

Valley Bible Church – Life of Christ

FOCUS #9

THE PASSION WEEK OF JESUS

Friday: Arrest, Trials, Crucifixion, Burial

INTRODUCTION

We have come in our consideration of the Passion Week to Friday, the final day of Jesus' mortal life on earth - the day of His crucifixion. Recall that Jesus and the twelve had gathered late in the day on Thursday for the Passover meal, that they had observed that meal together, and that Jesus had then begun to instruct and encourage them. Early in that time of final instruction, the betrayer had made excuses and departed, intending to fetch the Sanhedrin soldiers and bring them to the upper room to arrest Jesus.

And then, very early in the morning, in the midst of His "Upper Room Discourse," Jesus had said to the eleven, "Arise, let us go hence!" (John 14:31). The disciples must have been dumfounded as they followed their Lord out into the blackness of the Jerusalem night. As they hastened down the flank of the western hill, across the Valley of the Cheese Makers, over the hill of David just to the south of the great second temple, and then across the Kidron toward the Mount of Olives, Jesus continued to challenge and commission them. Finally, in the very early hours of Friday, Jesus and His eleven bewildered disciples arrived at the hedged-in, private "garden of the wine-press, known to us as Gethsemane.

This is where we left Jesus in the last section of the notes.. We will resume narrative as Jesus emerges from the Garden after the season of infinitely painful prayer before His Father.

FRIDAY MORNING-- long before dawn -Jesus is betrayed, arrested & forsaken (Mt 26:47-56; Mk 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-12) lb.

1. Jesus is betrayed by Judas (Mt 26:47-49)

- The probable chain of events that led to this time:
 - Judas had gone to the Sanhedrin and fetched the group of Levitical guards, soldiers, Sanhedrinists, and so on who were waiting for him to take them to Jesus;
 - when they came to the upper room, they found it empty;
 - reminded by the Sanhedrinists of his promise to betray Jesus to them, Judas decides to take the group to Gethsemane, the private garden which had been made available to Jesus, and where the Nazarene had so often repaired for a time of solitude or for a night of rest;
 - the betrayer does so, and there he and the soldiers accompanying him find Jesus as He emerges from a season of prayer in the Garden, the eleven sleeping nearby.

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- Notice that all 3 Synoptists refer to Judas in this narrative as "Judas, one of the twelve" (Mt 26:47; Mk 14:43; Luke 22:47).
- Judas had arranged a signal, as there were probably those among the soldiers, on "loan" from the Romans to the temple authorities, who would not have recognized Jesus by face.

NOTE: It is important to understand exactly what Judas had bargained to do for the Sanhedrinists to help them arrest the Master. There is much confusion in this regard, and that confusion arises from a misperception of the purpose of the kiss with which Judas greeted Jesus.

2. Jesus is arrested (Mt 26:50-55; Luke 22:49-53)

- The disciples attempt to protect Jesus with a "sword," and Peter smites the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear; Jesus rebukes Peter, miraculously restores the ear of the servant (!!!), and then is taken.
- Jesus goes on to make it clear that these things must happen in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled (Mt 26:53,54).

3. Jesus is forsaken by the eleven (Mt 26:56b)

- Only Peter and John followed afar as the Lord was taken to the house of the High Priest, Caiaphas
- At this time, a young onlooker fled leaving his outer garment behind him (Mk 14:51,52)

Concerning this, the following questions suggest themselves:

- 1.) What is the best guess as to the identity of this young man?
- 2.) How did this young man come to be at this place in the middle of the night?

FRIDAY (*before and after dawn*) --Jesus is tried by the Jewish leadership

Note: There are three stages to the trials of Jesus before the Jews.

This did not happen spontaneously; the Sanhedrin had laid careful plans and made elaborate preparation to assure that the desired result would be accomplished very quickly once the hated miracle-worker had finally been taken.

IMPORTANT: The Hebrew nation had very well defined canons of jurisprudence, and they were proud of the justice and equity inherent in their system. However, the clear testimony of the Scriptural record is that all of those canons were deliberately violated in the trials of Jesus.

#181 **The first Jewish stage:** Jesus is examined by Annas, the former high priest (John 18:12-14, 19-23)

- Annas was not the high priest, but he had been for many years earlier. In fact, he had been expelled from that office by the Romans because of the corruption and iniquity of his administration.

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- However, Annas was still a very influential man in Jerusalem. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the present high priest. The family of Annas had occupied the office of high priest through six successive "generations" of the office, a record unparalleled in that era of Jewish history, but a record that is "an evidence of their corruption no less than of their astuteness. "
- Actually, Jesus was just held in Annas' chamber only until the Sanhedrin could be (illegally) confirmed
- While Annas had the hated Teacher there, however, he tried to find some accusation he could make against Him (John 12:19). In replying to Annas' question, Jesus properly insisted that witnesses be brought against Him in accord with Jewish law (John 12:20,21), and for this He was severely rebuked by Annas (John 12:22,23).

#182 **The second Jewish stage:** a hasty, informal trial before the Sanhedrin (presided over by Caiaphas); Jesus is condemned, mocked, and buffeted (Mt 26:57, 59-68; Mk 14:53, 55-65; Luke 22:63-65; John 18:24)

- This "trial" was illegal by every standard of Jewish jurisprudence, and thus Jesus remained silent as accusations were hurled against Him.
- Specific aspects of this procedure which were illegal according to the canons of Jewish jurisprudence include:
 - 1.) The trial was held in the wrong place - a private home, rather than in the temple precincts, or some public place where witnesses might be easily brought.
 - 2.) The trial was held at night, when it was difficult (if not impossible) to subpoena witnesses at that hour; in fact, there is no record that any attempt was made to hear witnesses concerning this Jesus of Nazareth, thus high-handedly violating the most basic canon of Hebrew jurisprudence (Dt 17:6);
 - 3.) The trial was convened with undue haste.
 - 4.) False witnesses were sought and bribed.
 - 5.) There was no careful warning of witnesses concerning the results of perjury.
 - 6.) Attempts were made to force Jesus to bear witness against Himself
 - 7.) Jesus was not released when witnesses against Him disagreed among themselves.
 - 8.) Execution was carried out immediately, without allowing time to find witnesses in support of the accused.

The point: the Sanhedrinists did not convene to TRY Jesus, but to CONDEMN Him; the outcome was determined before the trial commenced.

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- Even with this determination, the Sanhedrinists were unable to construct a case against Jesus (Mk 14:55,56); even the much used charge that Jesus had threatened to destroy the Temple was insufficient (Mk 14:57-59)
- Finally, when asked under oath if He did indeed claim to be Messiah, the very God, He affirmed the charge, adding that the day would come when He would powerfully demonstrate the truth of that claim when He comes in infinite power! This was taken as demonstration that He deserved to be executed; He was mocked, buffeted, and taken off to a dungeon to await the dawn, when the verdict would be "validated" and the sentence executed.

1.) Concerning the reply of Jesus, "Thou hast said" (Mt 26:64, KJV)
Compare Mk 14:62

2.) Compare the response of His accusers (Mt 26:65,66; Mk 14:63,64)

- After the Sanhedrin had condemned Jesus, as they waited for the dawn, when they could convene officially and endorse this decision, the members of Sanhedrin mocked and buffeted the Lord (Mt 26:67,68; Mk 14:65).

Compare Isaiah 50:6

"It was...required that after condemning a criminal to death the Sanhedrin should mourn and fast all day; but no sooner was Jesus condemned than those grave councilors, the custodians of Israel's law and faith, arose from their seats and compassed Him with contumely. They spat on His face, they buffeted Him, they blindfolded Him, and striking Him, challenged Him, as He was a prophet, to divine who smote Him. And the officers of the court abetted their superiors in the brutal sport. The conduct of the Sanhedrin on that woeful morning imprinted on the reputation of the August court an indelible stain which by and by the Jews would fain have obliterated. Vainly seeking to rewrite history, they told how for forty days Jesus was led through the city, and a herald went before Him, proclaiming that He had been sentenced to stoning, as a deceiver of the people, and inviting any who could and inviting any who could attest His innocence to come forward and do so. (SMITH, p. 471)

#183 MEANWHILE, Peter was in the courtyard denying his Lord (Mt 26:58, 69-75; Mk 14:54, 66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27).

- As Jesus was led from the house to the dungeon He heard Peter's third denial; the Lord looked upon him who had so vigorously protested his superior loyalty, and Peter fled with a broken heart (Luke 22:60-62).

"At That fatal moment, while those shameless curses still quivered in the air- first the cook crew in the cold gray dusk, and at the same moment, catching the last accents of those perjured oaths, either through the open portal of the judgment-hall, or as He was led past the group at the fireside through the open court, with rude pushing and ribald jeers, and blows and spitting- the Lord- the Lord in His agony of His humiliation, in the majesty of His silence- 'the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.'

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Blessed are those on whom, when he looks in sorrow, the Lord also looks with love! It was enough. Like an arrow through his inmost soul, shot the mute eloquent anguish of that reproachful glance... If the angel of Innocence had left him, the angel of Repentance took him gently by the hand. Sternly, yet tenderly, the spirit of grace led up to this broken hearted penitent tribunal of his own conscience, and there his old life, his old shame, his old weakness, his old self was doomed to that death of godly sorrow which was to issue in a new and nobler birth." (FARRAR, p. 412)

#184 **The third Jewish stage:** after dawn, Jesus is formally condemned by the Sanhedrin (Mt 27:1; Mk 15:1; Luke 22:66-71)

- The purpose of this assembly: to cover the illegal nocturnal proceedings with a facade of legitimacy
- Notice the question put to Jesus at this time: "Are you the Messiah?" (Luke 22:67)
- The point: Jesus' bald claim to deity at His earlier "trial" was sufficient to extract a death sentence from the Sanhedrinists, but such a charge would be meaningless as a charge against Him before the tribunal of the Romans. On the other hand, if they could get Him to claim Messiahship (i.e., kingship), that would make a powerful charge before the Roman authorities.
- Notice Jesus' reply (Luke 22:67); He refused to state boldly that He was the Messiah, but He clearly foretells the time when He will enjoy the prerogatives of Messiah. In effect, He answered their question positively without giving them the opportunity they were seeking to indict Him before the Romans.
- Finally, the Sanhedrinists demanded of Jesus whether He claimed to be the "Son of God;" He answered positively, and they all pronounced Him guilty of blasphemy and therefore worthy of death.

#185 MEANWHILE, the remorse and suicide of Judas {NO REPENTENCE} (Mt 27:3-10; Ac 1:18,19)

IV. "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." Matthew 27:42 (The last day: the civil trials and the Crucifixion)

FRIDAY, shortly *after* dawn

1. Jesus is tried by the ROMANS

#186 **The FIRST ROMAN STAGE:**

- Before Pilate the first time; Jesus remains silent before the Procurator (Mt 27:2, 11-14; Mk 15:1-5; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:28-38)
- Note: There were several events connected with this initial appearance before Pilate; they can all be seen by comparing the various accounts in the four Gospels.

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- Jesus is taken to the "hall of judgment" very early (John 18:28)

The Jews were in a great hurry for two reasons:

- 1.) They still feared the people, and wanted to have this accomplished before the city was astir
- 2.) They needed to have this crucifixion over by the beginning of their Sabbath, which commenced at sundown on Friday (John 19:31).

Notice the hypocrisy of the Sanhedrinists seen in John 18:28; as they go about high-handedly committing the most awful crime in all of human history, they very fastidiously avoid coming in contact with a Gentile household, lest they defile themselves and thus render themselves unfit to appear before YHWH in the Passover observance.

"O impious blindness! They would be defiled, forsook, by a dwelling which was another's, and not be defiled by a crime which was their own. They feared to be defiled by the blood of an innocent brother." --Augustine

- At first, the Jews attempted to get Pilate to condemn Jesus without so much as a charge against Him; they expected Pilate to accept the very fact that they brought this One to him as ample evidence of His guilt and worthiness of death (John 18:29,30); however, Pilate would have none of that (18:31).

1) Notice that the problem faced by the Sanhedrinists is well expressed in John 18:31b.

2) Notice further that by thus forcing the Jews to depend upon Rome to carry out the execution, our Lord accomplished His purpose of dying the "kind of death" (John 12:33) which would result in all men being drawn to Him (John 3:18; 12:32).

- Pilate took Jesus alone into the Judgment Hall, and there interrogated Him (John 18:33-38a)

1) Note the twisted accusation made against Jesus in order to force Pilate to hear the case (Luke 23:1,2). It was a three-fold accusation: 1-misleading the nation; 2-refusing to pay taxes; 3-claiming to be the Christ/a king.

- Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God, and in their meeting the Sanhedrinists had thus accused Him of blasphemy. But they knew that such a charge would carry no weight with Pilate!
- Therefore, they now pervert that statement of Jesus horribly and extract from it an accusation of TREASON, a charge much more likely to excite the concern and anger of the Romans.

2) This private interview between Jesus and Pilate, recorded by John, is a marvelous example of the infinite wisdom and grace of our Lord!

- While not denying the truth concerning His kingship, He clearly refuted the false charges of treason against Rome.

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- Further, all of this was done in such a spirit of self-effacedness mingled with inherent majesty that Pilate was completely disarmed.
- 3) The conclusion of Pilate: he brought Jesus back out to the multitude and declared, "I find in Him no fault at all" (John 18:38).
 - Note: This is the first of five distinct times that Pilate explicitly states the innocence of Jesus. See below for a summary of those five statements.
- When Pilate announced this finding to the Jews, they were enraged.
 - 1) The Jews began to cast railing accusations against Jesus (Mt 27:12-14), and in the face of these Jesus remained absolutely silent, to the amazement of the Procurator.
 - 2) At this time, Pilate commenced a series of attempts to find a strategy which would enable him to release Jesus (who was obviously innocent of any crime) and at the same time placate the anger of the Jews.

Attempt #1: *As the Jews were accusing Jesus, they insisted that beginning "from Galilee to this place" He had stirred up the people.*

When Pilate heard the word "Galilee" he felt perhaps he could shift this very difficult problem to another Roman officer, Herod Antipas, whose jurisdiction included Galilee, and who happened to be in Jerusalem for the feast season.

#187 The SECOND ROMAN STAGE: Before Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch of Galilee: Jesus remains silent, in spite of the accusations hurled against Him (Luke 23:6-12)

- Again, this appeal to Herod was simply an attempt by Pilate to avoid a very difficult situation.

NOTE: This was the Herod who had been reprimanded by John the Baptist for immorality, and who had subsequently had John executed (Mk 6:14-28); he had been anxious to meet Jesus in order that he might put to rest the fears of his conscience that perhaps John had returned to life (Mk 6:14).

- Once again, as accusations were made against Him by the enraged Jews, Jesus remained absolutely silent; that silence was maintained even as Herod Antipas interrogated Jesus (Luke 23:9,10).
- Herod seems to have been relieved that John the Baptist was not come back to trouble him, and when he is unable to extract anything at all from Jesus, he simply falls in with the mood of the mob, subjects Jesus to mockery and derision, and returns Him to Pilate (Luke 23:1-11).

#188 The THIRD (& FINAL) ROMAN STAGE: Before Pilate a second time; the Procurator treacherously surrenders to the demand of the Sanhedrin that Jesus be executed (Mt 27:15-26; Mk 15:6-15; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39-19:16)

- Barabbas is released

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Attempt #2: *Pilate at this time (?) offers to release Jesus as the prisoner who would, according to local custom, be given His liberty at the Passover season; however, the Jews refuse, insisting instead that Barabbas be released (Mk 15:6-13)*

--A word concerning the historical veracity of the Barabbas account: This is something that the local Roman procurator had instigated on his own. It was likely only done a few short years and likely done to appease the Jews and to ease the disagreements of earlier years between Pilate and the Jews.

- In connection with this, a message from Pilate's wife reached him, exhorting him not to allow the execution of this one called Jesus (Mt 27: 19).

NOTE: Pilate evidently hoped that by going to the people (with whom Jesus had been so popular so recently) rather than to the Sanhedrinists (who had only delivered Jesus up "for envy" - Mt 27:18), he could effect the release of Jesus at the behest of the multitudes.

However, during the time that Pilate was considering that letter from his wife, the Sanhedrinists had been busy persuading the people that they should demand Barabbas be released and that Jesus should be crucified (Mt 27:20-23; Mk 15:9-14; Luke 23:20-23).

Thus, the "leaven of the Pharisees" was finally leavening the whole lump.

- Jesus is scourged.

Attempt #3

In the midst of this exchange, Pilate makes ATTEMPT #3 to release Jesus. The Roman procurator offers to scourge Him and then release Him, evidently hoping thus to satisfy the bloodthirstiness of the Jews who were clamoring for the death of Jesus.

After a complete and absolute declaration of the Prisoner's innocence (Luke 23:14,15- the second such confession by the procurator), Pilate made this feeble attempt to placate the rage of the Jews by scourging Jesus (Luke 23:16).

- Finally, in desperation, Pilate consents to the demand of the Jews

1-Pilate, with painful reluctance, turns Jesus over to be crucified.

- Remember that Pilate had already had Jesus "scourged," probably hoping this would placate the bloodthirstiness of the Jews (John 19:1)
- The soldiers then took the ignominy even further; they placed a crown of thorns upon Jesus' head, clothed Him with a robe of royal hue, and continued to mock and smite Him (John 19:2,3). Pilate allowed this barbarity to go on, and when Jesus had obviously endured much, he presented Him to the multitude (John 19:4,5).

NOTE: The statement of Pilate in John 19:5, "Behold, the man" was probably spoken in derision of the charges against Jesus.

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- As the Roman procurator presented the brutalized Jesus to the crowds, he said, "Behold, here is the man you charge with being a dangerous insurrectionist, the man whom you insist I execute in order to protect and safeguard the Roman empire. Look at him - can you maintain this charge against such a beaten and bloody man?"
- The ploy may have been temporarily effective with reference to the people, but the chief priests continued to cry for the crucifixion of Jesus (John 19:6a)!
- Thus Pilate instructed the Jews to put Jesus to death, because he (Pilate) could find no fault in Him (John 19:6b).
- This was the *fifth* time in the Gospel record Pilate had unequivocally declared the absolute innocence of Jesus. Those five confessions of Jesus' innocence are as follows:
 - At the first interview, Pilate stated, "I find no fault in this man" (Luke 23 :4).
 - In connection with the Barabbas episode, Pilate defends his decision to release Jesus by insisting: "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him" (Luke 23: 14).
 - After the second private interview with Jesus, Pilate insisted to the Jewish leadership, "I find no guilt in Him" (John 18:38).
 - As Pilate emerged from his chambers after that interview, he announced to the multitudes, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no guilt in Him" (John 19:4).
 - Finally, as Pilate turned Jesus over to the Jews to be crucified, He asserted, "Take Him yourselves, and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him" (John 19:6).
- The Jews still hoped to convince Pilate to do their dastardly work for them, to get the Roman Empire to execute this One who had demonstrated Himself to be the Christ, but whom the nation had high-handedly refused to accept. Thus, they continued to hurl accusations against this Nazarene.
- In the course of those accusations, the Jews mentioned that the accused had claimed to be the "Son of God" (John 19:7). This struck such fear in the heart of Pilate (John 19:8) that he called Jesus inside once again to question Him (John 19:9-12). This final private interview with Jesus convinced Pilate more than ever that He was innocent, and thus Pilate "sought to release Him" (John 19:12).
- But the threat of the Jews that they would accuse Pilate before Caesar was too much for the cowardly Pilate, and he capitulated to the demands of the Jews (John 19:12,13).
- Remember that the basic responsibilities of a Roman procurator were to collect the taxes and keep the peace. Pilate's real fear here was that the Jews would take their case to the Roman Caesar.

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- "So long as the two great imperial interests, revenue and order, were conserved, Tiberius (the Caesar) cared little what went on in the provinces, least of all in despised Judea; but woe to the luckless governor if the taxes fell into arrears or an insurrection arose requiring military operations for its suppression." (SMITH, p. 478)

This fear was compounded in the case of Pilate because of a series of difficulties he had had in Judea in recent years.

2-Pilate cynically presents Jesus as a rival "King"

Attempt #4: *Even in releasing Jesus to the Jews for crucifixion, Pilate made ATTEMPT #4--the final attempt to escape condemning and executing this One whom he knew to be innocent. As he turned Jesus over to the murderous Jews, Pilate said to the multitudes, "Behold your king!"*

"It was said as though he said: 'Can you seriously maintain that this poor broken man is a dangerous person, a rival of the Emperor?'

At the same time, he appeals to their Jewish sentiment. 'It was,' says John, 'the Passover Friday,' and could they at that season, sacred to the memory of the great deliverance which had made Israel a nation, doom a fellow-countryman to an ignominious death for seeking to make Israel once more free and rid her of the foreign yoke?" (SMITH, p. 490)

Though the people and the Pharisees were struck by this, the chief priests and Sadducees cried out, "We have no king but Caesar!" Thus, Pilate "delivered him therefore unto them to be crucified."

NOTE: Concerning the modern attempt to rewrite the role of Pilate in the events leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus: All that needs to be said here is that among Jewish circles there have been attempts to rewrite the role of Pilate, thus showing him to be more cruel than he was and to release the Jews from the blame of putting a man to death. This is an attempt by the unbelieving to historically place responsibility in the hands of Pilate. This rewriting of history is an attempt to show the Bible to be in error.

FRIDAY: The day of the Crucifixion of the Prince of Life

INTRODUCTION

We come now to that one incident which is at once the most horrific and the most blessed event in all of human history - the crucifixion of the Prince of Life. Recall that Jesus and the twelve had gathered late in the day on Thursday - yesterday - for the Passover meal, that they had observed that meal together, and that Jesus had then begun to instruct and encourage them. Early in that time of final instruction, the betrayer had made excuses and departed, intending to fetch the Sanhedrin soldiers to the upper room to arrest Jesus.

And then, very early in the morning, in the midst of His "Upper Room Discourse," Jesus had said to the eleven, "Arise, let us go hence!" (John 14:31). The disciples must have been dumfounded as they followed their Lord out into the blackness of the Jerusalem night. As they hastened down the flank of the western hill, across the Valley of the Cheese Makers, over the hill of David just to the south of the great second temple, and then across the Kidron toward the Mount of Olives, Jesus continued to challenge and commission them.

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Finally, in the very early hours of Friday, Jesus and His eleven bewildered disciples arrived at the hedged-in, private "garden of the wine-press, known to us as Gethsemane.

After anguishing in prayer in that place, Jesus emerged and was confronted by Judas the betrayer, who was accompanied on his heinous task by a pack of Sanhedrin soldiers intent on arresting the Nazarene. They were under orders to deliver the hated Messiah to the chambers of the Sanhedrin for the nocturnal "trial" which - it had already been determined - was to result in a sentence of death being passed upon the Accused.

There followed a series of six hearings and/or trials - three Jewish and three Roman. Every imaginable canon of jurisprudence cherished by the Hebrew people was violated in the course of these trials, but the result desired and demanded by the Sanhedrin was accomplished - Jesus the Christ was turned over to His enemies to be executed by crucifixion.

Again, it is certainly true that the gruesome death of our Lord at the hands of His enemies is not a happy subject. And yet, it is at the same time true that no subject - no incident in all of sacred or human history - is so worthy of our consideration. And while the scenes of Golgotha are uniformly wretched, those scenes are at the same moment the most important, the most sublime, and the most blessed that a sanctified soul can conceive. Our focus in this lesson will be the crucifixion of Jesus the Christ, as described in the narratives of the New Testament Gospels.

Notice that the outline in the lesson conforms to that in the PROPOSED HARMONY of the Gospel accounts.

FRIDAY, about 6:00 - 9:00 a.m.

#189 The Roman soldiers mock Jesus (Mt 27:27-30; Mk 15:16-19)

- A short time was necessary to make physical and logistic preparations for the crucifixion; during this time Jesus was remanded to the Roman officers, who called their fellows together and engaged in vicious mockery of the condemned man.

FRIDAY, about 9:00 a.m.

#190 Jesus on the way to Golgotha (Mt 27:31-34; Mk 15:20-23; Luke 23:26-33; John 19: 16,17)

- As they set out for the place of crucifixion, to the north of the walls of Jerusalem, Jesus was compelled to carry His cross; He was so debilitated by the sufferings already endured that another had to be called to assist Him with the burden (Mt 27:32).
- Although the disciples had forsaken Christ and fled, there followed Jesus at this time "a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him" (Lk 23:27). Jesus turned to these and warned them to "weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Lk 23:38).
- When Jesus arrived at Golgotha, He was offered a narcotic, but He refused it (Mt 27:34).

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"He preferred to drink to the bitter dregs the cup which His Father had given Him, and remain in full possession of all His powers through it all. Narcotics, prepared by the charitable hands of the women of Jerusalem, were to alleviate the sufferings of the victims of this horrible death by deadening the senses. Jesus would not receive them though offered repeatedly and by humane hearts." --SHEPHERD, 595

- Luke notes at this point in the narrative that there were two "malefactors" were to be crucified with Jesus, "one on the right hand and one on the left" (Luke 23:33).

The crucifixion of Jesus, the Christ:

#191 The first three hours on the cross (9:00 a.m. - noon)

(Mt 27:35-44; Mk 15:24-32; Luke 23:33-43; John 19:18-27)

- As Jesus was raised on the cross, the Jews noticed for the first time the superscription which Pilate had caused to be placed above Him; they insisted he modify it, but he refused (John 19:19-22).

"With the passionate ill-humor of the Roman governor there probably blended a vein of seriousness. While he was delighted to revenge himself on his detested subjects by an act of public insolence, he probably meant, or half meant, to imply that this was, in one sense, the King of the Jews- the greatest, the noblest, the truest of his race- whom, therefore, His race had crucified. The king was not unworthy of His kingdom, but the kingdom of the King... The Jews felt the intensity of the scorn with which Pilate had treated them. It so completely poisoned their hour of triumph, that they sent their chief priests in deputation, begging the Governor to alter the obnoxious title... But Pilate's courage, which had oozed away so rapidly as the name of Caesar, had now revived. He was glad in any and every way to browbeat and thwart the men whose seditious clamor had forced him in the morning to act against his will."--FARRAR, 441

- During these hours Jesus speaks three times:

1.) **A word of compassion** *for His enemies:*

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

"... at this moment of inconceivable horror that the voice of the Son of Man was heard uplifted, not in a scream of natural agony at that fearful torture, but calmly praying in Divine compassion for his brutal and pitiless murderers--... 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'"--
FARRAR, 2:402

Note: Specifically to whom did Jesus have reference in this prayer?

2.) **A word of compassion** *for the repentant thief:*

"Today thou shalt be with me in paradise. "

"The 'penitent' had spoken of the future, Christ spoke of 'today'; the penitent had prayed about the Messianic Kingdome which was to come, Christ assured him in regard to the state of disembodied spirits, and conveyed to him the promise that he would be there in the abode of the blessed—

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"Paradise"-- and that through means of Himself as the Messiah: 'Amen, I say unto thee-- Today with Me shalt thou be in the Paradise.'"--Edersheim, 2:600

3.) **A word of compassion** for His mother:

"Woman, behold thy son," ...and to John, "Behold thy mother."

- During this time, the Roman soldiers cast lots for the garment of Jesus (Mt 27:35, cp. Ps 22:18)

It was Roman procedure to assign four soldiers to each victim as that victim went to his execution; the four assigned to Jesus first took what could be divided and distributed the items among themselves (John 19:23a), but His coat (outer garment) was "without seam, woven from top to bottom," and to rend it would destroy its value. Thus, the four cast lots to see who would have it.

Compare Ps 22:18.

- Many of the onlookers railed on Jesus even as He hung on the cross (Luke 23:35-37)

#192 The three hours of darkness (noon - 3:00 p.m.)

- During this time, Jesus speaks four more times:

1.) *A cry of horror*: "My God, My God! Why hast thou forsaken me!?" (Mt 27:46)

"These words mark the climax of the suffering of Christ for a lost world. Here He drank to the dregs the cup of sorrow, grief, and pain on our behalf. In these hours when the sun refused to shine upon suffering deity, Jesus found fitting expression to His feeling of desolation in the words of the Psalmist... Jesus had to pay alone and tasted death--spiritual death--for every man. Spiritual death is broken communion. Jesus had a taste of such broken communion, the first and last He ever experienced--in those desolate hours when darkness lay upon the earth and upon His soul."--Shepard, 602

"The logical, irresistible, irrevocable issue of sin is to be God-forsaken. Sin in its genesis was rebellion against God. Sin in its harvest is to be God-abandoned. Man sinned when he dethroned and enthroned himself. He reaps the utter harvest of his sin when he has lost God altogether. That is the issue of all sin... Now listen solemnly, and from that cross hear that cry, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?' That is hell. No other human being has ever been God-forsaken in this life. Man, by his own act, alienated himself from God, but God never left him... WHAT explanation can there be from this cry from the lips of Jesus? None other is needed than that declared by His herald three years before... "Behold, the lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" He has taken hold upon sin. He has made it his own... On that Cross He was forsaken. He knew no sin. He was made sin. He was forsaken of God."--Morgan, *Crises*, 299

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2.) *A cry of torment*: "I thirst!" (Jn 19:28)

"The expression 'I thirst,' was chiefly used, I believe, in order to afford a public testimony of the reality and intensity of His bodily sufferings, and to anyone supposing, because His marvelous calmness and patience, that He was miraculously free from suffering. On the contrary, He would have all around Him know that he felt what all severely wounded persons, and especially what all crucified persons, felt--a burning and consuming thirst. So that when we read that he suffered for sins, we are to understand that he really and truly suffered.

"Henry observes, 'The torments of hell are represented by a violent thirst, in the complaint of the rich man who begged for a drop of water to cool his tongue. To that everlasting thirst we had all been condemned, if Christ had not suffered on the cross, and said, 'thirst.'"--Ryle, 3:320

3.) *A cry of victory*: "It is finished!" (John 19:30)

"The word translated 'It is finished' (tetelesti) was used in Greek commercial life. The term signified the completion of a transaction by the full payment of a price or the discharge of a debt by a complete payment. All sin incurs a debt in which the sinner owes a debt to God. The debt must be discharged before that sinner can be accepted by God... Christ's death paid for the total sin of the human race. Having made that payment, Christ could say, 'It is finished,' or 'The debt has been paid in full.'"--Pentecost, 487

"In this word, 'It is finished!', will I comfort myself. I am forced to confess that all my finishing of the will of God is imperfect, piecemeal work, while yet the law urges me on that no so much as one title of it must remain unaccomplished. Christ is the end of the law. What it requires, Christ performed."--Martin Luther

4.) *A cry of commitment*: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" (Luke 23:46)

"[Jesus] bowed his head and gave up his spirit (John 19:30). In doing so Christ offered a final prayer: 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit' (Luke 23:46). This was in keeping with Christ's own statement, 'I lay down my life--only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down at my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father' (John 10:17).

"Christ did not die because life slowly ebbed from his veins. His life was not taken from Him. Christ died because by an act of His will He dismissed His soul from His body. Christ was sovereign over His death as He was over His resurrection (John 10:17, 18)."--Pentecost, 487

- The death of the God-Man (Mt 27:50; Mk 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30)

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#193 Physical phenomena at the time of the death of Jesus

- The veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was rent in two, from the top to the bottom (Mt 27:51)

"The veils before the Most Holy Place were 40 cubits (60 feet) long and 20 cubits (30 feet) wide, of the thickness of the palm of a hand, and wrought in 72 squares, which were joined together; and these Veils were so heavy, that, in the exaggerated language of the time, it needed 300 priests to manipulate each. If the Veil was at all such as it is described in the Talmud, it could not have been rent in twain by a mere earthquake of the fall of the lintel, although its composition in squares fasted together might explain, how the rent might be as described in the Gospel. --Edersheim, 2:611

"This veil, which was the thickness of a palm breadth, was sixty feet long and thirty broad, and separated the Holy and Most Holy Places. Various attempts have been made to explain this strange phenomenon on naturalistic grounds, such as the earthquake, or as Jerome's comment on the Gospel according to the Hebrews, by the fall of the large lintel of the temple broken by the earthquake. But this veil was of such tough fabric and so woven that it could not have been rent in train by an earthquake of the falling lintel. Matthew connects the phenomenon directly with the death of Jesus, calling attention to the fact that it was rent 'from top to bottom' by God's hand, throwing open thus the Most Holy Place to all men. Previously only the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place, and that once a year on the day of Atonement, to offer on behalf of himself and of the people. Early evangelical tradition held to this supernatural interpretation which is confirmed for us by the Hebrew epistle. This significant portent was doubtless the explanation for the fact that a great number of preists became Christians in early apostolic times. The way is open now for all men to come boldly to the throne of grace through the atoning death."--Shepard, p. 602

- There was an earthquake (Mt 27:51)
- Graves in the area of Jerusalem were opened and "many bodies of saints which slept arose;" after the resurrection of Christ, these went into the city and "appeared unto many" (Mt 27:52,53)

Notice one effect of all this: Mt 27:54

FRIDAY, *before sundown*

#194 The burial of the body of Jesus, after proof of His death (Mt 27:57-60; Mk 15:42-46; Luke 23:50-54; John 19:31-42)

- The Roman soldiers came to break the legs of the victims to hasten death; when they did so they discovered that Jesus was already dead (Jn 19:33)

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NOTE: This is clear and convincing proof that Jesus *was* dead; the oft-revived idea that Jesus only "swooned" on the cross, and was later revived by the cool air of the tomb- simply will not stand up in the record.

- As further proof that Jesus was indeed dead, the soldiers pierced the side of the Savior (John 19:34)

Compare Zechariah 12:10.

Note concerning the reference to a "pierced Messiah" in a scroll from the Dead Sea collection:

- Two courageous Sanhedrinists--Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea--came forward to identify with Jesus and to claim His body for burial (Mk 15:42-47; John 19:41,42)

1) The tomb where Jesus was placed was in a garden nearby; the tomb had never been occupied before (John 19:41,42).

2) Had these men not intervened, Jesus' body doubtless would have been buried in a common sepulcher because of the ignominious death He suffered; such a burial would have been in violation of the prophecies of the Old Testament (cf. Isaiah 53:9).

- The next day the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate to demand that the tomb of Jesus be sealed "lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead; so that the last error shall be worse than the first" (Mt 27:64). Pilate complied, and thus was the theory that Jesus' body was stolen rendered untenable by His enemies.

#195 The watch of the women by the tomb of Jesus (Mt 27:61; Mk 15 :47; Luke 23:55,56)

- Jesus was buried sometime before sundown on Friday; His body lay in the tomb all of Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath), and He resurrected sometime before sunrise on Sunday.
- Throughout the time the body of Jesus lay in the sepulcher, the women maintained a vigil during those hours when such was appropriate.