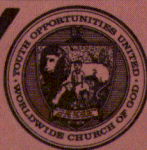
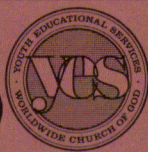


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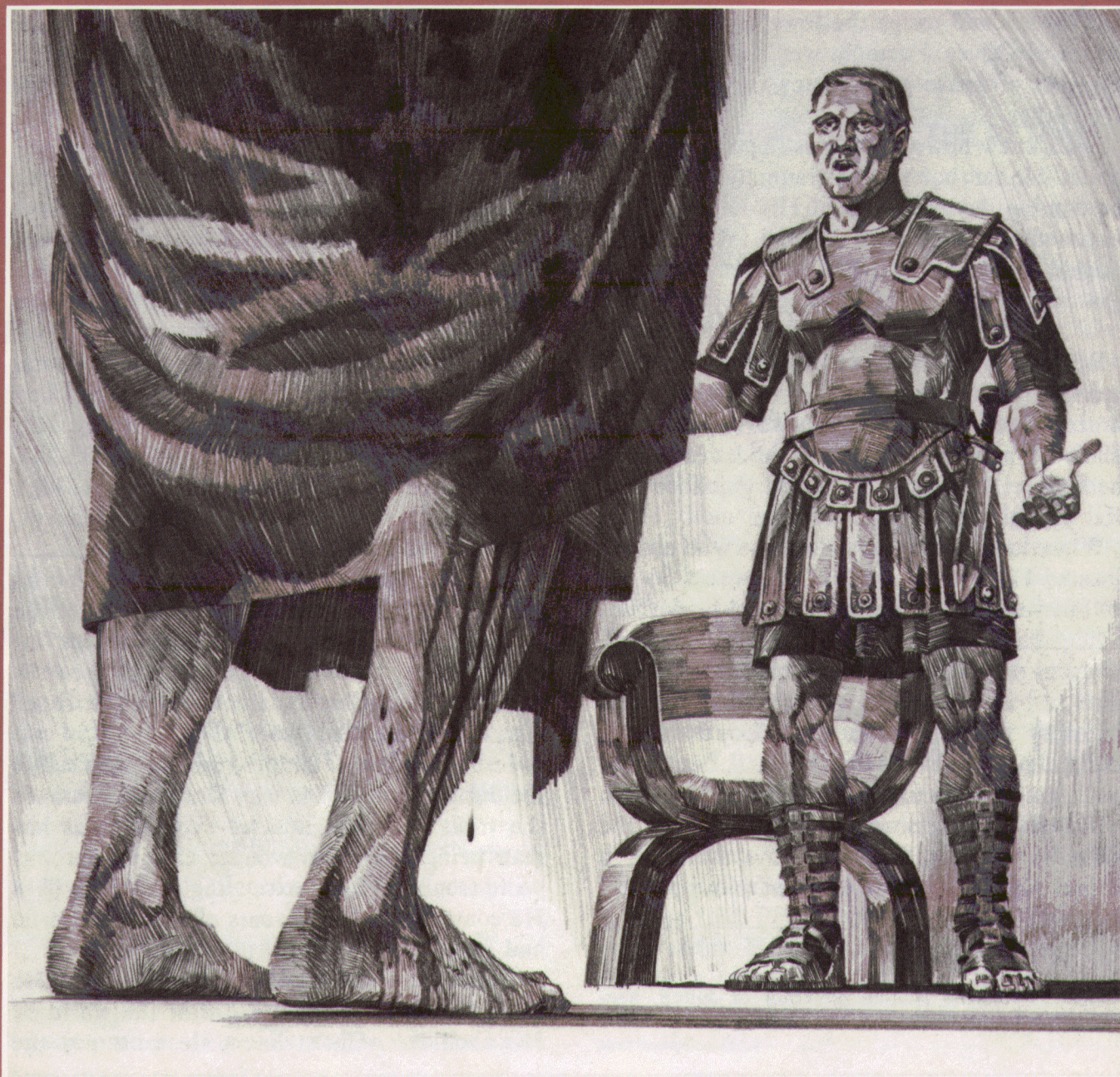
BIBLE

LESSONS



LEVEL 8

LESSON 11



The Arrest, Trial and Crucifixion of Christ

THE ARREST, TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

After concluding the Passover, Jesus Christ and His disciples crossed over the Kidron brook and on to the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. Here He would have the last moments of peace and privacy in prayer with His Father.

Jesus knew how vital it was that He be close to His Father before the traumatic events of the coming day. He wanted His Father's support and inspiration to help Him with the terrible ordeal He faced.

STAYING CLOSE TO GOD

Whenever we are about to face difficult situations, or find ourselves in trying circumstances, it is important that we have a close relationship with God. We should draw upon the support, encouragement and guidance that God can give us at such times.

What does God promise to those who remain close to Him?

"Let your conversation [conduct] be without _____; and be _____ with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never _____ thee, nor _____ thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my _____, and I will not _____ what _____ shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

It doesn't matter how great or how small the difficulty may be, God is always available to help us with our needs and listen to our prayers

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, sentenced Christ to scourging and crucifixion.

Illustration by Ken Tunell

for help. Perhaps we face a difficult examination at school or problems in our relationship with our family. Possibly the influence of our peers at school seems too much to cope with. Whatever the situation, God will hear us when we ask Him for help.

CHRIST PRAYS TO THE FATHER

After arriving at the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ told His disciples to wait while He went to pray. Taking Peter, James and John with Him, He began to pour out His feelings to them.

Remember, Christ was also a human being. He had led a perfect, sinless life having had God's Holy Spirit from birth, but He still suffered just as you and I do (Mark 14:33-34).

"Seeing then that we have a great high _____, that is passed into the heavens, _____ the Son of God, let us _____ our profession. For we have not an _____ which cannot be _____ with the _____ of our infirmities; but was in _____ points _____ like as we are, yet without _____" (Hebrews 4:14-15).

Jesus Christ was tempted just as we are, but He did not sin. This is why Christ understands the trials and problems we experience as human beings. It is no wonder that Christ was "sore troubled" and "exceedingly sorrowful" as He contemplated the events of His arrest, trial and crucifixion.

Christ knew the terrible death He faced. He knew He would carry the sins of the world on His shoulders. Christ knew He must pay the

death penalty for the breaking of God's laws on behalf of all who would later be given the opportunity for eternal life.

With all these events on His mind, Jesus prayed to His Father. He asked that if it were possible, could there be another way that God's purpose of salvation be achieved. But Jesus concluded His prayer with the recognition that all things must be done according to the Father's will.

We often make our requests to God in prayer as Christ did, only to become upset when our prayers are not answered exactly in the way we asked. We must understand, as Christ did, that God's decisions and ways are perfect. Too often we judge situations according to our own reasoning. We decide what is fair and just according to man's way. But God judges perfectly. And sometimes His decisions are not the decisions we would make.

"For my _____ are not your _____, neither are your _____ my _____, saith the _____. For as the heavens are _____ than the earth, so are my _____ higher than your _____, and my _____ than your _____" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

We should always seek to understand God's will and to understand why God does what He does. When a person receives God's Holy Spirit, he begins to think as God does. He or she begins to understand God's way. Because Jesus had the Holy Spirit from birth, He understood God's will and was willing to acknowledge that God's way is right.

Christ was in such agony when he prayed, that His sweat became like drops of blood (Luke 22:44).

When Christ returned to Peter, James and John, He found them asleep. After encouraging them to pray and remain alert, He went back to continue praying. His prayer was the same

as before. Suffering from physical and nervous exhaustion, the disciples again fell asleep. When Christ returned the second time, they were embarrassed and afraid and could offer no excuse (Mark 14:39-40).

A third time, Christ prayed in great mental anguish that God would take away the awesome trial that faced Him. But being subject to God's will, He understood God's purpose and accepted what was about to happen to Him.

Returning to His disciples, He woke them and told them that the time of His betrayal and arrest had come. Christ was now prepared to face His ordeal (Matthew 26:46).

JUDAS THE BETRAYER

Knowing that Jesus and His disciples often came to the Garden of Gethsemane, Judas Iscariot led a band of

soldiers there to arrest Him. With them were officers of the chief priests and Pharisees. They carried lanterns and torches and their weapons (John 18:2-3).

Judas, the betrayer, planned to identify Jesus to the soldiers with a kiss of greeting (Matthew 26:48-49). As the soldiers approached, Christ asked them who they were looking for. The guards making the arrest then answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." When Jesus replied to the men, the guards and officers of the priests and Pharisees fell backward to the ground.

A second time they said they had come for Jesus of Nazareth and moved forward to make the arrest. At that moment, Peter drew his sword and struck a servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Christ sternly rebuked Peter by saying that violent men suffered violent deaths. Jesus then healed the servant's ear (Matthew 26:51-52; Luke 22:48-51).

Jesus told Peter that if He had wanted to resist arrest, He could have called on thousands of angels to come to His aid. Instead, Jesus knew that it was God's will that He go through with the arrest.

Suffering from physical and nervous exhaustion, the disciples again fell asleep. When Christ returned . . . they were embarrassed and afraid . . .



The soldiers grabbed Christ and bound Him in ropes. Christ questioned their actions in making this arrest at night in a quiet, secluded place. He asked them why they hadn't arrested Him when He taught in the Temple or walked through the streets.

At the moment of Christ's arrest, the faint-hearted disciples all fled. No one remained to support Him. One young man was so desperate to escape that when the soldiers grabbed his clothing, he tore himself free and ran naked from the garden. It is possible that this young man was Mark, who later wrote of this incident in the book of Mark (Mark 14:50-52).

The disciples had been with Christ for three

and one-half years. They had seen many fantastic miracles. They had watched how Christ reacted to many different situations. They heard Him teach with authority and explain the true meaning of the Scriptures—not twisting the Scriptures to suit His own will as the Pharisees did. Even Peter had told Christ that he knew there was no other way to live except to follow His example (John 6:68).

But when they were tested, the disciples, without God's Spirit, were unable to hold to their convictions. In spite of all that they knew to be true, they didn't have the character to stand for what they believed.

We can look to the end of these disciples'



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The view looking across the Kidron Valley in Jerusalem, with the Garden of Gethsemane where Christ was arrested in the foreground.

lives to see that they did develop that character. After they received God's Spirit on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31, dramatic changes took place in their lives. They began to teach with power and authority what Christ had told them to teach, the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

AN ILLEGAL TRIAL

From the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ was taken to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of the high priest. Annas was an influential man among the Jewish religious leaders. He

had previously been high priest before being deposed by the Romans in A.D. 15. In A.D. 18, Caiaphas became high priest, but Annas remained a respected religious leader among the Jews. Both Annas and Caiaphas were often regarded as high priests (Luke 3:2).

Annas was an older man and well versed in the Jewish law. He was concerned about his role in the community if the message of the Kingdom of God were to be believed by the multitudes.

Annas questioned Jesus about His teachings and His disciples (John 18:19). Christ's reply was that He had never hidden anything, but had preached openly in the synagogues and in the Temple.

"Why then," Jesus asked, "didn't you question those who heard Me teach?"

Angered at Christ's reply, a guard struck Christ. This was the beginning of the physical abuse that would eventually culminate in Christ's crucifixion. Jesus was then taken to Caiaphas' house where He was to be tried.

Caiaphas quickly convened an investigative council. The council members came from the influential people of Judea—priests, lawyers, Sadducees and Pharisees.

The council could make charges in civil and religious matters in Judea. But under Roman rule, they could not deal with acts of treason or disloyalty to Roman leadership.

Witnesses were bribed to appear and make false accusations against Christ. But none of the men making the charges agreed with each other. Then two men came forward and falsely claimed that Jesus had boasted of destroying the Temple and rebuilding it in three days. But even these two witnesses could not agree on their story. They were also twisting the meaning of what Christ had said (Mark 14:55-59).

Christ had been referring to the "temple" of His body (John 2:18-21). The Apostle Paul also referred to the body of a converted Christian as a temple.

Why is it called a temple?

"Know ye not that ye are the _____ of

_____, and that the _____ of God dwelleth in you?" (I Corinthians 3:16.)

The only *sign* Christ gave to the disbelieving Jews that He was the Messiah was that He would be in the grave three days and three nights. He would be buried and His body, the temple of God's Spirit, would be raised three days later.

Christ gave no defense to the false accusations and lies directed at Him. To have done so would have been useless in this unjust court (Mark 14:61).

Finally, Caiaphas asked Jesus if He was the Christ, the Son of God. Christ replied: "Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64).

This was too much for the self-righteous religious leaders. In a ceremonial display of indignation, Caiaphas tore the hem of his garment, loudly accusing Christ of blasphemy—claiming to be God.

According to the law (Leviticus 24:16), a "blasphemer" was to be stoned to death. In their hatred against Christ, these men may now have felt justified in their predetermined decision to kill Him.

These highly regarded religious leaders now began to take out their spite and hatred on Christ. They struck Him with their hands and spit in His face.

As they struck Him, they began to taunt Him and call on Him to prophesy. They covered His face with a hood or blindfold and mocked Him to identify those who struck Him. This violent, cowardly treatment of Jesus continued through the early hours of the morning.

PETER DENIES CHRIST

During this time, Peter and another disciple, probably John, followed the arresting mob

from a distance to Caiaphas' house. Because John was known to someone in Caiaphas' household, they were allowed into the courtyard (John 18:15-16).

When they entered the gateway, a maid questioned if Peter was one of Christ's disciples. Peter promptly denied that he knew anything about Christ. He then walked to a brazier filled with hot coals where several officers of the guard were warming themselves. As Peter stood warming his hands, he was again asked if he was one of Christ's disciples. Again, he denied any knowledge of Christ.

Then one of the household servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, was sure that he had seen Peter with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:26).

What was Peter's reaction to this third accusation?

"Then began he to _____ and to _____, saying, I _____ not the man" (Matthew 26:74).

At that moment, a rooster crowed, signaling the dawn of a new day. Then Christ turned and looked at Peter. Suddenly, Peter remembered that Christ had told him that he would deny Him three times.

Filled with grief, Peter went out and wept bitterly (Matthew 26:75).

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Jesus Christ was subjected to false charges, insults and severe physical abuse. At dawn He was again before a council of religious leaders. He was again questioned as to whether He was the Christ, the Son of God.

What was Christ's reply?

"If I tell you, ye will not _____: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor _____ Hereafter shall the _____ of _____ on the _____ of the power of _____. Then said

Christ gave no defense to the false accusations and lies directed at Him. To have done so would have been useless in this unjust court.

they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye _____ that _____” (Luke 22:67-70).

As far as the members of the council were concerned, Jesus was now condemned by His own words.

Do You Remember?

1. Why is it important for us to have a close relationship with God? _____

2. God has promised us that He would never _____ us.
3. What did the disciples do while Jesus prayed? _____
4. Should we be angry at God if He does not answer our prayers exactly as we asked? Why? _____

5. We should always seek to understand God's _____.
6. Christ prayed while in the Garden of _____.
7. _____ betrayed Christ.
8. Which disciple cut off the ear of the high priest's servant? _____.
9. What did the disciples do when Christ was arrested? _____
10. Who was the high priest? _____.
11. Who was the father-in-law of the high priest? _____.
12. Peter denied Christ _____ times.

THE BETRAYER'S END

When Judas Iscariot, who was standing on the fringes of the crowd, heard the condemnation of Christ, he understood its meaning. He understood that the religious leaders would not

rest that day until Christ was dead. He further realized that it was his actions that resulted in Christ's arrest.

Judas returned the pieces of silver, his price for betraying Christ, to the chief priests. They refused it, self-righteously declaring it tainted with blood (Matthew 27:3-10).

After throwing the money down in the Temple, Judas ran out and hastily made a noose out of old rope, tied it to a tree and placed it around his neck. Unable to bear the guilt, Judas leaped out and ended his life. As Judas hung from the tree, the rope broke and his body fell to the ground, bursting his stomach (Acts 1:18-19).

Pilate was continually trying to keep the Roman emperor happy, and at the same time, rule a nation of people he hated and misunderstood.

JESUS BROUGHT BEFORE PILATE

Christ was next taken before the procurator, Pontius Pilate. Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea. He had been appointed to the office in A.D. 26 possessing military and financial powers. He appointed the high priest and controlled the Temple funds. The Roman historian Philo describes Pilate as a harsh and spiteful man (Matthew 27:2).

Pilate was continually trying to keep the Roman emperor happy, and at the same time rule a nation of people he hated and misunderstood. He particularly hated the self-righteous, vindictive religious leaders of the Jews, and they had the same feelings toward him.

Christ was taken to Pilate's palace. Standing outside, as they feared becoming defiled by entering a Gentile's house, the Jews accused Jesus of many things. They wanted Christ tried and executed by the Roman authorities. To make this possible, they used other false charges. These things helped fulfill Christ's prophecy of how He would be killed—by Roman crucifixion, not stoning (Luke 23:1; John 18:28-29).

“And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow _____ the nation, and forbidding to give _____ to _____,

saying that he himself is Christ a _____” (Luke 23:2).

They implied that Christ was plotting against Caesar. This was treason, a crime by Roman law and punishable by death.

Pilate would have known about Christ, who had received much attention in Jerusalem because of His miracles and teachings. But seeing no harm in Christ’s teachings, he told the Jewish leaders to try Christ and judge Him according to their law (John 18:31).

Realizing that their purpose was beginning to be thwarted, they loudly proclaimed that they could not pronounce the death sentence for treason, saying that it was Pilate’s responsibility. Pilate did not want them accusing him to Caesar of allowing sedition in Judea. So he reluctantly agreed to question Christ.

Pilate asked Christ if He claimed to be the king of the Jews. “Is that what you think or did someone tell you about Me?” Christ asked him. Pilate quickly assured Christ that it was the Jew’s accusation (John 18:33-35).

Christ then explained that He was indeed a king and was born for that purpose. But, His kingdom was not of this world (age). Therefore, His followers did not fight. Christ’s purpose in being born was to bring the knowledge of the truth to those whom God would call. Cynically, Pilate asked, “What is truth?” (John 18:38.)

The Bible answers this question for us. “Thy _____ is truth” (John 17:17).

Satisfied that Christ presented no threat to Roman rule, Pilate told the Jewish religious leaders that he considered Christ innocent.

But the religious leaders continued their accusations against Christ. Pilate was astonished that Christ remained silent, not answering their accusations as most people would have done (Matthew 27:13-14).

The priests and elders then turned their accusations to Pilate, again claiming Christ was guilty of treason. “He’s preached sedition from Galilee to Judea,” they shouted.

Hearing that Jesus was from Galilee gave

Pilate the idea of sending Him to Herod. Herod Antipas was the tetrarch and ruler over the area of Galilee.

Herod, who happened to be in Jerusalem at this time, was delighted to see Jesus. But not for any good reason. Having heard about Christ’s miracles, he was hopeful that Jesus would perform one for him. He questioned Christ in detail, while the chief priests and scribes stood by vehemently accusing Him. But

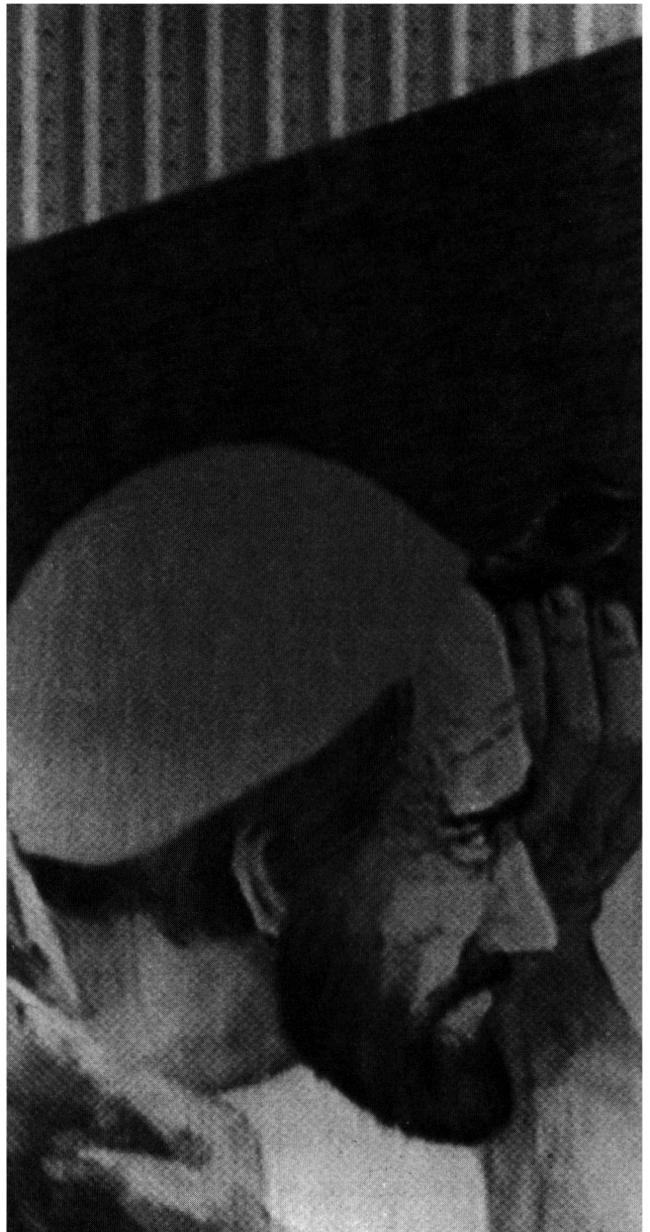


Illustration by Ken Tunell

Simon of Cyrene was required to carry the huge wooden stake to the site of Christ’s crucifixion.

Christ did not dignify their accusations by answering them.

Angry at Christ's silence to his questions and not seeing a miracle, Herod and his soldiers mocked Him. They dressed Christ in a royal robe and then sent Him back to Pilate (Luke 23:6-12).

BARABBAS IS RELEASED

As a gesture of "generosity" toward the Jewish people, it was Pilate's custom during the Passover season to release a prisoner of their choice. Hoping to be rid of Christ, he offered them the choice of Barabbas, a convicted terrorist and murderer, or Jesus Christ.

The Jewish leaders persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas. When Pilate appeared on the balcony to ask which prisoner they wanted released, the angry mob, led by the hateful scribes and Pharisees, began to shout for Barabbas.

Pilate told them that he could find no fault that made Jesus deserve crucifixion. By this time the Jewish leaders were beside themselves with hatred and fury.

What did they say to Pilate?

"If thou _____ this _____ go, thou art not _____ friend: whosoever maketh himself a _____ speaketh against _____" (John 19:12).

Pilate realized that it was Christ's life or his loss of credibility with Caesar and possible death. Taking Christ down to the Roman judgment hall, he presented Christ to the religious leaders as the king of the Jews.

"We have no king but Caesar," they shouted to Pilate (John 19:15).

Pilate then ceremoniously washed his hands, symbolizing that he did not consider himself responsible for Christ's death. He released Barabbas and formally sentenced Christ to the will of the religious leaders. Christ was then taken to be scourged before being crucified

(Matthew 27:23-26; Luke 23:24).

THE ROMAN SCOURGING

A Roman scourging was a terrible punishment which many never survived. The person was tied to a pillar or post and then lashed by a trained soldier. The whips were made of thongs of leather fastened to a handle. There were usually three thongs in each scourge imbedded with bits of metal and bone. Christ was beaten so badly during this scourging, He was barely recognizable.

What does Isaiah say about Christ's beaten body?

"As many were astonished [astonished] at thee; his _____ was so _____ more than _____, and his form more than the _____ of men" (Isaiah 52:14).

This beating was a vital part in God's plan. Christ's shed blood and His broken body picture a complete and total sacrifice for sin.

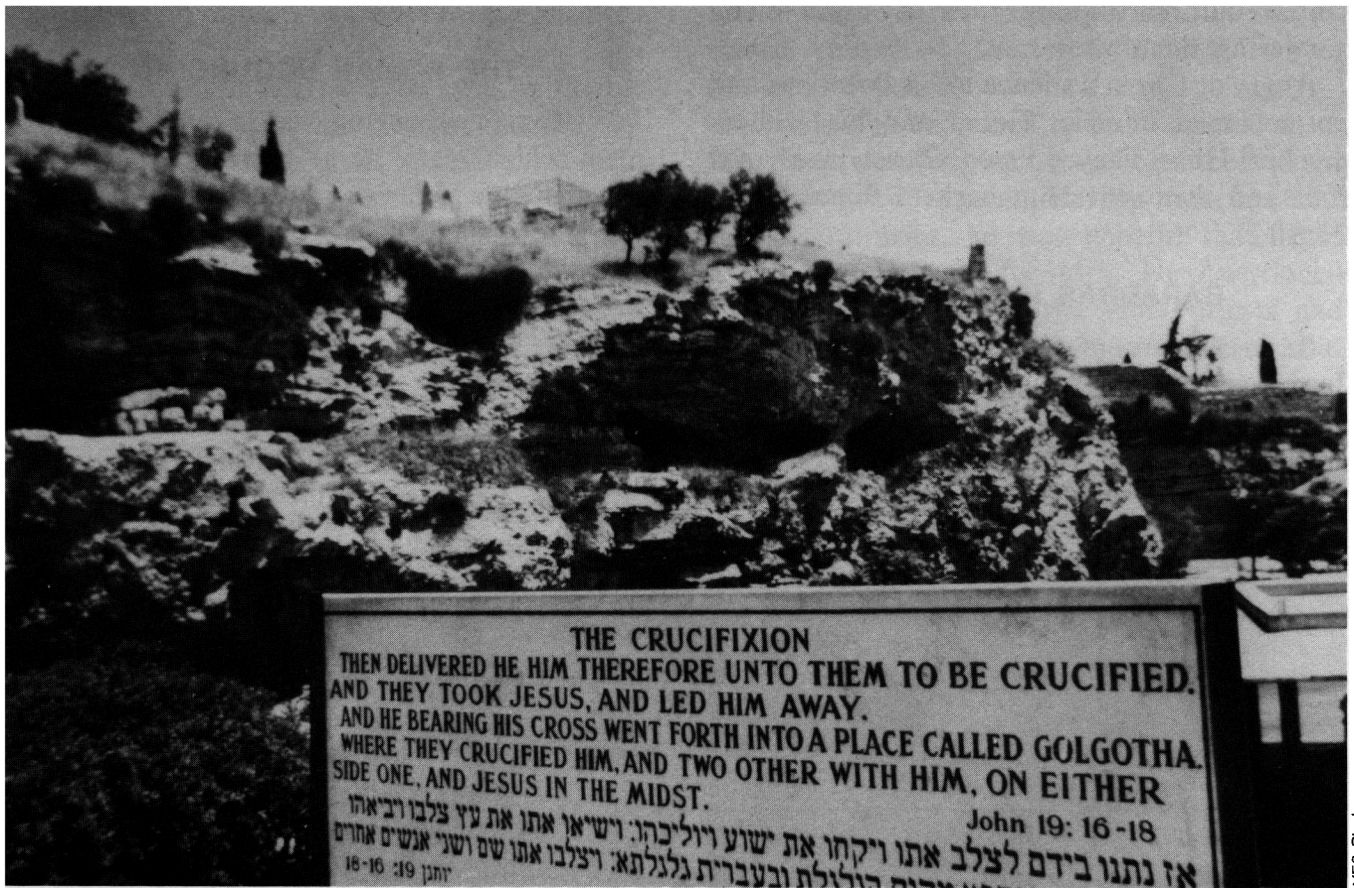
At the Passover service today, Christ's sacrifice is remembered through the symbols Christ established. A small glass of wine represents Christ's shed blood and a piece of unleavened bread represents His broken body. True Christians show appreciation that Christ's blood allows forgiveness of sin. But also, the broken bread shows our willingness to allow Christ to live His life in us.

Another deep meaning of Jesus' sacrifice and suffering is that with His _____ we are _____ (Isaiah 53:5 and I Peter 2:24).

After the terrible scourging, the Roman soldiers draped a robe around Christ's battered and bleeding body. Then they took a wreath of thorns and jammed it down onto Christ's head, causing excruciating pain as the blood ran down His face.

Then spitting on Him, mocking Him and beating His head with a reed, they bowed down before Him, saluting Him as the king of the Jews (Matthew 27:27-30).

Pilate told them that he found no fault that made Jesus deserve crucifixion. The Jewish leaders were beside themselves with hatred and fury.



YES Photo

The probable site of Golgotha, the “place of the skull,” where the crucifixion of Christ occurred.

CHRIST IS CRUCIFIED

After their humiliating treatment of Christ, the soldiers led Him away to be crucified. He was so weak from the brutal scourging, they had to force a man named Simon of Cyrene to carry the huge wooden stake to the site of the crucifixion (Luke 23:26).

A large crowd of people followed the procession outside the city.

Some women who saw Jesus began weeping. When Christ saw them crying, He turned and told them not to weep for Him, but for themselves as the destruction of Jerusalem would soon be upon them. It was about 40 years later that Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans (Luke 23:27-31).

Finally, the group of soldiers with Christ reached a small rocky outcropping called Golgotha, outside the wall of the city. *Golgotha* is

a word that means “place of the skull” (Matthew 27:33).

There they stripped Him of His robe and proceeded with the final part of Christ’s death. They stretched Him out on the stake and pounded crude iron nails into His hands and feet, fixing Him to the wooden stake. Nailed to the stake over Christ’s head was an inscription in three languages—Hebrew, Greek and Latin—that read, “This is Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.” This was Pilate’s final spiteful act to the Jewish religious leaders (John 19:19-20).

Jesus hung in agony on the stake while the chief priests and Pharisees came to mock and insult Him. They challenged Him to save Himself from the cross if He could. They did not realize that Jesus could have called upon thousands of angels to come to His rescue. But Christ knew He had to go through with this

terrible ordeal to make it possible for God to enlarge His Family (Matthew 27:39-43).

Crucified on either side of Him were two thieves. One scorned Him and accused Him. The other knew that they both deserved their punishment, but Christ was innocent. The thief then asked Christ to remember him when He returned to His kingdom. Christ's reply was that later, after the resurrection of all the dead, the thief would indeed see Christ in His Kingdom (Luke 23:39-43).

Among the mourners around the cross were Christ's mother Mary, and one of His disciples, John. Thinking of others, even in this time of pain and agony, Christ commanded John to look after His mother from that time forward (John 19:27).

About midday, an unnatural darkness came over the land of Judea. It lasted for about three hours. After this, Christ knew even His Father had turned His back on Him as He carried the world's sins on His shoulders. With a heartrending cry, Christ called out to His Father.

"My _____, my _____, why hast thou _____ me?" (Matthew 27:46.)

Shortly after this, a soldier took his spear and rammed it into Christ's side. As the water and blood gushed out, Christ's last words to His Father asked for the forgiveness of those who had killed Him. Then He died.

At the moment of Christ's death, miraculous events happened. An earthquake shook through the area of Judea. Many tombs were opened and people were resurrected from the dead. Also the veil separating the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple was ripped from top to bottom, showing that man now had access to the Father (Matthew 27:51-54).

As the first Day of Unleavened Bread was approaching, the Jews wanted the bodies removed from the stakes. Soldiers came to break the legs of those crucified. This would speed up their deaths as they would no longer be able to support the weight of their bodies to breathe (John 19:31-32).

The soldiers broke both the thieves' legs, but upon seeing Christ was dead, they left Him alone. This fulfilled the prophecy that not a bone in Christ's body would be broken (Psalm 34:20).

Christ's sacrifice made it now possible for our sins to be forgiven, when we repent of them. We also now have direct access to God the Father.

Christ died so that we may have life in abundance in God's Family. And as we will learn in our next lesson, Christ was resurrected and now sits at the right hand of God the Father. We will also learn about the beginning of His Church.

Do You Remember?

1. What did Judas do after realizing that Christ would be killed? _____

_____.
2. Who was the Roman procurator or governor over Judea? _____.
3. What did the Jews falsely accuse Jesus of doing before Pilate? _____

_____.
4. What is truth? _____
_____.
5. Who was the tetrarch and ruler of Galilee? _____.
6. Who was the prisoner that Pilate wanted to release? _____.
7. What is the importance of the beating that Christ suffered? _____

_____.
8. What did the sign say that was nailed to the stake above Christ's head? _____

_____.
9. How long did Christ say that He would be in the grave? _____
_____.

FOUNDER: HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG (1892-1986)

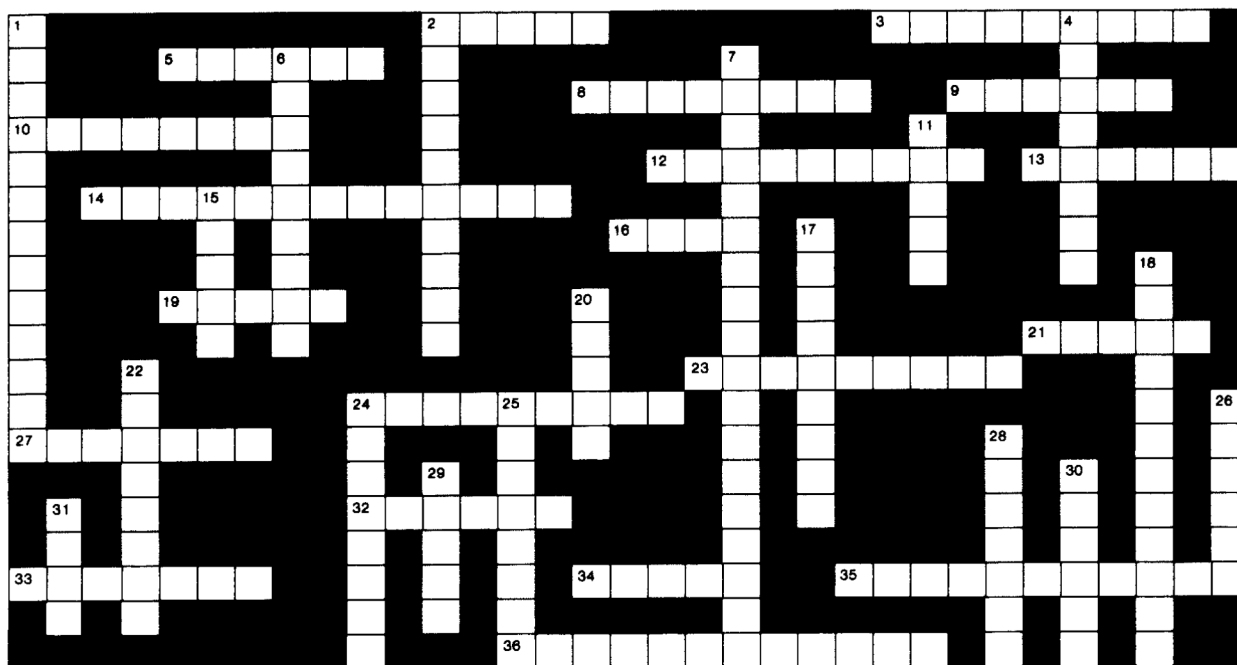
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BIBLE MEMORY

Revelation 2:26

LIFE OF CHRIST CROSSWORD



ACROSS

2. Tetrarch of Galilee.
3. Leading Jewish court.
5. Christ taught here.
8. Judas was a ____.
9. Roman emperor.
10. Where Christ was crucified.
12. Jewish religious group.
13. Governor of Judea.
14. Betrayed Christ.
16. Cared for Jesus' mother.
19. A disciple of Christ.
21. Roman historian.
23. City in Judea.
24. Caiaphas falsely accused Christ of ____.
27. Jewish religious group.

32. Soldiers were sent to ____ Christ.
33. Christ falsely accused of this before Pilate.
34. The Jews lived in ____.
35. A type of Roman punishment.
36. Happens at Christ's return.

DOWN

1. Jesus was called this.
2. Jewish religious leader.
4. A student of Christ.
6. Jewish religious group.
7. Where Jesus went to pray.
11. Was crucified on the stake.

15. The high priest's father-in-law.
17. A Roman soldier in charge of 100 men.
18. Part of the Temple.
20. Denied knowing Christ.
22. The high priest.
24. Released from prison.
25. Kept by Christ and disciples.
26. Valley near Jerusalem.
28. Someone who is not a Jew.
29. Christ was given an illegal ____.
30. He is our Savior.
31. The mother of Jesus.