

Jesus is *no Myth*



Workbook

By D.L. Stephens



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The Jesus is No Myth Workbook

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The Myth

1.0 Fixing people and events in history.

People who truly lived in the history of the world leave revealing evidence that places them in a particular historical context. This is especially true of famous persons. From the age in which they lived clues remain that confirm the person's existence, and place them in the proper time. This section examines evidence supporting the reality of the life of Jesus Christ, and shows how it places him in history.

Chronology is the science of determining the true periods, or years, when past events took place. Chronology attempts to arrange the events into their proper order according to their dates. Arranging events in proper order is a major problem in ancient and medieval history because years were commonly identified by association with a public figure, such as a ruler's name that appears on a kings list.

In ancient times many people reckoned occurrences by counting the lunar months. The length of the lunar month was 30 days. The lunar year was short, and required frequent correction. Some societies measured the onset of the different seasons by observing the Sun. There was no universal, continuous calendar by which to fix an event in history, or to predict the coming of a familiar day. Such a calendar is an era calendar, as we use today. To fix an event in time they referred to kings, or to high priests, and sometimes to catastrophes. For example, in the Gospel of Luke the Scripture says, referring to the coming of John the Baptist,

Luke 3:1 NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, 2 in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.

By his references, Luke fixed as precisely as he could the advent of John the Baptist. To know when John lived, historians can refer to the years of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, the coinciding governorship of Pontius Pilate, and the kingship of Herod. To know when John came preaching in the wilderness, a person would search for the occurrence of a time when two men shared the status of the high priesthood in Israel. Luke says that was when John came.

It is interesting to note that John the Baptist baptized Jesus of Nazareth, thus placing them together at the same place and at the same time.

The job of the chronicler of history is to compile a record of events that have taken place during the existence of the world. A chronicler does not attempt to interpret an event, only to establish the fact of it. Although no calendar exists which was commonly used by all the known civilizations, yet historians have tools that enable them to fix ancient chronologies with enough precision to say that a person actually lived, or that he lived during certain period. For example, it would be impossible to prove that Julius Caesar did not exist in the time indicated by the history books. There is ample evidence to prove that he did live at the time indicated and in the Rome over which he was the ruler.

Review

Fill in the blank

1. The purpose of this section is to prove that Jesus of Nazareth is a man of _____.
2. _____ is the science of determining the true periods, or years, when past events took place.
3. The _____ month is a month of 30 days. A lunar _____ requires frequent correction.
4. The type of calendar we use today is called an _____ calendar.
5. To fix an event in time ancient people referred to _____, or to _____ and sometimes to _____

- _____.
6. Name at least three people to whom Luke refers when he fixes the birth of John the Baptist. _____
_____, _____,
_____.
7. Jesus was baptized by _____
_____.
8. John's _____ of Jesus place them together at the
*same time.

TRUE/FALSE

1. (T or F) The first book of the Bible includes a calendar.
2. (T or F) When the word of God came to John the Baptist two men shared the high priesthood in Israel.
3. (T or F) A fact is a thing done; it is a thing that had actual existence or reality.
4. (T or F) It is a fact that John the Baptist baptized Jesus of Nazareth.
5. (T or F) There is no evidence to prove that Julius Caesar actually lived.

2.0 The Myth.

2.1 Definition of the Myth.

Demeter is a mythical character, and the tales told about her follow all the rules of the myth. The Greeks used a mythical story about her to explain the seasons.

The Greeks believed that Demeter, the earth-goddess of corn, harvest and fruitfulness, had a daughter by Zeus whose name was Persephone. Hades, the ruler of the underworld, stole Persephone and took her to the underworld. Hades tricked her into eating four pomegranate seeds, and for this reason Persephone had to remain in Hades for at least four months of the year. During this time the Homeric Hymn says that Demeter is in anguish over the loss of her daughter, and so lays waste the

earth. But when Persephone returns to earth Demeter makes the earth fruitful again, and causes the flowers to bloom.

As with the myth of Demeter, other myths have the following characteristics:

- Myths tell about extraordinary people or events.
- Myths deal with gods or superhumans.
- Frequently, mythical characters are described as monstrous, or a combination of animal and man. The centaur, the Gorgons, or Pegasus the winged horse are examples.
- Myths originate before (or outside of) written history. The myth is generally complete by the time written history includes them, or takes note of them.
- Myths take generations, or centuries, to develop.
- Myths typically give no dates, or no references that may be used to determine a date.
- Myths reflect the culture, or race in which they originate. (Anthropologists will tell you that myths are accepted as decisive truth in the cultures where the myth prevails.)

Review

1. Myths deal with _____ or _____.
2. Myths originate before, or outside of, _____.
3. Myths reflect the _____, or _____ in which they originate.

Questions

1. Do the events in a myth occur as actual historical events?
2. Is it possible to verify the existence of the places, people, or creatures in a myth?
3. According to anthropologists are myths usually accepted as truth in the cultures where they originate?

2.2 Use Of The Term “MYTH.”

The dictionary says a myth is a parable or an allegory; it is a story having an imaginary source; it is a story whose main character may or may not have existed.

In most cases people think a myth is a story that has grown much in the telling. In ordinary conversation, a myth is a story that is either fanciful, or downright false. People not devoted to “scholarly” work commonly use the word “myth” to mean a “fairy tale,” or a “fable.” To them there is an important distinction between a myth and a factual report.

There are also people who would say that the distinction between a myth and a factual report is unimportant when dealing with heroic national characters, or even with religious characters. At the University of South Florida there was a Senior Seminar teacher who said, “Myths can be true, can’t they?” Perhaps some people would believe a myth to be true, but most people would answer, “No. A myth is not true.” And there is an important distinction between a myth and a factual report—one is fantasy, and the other is reality.

Review

1. The word myth is commonly used to mean a _____ or a _____ .
2. In ordinary usage a myth is a story that is either _____ , or downright _____ .
3. A myth is a story having an _____ source.
4. When a person applies the term “myth” to a religious character, such as Jesus, the listener is influenced to believe Jesus never really _____ .

Questions

1. In general usage, is a myth believed to be true?
2. Is there a distinction between a myth, and a factual report?
3. Does a myth have objective reality? Did it ever?

3.0 The Birth of Jesus Compared to the Myth.

The chronology of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth is given with a precision equal to any other character in his time, and in many cases his life is described with much greater precision. For example, in the Gospel of Luke it says,

Luke 2:1 “Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census should be taken in all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; in order to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Notice the number of historical persons who are named by Luke: The Roman Caesar was Augustus who lived from BC 63 to AD 14. He was the first Roman emperor, and was grand-nephew to Julius Caesar. Historians report that he imposed the Pax Romana (Roman Peace) on the civilized world. The governor of Syria was Quirinius. Luke gives the landmarks: Syria, Galilee, Nazareth, Judea, and Bethlehem. He names the parents of Jesus: Joseph and Mary. Not only does he give the names, but also he says they are enrolled in a census. In other words, the historian makes no attempt to fictionalize the story; he reports the facts.

Review

1. Does Luke’s account of the birth of Jesus appear to be a myth?
2. Are historical people mentioned with the birth?
3. Can the people be fixed in time on a calendar?
4. What is the significance of being enrolled in a census?

4.0 The Historical Christ.

4.1 The New Testament Record.

There are 27 documents by various authors that have been assembled into a book, and called the New Testament. These documents were written in Greek, and have been translated from Greek into English. The writings include historical narratives about the birth, the life, the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. There is a history of the activities of the early church, and there are letters written by the Apostles to the churches they had founded or visited. All of these documents forthrightly claim that a man named Jesus of Nazareth did actually live in the places described in their narratives and at the times these writers went in and out of those places.

4.2 Early Church Writers.

The following is a list of people who once lived, who lived near the time of the Apostles, some of whom spoke directly with the Apostles, and all who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was in fact a man who lived, died and rose from the dead in the places mentioned in the New Testament:

- **Clement of Rome:** an Elder appointed by Peter.
- **Irenaeus:** quotes the Gospels, Acts and more.
- **Ignatius:** was a bishop at Antioch, and was martyred. He knew the Apostles well.
- **Polycarp:** martyred at age 86; was bishop of the church at Smyrna and was a disciple of the Apostle John.

Writings of these men, which confirm their belief in Jesus, have been preserved to our own time.

4.3 Early Secular Historians and writers.

Cornelius Tacitus, who lived from about 55 AD until 117 AD, was a man of high moral tone. There is severe criticism of Rome in all three of his most notable works—*The Germania*, *The Histories*, and *The Annals* (a work in 12 parts that covers the reign of Tiberius and parts of the reigns of Claudius and Nero). He was Governor of Asia, and son-in-law of Julius Agricola. In

his *Annals* Tacitus alludes to the death of Christ and to the existence of Christians at Rome.

He said,

Not all the relief that could come from man, not all the bounties that the prince could bestow, nor all the atonements which could be presented to the gods, availed to relieve Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration, the fire of Rome. Hence to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also.¹

Note the number of items mentioned by Tacitus that exactly agree with the testimony of the Scriptures,

- The believers were early on called Christians.
- Christus (Christ) founded the name (the religion, or authority).
- Pontius Pilate put Christ to death in Judea under the reign of Tiberius. [Tiberius reigned from AD 14 to AD 37, the exact period when Christ of the New Testament was crucified.]

Lucian was a Greek Writer who lived in the Second Century (about 100 AD). He wrote scornfully concerning Christ and the Christians. But even in scorn there is a kind of confirming testimony, and some truth can be gained by examining what he said. Lucian connected the Christians with the synagogue of Palestine, and alluded to Christ as:

“...the man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world. Furthermore, their first lawgiver persuaded them that they were all

¹ Tacitus, *Annals of Imperial Rome*, trans. Michael Grant, p 365

brothers one of another after they have transgressed once for all by denying the Greek gods, and by worshiping that crucified sophist himself, and living under his law.”²

Caius Plinius Caecilius Secundus (Pliny the Younger) who lived from about AD 62 till AD 113 was an orator and statesman. He was Governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor and wrote to the Emperor Trajan seeking counsel as to how to treat Christians. He explained that he had been killing both men and women, boys and girls. There were so many being put to death that he wondered if he should continue killing anyone who was discovered to be a Christian, or if he should kill only certain ones. He explained that he had made the Christians bow down to the statues of Trajan. He goes on to say that he also,

...made them curse Christ, which a genuine Christian cannot be induced to do.

In the same letter he says of the people who were being tried that:

They affirmed, however, that the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verse a hymn to Christ as to a god, and bound themselves to a solemn oath, not to do any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft, adultery, never to falsify their word, not to deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up.³

The allusions and references in secular history to Christ and to Christians are numerous and detailed. In these references the testimonies of the secular writers rejoin with those of the writers of Scriptures in the essential details of the history of the period. The testimony exactly agrees that Jesus did indeed live at the place spoken of in the Scriptures, at the time indicated, that he founded a religion, that Pontius Pilate in Judea crucified him.

² Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, p. 84.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

5.0 Jesus and the Myth.

Note how Jesus compares to the myth,

- The chronology of the birth of Jesus is given with a precision equal to any other character who lived during his time. (See Luke 2:1-7; Luke 3:1-2; Luke 3:21-23.)
- Jesus is not a grotesque, super-strong, national hero; he is not part animal, did not conduct himself like a mythical super-hero. In fact, the personal appearance of Jesus is not described by even a single word in the New Testament.
- Jesus does not show the typical coloring of the Hebrews of his own age.
- There is not a trace in Jesus of the typical Hebrew personality from any age of that ancient nation. Therefore, Jesus cannot be identified as the product of any particular age of the nation of Israel.
- The geography and topography of the places mentioned in the narratives of the life of Jesus are well known.
- Some of the cities mentioned in the New Testament still exist today, such as Jerusalem, Damascus, Athens, Rome, or Nazareth. Hills, mountains and rivers are mentioned which we can easily locate on a map, or visit.
- The narratives of the life of Jesus indicate that he lived near the END of the history of his nation, not at the beginning as is the case of a character in a myth.

6.0 Conclusion.

Because the events reported in the New Testament, which refer to the birth, life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, were widely accepted and believed at the time they happened, that they are fixed in time and at a definite place, involving named and identifiable persons and places, the matters related are not myth, but are facts.

Final Review Questions

1. Does the term myth apply to historical persons?

2. How did people in ancient times fix an event with regard to its occurrence?
3. Is the birth of Jesus given with historical precision?
4. What is the difference between a “myth,” a “fairy tale,” and a “fable”?
5. Is it correct to refer to a historical event as a myth? Why?
6. Is there a historical record of the birth, life and death of Jesus of Nazareth? If so, what is it?
7. Did Jesus live at the beginning of the history of His nation, or at the end?
8. Have secular historians made reference to Jesus Christ?
9. Name an early church writer who believed Jesus lived.
10. What did Pliny say about Christians?

Appendix

A reference in Josephus to the brother of Jesus also attests to the reality of Christ. Josephus wrote,

And now Caesar, upon hearing of the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judaea as procurator; but the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood, and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also himself called Ananus. Now the report goes, that this elder Ananus proved a most fortunate man; for he had five sons, who had all performed the office of a high priest to God, and he had himself enjoyed that dignity a long time formerly, which had never happened to any other of our high priests; but this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who were very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition he thought he had now a proper opportunity (to exercise his authority). Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he

assembled the sanhedrin of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others (or some of his companions); and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned..⁴

A highly significant archaeological find in Jerusalem has added more weight to the reality of Jesus and his brother. The Washington Post, as reported in the Tampa Tribune, printed the following quote in a article about an ancient ossuary,

“A nondescript limestone box, looted from a Jerusalem cave and held secretly in a private collection in Israel, could be the earliest known archaeological reference to Jesus, scholars said Monday. The box is an ossuary, used by Jews at the time of Jesus to hold bones of the deceased. The ossuary has almost no ornamentation except for a simple Aramaic inscription: *Ya’akov bar Yosef akhui diYeshua* — “ : James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.”^{5 6}

Questions

1. If Jesus were a myth would Josephus have referred to him as having a brother?
2. If Jesus had not been more widely known than James, would Josephus have referred to James as the brother of Jesus? Or would the ossuary of James have referred to Jesus if Jesus had not been well known?

⁴ Whiston, *Josephus, Complete Works*, p 423.

⁵ The Tampa Tribune, Tuesday, October 22, 2002, front page article.

⁶ Paul Maier, “The James Ossuary,” www.mt.io.com/articles/bissar95.htm

John the Baptist

1.0 Ancient Expectations.

Many of the ancient nations counted among their legends a promise that a divine being would come to rescue the human race from its misery. The Romans believed the legends. Tacitus, Pliny and Cicero speak of the dread and expectation that gripped the Roman world. They believed that near the time of Christ one would come from among the Jews who would have universal dominion. Also, Suetonius says that the Sibylline prophecies told that Nature was about to bring forth a king to the Romans, and it so terrified them that the Senate passed a decree saying that all children born that year should be destroyed. A device of the wives of the senators, each of whom hoped she might be the mother of this great being, avoided the consequences of the decree.⁷

The Jews also had prophecies handed down to them concerning the coming of the Messiah. Writings of great antiquity predicted his coming, and added that he would be announced by the voice of a messenger. That messenger was John the Baptist.⁸

Luke 1:5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.⁶ And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.⁷ And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. ⁸ Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division,⁹ according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering.¹¹ And an angel of the Lord

⁷ Irwin H. Linton, *The Sanhedrin Verdict*, p 17.

⁸ Mark 1:2-4.

appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.¹² And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him.¹³ But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.¹⁴ “And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.¹⁵ “For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother’s womb.¹⁶ “And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God.¹⁷ “And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

As one who is sent before a king to see that the way is prepared, John the Baptist went before the Christ. It was customary for eastern kings, when on an expedition, to send forerunners to prepare the way; the hills were to be leveled, the valleys to be filled, and the road was to be straightened so that the king would have easy access in travel. John came on a similar mission. Yet his preparations differed from the forerunners of earthly kings. He called the people to repentance, preparing their hearts for the message to follow.

Fill in the Blank

1. Many ancient nations had _____ that promised a divine _____ would come to rescue the human race.
2. Prophecies given to the Jews said that the Messiah would be announced by a _____.
3. The father of John was the priest named _____, whose wife was named _____.
4. The angel told the priest that his son would be the _____ of the Lord.
5. John’s task would be to make _____ a _____ prepared for the Lord.

6. John went before Christ as one goes before a _____.

7. John called the people to _____.

2.0 John Came in Fulfillment of the Prophecy.

The prophet Malachi said,

Malachi 3:1 “Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.”

A priest of Abijah by the name of Zacharias was the father of John. His mother was Elizabeth, and she was a daughter of Aaron. Therefore, the blood of priests ran in John’s veins. The forerunner of the Messiah was also a Nazarite from his birth. (A Nazarite was bound by a vow to be set apart from others for the service of God.)⁹

The appearance of John the Baptist in the wilderness of Judaea was as startling as that of Elijah. From his dwelling place in the wild and thinly populated region about the Dead Sea his voice is Stentorian:

Mark 1:15 “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent...”

He dwelt by himself. He wore garments like the prophets of old: a garment woven of camel’s hair, attached to his body by a leather girdle. The desert provided his food—locusts and wild honey.

John came suddenly out of the wilds of Judaea, as Elijah had come from the wilds of Gilead. John’s message resembled Elijah’s in its sudden appearance, vehemence and denunciation.¹⁰

¹¹

Matt. 3:1 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, saying, 2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” 3 For this is the

⁹ William Smith, *A Dictionary of the Bible*: “nazarite.”

¹⁰ Mark 1:6.

¹¹ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p 255.

one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight! 4 Now John himself had a garment of camel’s hair, and a leather belt about his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

Questions

1. What is the name of the prophet who predicted the coming of John?
2. From what famous priest of the Old Testament was John’s mother descended?
3. From what areas of Palestine did John come when he made his public appearance?
4. A Nazarite was bound by a vow to serve whom?

3.0 The Message of the Baptist.

Josephus says that John,

“... had a great influence over the people, and that they seemed ready to do anything that he should advise.”¹²

But John had no thought of fomenting a rebellion of the type feared by Herod. The people were already in rebellion—against God. John came to call them to repentance, including Herod in the call.

Matt. 3:5 “Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judaea, and all the district around the Jordan; 6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with your repentance; 9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father;’ for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 10 And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore

¹² Ibid., Whiston, *Josephus*, p. 382.

that does not bear good fruit is cut down, and thrown into the fire. 11 As for me, I baptize you in water for repentance; but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not even fit to remove His sandals; He Himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 And his winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean His threshing-floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

4.0 The Identity of John: The Forerunner.

John wanted no rebellion, but he did want the people to repent. In fact, his baptism was a baptism of repentance. John called on the people of Israel to turn from their sins, and to receive their coming king. In this role he was the typical “forerunner” of a royal person, sent in advance of the king to announce the king’s coming.

John 1:19 And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” 20 And he confessed, and did not deny, and he confessed, “I am not the Christ.” 21 And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” And he answered, “No.” 22 They said then to him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” 23 He said, “I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”

Questions

1. What was John’s principal message?
2. Was John widely known among the people of his own time?
3. Did John baptize people?
4. Did John tell the priests and Levites that he was the Christ?
5. How did John describe himself?

5.0 John Baptizes Jesus, Naming Jesus The Christ.

John 1:25 And they asked him, and said to him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” 26 John answered them saying, “I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. 27 It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” 28 These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

- John was not the Christ
- John said there was another.

Matt. 3:13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. 14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” 15 But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him. 16 And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him; 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ .

- Jesus was superior to John.
- John baptized Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit and the Father identified Jesus.

John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’ 31 And I did not recognize Him, but in order that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.” 32 And John bore witness saying, “I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and He remained upon Him. 33 And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water

said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. 34 And I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son of God.’”

- John identified Jesus as the Savior.
- John said Jesus is the Son of God.

At the height of this popularity, John baptized Jesus, and proclaimed Him to be the Messiah. After the baptism of Jesus John moved northward to Aenon, continuing to baptize.¹³

6.0 John’s Imprisonment.

About a year after John baptized Jesus, Herod Antipas had John arrested and imprisoned in the castle Macherus, a fortress on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. John had said to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.”

To complicate matters for John, Herod Antipas and Aretas, the king of Arabia Petrea, had a quarrel. It happened this way: Herod had married the daughter of Aretas, and had lived with her for a long time. Then Herod went to Rome where he stayed with his half-brother, Herod Philip. Herod Philip had a wife whose name was Herodias. Herod Antipas fell in love with her, and asked her to come and live with him when he returned home. She agreed, but put a condition on the arrangement. Herod Antipas would have to divorce his wife, the daughter of Aretas. His wife learned of the arrangement Herod had made, and asked him to send her to the castle Macherus that stood on the border of his realm and her father’s. So she told her father of Herod’s intention to marry Herodias. When Aretas added this insult to his disputes with Herod over the borders of their realm their differences boiled over. They had a war.¹⁴

Nevertheless, Herod brought Herodias to his palace and lived with her as his wife. John denounced Herod as an adulterer. Herodias developed a grudge against John, and wanted to put

¹³ John 3:23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Whiston, *Josephus*, p. 382.

John to death, but the king feared John because he knew he was a righteous and holy man.

Mark, in his Gospel, says,

Mark 6:20 "...Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed, but he used to enjoy listening to him..."

7.0 John's Execution.

Herodias had a daughter whose name was Salome. On Herod's birthday she danced for him. So pleased was the king that he promised her anything she wanted, up to half his kingdom. She said,

Matt. 14:8 "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist."

Herod gave it to her. After John's death, Herod kept his fears of the prophet. When Jesus appeared, sending out his disciples to preach, Herod's fears increased. He thought John the Baptist had risen from the dead. As Matthew says,

Mark 6:16 "John, whom I beheaded, he has risen!"

8.0 Conclusion.

The testimony of Scripture, and the historian Josephus, are in unison: John the Baptist did live in the times and places described in the Scriptures. John the Baptist was a man of history. His purpose in coming was to be a forerunner of the Messiah. He was a signpost in history pointing to his successor. He pointed to Jesus of Nazareth, naming him the Christ.

Review Questions

1. Was the expectation of the coming of a divine being confined to the Jews, or did other nations share this belief?
2. Was John the Baptist the Messiah?
3. Were there Jewish prophecies predicting the coming of John the Baptist?
4. What Old Testament prophet did John resemble?

5. What secular historian mentions John the Baptist?
6. What was the reason for the coming of John the Baptist?
7. Did John say anything about Jesus of Nazareth?
8. How did John die?
9. Did John accomplish his purpose?
10. Did John speak with and touch Jesus of Nazareth?

Appendix

Celsus, an Epicurean philosopher who lived in the region of Adrian in the second century, was one of the most virulent adversaries of Christianity. He used only the Gospels as evidence for his arguments, not by denying the facts reported by the Gospel writers, but by drawing his own inferences from the incidents. Celsus says that Jesus lived but a few years before him. He mentions that Jesus was born of a virgin. He speaks of the star that appeared at the birth of Jesus, the wise men who visited the infant, and of Herod's massacre of the children. He also says that John baptized Jesus.¹⁵

¹⁵ Alexander Campbell, *The Evidence of Christianity, A Debate*, p. 297.

The Sanhedrin

1.0 Betrayal and Arrest.

Mark says in his Gospel that the Jewish authorities arrested Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Olive, and fig trees grew there, and some pomegranate. It lay across the valley of Kedron, most likely at the foot of the Mount of Olivet, about a half mile to the northwest from the wall of Jerusalem. There among the trees one could find shade in the daytime, coolness and rest from toil. Oftimes Jesus went there to rest and refresh himself. This time He went to pray about his imminent suffering, and to await his betrayer. He tried to awaken his disciples, but their eyes were heavy with sleep.¹⁶

Mark 14:43 And immediately while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44 Now he who was betraying Him had given them a signal, saying, 'Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him, and lead Him away under guard.' 45 And after coming, he immediately went up to Him, saying, 'Rabbi!' and kissed Him. 46 And they laid hands on Him, and seized Him.

Mark 14:53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together.

When the authorities came to arrest Jesus the Paschal Moon would have been setting, and the shadow of an adjoining mountain would have shrouded the garden. Deeper darkness shrouded the hearts of the men of Jerusalem. At that late hour, probably after midnight according to the historians, in the early hours of Friday the 14th of Nisan, they arrested Jesus and led Him away.¹⁷

They led Jesus first to Annas, a Sadducee who had been appointed High Priest in the year AD 7 by Quirinius the imperial governor of Syria. At the beginning of the reign of Tiberius in

¹⁶ J.W. McGarvey and A. B. Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel*, p 689.

¹⁷ Matt 26:36, Mark 14:32, Luke 22:39.

AD14, the Roman procurator, Valerius Gratus, replaced Annas with Ismael, the son of Phabi. Next, Gratus appointed Eleazar high priest, followed by Simon. Then in AD 25, he made Joseph Caiaphas¹⁸ high priest. Caiaphas was the son-in-law of Annas.¹⁹
20 21

The high priest, Annas, questioned Jesus about his teaching, and about his disciples. Jesus answered him,

John 18:20 ... "I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret. 21 Why do you question Me? Question those who heard what I spoke to them; behold, these know what I said." 22 And when He had said this, one of the officers standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, "Is that the way You answer the high priest?" 23 Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?" 24 Annas therefore sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

The authorities in Jerusalem, both Jewish and Roman, tried Jesus six times in twelve hours. He stood before Annas, Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, and finally before Pilate again after which the Roman Governor surrendered to the will of the mob.²²

Review

1. Jesus was arrested in the _____ .
2. The place of the arrest of Jesus was near the city of _____ .

¹⁸ In November, 1990 archaeologists found the bones of Joseph Bar Caiaphas in a magnificently carved ossuary in the Peace Forest in Jerusalem. He was the high priest who indicted Jesus before Pontius Pilate. Ibid. James Ossuary, by Paul Maier. Excavator, Zvi Greenhut, Israeli Antiquities Auth. Location, Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

¹⁹ John 18:13.

²⁰ William Smith, *A Dictionary of the Bible*.

²¹ Ibid., Whiston, *Josephus*, pp. 377-378.

²² David K. Breed, *The Trial of Christ*, pp. 4, 5.

3. The name of the man who betrayed Jesus was _____
_____.
4. Jesus was arrested on the day before the _____.
5. The arresting party brought Jesus first before _____, and then before _____.

2.0 Trial before the Great Sanhedrin.

On the night of his trial Jesus stood before a hastily convened meeting of the supreme council of the Jewish people, in the Talmud called the Great Sanhedrin. From the few incidental notices in the New Testament we gather that it consisted of chief priests, or the heads of the twenty-four classes into which the priests were divided; elders—men of age and experience; scribes, lawyers, or those learned in the Jewish Law. Seventy one members is the number usually given. At least twenty-three members were required to form a quorum. The Sanhedrin usually met in a private locale attached to the “Bazaars,” places where money changers sat, and people sold doves. On occasion, they met in the palace of the high priest. The night of the betrayal it is likely that the Sanhedrists met in the Palace of Caiaphas where they accused Jesus, and extracted His confession.^{23 24}

(Edersheim says that forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem the Sanhedrin transferred its meeting-place from the Lishkath haGazzith, the Hall of Hewn Stones that lay partly within the Temple Sanctuary, to the “Bazaars,” then to the City.)²⁵

In the midst of this deliberative body, at that late hour, Jesus of Nazareth stands accused. The Law of Moses demanded that witnesses be called to testify. In the Jewish tradition the witnesses brought accusation. There was no other legal form of prosecution in a criminal trial. They led Jesus, therefore, before the high tribunal of Israel, and true to the hypocrisy that prevailed in their observance of the Law of Moses, they

²³ Matt. 21:12-13.

²⁴ Ibid., Smith, “Sanhedrin.”

²⁵ Ibid., Edersheim, *Life and Times*, ii. pp. 553, 554, i. p. 371.

suborned witnesses, and attempted to convict him on the basis of false testimony. Mark says,

Mark 14:56 For many were giving false testimony against Him, and yet their testimony was not consistent.

Matthew recorded it as follows,

Matt. 26:59 Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, in order that they might put Him to death;

Under Jewish law there were three classes of testimony. These are described in detail in the Mishnah. Essentially, the classes are as follows:

1) **A vain testimony:** this was testimony obviously irrelevant or worthless, and immediately recognized by the judges as such.

2) **A standing testimony:** this was evidence of a more serious kind to be accepted with the provision that it be proved true or false.

3) **An adequate testimony:** this was evidence in which the witnesses “agreed together,” or as the New Testament says, “were consistent.”

A distinguished writer by the name of Salvador said that the least disagreement between the evidence presented by the witnesses was held to destroy the value of the testimony.²⁶

Matthew wrote,

Matt. 26:60 ... But later on two came forward, 61 and said, “This man stated, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.’”

Mark records the same incident in this way,

Mark 14:58 “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.’” And not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.

John reported that the actual words of Jesus were,

John 2:19 ... “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” 20 The Jews therefore said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and You will raise it up in three days?” 21 But He was speaking of the temple of

²⁶ Frank Morison, *Who Moved the Stone?* p. 18.

His body.

From this it is clear that whatever might have been the accusations of the preliminary witnesses to whom Mark and Matthew referred, the testimony they presented did not get beyond the second classification. The testimony either contradicted the knowledge and experience of the court, or inconsistency, and falsehood invalidated the testimony.

It would be a mistake to assume that everything the Jewish authorities did that night was illegal. They at least followed the form of the Jewish trial. However, they did follow procedures that violated Jewish law. For example, a capital case, which is a case in which a person is on trial for his life, could not be tried by night. Only trials that involved money could be tried after sunset. Further, the judges could not cross-examine the accused after the testimony of the accusers had been thrown out. Jesus should have been acquitted. If the testimony against him had been proved false, the witnesses should have been stoned to death.

By both the letter and the spirit of the elaborate Jewish Law the judicial code sought to protect the life of the citizen. The witnesses bore the power of accusation in a Hebrew trial for life. They arrested the accused and brought him before the court; but the law charged the court to protect the interests of the accused in every way, while trying to arrive at a just and impartial verdict on the evidence submitted.

But the testimony of the witnesses was rejected as false. The conspirators could find no others who would come forward accusing Jesus. After all these elaborate proceedings it appeared that the attempt to convict Jesus of the double offense of sorcery and sacrilege would break down on a vital point of Jewish Law. Had the testimony of the witnesses convicted him, the sentence for sorcery would have been death, for the crime of sacrilege, stoning and exposure of the body.

Grievous false charges. Late at night. Hastily obtained witnesses. A guard of soldiers. Men with swords and clubs. All this against a man who was gentle in all his ways, who had healed the sick, restored sight to the blind, raised the dead. Who had preached “blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that

mourn, blessed are the meek, blessed are the merciful, and love your enemies.” Matt 8:14-17; John 9; John 11; Matt 5.

Why had these Jews come out against him? Why were they so determined to convict him? Whatever their motive was, it appeared that the scheme was about to fail.

At this moment, Caiaphas, the high priest, cast aside legality, and applied to Jesus the most solemn oath known to the Hebrew Constitution—the famous Oath of the Testimony. It says in the Mishnah that if one shall say,

“I adjure you by the Almighty, by Sabaoth, by the Gracious and Merciful, by the Long-Suffering, by the Compassionate, or by any of the divine titles, behold they are bound to answer.”²⁷

Caiaphas said to Jesus,

Matt. 26:63 “I adjure you by the Living God, that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God?” (Matt 26:63 ff.)

By this question, Caiaphas placed Jesus under oath.

Jesus answered,

I am. Mark 14:62.

You have said it yourself. Matt 26:64.

Yes. I am. Luke 22:70.

The testimony agrees that the answer was affirmative.

Review

1. The supreme ruling council in Jerusalem before which Jesus stood trial was called the _____.
2. Those who served on the supreme Jewish council were _____, _____, or _____.
3. Under the Law of Moses the one who brought accusation at a trial was a _____.
4. The Jewish authorities attempted to convict Jesus on the basis of _____ testimony.
5. The three classes of testimony as described in the Mishnah are _____

²⁷ Ibid., Morison, *Who Moved the Stone*, p. 26.

_____, _____, and
_____.

Questions

1. Was the testimony against Jesus enough to cause a conviction on the charges?
2. Did the Jewish authorities violate the law in the trial of Jesus?
3. Was the Oath of the Testimony proper for the trial? Why?
4. Did Jesus confess Himself to the Great Sanhedrin?

3.0 The Sanhedrin Verdict.

Matthew goes on to tell what Jesus said to the Sanhedrin, Matt. 26:64 ... Nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven. 65 Then the high priest tore his robes, saying, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; 66 what do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death!"

A lawyer would say, it was an error for Caiaphas, acting as judge, to cause Jesus to answer in a way that would use his own words to convict him of the charges against him. The witnesses should have proved the case by their testimony. The Oath of the Testimony had caused Jesus to testify against himself.

4.0 The Motives for the Jewish Rejection of Jesus.

Why did this happen? Why was Jesus—who advocated peace, who healed the sick, who concerned himself with the poor, and who neither defied nor advised defiance of the authorities—in such a dangerous and threatening situation? What charges could be brought against him? Why would the authorities choose such a moment—it was the middle of the night, during one of the most solemn of Jewish festivals?

After Jesus had raised Lazarus of Bethany from the dead, many of the people who saw Lazarus alive again were compelled

by the evidence to believe that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. The fact of the raising of Lazarus could not be denied. It was similar in many ways to what Quadratus wrote,

The works of our Savior were always conspicuous, for they were real; both they that were healed, and they that were raised from the dead; who were seen not only when they were healed or raised, but for a long time afterward; not only while he dwelled on this Earth, but also after his departure, and for a good while after it, insomuch that some of them have come down to our own time.²⁸

No one could deny that Jesus performed signs and miracles, not even the authorities in Jerusalem. The rejection of Jesus by the authorities rested on two opinions. As John says,

John 11:47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, “What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. 48 If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

Fear, envy and pride laid the foundation for the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. They feared the loss of influence: “...all men will believe in Him.” Nationalistic fervor had swept through Israel. Thoughts of a general uprising against the idolatrous Gentiles motivated many. These “revolutionaries” looked for a Messiah in the mold of David who would restore Israel to grandeur, and throw off the yoke of Roman bondage. In this spirit the grip of the Saducees had weakened. The Jews who ruled in Judea feared the Romans. They feared the loss of position, and the loss of national identity.²⁹

Why did the Jewish authorities go to such lengths to rid themselves of the influence of a man who had done so much good, and who seemed so harmless? The answer is that to them he was not harmless. His coming heralded a change both in the political power structure of Israel, and in the way the Jewish people practiced their worship of God.

²⁸ William Paley, *A View to the Evidences of Christianity*, p 91.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Edersheim, *Life and Times*, pp. 237-242.

The ranking Pharisees and Saducees who opposed Jesus saw the threat mainly as political. (Although a few of the Pharisees believed in Jesus, notably Nicodemus³⁰ and Joseph, these ranking believers remained a minority.) The authorities maintained a narrow opinion of what would be the consequences of the coming of the Messiah. To them it meant first, a clash with the Romans in which the tenuous fabric of Jewish rule in Palestine would be ended. Israel would become a complete vassal state of Rome. Second, the loss of the nation would also mean a loss of power and prestige for them. No uprising, even one based on a popular belief in a prophet could overcome Rome, at least not in their estimation. That left only one alternative. Jesus must die.

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, named Caiaphas; and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth, and kill Him. Matthew 26:3-4, John 11:53

Why did they arrest Him and bring Him to trial at night and in such evident haste? First, Jesus' influence had increased until the Pharisees and Saducees felt threatened. He had made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem, mounted upon a donkey in the manner reserved for future kings. Jesus had raised Lazarus of Bethany from the dead, a miracle so astonishing and so stunning that it had shaken the very foundations of Judaism. He had called the Pharisees and Saducees to repentance, a change they were unwilling to make. Add to these reasons the betrayal of Judas Iscariot, coming as it did on the eve of the Day of Preparation for the Passover, and the willingness of Jesus to allow Himself to be arrested.

Luke says,

Luke 22:3 And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve. 4 And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them. 5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6 And he consented, and began seeking a good opportunity to

³⁰ Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, pp. 96, 237, 255. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, and one of the principal scribes on the Great Sanhedrin, along with Shemaiah, R. Gamaliel I, and Simeon.

betray Him to them apart from the multitude. 7 Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.

Matthew says,

Matt. 26:5 But they were saying, “Not during the festival, lest a riot occur among the people.”

So the rulers and chief priests had Jesus arrested and brought to trial. They tried him illegally, in a court that attempted to maintain the forms, while turning the substance of justice to betrayal and perfidy. In a last act of desperation, Caiaphas had applied to Jesus the Oath of the Testimony, to which a refusal of answer was itself an unforgivable offense. The Oath succeeded, probably beyond even the hopes of the High Priest, for in that fearless reply—“I AM”—there formed the basis of the deadliest of all charges.

The Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate, might ignore a prophet and a preacher, a teacher who advocated gentleness and forgiveness, but he could not ignore a man who claimed the throne. Under Roman law a person who claimed that someone else, besides Caesar, was king was guilty of the crime of *laesa maiestas*, which was treason by act or word. The penalty for *laesa maiestas* was death.³¹

5.0 Conclusion

That year when Israel kept the Passover they offered as their lamb the Lamb of God. His offering came at the command of the Sanhedrin, the highest tribunal of the nation. His condemnation resulted from his claim that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, the long prophesied King of the Jews.

Review Questions

1. What are the two reasons given by the council of priests and Pharisees for arresting Jesus?
2. Jesus was brought to trial before the governing body of Israel. What was this body called?

³¹ Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, pp. 398, 591.

3. Of what character were the witnesses who were brought against Jesus?
4. Did the witnesses convict Jesus of a crime?
5. By what means did the Jewish High Priest convict Jesus?
6. Of what offense did the Jewish authorities believe they had convicted Jesus when He answered Caiaphas' adjuration?
7. Who did Jesus tell the Sanhedrin He was?
8. Did Jesus admit that He was the Messiah?

Pilate

1.0 The Trial Before Pilate.

On Friday morning, the Day of Preparation, the weather in Jerusalem was cold. The disciples have fled in fright after the arrest of Jesus. Peter has heard the cock crow for the third time and has wept his tears of recrimination and remorse. Jesus stands alone at the mercy of his enemies.

Mark 15:1 And early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation, and binding Jesus, they led Him away, and delivered Him up to Pilate.

John 19:28 They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium; and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium in order that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

Historians say that the Praetorium was located wherever the Praetor was. In this case the Roman Governor, Pilate, was the Praetor. If his headquarters were with the Roman Legion then the Praetorium was located in the Tower of Antonia, which stood near the northwest corner of Temple of Herod. The Tower of Antonia housed the Roman garrison. For the Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it is possible that the Praetorium was located in the Palace of Herod which lay west of the Temple.

During the summer of 1961, Italian archaeologists excavated an ancient theater at Caesarea, the Mediterranean port that served as the Roman capitol of Palestine. The Italians dug up a stone about the size of a suitcase that bore an inscription in Latin. In three inch letters the stone said,

Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judaea, has presented the Tiberium to the Caesareans.³²

The discovery was the first archaeological evidence for the existence of Pontius Pilate. He is called the “Prefect” of Judaea, not “Procurator,” as some sources have said. The Scriptures called him “governor,” and so he was. Pilate was the Prefect of Judaea, a governor with military rank and responsibilities.

³² Paul Maier, *The First Easter*, p. 57.

Pilate married Claudia Procula, who was the illegitimate daughter of Claudia, the third wife of Tiberius Caesar. Claudia Procula was, therefore, the granddaughter of Augustus Caesar. Claudia Procula accompanied Pilate when he assumed his post in Jerusalem in AD 25. By this marriage Pilate gained family, and position. Pilate received the Roman honor to be called the “Friend of Caesar,” and wore the ring which signified this association.

Incidents with the Jews marred Pilate’s tenure in Palestine. The affair of the Roman ensigns is an example. It was the habit of the Roman regiments to carry ensigns as their standards when they marched. Images of Caesar adorned the top of the ensigns. The Jews considered the Roman attitude toward the ensigns to be idolatry.

Pilate ordered the army to Caesarea for winter quarters, and had them carry the ensigns with them. He ordered them to march at night, a fact that suggests he suspected there might be trouble with the Jews. Subsequent events confirmed his suspicions.

Immediately upon entry into Caesarea, the Jews angrily besieged him with protests about the introduction of idols into the city. The trouble lasted for six days and six nights, during which Pilate remained stubbornly opposed to the Jewish protest. On the sixth day, Pilate ordered his soldiers to arm themselves privately, and he went out and sat on his judgment seat in an open place in the city. When the Jews protested again he ordered the army to surround them, and threatened them with immediate death lest they leave off the protest. But when the Jews threw themselves on the ground and bared their necks, prepared to die, Pilate was so impressed that he ordered the ensigns removed.

On another occasion, Pilate used sacred money to build an aqueduct to Jerusalem. When the Jews protested the use of the Temple’s money, Pilate sent soldiers with daggers among the crowd, and they killed a great number of the Jews.

That was Pontius Pilate. He was not the trembling, indecisive weakling that some writers have alleged.

It is easy to infer from Pilate’s conduct of the trial of Jesus that the governor had advance notice from Caiaphas that Jesus of Nazareth would be coming before his tribunal. The governor ordered his ivory magistrate’s chair moved outside the palace to

a raised dais overlooking the plaza to the east. The Jews called this place “Gabbatha,” the Pavement. Since that Friday was the Day of Preparation for the Passover, the Jews would not enter the Praetorium. They would not allow themselves to be defiled by entering the place of the Gentiles.

It was still early when the crowd of priests and scribes, Temple guards and servants filled the plaza. The guards thrust Jesus forward. The priests evidently expecting Pilate to accept their earlier condemnation are surprised by Pilate’s formality.

Review Questions.

1. The Jewish authorities brought Jesus to trial before Pontius Pilate on _____, a day they called the _____ of _____.
2. The location of the trial of Jesus was called the _____.
3. Archaeologists found a stone that shows Pilate dedicated a building called the _____.
4. Pontius Pilate was the Roman _____ of Judaea.
5. The name of the wife of Pontius Pilate was _____.
6. Pilate wore a ring that proved he was a “_____.”
7. Pilate placed his judgment chair outside above the _____.

1.1 The Roman Trial.

The Roman system of justice required the magistrate’s formal opening remark. Also, it was an essential part of Roman legal procedure that an accusation be made. This public accusation was called the *accusatio*. It was followed by the magistrates inquiry, called the *interrogatio*. Lastly, came the prisoner’s defense, called the *excusatio*.³³

³³ Ibid., Frank Morison, p. 54.

1.2 The Trial of Jesus.

The magistrate's opening remark. Maier calls this the opening *interrogation* of the Roman trial.³⁴

29 Pilate therefore went out to them, and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?" John 18:29.

Pilate spoke to them in Greek, asking them, in effect, "How do you speak against this man before the Roman public tribunal?"³⁵

Then followed the *accusatio*:

John 18:30 They answered and said to him, "If this man were not an evil-doer, we would not have delivered him up to you." 31 Pilate therefore said to them, "Take him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law." The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death;"

This first attempt by the Jews to have Jesus put to death on the basis of the Sanhedrin verdict failed. Pilate would not approve of a verdict on the Jewish charge of blasphemy.

The Jews now changed the verdict of the Sanhedrin, and the opinion of the elders into charges against Jesus. They raised essentially three charges.

Luke says,

Luke 23:2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."

Mark wrote,

Mark 15:3 And Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "It is as you say."

John records the first encounter between Jesus and Pilate as follows:

John 18:33 Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus, and said to Him, "You are the King of the Jews?"

³⁴ Ibid., Maier, *First Easter*, p. 65. Yet, Morison differs. Op. Cit. p. 54.

³⁵ W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, "accusation."

34 Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?” 35 Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You up to me; what have You done?” John 18:33-35.

Excusatio:

The opposite of the “*accusatio*” was the “*excusatio*,” or “defense.” Similarly, in the Greek, the “*apologia*” stands opposite the “*kategoria*,” and is the Greek equivalent of the Latin term for defense. The defense Jesus offered was adequate to convince Pilate that He presented no threat to Rome.

John 18:36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is My kingdom is not of this realm.” 37 Pilate therefore said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

Review Questions

1. The opening phase of a Roman trial was the _____.
2. The second phase of the Roman trial was called _____.
3. The defense offered by the accused was called the _____.
4. Jesus said that Pilate was correct when he referred to Jesus as a _____.

2.0 The King Before the king.

When the Jews said that Jesus taught all over Judaea, starting from Galilee, Pilate then asked them if Jesus were a Galilean, because if he came from Galilee then Jesus belonged to the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas. Herod had come to Jerusalem from Tiberias in order to remain in the favor of the Jews by showing respect for the Passover festival. About five months had passed since Herod Antipas had sent a letter to Caesar protesting

Pilate's conduct in the matter of the golden shields. The episode had placed Pilate on virtual probation, and he had no desire to make an enemy of Caesar.

There was in those days divided authority in Palestine. Herod Antipas ruled the tetrarchy that included Galilee. Since Galilee had been Jesus' place of birth, He fell under the jurisdiction of Herod as much as under Pilate. In a move that Pilate hoped to both rid himself of the problem of what to do with Jesus, and to make amends with Herod, Pilate ordered a change of venue. He sent Jesus under guard to the Hasmonean palace.

The palace was located along the western wall of the upper city to the west of the people's assembly hall. It was surrounded by a 45-foot wall surmounted by ornamental towers at fixed intervals. The palace was renowned for its circular porticoes, fine gardens, and a banquet hall seating over 100 guests. The palace was destroyed in September of AD 70.³⁶

The chief priests came also, bringing with them their charges. No doubt they expected to get a quick conviction in the court of the Herod who had ordered John the Baptist beheaded.

After Jesus arrived, Herod prodded Jesus for a reaction, but got nothing. So the king and his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt, and mocked Him. They then dressed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.

Review Questions

1. Did Pilate want to sit as judge in the trial of Jesus?
2. What did Pilate do to avoid the responsibility of the trial?
3. Did Jesus receive respect in the court of Herod?

3.0 Pilate's Choice.

Luke says,

Luke 23:13 And Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14 and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion,

³⁶ C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, T. C. Butler, & B. Latta, (2003). *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 755.

and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him. 15 No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him. 16 I will therefore punish Him and release Him.”

John says of this conversation between Pilate and the Jews, John 18:39 But you have a custom, that I should release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?” 40 Therefore they cried out again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas.” Now Barabbas was a robber.

The chief priests and officers of the Jews demanded that Pilate crucify Jesus. Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves, and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him.”

John says,

John 19:7 The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God. 8 When Pilate heard this statement, he was the more afraid;

Was Pilate afraid of the Jews? Hardly. Pilate feared Caesar. Pilate also feared because his wife Claudia Procula had told him of her dream about Jesus, and that Pilate should leave him alone. The next question the governor put to Jesus showed that he feared that Jesus might just be a representative of God, or the “gods” as he would have said it.

John 19:9 ... “Where are you from? But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 Pilate therefore said to Him, ”You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?”

11 Jesus answered, “You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin.” 12 As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, “If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar’s; every one who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar.

As Paul Maier says, “It was a brilliant thrust, that hit the mark...” Pilate could not refuse the Jewish demand. If he refused to crucify Jesus then they would complain to Caesar, tell the

emperor that Pilate had refused to punish an insurrectionist and rebel, a man who had openly called himself the “King of the Jews.” Pilate would be forced out of the exclusive club of the Friends of Caesar, and disgraced.³⁷

Pilate’s resistance crumbled. It was either Jesus or himself. Matthew says,

Matt. 27:24 And when Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of this Man’s blood; see to that yourselves.” 25 And all the people answered and said, “His blood be on us and on our children!” 26 Then he released Barabbas for them; but Jesus he scourged and delivered over to be crucified.

Tacitus, the Roman historian, says in his *Annals of Imperial Rome* that the “originator” of Christianity “Christ, had been executed in Tiberius’ reign by the governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilatus. But in spite of this temporary setback the deadly superstition had broken out afresh, not only in Judaea (where the mischief had started) but even in Rome.”³⁸

Final Review Questions.

1. Did Pilate find guilt in Jesus?
2. Did Pilate want to release Jesus?
3. What is the name of the historian who wrote that Pilate executed Jesus?
4. How do the facts given by Tacitus accord with the New Testament record?

4.0 Conclusion

The crucifixion of Christ came at the command of the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. The Sanhedrin, the highest

³⁷ Ibid., Maier, p. 72-73.

³⁸ Ibid., Tacitus, p. 365.

tribunal of the Jewish nation, had already passed judgment upon Him for blasphemy, and had sought his death. His condemnation resulted from his claim that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, the long prophesied King of the Jews.

Review Questions

1. The enemies of Jesus brought Him to trial before a king. Who was the king?
2. Jesus was tried before the Roman governor. What was his name?
3. Is there archaeological evidence to verify the governorship of Pilate?
4. To what club did Pilate belong?
5. Was Pilate a weak governor?
6. Did Pilate find Jesus guilty?
7. What are the three parts of a Roman trial?
8. Did the Jewish authorities keep the same charges before Pilate as they maintained before the Sanhedrin?
9. Did Jesus admit to Pilate that He was the Messiah?
10. Did Pilate appeal to law or to the mob to determine whether Jesus should be crucified?

Appendix

In the Slavonic Josephus, which is referred to as a translation of the original Aramaic text of the *War*, there is a disputed passage, yet interesting for the way it relates to the crucifixion of Jesus:

And in it (the Temple) there stood equal pillars, and upon them titles in Greek and Latin and Jewish characters, giving warning of the law of purification, (to wit) that no foreigner should enter within. For this they called the sanctuary, being approached by fourteen steps, and the upper area was built in quadrangular form. And above these titles there hung a fourth title in these characters, announcing that Jesus the King did not reign, but was crucified by the Jews, because he prophesied the

destruction of the city and the devastation of the Temple.³⁹

³⁹ Barrett, *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*, p. 207.

Crucifixion

1.0 Introduction

On the day before the Sabbath the Romans brought Jesus to the place in Hebrew called Golgotha, which translated means, Place of a Skull. They crucified Him. The four Roman soldiers divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. John 19:17-18; Luke 23:33-34.

The enemies of Jesus assembled around His cross, taking grim pleasure in seeing Him crucified. Passing by, they taunted Him, and hurled insults and abuse, wagging their heads, and saying, "You who were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross!" The chief priests along with the scribes also mocked Him among themselves, saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself. Let this Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, so that we may see and believe!" Matt 27:39-43; Mark 15:29-32; Luke 23:35-37.

The mockers about the cross unwittingly declared the test that would validate the claims of Jesus. They said, "...that we may see and believe." But merely coming down from the cross was not enough. Jesus intended to rise from the dead that they "...may see and believe."

The importance of the Resurrection cannot be overstated. It is the foundation of Christianity, and the only guarantee to mankind of a life hereafter. As the Apostle Paul said, "...if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins." I Corinthians 15:17.

Review

1. The Romans crucified Jesus at a place called _____.
2. The Roman soldiers cast lots for the _____ of Jesus.
3. His enemies referred to Jesus as _____, the _____ of _____.

4. The resurrection is the _____ of Christianity.

2.0 The Death on the Cross

People who refuse to believe in the resurrection of Christ base their skepticism on several different explanations of the facts. The Jewish authorities argued that the disciples came and stole the body away from the tomb. Others said that the disciples lost the way to the tomb, and thus became confused. In the early years of the 19th Century a Rationalist by the name of Venturini argued that Jesus did not truly die upon the cross, but swooned. His explanation says that the disciples buried Jesus in the tomb, but that he later revived in the cool restfulness of the tomb and left.

There are obvious difficulties with these and other explanations of the resurrection. Those difficulties become evident when the plain facts of the gospel record are laid beside them.

The Crucifixion and Resurrection

The importance of the Resurrection must not be minimized. In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul stated the case bluntly,

1 Cor. 15:13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

Owing to various adjustments in the calendar, the years of Jesus' birth and death remain controversial. However, it is likely that Jesus was born in either 4 or 6 BC, and died in 30 AD. During the Passover observance in 30 AD, the Last Supper would have been observed on Thursday, April 6 [April on our calendar corresponds approximately to the Jewish month of Nisan; the Last Supper fell on the 13th day of the month of

Nisan]. Jesus would have been crucified on Friday, April 7 (Nisan 14).

The Health of Jesus

The rigors of Jesus' ministry (that is, traveling by foot throughout Palestine) would prove to us that he had no major physical illness, nor did he have a weak bodily constitution. Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that Jesus was in good physical condition before his walk to Gethsemane. However, during the 12 hours between 9 PM Thursday and 9 AM Friday, he suffered great emotional stress (as evidenced by *hematidrosis*),⁴⁰ abandonment by his closest friends (the disciples), and a physical beating (after the first Jewish trial). Also, in the setting of a traumatic and sleepless night, he had been forced to walk more than 2.5 miles (4.0 km.) to and from the sites of various trials. These physical and emotional factors may have rendered Jesus particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of scourging, including intense pain and blood loss.

Gethsemane

Jesus suffered great mental anguish at Gethsemane.

After Jesus and his disciples had observed the Passover meal in an upper room in a home in southwest Jerusalem, they traveled to the Mount of Olives, northeast of the city. At nearby Gethsemane, Jesus, apparently knowing that the time of his death was near, suffered great mental anguish, and, as described by the physician Luke, his sweat became like blood.

Although it is a rare phenomenon, bloody sweat (*hematidrosis* or *hemohidrosis*) may occur in highly emotional states or in persons with bleeding disorders. As a result of hemorrhage into the sweat glands, the skin becomes fragile and tender. Luke's description supports the diagnosis of bloody sweat rather than brown or yellow-green sweat (*eccrine chromidrosis*), or blood oozing from the palms or elsewhere (stigmatization). Although some authors have suggested that the bloody sweat produced a decrease in the volume of circulating blood (*hypovolemia*), medical doctors agree with Bucklin that

⁴⁰ Bloody sweat.

Jesus' actual blood loss probably was minimal. However, in the cold night air, it may have produced chills.⁴¹

Scourging

Scourging, or flogging, was a legal preliminary to a Roman execution.⁴² Usually, two soldiers (*lictors*) performed the scourging, using a short whip called a *flagrum*, or *flagellum*. It was a whip with several single, or braided leather thongs of different lengths. Small iron balls, or sharp pieces of sheep bones were tied in the thongs. (Fig. 1)

The soldiers stripped the victim of his clothing, and tied his hands to an upright post. They then flogged his back, buttocks, and legs to weaken the victim to a state just short of collapse and death. (Fig. 2) The intent of flogging was not to kill but to weaken the victim. Scourging caused these injuries: contusions, deep cuts, and torn skeletal muscles. The victim suffered intense pain. Blood loss caused circulatory shock. Survival on the cross in many cases depended on the severity of blood loss.

Luke wrote,

Luke 23:13 And Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14 and said to them, "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. 15 "No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him. 16 "I will therefore punish Him and release Him."

John wrote,

⁴¹ *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Mar. 21, 1986.

⁴² Jewish Law limited the lashes to 39, Vine: μαστιγῶν. However, Romans punished Jesus. Maier, in *Pontius Pilate a Biographical Novel*, says it was the *fustigatio*, a milder form of beating than the severe scourging that precedes capital punishment. See Maier, p. 232. The inability of Jesus to carry the *patibulum* argues against the opinion of Maier. Further, Matthew and Mark use the Greek term: φραγελλῶσα, indicating the use of the *flagellum* as a prelude to crucifixion. Matt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15.

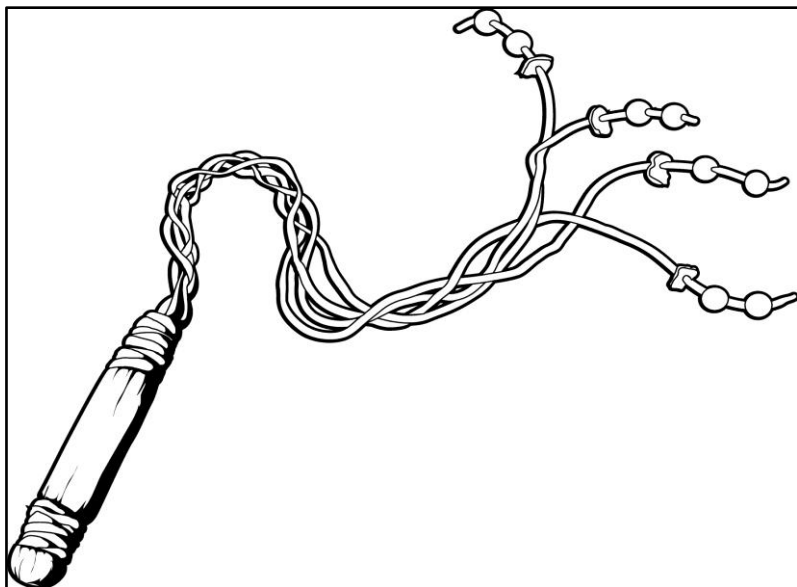


Figure 1 A flagrum, or flagellum.

John 19:1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him. 2 And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and arrayed Him in a purple robe; 3 and they began to come up to Him, and say, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and to give Him blows in the face.

Matthew wrote,

Matt. 27:24 And when Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of this Man’s blood; see to that yourselves.” 25 And all the people answered and said, “His blood be on us and on our children!” 26 Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he delivered Him to be crucified. 27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole Roman cohort around Him. 28 And they stripped Him, and put a scarlet robe on Him. 29 And after weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they kneeled down before Him and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” 30 And they spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head. 31 And

after they had mocked Him, they took His robe off and put His garments on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.

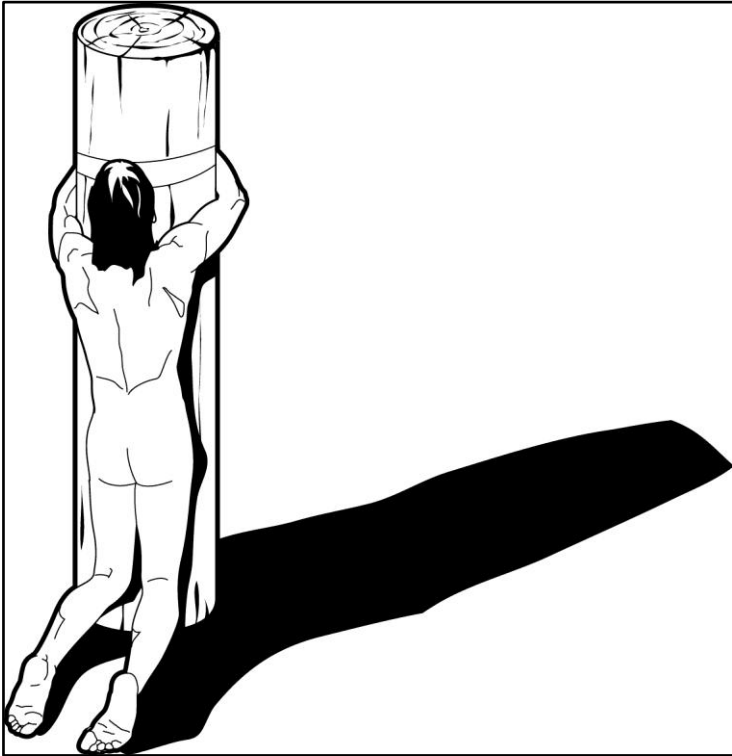


Figure 2 A victim of scourging, stripped and tied to an upright post.

The Cross

The upright post used for crucifixion, in Latin called the *stipes*, was generally, permanently fixed in the ground at the site of execution. (Fig. 3) Authorities frequently located the *stipes* outside the city walls. The victim carried the crossbar, or *patibulum*, to the site of crucifixion where the executioners would secure the crossbar to the upright post (Fig. 4). In the case of the Tau cross (as shown in Fig. 3), this was accomplished by means of a mortise and tenon joint, with or without

reinforcement by ropes. To prolong the crucifixion process, a horizontal wooden block or plank, serving as a crude seat (*sedile* or *sedulum*), often was attached midway down the *stipes*. Only very rarely, and probably later than the time of Christ, was an additional block (*suppedaneum*) employed for transfixion of the feet.

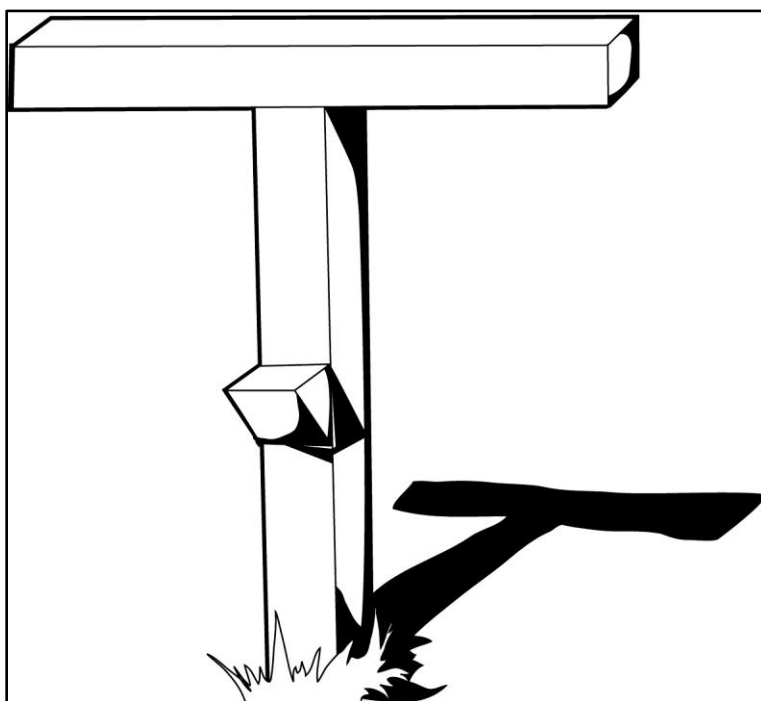


Figure 3 The Tau Cross.

At the site of execution, by law, the executioners gave the victim a bitter drink of wine mixed with myrrh (gall) as a mild analgesic (a pain reliever).⁴³ Wine mixed with myrrh made a drug that was intended to dull the wits or senses.

Jesus refused this drink. Mark 15:23.

⁴³ Wine mixed with myrrh made a drug that was intended to dull the wits or senses.

Crucifixion probably began first among the Persians. Alexander the Great introduced the practice to Egypt and Carthage, and the Romans appear to have learned of it from the Carthaginians. Although the Romans did not invent crucifixion, they perfected it as a form of torture and capital punishment that was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering. It was one of the most disgraceful and cruel methods of execution and usually was reserved only for slaves, foreigners, revolutionaries, and the vilest of criminals. Roman law usually protected Roman citizens from crucifixion, except perhaps in the case of desertion by soldiers.

In its earliest form in Persia, the executioners either tied the victim to a tree or impaled him on an upright post, usually in a manner that kept the guilty victim's feet from touching the ground. Only later did they use a true cross. An upright post (*stipes*) and a horizontal crossbar (*patibulum*) characterized the cross, and it had several variations (See Appendix, Table, Types of Crosses). Although archaeological and historical evidence strongly indicates that the Romans in Palestine preferred the low Tau cross at the time of Christ (Fig. 3), crucifixion practices often varied in a given geographic region and in accordance with the imagination of the executioners. The Latin cross and other forms also may have been used.

A complete Roman military guard, headed by a centurion, led the procession to the site of crucifixion. One of the soldiers carried a sign (*titulus*) on which they wrote the condemned man's name and the crime for which they executed him (Fig 7). At the site of crucifixion the *titulus* would be attached to the top of the cross.

Jesus carried His own cross.

John wrote,

John 19:17 They took Jesus therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. 18 There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between.

It was customary for the condemned man to carry his own cross from the flogging post to the site of crucifixion. In Jerusalem the site was outside the city walls. The condemned was usually naked, unless this was prohibited by local customs. Since the weight of the entire cross was probably well over 300 lb. (136 kg), the victim carried only the crossbar (Fig. 4). The *patibulum*, weighing 75 to 125 lb. (34 to 57 kg), was placed across the nape of the victim's neck and balanced along both shoulders. Usually, the executioners tied the victim's outstretched arms to the crossbar.

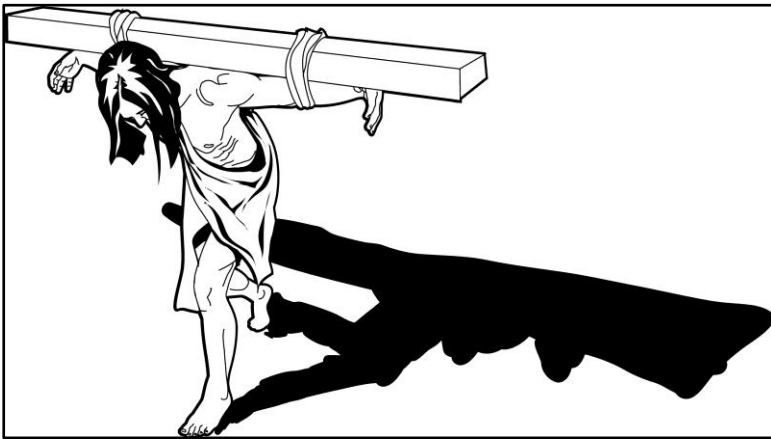


Figure 4 Victim carrying the crossbar or *patibulum*.

That Jesus had suffered greatly under the flogging may be inferred from his inability to bear the crossbar all the way to the place of crucifixion. John 19:17; Matt 27:32.

Luke wrote,

Luke 23:26 And when they led Him away, they laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.

Matthew wrote,

Matt. 27:32 And as they were coming out, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon, whom they pressed into service to bear His cross.

The Method

Matt. 27:33 And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull, 34 they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink. 35 And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots; 36 and sitting down, they began to keep watch over Him there. 37 And they put up above His head the charge against Him which read, “THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

They threw the victim to the ground on his back, with his arms outstretched along the *patibulum*. His hands could be nailed or tied to the crossbar, but the Romans apparently preferred nailing.

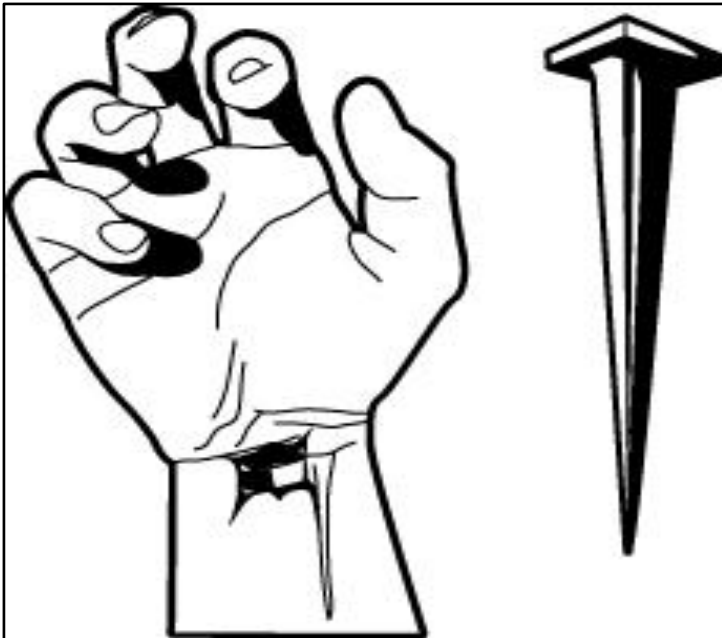


Figure 5 The nail, or spike, used in crucifixion.

The archaeological remains of a crucified body, found in an ossuary near Jerusalem and dating from the time of Christ,

indicate that the nails were tapered iron spikes approximately 5 to 7 in. (13 to 18 cm) long with a square shaft 3/8 in. (1 cm.) across. Furthermore, ossuary findings and the Shroud of Turin have documented that the nails commonly were driven through the wrists rather than the palms (Fig. 5).

After both arms were fixed to the crossbar, the *patibulum* and the victim, together, were lifted onto the *stipes*. On the low cross, four soldiers could accomplish this relatively easily. However, on the tall cross, the soldiers used either wooden forks or ladders. Next, the feet were fixed to the cross either by nails or ropes. Ossuary findings and the Shroud of Turin suggest that nailing of the feet was the preferred Roman practice. Although the feet could be fixed to the sides of the *stipes* or to a wooden footrest (*suppedaneum*), they usually were nailed directly to the front of the *stipes* (Fig 6). To accomplish this, flexion of the knees may have been quite prominent, and the bent legs may have been rotated laterally.



Figure 6 The Roman method of nailing the feet.

When they had completed the nailing, they attached the *titulus* to the cross, by nails or cords, just above the victim's head (Fig. 7). The soldiers, and the civilian crowd, often taunted and jeered the condemned man, and the soldiers customarily divided up his clothes among themselves.

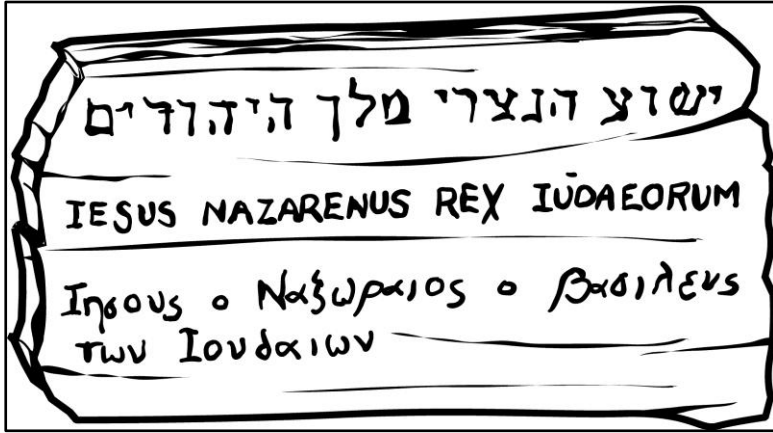


Figure 7 The Titulus. "Jesus the Nazarene the King of the Jews."

The length of survival generally ranged from three or four hours to three or four days, and appears to have been inversely related to the severity of the scourging. However, even if the scourging had been relatively mild, the Roman soldiers could hasten death by breaking the legs below the knees (*crucifragium* or *skelokopia*).

Not uncommonly, insects would burrow into the open wounds, or the eyes, ears, and nose of the dying and helpless victim. Birds of prey would sometimes tear at these sites. In actual practice, it was customary to leave the corpse on the cross to be devoured by predatory animals. However, by Roman law, the family or friends of the victim could take the body down for burial. To do this they first had to obtain permission from the Roman judge. (See Matt. 27:58; Luke 23:50-53)

The Intent

The intent of crucifixion was to cause suffering and death.

Crucifixion was capital punishment in its cruelest form. The Romans did not intend that any victim would survive the cross. To ensure that the victims did not survive, the Romans assigned soldiers to perform the execution and to remain at the site until they could verify that death had occurred. Crucifixion had the following characteristics:

- Design: slow death, maximum pain, suffering
- Regard: disgrace, cruel
- Persian method: tied to tree, impaled on post
- Condemned carried his own cross
- Roman: led to site by a guard, with centurion
- *stipes* located permanently at the site
- Victim given bitter drink by law
- Wrists nailed to cross bar first
- *patibulum* and victim lifted to top of *stipes*, feet nailed
- Survival usually 3 to 4 hours
- Death hastened by breaking the legs

Death on the Cross

Since the authorities did not intend that the victim survive crucifixion, the body was not released to the family until the soldiers were sure that the victim was dead. By custom, one of the Roman guards would pierce the body with a sword or lance. Traditionally, this has been regarded as a spear wound to the heart through the right side of the chest—a fatal wound probably taught to most Roman soldiers. (Fig. 8) The Shroud of Turin documents this form of injury. Moreover, the standard infantry spear, which was 5 to 6 ft (1.5 to 1.8 m) long, could easily have reached the chest of a man crucified on the customary low cross.

Jesus' Last words.

Matthew 27:45 Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli lama sabachthani, that is, "My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?"

Mark says,

Mark 15:37 And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.

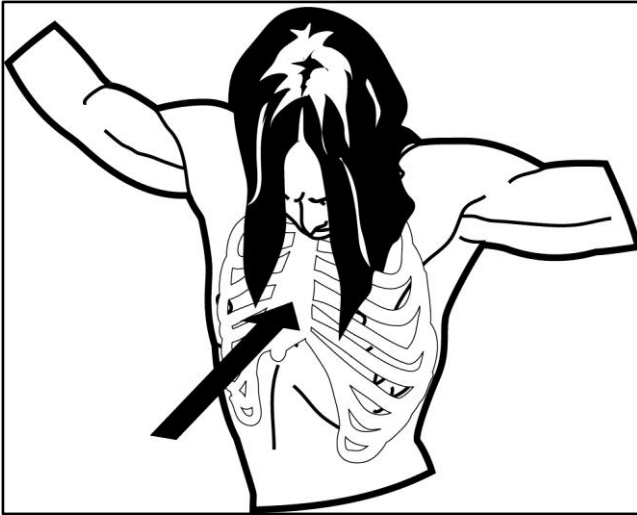


Figure 8 Location and direction of spear thrust.

But Luke and John record what He cried out. The Scriptures say,

Luke 23:46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’ ” Having said this, He breathed His last.

And He said,

John 19:30 “It is finished!”

His words meant, everything has been accomplished which by the appointment of the Father as revealed in the Scriptures I must do and bear.⁴⁴

Witnesses to His death.

Gospel writers record his death in this way,

John 19:30 He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

Mark 15:39 And when the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

Women who knew him were present to see his crucifixion.

⁴⁴ Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*, τειλεω.

Matt. 27:55 And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar,⁵⁶ among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

The Jews, not wanting the bodies of the ones they had crucified to remain on the crosses until the Sabbath, went to Pilate. The Sabbath was a high day, a holy day. The Friday before the Sabbath was to the Jews the Day of Preparation for the Passover. So, on this Friday when Jesus was crucified, they went to Pilate, the governor, and asked that the legs of the ones crucified be broken—to hasten their deaths. It was not uncommon for the victims of crucifixion to remain alive, lingering on their crosses, for days.

Pilate undoubtedly consented, for the soldiers came and broke the legs of the,

John 19:31 "... first man, and of the other man who had been crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water."

Mark wrote that Pilate confirmed his death by asking the centurion,

Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 44 Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. 45 So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

Jesus died on the cross of Calvary

The testimony of the witnesses, and the records of history agree that Jesus was dead upon the cross. Consider:

Summary of evidence:

1) Jesus was scourged with a *flagrum*. This weakened Him. Scourging, or flogging, was a legal preliminary to a Roman execution. Usually, two soldiers performed the scourging, using a short whip called a *flagrum* or *flagellum*. It was a whip with

several single, or braided leather thongs of different lengths. Small iron balls, or sharp pieces of sheep bones were tied in the thongs. The victim was stripped of his clothing. His hands were tied to an upright post. The back, buttocks, and legs were flogged to weaken the victim to a state just short of collapse and death.

2) Jesus carried His own cross.

The weight of an entire cross exceeded 300 lb; therefore, in almost all cases the one who was crucified carried only the crossbar, called a *patibulum*. But the *patibulum*, alone, would have weighed 75 lb. to 125 lb. It was placed across the nape of the victim's neck, and balanced along the shoulders. Usually, the arms were then tied to the *patibulum*. That Jesus had suffered greatly under the flogging may be inferred from his inability to bear the crossbar all the way to the place of crucifixion. John 19:17; Matt 27:32.

3) They nailed His hands and feet to the cross.

The soldiers threw the victim on the ground on his back, with his arms outstretched along the crossbar. The Romans preferred at that time to nail the victim's hands to the crossbar. Archaeological evidence indicates that the Romans used nails that were tapered iron spikes approximately 5 to 7 inches long, with a square shaft. They drove the nails through the wrists just above the heel of the hand. After they had nailed the victim's hands to the crossbar, they then lifted the victim and crossbar to the post, or *stipes*. Romans would then have nailed the victim's feet to the front of the *stipes*.

4) The centurion saw how He died.

A complete Roman military guard accompanied victims of crucifixion to the site. A centurion commanded this guard. Pilate asked the centurion to verify that Jesus was dead.

Mark wrote,

Mark 15:44 Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. 45 So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

5) The soldiers did not break Jesus' legs because they saw that He was already dead.

John wrote,

John 19:31 Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the

Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

6) A soldier pierced His side with a spear.

John went on to say,

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

The Greek word used by John, *pleura*, meaning “side” clearly tells where the spear entered the body of Jesus.

7) Blood and water issued from the wound—indicating a rupture of the heart.

Medical doctors believe the water was pleural and pericardial fluid that preceded the flow of blood. The accumulation of such fluid could easily result from cardiac rupture. **The weight of medical evidence indicates that Jesus died before the thrust of the spear into his side.**⁴⁵

8) The disciple John saw Him crucified. John 19:26.

9) The women, who knew Him well, saw Him crucified.

John wrote,

John 19:25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

Luke said,

Luke 23:49 But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

In verse 46 Luke says “He breathed His last.” And the acquaintances and women witnessed it.

10) His enemies believed He was dead.

Matthew wrote,

Matt. 27:62 On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, 63 saying, “Sir, we remember, while

⁴⁵ *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Mar. 21, 1986, p.1463.

He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.'

The death of Jesus Christ upon the cross is certain. He died in the full physical sense of the word. Every witness confirms it, including His enemies.

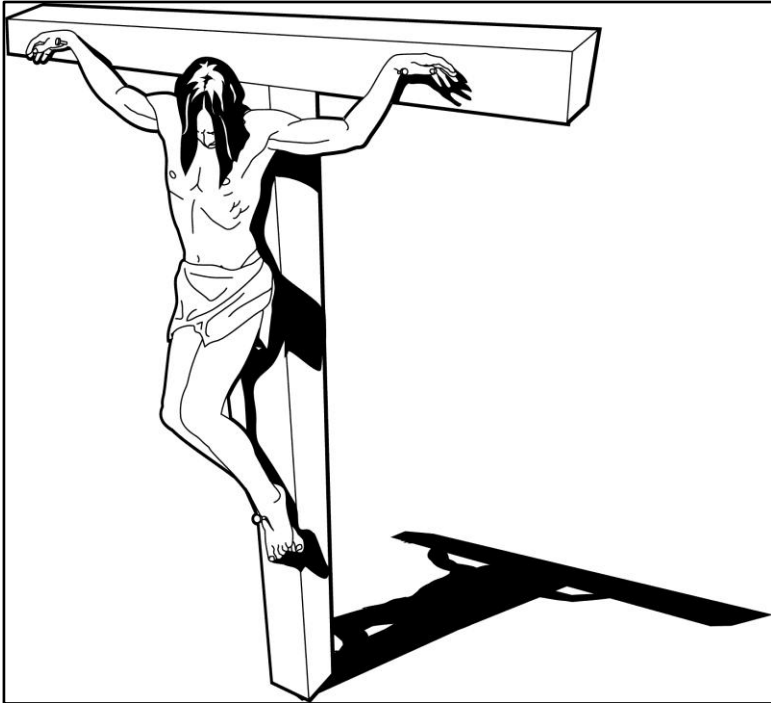


Figure 9 The victim frequently died of asphyxia.

Review - The death on the cross

1. The gospel of Mark says Jesus breathed His _____.
2. The gospel of John says Jesus _____ up His _____.
3. A centurion who stood in front of Jesus saw how He _____.
4. Many _____ also saw Jesus crucified.

5. The Romans broke the legs of the ones crucified to hasten their _____.
6. The Romans did not break the legs of Jesus. Why?
7. How did the soldier ensure the death of Jesus?
8. How did Pilate ensure himself of the death of Jesus?
9. Name two things that caused injury to Jesus or contributed to His suffering before His crucifixion.
10. How did the Romans attach Jesus to the cross.
11. Blood and water issuing from the spear wound indicated that Jesus suffered a _____ of the _____.
12. The disciples saw Jesus _____.
13. The enemies of Jesus believed He was _____.
14. Jesus died in the _____ sense of the _____.

The Resurrection

The Tomb. Mark 16:3.

Joseph of Arimathea,⁴⁶ a member of the Great Sanhedrin, requested of Pilate, and received permission to remove the body of Jesus from the cross the same Friday on which Jesus was crucified. Nicodemus, also a ruler of the Jews, came with Joseph. These men removed the body from the cross, bound it in linen wrappings, along with spices—a mixture of myrrh and aloes—which Nicodemus had brought, and took the body to the tomb.

Joseph and Nicodemus buried Jesus

(See John 19:38-42.)

Joseph of Arimathea provided a new tomb. The tomb had been hewn out of the rock. No one had ever lain in the tomb before. The tomb was near Golgotha, the place where the Romans crucified Jesus.

They laid Jesus in the tomb on Friday as the women watched. The Jewish custom of burial provided that the body be wound in a linen sheet eight feet long. To wind the body thus would have required two people, at least. Carrying the body from the cross to the tomb, would have required at least two people.

So it was late on Friday afternoon, approaching the Sabbath, and Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses saw the tomb and how the body was laid.

Mark wrote,

Mark 15:46 And Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance.

Matthew says when Joseph,

Mat. 27:59 ... had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and laid it in his **new tomb** which he had **hewn out of the rock**; and he rolled a **large stone**

⁴⁶ Edersheim says that Joseph was a member of the priestly council, a 14 member standing council that regulated everything concerned with the affairs and services of the temple. See *The Temple its Ministry and Services*, pp. 70-71.

against the door of the tomb, and departed. 61 And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, **sitting opposite the tomb**. See also, Luke 23:54, 55; Mark 15:47.

Luke said that Joseph laid Him,
...in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain.
Luke 23:53.

Professor Willis describes the typical tomb of this place and period as,

“In many instances the sarcophagus, couch, or other resting-place, is hewn out of the solid rock, and thus must have been left standing out from the floor, or projecting from the sides, when this apartment was first excavated. When the stone couch was employed, its surface was either level, or merely hollowed out an inch or two in depth, to afford a resting-place; and a raised part is often left at the head, to serve as a pillow, or a round cavity cut for the same purpose. Such couches are found in the Etruscan rock-tombs, and in those of Greece and Asia Minor....In the Jewish tombs of Syria the recess in the side of the chambers appears to have been always employed. But even this admits of great variety. In its simplest form, it is a rectangular opening or cavity in the face of the rocky side of the tomb, the bottom of it being usually higher than the floor of the chamber; and its length and depth just sufficient to admit of a human body being deposited in it. Often its upper surface or soffit is curved into an arch, which is either segmental or semicircular; and this, too, is its usual form when a sarcophagus is deposited in it.”⁴⁷

Summary:

Note these facts: Joseph of Arimathea provided a **new tomb**. The tomb had been **hewn out of the rock**. **No one** had ever lain in the tomb before. The tomb was **near Golgotha**, the place where the Romans crucified Jesus. Two women, “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” (Mary the mother of Joses) **saw**

⁴⁷ *Extract from the Architectural History of the Holy Sepulchre*, by Prof. Willis, formerly Jacksonian Professor in the University of Cambridge. The Holy City: G. Williams, Vol. I, p. 150.

where the tomb was. [These facts preclude confusion of the body of Jesus with another body, access by someone through a rear opening and loss of the way to the tomb.]

The Burial

John Mark's account of the burial of Christ tells that Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, gathered up courage and went before Pontius Pilate to ask permission of Pilate to remove the body from the cross. (Mark 15:43-46) This audience would have taken place late on the Friday afternoon that they crucified Christ. Pilate granted Joseph's request after the centurion told him that Jesus was dead. With permission from the governor Joseph and Nicodemus took away the body and prepared it for burial. The Scripture says that Joseph had obtained about a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, along with a clean linen cloth to prepare the body. (John 19:39)

According to Jewish custom Joseph and Nicodemus would have washed and straightened the body. They used the linen wrappings as a bandage, winding it tightly from the armpits to the ankles in strips about a foot wide. Then they placed the myrrh and aloes between the wrappings. The spices were aromatic and often gummy. They acted as a preservative, and as a cement to glue the linen wrappings together. John's term "bound" is from the Greek: ἔδησαν (δέω) meaning "bound" or "tied" in linen cloths with spices.⁴⁸

The King James Version uses the word *myrrh* to refer to different plants. One of these was a small tree with bushy branches and three-sectioned leaves, bearing a plumb-like fruit, and producing a fragrant gum that had many uses. The Hebrew word for this plant was *mor*. They used the gum in anointing oil, in perfume, and in ceremonial cleansing. The Magi brought it to the baby Jesus. The people at the cross offered it to Jesus in the form of "wine mixed with myrrh." Nicodemus and Joseph also used it to prepare the body of Jesus for burial.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Bauer, Gingrich and Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*.

⁴⁹ Packer., Tenney, White, *The Bible Almanac*, p. 253.

It is settled knowledge as old as the 4th Century that myrrh is a substance that adheres closely to the body, so closely that grave clothes could not be removed easily. Missionaries and natives of Syria say that it is still customary to wash the body, wrap hands and feet in grave bands, usually of linen (John 19:40), and cover the face or bind it about with a napkin or handkerchief (John 11:44b). It is still common to place in the wrappings of the body aromatic spices and other preparations to retard decomposition.⁵⁰

Edersheim says that "...haste characterized all that was done..." in the preparation of the body of Christ for burial. Joseph and Nicodemus brought the body to Joseph's new tomb. Such a rock-hewn tomb had niches where they laid the dead. At the entrance of the tomb there was a court, nine feet square, where they ordinarily deposited the bier. Then it was that the bearers gathered to do the last duties to the dead. Evidence indicates that Nicodemus and Joseph tore the "clean linen cloth" into swathes. Then using the swathes they bound the body, including within the bindings layers of myrrh and aloes. Then they wrapped the head in a napkin.⁵¹ When they laid the body in the tomb, the head would have rested upon the raised portion of the ledge at the far end that served for a pillow.

Other authorities say that the body lay with its face turned upwards, and its hands folded on the breast. Judging from existing practice the neck and the upper surface of the shoulders were commonly left bare as well as the face.

There are important facts to consider: There is no record of spices found in the tomb following the resurrection. Secondly, the aloes was a fragrant wood that had been pounded or reduced to dust, while the myrrh was an aromatic gum, morsels of which were mixed with the powdered wood. Thirdly, John says that he and Peter ran to the tomb after the report of the resurrection and Peter saw the "linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself."⁵² The language of the gospel indicates that Peter

⁵⁰ Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*.

⁵¹ Alfred Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. ii. p. 617-618.

"steadfastly and intently beheld" the linen swathes that had covered the body of Jesus, and the napkin that had been about his head.⁵³ There was no sign of haste. All was orderly.

The amount of spice that John says Nicodemus brought for the preparation of the body is extremely large (about a hundred pounds). The quantity, however, is of less importance than the fact that is established by the best authorities, that the spices were dry, and would therefore fall to the ground in a heap if the body were placed in an erect posture, or if the cerements were removed. (Cerements were waxed cloths used for wrapping the dead.) Certainly, if the disciples (or anyone else) had stolen the body they would have disturbed the wrappings, and spilled the aloes. But that was not the case. Otherwise, they would have removed the wrappings, or they would have carried the body away still wrapped. But the wrappings were "lying there." And the gospel writers do not mention spices spilled on the floor.

Also, the tomb was new, and it belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. There would be no confusion about what tomb to use. Significantly, no one had been buried there before Jesus. These facts preclude confusion with another body. Nicodemus and Joseph were acquainted with Jesus, thus ruling out misidentification of the body. Add to this the fact that the women were "...looking on to see where He was laid..."⁵⁴ and the evidence is indisputable that they buried Jesus within a rock-hewn sepulcher well known to the witnesses, and "...rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away."⁵⁵ The Jewish custom of burial provided that the body be wound in linen strips about a foot wide.

- Joseph and Nicodemus used linen burial wrappings.
- Spices were used to preserve the body. Myrrh was used to glue the wrappings, and to preserve.
- Carrying the body from the cross to the tomb would have required at least two people.

⁵² John 20:5-7.

⁵³ Ibid., Edersheim, *Life and Times*, p. 634.

⁵⁴ Mark 15:47.

⁵⁵ Matthew 27:60.

- Joseph, Nicodemus and the women could easily identify the body.
- They buried Jesus in a new tomb, hewn out of a rock.
- Joseph and Nicodemus laid Jesus in the tomb on Friday as the women watched. There was no confusion about the burial site.
- There was only the body of Jesus in the tomb.

The Stone

So it was late on Friday afternoon, approaching the Sabbath, and Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Jesus saw the tomb and how the body was laid. Matthew says when Joseph,

Matt. 27:59 ... had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. ⁶¹ And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb. See also, Luke 23:54, 55; Mark 15:47.

The stone was large.

“...he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb...” Matt. 27:60.

Mark 16:3 And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” ⁴ And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.

The significance of the stone is that it sealed the tomb from outside influence. The weight precluded removal by a single person, or two women in the case of Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus.⁵⁶ It renders absurd the idea that Jesus awoke from a swoon and rolled the stone away himself--despite his wounded side, feet and hands, further aggravated by the wounds from scourging.

The Seal

Matthew wrote,

Matt. 27:66 And they went and made the grave secure,

⁵⁶ Mark 16:3

and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone.
Matt. 27:66.

Paul Maier, a professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University, said that the seal would have been nothing more than a cord stretched across the rock and fastened at each end with clay. Like any seal, its purpose was not to cement the rock, but to indicate whether anyone had tampered with the stone.⁵⁷

Feeling reassured in the belief that the tomb was secure, the Pharisees left the guard and returned to the city. To them, it was certain that the disciples could not, nor would they dare, defy the Roman Governor, and overpower a military guard in order to embarrass the civil authorities.

Review - the burial

1. Joseph of Arimathea received permission from _____ to remove the _____ of Jesus from the cross.
2. The name of the man who accompanied Joseph to take the body down from the cross was _____.
3. These men bound the body of Jesus in _____ and _____.
4. Joseph provided a _____ for the burial.
5. _____ watched as they buried Jesus.
6. The entrance of the tomb was closed by a _____.

The Guard At the Tomb

On the morning of the Sabbath, following the Passover, chief priests and Pharisees met with Pilate. Matthew wrote in his gospel,

Matt. 27:62 On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate,⁶³ saying, "Sir, we remember, while

⁵⁷ Ibid., Maier, *First Easter*, p. 92.

He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise.’ 64 “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.” 65 Pilate said to them, “You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.” 66 So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

The guard at the tomb was more than a single soldier. Matthew wrote, describing the emotional state of the guard following the Resurrection, “...and the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.”⁵⁸

Further, Matthew said,

Matt. 28:11 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. 12 When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers,¹³ saying, “Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.’

Professor William Smith in *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* gives some information about the number of men in a Roman “guard.” According to Dr. Smith, the maniple (a subdivision of the Roman Legion) consisting of either 120, or 60 men “furnished...for the tribune to whom it was specially attached...two guards...of four men each, who kept watch, some in front of the tent and some behind, among the horses. We may remark, in passing, that four was the regular number for a Roman guard (a *quaternion*)... of these, one always acted as a sentinel, while the others enjoyed a certain amount of repose, ready, however, to start up at the first alarm.”

[The Romans divided the night into four watches of three hours each. If there was a separate guard for each watch, then there would have been 16 soldiers on guard duty that night.]

⁵⁸ Matt 28:4.

Clearly “guards” implies more than one soldier. “Some of the guard” implies more than two. A guard usually consisted of four soldiers, each of whom kept watch in turn while the others were able to rest.⁵⁹

Review - the guard at the tomb

1. The purpose of the guard at the tomb was to make the _____ until the _____.
2. The enemies of Jesus wanted the guard present lest the _____ come and _____ away.
3. They went and _____ the grave _____.
4. Along with the guard they set a _____ on the _____.
5. The guard at the tomb was _____ than a _____ soldier.
6. The statement: “Some of the guard” implies more than _____.
7. A guard usually consisted of _____ soldiers.
8. The seal would have been a _____ stretched across the _____.

The Resurrection

Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week.

28:1 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.

2 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. Matthew 28:1-2.

⁵⁹ Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, p. 222, 223.

The angel said,

5 But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

6 “He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. Matthew 28:5-6.

The appearance of the angel occurred while the guard was still present. But the guard had shaken for fear of him, and had become “...like dead men.” When the soldiers awoke, they evidently fled from the garden, some of them coming into the city to tell the chief priests what had happened.

Then the elders and chief priests did a remarkable thing. After they had heard the soldiers’ story, they attempted to conceal the whole matter by paying,

Matt. 28:12 ... a large sum of money to the soldiers,¹³ saying, “Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.’¹⁴ “And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.”¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The authorities in Jerusalem knew that the disciples of Jesus had not stolen His body. They had obtained a guard for the tomb to prevent such an occurrence. Note the facts that argue against the claim that the disciples stole the body,

- The tomb was sealed with an official seal.
- A large stone closed the entrance of the tomb.
- The stone was large enough that the women could not move it. Mark 16:3.
- A guard, a plurality, evidently four (or more) Roman soldiers, kept the tomb secure.
- The disciples were demoralized. They fled. Mark 14:50.
- The disciples did not have the courage to defy the authorities and steal the body.
- The disciples were looking for an earthly prince. They were utterly unprepared for His death.
- After they were convinced of the Resurrection, these same disciples became the Apostles of the Gospel. All

of them were martyred, except John, because they steadfastly maintained the truth of the Resurrection. (John was exiled on the island of Patmos.)

- The authorities in Jerusalem paid a bribe to promote the story of the stolen body. Does the truth require a bribe?
- The soldiers were paid to say “...the disciples came and stole the body while we were asleep.” Is a soldier conscious of anything while he is asleep?
- Jerusalem was filled with visitors who had come for the Feast of the Passover. Hoaxes are perpetrated where there are few witnesses.

The authorities in Jerusalem continued to publish the story that the disciples had stolen the body from the tomb. In his dialogue with Trypho, Justin Martyr, who came from neighboring Samaria, reported about 150 AD, that the Jewish authorities even sent specially commissioned men across the Mediterranean to counter Christian claims with their explanation of the Resurrection.

Mark says,

Mark 16:1 Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.² Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³ And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” ⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away; for it was very large. ⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶ But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. ⁷ “But go, tell His disciples; and Peter; that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.” ⁸ So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Review - the resurrection

1. The resurrection of Christ occurred on the _____ day of the _____.
2. The angel appeared while the Roman _____ was _____.
3. The elders and chief priests _____ the soldiers to say, "His _____ came by _____, and stole Him away while we were _____."
4. The disciples did not have the _____ to defy the _____.
5. The disciples were utterly _____ for the death of Jesus.
6. The women who came to the tomb were saying, "Who will _____ the stone for us from the entrance to the _____."
7. When the angel told the woman Jesus had risen the women fled _____ and _____.

The Appearances of Jesus after His Resurrection.

To:

- Mary Magdalene, Mark 16:9.
- Two disciples on the road to Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. One disciple was named Cleopas. These disciples reported the event to the Eleven, but the Eleven did not believe them. Luke 24:13.
- Ten of the Apostles. John 20:24.
- Thomas. John 20:26-29.
- The Eleven Apostles as they reclined at table. Judas Iscariot had departed. Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36.
- The disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. John 21:1.
- To more than 500 brethren at one time. I Cor 15:6.
- To Saul of Tarsus. I Cor 15:6-8.

Note these facts:

- It was not one who saw Him, but many.
- They saw Him separately; they saw Him while they were together.
- He was not obscured by darkness, but He appeared in daylight.
- He was not distant, but near.
- He appeared not once, but repeatedly.
- The witnesses not only saw Him, but they touched Him, talked with Him, ate with Him, and examined His person.

Review - the appearances

1. Jesus appeared to a woman named _____.
2. The name of the disciple on the road to Emmaus was _____.
3. Jesus appeared to eleven of the _____.
4. Jesus appeared to more than _____ brethren at one time.
5. Jesus appeared to _____ of _____.
6. Did only one person see Jesus?
7. Did they see Jesus separately, or while together?
8. Was Jesus seen only at night?
9. Did the witnesses see Him only once?
10. Was there physical contact between Jesus and the disciples?

Conclusion

Jesus rose from the dead.

The facts are decisive. Jesus Christ died upon the cross. (He did not swoon). He arose from the dead, one who had been dead in the full physical sense of the word, but later became alive again.

Final Review Questions

1. On what holy day did the Romans crucify Jesus? What day of the week?
2. What day of the week did Joseph and Nicodemus bury Jesus?
3. On what Jewish holy day did Jesus lie in the tomb?
4. Name at least three facts which show that Jesus was dead while he remained on the cross?
5. Was the tomb in which they buried Jesus new or old?
6. Where was the tomb? How had the tomb been constructed?
7. Was the location of the tomb known to anyone? To whom?
8. What was the reason for the guard at the tomb of Jesus?
9. What comprises a guard of Roman soldiers?
10. How was the tomb made secure?
11. On what day of the week did the Resurrection take place?
12. Was anyone present when Jesus arose?
13. What did the soldiers at the tomb do when Jesus arose? What did they do afterward?
14. What story was published by the authorities in Jerusalem to explain the Resurrection? What is the flaw in the story?
15. Was the Resurrection of Jesus bodily, or spiritual?

Appendix

TYPES OF CROSSES

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Infelix lignum | Tree |
| Crux simplex | Upright post pointed |
| Crux acuta | |
| Crux composita | <i>stipes and patibulum</i> |
| Crux humilis | Low cross |
| Crux sublimis | Tall cross |
| Crux commissa | T-shaped(Tau)cross |
| Crux immissa | t-shaped (Latin) cross |
| Crux capitata | t-shaped(Latin) cross |
| Crux decussata | X-shaped cross |

Who Am I?

1.0 “Who Do You Say I Am?”

In the gospel of Matthew the Scripture says,

Matt. 16:13 “Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking his disciples, saying, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’

Matt. 16:15 “And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist; some Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.’ 15 “He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’”

In *The Antiquities Of The Jews*, the historian Josephus wrote,

Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles.⁶⁰

Who was this “Jesus” who asked his own disciples who they thought he was? Who was the Jesus that Josephus hesitated to call a mere man? Was Jesus just another prophet? Was he just another good man, a teacher, or rabbi as many are willing to call him?

Josephus was the Jewish historian who composed an exhaustive history of Israel, particularly dealing with the times of troubles that beset Israel while the Jews struggled under the domination of Rome. Josephus was not a Christian, he was a Pharisee, but he was also a historian.

As a historian he could not ignore Jesus. He only devoted one paragraph not much considering the effect Jesus has had on his nation.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Whiston, *Flavius Josephus*, p. 379.

Jesus Christ cannot be ignored. He demands an explanation. He also demands an attitude. Every individual who hears of him develops an attitude toward him.

Many of his critics assign him a place that is lower than deity; they say, “He is the Earth’s greatest man, its greatest teacher; its greatest philosopher; he has revealed God to us as no one else has.” But many will not go beyond an affirmation that he was a teacher. He is to them, like Josephus, a “good” or a “great” man, but no more.

Questions that bear on the issue:

- Could clever Jewish writers have invented Jesus?
- Is Jesus a work of fiction?

Reasons the answer to both questions is ‘no.’

- The Hebrews did not produce this kind of literary work; i.e., fantasy and fiction.
- They were not given to art, but morals.
- Hebrew literature is prose: history, law, proverbs, poetry.
- If the gospels are fiction then why did four writers compose four accounts of one character? Why don’t the accounts of Jesus differ?
- Gospel writers were common people, not literary.
- No dramatist can produce a character greater than himself. (It is impossible to invent without experience.)
- Jesus is out of harmony with the *zeitgeist* (the trend of thought or feeling) of his time.
- If Jesus never lived then the evangelists produced His doctrine. How did they do this?
- If He did not live then how did they get the meaning of His teaching?

The evangelists were neither good enough nor great enough to invent Jesus.

Evangelists

narrow
misunderstood
impulsive
worldly ambitious
Kingdom: Israel
seats of honor
be served
fearful
slow of wit
prejudiced

Jesus

all encompassing
always understood
deliberate
rejected the world
Kingdom: all hearts
lowest position
to serve
courageous
intelligent
loves all

Review - "Who do you say I AM"

1. At Caesarea Philippi Jesus asked His disciples two questions. What were the questions?
2. Does the historian Josephus refer to Jesus in his writings?
3. Were the Hebrews of Jesus' time known for works of fiction?
4. The writers of the gospel were _____ people, not _____.
5. No dramatist can produce a character _____ than _____.
6. If Jesus never lived then the evangelists must have produced His _____.
7. The evangelists were neither _____ enough nor _____ enough to invent Jesus.

2.0 Jesus: His Character.

Jesus is not the ideal Jew of the time of Tiberius.

- His mission included all men, not just Israel.
- He is not like other men of his time.

The method and thought of Jesus separates Him.

- He never investigates, He knows.
- He never uses logical forms, He declares.

- He speaks law, not suggestion.
- He tells self-evident truth. “Never did a man speak the way this man speaks.”⁶¹
- He is love: *agape* (active good will).

Jesus is the one perfect character.

There is not one defect in Him.

- Pilate said, “I find no fault in Him.”
- Jesus is superior to any other person in history: ruler, scholar, professional, businessman, soldier, religious leader.

Jesus never confessed sin. He challenged his opponents to find sin in him.

In the Gospel of John it is recorded that Jesus said, John 8:46 “...But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do you not believe Me?”

Jesus spoke these words in the temple to the Jews who opposed him. They said he had “...a demon” and they threw stones at him, but they did not convict him of sin.

In the same chapter of John, Jesus says that “...I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.” This he said while referring to the Father, that is, God. And in this same context he says that he has unbroken communion with the Father. No man could make such a claim since Adam, and even Adam lost his close communion with God. John 8:29

Christ’s self-conscious purity is astonishing because it is totally unlike the experience of any other believer in God. Every Christian knows that the nearer he approaches God, the more aware he becomes of his sin. However, with Christ this is not the case. Jesus lived more closely to God than anyone else and was free from all sense of sin.

⁶¹ John 7:46.

Also we are told of the temptations of Jesus (Luke 4), but never of his sins. We never hear of his confessing or asking forgiveness of his sins, although he tells his disciples to do so. In a letter to his disciple Timothy, the Apostle Paul confessed that he was "...the chief of sinners." (I Tim. 1:15) In the Gospel of Luke, the writer quotes Peter as saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"(Luke 5:8) The Apostle John said in his first letter that,

1 John 1:8 "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

But of Jesus, John said,

1John 3:5 "And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin."

See also, I Timothy 1:15; Luke 5:8; I John 1:8; I John 3:5.

How is this difference between Jesus and his disciples to be explained?

Was his standard of right and wrong different from that of his disciples?

Were his morals lower?

What impression do we get of him from the record of his life?

In the first place, **His standard of right and wrong was not different from his disciples.** It was the same standard of morality, but his perspective upon it conflicted with the Jewish idea of right and wrong. Matthew wrote that Jesus said,

Matt. 5:17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill."

The "Law" to which Jesus referred was the **Law of Moses**, the covenant which God had made with Israel through Moses when God brought them out of Egyptian bondage. That "Law" contained not only the ceremony and ritual associated with the worship and service of God, but also a code of conduct, the famous Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments have become synonymous with the Law of Moses. These commandments formed the basis of the moral code which the Israelites were expected to follow—along with the ritual and ceremony. Jesus knew this well, but He also knew that no Israelite had ever kept it, including Moses. What **He intended to do was to keep it perfectly, in all its requirements, and to supply what the law lacked— "...to fulfill."**

Jesus said in the same paragraph quoted above,
Matt. 5:19 “Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

The fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew is instructive as to the respect with which Jesus regarded the Law of Moses. He emphasized the spirit of the law behind the commandments, and the effect upon the one who violates one of the commandments.

Therefore, **the standard of right and wrong that Jesus presented was not different from that of his disciples, it was the same law**, but his perspective on it was vastly different.

Was his standard of morality lower? Hardly. The moral character of Jesus as presented in the gospels is one that transcends that of his contemporaries both in extent and quality, while at the same time resting upon the same foundation of law.

The tasks He set for Himself,

- atonement for sin
- call and conversion of all men
- salvation for the human race.

Review

1. Jesus was not _____ other men of His _____.
2. Jesus never _____, He knows.
3. Jesus speaks _____, not suggestion.
4. Pilate said, “I find no _____ in Him.”
5. Jesus never confessed _____.
6. Jesus’ standard of right and wrong was the _____ as His disciples.
7. Among the tasks Jesus set for Himself was _____ for the human race.

3.0 The Things Jesus Claimed.

3.1 Jesus Claimed To Be A King.

On the day the authorities in Jerusalem brought Jesus to trial before Pontius Pilate, the charge that the Jews pressed said that Jesus had declared himself to be a king. Their wish was that these charges would arouse the Romans to execute him, and so accomplish for them what they wanted done because of his threat to their “place” and their “nation.” John 11:48.

Pilate asked Jesus,

Luke 23:1 “Are you the King of the Jews?”

Jesus told Pilate,

John 18:37 “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth.”

Yet, he would not compete with Caesar for the power that is in the world’s political system. He said,

Matt 22:21 “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.”

Jesus believed that he was a king. Yet He would not compete with Caesar. Was He subordinate to Caesar, as was Herod? He also said to Pilate,

John 18:36 “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews, but as it is My kingdom is not of this realm.”

It is clear from his conversation with Pilate on the day Jesus was brought before the Roman Governor for trial, that Jesus claimed to be king, and that Pilate understood that this was his claim. This is clearly seen in the inscription which Pilate commanded them to put on his cross. The inscription read in three languages: “The King of The Jews.”

But **what does it mean for a person to call himself the “King of the Jews” in the way Jesus meant it?** The title has special meaning. The King of the Jews is the Anointed One, The Christ, the one known to the Jews of that time as the Messiah. Jesus had claimed to be the Messiah, and many of his contemporaries found it difficult to believe.

3.2 He Claimed To Be The Son of God.

Before he was brought to Pilate for condemnation under Roman Law, Jesus had already been tried by the Jewish Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the supreme ruling council of Jewish elders, scribes and those learned in the Jewish law. This Council presided over the Jewish people in the time of Jesus and earlier.

When he was on **trial before the Great Sanhedrin**, after the last witness against him had been found inconsistent according to their law, **the High Priest**, whose name was **Caiaphas**, pressed Jesus with an oath, and not a simple oath. Caiaphas applied to Jesus the most solemn form of oath that is known to the Hebrew constitution, the famous “Oath of the Testimony.”

Caiaphas said,

Matt. 26:63 “I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.”

Any person to whom the oath is applied is bound to answer. Jesus could not under Jewish Law refuse. So he said,

Luke 22:70 “Yes. I am.”

Caiaphas tore his robes, and said to the assembly, “He has blasphemed!”

For this claim, and the threat his coming represented to their “place and their nation,” the Jewish authorities decided to have Jesus put to death. This they could not do themselves because in the Roman provinces the power of life and death, the *jus gladii*, was reserved to the governor.⁶²

Ask yourself this: **would a mere man, an ordinary man, have claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God?**

3.3 Jesus saw Himself as the Lamb—the sacrificial lamb.

On one occasion the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons. She bowed down and made a request of Him.

Matt. 20:21 “And He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She

⁶² W. R. Nicoll, *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, vol. 1, p.851.

said to Him, ‘Command that in your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left.’

22 But Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?” They *said to Him, “We are able.” 23 He *said to them, “My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.” 24 And hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. 26 “It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

What did he mean that He would become a “ransom” for many? A ransom is something paid in order to release something from captivity. A ransom is the price paid an enemy for someone’s freedom. Did Jesus see other people as slaves? If He did then He also saw Himself as the one who would free them by giving his own life for theirs.

Was this not a unique philosophy? What other leader has proposed to establish greatness by becoming a servant? What other leader has proposed to provide his greatest service by giving “His life a ransom for many?” If there have been others, they are certainly in the minority.

Matthew’s record shows that Jesus said another remarkable thing. It happened while Jesus and the disciples were eating the commemorative supper which they called the Passover Meal. Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He gave some of it to his disciples. Then He took a cup and gave thanks, and also gave it to His disciples, then He said,

Matt. 26:27 “... Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is to be shed on behalf of many for forgiveness of sins.”

Jesus clearly believed that the offering of His life had special significance for man, and He interpreted events in His life as leading to His death.

3.4 He Claimed to Be Deity.

On the first day of the week following his crucifixion and burial, many of Jesus' disciples reported that they had seen him alive. The Scripture says that...

John 20:25 "...the disciples were saying to Thomas, 'We have seen the Lord!' "But Thomas said to them, 'Unless I shall see in his hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.'"

Thomas would not allow his hopes to be dashed away again, he would have an infallible demonstration of proof or he would not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. It was eight days later that the disciples had shut themselves inside their room again. In much the same way, Thomas had shut himself inside his own room of unbelief, and of doubt. But this time, when Jesus came to the disciples, Thomas was present.

The written record says that,

John 20:27 "Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then He said to Thomas. 'Reach here your hand, and put it into my side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.'"

The effect on Thomas was immediate, and when he answered it was no longer Thomas the doubter who spoke, but Thomas the believer. This Apostle answered with a conviction deeper and stronger than any of the other Apostles; no higher assertion of the Divine nature has fallen from human lips. He said, "My Lord and my God!" Thomas saw clearly the deity of Jesus. Jesus did not deny the title.

The Jewish authorities were under no delusion about the claims Jesus was making about himself. The Gospel of John records the following,

John 5:17 "But He answered then, 'My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.' "For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but was calling God His own father, making Himself equal with

God.”

Not only did Jesus make the claim that he was equal with God, but he went on to claim that he would exercise power greater than God had ever before exercised.

He said,

John 5:20 “...and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. 22 For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, 23 in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.”

One might easily understand why the unbelieving Jews sought to stone Jesus. He claimed equality with God. He also declared that to see him is to see the Father (See John 14:7-10).

He claimed to be the Son of God (See Luke 22:70).

In the light of these claims, one must conclude that Jesus can only be one of two things: **he is either a pretender, or he is what he claimed to be.** There is no middle ground where he might still be called a “good man,” or just “another prophet.”

Julius Caesar became master of the Roman world in 46 BC. A year later he was made emperor for life. He adopted the ivory scepter and the throne, which were the traditional insignia of the ancient kings of Rome. Caesar went on to indulge his vanity in the corrupting influence of an emperor’s power. He took for himself the title of a god. Priests were appointed for his godhood. He had them carry his image in the midst of the other idols that marched in the idol-procession into the arena. The Romans also set up his statue in a temple, and on the image they carved this inscription: “To the unconquerable god!”

Our opinion of Julius Caesar, no matter how great, must be diminished some by his arrogance. He was not a god.

Jesus Christ taught that only God should be worshiped.

Jesus told Satan when Satan tempted him,

Matt. 4:10 “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.”

Yet, on another occasion, when Jesus had healed a blind man—who had been blind from birth—Jesus asked him,

John 9:35 “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He

answered and said, “And who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”

Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him, and He is the One who is talking with you.” And he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.

In another place, when Jesus met with his disciples after the resurrection, the disciples

Matt. 28:9 “...came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped Him.”

When, finally, Thomas had his doubts swept away by the evidence of wounded flesh in his hand, he uttered the most profound confession any man can ever say. He said, “My Lord, and my God.” With that confession he drew an indelible line across the Gospel pages. The identity of Jesus in the mind of Thomas is no longer doubtful. Once the realization broke upon him, Thomas was a humbled man. Thomas saw the Jesus who had been crucified only a few days before—the wounds were there to prove that this person was that Jesus—and realized that this same Jesus had overcome death itself.

Only God can overcome death.

In the Gospel of Matthew the Scripture says,

Matt. 16:13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” 15 He *said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.

Peter declared the identity of Jesus. The Apostle said that this Jesus was none other than the Messiah who had been promised by God through the prophets, and whose coming had been remembered in the Scriptures. But Peter went further. He said that Jesus was more than a “mere man.” Jesus was God’s Son.

The Apostle John, in his Gospel and in his letters, says unequivocally that Jesus is the Logos who was existing with God when the world was created. He is the Logos who became flesh and dwelt among men. And the Apostles beheld his glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father. As the Apostle Paul wrote, Col. 2:9 "...in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form." Jesus, speaking to Peter after the Apostle's confession, declares Peter's identity. Then Jesus says that upon this foundation, that is to say, because it is true that he is Jesus Christ, The Son, none other than God come in the flesh, he will build his church he would assemble unto himself all the chosen from among the Jews and Gentiles, cleanse them of their sins and bring them to glory.

Review

1. Jesus claimed to be the _____ of the _____.
2. The Christ is the same as the _____.
3. Jesus confessed to the Great Sanhedrin that He was the _____ of _____.
4. Jesus claimed to be _____.

4.0 Conclusion

The Scriptures portray **Jesus** as a man, but more than mere man. He is shown to be a special person. His coming is a special event. **He is described as no less than Emanuel, God with us.**

Final Review Questions

1. What is the name of a secular historian who mentions Jesus?
2. Did Jesus consider himself to be a sinner?
3. Did Jesus observe the moral law? The Law of Moses?
4. Of what people did Jesus claim to be the king?

5. Did Jesus tell the Jewish authorities that he was the Son of God? If so, when?
6. Who did Peter say Jesus was?
7. What did Paul say dwelt in Jesus?

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The Myth: Answers

Fixing people and events in History

1. History
2. Chronology
3. lunar, year
4. era
5. kings, high priests, catastrophes
6. Tiberius Caesar, Pilate, Herod.
7. John the Baptist
8. baptism

True/False

1. F
2. T
3. T
4. T
5. F

The Myth

1. gods, superhumans
2. written history
3. culture, race

Questions

1. No.
2. No
3. Yes

Usage of the term “myth”

1. fairy tale, fable
2. fanciful, false
3. imaginary
4. Existed

Questions

1. No.
2. Yes.
3. No.

The Birth of Jesus Compared to the Myth

1. No
2. Yes
3. No, Luke used another method.
4. Only living people are enrolled in a census.

Final Review Questions

1. No
2. By referring to kings, high priests, and catastrophes.
3. yes

4. None, in ordinary conversation.
5. No. A historical event actually happened, a myth did not.
6. Yes. The gospels.
7. At the end.
8. yes
9. Clement of Rome, Irenaeus, Ignatius, Polycarp.
10. They sang a hymn to Christ as to a god.

Appendix Questions

1. No.
2. No.

John the Baptist: Answers

Ancient Expectations.

1. legends, being
2. messenger
3. Zacharias, Elizabeth
4. forerunner
5. ready, people
6. king
7. repentance

John came in fulfillment of Prophecy

1. Malachi
2. Aaron
3. The region about the Dead Sea, or the wilds of Judea
4. God

The Message of the Baptist

1. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Prepare the way of the Lord.
2. Definitely. He wielded great influence.
3. John baptized Jews, including Jesus.
4. No. He denied that he was the Christ.
5. One crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord.

Review Questions

1. No. Many nations had expectations.
2. No. John was the forerunner.
3. Yes.
4. Elijah.
5. Josephus
6. To announce the coming of the Messiah.
7. John identified Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah.
8. Herod Antipas executed John.
9. yes
10. Yes. John baptized Jesus.

The Sanhedrin: Answers

Betrayal and Arrest.

1. Garden of Gethsemane.
2. Jerusalem
3. Judas Iscariot
4. Passover
5. Annas, Caiaphas

Trial Before the Great Sanhedrin.

1. Great Sanhedrin
2. Chief priests, elders, scribes or lawyers.
3. Witness
4. False
5. Vain, standing, adequate

Questions.

1. No.
2. Yes. A capital case could not be tried a night. The cross-examination of Jesus was improper.
3. No. The Oath of the Testimony compelled Jesus to testify against Himself.
4. Yes. While under oath, Jesus confessed that He was Christ (i.e., Messiah) the Son of God.

Review

1. They feared that “all men would believe in Him,” and that the Romans would come and take away their place and nation.
2. The Great Sanhedrin.
3. False witnesses.
4. No. The witnesses failed to convict Him.
5. By using the Oath of the Testimony and forcing Jesus to testify against Himself.
6. Blasphemy.
7. The Christ, the Son of God.
8. Yes. “The Christ” is Greek for “The Messiah.”

Pilate: Answers

Before Pilate.

1. Friday, Day of Preparation.
2. Praetorium.
3. Tiberium.
4. governor.
5. Claudia Procula
6. Friend of Caesar
7. Pavement, (or “Gabbatha”)

The Roman Trial and the Trial of Jesus

1. Accusatio
2. Interrogatio
3. Excusatio
4. king

The King Before the king.

1. No.
2. He sent Jesus to King Herod.
3. No.

Pilate’s Choice

1. Pilate said he found no guilt in sus.
2. Pilate wanted to release Jesus.
3. Tacitus, the Roman historian.
4. They are the same.

Review Questions

1. Herod.
2. Pontius Pilate.
3. Yes. A stone found in the ancient city of Caesarea.
4. The Friends of Caesar.
5. No.
6. No.
7. Accusatio, Interrogatio, Excusatio.
8. No. The charges were changed to a claim to kingship against Rome.
9. Yes. “King of the Jews” is equivalent to “Christ” or “Messiah.”
10. The mob.

Crucifixion: Answers

Introduction

1. Golgotha
2. garments
3. Christ, King of Israel
4. foundation

The death on the cross

1. last
2. gave, spirit
3. died
4. women
5. deaths
6. He was dead already.
7. The soldier pierced His side with a spear.
8. The centurion told him.
9. Flogging. Carrying the crossbar.
10. Nails through the wrists and feet.
11. rupture, heart
12. crucified
13. dead
14. full physical, word

The Resurrection: Answers

The burial

1. Pilate, body
2. Nicodemus
3. linen wrappings, spices
4. New tomb
5. women
6. large stone

The guard at the tomb

1. tomb secure, third day
2. disciples, steal Him
3. made, secure
4. seal, stone
5. more, single
6. two, soldiers
7. four
8. cord, rock

Resurrection

1. first, week
2. guard, present
3. paid, disciples, night, asleep
4. courage, authorities
5. unprepared
6. roll away, tomb
7. trembling, astonished

The Appearances

1. Mary Magdalene
2. Cleopas
3. Apostles
4. 500
5. Saul of Tarsus
6. No. Many saw Him.
7. Both.
8. No. In daytime also.
9. No. Many times.
10. Yes.

Final Review

1. The Day of Preparation, Friday.
2. Friday
3. The Sabbath of the Passover
4. a. The testimony of the centurion.
b. "He breathed His last." Mark.
c. "He gave up His spirit." John.
d. The soldiers did not break his legs.
e. The spear thrust to His side.
f. The blood and water from His side.
g. The disciples saw him crucified.
h. The women who knew Him saw Him crucified.
i. "He breathed His last" Luke.
j. The chief priests and Pharisees confirmed His death to Pilate.
k. Nicodemus and Joseph buried his body.
5. A new tomb in which no man had been buried.
6. Near the place He was crucified. Hewn out of the rock.
7. To the disciples. To the women. To His enemies. To the Romans.
8. To prevent the disciples from stealing the body.
9. Four. (most likely)
10. By a guard of Roman soldiers, and with an official seal.
11. The first day of the week.
12. Yes. The Roman guard.
13. They shook for fear, and became like dead men. They went into the city.
14. They told the soldiers to say that the disciples came while we were asleep and stole the body. No one can witness anything while he is asleep.
15. Bodily. The body of Jesus that had been dead returned to life.

Who Am I? Answers

Who do you say I am?

1. Who do people say the Son of Man is? But who do you say that I am?
2. Yes
3. No
4. common, literary
5. greater, himself
6. doctrine
7. good, great

Jesus: His character

1. like, time
2. investigates
3. law
4. fault
5. sin
6. same
7. salvation

The things He claimed

1. king, Jews
2. Messiah
3. Son, God
4. Deity

Final Review Questions

1. Josephus
2. No. Jesus never confessed sin.
3. Yes. Yes.
4. The Jews.
5. Yes. When on trial before the Great Sanhedrin.
6. The Son of God
7. All the fullness of Deity in bodily form.