

# Matthew: His Life And His Gospel

## – Part 16

**Matthew 26:1-5** [New King James] *“Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, ‘You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.’ Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. But they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.’”*

Once again Jesus Christ warns His disciples what was going to happen to Him.

**One thing that the Roman authorities would not stand for is civic disorder. If there was any rioting, Caiaphas knew he would lose his position.**

At the Passover time the atmosphere in Jerusalem was always explosive, the city being packed tight with Jews from across the Roman world.

**No wonder Caiaphas wanted to take Jesus secretly and quietly, for many of the pilgrims were Galileans and to them Jesus Christ was a prophet.**

**Judas provided Caiaphas with a solution to his problem.**

**Matthew 26:6-13** [New King James] *“And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, ‘Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.’ But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, ‘Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.’”*

**This is the record of one of the two or more anointings during the last week of Jesus Christ’s life.**

One was six days before the Passover, [**John 12:1-8**].

Another was two days before the Passover, [**Matthew 26:1-2; Mark 14:1**].

One at house of Lazarus, [**John 12:1-8**], house of Simon the leper, [**Mark 14:3; Matthew 26:6**].

Alabaster flask of fragrant oil, [**Matthew 26:6; Mark 14:3**] pound of very costly oil of spikenard, [**John 12:3**].

Anointed feet, [**John 12:3**], anointed head, [**Matthew 26:7; Mark 14:3**].

Judas asked the question in **John 12:4** why was it not sold and money given to the poor, as there was plenty of time to do this in the six days before the Passover.

It was the disciples who “were indignant” at the waste, [**Matthew 12:8**] or “some who were indignant,” [**Mark 14:4**].

The woman was not named, [**Matthew 26:7; Mark 14:3**] but named Mary sister of Martha, [**John 12:3**].

There is also another anointing mentioned by Luke that does not fit in with the accounts in Matthew, Mark and John, [Luke 7:36-50].

**Matthew 26:14-16** [New King James] *“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.”*

There are three basic reasons shown in the text why Judas betrayed Jesus Christ.

1) **It may have been because of greed**, according to **Matthew 26:14-16** and **Mark 14:10-11** it was directly after he made his protest against the expensive anointing, **John 12:6** adds that Judas was a thief and pilfered from the money that supporters put in the bag.

2) **It may have been because of bitter hatred, based on complete disillusionment.** The Jews always had their dream of power, therefore they had their violent nationalists who were prepared to go to any length of murder or violence to drive the Romans from Palestine. It may be that Judas was one of these who saw Jesus Christ as the divinely-sent leader, who with His miraculous powers, led a great rebellion. When Judas saw that Jesus Christ was deliberately taking a completely different way to the cross, his devotion turned into first disillusionment and then into hatred.

3) It may be that Judas never intended Jesus Christ to die, but that Jesus Christ was proceeding far too slowly, and wishes for nothing else than to force Jesus Christ’s hand and lead the nation in rebellion against the Romans and free them from their power over the nation.

**Judas may have betrayed Jesus Christ with the intention of compelling Him to act, this view best suits the facts and explains why Judas was shattered into suicide when his plan went wrong, [Matthew 27:3-10].**

**Matthew 26:17-25** [New King James] *“Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, ‘Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?’ And He said, ‘Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, ‘My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.’”’ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.’ And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, ‘Lord, is it I?’ He answered and said, ‘He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.’ Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, ‘Rabbi, is it I?’ He said to him, ‘You have said it.’”*

One thing is certain, Judas must have gone about his grim business with complete secrecy, for if the other disciples had known what Judas was doing he would never have escaped with his life.

Judas had concealed his plans from the disciples but not from Jesus Christ, who sees all the secrets of our heart and mind.

**Jesus Christ could have rendered Judas helpless, even killed him, but the only weapon that Jesus Christ used is the weapon of love’s appeal.**

**One of the greatest mysteries of life is the respect that the Eternal Creator God has for the free will of human beings.**

**God does not force or coerce, God only appeals, [1 John 4:19].**

**When Jesus Christ seeks to stop a person from sinning, He does two things.**

**First, Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, confronts a person with their sin, [John 16:8] to make the person stop and see and think about what they are doing.**

**Next, Jesus Christ confronts the person with Himself, as the only way that anyone can avoid the judgement of eternal death, [Acts 4:12] and His righteousness which we receive by faith in Him and obedience to His Word, the Christian Bible.**

**The example we all have to follow is that of Abraham who had the righteousness of our Creator Jesus Christ imputed [credited] to him by faith and obedience, [Romans 4:13, 16, 18-24].**

**Matthew 26:26-30** [New King James] *“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.’ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”*

The whole Passover festival was to the Jews a commemoration of deliverance, its whole intention was to remind people of Israel how God had liberated them from slavery in Egypt, [Exodus chapters 5-12].

Jesus Christ, named by John the Baptist as *“the Lamb of God,”* [John 1:29, 35-36] claimed to be the Saviour of all humanity from the result of sin which is death, [Romans 6:23] by dying for our sins, the death we earned, [1 Corinthians 15:3-4] as the Passover lamb’s blood did in Egypt, [Exodus 12:13-14].

**The Passover lamb was a symbol of safety from death, so faith in Jesus Christ saves us from eternal death.**

**Jesus Christ used the word covenant, and His shed blood the blood of that covenant.**

**A covenant is a relationship between two people. The covenant which Jesus Christ spoke was a covenant between humans and their Creator God.**

Jesus Christ was saying that because of His life and teaching, and above all because of my death, a new relationship has become possible between humans and their Creator God.

**Before the death of Jesus Christ people could only approach the Creator God through a priest and the making of a blood sacrifice.**

The Holy of Holies that depicted the throne of God was only approached through a veil, and that only by the chief priest on one day of the year, the Day of Atonement, [Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 23:26-32].

But at the moment of Jesus Christ’s death the veil that prevented access to the very Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom, [Mark 15:37-39].

*“From the top”* depicts this was the action of God the Father who through His Son’s death gives all humanity direct access to Him, no longer does it have to go through some human appointed priest.

**Matthew 26:31-35** [New King James] *“Then Jesus said to them, ‘All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: “I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.” But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.’ Peter answered and said to Him, ‘Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!’ And so said all the disciples.”*

Here we see the realism of Jesus Christ; He knew what lay ahead. Matthew actually sees the flight of the disciples foretold in the Old Testament in **Zechariah 13:7**. Jesus Christ foresaw what would happen and yet He carried on.

Here we see the confidence of Jesus Christ, [verse 32]. **Jesus Christ always saw beyond the suffering on the cross.**

We also see the sympathy of Jesus Christ. He knew His disciples were going to flee for their lives and abandon Him in the moment of His greatest need, but He did not upbraid them or condemn them, but tells them that when this terrible time has passed they will meet again.

**It is part of the greatness of Jesus Christ that He knows people at their worst and yet still loves them, [Romans 5:8].**

Peter thought he was stronger than Jesus Christ knew he was.

We will only be safe when we replace self-confidence with the humility that seeks the help of Jesus Christ through the active work of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, [Romans 8:9] in our lives.

**Matthew 26:36-46** [New King James] *“Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, ‘Sit here while I go and pray over there.’ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.’ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’ Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, ‘What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.’ And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.’”*

The human Jesus Christ was in great anguish over His approaching physical pain, separation from the Father and death on the cross for the sins of all humanity.

The divine course was set, but in His human nature He was still struggling, [Hebrews 5:7-9].

**Because of the anguish Jesus Christ experienced, He can relate to our suffering.**

Jesus Christ’s strength to obey came from His intimate relationship with God the Father, who is also the source of our strength, [John 17:11, 15-16, 21, 26].

Jesus Christ was not rebelling against the Father’s will when He asked that the cup of suffering and separation be taken away. In fact, He reaffirmed His desire to do God the Father’s will.

**What Jesus Christ’s prayer reveals to us the terrible suffering, and agony of being separated from God, the first time ever, if He was to completely pay for all our sins, [Isaiah 59:1-2] the “hand” that reaches out to us in our sin is that of Jesus Christ.**

The sinless Son of God, [Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5] became sin for us, [2 Corinthians 5:21] to save us from suffering and separation from God the Father.

**In times of suffering we should follow the example of Jesus Christ and look ahead to what God is planning for all humanity who will repent and seek forgiveness, [2 Peter 3:9] a new world where the motivating force is love, [Revelation 21:1-7].**

Jesus Christ used the disciples’ drowsiness to warn them about the kinds of temptation they would meet. The way to avoid falling was to keep watching and praying.

**Watching means being aware of possibilities of temptations and avoiding any place where that temptation would be strong.**

Also being aware of the spiritual strength available to fight those temptations, for temptation strikes where we are most vulnerable, so we cannot resist it alone.

Prayer is essential for Gods' strength to shore up our defences and defeat Satan's power.

**Revelation 12:7-12** [New King James] *“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.’”*

This is how we overcome the tempting power of Satan. Total trust in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the living witness of our lives, [**Matthew 5:14-16**] that is developing the “fruits,” that is character of Jesus Christ in our lives, [**Galatians 5:22-25**] even if it means the sacrifice of our physical lives, [**Revelation 6:9-11**].

**Matthew 26:47-56** [New King James] *“And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.’ Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, why have you come?’ Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?’ In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, ‘Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.’ Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.”*

**This was not an arrest by Roman soldiers under Roman law but an arrest by religious leaders and their servants.**

It was Judas who had given the religious authorities the information which enabled them to find Jesus Christ in the privacy of the Garden of Gethsemane away from any crowds that might have resisted the arrest and cause a riot.

John tells us that it was Peter who tried to defend Jesus Christ, [**John 18:10**] but Jesus stopped Him continuing in His defence and even took time to heal the injury that Peter had caused, [**Luke 22:50-51**].

**Matthew 26:57-69** [New King James] *“And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, ‘This fellow said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.”’ And the high priest arose and said to Him, ‘Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?’ But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’”*

*Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death.' Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, 'Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?' Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, 'You also were with Jesus of Galilee.'"*

First Jesus Christ was taken to the house of Annas, the former high priest and father-in-law of Caiaphas the reigning high priest. This could indicate that Annas still had influence on what happened in Sanhedrin.

**Annas then sent Jesus Christ to the home of Caiaphas. All this was happening at night, which made the trial illegal.**

Jesus Christ remained silent until charged under oath by the high priest, [verse 63].

**Jesus Christ's reply made the high priest condemn Him to death for blasphemy, [Leviticus 24:16]. The Jewish religious leaders refused even to consider that the words of Jesus Christ might be true.**

**Like members of the Sanhedrin we all have to decide whether Jesus Christ's words were blasphemy or the truth. Our decision has eternal implications.**

The trial of Jesus Christ was also illegal because of certain regulations for criminal trials other than not being held at night. Criminal cases could **not** be held during the Passover season at all. Only if the verdict was **not** guilty could a case be finished on the day it began, otherwise a night must elapse before the pronouncement of the verdict, so that feelings of mercy might have time to arise.

Further, no decision of the Sanhedrin was valid unless it was meeting in its own place, the Hall of Hewn Stone in the Temple precincts. All evidence had to be guaranteed by two witnesses separately examined and having no contact with each other. A false witness was punished by death.

**These were the Sanhedrin's own rules, and it is abundantly clear that, in their eagerness to get rid of Jesus Christ, the Sanhedrin broke their own rules.**

By saying "yes" to the demanding question of the high priest, Jesus Christ had signed His own death warrant.

Jesus Christ then quoted **Daniel 7:13** with its vivid account of the ultimate triumph and kingship of God's chosen one.

After this remark even the externals of justice were forgotten and the venomous hatred of the Jewish authorities broke through with spitting in the face and buffeting of the accused.

**Matthew 26:69-75** [New King James] *"Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, 'You also were with Jesus of Galilee.' But he denied it before them all, saying, 'I do not know what you are saying.' And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, 'This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.' But again he denied with an oath, 'I do not know the Man!' And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, 'Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you.' Then he began to curse and swear, saying, 'I do not know the Man!' Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So he went out and wept bitterly."*

**We see recorded here the three stages of Peter's denial of knowing Jesus Christ. The cursing and swearing was not foul language but was making an oath to confirm what he said was true.**

**We must remember that even after this great failure of Peter, his great remorse enabled Jesus Christ to use Peter greatly in spreading the gospel message, [Acts 2:14, 41].**

**Matthew 27:1-2** [New King James] *“When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.”*

**The Jewish religious leaders had to persuade the Roman government to sentence Jesus Christ to death because they did not have the authority to do it themselves. Politically, it would also look better for the religious leaders if someone else was responsible for murdering Jesus Christ. They wanted the death of Jesus Christ to be Roman-sponsored and executed so that the crowds could not blame them.**

The Jewish court condemned Jesus Christ of blasphemy but because this would be rejected by Roman court they had to come up with a political charge, **the claim to be a King which would be a threat to Caesar.**

**Matthew 27:3-10** [New King James] *“Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ And they said, ‘What is that to us? You see to it!’ Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.’ And they consulted together and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ‘And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter’s field, as the LORD directed me.’”*

**The priest’s job was to teach people about God and act as intercessors for them, helping administer the sacrifices that covered their sins. Judas returned to the priest exclaiming that he had sinned. Rather than help him find forgiveness, they told Judas it was his responsibility not only had they rejected the Messiah they had rejected their role as priests.**

**Matthew 27:11-26** [New King James] *“Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you say.’ And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?’ But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marvelled greatly. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, ‘Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?’ For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, ‘Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.’ But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release to you?’ They said, ‘Barabbas!’ Pilate said to them, ‘What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?’ They all said to him, ‘Let Him be crucified!’ Then the governor said, ‘Why, what evil has He done?’ But they cried out all the more, saying, ‘Let Him be crucified!’ When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, ‘I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.’ And all the people answered and said, ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’ Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.”*

Jesus Christ’s silence before Pilate fulfilled the words of the prophet, **Isaiah 53:7**. This silence amazed Pilate who now recognised the obvious plot against Jesus Christ and wanted to let Him go free, but Pilate was already under pressure from Rome to keep the peace in his territory, the last thing he needed was a rebellion over this quiet and seemingly insignificant man.

Barabbas had taken part in a rebellion against Rome, [Mark 15:7] and was a hero to the Jews. Barabbas was guilty of the very crime that Jesus Christ was accused by Jews before Pilate!

**Faced with a clear choice the people chose Barabbas over the Son of God.**

**Faced with the same choice today people are still choosing “Barabbas,” a tangible force of human power than the salvation offered by the Son of God.**

When the Jewish leaders threatened to report Pilate to Caesar, [John 19:12] Pilate became afraid that it would jeopardise his job of maintaining peace in the region he had been assigned by Rome.

**Although Pilate “washed his hands” it did not cancel his guilt, we all have to take full responsibility for the decisions we take.**

**Matthew 27:27-31** [New King James] *“Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.”*

The garrison must have been at least 200 men, taunting and mocking will hurt but we should never allow them to change our faith, [Matthew 5:11-12].

**Matthew 27:32-50** [New King James] *“Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: ‘They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.’ Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’ Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, “I am the Son of God.”’ Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing. Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, ‘This Man is calling for Elijah!’ Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, ‘Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.’ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.”*

Condemned prisoners had to carry their own crosses to the execution site, but Jesus Christ was so weakened by the scourging, one verse in **Psalms 22** illustrates the result of such scourging, [verse 17] for it tore the flesh off of the bones, [Isaiah 52:14].

So Simon of Cyrene had to carry the cross for Jesus Christ, [Luke 23:26].

One of the robbers repented later and Jesus Christ told him that such repentance would allow him to be in the Kingdom of God. In the original text the “*to-day*” is connected with “*I say*.”

There is no punctuation in the original text, we have to choose where to place punctuation. So to fit in with other scriptures it should read, “*I tell you the truth today, you will be with me in paradise,*” so it **cannot** be used as a “*proof text*” to heaven being the reward of Christians.

“Paradise” refers to a park or what is cultivated, [Revelation 2:7; Revelation 22:1-2] these both refer to a special park or garden in which was the “tree of life” on earth after Jesus Christ’s Second Coming.

**Darkness covered the entire land for about three hours in the middle of the day. All physical creation seemed to mourn over the stark tragedy of the Son of God, their Creator, [John 1:1-3, 14].**

**Matthew 27:51-54** [New King James] *“Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’”*

Jesus Christ’s death was accompanied by at least four miraculous events: darkness, the tearing of the curtain in the temple, an earthquake and dead people rising from their graves.

**Therefore Jesus Christ’s death could not have gone unnoticed, everyone knew that something significant had happened.**

**Matthew 27:55-56** [New King James] *“And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.”*

**Unlike the men, the women had nothing to fear by being near to Jesus Christ on the cross, because of the low status that a woman had in Israel at that time.**

**Yet they were there because of the love that they had for Jesus Christ cast out all fear.**

**John 19:25-27** [New King James] *“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.”*

John records that the great love he had for Jesus Christ gave him the courage to be there with the women at the cross as Jesus Christ died in great agony.

**Even in this great personal pain Jesus Christ was concerned for the welfare of others, assuring the future of His physical mother, Mary.**

**Matthew 27:57-61** [NIV] *“As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.”*

**Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple of Jesus Christ, he was a religious leader, an honoured member of the Sanhedrin, [Mark 15:43].** In the past, Joseph had been afraid to speak against the religious leaders who opposed Jesus Christ; now he was bold and courageously asked for the body of Jesus Christ to bury it. **The disciples who had openly followed Jesus Christ had fled, but this Jewish leader, who followed Jesus Christ in secret, came forward and did what was right.**

**Matthew 27:62-66** [New King James] *“On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, ‘Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, “After three days I will rise.” Therefore command that the tomb be*

*made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, "He has risen from the dead." So the last deception will be worse than the first.' Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard."*

**The religious leaders took Jesus Christ's resurrection claims more seriously than the disciples did, [Matthew 20:17-19; Matthew 12:40; Mark 8:31] and did all that they could to ensure that Jesus Christ's body would remain in the tomb.**

[Please download and study the article on this website with the title 'Three Days And Nights' to understand the sequence of events of the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, listed under main title 'Religion'.]

**Matthew 28:1-8** [New King James] *"Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.'" So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word."*

**Note the tomb was empty, Jesus Christ having risen from the dead, the resurrection had taken place just before sundown on the day before the weekly Sabbath.**

**This would be exactly three days and three nights after Jesus Christ's death on the Wednesday, the day on which all the Passover lambs were killed, and was buried before the sunset on the annual Sabbath, [high day] the first day of Unleavened Bread, [John 19:14, 31; Matthew 27:57].**

**Matthew 28:9-10** [New King James] *"And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.'"*

Jesus Christ allowed the two Marys to touch Him and worship Him but the earlier visit to the tomb Jesus Christ restrained Mary Magdalene from touching Him, [John 20:11-18]. **Between these two events Jesus Christ had presented His own blood to His Father in heaven to ratify the New Covenant they had made with all humanity.**

**Luke 24:39** [New King James] *"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."*

Note the resurrected body of Jesus Christ had no blood, only flesh and bones, [John 19:34] all His life-giving blood had been shed.

**Mathew 28:11-15** [New King James] *"Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, 'Tell them, "His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept." And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure.' So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."*

**Jesus Christ's resurrection was already causing a great stir in Jerusalem as the women were moving quickly through the streets, looking for the disciples to tell them the good news that Jesus Christ was alive.**

**At the same time a group of religious leaders were plotting how to cover up the resurrection.**

**Matthew 28:16-20** [New King James] *“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”*

God the Father gave the resurrected Jesus Christ authority over the heavenly creatures and all the humans on earth. This authority is the basis of all who are true Christians to fulfil the commission that Jesus Christ has given to His Church.

**Whereas in previous missions Jesus Christ had sent His disciples only to the Jews, [Matthew 10:5-6] this new commission is worldwide, for the sacrifice Jesus Christ had made was for all humanity, [John 3:16-17; Acts 4:12].**

Jesus Christ’s words [verse 19] confirms the Triune God that we worship, the three in one nature of the Eternal God.

[Please download and study the articles on this website under the main heading ‘*Trinity [Of God]*’. You will be eternally grateful that you did.]

We always need to remember this final promise that Jesus Christ made that all His true disciples can claim, *‘Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’*