather than Matthew who was a former tax collector and also acquainted with accounting and financial responsibilities. Jesus was very much aware of the future actions of Judas, but elected to choose him regardless, because Jesus knew that His ultimate purpose was to die on the cross for the sins of mankind (Jn. 6:64). To read why Judas was “needed” to betray Jesus, go to 14.01.12.Q1.

“30 pieces of silver.” For fourteen centuries, ever since Moses wrote the Torah, the price of a common slave had been “thirty pieces of silver.” For example, if a slave was accidentally killed, there was to be a thirty shekel fine levied upon the person responsible for the death (Ex. 21:32). Thirty silver coins was also a prophecy given by Zechariah (11:12), which stated that the Messiah would be betrayed for that price, implying he was a servant or slave. Those who became aware of Judas and the price of His betrayal did not miss this symbolism.⁴⁸³

15.03.12.Q4 How is the discrepancy between Matthew 27:6 and Acts 1:18 explained?

“It’s not lawful.”

The apparent discrepancy is that in Matthew’s account, it was not legal for the priests to purchase anything for the temple using “blood money,” so they purchased the potter’s field which was not owned by the temple. However, in Acts 1:18 Luke clearly said that Judas purchased the potter’s field with the reward of iniquity or sin.⁴⁸⁴ He wrote to a Gentile audience and indicated the original source of the funds. Matthew however, wrote to a Jewish audience and wanted to make sure his readers understood that the priest actually did something right this time.

“It is blood money.” This confession would haunt the chief priests. It was their confession that they were co-conspirators with the former disciple. Judas no longer wanted the money, nor could they accept it when it was offered back. They had worked so hard and feverishly to have Jesus killed, but once they succeeded, they disassociated themselves from Judas because they realized a great wrong had been committed. Money given to the temple by dishonest donors could not be used for temple service. Therefore, such money was used for public service, not related to the temple. In this case, since Judas was dead, the chief priests purchased a potter’s field in the donor’s name (Judas).

483. See the video “Insights into Selected Biblical Difficulties” 04.04.06.V.

484. Green, *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*; Berry, *Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament*.

In first century thinking, this act was as if the betrayer had personally purchased the field and not the priests.

“Potter’s field.” It was the custom that individual families had family tombs. However, potter’s fields or mass graves were for the poor, homeless, and criminals in Roman society.⁴⁸⁵ It was common in Gentile communities that a criminal who brought great shame to a family, was left on the cross to rot and be devoured by wild animals. The Jews would never permit this to happen. They did not use mass graves like the Gentiles, but they did have a “potter’s field” or “non-family” cemetery for the poor, homeless, and criminals. The Jewish people always tried to bury their dead before sunset.⁴⁸⁶

To a reader who takes a literal viewpoint on the term “potter’s field,” he would suspect that a potter’s field might be where clay is acquired for the manufacture of clay pottery, where ovens fired the clay vessels, or where broken pieces of pottery are discarded. But the term “potter’s field” might have been a euphemism for a mass grave since man was created and formed from dust or clay in the ground (Gen. 2:7).

The phrase “For the potter’s field,” can be translated to read “To buy the potter’s field.” Because pottery kilns created an undesirable smoke, they were prohibited within the city. But some have suggested it was known as the potter’s field because of the clay that was removed from the area.

Now for a final thought on the judgment of Jesus by the Sanhedrin: It is interesting that the supreme judicial body went through the formal exercise of a mock trial to eliminate Jesus from their midst. They could have planned a small riot to kill Him, although not at Passover when there was increased Roman security. Yet, judgment would fall upon those who condemned Him. When the Romans destroyed the temple, the entire cast of Sadducees was slaughtered, along with thousands of other Jews. The human slaughter was so huge that there was no physical means to bury them before decomposition began in the semi-arid desert heat. Therefore, thousands of corpses were merely tossed in the Valley of Hinnom that was “purchased” by the Sanhedrin in the name of Judas.

**Mystery
Unveiled**

God’s judgment is secure. Many of those who were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, were slaughtered in A.D. 70 and their bodies thrown on the “Field of Blood” purchased by Judas.

485. Cook, “Crucifixion and Burial.” 204.

486. Josephus, *Wars* 4.5.2.

“Blood Field.” It was also known as the “Field of blood,” and in the Hebrew Bible as the “Valley of Slaughter” (Jer. 7:31-32, 19:6, 11-14). Two other names are Gehenna and Topheth,⁴⁸⁷ where Ahaz (2 Kg. 16:2-3) and Manasseh (2 Kg. 21:1, 6) sacrificed infant children by burning them alive upon the altar to Molech (2 Kg. 23:10), the god of the Ammonites (1 Kg. 11:7). Therefore, it had a reputation of ultimate death and shame. Tradition says that it was in this field where he hanged himself.

The “field of blood” has traditionally been identified as being south of Mount Zion in the Hinnom Valley. However, archaeologists have discovered some of the most elaborate Herodian tombs, including the tomb of Annas, who was high priest from A.D. 8-15⁴⁸⁸ and identified later as such by Josephus in this area.⁴⁸⁹ This would have made this valley expensive real estate and not anything that could have been purchased with thirty pieces of silver. The mystery arises because many early Church fathers identified this as the location as where Judas was buried. Influential church leaders, such as Eusebius in A.D. 335, Jerome in A.D. 400, and others who followed, all indicated the same field, where today the Herodian tombs reveal their secrets.⁴⁹⁰

487. *Topheth* means “the place of burning.” This would not have been a garbage dump, but rather, a place where pottery kilns created a constant smoke. First century peasant Jews did not have nor could they afford to burn garbage, as anything combustible but not needed elsewhere was used for cooking fuel.

488. Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, “Akeldama.” 31.

489. Josephus, *Wars* 5.12.2.

490. Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, “Akeldama.” 26.



15.03.12.B. THE VALLEY OF HINNOM. The valley as it appears today at the western side of Jerusalem, hides the location of the “field of blood.” At one time this Valley was where Manasseh sacrificed babies to the god Molech (2 Kg. 21:1, 6; Jer. 7:31-32), where they were burned alive. Photograph by the author.

A Lesson in First Century Hermeneutics:

15.03.12.Q5 Did Matthew make a mistake when he attributed the words of Zechariah to Jeremiah?

More specifically, the quotation is this, “**What was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled.**” In Western thinking, the question answers itself. This phrase would appear to be without difficulties, until the words of Jeremiah (7:31) are researched and it is discovered that these were actually spoken by Zechariah (11:12-13). The closest allusion to any words of Jeremiah refer to a field purchased for seventeen shekels (Jer. 32:6-9, see also 18:2-12; 19:1-13) and not thirty shekels as in Zechariah 11:12 and Matthew 27:9. Did Matthew make a mistake in recording this portion of his gospel? Most certainly, this is problematic to modern Western logic. To understand the statement, it is important to return to the first century to discover how the ancients processed information.⁴⁹¹

491. See also 05.01.02.X “The Major Prophet Speaks.”

As previously mentioned, there were two schools of biblical interpretation: the Schools of Shammai and Hillel. The latter had established seven rules of interpretation,⁴⁹² of which the second one brought together various Old Testament passages based on common words. For example, in the study of messianic prophecies, it would have been normal to bring together words such as *shekel*, *silver*, and *potter*. Hence, there was a blend of two prophecies. Matthew referenced Jeremiah because he was the major prophet even though the bulk of the quotation came from Zechariah. Today, no Bible college student would pass a hermeneutics class with this kind of methodology, but it was common for the students in the School of Hillel, as it was with Matthew and Mark. Likewise, Mark (1:2-3) quoted Malachi (3:1) and Isaiah (40:3), but credited the entire quotation to Isaiah.⁴⁹³ The gospel writers did not make an error. They followed the principles of scholarship that were in common use in their day.⁴⁹⁴

<p>Mystery Unveiled</p>	<p>Ironically, as the result of the Roman slaughter of A.D. 70, thousands of corpses were tossed in the Field of Blood purchased by the Sanhedrin in the name of Judas.</p>
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Finally, if the Sanhedrin had the legal authority to execute Jesus, then bringing Him before Pilate would have been unnecessary. The fact that the high court broke multiple rules of Jewish justice is indicative of the corruption of the Hellenistic leadership at this time. It is amazing that Jesus was even brought before Pilate, and not killed quietly by a Zealot or Roman assassin. But He had to die as the prophets foretold.

492. Some ancient scholars debated on the number of rules. Rabbi Hillel said there were seven, but shortly after him Rabbi Ishmael said there were thirteen. See Appendix 30 “Hermeneutics 101.”

493. See 05.02.01.X.

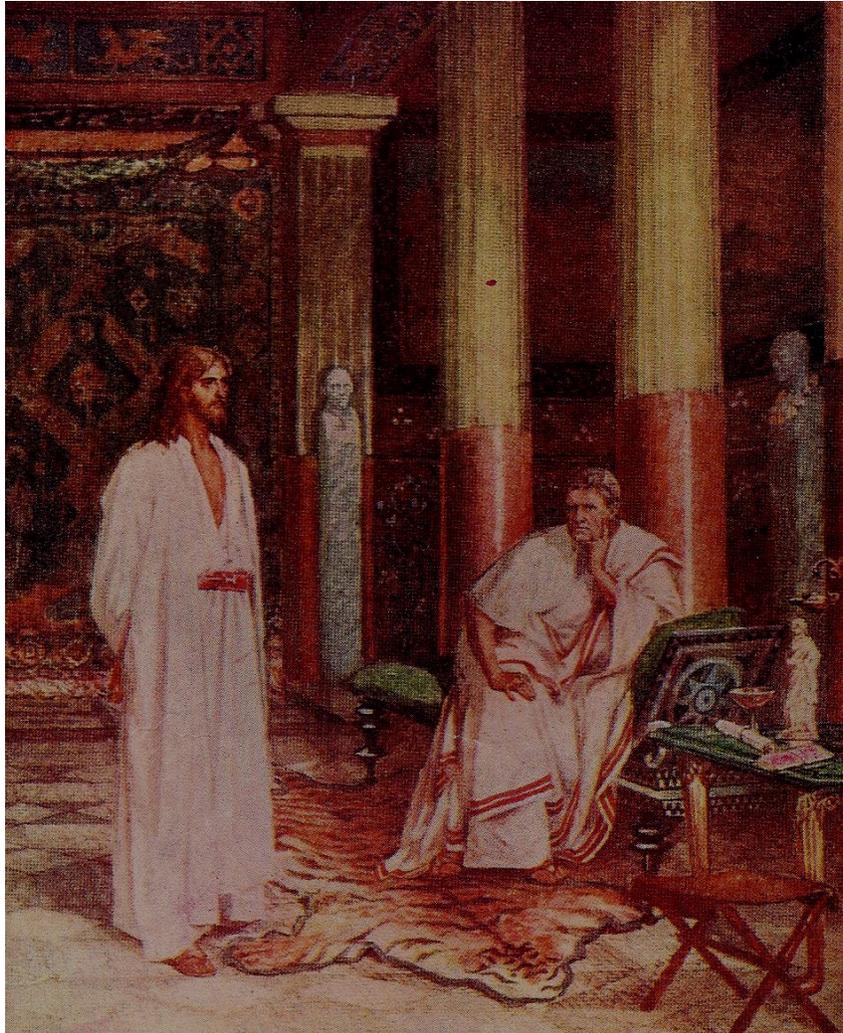
494. Kaiser, Davids, Bruce, and Brauch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. 399-400.

Unit 15

The Passion Escalates

Chapter 04

The Three Roman Trials



15.04.00.A. JESUS BEFORE PILATE. Artwork by William Hole of the Royal Scottish Academy of Art, 1876. According to the customary Roman method, a private examination of Jesus by Pilate would have occurred either in Pilate's library or in his business room (office). Later Pilate would present Jesus to the waiting Jews for another discussion. As much as the Roman governor tried, he could not find anything illegal or threatening about Jesus and, in fact, attempted to free Him. See John

18:33-38.

15.04.01 Introduction

After the three Jewish trials, Jesus experienced three Roman trials.⁴⁹⁵ These judicial, or quasi-judicial, proceedings occurred within a few short hours. The gross illegality of the Jewish trials stands in sharp contrast to the legal Roman trials, which repeatedly found Jesus innocent of all charges.⁴⁹⁶ So why did the Romans crucify Him? As will be explained, there was considerable turmoil and fighting within the Roman political system. The political dissension appears to have been the deciding factor as to why Pilate finally caved in to the desires of the Sadducees. Essentially, he feared for his own political future. However, to better understand the biblical narrative, it is important to quickly review who ruled which area.

1. Herod Antipas, one of the heirs of Herod the Great, ruled the District of Galilee and Perea (a district east of the Jordan River).
2. Caiaphas, the high priest ruled Jerusalem and to a lesser degree, the rest of Judea.
3. Pontius Pilate, the Roman Prefect, had general oversight of these three areas which formed the Province or District of Judea (sometimes called Judaea).⁴⁹⁷
 - a. Idumea
 - b. Samaria
 - c. Judea

Therefore, it is important to look briefly at the overall political situation of the Jewish enclave as it was related to the Roman Empire. The expanding Parthian Empire to the east was a constant threat to Roman stability. Even though Rome conquered Jerusalem in 63 B.C., by 40 B.C. the Parthians had taken temporary control of the Holy City. But Herod the Great defeated both the Parthians and the Jewish freedom fighters and re-established Roman control in 37 B.C. Add to this political quandary the long history of Jewish rebellions, and there was sufficient reason for the temple leaders, as well as the Romans, to be concerned. For this reason, the religious leaders and the Romans had

495. For further study, see James C. McRuer, *The Trial of Jesus*. Toronto: Clarke Irwin Ltd. 1964.

496. See Appendix 21 for the seven proclamations of the innocence of Jesus.

497. Sanders. "Jesus in Historical Context." 432.

established a delicately woven fabric of political collaboration to quickly resolve problems. The Jewish leaders convinced the Romans that the Miracle Worker from Nazareth needed to be executed.

Scholars debate upon are two possible locations concerning the location of the trials before Pilate.

1. According to tradition, Pilate was stationed in the Antonio Fortress⁴⁹⁸ that was located on the northwest side of the temple (see 15.04.04.A). This is the majority view and held herein.
2. However, recently a few scholars have argued that Pilate was in Herod's palace which was located on the western side of the city near today's Jaffa Gate. This is a minority view, but is where Herod Antipas was for the second Roman trial of Jesus.

Both the Antonia Fortress and Herod's palace had a suite where Pilate could comfortably reside. However, if Pilate was staying in the palace of the former Herod the Great, then when he decided to send Jesus to Herod Antipas, the Jews would have stayed and Herod would have come forth to consider their argument.

While the Antonio Fortress is the traditional site for the first and third trials of Jesus, that tradition alone is not sufficient "evidence" to assume it is the actual site. Other traditional sites identified as the Mount of Transfiguration near Nazareth have long been discredited by scholars. Therefore, a closer examination is needed.

1. Pilate generally lived in Judea's capital city of Caesarea along the Mediterranean Sea, and came to Jerusalem only during festivals to insure peace. Therefore, he naturally would have stayed in the royal suite within the fortress where he had direct command of his troops.
2. The Antonio Fortress was adjacent to the temple, and it was at the temple where tradition said anyone who wanted to be a messiah would announce his messiahship.
3. When Jesus was before Pilate, He would have been before the "judgment seat." That was almost always inside of a Praetorium. When the Apostle Paul appeared before Felix and Festus (Acts 23:31-25:12), it was before the "judgment seat."

498. Luke said in Acts 21:37 that the Apostle Paul was taken into the "barracks," which was the Antonio Fortress. It was where Paul addressed the people in Acts 22:1-21.

4. Mathew said

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into headquarters and gathered the whole company around Him.

Matthew 27:27

Some translations use the word “barracks” or “garrison” for “headquarters.” All these terms apply to a fortress. By this time in Pilate’s career he had to maintain order or possibly lose his position. So it is highly doubtful that he would have sent a garrison of soldiers with Jesus to the western end of the city for a trial if all of the potential problems were expected to center around the temple area.

5. When the Apostle Paul was speaking to the crowds near the temple, he was rescued from a Jewish mob by Roman soldiers and taken into the nearby “barracks,” (Acts 21:37). This would have been the same place where Jesus was tried by Pilate.

Therefore, it simply makes common sense that Pilate was in the Antonio Fortress, and it was there where Jesus stood before him. Therefore, in addition to the physical abuse Jesus endured during the Jewish and Roman trials, soldiers probably made him walk from the Antonio Fortress to Herod’s palace on the western side of the city by the Jaffa Gate, and back again.

As to Herod’s palace, it was constructed by his father Herod the Great and now most likely occupied occasionally by Herod Antipas when he was in the area. Generally, Herod Antipas was either in Tiberias or in the Machaerus Fortress, east of the Dead Sea. The only reason he would have been in Jerusalem at Passover was to help maintain peace, even though the city was not part of his domain.

15.04.01.Q1 What were the Roman charges against Jesus?

In violation of Jewish law, the Sanhedrin conjured up sufficient false charges in an attempt to have Jesus convicted and executed. In their haste, however, they realized that the charge of blasphemy was not sufficient grounds to execute anyone under Roman law. So they restructured their charges to charge Him with treason – that is, tax evasion. Furthermore, to be called “king of the Jews,” was a direct challenge to Roman authority.⁴⁹⁹ Pilate could not avoid these charges. So Jesus was then taken from the

499. Webb, “The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus.” 754.

religious court to the civil court.

When they arrived, Pilate was sitting in the judge's seat; for Rome had given him supreme authority in the judicial system and enforcement of Roman law. Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin came before him and charged Jesus with four counts of treason:

1. They charged Him with sedition
2. They said Jesus forbade the payment of taxes to Rome
3. They said Jesus claimed to be king.
4. Finally, there was an overarching rule known as *lex de maiestate*, meaning *law of majesty*, which forbade offending the emperor or empire.⁵⁰⁰ Because it was interpreted in a broad manner, emperors such as Tiberius used it to remove or execute suspected enemies.

While the charge of treason could not be ignored, Pilate correctly realized that Jesus was the victim of a religious charade. Pilate questioned Him carefully and realized that while claiming to be a king, He certainly was not a threat to Rome. He could have released Jesus because not a single statute of Roman law was violated; however, eventually he yielded to the pressures of the Sanhedrin.⁵⁰¹ The essential Roman laws that governed the trial were as follows:

1. All proceedings had to be public and held during daylight hours.
2. The trial started with the prosecuting witness presenting the charge that Jesus was guilty of treason. However, the problem the Sanhedrin had was that Judas was dead.

Shortly after sunrise on the morning of Passover, Jesus was taken before Pilate, possibly between 6:00 and 6:30 a.m. Trials at this time did not have the formalities of modern Western judicial systems and, hence, decisions were rendered quickly. Pilate was irritated that these pesty Jews were bothering him so early in the morning. Furthermore, he had to come out to meet them, because they refused to enter his royal court lest they would become defiled. Therefore, the Jews had the following two strikes against them.

500. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 390.

501. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 473.

1. Pilate was unhappy because they demanded his attention before the normal business day began and...
2. The Jews asked him to step outside of his palace to address them.

Pilate and the Herodians knew all too well that Jesus did not have any political motivations. Both had a vast network of spies who scouted for any possible messianic revolutionaries. Military commanders also made reports to their superiors which would have reached Pilate. All knew Jesus was innocent of the charges brought forth by the Sadducees.

15.04.01.Q2 Why might Pilate have been remotely concerned about the possibilities of Jesus being a revolutionary?

It is noteworthy to consider that the gospels provide only a small window of the events of the life of Jesus. For example, notice how often Jesus went to pray, and did so for lengthy periods of time, yet all the prayers recorded in Scripture are relatively short. Likewise in this matter. This question is hardly ever considered because Jesus had a well established reputation by this time. When the Sadducees drummed up all the charges they could, they probably included the following reasons as secondary evidence:

1. One of His disciples was Simon, a former member of the Zealots.
2. Jesus and all but one of His disciples were from the district of Galilee, an established center of Zealot activity.
3. While Jesus taught peace, He also said there would be wars and rumors of wars. But He did not say when these would occur or His involvement in them.⁵⁰²

However, Jesus had been an incredibly popular figure for the previous three and a half years. The actions of a would-be revolutionary certainly did not fit His teaching or miracles. So while there were some concerns, they were muted by the well-established teachings and actions of Jesus and His disciples. Furthermore, the fact that at least one of the disciples (Peter) carried a small weapon may not have been a concern for Pilate. Most men carried a small weapon for the same reasons men and boys carried pocket

502. See Appendix 25 for a listing of rebels and false prophets who had messianic expectations and for a partial listing of revolts and social disturbances from 63 B.C. to A.D. 70.

knives years ago in America.

15.04.02 Mt. 27:2; Jn. 18:28-30; Lk. 23:1-2; Jn. 18:28-32; Fourth Ministry Passover, April 30, in the Praetorium.

FIRST ROMAN TRIAL: JESUS TAKEN BEFORE PILATE

Mt. ² After tying Him up, they led Him away and handed Him over to Pilate, the governor.

Jn. ²⁸ Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They did not enter the headquarters themselves; otherwise they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover.

²⁹ Then Pilate came out to them and said, "What charge do you bring against this man?"

³⁰ They answered him, "If this man weren't a criminal, we wouldn't have handed Him over to you."

Lk. ¹ Then their whole assembly rose up and brought Him before Pilate. ² They began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man subverting our nation, opposing payment of taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is the Messiah, a King."

Jn. ³¹ So Pilate told them, "Take Him yourselves and judge Him according to your law."

"It's not legal for us to put anyone to death," the Jews declared. ³² They said this so that Jesus' words might be fulfilled signifying what kind of death He was going to die.

Throughout these two trials before Pilate, there were four identifiable procedural steps.

1. Pilate had to know the accusation. The Jews said that if Jesus were not guilty, they would not have brought him. Caiaphas and his co-conspirators had assembled an angry mob that was so emotionally charged that they did not even

realize their own sarcasm towards Pilate who could have had all of them crucified.

2. Interrogation. Pilate asked the question, “Are you king of the Jews?” This was an interesting question, because the Jews had many self-proclaimed messiahs who desired to overthrow Roman tyranny.

3. Defense. Since Jesus did not have an attorney to defend Him, Pilate spoke on His behalf to His accusers.

4. The verdict. Pilate was one of the cruelest dictators of this era, yet he could find no fault in Jesus.

“Pilate, the governor.” The name “Pilate” or *Pilatus* was most fitting for the governor. It comes from a Latin word that means *armed with a javelin*, a six-foot long throwing spear that had an iron point, a decisive weapon in combat.⁵⁰³ He was the sixth ruler of Judea, an appointment he received through the influence of his good friend Lucius Aelius Sejanus, who, like Pilate, was a friend of Caesar.⁵⁰⁴ However, while Sejanus claimed to be a friend of Caesar, he was, in fact, an arch rival; a stealthy Judas.⁵⁰⁵

Traditional scholarship has said that Pilate, who was born in Spain, was authorized by Rome to be the official *procurator cum potestate*, meaning he had full rights in civil, criminal, and military jurisdictions. Some ancient writers, such as Josephus, referred to him as the procurator. However, in 1961 scholars discovered that this was an error, and that his proper title was “prefect.”⁵⁰⁶ Therefore, it must be concluded that while titles were important, writers were somewhat loose with the proper use of them. Also, while Judea was in effect a part of a province of Syria, Pilate was personally responsible to the Emperor Tiberius, rather than to the Governor of Syria or the Roman Senate. He was not only an extension of Rome, but also had ultimate Roman judicial authority, which included capital punishment (Latin: *ius gladii*)⁵⁰⁷ for non-Roman citizens.⁵⁰⁸

503. Macartney, *Great Interviews of Jesus*. 103; Dixon and Southern, *The Roman Calvary*. 51, 128; Maier, *The First Easter*. 56-58; Nelesen, *Yeshua; the Promise, the Land, the Messiah*. (Video Tape 2); Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 2:277.

504. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 418; Bruce, *New Testament History*. 32-33; See also John 19:12; 03.06.25; 15.04.02; 16.01.05.

505. See 03.06.25, 16.01.05; Maier, “Judas, Pilate.” 10-13.

506. Maier, *In the Fullness of Time*. 346. A prefect was one who governed and, therefore, is sometimes referred to as a “governor.”

507. Barclay, “John.” 2:233.



15.04.02.A. THE PRAETORIAN GUARD. Two reliefs of the Praetorian Guard shown in Rome on whom the emperor relied for personal power and protection. Jerusalem had a similar Praetorian Guard to protect Pilate and to crush any Jewish uprising.

Some scholars have concluded that Pilate was in Herod's palace near the Jaffa Gate. However, if these two men were at odds with each other, there is a slim possibility that they were under the same roof, especially when Pilate was needed by the temple. Therefore, it can be concluded that Pilate was in the Fortress and Herod in his palace, thereby requiring the Jews to march Jesus back and forth across the city in the early morning of Passover.

The Romans were primarily concerned about treason, potential riots, and rebellions which would obviously lead to the loss of tax revenue. Therefore, when the Jews came

before Pilate accusing Jesus of treason, he listened. The situation had now changed dramatically, primarily due to actions of Sejanus in Rome.⁵⁰⁹ Furthermore, no longer was Jesus under Jewish law; He was now under Roman law (see 03.06.25 and 16.01.05).

The first Roman trial is believed to have taken place in the Praetorium Guard, located in the Fortress. It has been argued that the Guard was stationed only in Rome, and Paul was therefore, incorrect in his comments about them in Philippians 1:13 and 4:22. However, recently scholars have discovered that the term “Caesar’s house,” as used by Paul had a much broader definition and included all those in government service. Hence, the word “Praetorium” can be applied to many locations outside of Rome, including Jerusalem.⁵¹⁰

15.04.02.Q1. If capital punishment was illegal, how could the Jews have killed Stephen and James?

It has been argued that the Jews did, in fact, have the right to execute (Latin: *ius gladii*),⁵¹¹ since they killed both Stephen and James. First was the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60) and later, the stoning of James, the half-brother of Jesus in A.D. 62. That account was recorded by Josephus.⁵¹² However, these two deaths were caused by Sanhedrin-inspired riotous mobs and not by proper judicial procedure. The priest who initiated the death of James was removed from office because he violated the law prohibiting capital punishment (Latin: *ius gladii*).⁵¹³ Amazingly, in later years, the documents of the Jerusalem Talmud recorded the following:

Forty years before the destruction of the temple they took from Israel the right to inflict capital punishment.

Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 1 18a

This Talmudic report is amazingly incorrect because Israel’s right to inflict capital punishment was removed decades earlier by Herod the Great, who also restricted the Sanhedrin to the area of Judah. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the restriction

509. Webb, “The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus.” 721-24.

510. Tenney, ed., “Praetorium.” 13:1654.

511. Barclay, “John.” 2:233.

512. Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.9.1.

513. Barclay, “John.” 2:233.

against capital punishment by the Sanhedrin was revoked by the Romans. These riots also underscore the tensions that existed and gave cause for the Romans to be ready at a moment's notice to subdue an uprising.

It is unfortunate that historians are rather harsh on the Romans. In spite of all their faults, the Romans did attempt to accommodate their Jewish subjects. For example, while the authority to execute criminals was removed from the Sanhedrin, Rome did permit Jewish guards to execute any Gentile who entered the most holy sanctuary of the temple, even if he was a Roman soldier. This was confirmed by Josephus when he recorded a statement made by General Titus to the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem. Titus said:

Did we not permit you to put to death any who passed it, even if he be a Roman?

Josephus, *Wars* 6.2.4 (126a)

Two other examples of Roman accommodation are:

1. When Soldiers marched across Israel, the icon of the Tenth Roman Legion was either not visible or the soldiers bypassed Israel.
2. Roman symbols were not placed in the temple as not to offend the Jews.

“Governor’s headquarters.” Some translators have used the phrase, “hall of judgment,” which is translated from the Latin word *Praetorium*, which originally meant *the general’s tent*.⁵¹⁴ However, the word *praetorium* can also be translated as *villa* or *palace*, the latter literally translated from *praetoria*. Luke used it as follows:

He said, “I will give you a hearing whenever your accusers get here too.” And he ordered that he be kept under guard in Herod’s palace.

Acts 23:35

The Roman writer Juvenal used the phrase in this manner:

To their crimes they are indebted for their gardens, palaces (*praetoria*), etc.

Juvenal, *Satire* 1:75

514. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 2:272-73.

By the first century, in Roman provinces the Praetorium was the official residence of the Roman governor while the term *praetorian guard* was the imperial bodyguard as in Philippians 1:13.⁵¹⁵

“They did not enter the headquarters themselves.” When the Sadducees and their henchmen were before Pilate, they were in his open-air courtyard and not in the palace headquarter. Such places often had numerous statues of Roman heroes and gods, or “graven images,” which violated Jewish sensitivities. But since these Jews were not in the building, they did not consider themselves to be ceremonially defiled.⁵¹⁶

“Otherwise they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover.” The Priests observed their Passover at 9:00 o’clock in the morning. The Feast of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were weeklong celebrations,⁵¹⁷ for which the participants had to keep themselves ritually pure. Therefore, they could not enter the home or facility of a Gentile.

“What charge do you bring against this man?” Pilate was known for being cruel, but also followed Roman law in every detail. He presented this question to the Jews, but they had a problem. Their so-called witness who should have brought the charge was Judas, but he was now dead. Since the Sadducees had no “witness,” they were forced to make up their own charges.

“Criminal.” The Greek term *kakopoios* or *kakon poion*, would be better translated as *evildoer*, or *malefactor* (Gk. *kakourgos* 2557).⁵¹⁸ Yet these do not fully convey the meaning because the Latin *maleficus* (*malefactor*) point toward making evil with the use of magic.⁵¹⁹ Several church fathers, including Tertullian, also interpreted the biblical passage to read *magic*.⁵²⁰ In essence, the exorcisms and healings Jesus performed became the accusations used by the scribes, elders, and Sadducees. At no point were any of the people present to whom Jesus ministered. The irony is that while pagan religious

515. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 2:273.

516. Nelesen, *Yeshua; the Promise, the Land, the Messiah*. (Video Tape 2).

517. See Appendix 5.

518. Green, *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*; Vine, “Malefactor.” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:388.

519. Welch, “Miracles, Maleficium, and Maiestas in the Trial of Jesus.” 375.

520. Tertullian, *Scorpiace* 12; Welch, “Miracles, Maleficium, and Maiestas in the Trial of Jesus.” 378.

practices used numerous forms of magic as part of their healing rituals, some forms of magic were illegal. And it may be for that reason, that the Sadducees then claimed that Jesus was subverting “our” nation.

Previously, Pilate asked, “What *kakon* has he committed?”⁵²¹ To this the chief priests responded by saying, “He was doing *kakon*.” Words of common conversation tend to take on a significant importance in a court setting. Some scholars believe that this phrase carried more legal weight than what modern readers realize.⁵²²

Among the Romans, Jesus had the reputation of performing magic. So when Suetonius, the Roman historian, wrote of Nero, he said that “Christians” were involved with *superstitionis novae ac maleficae*.⁵²³ That is, a superstitious people involved in magic. This may be why the first century church fathers specifically said in the *Didache* that magic was prohibited.⁵²⁴ The church father Origen said that Celsus⁵²⁵ said that Jesus went to Egypt for training in the magical arts. The conclusion is that Jesus performed many miracles and exorcisms that the Jewish leadership and pagans referred to as “magic.” For that reason, the early church was adamant on,

1. Declaring that the miracles Jesus performed were of God and a fulfillment of prophecies.
2. Prohibiting the practice of magic.

No one denied that Jesus did wonderful works, but the primary argument was the source of His power. Where one believes that source came from clearly reflects what one thinks of Jesus.

“We found this man subverting our nation.” Since the Jews knew they could not convince Pilate to execute Jesus on charges of magic or blasphemy,⁵²⁶ they formulated political charges equal to treason against Him. In the process, they claimed the Roman Empire as “our nation,” and thereby, they rejected the Promised Land God had given

521. Mt. 27:23; Mk. 15:14; Lk. 23:22.

522. Malina, “Jesus as Astral Prophet.” 93-98.

523. Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum* 6.16.

524. *Didache* 2.2; 3.4 and 5.1.

525. Celsus was a second century Greek philosopher and fierce opponent of Christianity.

526. Welch, “Miracles, Maleficium, and Maiestas in the Trial of Jesus.” 375-79.

them. This was the same tactic used by them against Paul where religious charges in Acts 21:27-23:10 were changed to political ones in 24:5-6, and he was then accused before the Roman governor.

“Opposing payment of taxes.” Could Jesus have been accused of encouraging the Jews not to pay taxes? Pilate knew that the Jews hated taxes and, in fact, this was the primary cause for many revolts. The very last thing any Jew would do was to accuse another of failing to pay Roman taxes. Pilate was also aware that the tax collectors were the most hated Jews. Rabbis even permitted people to lie to tax collectors. Amazingly, now the Sadducees were standing before Pilate, supposedly fearful that Rome might not obtain “its fair share” of tax revenue. Pilate most certainly must have been amused at their concern. In essence, Jesus was accused of a crime against the sovereignty of the Empire: treason – which was punishable by crucifixion – but Pilate could easily see through the ridiculous accusation. Other reasons would soon emerge (next section below).

“Take Him yourselves and judge Him according to your law.” Pilate did not want to become involved with Jesus. He saw Him as a harmless figure in a religious group that he did not understand. While Pilate knew that the Jews had no authority to crucify, he most certainly did not think they would go so far as to kill one of their own, especially if he was innocent.

“It’s not legal for us to put anyone to death.” For once the Sadducees told the truth. Their right to inflict capital punishment was removed from their authority by Herod the Great, with the exception of a Gentile who entered the sacred temple area.

15.04.03 Jn. 18:33-38; Mt. 27:11-14 (See also Mk. 15:2-5; Lk. 23:3-4) First Roman Trial

PILATE QUESTIONS JESUS

Jn. ³³ Then Pilate went back into the headquarters, summoned Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

³⁴ Jesus answered, “Are you asking this on your own, or have others told you about Me?”

³⁵ “I’m not a Jew, am I?” Pilate replied. “Your own nation and the chief priests handed You over to me. What have You done?”

³⁶ **“My kingdom is not of this world,” said Jesus. “If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. As it is, My kingdom does not have its origin here.”**

³⁷ **“You are a king then?” Pilate asked.**

“You say that I’m a king,” Jesus replied. “I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.”

³⁸ **“What is truth?” said Pilate.**

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no grounds for charging Him.

Mt. ¹¹ Now Jesus stood before the governor. “Are You the King of the Jews?” the governor asked Him.

Jesus answered, “You have said it.” ¹² And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He didn’t answer.

¹³ Then Pilate said to Him, “Don’t You hear how much they are testifying against You?” ¹⁴ But He didn’t answer him on even one charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

“Are you the King of the Jews?” Again, Jesus was sarcastically asked to incriminate Himself. He did not respond to Pilate in self-defense, but in a manner that would permit Pilate to act and judge as his office demanded. The Jews had been witness to many teachings and miracles of Jesus. They heard Him preach on forgiveness, love, and all aspects of living a godly life. But Pilate did not have that privilege. Therefore, Jesus capsulated His ministry and messianic mission:

“My kingdom is not of this world,” said Jesus. “If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. As it is, My kingdom does not have its origin here.”

John 18:36

Evidence to support this statement occurred when one of His disciples pulled out his sword and cut off the ear of Caiaphas’ servant. Jesus rebuked the disciple and healed the

servant. To Pilate, Jesus was simply a man of wild illusions, one who desired to have a kingdom – possibly somewhere among the stars, since it was not to be in this world. He considered Jesus a harmless lunatic who, by some mystical power, was able to heal the sick. The Romans had a well-established reputation for a quick execution of any self-proclaimed messiah who dreamed of leading the Jews to independence. Jesus, however, was different and after several questions, Pilate could find no reason for His execution.

“What is truth?” This has been the eternal question throughout millennia. Greek philosophers, modern humanists, atheists, and others have debated this question. Scholars have asked whether this was an honest question or sarcasm. Regardless, from the moment Pilate asked this question, it was he who was on trial. He saw Jesus as an idealist who was harmless to the empire and, hence, certainly not worthy of death. He knew Jesus was innocent but would he make a judgment that reflected truth? Knowing truth and acting upon it should have been one and the same. It wasn't. Pilate was facing truth, but rendered a wrongful decision.

It is an interesting irony of history that Jesus was before Pilate, where He was questioned about being the King of the Jews, when some three and a half decades earlier the magi came to this same city to ask where the king of the Jews was born. Now Jesus was on trial for being the king and only Pilate could officiate over this matter. This is the first Roman declaration of innocence. He then sent Jesus to Herod Antipas for trial, because he did not have the courage to release Jesus.

“But He didn't answer him.” This was not only a fulfillment of prophecy and a position of humility, but also a condemnation of Pilate. The silence of Jesus speaks volumes to the fact that it was not Jesus, but Pilate who was on trial. In centuries past, the first king of Israel, Saul, had parted ways from God. In response Saul said, “God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or dreams” (1 Sam. 28:15). As the Holy One was silent before King Saul, Jesus was silent before His accusers.

<p>Mystery Unveiled</p>	<p>Jesus did not “fit into human schemes.” He did not always answer questions, but He always spoke truth in love with man's eternity in mind.</p>
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Pilate normally lived in Caesarea Maritima along the Mediterranean coast. But during the days of Passover, he was in Jerusalem with extra soldiers in the event that some

early. This is significant in that it provides overwhelming support that many stories of miracles were, in fact, historical events and not myths added to the text by later editors, as some critics claim (without support for their opinions). With so many early copies of this gospel circulating in the ancient Middle East, it would have been impossible to create legends and myths concerning Jesus that would have been accepted by the Church.

It is important to summarize the charges the Sanhedrin brought against Jesus when before Pilate. Any one of these was worthy of crucifixion.

1. Jesus was a criminal who used magical powers
2. Jesus attempted to subvert the nation
3. He forbade the payment of taxes to Rome
4. He claimed He was king, a position superior to Pilate.

In summary, Pilate was by no means the ideal administrator of the Roman Empire. He is remembered for his cruelty, yet he could see through the accusations of the Jewish leaders, and considered Jesus to be innocent. But he did not have the inner strength to stand in opposition to the Jews and administer fair justice.

15.04.04 Lk. 23:5-7

PILATE SENDS JESUS TO HEROD

⁵ But they kept insisting, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where He started even to here.”

⁶ When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man was a Galilean. ⁷ Finding that He was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem during those days.



15.04.04.A. A MODEL OF THE ANTONIA FORTRESS (Behind the Temple). This model shows the proximity of the fortress (in background) to the temple, and is where scholars believe Jesus was tried before Pilate. The fortress had a palace-type luxury suite for Pilate, barracks for the Praetorian Guard, a prison, and even a place where the high priest kept his priceless priestly robes. The Sanhedrin held its judicial proceedings in the Chamber of Hewn Stone within the temple, under the watchful eyes of the Roman guards. Photographed at the Holy Land Hotel by the author.



15.04.04.B. THE ROBES OF THE HIGH PRIEST. LEFT: A mannequin of the high priest dressed in one of his priestly robes as he may have appeared during temple service. Photo courtesy of the Bible History Exhibits and Stephen Meyers. RIGHT: A model displays a recreated priestly robe as he may have appeared in daily life. Photo by the author near the Southern Temple Steps.

While performing temple duties, the high priest wore a linen garment and turban, but was in bare feet. His official dress was worn only in the temple, and kept under guard in the Antonia Fortress in the years 6-41 when not in service.⁵²⁹

15.04.05 Lk. 23:8-12, The palace of Herod; Second Roman Trial

JESUS BEFORE HEROD ANTIPAS

⁸ Herod was very glad to see Jesus; for a long time he had wanted to see Him because he had heard about Him and was hoping to see some miracle

⁵²⁹. Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 1:91.

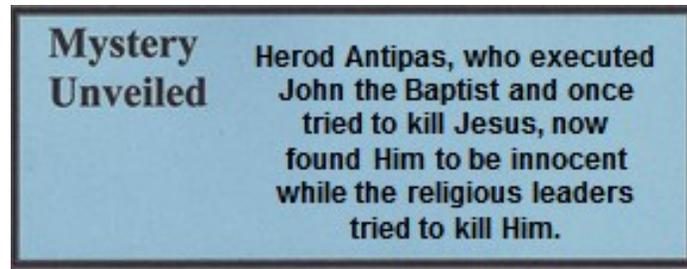
performed by Him.⁹ So he kept asking Him questions, but Jesus did not answer him.¹⁰ The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing Him.¹¹ Then Herod, with his soldiers, treated Him with contempt, mocked Him, dressed Him in a brilliant robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.¹² That very day Herod and Pilate became friends. Previously, they had been hostile toward each other.

There was no legal reason for Pilate to send Jesus to Herod Antipas, since Pilate was in the superior government position.⁵³⁰ He simply did not want to take responsibility for a decision. However, this may have been an attempt to appease Herod, because Pilate was responsible for the Galilean massacre in Jerusalem (Lk. 13:1). Technically, the massacre was an infringement upon Herod's domain, even though the incident occurred in Jerusalem.⁵³¹ Nonetheless, Pilate most certainly was delighted to send Jesus to Herod Antipas, governor of the province of Galilee. This northern area was a traditional problem, for it was the home of the Zealots. Herod was always quick to remove any insurrectionist that appeared and, in Pilate's thinking, he was well equipped to handle Jesus and any other Jewish problem.

The reputation of Jesus had spread into every corner of the ancient Middle East. Herod Antipas had at one time listened carefully to John the Baptist (Lk. 3:19-20). When the twelve disciples were preaching, He was gravely concerned (Lk. 9:7-9) and even searched for an opportunity to kill Jesus. But friendly Pharisees warned Jesus of imminent danger at which time Jesus referred to him as the "fox" (Lk. 13:31-35). Now Herod had his fourth encounter with Jesus. Evidently, he pretended to have some interest in the ways of God. His life had deteriorated spiritually and morally and his only interest was some form of entertainment, miracles, or sideshow. Jesus, however, did not consent. In fact, the entire courtroom mocked Jesus and, sarcastically, gave Him all appearances of a king. When they were finished with Him, He was sent back to Pilate. However, Herod's refusal to pronounce a sentence of any kind strongly suggests that he considered Jesus innocent.

530. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*. 9.

531. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*. 31.



But the questions persist. Why did Herod Antipas, who once tried to kill Jesus, now find Him innocent? Was this declaration of innocence truly the result of Herod's concern for judicial equality, or did some people of his household, who had supported Jesus financially, have an influence on his decision?

1. There was Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward who became a follower of Jesus (Lk. 8:3)
2. Manaen became a believer and was a member of Herod's court (Acts 13:1). No doubt, there were others as well.

Since Herod's decision appears to be out of character, one must suspect that these and other believers, who served in the royal household, demonstrated their influence to find Jesus innocent. He had no interest in justice, but only wanted to be entertained. When that attempt failed, he returned Jesus to Pilate.

“That very day Herod and Pilate became friends. Previously, they had been hostile toward each other.” There are few verses in the Bible that imply political alliances as much as this one. In ancient times, as today, the world of politics can demand strange alliances even among those who despise each other. Such was the case here. For years there had been a peaceful hatred between Pilate and Herod Antipas. However, neither could be vocal about the issue or Rome would have removed the accuser from office. Now, before them was a man whom neither of them found to be guilty. There is no recorded information as to why Pilate and Herod were hostile with each other, but previously there was at least one event initiated by Pilate that might have been the cause.

As has already been stated, scholars have long suspected that the hostilities between the two leaders resulted from a massacre in Jerusalem (Lk. 13:1) after Pilate raided the temple treasury to pay for an aqueduct that was under construction.⁵³² Justification for this opinion is based, in part, on the fact that in A.D. 36, Pilate was ordered to Rome by Vitellius, the legate of Syria, to defend similar actions concerning a Samaritan rebellion.

532. More information, including a quotation from Josephus, is found at 09.03.08.

In that case, he imprisoned and then slaughtered Samaritan rebels. However, by the time he arrived in Rome, Emperor Tiberius had died.

History is inconclusive as to what became of Pilate. Eusebius said that he was exiled and then committed suicide,⁵³³ although another account says he suffered death under Emperor Nero. Regardless, his final hours were not peaceful.⁵³⁴

15.04.06 Mt. 27:19; Lk. 23:13-16 Praetorium (or Herod's Palace), Thursday morning

THIRD ROMAN TRIAL: PILATE'S WARNING AND QUESTIONS RELEASE

Mt. ¹⁹ While he was sitting on the judge's bench, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for today I've suffered terribly in a dream because of Him!"

Lk. ¹³ Pilate called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, "You have brought me this man as one who subverts the people. But in fact, after examining Him in your presence, I have found no grounds to charge this man with those things you accuse Him of. ¹⁵ Neither has Herod, because he sent Him back to us. Clearly, He has done nothing to deserve death. ¹⁶ Therefore, I will have Him whipped and then release Him." [¹⁷ For according to the festival he had to release someone to them.]

Pilate would have been wise if he had listened to his wife.⁵³⁵ The ancients strongly believed in dreams, and often, made decisions accordingly. In this case, he did not heed her dream and warning.⁵³⁶ Some in the early church believed she became a Christian, which is altogether possible after having a dream as this one. The Greek Church eventually elevated her to sainthood.⁵³⁷

The soldiers of the elite Praetorium Guard were among the finest soldiers of the Empire and personal bodyguards of Emperors and puppet kings. Mark 15:16 could imply that

533. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*. 2.7.

534. See 16.01.06.Q1 concerning the consequences that fell upon those who opposed Jesus.

535. One tradition says her name was Claudia Procula while other traditions state her name was Claudia or Procula. See Jordan, *Who's Who in the Bible*. 240.

536. Macartney, *Great Interviews of Jesus*. 107.

537. Lindsay, *The Life and Teachings of Christ*. 3:206.

the Praetorium was also the palace, and twice Josephus said the fortress was “like a palace.” However, scholars believe Herod’s palace – the one built by his father – was near the Jaffa gate.⁵³⁸ A portion of Josephus’ description follows:

Next to this, and before you came to the edifice of the tower itself, there was a wall three cubits high.... The inward parts had a largeness and form of a palace, it being parted into all kinds of rooms and other conveniences, such as courts, and places for bathing, and broad spaces for camps; insomuch that, it might seem to be composed of several cities, but its magnificence it seemed like a palace.

Josephus, *Wars* 5.5.8 (240-241a)

A second reference by Josephus is to the judge’s seat that was also in the Antonia Fortress. An example of a court trial that occurred in “the palace” took place before Gessius Florus. He reigned only from A.D. 64 to 66, and was possibly the most vicious of all rulers. There is little question among historians that he was a major cause of the Second Revolt that led to the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. At one time the Jews came before him with a complaint, just as they had done decades earlier before Pilate about Jesus. Josephus recorded the event before Florus. Notice the similarities.

Now at this time Florus took upon his quarters at the palace; and on the next day he had his tribunal set before it, and sat upon it (the judge’s chair), when the high priests and the men of power and those of the greatest eminence in the city came all before that tribunal upon which Florus commanded them to deliver up to him those that had reproached him.

Josephus, *Wars* 2.14.8 (301-302a)⁵³⁹

The term “**palace**” is from the Latin *praetorian*,⁵⁴⁰ and refers to the Antonia Fortress as used by Josephus. Some scholars believe the same connection can be made with the Pilate having been in the Antonia Fortress to pass judgment upon Jesus.

“I have found no grounds to charge this man.” After cross-examining Jesus in the

538. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 424-26.

539. Parenthesis mine.

540. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 2:272-73.

presence of the Sanhedrin, Pilate declared that he found no fault with Him.⁵⁴¹ This was his second declaration of innocence, which was also in agreement with Herod. However, to appease the Jews and to secure his own political survival, Pilate decided to have Jesus punished instead of being crucified. He hoped they would give up their demands for a crucifixion because he made three significant observations about Jesus.

1. As a peaceful man, Jesus avoided all forms of force.
2. Jesus did not attack or criticize the oppressive Roman government.
3. His criticisms were directed mainly towards the temple priesthood and public teachers.

Therefore, Pilate summarized that the priests and rabbis were merely envious and wanted Jesus dead for their own selfish reasons. So he offered them a choice between Jesus and Barabbas.

15.04.07 Mk. 15:6-10 (See also Mt. 27:15-18; Jn. 18:39)

JESUS OR BARABBAS

⁶ At the festival it was Pilate's custom to release for the people a prisoner they requested. ⁷ There was one named Barabbas, who was in prison with rebels who had committed murder during the rebellion. ⁸ The crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do for them as was his custom. ⁹ So Pilate answered them, "Do you want me to release the King of the Jews for you?" ¹⁰ For he knew it was because of envy that the chief priests had handed Him over.

Unfortunately, Pilate failed to realize that these Jews were not the same people who waved palm branches and sang "Hosanna" when Jesus entered the city on a donkey. Since it was the Roman custom in some areas to release a *convicted* prisoner at Passover (Jn. 18:39) to appease the Jews, he thought this would be a good time to release Jesus. It is difficult to understand why he thought that he could have released Jesus to the very same Jews who were trying to kill Him. Yet, that was his attempt. The irony is that Jesus had *not* yet been convicted and, therefore, Pilate broke from the Roman custom in an attempt to appease them.

541. It should be noted that in the account presented by Mark, he clearly states that the only charge against Jesus is a religious one. Mark appears to be passionate about any readers concluding that there may have been any possible treason or rebellion charges against Jesus. Luke and many other writers seem to have praised the Romans at the expense of the Jewish leadership.

Some writers have said this Roman custom of releasing a prisoner at Passover was unique to Jerusalem. But history seems to indicate otherwise.

1. In Egypt there was a parallel custom where a prefect said to a prisoner, “You deserve to be scourged for the crimes you have committed, but I grant you to the crowd.”⁵⁴² This may have been an annual event that had its own name – the *privilegium paschale* was not limited to Jerusalem historically.⁵⁴³
2. Centuries earlier, Jehoiachin, King of Judah, was freed by Amel-Marduk (Evil-Merodach) in 561 B.C. after Nebuchadnezzar died and Amel-Marduk ascended to the throne (2 Kgs. 25:27-30; Jer. 52:31-34).
3. Convicted prisoners were released at times of religious significance in Assyria and Babylon.
4. In Greece, prisoners were released at the six-day Athenian Festival of Dionysus, known as the *Greater Dionysia*.⁵⁴⁴

Therefore, while the custom of releasing a prisoner was not accepted by most Roman governors, many living within their provinces were aware of it. Clearly this was an attempt by Pilate to appease the Sadducean crowd.

15.04.08 Mk. 15:11; Jn. 18:40; Lk. 23:18-19; Mt. 27:20-21

CROWD DEMANDS BARABBAS

Mk. ¹¹ But the chief priests stirred up the crowd so that he would release Barabbas to them instead.

Jn. ⁴⁰ They shouted back, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

Lk. ¹⁸ Then they all cried out together, “Take this man away! Release Barabbas to us!” ¹⁹ (He had been thrown into prison for a rebellion that had taken place in the city, and for murder.)

542. Cited by Stein, R. *Jesus the Messiah*. 232.

543. Merritt. “Jesus Barabbas.” 67.

544. “Dionysia.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 8:283.

Mt. ²⁰ The chief priests and the elders, however, persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to execute Jesus. ²¹ The governor asked them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?”

“Barabbas!” they answered.

“Then they all cried out together.” Unfortunately, throughout most of church history, the prevailing opinion has been that *all* the Jewish people cried out against Jesus. Really? This demands some serious thought! Were those whom Jesus healed and raised from the dead now demanding that Pilate crucify Him? At this point only the Sadducees and possibly the elders and scribes were before Pilate. Luke 19:47-48 states that the chief priests were unable to stop Jesus because *all* the people were very attentive to Him. On another occasion *all* the people listened to him *gladly* (Mk. 12:37).

If there was a change in public sentiment, it is not recorded in the Bible. The *only* reason the trials were held at night was Jesus was extremely popular and a day trial would certainly have caused a riot. Why would the rejoicing crowds who witnessed Jesus perform dozens, if not hundreds of healings and raise Lazarus from the dead, suddenly want to see Him crucified? As is explained below, the term *all* refers only to the small crowd that was before Pilate, not to every Jew in the land.

15.04.08.Q1 Does the word “all” mean the entire Jewish community; every Jew in the land?

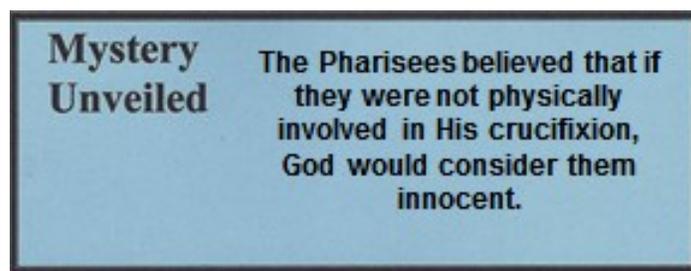
Those who believe that the word “all” refers to every Jew in the land may have difficulty explaining why, in John 8:30, so many put “their faith in Him” but only twenty-nine verses later the same group wanted to stone Him. If this were the case, then a major event that caused the change in public opinion was never recorded in biblical, Jewish, or secular history – and that is highly unlikely.

Yet, later, in Matthew 27:22, the gospel writer said, “They all answered.” Throughout church history, this phrase has often been used to condemn all the Jews because of a single word: *all*. Even today, many well-meaning Christians believe *all* the Jews of Israel condemned Jesus to die. One must ask what had occurred between the time Jesus rode into Jerusalem when everyone praised Him and anticipated He would deliver them from the brutal Romans, and now, when He was standing before Pilate. What could possibly have caused the radical transformation of public opinion, which escaped not only the gospels but also all of the extra-biblical Jewish writings? The answer is – absolutely nothing! If anything had occurred that would have changed public opinion, the gospel

writers would certainly have written about it. Clearly not *all* the Jews were against Jesus, but only *all* those Jews who stood before Pilate.

Consider this train of thought: Did His mother Mary condemn her Son? She was Jewish. How about the disciples? They were also Jewish. What about the hundreds of people He healed and the thousands He fed? And why would all of them have condemned Him to the cross? The common opinion that *all* the Jews of Israel condemned Jesus is obviously not well thought out. The thousands who loved Him were busy with their Passover observances and were probably wondering if He would make an announcement at the temple about being the messiah. They certainly would never have believed He would be tried illegally at night. Yet the very purpose of the night trials was to keep the public ignorant until Jesus was convicted. Therefore, those who responded to Pilate were *not* the same people who praised Jesus when He entered Jerusalem.

That raises the obvious question: Who were *all* the people who demanded the death of Jesus? It was Caiaphas and his small group of temple power brokers who were willing to go to any length to insure that Jesus would not overthrow their positions as the religious establishment.



Because this is an important point, extra detail is hereby given. The word *all* does not always mean exclusively every person, but the definition can include a majority of people who are at a specific place at a specific time. Even though most of the New Testament was written in Greek, the writers were Jews who thought and expressed their ideas like other Jewish people. In Hebrew, the word *kol*, meaning *all* does not always mean every single entity or person, but rather, the majority.⁵⁴⁵

A biblical example of the use of *all* in this sense is found in the account of Saul when he fought the Amalekites. In a battle recorded in 1 Samuel 15:7-8, 20, Saul “totally destroyed with a sword” *all* the Amalekites, yet later they appeared again in 1 Samuel 27:8, 30:1,18, in 2 Samuel 8:12, and in 1 Chronicles 4:43. Did the Scripture writers make a mistake when they said Saul totally destroyed all the Amalekites? No. Saul killed

545. Stern, *Restoring the Jewishness*. 26-27.

all the Amalekites who were on the battlefield, but not the entire people group. Ironically, eventually one of them killed Saul (2 Sam. 1:8-10). Incidentally, Scripture centuries later recorded that the evil Haman was an Agagite (Esther 3:1) but Josephus said he was part of a clan within the larger tribe of Amalekites.⁵⁴⁶

To modern readers, the gospel writers seem to have been a bit loose with the word *all*. Matthew (26:56) and Mark (14:50), both said that *all* the disciples fled when Jesus was crucified. Yet among the last words of Jesus were His instruction to Mary, His mother, who would live out the rest of her life under the care of John. Both stood before Jesus as He died upon the cross. So clearly, the word *all* means a *vast majority*, and not *every single person*.⁵⁴⁷ The gospel writers were not loose with their vocabulary; they just had a broader definition to it.

Another thought to consider is this: the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17 speaks of those who are “in” Jesus as He is “in” God the Father. But that prayer would not make any sense if *all* the Jews were shouting for His crucifixion. Without question, that prayer would be considerably different.

Those who were before Pilate were, at most, a few hundred accusers from the temple leadership. This is supported in the New Testament (Acts 2:23, 36; 1 Thess. 2:14-15) and the Babylonian Talmud.⁵⁴⁸ However, the clearest support for this is from Josephus, who stated that,

Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.3.3 (64)

The term “**principal men**” clearly refers to the Jewish leaders of the temple elite – namely the Sadducees and the family of Caiaphas. Josephus made a point of saying that only a few selected leaders were responsible for the crucifixion, not *all* the Jews. In addition, Luke made a point to record that Joseph of Arimathea was a believer and, although he was member of the Sanhedrin, he did not agree to the plan and action to execute Jesus (Lk. 23:50-51). So clearly, not all members of the high court wanted Jesus dead. Furthermore, if anyone would have understood the times and the environment of

546. Josephus, *Antiquities* 11:6.2-3.

547. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 3:417-18.

548. Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 43a; see 18.03.03.

this major religious event, it would have been Josephus. Concerning Jesus, he added that,

Those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.3.3 (64)

Finally, in His high priestly prayer of John 17, Jesus prayed for Himself (vv. 1-5), then for His disciples (vv. 6-19), and finally for all believers (vv. 20-26). Noteworthy, is the fact that He does not forgive them because they did not commit the sin of demanding that He be crucified – they are “in Him.” They were unaware that the religious leaders tried Jesus in an illegal system of trials until the sun rose and He was on His way to the cross. Then it was too late.

<p>Mystery Unveiled</p>	<p>If all those whom Jesus healed and raised from the dead were demanding His crucifixion, would Jesus have said that they are “in Him” in His high priestly prayer?</p>
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Another example of where a term that appears to be all exclusive, but isn't, is the word *destry* as found in Acts 13:19.⁵⁴⁹ The context of the passage is that Paul is speaking to the men of Israel and gave them a summary of their history. In verse 19 Paul said that God *destroyed* the seven nations of Canaan⁵⁵⁰ and gave the land to the people of Israel as an inheritance. The term *destroyed* can mean that every man, woman, and child was killed, which obviously never happened. In fact, when Jesus multiplied bread and seven baskets of bread were left over, that was symbolic that He is the Provider for the Gentile people.⁵⁵¹ Clearly the word the apostle used was never intended to convey complete annihilation of the various Gentile tribes.

“Barabbas,’ they answered.” The Jewish leaders responded to Pilate’s offer by demanding the release of Barabbas to insure the death of Jesus. It was Barabbas who was a notorious criminal (Mt. 27:16), robber (Jn. 18:40), murderer (Lk. 23:19), and, worst of

549. The King James Version and Holman Christian Standard Bible use the word *destry*. Some other translations use the word *overthrew* which is a better term.

550. Deut. 7:1; Jos. 19:51.

551. See 10.01.25 Mk. 8:1-10; Mt. 15:29-39.

all, an insurrectionist (Mk. 15:7). These qualities were typical of the Zealots of the day, who fought against the Romans whenever possible. However, the word for “robber” in John 18:40 would be better translated as “rebel.” According to Roman law, rebels were crucified whereas robbers were imprisoned or scourged but never crucified. The Romans crushed insurrections without care for the loss of innocent life.

Herein is another amazing irony: It was Barabbas (Heb. *Bar-Abbas*) whose name meant *son of the father*, or *son of the master*.⁵⁵² The Jews chose a counterfeit *son of the father* instead of the true *Son of the Father*. Barabbas was released while Jesus, who was innocent, who raised the dead, and who is the true Son of the Father, died for the sins of Barabbas and everyone else.⁵⁵³ Furthermore, the early Syrian and Armenian gospel manuscripts record his name as Jesus Barabbas.⁵⁵⁴ Barabbas is a metaphor for the crucifixion experience. If those early transcripts are true, then the obvious question is why the name “Jesus” was dropped for the biblical record? The theory is that because the common name of Jesus became so highly honored, no church father desired it to be associated with one who was a killer and Zealot, and therefore, it was dropped. Barabbas was guilty of being anti-Roman in a manner similar to what Jesus was accused of, yet Jesus willingly and peacefully died on the cross that was prepared for the “son of the father.”

Since every male child is a “son of the father,” there is the obvious question of who would give their son such a name. The answer lies in the Jewish culture. In ancient times the local rabbi was seen as the spiritual father and, out of kindness and respect, he was at times called “Father.” This would have been evidenced by the letter “s” at the end of the name, “Barabbas.” Therefore, there is a high probability that Barabbas was the son of a rabbi – a rebellious young man, who brought much shame to his father by,

1. Not following in his father’s footsteps and becoming a rabbi, and
2. Rebelling against the religious system, and
3. By becoming a freedom-fighting Zealot.

Simply said, Barabbas was a son who rebelled against his father and the religious code. In later years, the Zealots started two rebellions of phenomenal significance:

552. Stimpson, *A Book about the Book*. 70.

553. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 427; Kalland, “Abba.” 1:6-7; Rees, “Barabbas.” 1:429.

554. Gilbrant, “Luke.” 673; Barclay, “John.” 2:249; Smith, *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: Matthew*. 320-21.

1. The conflict that resulted in the Roman destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, and
2. The insurrection led by Simon bar Kokhba that caused all Jews and Christians to be exiled from Jerusalem in A.D. 135. The city was destroyed both times.

Finally, Barabbas most certainly looked upon Jesus as the one who saved his life. However, he was just as guilty as were the other two rebels (sometimes called thieves) who were crucified with Jesus. The probability is almost certain that Barabbas and the two thieves had previously fought the Romans together. Romans often executed entire groups of rebels at the same time. Therefore, Barabbas not only saw the one who saved his life, but also his two friends die for the same sins for which he was guilty.

15.04.09 Mt. 27:22-23; Lk. 23:20-23 (See also Mk. 15:12-14)

JESUS' CRUCIFIXION DEMANDED

Mt. ²² Pilate asked them, “What should I do then with Jesus, who is called Messiah?”

They all answered, “Crucify Him!”

²³ Then he said, “Why? What has He done wrong?”

But they kept shouting, “Crucify Him!” all the more.

Lk. ²⁰ Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, ²¹ but they kept shouting, “Crucify! Crucify Him!”

²² A third time he said to them, “Why? What has this man done wrong? I have found in Him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore, I will have Him whipped and then release Him.”

²³ But they kept up the pressure, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And their voices won out. ²⁴ So Pilate decided to grant their demand ²⁵ and released the one they were asking for, who had been thrown into prison for rebellion and murder. But he handed Jesus over to their will.

“What should I do then with Jesus, who is called Messiah?” Pilate specifically referred to Jesus who is called the Messiah. Some translations read, “Jesus, who is called the Christ”⁵⁵⁵ Why? It might be because two of the oldest versions of the New Testament – the ancient Syriac and Armenian versions – present the name of Barabbas as *Jesus bas*. This is supported by two early church fathers, Jerome and Origen, who agreed with the translation.⁵⁵⁶ If true, this is probably the reason why Pilate referred to *Jesus, who is called Messiah* or *the Christ* in Matthew 27:17 and again in 27:22. It should be noted that Jesus was a common name, as were the names Matthew and Simon.

“They all answered.” Due to the significance of understanding the term *all*, please see comments in 15.04.08.Q1 above – “Does the word “all” mean the entire Jewish community; every Jew in the land?”

“Crucify! Crucify Him,” Literally, “crucify him, crucify him.” The Jewish leadership not only wanted Jesus dead, they wanted Him cursed because the Mosaic Law stated that anyone who was “hung from a tree” was cursed (Deut. 21:22-23). This method of execution was reserved for the worst of criminals, including Zealots, who frequently rebelled against Roman authority. While the Assyrians, Phoenicians, Greeks, and the Persians all practiced a form of crucifixion in the first millennium B.C., the Romans popularized it.

15.04.09.Q1 Would God punish all people because of the decision of their leaders?

The leader of a nation directs its prosperity, peace, and even its cultural changes. The position of a king or national leadership is extremely important in the eyes of God. When the Sadducees had Jesus crucified, they cast the direction the Jewish people would take for centuries to come. Their own Hebrew Bible is full of historical accounts that preserved the results of poor leadership decisions. Note these examples:

1. When the Pharaoh of Egypt took Sarah into his court, his household got sick (Gen. 12:17).
2. When Abimelech planned to take Sarah, all the women in his household became infertile (Gen. 20:18).
3. Centuries later the Pharaoh’s sinful decision not to permit the Israelites to leave

555. The terms *Messiah* and *Christ* both mean *Anointed One*.

556. Barclay, “Matthew.” 2:361.

Egypt resulted in numerous plagues upon his people, the deaths of all “first borns,” his own death, and the loss of thousands of Egyptian soldiers (Ex. 9 - 12).

4. When Moses sent out spies into Canaan only two returned with a favorable report, yet everyone had to endure forty years of wandering aimlessly through the desert. Why? It was because they had made a decision against the desires of the Lord.

5. When the Philistine soldiers took the Ark of the Covenant, their families and neighbors developed cancer tumors (I Sam. 5:6; 6:1-12).

6. When King David disobeyed the Lord and took a census, he had the unusual choice of three punishments: famine, conquest, or a plague. He chose a plague and seventy thousand of his citizens died (2 Sam. 24:10-15; 1 Ch. 21:7-14).

7. When Joshua and the Israelites captured the city of Ai, a certain man by the name of Achan stole silver and other valuables in disobedience to the Lord’s command. As a result, he and 36 other individuals of his family perished (Jos. 6:16-26).

The consequences of the decisions of a king upon his people are proverbial. The writer of Proverbs 29:4 said, “By justice a king gives a country stability.” The Sanhedrin, which served as Israel’s legislative body as well as its supreme court, failed to mete out godly decisions and justice which eventually led to increased instability that resulted in destruction.

It should be stated that the converse is also true. When the careless Jews failed to examine and purify themselves prior to Passover (2 Ch. 30:18-19), the righteous king Hezekiah prayed that God would pardon those who failed to purify themselves. The result of one godly king was that, “and God heard Hezekiah and healed the people” (2 Ch. 30:20). Passover, like communion, is a highly important soul-searching event. The Apostle Paul said death would come upon some who took communion lightly (1 Cor. 11:27-30). The decisions of a national leader can be either a blessing or a curse upon the people. It is a principle of life.

15.04.10 Lk. 23:24-25 (See also Mt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15; Jn. 19:16)

BARABBAS IS RELEASED

²⁴ So Pilate decided to grant their demand ²⁵ and released the one they were

asking for, who had been thrown into prison for rebellion and murder. But he handed Jesus over to their will.

“He handed Jesus over to their will.” The words of condemnation are not recorded in the gospels, but the customary declaration of death by crucifixion was spoken in Latin *Ibis in crucem!* Meaning “You mount the cross!”⁵⁵⁷ This degrading and most horrible death was never permitted for a Roman citizen.

Mystery Unveiled Most, if not all, Jewish people were unaware of the illegal trials of Jesus until it was too late. Otherwise they probably would have rioted for His release.

The dye was cast; the sentence was ordered; Jesus was ordered to “mount the cross.” More than three years earlier He began by His ministry with profound but simple sermons. A few people listened, but then the audiences grew. A few men of simple but various backgrounds accepted the opportunity to be the disciples of Someone who was uniquely different from other rabbis.

Then there was the profound miracle at Cana, followed by a few more miracles and then more disciples – a closed fellowship of a dozen. But when the blind were healed and demons were cast out; when bread and fishes were multiplied to feed thousands; He was the talk of the Middle East. For nearly the entire Inter-Testamental period – four hundred years – people had been anticipating a messiah who would give them the freedom they longed for. Certainly, they thought, this Man must be Him.

Another issue was the three messianic miracles. For centuries people asked their rabbis why lepers were not healed, how could the demons be cast out of a deaf and mute person if the exorcist could not speak to him, and healing someone who was born blind? All three conditions were assumed to be the result of the judgment of God, and only God could restore these people to their health. So when Jesus healed them, people were absolutely awestruck! Yet to them, Jesus was a man just like they were. They wondered how could He perform such God-like miracles. They could not accept the fact that the performance of these miracles was a profound statement that proclaimed His deity. And as if that was not enough, a greater miracle was in the forecast.

557. Pixner, *With Jesus in Jerusalem*. 135.

When Lazarus died, his body was in the grave four days before Jesus arrived on the scene. It was an assumed fact of life that the soul lingered around a body for three days after death, but after the face was decomposed, the soul left. So when Jesus raised Lazarus on the fourth day of death, He definitely demonstrated an act of God – restoring life to someone who was dead, dead, dead! No wonder everyone gathered palm and tree branches to greet Him as a King!

It was the common opinion that the messiah would announce his messiahship from the temple at Passover. When Jesus made His triumphal entry, it was on Passover – just what the people were expecting. The air was tense with excitement and anticipation for the common people, but equally fearful for the religious establishment with whom Jesus had numerous conflicts. They had to prevent a declaration of messiahship by Jesus by every means possible. But they were limited because of His incredible popularity – and it was only a few days until Passover.

But the Sadducees and leading Pharisees had a major problem: Their “man of the hour” was none other than Judas Iscariot. He was willing to betray Jesus so they could convene a last-minute late night court, obtain a guilty verdict, and convince the Romans to have Him crucified. When the people woke up on Friday morning and heard what happened during the night, they were devastated. They killed the Miracle-worker; the Man who healed the blind, the lame and those with hundreds of other ailments; they killed the Man of Promise in whom they had placed their hope for a bright future and a better tomorrow; they killed the One who people thought would overthrow the Roman occupation and re-establish the ancient Davidic Empire. Everyone was devastated. They wondered where was God in all this?⁵⁵⁸

But then came Sunday morning. Hallelujah! And the world was turned upside down.

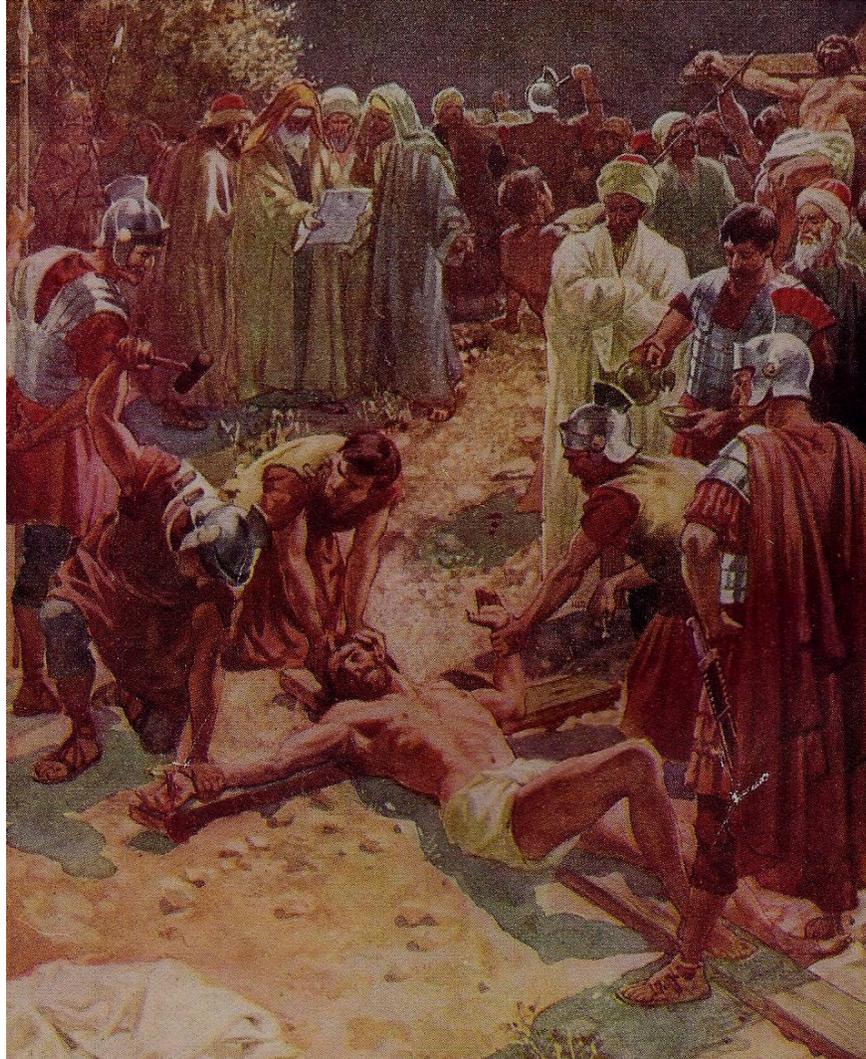
558. See 17.02.03.B “The Popularity – Time Chart of the Ministry of Jesus.”

Unit 16

The Crucifixion And Burial Of Jesus

Chapter 01

The Crucifixion



16.01.00.A. THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS. Artwork by William Hole of the Royal Scottish Academy of Art, 1876. Historically, prisoners were nailed first to the cross-beam because the post was already secured in the ground. Four soldiers then lifted the cross-beam and set it on the top of the post, after which the prisoner's feet were nailed to the sides of the post. Therefore, the typical artistic rendering of Jesus nailed to

the crossbeam and post, as shown above, is inaccurate. The dying process was so severely painful, that the English word “excruciating,” meaning “out of the cross,” originated from it.

16.01.01 Introduction

Scourging was the legal preliminary to crucifixion.⁵⁵⁹ The pain of this affliction was so severe that prisoners often died in the process. In the case of Jesus, the severity of the scourging was so severe that He was unable to carry His cross to the crucifixion site. Furthermore, not only was He scourged, but He was mocked by soldiers who played the ancient “King’s Game” as described below.

16.01.02 Jn. 19:1; Mt. 27:27-30 (See also Mk. 15:16-19)

JESUS HUMILIATED WITH SARCASTIC KINGSHIP

Jn. ¹ Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him flogged.

Mt. ²⁷ Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into headquarters and gathered the whole company around Him. ²⁸ They stripped Him and dressed Him in a scarlet military robe. ²⁹ They twisted together a crown of thorns, put it on His head, and placed a reed in His right hand. And they knelt down before Him and mocked Him: “Hail, King of the Jews!” ³⁰ Then they spit on Him, took the reed, and kept hitting Him on the head.

“Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him flogged.” Prisoners who were to be crucified were first flogged, although floggings were not always followed by a crucifixion.⁵⁶⁰ Josephus recorded that Florus, procurator of Judea in A.D. 66, had many people brought before him, “Whom he first chastised with stripes and then crucified.”⁵⁶¹

At this point it may be worthwhile to consider who the soldiers were who performed this action. The fact is that the Jewish nation was the *only* nation in the Roman Empire where men were not required to serve in the military. A number of rebellions and a basic understanding of Jewish beliefs were all the Romans needed to realize that Jews within their military units could be potentially dangerous. Soldiers of the Tenth Roman Legion

559. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 2:277.

560. See also 14.01.04.Q2, “What was the difference between Jewish and Roman scourges?”

561. Josephus, *Wars* 2.14.9.

came from a number of different countries; but none from any Jewish community.

Floggings or Scourgings

There were two kinds of floggings, a/k/a scourgings: Jewish and Roman.

1. The Jews flogged a criminal only 39 times (Deut. 25:1-3). When the Jews scourged the Apostle Paul five times, he survived because he received 39 stripes each time. These were not floggings unto death.
2. The Romans, however, had no limit to their floggings and a prisoner would often die under the scourge (see 16.01.02.A). When they flogged Jesus, Isaiah's prediction was fulfilled when said that He no longer resembled a man.

The differences between Roman and Jewish are described in further detail below. But it is because of the brutal Roman scourging that Jesus received, that Isaiah said that He no longer could be looked upon.

**^{2b} He didn't have an impressive form
Or majesty that we should look at Him,
No appearance that we should desire Him.
³ He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of suffering who knew what sickness was.**

**He was like someone one people turned away from;
He was despised, and we didn't value Him.
⁴ Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses,
and He carried our pains;
But we in turn regarded Him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.**

Isaiah 53:2b-4

**¹³ See, My Servant will act wisely; He will be raised
and lifted up and greatly exalted.
¹⁴ Just as many were appalled at You --
His appearance was so disfigured
That He did not look like a man,
And His form did not resemble a human being --**

Isaiah 52:13-14

Roman and Jewish Floggings or Scourgings⁵⁶²

Technically, a beating was known as a *fustigation*, a flogging was known as a *flagellation*, and a scourging was known as a *verberatio*.⁵⁶³ Because the definitions of these terms overlap, the punishments imposed upon prisoners were seldom written precisely. What is known is that the pain and agony was horrific.

The act was performed by two soldiers, known as *lictors*, one on either side of the criminal, who was either tied over a post or stretched with chains between two stone pillars. The short flogging whip, known as a *flagrum* or *flagellum*, consisted generally of a round wooden handle to which three strips of leather were attached, each about three to five feet long. Attached to each leather strip were three or more iron barbs, some sharp bones, lead or iron balls and, therefore, was known as the “cat ‘o nine tails.” When the criminal was flogged the barbs and bones would literally tear the flesh like fish hooks. The *lictors* struck the back, buttocks, and legs. When they pulled back with the wooden handle, the barbs tore the flesh, exposing ribbons of bleeding, quivering muscle tissue, sometimes removing chunks of flesh while the prisoner screamed in agony. At this point the pain was so intense that the criminal often passed out or died while tied to a post. Water was then thrown on him to determine if he was dead or alive. If still alive, he was revived so the process could be continued. The water shocked the body, and even more so if it was salt water from the Mediterranean or Dead Sea. Everyone who endured this punishment had the muscle tissue of the entire back and buttocks exposed.

As previously stated, the Romans had absolutely no respect for the Jews or Jewish laws, and in fact, most hated them. Therefore, it is unknown how many times the Romans applied the scourging to Jesus, but the fact that He died within six hours of being crucified and that His appearance was grossly disfigured (Isa. 52:13-15), gives clear evidence that His scourgings exceeded thirty-nine. According to those who examined the *Shroud of Turin*, the traditional cloth that covered the body of Jesus while He lay in the tomb, He was scourged approximately 120 times. Furthermore, the *lictors* who played “the King’s Game” earlier, most likely scourged Jesus all the more because they were aware of His Kingdom teachings. Little wonder then, that with the huge loss of blood and pain endured beyond what other executed prisoners endured, Pilate was surprised by His quick death.

562. For further study of the crucifixion process and how the ancients understood it, see Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross*.

563. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 387.

The large amount of blood loss at this point, along with the intense pain brought on by circulatory shock, generally determined how long the criminal would survive on the cross.⁵⁶⁴ Jesus was at this point weakened by physical punishment. He was abandoned by friends and disciples and suffering from the lack of food, sleep, and water. His mental condition was as painful as His physical condition. At this point He endured His greatest blood loss. The cross was so cruel that the Romans themselves eventually came to the same opinion and abolished its use in the year 315.

Jewish Floggings or Scourgings

It is often said by some modern commentators that when scourging Jesus, the lictors took alternate turns thirteen times for a maximum of thirty-nine stripes (forty minus one; cf Deut. 25:1-3). When the Apostle Paul was scourged by the Jews, he was whipped thirty-nine times (2 Cor. 11:24). However, the limit and method of stripes was in accordance with Jewish law. Two-thirds of the lashes were to be placed on the back and one-third on the front. All striking took place with the recipient bent over a post or stretched out between two pillars.⁵⁶⁵

16.01.02.Q1 Should the false Jewish witnesses have been scourged?

According to Oral Law of the Pharisees, if the testimony of a false witness led to an innocent person being scourged 39 times, that false witness was subject to 80 scourgings. But Jesus was before the Sanhedrin and the Sadducees who had their own penal code that was considerably harsher than that of the Pharisees.⁵⁶⁶ The Sadducees demanded that false witnesses be put to death while the Pharisees permitted punishment by eighty scourgings.⁵⁶⁷ There apparently was no law concerning a false witness whose testimony resulted in a Roman scourging. The false witnesses who testified against Jesus appear not to have been punished at all. According to the Oral Law, which the Pharisees defended so dearly, if several witnesses said:

We testify that such-a-one is liable to suffer the forty stripes, and they are found (to be) false witnesses, they must suffer eighty stripes by virtue of the law, “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor” (Ex. 20:16)

564. Edwards, Gabel, and Hosmer. "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ." 1457.

565. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 173-74.

566. Megillah, *Taanith* 10; Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 127. This may explain why the Sadducees were before Pilate demanding a crucifixion before Pilate, and the Pharisees are not mentioned.

567. Mishnah, *Makkoth* 1.3 and 1.5; See 15.03.07.

and also by virtue of the law, “Then do to him as he intended to do to his brother” (Deut. 10:10).

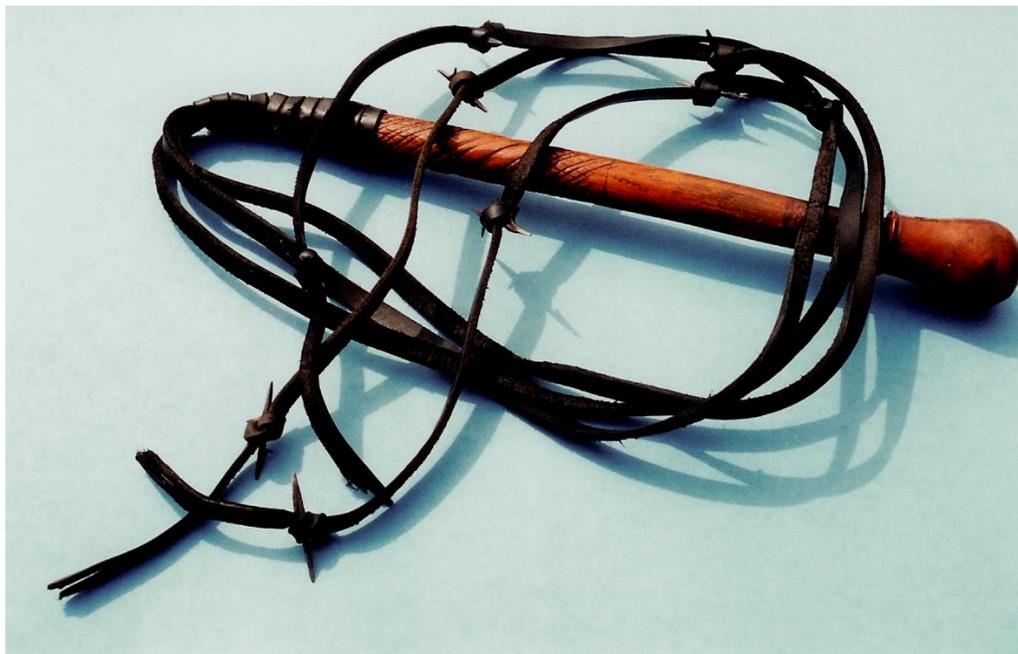
Mishnah, *Makkoth* 1.3

The Oral Law further condemned false witnesses to death, if the result of their testimony caused the death of an innocent victim. Clearly, the false witnesses who stood before Caiaphas should have received death sentences, and at least, they should have been punished with 80 stripes.

If yet others came and proved false the evidence of these others, and yet others came and proved their evidence false, even if (there came) a hundred (pairs of witnesses to prove false the evidence to them that went before), they must all be put to death. Rabbi Judah says: This would be a conspiracy: but the first pair alone are put to death.

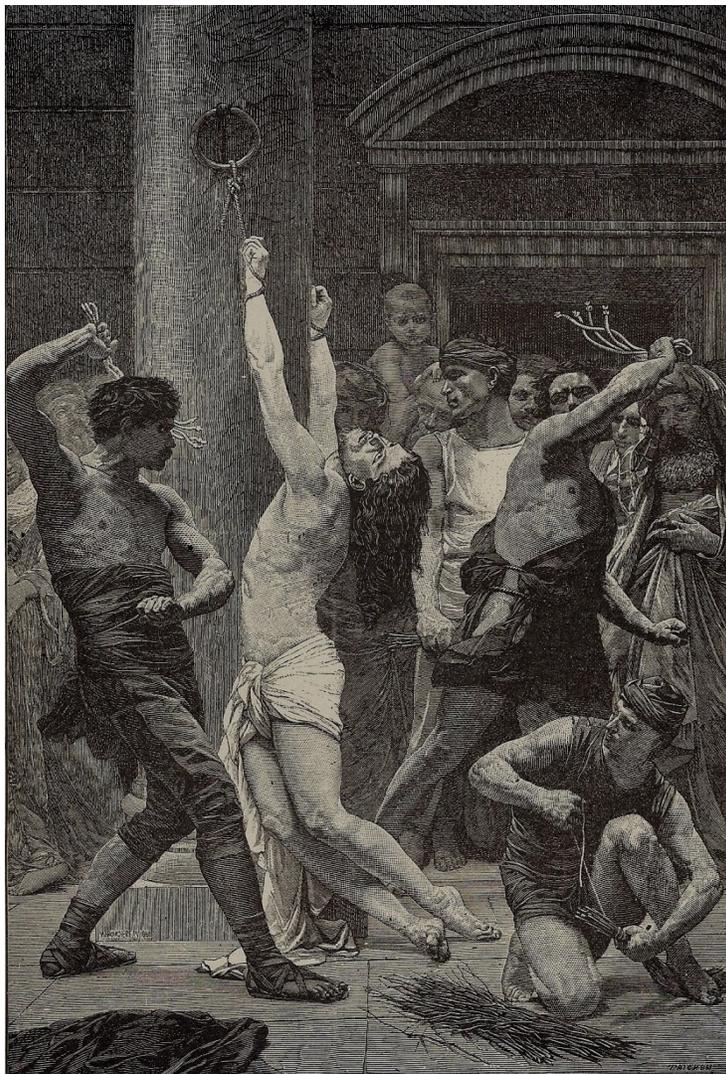
Mishnah, *Makkoth* 1.5⁵⁶⁸

Yet a mere four decades later, those who condemned Jesus were condemned by their own law. When the Romans destroyed the temple, they massacred the leading Pharisees and every Sadducee.



568. Parenthesis by Danby, ed., *Mishnah*.

16.01.02.A. A RECONSTRUCTED ROMAN FLOGGING WHIP WITH IRON BARBS. A whip with iron spurs was an instrument of immense brutality. It consisted of a turned wooden handle with three long leather thongs, each with three or more knots. In each knot was a bone or iron barb. The objective was to scourge the prisoner and have barbs and bone hooks tear into flesh. Jesus would have been whipped many times with a flogging/scourging whip like this one. It should be noted that the Romans did not have any limitation to scourging. The restriction of thirty-nine lashes was the legal limit observed only when Jews scourged (without the spurs) other Jews.⁵⁶⁹ Reproduced by Thomas C. Moore. Photograph by the author.



569. Liefeld, "Prison, Prisoner." 4:869-70; Knapp, "Prison." 3:975.

16.01.02.B. AN ILLUSTRATION OF A CRIMINAL BEING FLOGGED by T. DeWitt Talmage, 1881. A criminal was stripped, tied to a post, and then scourged. The Romans had specific directions on how to flog or scourge a prisoner in order to create the maximum pain and suffering.

16.01.02.Q2 What was the game *King of a Day*?

Soldiers had a cruel way of tormenting their prisoners before crucifying them. They dressed each of them like a king and mockingly worshiped and obeyed him. It was so popular throughout the empire that their game was known as *King of a Day* or the *Game of the King*. The latter game generally connected with the Feast of Saturn, or whenever a prisoner was to be executed. The feast lasted four or five days, during which time a prisoner was chosen to be the king of the feast. During the feast, he could do whatever he desired, although with some limitations. He was given a crown, a red vest, and a staff. He pretended to be a king and enjoyed the proverbial wine, women, and song. However, at the end of the feast, he had to kill himself on the altar of Saturn and his possessions were distributed. Scholars believe the dice game inscribed in the floor and the actions of mockery by the soldiers were associated with that game.⁵⁷⁰ A similar game was found to have been inscribed in a pavement stone in Sepphoris. The shorter version was known as *King for a Day*. It too was a game of mockery, but at the end of the day the prisoner was crucified.

“Headquarters and gathered the whole company.” The headquarters was the Praetorium or possibly the courtyard that surrounded the Praetorium. The whole company of soldiers was those soldiers who were members of a single unit and standard called a *manipulus*.⁵⁷¹

Soldiers mocked Jesus – scarlet robe

“Dressed Him in a scarlet military robe.” They **“put a scarlet robe on him”**⁵⁷² and mocked him, as if He were an emperor. Roman soldiers understood loyalty and devotion to Caesar, emperor of Rome. Therefore, when they heard Jesus speaking of Himself as a king and His theme of the Kingdom of God, they mocked him accordingly. His

570. Information is from a placard in the Convent of the Sisters of Zion.

571. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:231.

572. John identifies the color as being purple (19:2). This is not a conflict, as at times the royal colors of scarlet and purple are blended, and the identification is in the eyes of the observer. The colors were seldom pure scarlet or pure purple.

reputation followed Him to this persecution and death. They placed a scarlet soldier's robe on Him that imitated the king's robe (Mt. 27:28).⁵⁷³ This robe was not a full-length garment, but one that draped over the shoulders and barely came down to the waist. They stripped Jesus of His garments. Nothing could have been more humiliating before these mocking soldiers than wearing only a loincloth, assuming it was not taken off, and a short scarlet robe that hardly covered the upper torso. They purposefully made Him look ridiculous so they could mock Him.

There are several references to the scarlet robes worn by kings and military commanders. The earliest is thought to have been written in 440 B.C. by Herodotus (c. 484-425 B.C.), the world's first historian. He wrote how Darius, a young army officer, was excited to acquire a scarlet robe of the Samian exiles.⁵⁷⁴

Then, taking the purple robe, he [Darius] asked them what it was, and how it had been made. They answered truly, telling him concerning the purple, and the art of the dyer- whereat he observed "that the men were deceitful, and their garments also."

Herodotus, *The Histories* 3:139⁵⁷⁵

Well, deceitful or not, the original owner of the scarlet robe gave it to Darius, and when Darius ascended to the throne, he wore the robe and rewarded the one who gave it to him. Another reference to a small royal purple or scarlet robe was mentioned at the time of the Maccabean Revolt. Note the honor given to the one who was given the robe.

King Alexander to his brother Jonathan, greeting. We have heard about you, that you are a mighty warrior and worthy to be our friend. And so we have appointed you today to be the high priest of your nation; you are to be called the king's friend (and he sent you a purple robe and a golden crown) and you are to take our side and keep friendship with us.

***1 Maccabees* 10:18-20⁵⁷⁶**

573. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 37; Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*. 384.

574. An event in ancient Greek history.

575. *The History of Herodotus* Trans. by George Rawlinson. <http://classics.mit.edu/Herodotus/history.3.iii.html> Retrieved November 30, 2013.

576. First and 2nd Maccabees belong to a classification of extra-biblical books known as the Apocrypha. These two literary works are deemed highly reliable historically. See 02.02.03 "Apocrypha" for more information.

When Jonathan received his purple robe and crown, he received his kingdom. The Romans mocked Jesus with a robe and crown concerning the Kingdom of God that He had preached. Concerning the phrase, “**crown of thorns,**” the term *crown* (Gk. *stephanos* 4735) denotes a *victor’s crown* or *king’s crown*. Since every king wears a crown as a symbol of his office, power, and prestige, Jesus was also given a crown of thorns and mocked again. His crown was made from the branches of a thorny tree that produces thorns two to three inches long. The points are extremely sharp and to make a crown is still an arduous and sometimes painful task. In the Old Testament, thorns are symbolic of punishment⁵⁷⁷ and the Adamic curse (Gen. 3). The crown of thorns reflects the Adamic curse that Jesus took upon Himself.

As a crown, its mockery was a reflection of when an emperor took official position in the government. On coronation day, a new monarch was honored with a golden crown, or a winning athlete receives a crown of olive branches upon his head.⁵⁷⁸ Cyril of Jerusalem made this observation regarding the crown of thorns:

Adam received the sentence, “Cursed is the ground in your labors; thorns and thistles will it bring forth to you.” For this cause Jesus assumes the thorns, that He may cancel the sentence; for this cause also was He buried in the earth, that the earth, which had been cursed, might receive a blessing instead of a curse.

Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*⁵⁷⁹

The crown of thorns not only inflicted mockery and shame, but also pain. When the long thorns pricked through the nerves around the skull, the result was a pain in the form of a lightning bolt. It was so severe, that some prisoners who were not condemned to death, but received the crown, committed suicide.⁵⁸⁰

577. Num. 33:55; Judg. 2:3; Prov. 22:5.

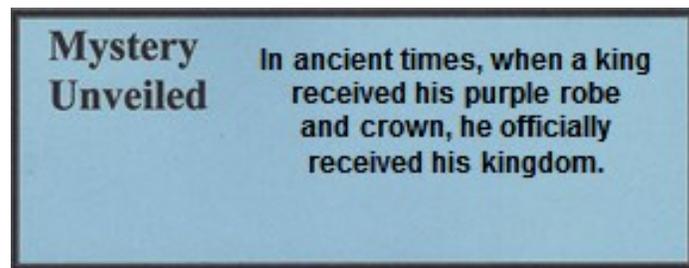
578. Packer and Tenney, eds., *Illustrated Manners*. 261-62; Vos, “Crown.” 1:1039-40; Raffety, “Crown.” 1:831-32.

579. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Patristic Quotations: From 50 – 750 A.D.* 76.

580. Dauer, *How Jesus Died: The Final 18 Hours*. (Video).



16.01.02.C. A CROWN OF THORNS. The author made a crown of thorns from a thorny tree growing near the Dead Sea. Its woody thorns are rigid and easily puncture the skin. A crown like this was placed upon Jesus. Photograph by the author.



“Placed a reed in His right hand.” Some translations use the word *cepter* or *staff* in place of *reed*. Regardless, what was placed in His right hand was symbolic of authority. Furthermore, the right hand was also symbolic of authority as well as blessing. Centurions and other officials often carried a staff or vinestick as a sign of rank.⁵⁸¹ Clearly, this was part of a planned mockery – one that many others suffered through was well.

The mocking of prisoners and the disadvantaged

Prisoners and others, who were disadvantaged for whatever reason, were in an absolutely

581. Juvenal, *Satire* 8:247; Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 2:527.

powerless position and were often mocked, as if they had ultimate royal power and authority. The mockery of Jesus was similar to what many others faced. Below is an account of a mentally-challenged man who was mocked as being a king – an effigy of King Agrippa.

According to Philo of Alexandria, on July 28, A.D. 38, Herod Agrippa visited Alexandria, Egypt on an imperial mission from the Roman Emperor Caius Caligula. When Agrippa arrived, he was grossly insulted by some teenagers, and the Roman governor of Egypt, Aulus Avilius Flaccus, did nothing to punish them. In essence, Flaccus said that a group of teenagers (called “youngsters”) took a mentally ill man named Karabas, dressed him up like a king, and played a cruel game of honoring him as if he was Herod Agrippa. In fact, the Egyptian governor seemed to enjoy it. Philo wrote the following account:

³⁶ Now there was a lunatic named Karabas, whose madness was not of the wild and savage kind, against which neither the madmen themselves nor those in their vicinity can protect themselves, but of the more relaxed and gentler variant. He spent both day and night naked on the streets, not discouraged by heat or cold, a plaything of the children and the youngsters who were idling about.

³⁷ Together they drove this poor man into the gymnasium and placed him there on a platform so that he could be seen by everyone. On his head they spread out a piece of papyrus for a diadem and clothed the rest of his body with a doormat for a robe; and someone who had seen a small piece of native papyrus lying on the street, gave it to him for a scepter.

³⁸ And then, as in the theatrical mime, he had been dressed up like a king and received the insignia of kingship, young men, bearing sticks on their shoulders as if they were carrying spears, stood on either side of him in imitation of bodyguards. Then others approached him, some as if to salute him, others as if to plead their case before him, again others as if to consult him about the affairs of the state.

³⁹ Then there arose a strange sound from among the multitude of those standing around him: They called him “Marin” – which is said to be the world for “Lord” in Syriac – for they knew that [King] Agrippa not only was by birth Syrian but also ruled as a king over a great part of Syria.

⁴⁰When Flaccus heard, or rather saw all this, he should not only have

arrested the madman and put him in prison, in order to prevent him from giving opportunity to the revilers to insult their superiors, but he should also have punished the ones responsible for dressing him up like that, for they had dared in both deeds and words, both openly and indirectly, to insult someone who was a king and a friend of Caesar, someone who had been honored by the Senate of Rome with the praetorian insignia. But not only did he not punish them, he did not even think fit to restrain them, but he gave license and impunity to all whose who were so malevolent and malicious, and he pretended not to see what he did see and not to hear what he did hear.

Philo, *Against Flaccus* 36-40⁵⁸²

However, on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea, Rome was not about to tolerate the laxness of Flaccus. Early in October of A.D. 38, Emperor Caligula sent a Roman officer to arrest Flaccus. The mockery of Karabas was obviously not focused on him alone, but also on King Agrippa. Likewise, the mockery of Jesus was not focused on Him alone, but also upon all those who were His followers, as well as upon the God of the Jews.

“Kept hitting Him on the head.” To hit anyone on the head, meaning the cheek, signified the greatest dishonor, insult, and humiliation. Those who did so to a king or someone in the king’s family were certain to be killed; it was a capital crime.

16.01.03 Jn. 19:4-6

PILATE PRESENTS JESUS

⁴ Pilate went outside again and said to them, “Look, I’m bringing Him outside to you to let you know I find no grounds for charging Him.”

⁵ Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!”

582. Boring, Berger, and Colpe, eds. *Hellenistic Commentary to the New Testament*. 303-304. See also <http://www.bible.org/docs/nt/books/mar/jewishhb.htm>, Retrieved July 25, 2001; as well as http://books.google.com/books?id=PQu2usF-cEYC&pg=PA46&clpg=PA46&dq=philo+against+flaccus&source=bl&ots=6L1PfsYRCz&sig=JvE_QHJrUtqMIFGUpuFX3FIK6s&hl=en&sa=X&ei=43lrUPidFo2B0QGz_IGoDw&sqi=2&ved=0CEoQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=philo%20against%20flaccus&f=false Retrieved October 2, 2012.

6 When the chief priests and the temple police saw Him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!”

Pilate responded, “Take Him and crucify Him yourselves, for I find no grounds for charging Him.”

“Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.” The crown and robe together were symbols of kings, obviously used now in mockery. Kings and wealthy aristocrats wore fine linen and purple or scarlet garments to display power, wealth, and prestige.

Purple dye was made from the secretions of four seashells creatures⁵⁸³ that lived along the eastern Mediterranean coast. The dye masters of Tyre created variations of purple or scarlet by mixing the secretions. Since a large number of creatures⁵⁸⁴ were needed for the production of a small quantity of dye, the process was labor intensive and expensive.⁵⁸⁵ This not only was insulting to Jesus, but also to the Jewish people.

“When the chief priests and the temple police saw Him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!” The passage clearly states those who called for the crucifixion were the chief priests (Sadducees) and their police assistants. Pilate again brought out Jesus and told the crowds that he found Him innocent, the fourth such announcement. By this time Jesus had been beaten severely and was exhausted from repeated punishments. When Pilate said, “Here is the man,” it was to strike a chord of compassion and pity among the Jews when they looked upon a Man who had already suffered so much. However, the Sadducees were void of any compassion or pity. Again, Pilate said, “I find no basis for a charge against him,” the fifth declaration of innocence. But they just wanted Him crucified.

16.01.04 Jn. 19:7-11

JESUS QUESTIONED AGAIN

583. The four types of molluscs are known by the names of *belix ianthina*, *murex brandaris*, *murex trunculus*, and *purpura lapillus*.

584. It has been estimated that 8,000 molluscs were needed to produce 1 gram of dye. See Irvin, “Purple.” 1057.

585. Irvin, “Purple.” 1057. According to Josephus, large quantities of purple (or scarlet) fabric were required for the temple curtains which were replaced every few years (*Wars* 6.8.3 (390)). Some scholars believe that the purple (or scarlet) robe placed on Jesus (Mt. 27:28) was a soldier’s cloak.

⁷ **“We have a law,” the Jews replied to him, “and according to that law He must die, because He made Himself the Son of God.”**

⁸ **When Pilate heard this statement, he was more afraid than ever. ⁹ He went back into the headquarters and asked Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus did not give him an answer. ¹⁰ So Pilate said to Him, “You’re not talking to me? Don’t You know that I have the authority to release You and the authority to crucify You?”**

¹¹ **“You would have no authority over Me at all,” Jesus answered him, “if it hadn’t been given you from above. This is why the one who handed Me over to you has the greater sin.”**

“He made Himself the Son of God.” The Jews had a serious problem with anyone who claimed deity, especially if claimed by a Jew. Such claims brought to mind the horrific experiences two centuries earlier by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (170-165 B.C.) who not only claimed to be a god, but unmercifully persecuted the Jews.⁵⁸⁶ Furthermore, to claim deity was a violation of the Mosaic Law, since no man was to be worshiped. Obviously, if Jesus was God, He was to be worshiped. The Romans, on the other hand, did not have such a problem with divine humanity.

Emperors considered themselves gods, just as the pharaohs of Egypt had done centuries earlier. Any son of an emperor was considered to be a son of a god. Pilate most certainly looked at the homely Jesus and knew He was not a son of an emperor. To Pilate, for a man to call himself such was sheer folly, yet he knew Jesus had character traits that were most honorable. No doubt, he must have considered what would happen to him if he did condemn this Holy Man to die. Furthermore, his wife warned him of a dream and said that he should have nothing to do with this Jesus. His life was in turmoil and there seemed to be no easy escape. He failed to have the courage to do what was right.

16.01.05 Jn. 19:12-15 Before Pilate in the Antonia Fortress, adjacent to the Temple

PLAY ON PILATE’S LOYALTY

¹² **From that moment Pilate made every effort to release Him. But the Jews shouted, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Anyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar!”**

586. See Chronological History from 200 B.C. (03.04.15) to 162 B.C. (03.04.24).

¹³ When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside. He sat down on the judge’s bench in a place called the Stone Pavement (but in Hebrew *Gabbatha*). ¹⁴ It was the preparation day for the Passover, and it was about six in the morning. Then he told the Jews, “Here is your king!”

¹⁵ But they shouted, “Take Him away! Take Him away! Crucify Him!”

Pilate said to them, “Should I crucify your king?”

“We have no king but Caesar!” the chief priests answered.

The Jewish leaders had an exhausting night and now it was 9:00 in the morning. With Passover nearly upon them, they were relentless and modified their tactics. Previously they sailed twice to Rome and complained to the emperor about the cruel treatment and persecution afforded them by Pilate. He did not want to hear this current accusation because he feared that they would again sail to Rome and tell the emperor he had released a dangerous revolutionary who called himself “king.” This would most certainly cost him his throne. One radical Jew, however innocent, was not worth the risk.

“You are not Caesar’s friend.” The phrase, “friend of Caesar” ⁵⁸⁷ was by no means a casual acquaintance. It was a technical term, *philokaisar*, used to honor loyal senators, prominent soldiers, and outstanding administrators.⁵⁸⁸ It was a term envied by every Roman official. This title was reserved for those whom Caesar honored, and such an individual was destined to have a bright future in the empire. It meant that a special allegiance existed with the most powerful man on the face of the earth.⁵⁸⁹ What the religious leaders were essentially saying was, “If you let this man go free, you are not Caesar’s friend” and, at this time, that was pure blackmail. Not to have been a friend of Caesar reflects the frequent manipulation of the treason law for political ends in Roman public life. It reflects upon the notable political Latin term – *Caesaris amicus* – to enforce its point.⁵⁹⁰ Philo used the same term in the same manner in his works *In Flaccum*.⁵⁹¹ Obviously, it was a *very* serious accusation.

587. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 418; Bruce, *New Testament History*. 32-33; See also 03.06.25; 15.04.02.

588. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 369.

589. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 431-32; Harrison, *A Short Life of Christ*. 215.

590. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*. 47.

591. Philo, *In Flaccum*. 2.40.

The Sanhedrin manipulated and played upon the emotions of Pilate. They knew that in the previous year he had come under heavy scorn from Emperor Tiberius because he placed some shields with engraved images on the walls of Herod's palace.⁵⁹² These engraved images offended the Jews. Their outrage was so strong that eventually Rome heard of the commotion. The Romans wanted only peace and taxes; they cared little about religion. Hence, Pilate was commanded not to offend them needlessly or he would face possible dismissal. The Sadducees, knowing that Pilate feared dismissal, accused him of not being, "a friend of Caesar."⁵⁹³ His fear of Rome would prove to be greater than his fear of God or the Roman gods.

The tyranny of Pilate did not escape the pen of Philo, who recorded some astounding actions of the Roman governor. In his work titled, *Legation to Caius*, he related a story of the shield that had an image engraved on it, which Pilate attempted to hang in the temple. This was the cause of great confrontation between the Jews and Pilate, and he was willing to use Roman might to accomplish his goal. However, the Jews were willing to die en masse to protect their religion, maintain their tradition, and thereby forced him to rescind his decree. There is no question that he would have eagerly killed them except that he feared rebuke from the emperor. Consequently, he vented his anger against the Jews in every other conceivable manner. Therefore, immediately after this account, Philo attributed rape, murder, insult, and inhumanity to Pilate. He states:

But this last sentence exasperated him in the greatest possible degree, as he feared that they might in reality go on an embassy to the emperor, and might impeach him with respect to the other particulars of his government, in respect of his corruption and his habit of insulting people, and his cruelty, and his continual murders of people untried and uncondemned, and his never ending and gratuitous and most grievous inhumanity.

Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius* 38⁵⁹⁴

In light of statements like this, it is amazing that Pilate even considered kindness toward Jesus. No doubt this unusual kindness was noticed by Jewish believers when they reflected upon the time their leaders had Jesus crucified and realized that one of the most wicked governors could not find fault with Him. This only increases the guilt of those

592. Some scholars argue that this occurred in the year A.D. 31-32, which, in this writer's opinion, would have been after the death of Jesus. See Webb, "The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus." 719-21.

593. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 468-69; See John 19:12; 03.06.25; 15.04.02; 16.01.05.

594. Yonge, C. D., ed. and trans. *The Works of Philo. Legation to Caius* also known as "On the Embassy to Gaius," a chapter of *The Works of Philo*. 784.

Sadducees, scribes, and elders who were instrumental in His death.

To add pressure on Pilate, the wealthy Herodians made numerous voyages to Rome where they “wined and dined” with various aristocrats. Since they were close friends with family members of Caesar, there was a constant indirect line of communication from Jerusalem to Rome.⁵⁹⁵ Little wonder then that Pilate had to be very careful about what he was to do with Jesus. He was deeply dependent upon and devoted to Rome, and this issue was the fatal point for Jesus.⁵⁹⁶ Pilate was unwilling to do what he knew was right.

Roman law required a minimum of a ten-day waiting period between the verdict and the execution of a prisoner, but Pilate submitted to the pressures of the Sanhedrin and ordered Jesus crucified immediately. His weakness and cruelty was evident when he chose to cave in, rather than to risk a riot.⁵⁹⁷ On this day, he became a friend of Herod, as well as the Sanhedrin. It is remarkable to what extent the Romans attempted to be fair in this situation. Biblical readers frequently obtain a view of the evils of Rome, but seldom recognize any of their attempts at fairness and justice. The Romans, for example, permitted the Jews to maintain and enforce their own religious laws, as confirmed in John 18:31a.

As stated previously, a major reason why Pilate appeased the Sadducees was that in A.D. 26, Sejanus, his friend and benefactor in Rome, was instrumental in having him appointed to the position of prefect (governor) over the Jews. Thereafter, Sejanus caused political tension in Rome and eventually became involved in a plot to overthrow Caesar. By the time Jesus was on trial, the Roman senate was investigating all persons related to him, including Pilate. Consequently, Pilate feared for his life and position and did not want to lose his *amici Caesaris*, or “friendship with Caesar” and face execution.⁵⁹⁸ That was in the year A.D. 30, when Sejanus was at the height of his power and the emperor’s life was in chaos. Therefore, when the Jews cried out that Pilate was no friend of Caesar, Pilate reflected upon the political turmoil in Rome and all those who had already been executed, imprisoned, or committed suicide.⁵⁹⁹ He walked a fine line in Roman politics and reigned from A.D. 26 to 36, the second longest of all rulers, but eventually he paid for his sin.

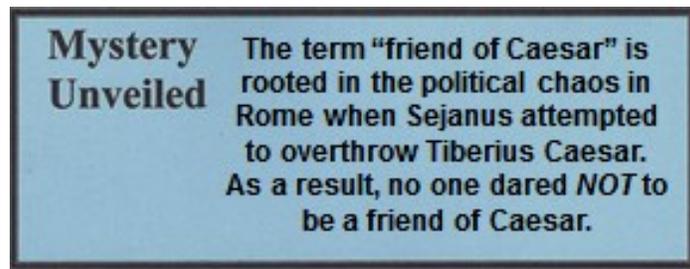
595. Dauer, *How Jesus Died: The Final 18 Hours*. (Video).

596. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 432-33; Harrison, *A Short Life of Christ*. 199-201.

597. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 433-34; Harrison, *A Short Life of Christ*. 199-201.

598. Maier, “Sejanus, Pilate, and the Date of Crucifixion.” 3-13.

599. For more information on this important point, see 03.06.25 and 15.04.02 as well as 03.06.25, “A.D. 22-31 Sejanus, the Arch Enemy of Tiberius Caesar” in Historical Backgrounds.



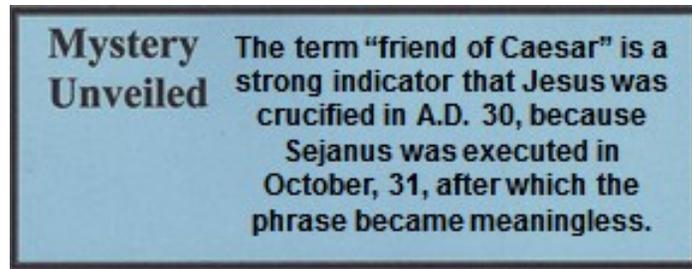
All those in the highest level of government were concerned about a possible overthrow of the government. To make matters worse, Sejanus hated the Jews with a passion and all those investigating him knew it. Pilate knew that the Jews had, in years past, sent delegations to Rome to complain about their governors. So for them to sail to Rome and to complain about Pilate could easily have tied him in a close connection with Sejanus. Note the words of Philo.

¹⁵⁹ Therefore, all people in every country, even if they were not naturally well inclined towards the Jewish nation, took great care not to violate or attack any of the Jewish customs of laws. And in the reign of Tiberius things went on in the same manner, although at that time things in Italy were thrown into a great deal of confusion when Sejanus was preparing to make his attempt against our nation; ¹⁶⁰ for he knew immediately after his death that the accusations which had been brought against the Jews who were dwelling in Rome were false calumnies, inventions of Sejanus, who was desirous to destroy our nation, which he knew alone, or above all others, was likely to oppose his unholy counsels and actions in defense of the emperor, who was in great danger of being attacked, in violation of all treaties and of all honesty. ¹⁶¹ And he sent commands to all the governors of provinces in every country to comfort those of our nation in their respective cities, as the punishment intended to be inflicted was not meant to be inflicted upon all, but only on the guilty; and they were but few. And he ordered them to change none of the existing customs, but to look upon them as pledges, since the men were peaceful in their dispositions and natural characters, and their laws trained them and disposed them to quiet and stability.

Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius* 24:159-161⁶⁰⁰

⁶⁰⁰ This information was repeated by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* 2.5, but he mentioned Philo as his source.

Therefore, to be a friend of Caesar in that year was very important; and if one was Jewish, its importance was nearly a life or death matter. There is no equal in Western politics to which this could be compared.



However, the long arm of Roman law eventually caught up with Sejanus. In October of A.D. 31 he was tried and executed for attempting to subvert the emperor.⁶⁰¹ Thereafter, peace returned to Rome and the phrase, "friend of Caesar" carried little or no weight. If the crucifixion of Jesus would have occurred in A.D. 33, there would have been no need to make this statement.⁶⁰²

"Stone Pavement." The location of Pilate's judicial bench – the stone pavement that in Hebrew is *Gabbatha*, is the subject of debate. Some scholars believe it was in the Antonio Fortress while others believe it was in the western part of Jerusalem where Herod had his palace.⁶⁰³

"We have no king but Caesar." This statement has often been overlooked as an identifier of those who stood before Pilate. The Pharisees, who were extreme legalists, would never have said this. For three years they argued with Jesus about the details of the Law, and even in anger and hatred, they would not have denied their *Shema* (Deut. 6:1). However, the Sadducees, who were completely Hellenized and always had been faithful and loyal to the Romans.

601. Webb, "The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus." 720-23.

602. Webb, "The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus." 720-24.

603. Wieand, "Gabbatha." 2:373; Payne, "Gabbatha." 2:618.

Mystery Unveiled	The phrase “We have no king but Caesar,” would never have been said by the Pharisees who were the ultimate legalists, but by the Hellenistic Sadducees.
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Since the Sadducees controlled the temple and the Sanhedrin, they were the official leadership of the nation and the Jewish people. This statement was the official declaration that the Jews rejected the God of Abraham, the Messianic hope, and accepted the Roman, self-deified Caesar as their king. The leadership abandoned their long-held view that God alone was their king (1 Sam. 12:12); that only the Lord God of Israel would rule over the children of Abraham (Jg. 8:23). Ironically, the day the Sadducees, and probably some of the School of Shammai as well, made this declaration, was the day they were *supposed to praise God* for their deliverance from Egypt and affirm their faithfulness to Him. For them to say that Caesar was their king was also to say that he was their lord and god. An astonishing announcement! The renunciation of Israel’s profession to have no king but God, as made in the Passover hymn *Nismat kol hay*⁶⁰⁴ is precisely why Josephus said that the Zealots continuously rebelled against the Romans.⁶⁰⁵ What an irony!

While it is difficult to imagine that they would abandon their cultural and theological heritage, they did precisely that to rid themselves of Jesus. They continued in their Jewish traditions, their hearts were obviously nowhere focused toward the God of their forefathers.

Mystery Unveiled	For the Jewish leaders to say that they had no king but Caesar, was to say he was their lord and god. The Pharisees would never have said that, but Sadducees would have.
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16.01.05.Q1 What other issue may have been a challenge for Pilate?

Often Bible students have become so engrossed in the “Jesus” events of the Passion

604. Rensberger, “The Politics of John.” 406.

605. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.1.6 and *Wars* 2.8.1; 7.10.1.

Week, that the possibility that anything else was going on that could have affected Pilate is simply never considered. Jesus was little more than one more case he had to struggle with. He wanted to crucify Barabbas and his two rebel friends, but the Sadducees demanded he be freed, leaving his co-conspirators to die a horrible death.

Along with all the matters of state that any governor had to deal with, throughout the years Jesus ministered there was increased interest in astrology and magic. According to the *Chronicle of the Year A.D. 354*, Tiberius executed forty-five sorcerers and eighty-five sorceresses, in the years A.D. 16 and 17.⁶⁰⁶ These would have been barely more than a decade prior to the ministry of Jesus. In the year A.D. 32, shortly after the crucifixion of Jesus, twenty-five were executed with a third of those guilty for conspiracy with Sejanus in the previous years. It is believed that the law that was applied was the *Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneticis*, capital punishment by burning alive for those who murdered by poisoning.⁶⁰⁷ The number of people charged increased annually, until the year 32 when Tiberius had the most cases of any year during his reign.⁶⁰⁸ One of those is mentioned by Tacitus who wrote of a woman by the name of Numantina. She was accused of casting incantations and spells on her husband causing him to become insane. For this she is believed to have been charged with *Lex Cornelia*.⁶⁰⁹ There can be no question that the religious leaders must have accused Jesus of being a sorcerer before Pilate. If they made that announcement to the people,⁶¹⁰ then they probably did so at this time. As previously stated, in light of the other charges against various individuals, it is utterly amazing that Pilate was so incredibly compassionate with Jesus. It also highlights the false accusations the Sadducees had against Him as a sorcerer.

16.01.06 Mt. 27:24-25

PILATE WASHES HIS HANDS

²⁴ When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that a riot was starting instead, he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. See to it yourselves!”

606. Welch, “Miracles, Maleficium, and Maiestas in the Trial of Jesus.” 373.

607. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*. 147.

608. Welch, “Miracles, Maleficium, and Maiestas in the Trial of Jesus.” 373.

609. Tacitus, *Annals of History*. 4.22.

610. See 09.01.03.Q1 “What was the significance of the Beelzebub discussion?”

²⁵ All the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” ²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them. But after having Jesus flogged, he handed Him over to be crucified.

The accusers presented alleged offenses, but could not convince Pilate that Jesus was guilty of any crime. The progression of Pilate’s attempts to release Jesus is noteworthy.

1. First he attempted to ignore the case
2. Then he tried to release Jesus in light of the Passover tradition of releasing a condemned prisoner.
3. Then he had Jesus scourged believing this would satisfy the Jewish crowd.
4. After three successive failures, he attempted his last appeal.

Finally, Pilate surrendered to Caiaphas and his hysterical mob. Since there was no defense, Pilate pronounced execution by crucifixion.⁶¹¹ He then **“took some water, [and] washed his hands.”** This was the sixth and final declaration of innocence concerning the charges against Jesus of Nazareth. The washing of hands was a common ritualistic act that declared innocence when a life was lost by accident. The washing of hands was already at this time an ancient symbol among many cultures for declaring innocence involving the death of a person. Some fourteen centuries earlier, Moses recorded the atonement for an unsolved murder that included the elders of the town washing their hands over the broken neck of a heifer (Deut. 21:6-9). David did likewise in Psalm 26:6 and 73:13. As Pilate would eventually learn, his guilt could not be washed away because he was guilty.

He then announced, **“I am innocent of this man’s blood.”** However, that statement did not release him from the consequences and responsibility for his decision. He failed to stand up for what was right, but instead, caved in to the pressure of a minority group. Even his wife had warned him. He could have given Jesus His freedom, exiled Him from the country, or invoked any number of other options, but he didn’t. It is ironic that pagan justice was more just than the justice of the Jews, who were to represent the love and justice of God.

Furthermore, Josephus stated that Pilate attempted to abolish Jewish laws, set up statues at night without the knowledge of the local religious leaders, and used temple money to

611. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*. 25.

bring water into Jerusalem. Pilate eliminated his opponents by having his soldiers wear street clothes, surround the opponent in a crowded street, and at a given signal, they stabbed him. The soldiers would then keep on walking and disperse.⁶¹² It was a tactic used by the Zealots, whom the Romans called Sicarii. Clearly, Pilate disliked the Jews and their religion. Overall, he failed to offer them consideration afforded by other Roman prefects. He frequently reflected the beliefs and lifestyle of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who ruled some two centuries earlier.

Pilate may have claimed innocence by the washing of his hands, but God did not see it that way. The rest of his life was in constant turmoil. He met his demise as the result of his response to a Samaritan “rebellion.” Some scholars believe it was a messianic movement while others say that a certain imposter claimed to have found some artifacts that were hidden by Moses. Regardless, in A.D. 36 Pilate sent his troops to the Samaritan village of Tirabatha and the result was a huge slaughter of innocent people.⁶¹³ The Samaritans complained to Vitellius, telling him that the whole matter was not a rebellion, but a harmless religious movement. Furthermore, Pilate’s soldiers killed many refugees.

When the senseless killing became known in Roman circles, Pilate was ordered by Vitellius, the legate of Syria, to sail to Rome and defend himself. However, by the time he arrived, Emperor Tiberius had died. Nonetheless, he was removed from office.⁶¹⁴ According to Eusebius, Pilate was exiled and committed suicide, although another account says he suffered death under Emperor Nero.⁶¹⁵ The account of Pilate’s last days as recorded by the early church father Eusebius is as follows:

It is proper also to observe how it is asserted that this same Pilate, who was governor at our Savior’s crucifixion, in the reign of Gaius (Caligula), whose times we are recording, fell into such calamities that he was forced to become his own murderer, and the avenger of his own wickedness. Divine justice, it seems, did not long protract his punishment. This is stated by those Greek historians who have recorded the Olympiads in order together with the transactions of the times.

Eusebius, *Church History* 2.7.1⁶¹⁶

612. Josephus, *Antiquities*. 18.3.1-2.

613. Webb, “The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus.” 721-22.

614. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.4.1-2; also 09.03.08 and 15.04.05.

615. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.4.1-2; Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 432-36.

616. Elwell and Yarbrough, *Readings from the First-Century World*. 44; Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 433.



16.01.06.A. INSCRIPTION OF PILATE AND TIBERIUS. A monument with an inscribed reference to Pilate and Tiberius was discovered in 1961 for a building known as the *Tiberius*. It was the dedication stone of the Roman theater in Caesarea Maritima built by the architectural genius, Herod the Great. Photographed by the author at Caesarea. The inscription completed (below) by the Israel Museum.

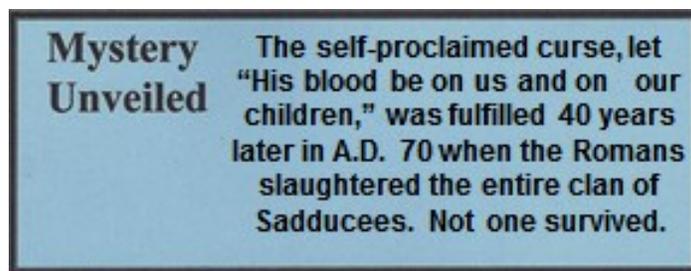
This damaged inscription is the only one found that refers to Pilate. Notice that his title was “Praefectus Iduaeae” or Prefectus Judaea. Until this time, scholars believed the official title of Pilate to have been “procurator.”⁶¹⁷

**[Dis Augusti]s Tiberieum
[-Pon]tius Pilatus
[praef]ectus Idua[ea]e
[fect, d]e[dicavit]**

617. Zondervan’s *New International Version Archaeological Study Bible*. (2005 ed.). 1714.

16.01.06.B. THE INSCRIBED LATIN WORDS THAT HONOR PILATE AND TIBERIUS.

“His blood be on us and on our children.” In the rage and anger of mob hysteria, the Jews (namely the Sadducees and their friends) eagerly cursed themselves and their future generations. The power of words by mere mortals is, at times, more dynamic and powerful than can possibly be imagined. Forty years later the entire Sadducean leaders and their families were slaughtered by the Romans as the temple was destroyed. Furthermore, two thousand years of history demonstrate that this curse has followed them throughout the world.



The fact remains that Jesus still had an immense following of people who desired to see Him become the political-messiah who would bring national independence and greatness as King David had done. The gospels place the blame for the death of Jesus upon the national leadership of the Jewish nation, as well as the Romans. Reasons for His death are historical, theological, and spiritual, but not racial.

Conclusion

Pilate had a devotion for doing whatever pleased himself, with little or no regard to anyone else, and especially the Jews. This is clearly evident in a letter written by Philo around the year A.D. 41. Philo, discussing the attempted placement of a statue of Gaius Caligula in the temple, inserted a description of Pilate. Philo said that,

[Pilate used] briberies, insults, robberies, outrages, wanton injuries, constantly repeated executions without trial, ceaseless and supremely grievous cruelty.

Philo, On the Embassy to Gaius 302

Philo continued his description of Pilate as one who willingly accepted bribes, committed unjust acts of violence, and shamefully treated many. In fact, the Jews looked upon the days of Herod the Great with regret as life had become much more difficult under

Pilate.⁶¹⁸ However, the long arm of justice eventually caught up with him. Shortly after the crucifixion of Jesus, Rome became uneasy with the job performances of both Caiaphas and Pilate. The corruption and cruelty of these two men became more than the Emperor Gaius and Roman Senate could tolerate. So sometime around late A.D. 36, according to Josephus,

[The Syrian governor, Vitellius] ordered Pilate to return to Rome to give the emperor his account of the matters with which he was charged...⁶¹⁹

[and] he removed from his sacred office the high priest Joseph, surnamed Caiaphas, and appointed in his stead Jonathan, son of Ananus the high priest.⁶²⁰

Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.4.2, 3 (89, 95b)

By the summer of A.D. 37, both men were removed from office. Nonetheless, the fact is that Pilate was one of the most corrupt and cruel procurators Israel ever had. Yet it is incredible that a monarch of such depraved character had to admit that he could find no fault in Jesus.⁶²¹ Both gospel writers noted the triadic insistence for two reasons:

1. Pilate really did come before the crowd and declare Jesus was innocent and,
2. The triadic structure which Pilate gave, communicated to the Jewish people that this was the most emphatic insistence that he could give to declare innocence of Jesus.

In summary, up until this time there were three major errors committed by Pilate which profoundly influenced his decision concerning Jesus.

1. In A.D. 26, shortly after he arrived in Caesarea, he entered Jerusalem with Roman military standards with the busts of the emperor on them. This violated the Jewish commandment of not having graven images. Every previous prefect had

618. Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius* 1033.

619. Judea and all the Jewish lands controlled by Pilate, Herod Philip, and Herod Antipas, were part of the larger district of Syria, of which the capital was Damascus. Therefore, Pilate reported to Vitellius, governor of Syria, who reported to Emperor Gaius.

620. Ananus held the title of high priest even though he was retired and no longer functioned in that office. It was a title of honor that was held throughout life.

621. Lk. 23:4; 13-16; 22; Jn. 18:38b; 19:4; 19:6.

the images removed before marching troops into Jerusalem, but Pilate lacked that sensitivity. For five days and five nights the Jews protested. When Pilate realized the Jews were willing to die for their law, he withdrew his standards in humiliation.⁶²²

2. He took funds from the temple to finance the completion of a new aqueduct that was begun by Herod the Great. This caused a huge protest among the Jews which Josephus estimated to have been in the tens of thousands. Many were severely injured, dozens killed either by the sword or being trampled upon by horses. The protest ended with a bloody legacy. There can be little doubt that word of this event reached Rome.⁶²³

3. He placed votive shields with the emperor's name richly engraved and gilded, in Herod's palace in Jerusalem to the honor and memory of the monarch.⁶²⁴ It is believed that Herod Antipas and his brother Philip⁶²⁵ successfully presented complaints before the emperor against Pilate for having set up these offensive shields.⁶²⁶ Hence, they were removed and hung in the temple of Augustus in Caesarea.⁶²⁷

The power of Pilate over the people was broken. Pilate had lost all three confrontations and some historians believe that Caesar was aware of them. From that time on the Jews knew how to extort concessions from him. Philo, a Jewish philosopher who lived in Egypt, said that the Jews threatened to report the misdeeds of Pilate to the Emperor.⁶²⁸ Obviously, later the leading Jews essentially blackmailed him into crucifying Jesus, as he feared they would go to Rome and file a complaint with the emperor. His career was clearly on the line. Ironically, his final misjudgment was a massacre of many Samaritans a few years later that ended his stay in the Middle East.

622. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.3.1 (55-57); *Wars* 2.9.2-4 (169-177); Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 301-02.

623. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.3.1 (55-57); *Wars* 2.9.2-4 (169-177); Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 301-02.

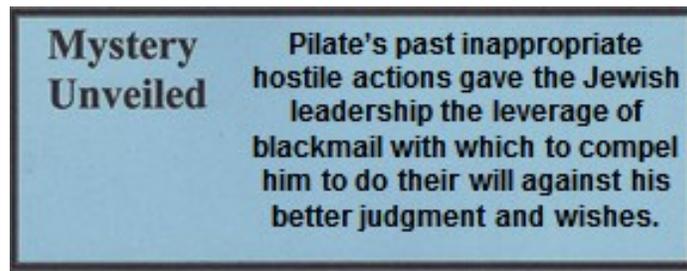
624. Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius* 24:159-61; Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 469.

625. Their brother Archelaus was no longer in the land after A.D. 6. Some scholars question if it was these two brothers (Antipas and Philip) who argued before the emperor, since Herod the Great had three other sons who did not inherit lands to govern: Herod the son of Mariamne, Herod the son of Cleopatra, and Phasael the son of Pallas. It is possible two of these brothers went to Rome and argued against Pilate. See Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.1.3; *Wars* 1.28.4; Philo *On the Embassy to Gaius* 30.

626. Schurer, *A History of the Jewish People* First Division, 2:40-42; Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 1:284.

627. Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 1:296.

628. Quoted by Barclay, "Matthew." 2:358-59.



In addition, there are two other points to consider.

1. In the year 35 or 36, a few years after the ministry of Jesus ended, there was a false prophet in Samaria. The prophet said that he claimed to know where Moses had hidden certain artifacts on Mount Gerizim and crowds of people came to see them. At this point, Pilate commanded his soldiers to kill and crucify many in the crowd.⁶²⁹ This was his final act of violence against innocent people. Vitellius, the legate of Syria ordered him to report to Rome and explain his actions, after which he was banished in exile.

2. Pilate had a general attitude of disrespect toward the Jewish people, so much so, eventually it was part of the consideration to have him removed from office. Concerning him, Philo said the following charges were made against him:

Corruptibility, violence, robberies, ill-treatment of the people, grievances, continuous executions without even the form of a trial, endless and intolerable cruelties.

Philo, *De Legatione ad Cajum* 38:299-305

And so ended the career of Pilate. Tradition says it was in exile that he committed suicide.

16.01.06.Q1 What happened to those who opposed Jesus (see also 03.05.18.Q1)?

All those who opposed Jesus met horrific deaths, just as did those three men who previously desecrated the holy temple.⁶³⁰ Divine judgment followed those who were

629. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.4.1.

630 See also 03.05.18.Q1 “What happened to those who violated the second Jewish temple?”

involved in both the planning of the crucifixion and the final act. Note the following brief accounts:

1. Herod the Great rebuilt the temple but lived a violent and decadent lifestyle, abused the Jewish people and introduced as much Hellenism as he could into the culture. His body began to decay while he was still living. Furthermore, by the end of the first century, the entire Herodian dynasty was gone.
2. The entire family of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, was destroyed during the First Revolt as the Romans attacked the Holy City. A vicious mob dragged one young man through the streets of Jerusalem until the skin on his back was shredded off, and he was beaten to an agonizing death.
3. The entire Sadducean religious party was destroyed with the temple.
4. As stated above, Pilate met his demise as the result of his horrific response to a Samaritan “rebellion,” that was merely a religious movement. Consequently, in A.D. 36 he was exiled and then committed suicide.⁶³¹
5. Herod Antipas was deposed and died in exile.
6. The Sanhedrin no longer met in the temple’s Chamber of Hewn Stone, but was relocated to the Hill of Evil Counsel nearby.⁶³² It was disbanded around the year 360.⁶³³

God’s judgment was also on those who violated His holy temple. See 03.05.18.Q1 “What happened to those who violated the second temple?”

On an interesting side note, due to Roman persecutions against Christians, many early church leaders blamed *all* the Jews rather than the Sadducees and Romans for the crucifixion of Jesus. A few went as far as to speak highly of Pilate, even though church liturgy clearly stated that it was Pilate who sent Jesus to the cross. In fact, Tertullian who was one of the early church fathers around A.D. 200, referred to Pilate as being “Christian in his conscience.” The Greek Orthodox Church canonized Pilate’s wife Procula, and the Ethiopian Church recognizes June 25 as “St. Pilate and St. Procula’s

631. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.7.

632. How interesting it is that today the United Nations is located on this hill.

633. Parry, *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to the Talmud*. 37.

Day.⁶³⁴

16.01.07 Mk. 15:20; Jn. 19:17 (See also Mt. 27:31)

JESUS IS LED OUT

Mk. ²⁰ When they had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the purple robe, put His clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

Jn. ¹⁷ Carrying His own cross, He went out to what is called Skull Place, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

Throughout the Roman world, men who were destined to the cross carried the cross-beam to the site of crucifixion completely naked. This was done to add to their humiliation. However, in Israel men were dressed which was probably a concession to Jewish sensitivities about nakedness.⁶³⁵

“Led Him out.” The Roman soldiers who led Jesus to the cross knew they were violating Roman justice. Yet they had to obey Pilate or their careers, and possibly their lives, would have been threatened. In the Old City of Jerusalem is a narrow winding street named the *Via Delarosa*, meaning the “Way of Suffering.” Nearly every tourist group today walks down that narrow winding street. Tradition says it is the path that Jesus walked from the Antonio Fortress to Calvary.⁶³⁶ However, history records that the city was destroyed and rebuilt many of times.⁶³⁷ Therefore, the authentic *Via Delarosa* is under many tons of rubble and no one knows where it was. Even the beginning and ending points are debated.

634. Yamauchi, “Concord, Conflict and Community.” 170.

635. During the Jewish civil war (90-88 B.C.), Jannaeus crucified 80 women in Ashkelon whom he suspected of being witches. He stripped them naked and, for the sake of modesty, nailed them facing the cross where they died. About 800 Pharisees were also crucified at the time, by other Jews. See 03.05.10. The Book of *Jubilees* 3:30-31 and 7:20 indicates that a loin cloth was used at times, but not always, when Jews were crucified.

636. The tradition is of Crusader origin. They created many such traditions and identified “traditional sites” of various biblical events to appeal to wealthy European tourists.

637. Some historians have estimated 17 destructions since A.D. 70.



16.01.07.A. A WALL MURAL OF A FIRST CENTURY JERUSALEM STREET SCENE.

The author stands in front of a painted mural of a typical street scene in first century Jerusalem (see 02.04.01.V). The street was colonnaded with shops on both sides of the street. Jesus would have carried His cross along a street like this, as the Romans wanted everyone to see what happened to anyone who dared to rebel against the empire. Photograph by Paivi Heinrich.

It was common practice that those who were to be crucified were forced to walk through the busiest streets to give maximum exposure to the event. Punishment by crucifixion had nothing to do with just punishment, but was to instill a horrific fear in anyone who was thinking of starting a rebellion. Note the following comment by Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (c. 35 – c. 100) who is generally referred to just as Quintilian.⁶³⁸

When we crucify criminals, the most frequently used roads are chosen where the greatest number of people can look and be seized by this fear. For every punishment has less to do with the offense than with the example.

638. <http://virtualology.com/rhetoricaltheory/quintilian.org/> Retrieved October 26, 2013; See also Webb, “The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus.” 697.

Quintilian, *Declamations* 274.13

The concept of using crucifixion to manipulate the decisions of others was used by General Titus when he began his onslaught against Jerusalem in the First Revolt. His Tenth Legion had surrounded the city, his war machines were in place, and any Jews who were captured were crucified so that those who stood upon the city walls could see their loved ones and neighbors dying in excruciating agony. Josephus said that the purpose was to induce the Jews to surrender. Of those captured, he said,

...They were accordingly scourged and subjected to torture of every description, before being killed,⁶³⁹ and then crucified [them] opposite the walls.⁶⁴⁰ Titus indeed commiserated their fate, five hundred or sometimes more being captured daily; on the other hand, he recognized the risk of dismissing prisoners of war, and that the custody of such numbers would amount to the imprisonment of their custodians. But his main reason for not stopping the crucifixions was the hope that the spectacle might perhaps induce the Jews to surrender, for fear that continued resistance would involve them in a similar fate.

Josephus, *Wars* 5.11.1 (450)⁶⁴¹

It should be noted again that crucifixion was not a permitted form of execution for a Roman citizen. In fact, the great orator Cicero essentially said that the thought of it should be far removed from the mind of a citizen.⁶⁴² However, if a Roman citizen, such as Sejanus, was tried and found guilty of treason, he would have experienced another form

639. Throughout the Old Testament Period, nearly all those who were “hung on a tree,” were executed first. The hanging of the body was for public observation only. For example Deuteronomy 21:22-23 assumes an already executed person was hung on a tree. See also Dead Sea Scroll 4QpNah fr 3-4 1:6-8. In this case, Titus followed a pattern used by many ancient cultures. Some Islamic governments still practice this today, as did Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority who hung the bodies of suspected Israeli collaborators from poles and water towers.

640. The term “opposite the walls” means that the crosses were placed in a position “opposite of the (city) walls” so those on top of the city wall could witness the bodies of friends and family members. The observers probably believed that the crucified victims were still alive at the time.

641. This narrative is an excellent example of a historian’s bias. While Josephus presents accurate details of the event, he rarely states anything negative about the Roman generals and commanders. After all, when he was writing his books, he enjoyed luxurious retirement and a villa in Rome, and he was not about to ruin that by criticizing those who were supporting him. See also Webb, “The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus.” 697-98.

642. Cicero, *For Rabirius on a Charge of Treason* 5.16. Marcus Tullius Cicero (107-44 B.C.) was a Roman lawyer, politician and philosopher whose death came by an assassin.

of execution. The Apostle Paul benefited from this Roman law.

“Carrying his own cross.” Jesus is often incorrectly portrayed as dragging a cross that consisted of a post and crossbeam. He did not *drag* His cross, He *carried* the crossbeam, known as the *patibulum*. The post was already secured in the ground. It was common practice in the Roman world to have the criminal carry his crossbeam to the site of the crucifixion.⁶⁴³ At times so many were crucified that some criminals were crucified on olive trees to which a cross beam was attached if two branches did not suffice.⁶⁴⁴



16.01.07.B. A SCULPTURE OF JESUS DRAGGING HIS CROSS. He is shown falling down due to the heavy load. This is the traditional image that has transcended the centuries. Yet Jesus did not drag or carry the entire cross as shown, but only the heavy crossbeam to the crucifixion site where the post was already in the ground. Photographed along the Via Delarosa by the author.

The description of the horrific method of crucifixion was preserved for us in the second century B.C. when the Roman comedian wrote his work titled the *Mostellaria*. In this comedy, a person is said to,

643. Nelesen, *Yeshua; the Promise, the Land, the Messiah*. (Video Tape 2).

644. Mackowski, *Jerusalem City of Jesus*. 6; Torrance, “Cross, Crucifixion.” 1:343.

Carry a crossbar (*patibulum*) through the city, which was then attached to an upright stake (*crux*).”

What was his name? Who? *Mostellaria*⁶⁴⁵

The English word *cross* comes from the Latin word *crux*,⁶⁴⁶ which was the upright stake. This account agrees with the custom of the first century in Judea. The weight of the entire cross would have been too heavy, even for a Roman soldier to carry.

Finally, the imagery of Jesus carrying His crossbeam is reflective typology of Isaac carrying his wood for the burnt offering. Isaac, however, was spared from being a human sacrifice; Jesus was not.

“Skull Place ... *Golgotha*.” This is an excellent example of the differences between Western and Eastern (Jewish) thinking.

1. The Western opinion is that the **“skull place,”** or the “place of the skull” as some translations read, is a hill that looks like a human skull.
2. The Eastern or Jewish opinion is that the **“skull place”** is where many people have died.

It was called such, not because of the *appearance* of a skull, but probably because *so many crucifixions* were held there. In such designated locations,⁶⁴⁷ crucifixion posts were often permanent fixtures. It probably has a colloquial meaning was “the place of crucifixion.” When Jesus carried His cross, in true Roman tradition, He carried only the crossbeam because the post was already secured in the ground.

Today there is a small hill at the Garden Tomb that has the obvious appearance of a skull, but that is not to say it had the same appearance in the first century, nor is it necessarily the place where anyone was crucified. It should be noted that this region is considered to be one of the most active earthquake regions of the world. Therefore, the hill that has the appearance of a skull most likely was merely a hill in the first century.

The gospels do not mention a specific hill or mount, but simply mention that the name of

645. Cited by Wilkinson, *Jerusalem as Jesus Knew It*. 150.

646. Caba, “Crucifixion: History and Practice.” 12.

647. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor’s Manual*. Class 25, page 2.

the crucifixion site is *the skull*. To translate *the skull place*, or *Golgotha*, as *the place of dead men's skulls* is not correct. Rather, it was *the place of death*. The name is translated correctly as follows:⁶⁴⁸

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1. In Aramaic | <i>Gulgoltha</i> |
| 2. In Hebrew | <i>Gulgoleth</i> (translated as "skull" in Judges 9:53; 2 Kings 9:35) |
| 3. In Latin | <i>Calvaria</i> |
| 4. In Greek | <i>Kranion</i> |
| 5. In English | <i>Calvary</i> (from the Latin <i>Calvaria</i>) |

16.01.08 Mk. 15:21-22 (See also Lk. 23:26; Mt. 27:32)

SIMON OF CYRENE

²¹ They forced a man coming in from the country, who was passing by, to carry Jesus' cross. He was Simon, a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus. ²² And they brought Jesus to the place called *Golgotha* (which means **Skull Place).**

Jesus carried the heavy crossbeam through the crowded streets of Jerusalem. Thousands who had seen Him perform healings and other miracles could not believe their eyes. The Man who was loved by the multitudes was being crucified on the eve of Passover. Soon they would learn of the significance of that connection. But in the meantime, Jesus struggled through the streets of the Holy City and stumbled to the ground. Some medical scholars believe this was possibly due to an early stage of shock.⁶⁴⁹

Simon of Cyrene (modern Libya) was a proselyte Jew, who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, and just happened to be near the procession when Roman soldiers ordered him to carry the crossbeam for Jesus. There was no reason given as to why he was selected. Since he was, however, from North Africa, he most certainly was Jewish

648. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 1:144; Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 393.

649. Dauer, *How Jesus Died: The Final 18 Hours*. (Video).

African and for this reason, he may have been drafted into service.⁶⁵⁰ Josephus recorded that there was a Jewish colony in Cyrene.⁶⁵¹

According to the Oral Law, the act of carrying the crossbeam defiled him. The irony is that he was prevented from celebrating Passover, the sole purpose for which he had traveled across the Mediterranean Sea to Jerusalem. However, according to an early church tradition, this act was also the point of his conversion. Eventually he and his sons became leaders in the Jerusalem church (cf. Rom. 16:13).⁶⁵²

Verse 21 states that “**They forced**” Simon to carry the cross for Jesus. The word *forced* is from the Greek term *aggareuein*, meaning *to compel*.⁶⁵³ The origin of the word is Persian, who authorized their couriers to force anyone into service for them, if assistance was needed. In this case, Simon had no choice but to obey the Roman soldiers or risk death.

“**Simon, a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus.**” Mark presents a piece of unique evidence which supports the theory of a mid-first century writing of his gospel. In this passage, Mark refers to a certain man identified as Simon, the father of two sons.⁶⁵⁴ His sons are mentioned here and nowhere else in Scripture. If they were significant individuals, their names would, most certainly, have been remembered for generations and mentioned by the early church fathers or in extra-biblical books. However, the fact that they were essentially “nobodies” indicates that the gospel was probably written in the lifetime of the two sons, even though the father may have passed on. Since obscure names are soon forgotten, Simon and his sons must have been influential in the Jerusalem congregation prior to the destruction of the temple.⁶⁵⁵ It is noteworthy that the Christian faith spread quickly to Cyrene as found in Acts 11:20 and 13:1, and Simon of Cyrene was probably very much involved in that work.

650. Powers, “Treasures in the Storeroom.” 47-48.

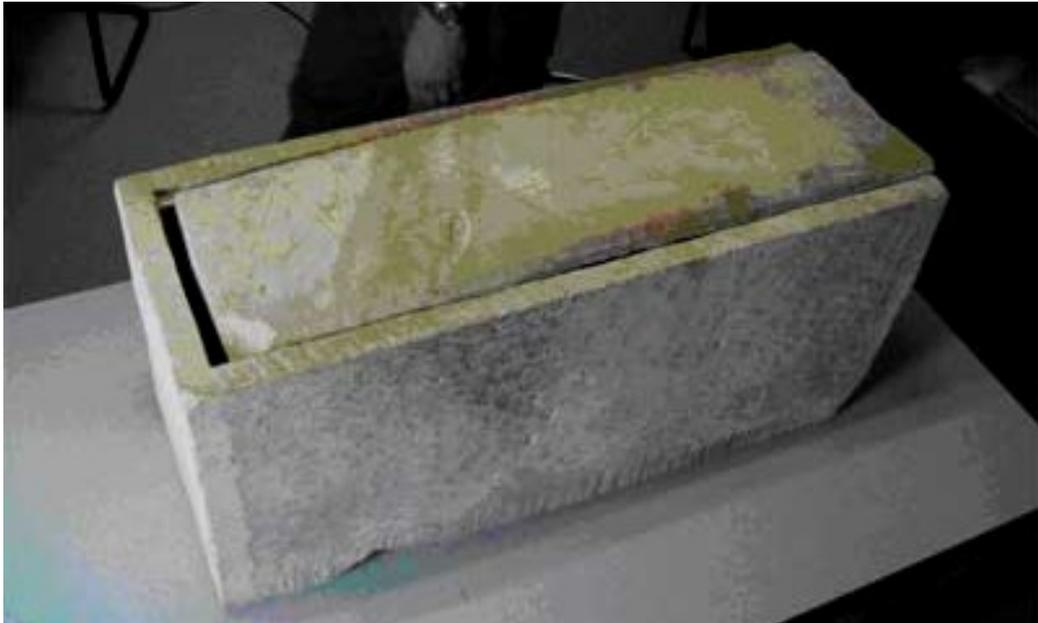
651. Josephus, *Against Apion* 2:44.

652. Macartney, *Great Interviews of Jesus*. 130; Torrance, “Cross, crucifixion.” 1:343; Pentecost, 478; Richards, *The Bible Reader’s Companion*. 647.

653. Barclay, *A New Testament Wordbook*. 15.

654. When this ossuary was discovered, another ossuary was discovered with the name Sara inscribed upon it. Scholars believe she was the sister to Alexander. See Evans, “Excavating Caiaphas, Pilate, and Simon of Cyrene.” 338-40.

655. When archaeologists discovered the burial cave that contained this ossuary, they also found 13 intact pottery vessels that clearly dated the last use of the tomb to pre-destruction Jerusalem. Powers, “Simon of Cyrene’ Tomb Connection.” 17:4, 4.



16.01.08.A. THE BURIAL OSSUARY OF ALEXANDER, THE SON OF SIMON OF CYRENE. In 1942 a remarkable discovery was made. The Ossuary containing the bones of Alexander, the son of Simon, who carried the cross of Jesus was found in a cave-tomb in the Kidron Valley. Ossuaries varied in size, barely long enough to hold the longest human bone – the thigh bone. Hence, sizes were approximately 12 inches wide by 15 inches high by 24 inches long. Photo courtesy of the Israel Museum.

16.01.09 Lk 23:27-31

WOMEN WEEP FOR JESUS

²⁷ A large crowd of people followed Him, including women who were mourning and lamenting Him. ²⁸ But turning to them, Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children. ²⁹ Look, the days are coming when they will say, ‘The women without children, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed, are fortunate!’

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?”

“For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?” This was a prediction of the suffering that would come in only four decades at the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. A similar thought is expressed in I Peter 4:17, “For the time has come for judgment to begin with God’s household, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?”

The phrase is another example of Jesus’ use of nature to explain His point. It cannot be understood without its reflection on the words of an early sixth century B.C. prophet who gave warnings to the rebellious children of Israel when they were in Babylonian captivity. The warning was words of judgment that would fall upon the people as fire destroys a dry tree in the desert. In this short allegory, the “green tree” represents the righteous Jews and the “dry tree” is representative of the wicked and religiously dead Jews. The impending judgment that would fall upon Jerusalem would not only destroy the wicked Sadducees, but also engulf some of the righteous as well.⁶⁵⁶ There were many righteous Jews living in Judaea, but their faith was tested when the judgment of God fell upon the land. Another way to explain this passage is to say that, if the leaders of Israel were willing to do this horrific act of rebellion now, how much worse would be done in the future when apostasy would be commonplace? The judgment of God would bring a greater infliction upon the rebellious children of Abraham.

At some point during the years A.D. 115 to 117, the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus wrote an interesting comment recognizing the suffering of Jesus, as well as those who became known as “Christians.” They were blamed for all the troubles of the Roman Empire, including the fire in Rome, which was started by Nero himself. Tacitus said:

But neither human resources, nor imperial generosity, nor appeasement of the gods, eliminated sinister suspicions that the fire had been instigated. To suppress this rumor, Nero fabricated scapegoats - and punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they had been popularly called). Their originator, Christus [Christ], had been executed in Tiberius’ reign by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilatus.⁶⁵⁷

Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome* 15.41⁶⁵⁸

656. Bivin and Blizzard, *Understanding the Difficult Words*. 82-84.

657. The Latin form of Pontius Pilate.

658. Book XV of Tacitus’s *Annals* is preserved in the 11th–12th-century *Codex Medicus* II, a collection of medieval manuscripts in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, Italy. See also “Did Jesus Exist? Searching for Evidence Beyond the Bible” by Lawrence Mykytiuk appears in the January/February 2015 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.

The words of Tacitus are important for two reasons:

1. Jesus is the originator of a religious movement known as “Christians.”
2. Jesus was crucified by the direct command of Pontius Pilate.

The Romans could not understand how the Jews, and later the Christians, could worship a god they could not see, touch, or smell. Furthermore, they certainly wondered what Jesus taught that would make so many be so willing to die for their faith. The Roman mind could not comprehend a mystery. However, it was not the death of Christ, but His resurrection,⁶⁵⁹ that was the passion of His followers.

16.01.10 Lk. 23:32-34a; Mk. 15:23, 25, 27-28 (See also Mt. 27:33-34, 38; Jn. 19:18)
9:00 a.m. – noon; First Day of Passover.

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

Lk. ³² Two others — criminals — were also led away to be executed with Him.
³³ When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified Him there, along with the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. [³⁴ Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing.”]
And they divided His clothes and cast lots.

Mk. ²³ They tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh, but He did not take it.
²⁵ Now it was nine in the morning when they crucified Him.

Jesus received the wrath of men and God on this day.

1. From 9:00 until 12:00 noon, He received the wrath of men.
2. From 12:00 noon until 3:00, He received the wrath of God.

“Two others – criminals – were also led away to be executed with Him.” A common robber or bandit was known as a *lestai*. Previously, when Jesus was arrested, He asked

659. For further study on the significance of the physical resurrection of Jesus, see Geisler, Norman L. “The Significance of Christ’s Physical Resurrection.” *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 146:582 (Apr-June, 1989). 148-70.

the soldiers if He was a *lestai*.⁶⁶⁰ But the Romans never crucified common robbers or bandits; they crucified those who rebelled against Roman authority. Those persons, however, were often robbers as well.

According to Roman practice, all three men were probably forced to walk along the longest route through the most crowded streets of Jerusalem. This was to install a strong sense of fear in the common people who may have had thoughts of insurrection. By this time, all of Jerusalem probably had heard that Jesus was tried and about to be crucified. Jesus and the other two men were each accompanied by four soldiers, and all twelve were under the command of a centurion. They were commissioned to perform four acts of service:

1. Guard the prisoner enroute from any persons in the crowd who would attempt to free him or kill him.
2. Insure the prisoner's safe arrival to the place of execution.
3. Soldiers were to stay with each prisoner until death was assured.
4. At times, soldiers guarded the deceased body so the family could not give their loved on a decent burial.⁶⁶¹

Jesus was crucified between two thieves,⁶⁶² as predicted by the prophet Isaiah, who said He was numbered with the transgressors (53:12). The Romans and religious elite promoted the image of Jesus as simply another criminal who needed to die. They were correct concerning His need to die, but did not understand the reason why. Christ died between two condemned men; one chose life through salvation and the other chose death and eternal damnation. Jesus is the only option between life and death.

The two criminals who were crucified with Jesus have at times been identified as robbers. However, robbery was not a crime punishable by crucifixion. The Greek word is *testes*, meaning "insurrectionists" (Mk. 15:27), which affiliated them with anti-Roman Zealot and possibly revolutionary messianic activities. Theft and similar crimes were often

660. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 369-70, 395.

661. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 479, 482.

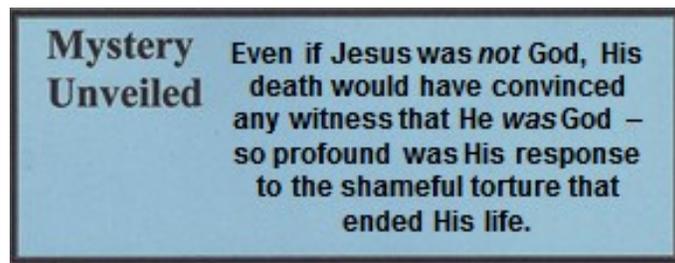
662. The pseudepigraphal books have a number of suggestions concerning their names, which clearly demonstrates why these writings must be evaluated with suspicion. Suggested names are Dismas and Gestas, as in the *Acts of Pilate*. Other suggested names are Zoathan and Chammata, Joathas and Maggattras, and Titus and Dumatchus. See Jordan. *Who's Who in the Bible*. 240.

committed as a means of support by these criminals.⁶⁶³

“Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing.”

This is the first of seven last sayings of Jesus as He was dying upon the cross of Calvary. This could very well have been the ultimate test of forgiveness – by Someone who lived a perfect life and had every right to call judgment down from heaven upon those who were killing Him.⁶⁶⁴

Whenever men died on the cross, they screamed in agony, shouted expressions of pain and cursed those who crucified them and all the gods they could think of. In sharp and stunning contrast, Jesus bore His pain in quietness and forgiveness. Even if Jesus was *not* God, His death would have convinced any witness that He *was* God – so profound was His response to the shameful torture that ended His life.



This profound statement, “Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing,” was spoken by the one who knew no sin and had every reason in the world to destroy those who had inflicted such massive pain upon Him. The phrase reflects *agape* or “God kind of love,” to a lost and dying humanity. Jesus died as He lived; He practiced what He preached; He lived and died His sermon that He preached on the beatitudes. His words would later be uttered by thousands of martyrs, who died for the faith beginning with Stephen, whose dying words were “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:60). Luke recorded in Acts 7:54-8:3 the events of the first martyrdom and the fact that Saul of Tarsus approved his execution by rioters. The love of Jesus demonstrated by Stephen with his dying breath was probably the beginning of Saul’s conversion process. The compassion that Saul witnessed was foreign to this zealous Pharisee. No doubt his incredible rage was evidence that his conscience was under strenuous guilt. The one who suffered the most that day may not have been Stephen, but the man who eventually became the greatest apostle and wrote more New Testament books than any other author.

663. Guinness, *Mysteries of the Bible*. 333-34.

664. Those who attempted to kill Him or were responsible for His death, such as the Sadducees, Pilate, Herod the Great and others, all died horrible deaths.

If any of those who crucified Jesus were condemned to Hell, it was not because they crucified Him, but because they failed to accept His forgiveness. If they could find salvation after this horrible deed, then most certainly anyone else can also find it also. The question then must be asked, “What is forgiveness?” It is the restoration of a fellowship. The fellowship between God and man was broken with the sin of Adam and Eve and was restored when Jesus paid the price for the sins of humanity. However, for that fellowship and restoration to be functional in one’s life, it must be accepted.

This phrase, **“Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing”**” also alludes to the words spoken by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. His statement of forgiveness made a powerful impact, for the Jews would realize the blood of Jesus had paid the sacrifice for their sins, just as the priest intervened on their behalf and the people received atonement of sins by the shed blood of the sacrificial scapegoat. When the priest laid his hands upon the scapegoat, he prayed this prayer:

O God, your people, the House of Israel, have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you. O God, forgive I pray, the iniquities and transgressions and sins which your people, the House of Israel, have committed and transgressed and sinned before you; as it is written in the law of your servant Moses, “For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you; from all your sins shall you be made clean before the Lord” (Lev. 16:30).

Mishnah, Yoma 6.2

The reflection of the priestly prayer of Jesus (Jn. 17) is obvious. What a contrast there was between the prayers of Jesus and those of the Sadducees. Jesus said “Father, forgive them...” (Lk. 23:34) while the Sadducees prayed (or said) “Let His blood be on us and on our children” (Mt. 27:25). Some scholars have said the religious leaders and Pilate *did know* or *should have known* that what they were doing was wrong and, therefore, Jesus did not extend forgiveness to them.

“They tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh.” Crucifixion was so horrible, that at times, wealthy women and hardened soldiers demonstrated compassion by giving the dying criminals wine with either bitter-tasting myrrh or frankincense which dulled the pain.⁶⁶⁵ The Talmud recorded the following custom of the day:

When one is led out to execution, he is given a goblet of wine containing a

665. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus*. 398.

grain of frankincense, in order to benumb his senses, for it is written, Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto the bitter in soul (Prov. 31:6). And it has also been taught: The noble women in Jerusalem used to donate and bring it.

Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 43a

Jesus refused to take an analgesic of wine as He was committed to carry our pain for us (see 16.01.13). Ironically, the gifts offered to Him as a new-born king were the same gifts offered to Him as a dying criminal.

“Now it was nine in the morning when they crucified Him.” Literally, it was the “third hour” in Hebraic time. It was also the same time that the high priest in the temple offered a sacrificed lamb before God for the sins of the people. What irony, the high priest, who had just condemned the Lamb of God to a Roman cross, was sacrificing a lamb to God as a sin offering. What the gospel writer called the third hour Josephus called the ninth hour – Roman time – with the following comments concerning the Passover sacrifices:

So these high priests upon the coming of their feast, which is called Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the ninth hour till the eleventh....

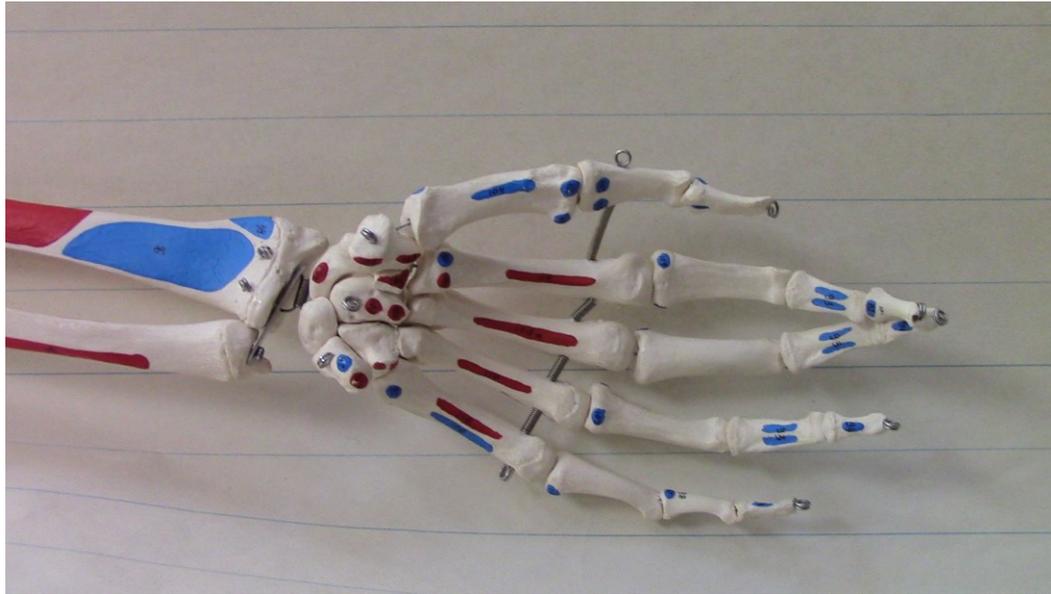
Josephus, *Wars* 6.9.3 (423a)

16.01.10.Q1 Where were the nails placed in the body of Jesus?

If the biblical account is to be literally understood, then the nails that held Jesus to the cross were *not* placed where traditional opinion says they were. Jesus was/is the sacrificial “Lamb of God” and sacrificial lambs were not to have a single broken bone. So likewise Jesus was to die without a single broken bone. So the obvious question is then, how were the nails placed in His hands and feet without breaking a single bone? If a nail was placed in the palm of His hand, it would have been impossible *not* to break any bones.

In Roman times the forearm and wrist were considered a part of the hand; the entire area from the fingernails to the elbow. If the nails were placed in the wrist, as most scholars believe, the iron spike would have been placed between the Ulnar and Median nerves, causing a pulsating pain like electrical shocks through the arms and shoulders. The Shroud of Turin and other bone discoveries indicate the nails were most frequently

placed through the wrists.⁶⁶⁶



16.01.10.A. BONES OF A HAND. This skeletal view of a human hand illustrates that it is impossible to place a nail through the palm of a hand without breaking any of the small bones that are in the palm. Photograph by the author.

Concerning the placement of nails to secure the feet to the post of the cross, many artistic renderings show one foot on top of the other and both are held in place with a long Roman nail. However, a view of the bone structure (16.01.10.B) reveals that it is nearly impossible to nail through a foot in this manner without breaking a bone, and definitely impossible if that same nail were to penetrate both feet. Therefore, the only possible conclusion is that Jesus had each foot nailed into a side of the post. The nail would have gone through the flesh and tendons been behind the ankle bone. To support this view, a few graffiti sketches of crucifixion have survived the centuries and all of them show a foot nailed into each side of the post (see 16.01.10.C).

Of the thousands of men, and of a few women who were crucified in ancient Israel, the remains of only one skeleton have been found that suggests death by this method.⁶⁶⁷ In 1968 an ossuary was discovered in a tomb in Giv'at Ha-Mivtar, a suburb of Jerusalem. It contained the remains of a crucified prisoner, by the name of Yohanan Ben Ha'galgol. It

666. Edwards, Gabel, and Hosmer, "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ." 1459.

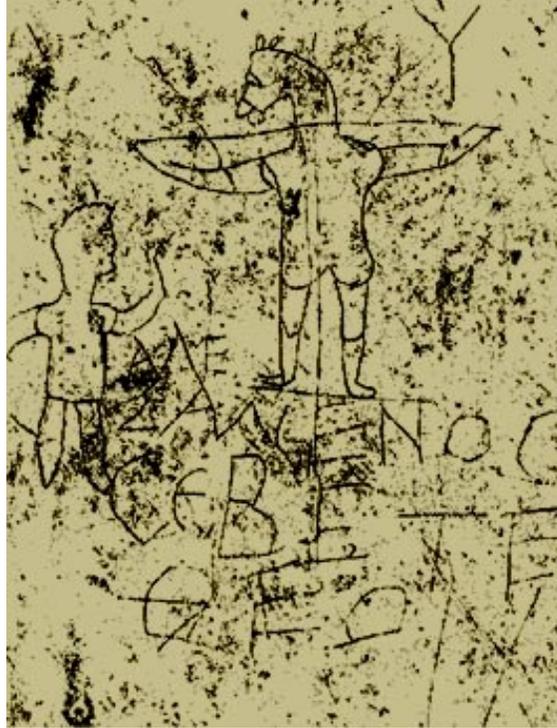
667. Caba. "Crucifixion: History and Practice." 12-14; Thiede and d'Ancona. *The Quest for the True Cross*. 66-67.

also had a nail along the side of an ankle, indicating that each ankle was nailed into opposite sides of the post. In this case, four nails were used in the crucifixion (see 16.01.10.B below).⁶⁶⁸ In addition, a small piece of olive wood was found in the tomb that originally was between the ankle and the head of the nail. Since olive trees are not very tall, this suggests that Ha'galgol was not crucified on a cross, but on a living olive tree. Researchers estimate that the nails used were approximately 5 to 7 inches long (13 to 18 cm) with a square shaft (3/8 inch or 1 cm.). To the left is a reconstructed model of a foot and crucifixion nail.



16.01.10.B. CRUCIFIED ANKLE BONE ATTACHED TO OLIVE WOOD. Shown in the lower right corner are the nail, anklebone, and a piece of olive wood that evidently was secured to the nail. Above it is a reconstructed foot with nail. It is believed that a piece of wood was under the head of the nail to secure the foot to the live tree or to a *crux* (post).

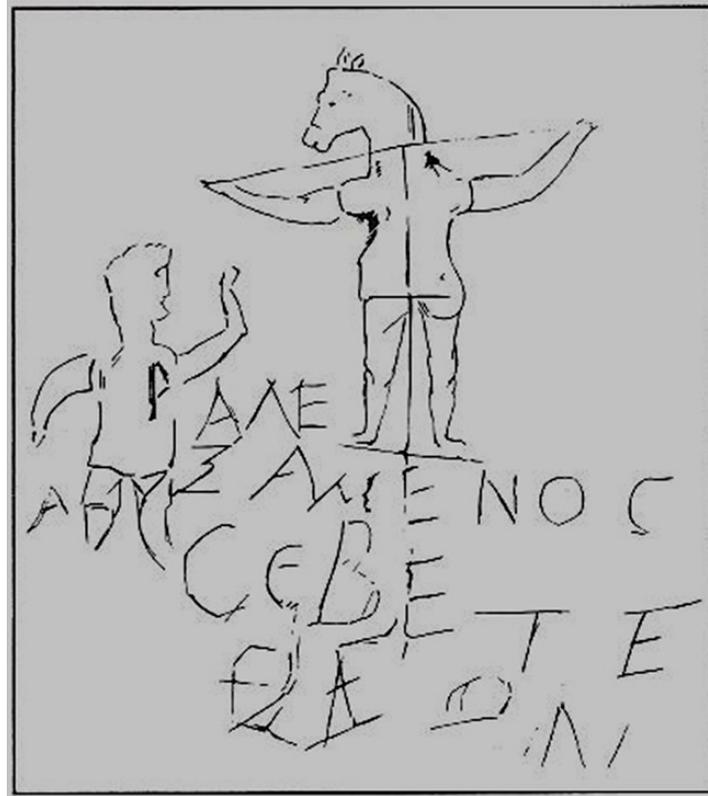
668. For an excellent study on the subject, see Robinson. "Crucifixion in the Roman World: The Use of Nails at the Time of Christ." 25-59.



16.01.10.C. ANTI-CHRISTIAN GRAFFITI. This second century Roman Period anti-Christian cartoon depicts a man, who might have been a soldier, worshiping a crucified figure with a donkey's head. This confirms the accusations by the church father Tertullian who said that Christians were accused of worshiping the head of a donkey.⁶⁶⁹ The drawing was discovered in an ancient imperial palace on the Palatine Hill in Rome in 1856, and is now in the Palatine Antiquarium.⁶⁷⁰ The Greeks and Romans believed that Jews and Christians worshiped a god in the form of a donkey. Photo by Wikipedia Commons.

669. Tertullian, *Apologeticus pro Christianis* 16; Tertullian, *Ad Nationes* 1.2.

670. Metzger, Goldstein, and Ferguson, *Great Events of Bible Times*. 162; Thiede and d'Ancona. *The Quest for the True Cross*. 114-15.

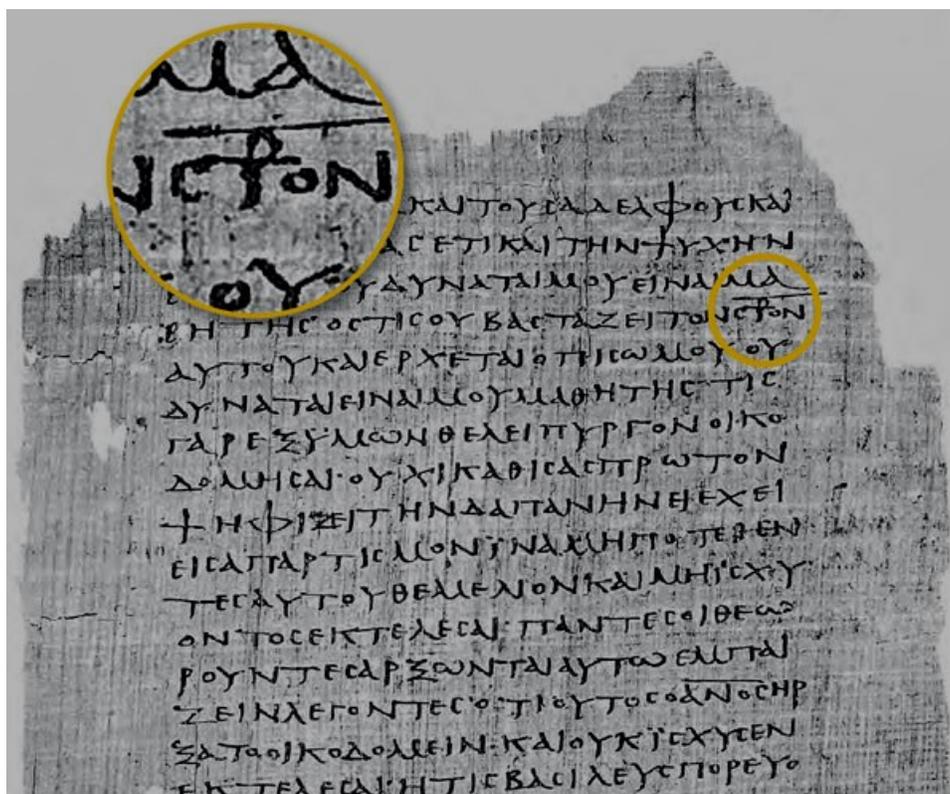


16.01.10.D CLARIFIED SKETCH OF ANTI-CHRISTIAN GRAFFITI. A clarified sketch of the original drawing reveals the vulgar attitude an artist had toward a Christian named Alexamenos. It is inscripted ΑΛΕΞΑΜΕΝΟΣ (ΑΛΕΞΑΜΕΝΟΣ) ΣΕΒΕΤΕ (CEBETE) ΘΕΟΝ, which translates as “Alexamenos respects (or worships) God.” The cross is shaped like a letter Greek “T” or *tau*.⁶⁷¹ Photo by Wikipedia Commons.

It is amazing that some critics claim that the early church fathers created the crucifixion story along with the accusation that Jesus was against the Roman government. For the early church fathers to do so would have been suicidal – why would they deliberately say that Jesus was anti-Roman, when that was the charge that caused anti-Christian hatred and sent thousands to the cross, gladiator fights, and lion pits? Obviously some critical arguments are not well thought out. Furthermore, it is well known that early Christians identified themselves with a Staurogram – a combination of the Greek letters *tau* and *rho* that look like a human figure hanging on a cross. The Bodmer Papyrus P⁶⁶, is a nearly

671. For further study, see Witherington III, “Images of Crucifixion: Fresh Evidence.” 28.

complete edition of the gospel of John⁶⁷² dated to the early 3rd century, and it contains ten staurograms.⁶⁷³



16.01.10.E. THE EARLIEST KNOWN IMAGE OF JESUS ON THE CROSS, One of the earliest manuscripts (circa. 200) of the Gospel of John, the Bodmer Papyrus P⁶⁶, has ten staurograms – two Greek letters (*tau* and *rho*) that, when combined, produce the image of a person on a cross. Photo by Wikipedia Commons.

As previously stated, when a prisoner was crucified on a low cross beam, four soldiers

672. For other papyri containing portions of the Epistles and Gospel of John, see <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Papyri.html>. Retrieved March 3, 2015. <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/crucifixion/the-staurogram/>. Retrieved March 4, 2015.

673. Hurtado, Larry W. "The Staurogram: Earliest Depiction of Jesus's Crucifixion." 50. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papyrus_66 and <https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1842/1204/staurogram+chapter+Manuscripts+volumea.pdf;jsessionid=04E12A1BCDA79BE1A197C31EDD2A4FB3?sequence=1> Retrieved March 3, 2015.

could easily lift the *patibulum* (cross beam) to its proper position on the top of the post and held in place by a mortise and tenon joint or with pins. Therefore, no nails were needed to hold the two pieces of timber together. If the prisoner was to be hung from a high cross, then ladders or forks were used to lift and secure him in place, but this was rare. Once hung in place, the prisoner had his feet nailed to the post, but with his knees slightly bent. Either way – low cross or high cross – the dying man would push himself up with excruciating pain to gain a breath of air. The open wounds on the back rubbing against the splintery post simply enhanced his agony. It was the ultimate punishment.

Crucifixion victims often spent three or four days in dying agony until death gave them sweet relief. In the case of Jesus, three hours on the cross was a relatively brief time when compared to the dying time of other prisoners. This indicates that the scourging was unusually hard on Him physically, plus He carried the heavy load of the sins of humanity.

A traditional act of mercy on the part of the soldiers was to break the legs or spear the right side to hasten death. This procedure was so common it was even given a name: *crurifragium*.⁶⁷⁴ In the case of Jesus, the legs were not broken, but His side was speared and, according to the Shroud of Turin, it was the right side. An infantry spear or lance (length: 5-6 ft.; 1.5-1.8 m.) in the right side was the custom of the Roman military.⁶⁷⁵ If the legs were broken, death transpired within minutes, because the victim would not have been able to elevate himself to inhale. The fact that the pierced sword caused blood and water to gush out of the body clearly confirms that Jesus was dead. This would be a difficult point to explain in future years by those who claimed that Jesus simply fainted and was later revived.

According to Roman military law, if the soldiers had permitted a condemned man to live, they would have been executed as well. They were not about to take that chance and, therefore, one of them thrust a spear into the side of Jesus.⁶⁷⁶ In addition, at times guards remained with the crucified man even after death to prevent family or friends from taking the body for a dignified burial before it was absolutely too late.⁶⁷⁷ Their presence was to insure uttermost humiliation and shame for the criminal and his family. To have a family member crucified was bad enough, but to have his or her body devoured by wild animals was beyond shame (Jer. 7:33; 19:7; Deut. 28:26). A proper burial was so highly valued in

674. Stein, R. *Jesus the Messiah*. 254; Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 2, 423.

675. Edwards, Gabel, and Hosmer, "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ." 1460.

676. Edwards, Gabel, and Hosmer, "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ." 1463.

677. Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus?* 161.

ancient times that it can be hardly understood or appreciated today.

The weight of the body upon the stretched arms and joints caused immense pain. In order to breathe, one had to push up with his feet to inhale. While this relieved the pain for a moment in the arms, it accelerated the pain in his feet and ankles. For this reason, each of the seven last statements spoken by Jesus was relatively short, barely long enough to be said with a single breath of air, as pain and muscle cramps increased. Every movement caused searing pain throughout the entire body, as the open muscle tissues scraped against the rough surface of the wooden post. The nails rubbing against raw nerves sent painful surges – like lightning bolts – through arms and legs that quiver.⁶⁷⁸ The symphony of agony from so many points, and even insects, had become acute. Slowly, death came as breathing became increasingly difficult, the muscles relaxed and bodily functions ceased. The stomach stopped functioning, the dry tongue swelled making speech nearly impossible, and blood pressure drops. There was not a great deal of blood loss from the crucifixion, but there was from the previous scourging. This was so painful that the Romans created a new word to describe it; “excruciating,” which comes from the Latin *excruiatus*, meaning “out of the cross.”⁶⁷⁹

<p>Mystery Unveiled</p>	<p>The English word “excruciating” as in “excruciating pain,” originated from the Latin word <i>excruiatus</i>, meaning “out of the cross.”</p>
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Finally, the One who gave the breath of life to His most favored creation in the Garden of Eden, died of asphyxia – the loss of breath. Secondary causes of death probably were shock, dehydration, and congestive heart failure.⁶⁸⁰ Jesus was hung to die; not only for our sins, but also that we may be recreated in the image of the One who created us in the Garden.

678. Dauer, *How Jesus Died: The Final 18 Hours*. (Video).

679. Edwards, Gabel, and Hosmer, “On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ.” 1461.

680. Edwards, Gabel, and Hosmer, “On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ.” 1461; Stein, R. *Jesus the Messiah*. 245.

16.01.11 Jn. 19:19-22 (See also Mt. 27:37; Mk. 15:26; Lk. 23:38)

INSCRIPTION ON CROSS

¹⁹ Pilate also had a sign lettered and put on the cross. The inscription was:

JESUS THE NAZARENE

THE KING OF THE JEWS.

²⁰ Many of the Jews read this sign, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

²¹ So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Don’t write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that He said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’”

²² Pilate replied, “What I have written, I have written.”

A sign, a/k/a *titulus*, was placed on the top of a cross of leading rebels or other significant persons.⁶⁸¹ It was seldom used otherwise. At the time the criminal was condemned, the *titulus* was carried by the leading soldier on a standard or was hung around the prisoner’s neck as he carried his crossbeam to the crucifixion site. After a prisoner was secured to the cross, the *titulus* was secured to the post over his head. Then all those who came by could read the prisoner’s name and the reason for his execution.

16.01.11.Q1 What were the words on the *titulus*?

There are five ancient documents that preserved the words on the *titulus* – the wooden sign that was placed on the cross above Jesus. Note carefully the *literal* translation of each:⁶⁸² While the wording differs slightly, all agree that Jesus claimed to be the king of the Jews. It also implied that He was a threat to Rome.

Mt. 27:37 **“This is Jesus, the king of the Jews.”**

Mk. 15:26 **“The king of the Jews.”**

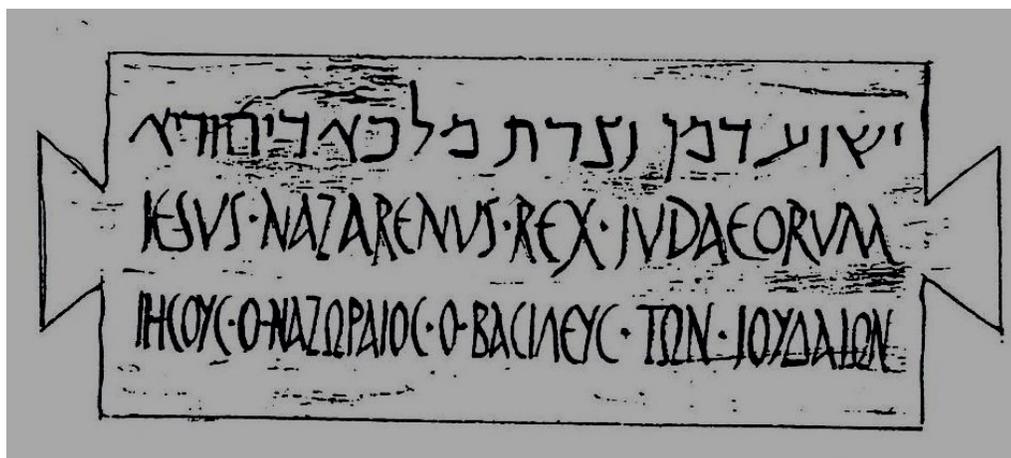
Lk. 23:38 **“The king of the Jews [is] this [man].”**

681. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 2:283.

682. Literal translations and bracketed inserts by Robert Webb. See Webb, “The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus.” 747-49.

Jn. 19:19 “Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews”

Gospel of Peter 4:11 “This is the king of Israel.”



16.01.11.A. AN ILLUSTRATION AND REPRODUCTION OF A ROMAN TITULUS. An illustration (top) of a titulus with reproduction below. The *titulus* was a wooden placard carried by the condemned or by the lead soldier, on which was written the reason for his execution. Jesus most certainly carried a titulus with the phrase “Jesus, the Natzarene, the King of the Jews” written in three languages: Hebrew, Latin and Greek.⁶⁸³

683. See 11.02.18.A, that also depicts a titulus on the Arch of Titus.

It implied that Jesus was a threat to *Pax Romana*.⁶⁸⁴ Reproduction by Marlin King. Photograph by the author.

Again there is a question of what appears to be an apparent conflict.⁶⁸⁵ Matthew, the former meticulous tax collector and bookkeeper, gave the most detailed account of the sign by recording the name of Jesus, while the other two synoptic writers simply presented the main idea of the sign, that this lifeless body was the “King of the Jews.” Since the people, by the demonstration of placing palm branches before Jesus at His triumphal entry, recognized Him as their king, His name became synonymous with “King of the Jews.”⁶⁸⁶ Again, the three languages on the *titulus* simply reflect what each writer considered significant – but the theme remains the same throughout.

These variations of quotations are a classic example of *ipsissima verba* and *ipsissima vox* that was previously described (see 08.03.04.Q4). It is evident from ancient Greek writers that it was permissible to record the primary theme or *exact voice* (*vox*) faithfully, rather than obtain an exact quotation or *exact words* (*verba*).⁶⁸⁷ Scholars agree that the accuracy of the gospel message does not demand verbal precision.⁶⁸⁸ An example of Jewish writers conveying ideas without exact wording was discovered in a Dead Sea Scroll Fragment 4Q521, which is explained in this author’s commentary on Luke 7:18-23 (see 08.05.04).

It was the Roman practice to place a *titulus* over selected crucified criminals for the following three reasons:⁶⁸⁹

1. The *titulus* announced the power and authority of the Roman Emperor to crush anyone who he thought might present a challenge. It was written in three languages: Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, so that everyone passing by would know

684. Mellowes and Cran, Producers. *From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians*. (DVD). Part 1; See “Pax Romana” in Appendix 26.

685. For further insight of the four variations of the gospel accounts, see 08.03.04.Q4 “What is the significance of verbal statements, “*ipsissima verba*” and “*ipsissima vox*?” Similar variations are found in 08.06.06.Q1 “Was the daughter of Jairus dead or asleep?”

686. Avi-Yonah and Kraeling, *Our Living Bible*. 295.

687. Wilkins, “Peter’s Declaration concerning Jesus’ Identity in Caesarea Philippi.” 345; Hagner, “Jesus and the Synoptic Sabbath Controversies.” 270; Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages*. vii.

688. These scholars hold to the Reformed Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration on the concept of *Ipsissima Vox*: Stonehouse, *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels*. 109-10; Murray, *Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty*. 30; Hodge and Warfield, “Inspiration.” 238.

689. Stein, R., *Jesus the Messiah*. 247; See also Suetonius, *Caligula* 32.2 and *Domitian* 10:1; Dio Cassius, 54.3.7.

the reason for the execution.⁶⁹⁰

2. To insult the Jewish leaders and the one whom they considered to be a false messiah.

3. To humiliate the person being executed.

A legend that the *titulus* was taken to Rome where it is in a church on the grounds of the Sessorian Palace; a church known as the Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, or Santo Titolo in Gerusalemme.⁶⁹¹

The brutality of a crucifixion was so severe that at times the prisoner was not recognizable, even to his family. Often the Romans prohibited the removal of the body and allowed it to decay and rot on the cross. Eventually dogs and wild animals would clean up the remains. However, the Jews were permitted to remove the body of a fellow Jew. The sign was to serve a function more than to identify the corpse. The cross was so cruel that the Romans abolished its use in A.D. 315. It symbolized a horrific death to the early church, but the meaning quickly changed to eternal life. For this reason, many early churches were built in the shape of a cross.

“The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city.” The Romans crucified Jesus according to Jewish custom – outside the city walls. Today, visitors are often told in error, that the Garden Tomb was the burial site of Jesus because it is outside of the Old City.⁶⁹² However, at the time of Jesus, Jerusalem had both the original city wall and a second wall that had been constructed by Herod the Great.⁶⁹³ At that time, a number of people had their gardens north of the city outside the second wall. Gardens were not permitted within the Jerusalem city walls – the reason was that natural fertilizer (manure) made the city “impure.”⁶⁹⁴ The exceptions were rose gardens with fruit trees. It was there that Joseph of Arimathea had his family garden and tomb.⁶⁹⁵

690. Harrison, *A Short Life of Christ*. 215.

691. Thiede and d’Ancona. *The Quest for the True Cross*. 66.

692. See Dr. Bryant Wood’s comments at 17.02.02.V1.

693. Price, *The Stones Cry Out*. 313.

694. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 42.

695. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 43.

In the year A.D. 41, King Agrippa I ordered a third wall⁶⁹⁶ to be built that enclosed the gardens, the Pool of Bethesda, as well as the crucifixion and burial sites of Jesus. Scholars believe that “third wall” was more for the protection of the food supply than for a defense of the city. When a gate was installed in the existing second wall, it was known as the *Genath* or *Garden Gate*.⁶⁹⁷ That enclosed the area in which Jesus was crucified by the garden owned by Joseph of Arimathea. The city walls seen today, for the most part, were reconstructed on what was believed to be the existing foundations as determined by two 16th century architects employed by the Turkish Suleiman the Magnificent. Unfortunately, they were not very accurate in their assessment. Nonetheless, there is abundant archaeological and historical evidence to support the tradition that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is both the crucifixion and burial sites, even though today it is located within the Old City walls.⁶⁹⁸

“What I have written, I have written.” Pilate again demonstrated how little he cared for the Jews. The Jews objected to the sign posted above Jesus, because it was a mockery to them. While Pilate could find no fault with Jesus, the Sadducees, elders, and scribes convinced him that Jesus was a messianic pretender with nationalistic aspirations. The Romans executed Jesus because,

1. Pilate tried to appease the Jewish leadership.
2. Officially Jesus was condemned for political reasons, although Roman observers never made a claim against Him during His life or ministry.

Jesus was not the only condemned person to have received a *titulus*. The church father and historian Eusebius, in his work on church history, wrote of an Attalus who was humiliated in an amphitheater, probably naked. In this case, the prisoner was not executed, but grossly humiliated which was a significant part of Roman punishment.⁶⁹⁹

He was led around the amphitheater and a placard (*titulus*) was carried before him on which was written in Latin, “This is Attalus, the Christian.”

696. In the 1960s a portion of the third wall was discovered by archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon, and in 1976, Magen Broshi discovered a portion of Herod’s city wall in the Sepulchre itself. See 17.02.02.Z, “Map of Jerusalem.” However, the exact locations of *all* the walls of the Old City, as it was in the first century, is a major problem for archaeologists and historians.

697. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 43.

698. Bahat, “Does the Holy Sepulcher Church Mark the Burial of Jesus?” 26-40.

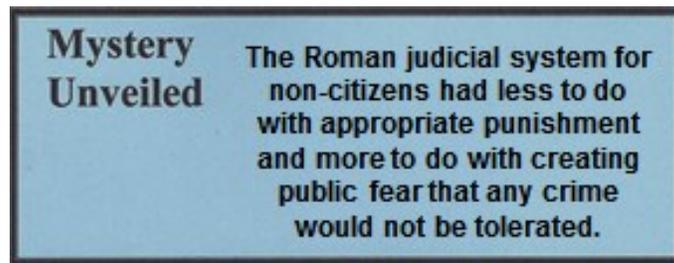
699. There appears to be no record of what happened to Attalus. When the local governor discovered he was a Roman citizen, Attalus was placed in prison and the governor inquired of the emperor of what to do with him.

Eusebius, *Church History* 5.1.44

Another case where the *titulus* was recorded is by the Roman historian Suetonius. He wrote of a slave owned by Emperor Caligula who was accused of stealing a strip of silver. The punishment was obviously rather severe.

At a public banquet in Rome he immediately handed over a slave to the executioners for stealing a strip of silver from the couches, with orders that his hands be cut off and hung around his neck upon his breast, and that he be led about among the guests, preceded by a placard (*titulo*) giving the reason for his punishment.

Suetonius, *The Life of Caligula* 32.2



During the reign of Caesar Tiberius when Jesus was on trial, crimes deserving death were punished by a number of different methods. Those who were “well born” of aristocratic families and Roman citizens, were exiled to live out their last day. But for others, the end of life came much sooner. Note the following:⁷⁰⁰

1. For some, it was decapitation by the sword. This would have been used on prisoners convicted of robbery or murder.
2. For the “low born” there was the “ultimate penalty” or in Latin, *summum supplicium*,⁷⁰¹ which was death by extreme suffering if they committed any form of treason or revolt. This category of death penalties was not so much for just punishment as it was for instilling fear in anyone who would consider rebellion or treason.

700. Webb, “The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus.” 755..

701. Webb, “The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus.” 754-56.

- a. Being thrown to wild animals (*bestiis dari*) where prisoners were literally eaten alive by ravenous lions and tigers.
- b. Being burned alive (*vivus exuri* or *crematio*)
- c. Crucifixion (*crux*). Within this form of execution, there were five methods used in Israel, as shown in the illustrations below. These methods were described, in part, by the Roman writer Seneca, and his words make modern readers shudder at the cruelty crucified men and women endured. It should be noted, however, that Seneca probably referred to crucifixions in Italy, as there is no record of any upside down crucifixions in Israel.

I see crosses, not indeed of a single kind, but differently contrived by different peoples; some hang their victims with the head toward the ground, some impale their private parts, others stretch out their arms on a fork-shaped gibbet.

Seneca, *Dialogus and Letters* 6.20.3

To insure that the maximum number of people would witness the execution, four Roman soldiers, two on either side of the prisoner, marched him through the busiest street of Jerusalem to the place of execution. The lead soldier generally carried the *titulus* or it was hung around the prisoner's neck. There was hardly anyone in the Holy Land who had not seen a man get crucified. Furthermore, since extended families were large, there was hardly anyone who did not have a cousin, a distant cousin, or other relative get crucified.



16.01.11.B. ILLUSTRATIONS 1 & 2 OF CRUCIFIXIONS. LEFT:

The most likely way Jesus was crucified in order to meet all biblical requirements is shown in this illustration – not a bone was broken and probably no butt board to prolong His life. Over the head is a sign called a *titulus*. RIGHT: A prisoner is shown crucified with a nail through bones in each foot as he is resting on a butt-board that a small horizontal piece of wood called a *sedulum*. Illustrations by Diana Clegg.



16.01.11.C. ILLUSTRATIONS 3 & 4 OF CRUCIFIXIONS. LEFT: A prisoner is crucified with legs to one side, resting on a butt-board with a board nailed to his feet. RIGHT: a modified crucifixion of Illustration 3 (Left). Illustrations by Diana Clegg.

The left image of 16.01.11.B is the only crucifixion method that meets all the requirements of the biblical crucifixion. It is well known that medieval artists depicted the feet of Jesus placed one over the other, pierced by a single nail.⁷⁰² That image is commonplace today although it is clearly misleading. All crosses had the posts secured in the rocky soil which stood as constant reminders to the local residents of pending death in the event there was a rebellion. There were essentially two kinds of crosses used in Israel.

1. A high cross, known as a “high *tau*” cross because it was shaped like the capital Greek letter *tau* (T). Lifting a prisoner, after he was nailed to the crossbeam, to the top of the post was always a difficult endeavor.
2. A low cross, known as a “low *tau*” cross, because it was shaped like a lower case *tau* (t). This was the most common type of cross. Jesus was probably tied to a low *tau* cross.

⁷⁰². Thiede and d’Ancona. *The Quest for the True Cross*. 66-67.

3. In addition, when necessary, trees, whether dead or alive, were used when convicted prisoners outnumbered available crosses. The branches served as the crossbeam to which the prisoner was nailed, but usually tied with ropes.

Some scholars have suggested that the Romans may have used ropes instead of nails to occasionally crucify someone as was done with the Apostle Andrew.⁷⁰³ That may have occurred if the supply of nails was exhausted, but generally, in the first century, criminals were nailed whenever possible.⁷⁰⁴ Execution by crucifixion was not reserved only for men, as two ancient witnesses indicate.

1. The Talmudic Tractate “Mourning” (*Semahot*) describes regulations pertaining to death, burial and mourning.⁷⁰⁵ In section 2.11 the tractate refers to Jewish women crucified in Alexandria in the years A.D. 37-41. However, the event in Alexandria was in a different Roman jurisdiction, not in Israel.

2. In Ashkelon, Jannaeus crucified eighty women whom he suspected of being witches, an account which was recorded in the *Mishnah*.⁷⁰⁶ He stripped them naked and, for the sake of modesty, nailed them facing the cross where they died. The Essenes also wrote of this horrific event in their Dead Sea Scroll 4QpNah 1:6-8.⁷⁰⁷ This was decades before the right of capital punishment was removed from the Jews.

703. A brief description of the lives of the apostles is found in Appendix 27.

704. Robinson. “Crucifixion in the Roman World: The Use of Nails at the Time of Christ.” 42-48.

705. Robinson. “Crucifixion in the Roman World: The Use of Nails at the Time of Christ.” 33.

706. See 03.05.10. The Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 6.4 states that it was Simeon ben Shetah who ordered the 80 women to be crucified.

707. Elgvin, “The Messiah.” 36. Young, “The Cross, Jesus and the Jewish People.” 27.



16.01.11.D. ILLUSTRATIONS 5 & 6 OF CRUCIFIXIONS. LEFT: A tree trunk by an stone wall (typical of olive tree orchards) ready for a crucifixion. RIGHT: Posts were secured in the stony ground and the cross-beam was attached with the prisoner nailed or tied with a rope to it.⁷⁰⁸ Posts were constant reminders to the Jews not to revolt. When crosses or posts were in short supply, the condemned were crucified in live trees or two criminals to a cross. Illustrations by Diana Clegg.

According to one ancient writer, the Apostle Andrew was bound with ropes on a low cross, a/k/a “low *tau*” cross, so dogs and wild animals could eat his flesh as he was dying.⁷⁰⁹ No capital punishment is pleasant, but some forms are worse than others. For the Jews according to the Oral Law, there were only four kinds of death penalties that could be ordered by the Jewish court:⁷¹⁰

1. Stoning
2. Beheading

708. See the martyrdom of the Apostle Andrew in Appendix 27.

709. See *The Acts of Andrew* in Appendix 27, “The Faith of the Disciples and Gospel Writers.”

710. Mishnah, *Sanbedrin* 7.1.

3. Strangling

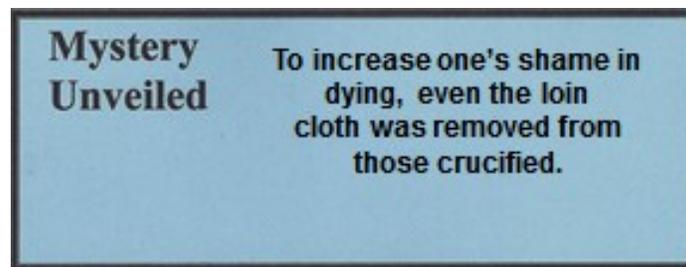
4. Burning

Clearly, some of the Jewish rulers did not follow their own Oral Laws, as they used the crucifixion method that was not legal according to the Sanhedrin. The low *tau* cross was the most commonly used cross. At times a horizontal piece of wood was placed to support the buttocks to prolong the dying process. Both men and women were stripped completely naked when crucified to add immeasurable shame and humiliation to their punishment. Artists throughout history have shown Jesus on the cross as wearing a loincloth, but this is artistic license done to maintain His dignity and is not historically accurate.

It is difficult to comprehend the inhumanity of the Roman soldiers at time of war. When Jerusalem was under siege, Titus crucified all who attempted to escape, sometimes as many as 500 a day. The historian said that the soldiers crucified them in a number of different ways simply out of fun, and they even ran out of crosses.

So the soldiers, out of wrath and hatred they bore for the Jews, nailed those they caught, one after one way, and another after another, to the crosses, by way of jest; when their multitude was so great, that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies.

Josephus, *Wars* 5.11.1 (451)



Roman citizens were exempted from crucifixion, yet the thought of it was so horrific that Cicero⁷¹¹ said,

Let the very name of the cross be far away not only from the body of a Roman citizen, but even from his thoughts, his eyes, and his ears.
Cicero, *Pro Rabirio* 5

711. Marcus Tullius Cicero (107-44 B.C.) was a Roman lawyer, politician and philosopher whose death came by an assassin.

An Historical Summary of Crucifixion

The method of crucifixion has a long history, predating the Roman period. Scholars believe that crucifixion, in its earliest and crudest form, originated with the Assyrians.⁷¹² During battles, they would place a pole in the ground and impale a captured soldier on the top of it, thus “hanging” him until he died an agonizing death. This had an incredibly demoralizing effect on the enemy.⁷¹³ Centuries earlier Joshua stated that the king of Ai (Jos. 8:23, 29) and the five kings of the Amorites were hung from trees (Jos. 10:5, 26-27). However, it appears that these were not live crucifixions, but the display of victory over the defeated and deceased kings.

It had long been used by the Persians and Carthaginians.⁷¹⁴ According to the first century Roman historian Curtius, Alexander the Great brought the practice into the Holy Land, but not until he first crucified two thousand citizens of Tyre who had surrendered.⁷¹⁵ Even the Jewish Sadducees, who were in power for most of the time after the Maccabean Revolt in the 160s B.C., practiced crucifixion. Between the years 90 and 88 B.C., they crucified an estimated eight hundred Pharisees (see 03.05.10). Obviously they had no second thoughts about killing Jesus because they had a well-established history of blood.

In the early first century B.C. era, Marcus Crassus was a Roman general and politician who helped transform the Roman Republic to an empire. He crushed the revolt at Spartacus and lined the road from Capua to Rome with crucified slaves who were captured.⁷¹⁶ Decades later, Caesar Augustus introduced its general use for anyone who revolted against Rome. There was absolutely no sense of compassion for those who rebelled against the empire, except an occasional centurion or a few local citizens.

Hanging on a cross often resulted in joints becoming disjointed. This must have occurred to Jesus as the Psalmist said,

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are disjointed;

712. Incidentally, Assyrian cruelty is why Jonah did not want to go to the Assyrian capital of Nineveh and preach repentance.

713. Tzaferis, “Crucifixion – The Archaeological Evidence.” 48.

714. Herodotus, *Histories* 3.128. *Histories* was written about 460 to 420 B.C.; Polybius, *The Histories* 1.86. *The Histories* was written in the second century B.C..

715. Quintus Curtius Rufus, *Historiae Alexandri Magni* 8.

716. Gaius Plinius Secundus, also known as Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae*. 38 Cited by Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*. 2:557.

my heart is like wax.

Psalm 22:14

To lessen the pain somewhat of this horrific experience, although it did prolong the dying experience, some prisoners were hung with a small horizontal piece of wood, called a *sedulum*, under the buttocks to relieve the pain of hanging. This was most likely *not* the case for Jesus.

16.01.12 Jn. 19:23-24 (See also Mt. 27:35-36; Mk. 15:24; Lk. 23:34b)

SOLDIERS CAST LOTS

²³ When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took His clothes and divided them into four parts, a part for each soldier. They also took the tunic, which was seamless, woven in one piece from the top.

²⁴ So they said to one another, “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it, to see who gets it.” They did this to fulfill the Scripture that says:

“They divided My clothes among themselves, and they cast lots for My clothing” (*Psalm 22:18*).

And this is what the soldiers did.

A typical Jewish person wore five pieces of apparel.⁷¹⁷ These were

1. The sandals (few people wore shoes)
2. A turban that was a head covering. It was required of women.
3. A girdle
4. A tunic. This garment was an expensive one-piece garment further described below.
5. An outer robe

⁷¹⁷ Barclay, “John.” 2:253.

“They took His clothes.” Crucifixion was the ultimate shame, not only because of the social stigma, but also because every piece of clothing was removed from His body. Jesus normally wore a prayer shawl that had strings or fringes,⁷¹⁸ and was probably taken from Him during the Jewish trials. Under the *tallith* was a larger and more expensive robe known as the *tunic* or *cetoneth*.⁷¹⁹ Garments taken were,

1. His long inner garment
2. His sandals
3. His girdle (belt)
4. His expensive outer garment (*tunic* or *cetoneth*)
5. His prayer shawl or *tallith*⁷²⁰

Roman soldiers regularly gambled for the clothes of those who were crucified. Since garments were expensive, there was a premium on the under garments, outer garments, upper garment, and sandals. As a courtesy, Christian art shows Jesus on the cross with a loin cloth. However, *a vast majority* of persons were crucified completely naked as this was the highest order of shame that could be bestowed upon anyone. Only in rare cases, as recorded in *Jubilees* 3:30-31 and 7:20, did the crucified person wear a loin cloth.

“The tunic, which was seamless.” On the day of His death, Jesus wore an expensive garment, the kind that was normally worn only by the upper class individuals (see 15.02.09.Q1). However, in this case, it was symbolic of Him being the universal and spiritual high priest of humanity, as the high priest was the same for the Jews. According to the Mosaic Law, the high priest in the tabernacle, and later in both temples, was required to wear a garment of a single piece of fabric (Ex. 28:31-43); a highly prized garment known as the *tunic* or *cetoneth*.⁷²¹ Since the *cetoneth* that Jesus wore was a

718. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 2:277. However, it appears that not all scholars agree on this particular garment. Fruchtenbaum, *The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 25, page 5.

719. Some scholars identify the garment that was worn closest to the skin as a *tunic* while others call it a *cloak*. Pilch, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible*. 15-17; Vine, “Clothing, Cloths, Clothes, Cloak, Coat.” *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:105-07, and “Garment.” 2:261.

720. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. 2:285.

721. Some scholars identify the garment that was worn closest to the skin as a *tunic* while others call it a *cloak*. It is doubtful that Jesus would have told someone to give a second pair of underwear to another person, but to give a second coat would have been more acceptable. The Jewish culture was a highly modest one and

continuous fabric, to tear it would have destroyed its value. Therefore, the soldiers cast lots for it.⁷²² This action was the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy found in Psalm 22:18. Josephus described priestly garment in this manner:

Now this vesture was not composed of two pieces, nor was it sewed together upon the shoulders and the sides, but it was one long vestment so woven as to have an aperture for the neck; not an oblique one, but parted all along the breast and the back.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 3.7.4 (161)

The gospel writer mentioned the four soldiers, who mocked Jesus and gambled for His garment. He also mentioned four women who wept when they realized Jesus was about to die. The identical number was no accident. Certainly there were many more (Zech. 12:10) who mourned the death of Jesus. Nevertheless, John used this as a literary device to heighten the tension of the event.⁷²³



nakedness was condemned. Pilch, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible*. 15-17; Vine, "Clothing, Cloths, Clothes, Cloak, Coat." *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. 2:105-07.

722. Farrar, *Life of Christ*. 439. 441.

723. Major, Manson, and Wright, *The Mission and Message of Jesus*. 928.

16.01.12.A. Roman Dice. Roman dice found at Sepphoris are typical of the first century. They were made of bone and opposite faces always added up to seven.

The Antonia Fortress was destroyed and today the Convent of the Sisters of Zion is upon its foundation. On the lower floor of the Convent is a second century (A.D.) stone pavement floor, which scholars believe was built by Emperor Hadrian in the reconstruction of the city. On one of the pavement stones is an inscribed game, which appears to have similarities to the dice game of the biblical narrative. The Fortress may not be where Jesus was condemned, but the game is believed to have been the same as when the guards entertained themselves at His expense. The game was a popular entertainment throughout the Empire.⁷²⁴



16.01.12.B. A GAME OF DICE INCISED IN STONE. A pavement stone with an incised dice game found in what was once the Antonia Fortress and is believed to be dated to the 2nd century A.D. when Hadrian rebuilt Jerusalem. A dice game was often played when soldiers had idle hours and at times, was part of the King's Game that was often played by Roman soldiers as they taunted prisoners.

724. Mackowski, *Jerusalem City of Jesus*. 96-97.

A similar dice game has been found incised on a pavement stone on the road in Sepphoris. It is the same as that found on a second century (A.D.) stone floor of the Antonia Fortress (today's Convent of the Sisters of Zion) as well as on a stone in the mountain-top city of Hippos. There is little doubt that these games are the same as, or similar to, first century games of chance.



16.01.12.C THE OSSUARY OF JAMES, THE BROTHER OF JESUS. This ossuary with an inscription indicating that it belonged to James, the brother of Jesus, was the subject of a court battle and continues to be debated among academics. Those who claimed the inscription was fraudulent lost their case, but that does not prove the inscription is genuine. Photo by Wikipedia Commons.

In 2011 and 2012 scholars in the fields of archaeology and paleography (the art and science of authenticating and dating inscriptions based on the shape and stance of various letters) examined, studied, debated, and held conferences concerning the authenticity of an ossuary with the inscribed words, “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.” Modern technology has advanced to the point that forgeries are almost impossible to distinguish from authentic antiquities. Therefore, the entire matter of whether the ossuary of James,

the brother of Jesus, not only was front page news around the world, but also a legal battle as Israel Antiquities Authority accused the owner of forgery. While the prosecution failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the inscription was a forgery incised on an authentic ossuary, that failure does not prove authenticity of the inscription. However, even if the inscription is authentic, that does not mean that the ossuary is a reference to Jesus of Nazareth as the name was common.⁷²⁵

16.01.13 Mt. 27:39-44; Lk. 23:35-37 (See also Mk. 15:29-32)

CROWD MOCKS JESUS

Mt. ³⁹ Those who passed by were yelling insults at Him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, “The One who would demolish the sanctuary and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross!”

⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked Him and said, ⁴² “He saved others, but He cannot save Himself! He is the King of Israel! Let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in Him. ⁴³ He has put His trust in God; let God rescue Him now — if He wants Him! For He said, ‘I am God’s Son.’” ⁴⁴ In the same way even the criminals who were crucified with Him kept taunting Him.

Lk. ³⁵ The people stood watching, and even the leaders kept scoffing: “He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One!” ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked Him. They came offering Him sour wine ³⁷ and said, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!”

Since crucifixions were public events, many of those who saw Jesus dying mocked Him and His messianic claims. The Sadducees challenged Him to come down from the cross. The imagery of Him in wrenching pain was recorded nearly a thousand years earlier by King David, as he eluded his enemies. Little did the king know that his words were prophetic.

**¹² Many bulls surround me;
strong ones of Bashan encircle me.**

¹³ They open their mouths against me

725. Lemaire, “Engraved in Memory.” 52-57; Shanks, “Brother of Jesus’ Inscription is Authentic!” 26-33.

Lions, mauling and roaring.

**¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are disjointed.
My heart is like wax,
Melting within me.**

**¹⁵ My strength is dried up like baked clay;
My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
You put me into the dust of death.**

**¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded me;
a gang of evildoers has closed in on me;
they pierced my hands and my feet.**

**¹⁷ I can count all my bones;
people look and stare at me.**

**¹⁸ They divided my garments among themselves,
and they cast lots for my clothing.**

Psalm 22:12-18

“The One who would demolish the sanctuary.” This statement is attributed to the Sadducees, as they claimed the temple to be their source of authority.⁷²⁶ The ordinary Jews would never have spoken these words and the Pharisees did not have the strong affiliation to the temple, as they had many decades earlier. This phrase, concerning the temple destruction and raising it in three days, suggests that it was the powerful, motivating factor in His crucifixion.

“If You are the Son of God.” These same words were spoken by Satan when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness. Evil spirits will function through any willing vessel. These words by the chief priests, scribes, and elders – essentially the Sadducees – were radically different from the soldier who stood at the cross and realized the Jesus really was the Son of God.

“They came offering Him sour wine.” They offered Jesus a wine-vinegar mixture that included myrrh, a spice, and medicine that functioned as a painkiller. This shows that

726. The Sadducees had control of the temple because that authority was given to them by the Romans.

even the war-hardened Roman soldiers had compassion for the criminals.⁷²⁷

By now Jesus was deprived of all human dignities of life; His honor and respect were lost, His disciples deserted Him, His clothes were gone, and the agony of physical and spiritual of death began to overwhelm Him. Yet in this most wretched state of existence, He offered eternal life to the two who were dying beside Him. One accepted, but the other refused. How can anyone refuse so great a salvation offered by the One with so great a compassion? Jesus became absolutely poor and destitute that believers might be made rich in and through Him forever.

16.01.14 Lk. 23:39-43

THIEF ASKS REMEMBRANCE

³⁹ Then one of the criminals hanging there began to yell insults at Him: “Aren’t You the Messiah? Save Yourself and us!”

⁴⁰ But the other answered, rebuking him: “Don’t you even fear God, since you are undergoing the same punishment? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, because we’re getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this man has done nothing wrong.”

⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!”

⁴³ And He said to him, “I assure you: Today you will be with Me in paradise.”

“I assure you: Today you will be with Me in paradise.” This second of the last Testaments on the cross is the promise of eternal life to one who was condemned to die.

There is a strong possibility that both revolutionaries knew Jesus or knew of Him, before their appointed executions. In fact, Jesus became so popular, that there was not a person who had not heard of Him. The primary reason for this opinion is that the one thief simply addressed Jesus by His name. Furthermore, he had knowledge of the kingdom Jesus preached as did the other criminal, but the second one never asked about it, although he seems to have had sufficient knowledge to reject it.

727. See 16.01.10; See also Ex. 30:23-24; Mt. 2:11; Mk. 15:23; Jn. 19:39-40.

One of them recognized his spiritual condition, his need for forgiveness, and appealed to Jesus for mercy. To comprehend the holiness of God in light of one's state of being (i.e. a sinner) results in a plea for mercy. Jesus is not a respecter of persons, but He is a respecter of motives and attitudes. The request of the thief was accepted and was forgiven while the other maintained his hardened heart and attitude.

How interesting is this scene with the two dying revolutionary Zealots, one on either side of Him. This scene reflects those of future generations when some will accept Him and others will reject Him. Jesus said two would be grinding corn, and one would be gone and the other left; two would be in the field, one would be gone, and the other left. So it was as He was dying on the cross.

16.01.14.Q1 Did Jesus take the repentant thief to heaven on the day they died (Lk. 23:43)?

The passage in Luke 23:43 has been problematic because Jesus said He would take the repentant thief to heaven "today," but it is well known that Jesus did not ascend to heaven until forty-three days later. Like many others, this writer once believed that paradise was the same place as heaven. It isn't. Consider the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The former was in a world of torment while Lazarus was in paradise – but not in heaven. Paradise was a holding area that had two areas:

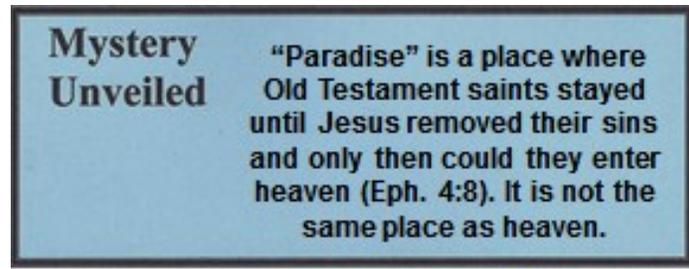
1. One for those going to heaven
2. Another for the damned

The word *paradise* is a/k/a "Abraham's bosom" to which Jesus referred to in Luke 16. The Apostle Paul also made a reference to it in Ephesians 4:8 when he said that Jesus led "captivity captive" – those in paradise destined for heaven. When the plan of salvation was completed, the captives went to heaven and therefore, there is no problem or conflict with Jesus having said, "Today, you will be with me in paradise."⁷²⁸

Godly saints of the Old Testament period went to paradise, not heaven, because their sins were *covered* by sacrificial animals (Heb. 10:1-4) but *not removed* by the blood of Jesus. No one can enter heaven with covered sins. Jesus paid the price for all pre-cross sins. Since no one could/can enter heaven without the blood of Jesus *removing* their sins, the saints of the Old Testament era stayed in Paradise, a/k/a Abraham's Bosom, Hades, until Jesus paid the price of their sins. But when Jesus died, He went to Paradise with the last

728. <http://www.bereanbiblesoceity.org/articles/1115147624.html> Retrieved October 15, 2011.

“new” saint of the Old Testament era – the Zealot – and proclaimed the gospel. Only His death could accomplish the removal of the pre-cross sins.⁷²⁹ From there the fellowship of Old Testament saints were then taken to their heavenly abode.



The classic example is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus found in Luke 16:19-31.⁷³⁰ It is the story of the rich man who died and was in torment while Lazarus was on the other side of a great gulf – in paradise – from where he would eventually go to heaven. Sometimes paradise is called “Hades,” especially the section of torment. Jesus is the triumphant Lord of heaven and hell (Rev. 1:18; Phil. 2:10) and has ultimate power over death (1 Pet. 3:19).

The Apostle Peter, in his first letter, said that Jesus preached to those who had died. Obviously, they were unaware of future events and had not heard of the gospel until Jesus shared it with them. Peter stated:

For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, so that, although they might be judged by men in the fleshly realm, they might live by God in the spiritual realm.

1 Peter 4:6

The Apostles Creed on the end of line 4 states “He [Jesus] descended into hell.”⁷³¹ An earlier form of the Apostles Creed formed the basic structure of the Nicene Creed, which led to the fifth century Athanasian Creed, which states that “[Christ] suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.” Because of His

729. Acts 17:30; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:15, 10:4.

730. See 12.03.08.

731. <https://www.ccel.org/creeds/apostles.creed.html> Retrieved July 31, 2014.

descent into hell and rise to life, He conquered sin and death, and more importantly, Jesus took the keys of Satan's authority.⁷³²

This does not indicate that those who died can still be saved, nor should one pray to or for the dead. Rather, it states that Jesus went to those who had died and told them of Himself. That is why Ignatius said,

He descended, indeed, into Hades alone, but He arose accompanied by a multitude; and rent asunder that means of separation which had existed from the beginning of the world, and cast down its partition-wall.

Ignatius, *Letter to the Tralhans*⁷³³

Finally, the names of the two Zealots who were crucified with Jesus have been lost in human history. Only one of them will be known throughout eternity. However, that has not prevented self-inspired writers for becoming creative historians.⁷³⁴ Several books within the classification of Pseudepigrapha, have listed their names. Unfortunately, there is some serious disagreement on their identity. Suggested names are Dismas and Gestas, as in the *Acts of Pilate*. But other books identify them as Zoathan and Chammata, or as Joathas and Maggattras, or as Titus and Dumatchus. Clearly this demonstrates why the Pseudepigrapha books must be evaluated with great suspicion.⁷³⁵

16.01.15 Jn. 19:25-27

JESUS PROVIDES FOR MARY, HIS MOTHER

²⁵ Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple He loved standing there, He said to His mother, "Woman, here is your son." ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from

732. Scaer, "He did descend to Hell: In Defense of the Apostles' Creed." 93.

733. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Patristic Quotations: From 50 – 750 A.D.* 39.

734. Creative writers and other "false teachers and prophets" have existed throughout the centuries. Ron Charles has gathered scores of fanciful legends and myths, mostly written between the sixth and sixteenth centuries, that pertain to the life of Christ in his book titled, *The Search: A Historian's Search for Historical Jesus*. (Self-Published, 2007). Another researcher is Nicholas Notovich, whose book, *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*. Trans. (Virchand R. Gandhi, Dover Pub.) is a so-called historical account of when Jesus went to Asia to study between the ages 13 and 29. All of these accounts are truly fanciful.

735. Jordan. *Who's Who in the Bible*. 240.

that hour the disciple took her into his home.

While Jesus was abandoned by all but one of His disciples, it appears that a few women were also with Him. The number of Marys in verse 25 highlights the difficulties of determining who is who. They were:

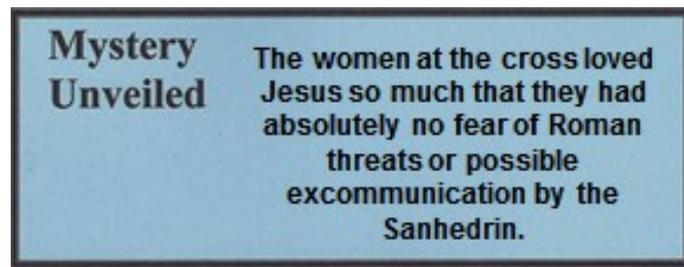
1. Mary, the mother of Jesus
2. Salome, His mother's sister who was His aunt. Salome was married to Zebedee and their two sons were James and John – cousins of Jesus.
3. Mary, the wife of Clopas, who was also the mother of James and Joses
4. Mary Magdalene.

The opinions of men concerning of women were not always very good. For example, Josephus and Nicholas of Damascus seldom mention the names of women.⁷³⁶ That was the general custom of the time. Therefore, for the gospel writers to mention and name the women who were present, speaks highly of the gospel writers. Those few were some women who were without question, as dedicated to following Him as were the disciples. Women were far less likely to be arrested by the Romans than men were. At this particular time it was dangerous for any man who knew Jesus to be at the crucifixion site for two reasons:

1. When men were crucified, it was always dangerous for his male friends to be seen nearby. No doubt that was the major reason the disciples had disappeared so quickly. However, female friends and family members were seldom suspect and could attend to the victim's dying needs if they wished.
2. However, in this case, it was also dangerous for anyone, including women, to be near a condemned criminal that the Jewish leaders considered a heretic. Obviously the Sanhedrin considered Jesus a heretic, or something worse, and one never knew if Caiaphas and his associates would attempt to have anyone else thrown out of the synagogue or crucified.

736. For further study on the various opinions concerning the status and influence of women in the Second Temple Period, see the excellent work by Tal Ilan, *Integrating Women into Second Temple History*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999. Take note of Chapter 3 on the discussions of two first century historians, Josephus and Nicholas of Damascus, and their comments about women. Nicholas was the personal historian for Herod the Great.

Nearly all of His male friends, as well as His disciples had deserted Him; those who had been like family were gone. Only the dearest of His family were there: His mother and two close friends. An early church tradition states that Clopas was a brother of Joseph, the step-father of Jesus. One must wonder, however, if Barabbas was not also there, watching intently and wondering who it was that gave him a second chance in life.



“The disciple He loved.” John used the phrase, “the disciple He loved” four times when referring to Himself as the disciple of Jesus.⁷³⁷ It was an indirect method of identifying himself. In the ancient Middle Eastern culture and likewise, in many areas there today, one does not speak directly of himself. Bragging is clearly out of order. Therefore, just as John the Baptist did not make “I” statements, Jesus simply followed cultural protocol by not making a public announcement of being the Messiah.

“He said to His mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then He said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” This third saying of Jesus reflects the love and care He had for His mother Mary. It was the responsibility of the oldest son to take care of His parents as they aged. Evidently, Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, had passed on previously, and only his mother survived until this time. As a widow, she was destined for poverty unless her children cared for her. Now that Jesus was dying, He transferred His responsibility to His best friend and soon-to-be apostle, John, who took her into his home.

Years earlier when Jesus was an infant, Mary presented Him to Simeon in the temple who said that a sword would pierce her heart. Now those words were fulfilled, as she grieved the death of her beloved Jesus. She had left her other children when she walked along up the hill known as “the Skull.” They refused to come as they could not bear additional shame, leaving her broken hearted standing by her first-born Son.

737. Jn. 13:23-25; 19:25-27; 20:2; and 21:20.

16.01.15.Q1 Concerning the care for Mary, why did Jesus break from the cultural norm?

It may surprise the reader that, evidently, Jesus was not always on the best of terms with His family. Or possibly better said, they were not always on the best of terms with Him. This is evident in several passages and is the most likely reason why Jesus passed the care of His mother to John.

The cultural norm was that the eldest son cared for both parents until they pass on and were buried. Should something have happened to the eldest son so that he cannot perform this responsibility, then that responsibility is passed on to the second eldest son. Clearly, this was not done in this case. As Mary's eldest Son was dying on the cross, but He passed the responsibility to care for His mother on to John. Jesus bypassed His other four half-brothers and two-half sisters, because they were *not* there. John was well loved and Mary, we can assume, would have been more comfortable with him than with her own children. Furthermore, Jesus, with His prophetic foreknowledge, probably knew that His brother James would be martyred, so His mother Mary would be safer with John.

As for John, it was an unspeakable honor to care for her. As soon as the crucifixion was over, John took her home and cared for her. Mary and John, truly a loving "sister" and "brother" in Christ, yielded to the will of Jesus without question. There is no record of how long she lived, but it can safely be assumed that she was well provided for.⁷³⁸

The resurrection had a dynamic effect on His family. It was then, like with so many others, that the family realized Jesus really was the Messiah. Therefore, when they had heard that the Holy Spirit of God was to come, all came to Jerusalem to receive this special gift. For Acts 1:14 reads that "Mary, the mother of Jesus and with His brothers" was at a prayer meeting that would usher in Pentecost. When Peter stood up to preach, Mary and her sons were among the 120 attendees.

16.01.16 Mt. 27:45-47 (See also Mk. 15:33-35; Lk. 23:44-45a) **The Wrath of God:**
12:00 Noon to 3:00 p.m.

JESUS CRIES OUT

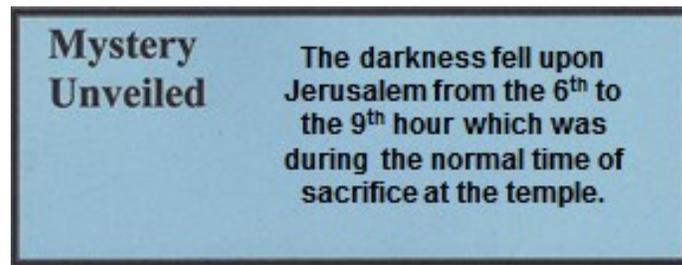
⁴⁵ **From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over the whole land.**

738. See commentaries on Lk. 2:41-50; Jn. 2:1-11; Lk. 4:16-20; Mk. 6:4; Mt. 12:48-50; Jn. 19:25-27; Acts 1:14.

46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lemá sabachtháni?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling for Elijah!”

“Darkness.” Darkness came upon the land during what normally is the brightest part of the day, noon, until the 9th hour (Hebraic time) which is reckoned to be 3:00 p.m.⁷³⁹ The judgment of God that fell upon Egypt had fallen upon Israel, as the Light of the World descended into the earth to take the keys of death, Hades, and the abyss from Satan. Some three decades earlier when Jesus was born, a starry light led the magi to Him, but when national Israel rejected Him, the light went out. The Jewish race fell into darkness and judgment that was only four decades into the future.



There has been much discussion concerning the source of this darkness. It has been suggested that it was a solar eclipse.⁷⁴⁰ However, such an eclipse is not possible during full moon, and if by some reason it did occur, the darkness of any eclipse is only eight minutes – not three hours.⁷⁴¹ Other suggestions have been a dust storm from the eastern Arabian Desert or dust from a volcanic eruption at some distant location, (since there are no active volcanoes in the Middle East). However, a dust storm or volcanic dust cloud will not create *total* darkness, but a fog-like atmosphere in which visibility is slightly reduced. Therefore, there is no natural explanation other than it was a divine event. Many evangelical scholars attempt to place the miracle of darkness within the framework

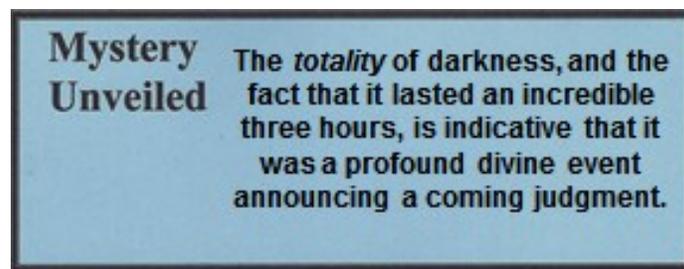
739. See Appendix 16.

740. In an interesting side note, *The New York Times* reported in late November, 2014 of a mechanical device built by the Greeks around 205 B.C., that was able to predict eclipses. Researchers James Evans, professor of Physics at University of Puget Sound, and Christian Carman, history of science professor at University of Quilmes, Argentina, said the computer-like device made predictions on Babylonian arithmetical methods borrowed by the Greeks, not on Greek trigonometry. There are no enlightening comments on the star of Bethlehem or the darkness of Good Friday, but it did predict lunar and solar eclipses. Cited by Bullinger, Clyde, ed. “Clues to an Ancient Greek Riddle.” *Artifax*. 30:1 (Winter, 2014). 12, 14.

741. See “Passover” in Appendix 5.

of a natural event, which “miraculously” occurred when Jesus was crucified. The significant fact that must be repeated is that an eclipse is an event lasting only eight minutes – this darkness lasted *three hours*. Its time and totality of darkness emphasized the obvious – as a number of biblical books associate it with divine judgment.⁷⁴²

Among the ancient writers, the historian Phlegon noted that there was an eclipse and an earthquake on Passover. However, a conventional eclipse would have been impossible, as the Jews always celebrated the Passover at a full moon. Phlegon, however, had no other way to explain the unusual event and equated it to an eclipse. While he was wrong in his interpretation of an eclipse, he did in fact, acknowledge and document that darkness fell upon the earth.



The Talmud says that whenever the sun is eclipsed, it is because a great rabbi was not properly eulogized after he died.⁷⁴³ This belief existed throughout the Inter-Testamental Period and continued for at least several centuries thereafter.

An eclipse of the sun is a bad omen for the world.

Babylonian Talmud, *Sukkah* 29a.

When Jesus died everyone knew that the resulting darkness was not an ordinary solar eclipse. They must have wondered that if an ordinary eclipse was a bad omen, what this darkness represented? Jesus closed His life with darkness for those who rejected Him; a darkness by divine appointment and warning as prophesied by the prophet Amos:

⁹ And in that day — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD---

I will make the sun go down at noon;

I will darken the land in the daytime.

¹⁰ I will turn your feasts into mourning,

742. Joel 2:2; 10; 3:15; Amos 8:9; Zeph. 1:15; Wisdom 5:6.

743. <http://www.aish.com/ci/sam/48936647.html>. Retrieved November 1, 2012.

**and all your songs into lamentation;
I will cause everyone to wear sackcloth
and every head to be shaved.
I will make that grief like mourning for an only son
and its outcome like a bitter day.**

Amos 8:9-10

“About three in the afternoon.” From the pinnacle of the temple the trumpeter blew three blasts when one-third of the evening-sacrifice service was over which was at the “ninth hour” or 3:00 PM on Friday afternoon.⁷⁴⁴ The moment of death for Jesus was at hand.

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” This is the only time when Jesus referred to God as “God” and did not call Him, “My Father.” At this point, Jesus personified the name, *Jehovah Tsidkenu* meaning, our Lord who is our Righteousness.⁷⁴⁵ The phrase reveals His humanity at a time of great suffering. In this fourth saying, Jesus did His greatest work, which was evidently hidden from Satan and his demonic angels. While they were aware that Jesus would redeem humanity, they did not know how this was to be accomplished. Satan used every trick he knew to kill Jesus and, apparently, worked rather successfully through the Sadducees and Romans. The irony is that Jesus willingly died a spiritual death, as evidenced by this statement. He was absolute, pure innocence, who took upon Himself all of the sins of humanity. Thus, He made Himself sinful in place of us. This profound question demonstrates that God could not even bear to look upon His perfect Son, when Jesus took upon Himself the sin of humanity as He hung on the cross. The prophet Isaiah said seven centuries earlier, “Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God” (Isa. 59:2). In Romans 6:23 the Apostle Paul wrote to fellow believers, “The wages (reward) of sin is death.” Death has always been the penalty of sin and results in being separated from God. Jesus, who lived a perfect life and died a cruel death so believers can enjoy the Kingdom of God and eternal life as well.

After Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, angels ministered to Him (Mt. 4:11). When He agonized in the “Garden of Gethsemane,” because He saw this death before Him, an angel came to comfort Him (Lk. 22:43). But now, not even the angels could comfort Him, yet it is amazing that He constantly maintained His faith in His Father. Even more amazing is that He maintained faith in sinful humanity, knowing that His suffering would not be in vain.

⁷⁴⁴. See discussion on “evening” in Appendix 16.

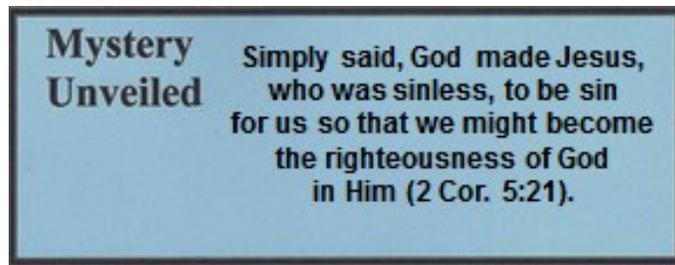
⁷⁴⁵. Evans, *The Power of God's Names*. 171.

This phrase has a unique feature. Even today when the historical figure of Jesus is attacked from various sources, nearly all critics agree, this phrase could not have been invented. If anyone would have fabricated all or part of the life of Christ, they most certainly would not have included this statement “My God, my God. Why have you forsaken Me?” Jesus had just assured the dying thief that he would be in paradise. Where was that assurance now? What did both thieves think when they heard Jesus utter these words? They did not realize that Jesus was taking their sins on the cross for them, just as He did for everyone else.

When Jesus cried out to the Father, **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me”** this reflects that, at this point, He accepted the sins of the world. God the Father, in His purity, could not look upon the sin-tarnished Son. Like Adam and Eve after their sin, fellowship had been replaced by separation. Therefore, the Father had to turn from Jesus. He felt completely forsaken for reasons incomprehensible to us. He was forsaken by the religious leaders, by most of the disciples, such as Peter, by His family such as His brothers, and now by His Father in heaven. To carry the sins of the world was horrific on its own and now God and man forsook him. This was the ultimate in loneliness, beyond what any man or woman can possibly imagine.

When Jesus asked this question, it was not a general question such as a modern reader might ask out of desperation. Rather, His question was a quotation from Psalm 22, which is rich in the vivid imagery of the suffering Jesus. Jews, throughout the Second Temple Period (c. 535 B.C. – A.D. 70) had memorized vast amounts of Scripture. Those who witnessed Jesus die assuredly had this popular Psalm memorized. The rhetorical question was not seeking an answer, but was a connection of the Psalm to the death of Jesus. Furthermore, the Psalm described the death in detail, permitting the witnesses to realize the fulfillment of prophecy.

Theologically, the dynamic work of the cross is beyond the scope of this writing, yet it cannot be left untreated. Without the death of Jesus, there could never have been a resurrection. Without a resurrection of Jesus, there could never have been hope for a lost humanity. God the Father, who is pure and sinless, could not look upon all the sins of humanity that Jesus carried upon the cross. As the Apostle Paul stated, Jesus was “made to be sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21). Not even the angels could come to His aid. The work on the cross is a powerful message for us. When we feel that we are totally in despair and we wonder if God abandoned us, we must remember that Jesus experienced the same emotions and thoughts, yet He promised never to leave us.



It is remarkably interesting that David, prior to becoming king, accurately described the death of Jesus a thousand years prior to the invention of this cruel torturous death. He stated:

**¹ My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?
 Why are You so far from my deliverance
 And from my words of groaning?**

**² My God,
 I cry by day, but You do not answer,
 by night, yet I have no rest.**

**³ But You are holy,
 Enthroned on the praises of Israel.**

**⁴ Our fathers trusted in You;
 they trusted, and You rescued them.**

**⁵ They cried to You and were set free;
 They trusted in You and were not disgraced.**

**⁶ But I am a worm and not a man,
 scorned by men
 and despised by the people.**

**⁷ Everyone who sees me mocks me;
 they sneer and
 shake their heads:**

(they say...)⁷⁴⁶

**⁸ “He relies on the Lord - let Him rescue him;
 Let the Lord deliver him, since He takes pleasure in him.**

Psalm 22:1-8

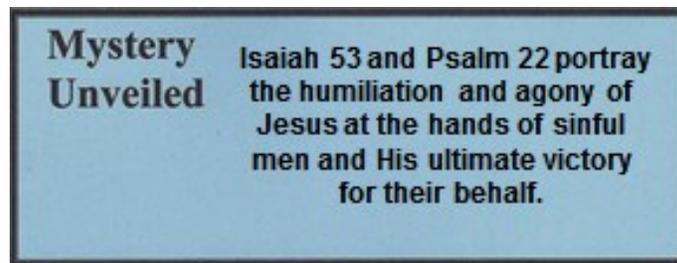
746. Explanatory parenthesis mine.

In the seventh century B.C., the prophet Isaiah said,

**⁴ Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses,
and He carried our pains;
but we in turn regarded Him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.**

**⁵ But He was pierced because of our transgressions,
crushed because of our iniquities;
punishment for our peace was on Him,
and we are healed by His wounds.**

Isaiah 53:4-5



Amazingly, in the portion of the Midrash known as the Haggadah, the tractate links Isaiah 53 with Psalm 22. The latter graphically describes a crucifixion experience a thousand years before Rome began using this excruciating form of capital punishment.

16.01.17 Jn. 19:28; Mt. 27:48a; Jn. 19:29b; Mt. 27:49 (See also Mk. 15:36) **On the Cross**

JESUS IS GIVEN DRINK

Jn. ²⁸ After this, when Jesus knew that everything was now accomplished that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He said, “I’m thirsty!”

Mt. ^{48a} Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge,

Jn ^{29b} full of sour wine on hyssop and held it up to His mouth.

Mt. ⁴⁹ But the rest said, “Let’s see if Elijah comes to save Him!”

“I’m thirsty.” This is the fifth of His testaments. He had not eaten nor had a drink since the Passover on the previous evening. He was dehydrated and breathing became increasingly difficult. The fact that He was extremely thirsty authenticates His humanity. It also demonstrated His humility, as anyone of proud character would not have uttered such words. Yet here was the One who healed the sick, offered living water to those of thirst, raised the dead; but now Himself suffered from thirst.

Jesus did not accept any wine with myrrh or frankincense to kill the pain, nor did He accept any poison, such as gall, to hasten death because He was to drink the cup of suffering decreed by His Father. Centuries earlier, these prophetic words were written,

**²⁰ Insults have broken my heart,
and I am in despair.
I waited for sympathy,
but there was none;
for comforters,
I found no one.
²¹ Instead, they gave me gall
in my food
and for my thirst
they gave me vinegar to drink.**

Psalm 69:20-21

It is interesting that a bystander, who had compassion for His pain, gave Him vinegar without realizing he was fulfilling prophecy. Jesus needed the fluid so He could make the most important statements of His work. The wine vinegar was non-alcoholic and cleared the mouth of drying saliva for the last two most important phrases that He was about to speak.

“Sour wine on hyssop.” John recorded this small detail of a hyssop plant because his Jewish audience knew hyssop was used to apply the blood of the sacrificial lamb on the doorposts just prior to their exodus out of Egypt. The blood applied with a hyssop⁷⁴⁷ was an act of mercy by God, because He was about to bring judgment upon all people (i.e. namely the Egyptians and Hebrews) who did not apply the blood upon their doorposts and lintels. This was to symbolize that Jesus was the blood of the sacrificial lamb that

747. The hyssop is a small plant that grows throughout the Middle East and is still a popular spice.

would save His people from death.

By this time Jesus had been on the cross for three hours, possibly four or more. He was on the cross from 12:00 noon until 3:00 when the land was covered with complete darkness. Scholars believe that it was sometime after the darkness lifted that He spoke His last words and died. That left only a short amount of time for the burial of the three crucified men before the Passover began.

16.01.18 Jn. 19:30a; Lk. 23:46a; Jn. 19:30b (See also Mt. 27:50; Mk. 15:37) On the Cross

JESUS DIES

Jn. ^{30a} When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!”

Lk. ^{46a} And Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into Your hands I entrust My spirit.”

Jn. ^{30b} Then bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

The most detailed description of *how* Jesus died is found in Psalm 22, while Isaiah 53 has the physical suffering up to the time of His death and atonement. Jesus was sacrificed as the Lamb of God to remove the sins of the world. Of all the individuals mentioned in Scripture, Jesus was the most abused person. He died precisely at the same time the lambs were being sacrificed in the temple. These lambs were a covering for the sins of each family, but Jesus died for the sins of humanity. The symbolism was underscored by the timing of the sacrificial death of Jesus (Jn 1:24; 1 Cor. 5:7). One cannot study the life and death of Jesus without taking into account the symbolism that was underscored by the timing of the events together.

Note the words of Melito:

Nature trembled and said with astonishment: What new mystery is this? The judge is judged and remains silent; The invisible One is seen and does not hide Himself; The incomprehensible One is comprehended and does not resist; The immeasurable One is measured and does not struggle; The one beyond suffering suffers and does not avenge Himself; The immortal dies and does not refuse death. What new mystery is this?

Melito of Sardis, *Homily on the Passion* 68⁷⁴⁸

The words of Isaiah continue...

**⁵ But He was pierced because of our transgressions,
crushed because of our iniquities;
Punishment for our peace was on Him,
and we are healed by His wounds.**

**⁶ We all went astray like sheep;
We all have turned to our own way;
And the Lord has punished Him
for the iniquity of us all.**

**⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb led to the slaughter
and like a sheep silent before her shearers,
He did not open his mouth.**

**⁸ He was taken away because
of oppression and judgment;
and who considered His fate?**

**For He was cut off from the land of the living;
He was struck because of my people's rebellion.**

Isaiah 53:5-8

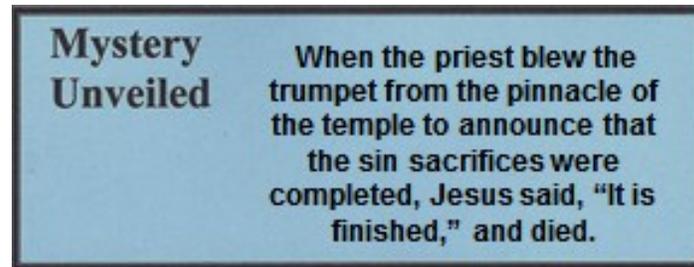
“It is finished.” The Greek word for this phrase, *tetelestai*, means that a work has ended and the goals have been accomplished.⁷⁴⁹ Only in Christianity does God say “it is finished.” It was another way of saying, “the debt of sin has been paid.” The sixth saying of the cross was the announcement that His ministry had concluded. It was at the 9th hour of the day (3:00 p.m.), the time when the priest stood at the pinnacle of the temple and blew the shofar. The sound of the ram’s horn announced the sacrifice of thousands of lambs, which faithful Jews brought to the temple for their sin sacrifices. By His

748. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Patristic Quotations: From 50 – 750 A.D.* 68.

749. Lang, *Know the Words of Jesus.* 404.

incredible grace, a person needs to come only as he/she is and accept His work of salvation. Other religions, both ancient and modern, insist that a good attitude and many good deeds or works for the service to humanity accomplish salvation.

It is significant that the cross demonstrates the identification and solidarity Jesus has with His people, for thousands of them had been crucified unjustly by the religious leaders, Greeks, and Romans. Jesus demonstrated that the greatest defeat can, by Divine grace, be transformed into the greatest victory.



“Father, into Your hands I entrust My spirit.” This final and seventh statement demonstrates that Jesus was in control of His death. Jesus dismissed His Spirit. He chose to die for the sake of a lost humanity. His work was completed in precise detail as predicted by the prophets of centuries past. No other prophet in the future could add anything to the work of Jesus. This was a fulfillment of Exodus 12:46 and Zechariah 12:10, which Paul referred to in 1 Corinthians 5:7. The Romans and Sadducees most certainly did all they could to kill Him, but the only reason Jesus died is because it was the plan of the Almighty Father, carried to completion by His Son Jesus. Jesus could have chosen to live but chose to die for our sake. These words were the prophetic prayer of David and the disciple-apostle John also wrote about it in his letter to the Philippians.

**⁵ Into Your hand I entrust my spirit;
You redeem me, LORD, God of truth.**

Psalm 31:5

**⁷ Instead He emptied Himself
By assuming the form of a slave,
Taking on the likeness of men.**

**And when He had come as a man in His external form,
⁸ He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death--
even to death on a cross.**

Philippians 2:7-8

These words describe not only how He died, but also how He lived. It has been said that how a man lives is how he dies. This was true of Jesus and every one of His apostles. David looked forward, by faith, to the time when man could enjoy complete restoration and the renewal (recreation) of a sinful heart. For this reason David was called the man after God's own heart.

The death of Jesus had a profound effect on those whom He healed, on those whom He taught, and those who believed He was truly sent from God. They struggled with two disappointments:

1. Their Messiah was dead – the One who raised the dead and healed the sick.
2. Their Messiah was cursed by God according to Deuteronomy 21:22-23.

Without question this was the worst and the greatest Passover in Jewish history. That was about to change at sunrise on the first day of the week. But even then, the events needed to be understood. Witnessing the events did not necessarily bring understanding. Therefore, some twenty to thirty years later the Apostle Paul addressed these issues in Galatians 3:10-14, Philippians 2:7-8 and 4:7-8.

16.01.18.Q1 Why did Jesus die?

Jesus died for two reasons:

1. He died because He did not conform to the ordinances which the religious leaders had profanely added to the Word of God.
2. Most importantly, He died so that humanity can have eternal life with Him. His death had been symbolized *as* the Lamb of God for nearly fifteen centuries. He died that mankind can be reconciled unto Himself. Reconciliation (Gk. *apokathistemi*) is to restore to an original state,⁷⁵⁰ which is, in effect, the Kingdom of God living within those who chose to follow Him. Jesus died because He *was* the Lamb of God, who was crucified for the sins of humanity, and He died because He was the King of Israel.

The day shall come when He will return and hold His rightful position of not only King

750. Vorlander and Brown, "Reconciliation, Restoration, Propitiation, Atonement." 3:144-74.

of Israel, but king of the world. However, the theological answer to this question is found most frequently in confessional statements in the Pauline epistles, where the apostles stated “Christ died for our sins” or “Christ died for us.”⁷⁵¹ Paul understood that the “message of the cross” (1 Cor. 1:18) is a “message of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19) to unite humanity with God. Second Corinthians 5:21 pointedly states that “God made him (Jesus) sin, who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Video Insert >

16.01.18.V *Man in the Image of God: A Divine Plan from Eernity Past.* Dr. John Soden discusses man’s problem of sin that began in Genesis, and God’s wonderful plan to resolve the issue. Click here if Internet connection is available.

The death of Jesus is known as the “shedding of blood,” meaning His blood. Since the life is in the blood, the shedding of blood is synonymous with death.⁷⁵² Modern scholarship is challenged by the fact that Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that “Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,” but he never referred to those Scriptures. Evidently, these were not significant to him, or he assumed that his readers were familiar with them. Jesus died to restore man into His image, the image of God – the *imago dei* (Latin phrase).

16.01.18.Q2 What is the Significance of “Shed Blood?”

Without the shedding of blood (death) there is no remission of sin (Heb. 9:22). As stated previously, the blood of bulls and goats sacrificed on the Day of Atonement only *covered* the sins of the people, but the blood of Jesus completely *removed* the sin. Furthermore, the Old Testament sacrificial system did not provide for the covering of the sins of murder and adultery, but the sacrifice of Jesus did. David realized the fallacy of the sacrificial system after he confessed to these two sins, which is why he wrote “create in me a new heart” (Ps. 51:10). His writing would become a foundational prayer in the heart of every new believer seeking the Kingdom of God.

This question has always been, and continues to be, one of the most important questions

751. cf. Rom. 5:6, 8; 14:9-10; 1 Cor. 8:11; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Gal. 2:21; 1 Thess. 5:10.

752. Mendenhall, “Covenant.” 1:722.

of life. The essence of His life and death is to restore humanity to a right relationship with Himself. The message has not changed during the centuries. Note the following comments written hundreds of years ago.

To whom was the blood paid out that was shed for us, and why was it shed?...We were in bondage to the evil one, sold under sin, and receiving pleasure in exchange for wickedness. If a ransom belongs not to someone else but to him who holds in bondage, I ask you, to whom was this paid, and for what reason? If to the evil one, O what an outrage!

If to the Father, first I ask, how can that be? For we were not being detained by Him; and second, why would He be delighted by His only begotten Son...surely it is evident, however, that the Father did receive (the sacrifice of His Son), though neither asking nor demanding it, but because of His plan of redemption and so that might we be sanctified by the Humanity of God.

Gregory of Nazianzus, *Second Oration on Easter*⁷⁵³

Jesus Christ our Lord, who, on account of His great love, became what we are so that He might bring us to what He Himself is.

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*⁷⁵⁴

The Sacrificial Victim was offered for all mankind, and was sufficient to save all, but it is believers alone who enjoy the bounty thereof.

John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Galatians*⁷⁵⁵

Not one reason, but many. First, that he might have dominion over the living and the dead. Second, so that, by being sacrificed for us and by becoming a cursed thing on our behalf, He might wipe away our sins. Third, so that He might be offered to the God of all on behalf of the whole world. Fourth, so that He might Himself, with secret words, bring about the destruction of the

753. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Patristic Quotations: From 50 – 750 A.D.* 35.

754. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Patristic Quotations: From 50 – 750 A.D.* 146.

755. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Patristic Quotations: From 50 – 750 A.D.* 24.

demoniacal workings which lead so many astray. The fifth is this: so that holding out to His acquaintances and disciples the hope of life with God after death...He might bring on to completion those already more willing and those of greater courage; and so that with His rejection He might proclaim a religious polity to all, to Greeks and barbarians alike.

Eusebius, *Demonstrations of the Gospel*⁷⁵⁶

Jesus, the perfect human specimen who never sinned, took upon Himself the punishment we deserve for our sins. Phrases such as “His shed blood,” “His death on the cross,” “His sacrifice,” all refer to His cruel death through which we can obtain forgiveness. However, as with any gift, it must be accepted. The phrase “received Jesus,” simply means one has accepted the gift of salvation (saved from the penalty of sin, which is eternal death), made a decision to become disciplined in a life of faith in Jesus, and will develop an attitude of living a holy lifestyle. When He hung dying on the cross, He looked into the future and saw every one of us; He saw you reading this and for Him the old rugged cross was a joy that you might live (Heb. 12:2).

The Jews understood very well the doctrine of sin in terms of willful disobedience and rebellion. What is amazing is that they either had no knowledge of the doctrine of original sin or failed to recognize it. This doctrine states that the nature of all sin originated in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. It further states that because of the original sin, all people have a sin nature and are guilty before a pure and holy God. Mankind’s only hope is found in Christ Jesus. This was a totally new concept for first century Jews and Gentiles. There is no reference to this concept in any rabbinical writings, nor in any other religion.

A blood sacrifice of some kind as a sin payment was well established in all ancient cultures, as handed down from the dawn of creation. The spilling or shedding of blood in biblical terms is always associated with the death of an innocent person or has reference to death through sacrifice for payment of sin. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God clothed them in skins, meaning that God sacrificed an innocent animal for the sins of the first two people. They instructed their sons to present a sacrificial animal to God (Gen. 3:21; 4:4; Heb. 11:4). When the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai, the Levitical covenant was sealed with a blood sacrifice. It stated, “For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life” (Lev. 17:11). In that sacrifice, the sins of the people were covered or “atoned.” The death of Jesus, however, was a

756. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Patristic Quotations: From 50 – 750 A.D.* 76.

substitute death for our sins, because now no longer do animals have to be killed nor are our sins covered, but they are completely removed. Therefore, we have a better covenant, a victory in this life and eternal life, all because of the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross.⁷⁵⁷

16.01.18.Q3 How old was Jesus when He died?

Luke recorded that Jesus was about 30 years of age when He began His ministry. This follows the Jewish tradition regarding the proper age when a man was to begin priestly duties in the temple. John records at least three Passovers which Jesus attended (2:13; 6:4; 11:55) during His public ministry, but that does not rule out the possibility that other Passovers were not recorded. Jesus died when Tiberius was Caesar, Pontius Pilate was the prefectus,⁷⁵⁸ Antipas was the tetrarch, and Joseph Caiaphas was the high priest in the temple. Records indicate that Tiberius died on March 16, A.D. 37, and Pilate ceased to be in power shortly before the Passover in A.D. 36. Caiaphas became High Priest shortly after the Passover in A.D. 18 and served until the year 36. Therefore, if Jesus was born between 6 - 4 B.C., and died in A.D. 30, His age would have been between 33 to 35 years.

16.01.18.Q4 What was the year of His death and resurrection?

There were five major considerations to be evaluated when calculating the date of His death and resurrection of Jesus, The result is that most scholars have concluded on two possible dates, A.D. 30 and 33.⁷⁵⁹

1. How is the 15th year of Tiberius reckoned?

757. Heb. 7:22; 8:9-10; 9:20; 10:16, 19.

758. The title of Pontius Pilate was always thought to be "procurator." However, in 1961 an inscription was discovered in Caesarea that has his title as "Prefectus Judaea" (see 16.01.06.B). The explanation of so-called error is that beginning from the time of Emperor Claudius (reigned 41-54), the title of the ruler of Judaea was *procurator*. Josephus and Tacitus who decades later wrote of Pilate used that title rather than his real one – *prefectus*, in Latin. See also Billington, "Was Palace of Herod where Jesus was Tried?" 9.

759. While this writer agrees with F.F. Bruce (*New Testament History*, 192 n2) and Arnold Fruchtenbaum, (*The Jewish Foundation of the Life of Messiah: Instructor's Manual*. Class 20, page 19.) that the year A.D. 30 is the crucifixion date, a majority view appears to lean toward the A.D. 33 date. One of the earliest studies of the crucifixion date was by Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918) and is titled *The Coming Prince*. It was first published in Great Britain in 1894 and quickly became a classic but it has some problems. In 1978 Dr. Harold Hoehner, in his book *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, resolved four difficulties of Anderson's work. Hoehner presents strong arguments defending an A.D. 33 crucifixion date. See also Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 572. See also Appendix 19.

2. How is the Passover in John 2 dated and how many Passovers are recorded in the gospels?
3. How long was the ministry of Jesus, and
4. The evidence in the Mishnah which indicates that the “mysteries” four decades before the destruction of the temple were the result of the crucifixion of Jesus (See below).
5. Evidence from secular sources.⁷⁶⁰

Part of the difficulty in any time calculation, and the apparent differences between John and the Synoptic gospels, is that the Jews had two calendars (civil and religious). Josephus recorded that Moses introduced a year of holy days and religious festivals that began with the month of Nisan. This was the month of the Exodus and Passover.⁷⁶¹ The celebration of Resurrection Day, a/k/a Easter, is the fulfillment of Passover and is reckoned on the solar-lunar cycles, coming on or after the spring vernal equinox (March 21). Moses, however, also kept the civil calendar year that was for buying, selling, and secular affairs. The civil year begins with *Rosh Hashanah* in the month of Tishri (1 Kg. 8:2).⁷⁶² Obviously historic investigations can be rather challenging. However, in light of the mysteries that occurred some forty years before the destruction of the temple (see below), there is a majority opinion of scholars that Jesus died in the year A.D. 30. Regardless of the accounts, it is known that,

1. Jesus existed, and
2. He was somewhat older than the 33 years of age that is commonly thought of today.

A strong argument that supports an A.D. 30 date is the statement shouted by the Sadducees, “You are no friend of Caesar.” These words are steeped in the political quagmire in Rome that was caused by personal confidant turned traitor, Sejanus. As stated previously, Sejanus feared for his life and position and did not want to lose his

760. The writings of the historian Phlegon state that there was an eclipse as well as an earthquake on Passover of A.D. 30. Could he have referred to the strange events that occurred when Jesus died? See Appendix 31 for comments by Phlegon as reported by other historians.

761. Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.3.3.

762. Funderburk, “Calendar.” 3:320-22.

amici Caesaris, or “friendship with Caesar” and face execution (which happened in October, A.D. 30).⁷⁶³ In that year he was at the height of his power and the emperor’s life was in chaos. If the crucifixion of Jesus had occurred in the year A.D. 33, there would have been no reason for the Sadducees to try to intimidate Pilate with this statement.⁷⁶⁴ This important point has been overlooked in nearly every study of dating the crucifixion.

Finally, critics have argued that if Jesus was so important, how could His date of birth⁷⁶⁵ and crucifixion be forgotten? Their implication is, of course, that in the first century Jesus was not an important figure. The answer lies in the fact that at this time and in this culture, birthdates and death dates were not as significant as what a person did in life. In Western thinking a greater emphasis is placed on these dates, but not in biblical times. Many people of this era did not know when they were born. Very few biblical figures have the date of birth recorded, so the biblical writers cannot be faulted. As some have said, “Uncertainty and debate regarding the precise date of an occurrence is not necessarily an indication of unhistoricity.”⁷⁶⁶

While there are various viewpoints, the following outline is one to which many scholars agree.⁷⁶⁷

Saturday, Nisan 8, A.D. 30 (six days before the final Passover - Jn. 11:55)

Jesus arrived at Bethany.

Jesus was anointed at the house of Simon the leper (Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9; Jn. 12:1-8).

Sunday, Nisan 9

A large crowd came to see Jesus at Bethany (Jn. 12:9-11).

Monday, Nisan 10 (the next day - Jn. 12:12)

Jews selected their lambs, which would live with them, be examined for purity between the 10th and the 14th day of Nisan, and be sacrificed on Passover (Ex.12:3-6).

763. Maier, *The First Easter*. 3-13.

764. See 16.01.05 as well as 03.06.25, “A.D. 22-31 Sejanus, the Arch Enemy of Tiberius Caesar” in Historical Backgrounds.

765. However, the date of birth for Jesus has been calculated by examining when John the Baptist was born and counting forward. He was born at the Feast of Tabernacles as described in 04.03.10.Q2 “When was Jesus born?”

766. Marshall, “The Last Supper.” 541.

767. Adapted from Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*. 90-93. See also Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. 3:374-76.

Triumphal entry into Jerusalem as the Paschal lamb (Mt. 21:1-9; Mk. 11:1-10; Lk. 19:28-40; Jn. 12:12-19).

The Kingdom of God is no longer offered to the Jewish nation, but Jesus speaks of national judgment.

Jesus visited the temple (Mt. 21:10-11; Mk. 11:11).

Jesus returned to Bethany.

Tuesday, Nisan 11

Return to Jerusalem, fig tree cursed (Mt. 21:18-19; Mk. 11:12-14).

Temple cleansed (Mt. 21:12-13; Mk. 11:15-17; Lk. 19:45-46).

Religious leaders plot to kill Jesus.

Jesus left Jerusalem, probably to Bethany (Mk. 11:18-19; Lk. 19:47-48).

Wednesday, Nisan 12

Return to Jerusalem, disciples saw the dead fig tree (Mt. 21:20-22; Mk. 11:20-26).

Debate with religious leaders at the temple (Mt. 21:23 - 23:39; Mk. 11:27 - 12:44; Lk. 20:1 - 21:4).

Left the temple to give the Olivet Discourse on the Mount of Olives (Mt. 24:1 - 25:46; Mk. 13:1-37; Lk. 21:5-36).

Jesus predicted His crucifixion in two days (Mt. 26:1-5; Mk. 14:1-2; Lk. 22:1-2).

Judas planned to betray Jesus (Mt. 26:14-16; Mk. 14:10-11; Lk. 22:3-6).

Thursday, Nisan 13

Jesus and disciples prepare the Passover lamb (Mt. 26:17-19; Mk. 12-16; Lk. 22:7-13).

Passover celebrated in the Upper Room (Mt. 26:20-30; Mk. 14:17-26; Lk. 22:14-30; Jn. 13:1 - 14:31).

They left the Upper Room.

Jesus prays for His disciples (Mt. 26:30-35; Mk. 14:26-31; Lk. 22:31-39; Jn. 15:1 - 18:1).

They arrive in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus in agony in the Garden (Mt. 26:36-46; Mk. 14:32-42; Lk. 22:39-46; Jn. 18:1).

Jesus betrayed late night (Mt. 26:47-56; Mk. 14:43-52; Lk. 22:47-53; Jn. 18:2-12).

First night trial by Annas, second night trial by Caiaphas (Mt. 26:57-75; Mk. 14:53-72; Lk. 22:54-65; Jn. 18:13-27).

Friday, Nisan 14 (reckoned to the Julian calendar: April 3, A.D. 30)⁷⁶⁸

Third trial by the Sanhedrin in early morning.

Fourth trial by Pilate.

Fifth trial by Herod Antipas.

Sixth trial by Pilate. (Mt. 27:1-30; Mk. 15:1-19; Lk. 22:66 - 23:25; Jn. 18:28 - 19:16).

9:00 a.m. Jesus crucified.

3:00 p.m. Jesus died (buried before sundown).

(Mt. 27:31-60; Mk. 15:20-46; Lk. 23:26-54; Jn. 19:16-42)

3:00 p.m. Jews sacrificed their Passover lambs (Ex. 12:6; 1 Cor. 5:7).

Saturday, Nisan 15

The body of Jesus lies in the tomb.

Jews secured Roman guards at the tomb (Mt. 27:61-66; Mk. 15:47; Lk. 23:55-56).

Sunday, Nisan 16

Jesus resurrected from the dead (Mt. 28:1-15; Mk. 16:1-13; Lk. 24:1-35).

Jesus is a type of offering of First Fruits which was offered the day after the Sabbath (Lev. 23:9-14; 1 Cor. 15:23).

Finally, it should be noted that several studies have been done concerning the year the 14th day of Nisan was on a Friday.⁷⁶⁹ Those years were A.D. 27, 30, 33, and 36. Since the years 27 and 36 are highly unlikely, the only two possible years for His death and resurrection, as previously stated, are 30 and 33.

16.01.18.Q5 Are there other ancient writings of tortures and crucifixions?

The Assyrians may have developed the precursor to crucifixions when they impaled a victim on a pole. Some scholars believe that the practice originated in Persia as part of a religious worship of Ormuzd (also known as Ahura Mazda), the chief deity of creation, light and goodness in Zoroastrianism.⁷⁷⁰ Because a criminal was considered evil, he was crucified “above the earth” as not to defile the earth.⁷⁷¹ From the Persian kingdom the

768. Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. 375.

769. For a listing of the studies, see Hoehner, “Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ.” *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 336 n34.

770. A religion founded by Zoroaster where life is explained as a constant conflict between good and evil.

771. <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Ahriman+and+Ormuzd> Retrieved August 10, 2013.

practice was passed on to Carthage in North Africa. When the Romans conquered the region they accepted the execution method, but used it for rebels, runaway slaves and for criminals who committed the most horrific crimes. Roman citizens were exempt from it.

What is known, however, is that this horrible method of execution was practiced by the Scythians, some Europeans (Celts, Germans, and Britons), Greeks, Parthians, and Indians. While some historic sources are questionable, it is clear that the Romans were not the instigators of this method.

While the Roman Empire officially ended the practice of crucifixion in the year 315, it unfortunately, continued. There are both ancient and modern records of such horrific executions. This form of execution reveals the depravity of human nature. Below are a few examples.⁷⁷²

522 B.C. The Greek historian Herodotus, writing about 450 B.C., mentions crucifixion three times in his work, *The Histories* (3.125.2-3). In one of his narratives, he described torture that preceded the crucifixion. He mentioned Polycrates who was a tyrant on the island of Samos. He was eventually captured by Oroestes, the Persian governor of Sardis, who tortured and crucified him. It should be noted that not all ancient historians agreed with Herodotus, as some called him “the father of lies.”

519 B.C. Herodotus reported (*The Histories*) that the Persian King Darius I the Great, had 3,000 rebellious citizens crucified.

332 B.C. After Alexander the Great conquered Tyre, he had 2,000 Tyrians crucified along the beach. The account was recorded by Roman senator Quintus Curtius Rufus in his book, *History of Alexander the Great*.

167 B.C Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Syrian-Greek ruler put to death anyone who attempted to observe the Jewish rites of religion. See 03.04.19 for more details concerning this madman. Some scholars consider Antiochus to have been a “type and shadow” of the future Antichrist.⁷⁷³

90 – 88 B.C. Eighty women and 800 Pharisees were crucified who were suspected of being witches. See 03.05.10.

772. <http://thes.blogspot.com/2007/02/jews-in-alexandria.html>. Retrieved October 2, 2012.

773. See “type and shadow” in Appendix 26.

A.D. 64 Some scholars have established the date of October 13, as the day that Peter was crucified by Nero. His death is mentioned in a letter written by Clement, Bishop of Rome (A.D. 88-97) to the Corinthians. A second century book, *The Acts of Peter*, says he was crucified upside down because he was not worthy to die in the same manner as was his Lord. Eusebius recorded the same account.⁷⁷⁴

A.D. 66-70 Josephus wrote of the actions of the Roman procurator Gessius Florus, whom William Whiston considered to be the most wicked of all procurators.⁷⁷⁵ Florus was made ruler of Judea shortly before the First Revolt (A.D. 66-70). When he exercised his demonic power over the Jewish people, he sent soldiers into the Upper Market Place to plunder it, but the soldiers did far more than plunder goods.

So the soldiers, taking this exhortation of their commander in a sense agreeable to their desire of gain, did not only plunder the place they were sent to, but forcing themselves into every house, they slew the inhabitants; so the citizens fled along the narrow lanes (streets) and the soldiers slew those that they caught, and no method of plunder was omitted; they also caught many of the quiet people and brought them before Florus, whom he first chastised with stripes (flogging) and then crucified.

Josephus, Wars 2.14.9 (306)

A.D. 66-70 Josephus continues this account to record that five hundred or more Jews were captured daily during the First Revolt. The killing machine of the Romans continued to the point that they exhausted their supply of trees and crosses. With a demented sense of humor, the Roman General Titus ordered two people to be crucified on every cross, one on either side.

So the soldiers, out of the wrath and hatred they bore against the Jews, nailed those they caught, one after one way, and another after another way, to crosses by way of jest. When their multitude was so great, that room was wanting for the crosses and crosses wanting for the bodies.

774. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3:1.

775. William Whiston was the translator of *The Works of Josephus: New Updated Edition*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987.

Josephus, *Wars* 5.11.1 (451)

Philo, who was a Roman senator and contemporary of Josephus, preserved two other accounts of scourging and crucifixion. He described the mocking delight the executioners had in their work.

And those who did these things, mimicked the sufferers, like people employed in the representation of theatrical farces; but the family and friends of those who were the real victims, merely because they sympathized with the misery of their relations, were led away to prison (and) were scourged, were tortured, and after all ill treatment, which their living bodies could endure, found the cross the end of all, and the punishment from which they could not escape.

Philo, *Against Flaccus* 72⁷⁷⁶

Philo's second description of a crucifixion also reveals how the depraved Romans thought of it as a comedy to persecute and execute in a theater with musicians and dancers. The depravity of humanity is, at times, beyond comprehension.

I have known instances before now of men who had been crucified when this festival and holiday (birthday of the emperor) was at hand, being taken down and given up to their relations in order to receive honors of sepulture, and enjoy such observances as are due the dead; for it used to be considered that even the dead ought to derive some enjoyment from the natal festival of a good emperor, and also that the sacred character of the festival ought to be regarded. But this man did not order men who had already perished on crosses to be taken down, but he commanded living men to be crucified, men to whom the very time itself gave, if not entire forgiveness, still, at all events, a brief and temporary respite from punishment; and he did this after they had been beaten by scourging in the middle of the theater and after he had tortured them with fire and sword; and the spectacle of their sufferings was divided, for the first part of the exhibition lasted from morning to the third or fourth hour, in which the Jews were scourged, were hung up, were tortured on the wheel, were condemned, and were dragged to execution through the middle of the orchestra; and after

776. Yonge, ed. and trans. *The Works of Philo*. 731; Parenthesis mine.

this beautiful exhibition came the dancers, and the buffoons, and the flute players, and all the other diversions of the theatrical contests.

Philo, *Against Flaccus* 83-84

To illustrate the horrors of this act, the Apostle Andrew was crucified in a manner to maximize pain and agony. He was crucified on a low cross to permit wild animals and dogs to feast on his flesh while he was still alive. The account, recorded in an extra-biblical book, reflects a common method of crucifixion.

He (the Proconsul Aegeates) commanded that Andrew be flogged with seven whips. Then he sent him off to be crucified and commanded the executioners not to impale him with nails but stretch him out tied up with ropes, (and) to leave his knees uncut, supposing that by so doing he would punish Andrew even more severely...The executioners ... tied up only the feet and armpits, without nailing up his hands or feet nor severing his knees because of what the proconsul had commanded them, for Aegeates intended to torment him by his being hung and his being eaten by dogs if still alive at night.

***The Acts of Andrew: The Passion of Andrew* 51.1; 54.4⁷⁷⁷**

480 On September 18 the 150,000 man army (huge for ancient times) Persian army led by King Xerxes, wiped out King Leonidas and his small army that had less than 10,000 soldiers. When the battle was over, Xerxes ordered that the head of Leonidas be cut off and his body crucified.

1920 Archbishop Joachim of Sebastopol, a city in the Ukraine (Soviet Union), was crucified upside down on the royal doors of the Sebastopol Cathedral. It is believed that local Bolsheviks committed the crime.

2006 The Assyrian International News Agency reported that a 14-year old Christian boy was crucified in Basra, Iraq in early October. Another news agency also reported the incident, but neither had confirmed details. Although rarely reported in the Western news media, crucifixions are increasing dramatically today in Muslim countries where radical Muslims hold government power.⁷⁷⁸

777. MacDonald, *The Acts of Andrew*. 395, 407.

778. For more information see Raymond Ibrahim, *Crucified Again: Exposing Islam's New War on Christians*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2013.

Critics who have stated that the narrative of the crucifixion of Jesus is exaggerated need only to read the accounts of others who died in this manner. Humiliation of the victim, terror upon the population, and demonstration of evil power were critical parts of every execution process. Seneca the Younger said in A.D. 65, that suicide is preferred before death on the cross.

Can any man be found willing to be fastened to the accursed tree, long sickly, already deformed, swelling with ugly tumors on chest and shoulders, and draw the breath of life amid long-drawn-out agony? I think he would have many excuses for dying even before mounting the cross.

Seneca the Younger, *Epistles* 101.14

Even in the Old Testament Period, criminals and enemies of the Hebrews were executed and then hung on a cross for public display and humiliation.⁷⁷⁹ But the idea of placing a live person on a cross to die in agony became popular in the Inter-Testamental Period. Seven centuries earlier the prophet Isaiah said that the Messiah would be disfigured beyond recognition (Isa. 52:14).

So intense was this horrible death, that the modern English word “excruciating” as in “excruciating pain” comes from a Latin word meaning “out of the cross.” Yet after this beating and humbled position, His body tormented with physical abuse, Jesus prayed, “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk 23:34). Such is the incredible love of Jesus.

Finally, for the benefit of the reader as well as the serious Bible scholar, there are several extra-biblical writings that refer to the crucifixion of Jesus that appear attractive. However, caution is advised. The more distant in time and distance a book is from the event it describes, the greater the probability of historical errors and creative writing. For example, two writings were found in Egypt in the late 1800s. One is the *Gospel of Peter* 2:3-5 that has a brief description of the crucifixion, and the other is the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus # 2949. Both differ significantly from the biblical narrative by claiming that Pilate was declared innocent of his judgment in which he condemned Jesus to the cross. The early church condemned the *Gospel* as heretical by the year 200, and Eusebius claimed it to be a false book in his *History of the Church* 6.12.2-6 and 6.13.1a in writing to Serapion, the bishop of Antioch.⁷⁸⁰

779. Deut. 21:22-23; Jos. 8:23, 29; 10:5, 26-27; Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.8.6.

780. An excellent resource for further study is Webb, “The Roman Examination and Crucifixion of Jesus.” 680-95.

16.01.18.Q6 What significant extra-biblical writings refer to Jesus and early Christians?

A number of secular writers made a reference to Jesus in some manner. A brief description of the authors, if known and their literary works are presented in Appendix 31, “Significant Extra-Biblical Writings That Refer To Jesus And Early Christians.”



Please note that all references to footnotes are in the “Works Cited” section located in the last *mini*-volume.

