



by

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"A very scholarly, orderly, and inspired account of the passion of Jesus."

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PREFACE

Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the single most important event in the history of mankind. Coupled with His resurrection, the Almighty God of the universe brought salvation to the whole world.

After approximately 250 hours of research and study, I have compiled an accurate historical account of the final events leading to Jesus' death. The theme of this essay is based upon Rice Broocks' audio-visual message, *The Cross*. Quoting from Broocks often and using his basic outline format, I have expanded each of the topics with quotes from appropriate sources and with reliance upon God's Holy Spirit. The essay is divided into two parts.

Part One deals with **Jesus' suffering** in connection with His trials, scourging, and crucifixion. Part Two deals with **Jesus' seven statements on the cross** and a historical and theological discussion of the meaning of each statement.

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THE CROSS

Part One: JESUS' SUFFERING

INTRODUCTION

Jesus said in **Luke 9:23**, "*if anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross daily, and follow Me.***" The phrase "commitment to Jesus" and "giving all to Jesus" will not make sense until we understand what Jesus did when He went to the cross. The cross is interwoven in our faith in God. The real issue of our faith is not in what Christ has made us feel like. "Many religions that people consider 'great' can make you feel something." Instead, **we rest our faith on the facts of what Jesus actually did on the cross.** Jesus' death on the cross and the agony and suffering that He went through was prophetically spoken long before His birth by King David in **Psalms 22** and by Isaiah in **Is. 53**. **Why did Jesus have to go through such pain and die?**

"The word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" (**1 Cor. 1:18**). Jesus, who had great talent, willfully and abruptly stopped his successful ministry for death. **"He could command crowds** like no man could have ever commanded them in history... **People were so caught up in the words** of this man that they did not even consider food. They had to be reminded by Jesus Himself in three days, 'you need to eat.' You can imagine the promoters and the agents that could have come around Jesus and said, 'hey things are going our way-- we've got the crowds.' **Jesus was having 'all you can eat' dinners for 5000 people.** He had boat rides where they rode out and walked back [almost]. There was no stopping the schemes and the things he had going for him." **Jesus had so much going for Him**, so it did not make sense why He had to go to the cross. Similarly, **people think Christians with great talents and potential are foolish to die to themselves and to live for Jesus rather than living for themselves.** However, "through the cross comes life. Through the cross comes victory." **We can gain an understanding of the true meaning of the cross by analyzing the final short statements that Jesus spoke on the cross.**

Every word that Jesus spoke was filled with power and authority because of the perfect life that He was living (**Heb. 4:12, John 1:1,14**). For 33 1/2 years He lived without committing a sin. He performed extraordinary miracles. "His words were immutable. His words had such weight and such power that the wisest of the wise would confront him and yet with one sentence, (not with long dialogues as the philosophers and intellects of today), **with one phrase He would shut their mouths'.** **There was not one man**, not one philosopher, not one debater, not one scribe, not one Pharisee, not one priest **who had the wisdom to stand** in front of this 'more than a man' and begin to even come close to **arguing with Him**, because He encompassed such power in His words." In **John 7:46**, the officers of the guard had said to the chief priest and the Pharisees, "never did a man speak the way this man speaks." Josh McDowell states that "many of today's scholars feel that Jesus' words are the greatest ever spoken." Jesus' final short statements were spoken after He had gone through much agony.

THE AGONY THE NIGHT BEFORE THE CROSS

Jesus had spent the night before the crucifixion in **fervent prayer** in the **Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives**. He was so weighted down with anxiety and what he had to do that **he sweat drops of blood as he prayed (Luke 22:44)**. "Science and medical doctors tell us that that phenomenon is something that when you have such weight and anxiety that literally the blood vessels (capillaries) break and the blood begins to shed and comes through the pores." C. Truman Davis, M.D., states:

Though very rare, the phenomenon of **Hematidrosis**, or bloody sweat, is well documented. Under great emotional stress, **tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break**, thus mixing blood with sweat. This process alone could have produced marked weakness and possible shock.

THE AGONY OF THE SIX UNFAIR TRIALS

Jesus was betrayed by Judas with a kiss. Jesus had not slept that night and was fatigued, but He willingly and harmlessly surrendered to his armed captors. The Roman cohort (tenth part of a legion, normally being **600 men**) and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and brought Him to be tried. This **multitude** came with torches and **weapons** in case of a revolt from Jesus' many followers, but Jesus did not resist arrest and told Peter to put down his sword, since this was all in God's plan. Jesus was taken through six trials-- **three Jewish and three Roman**. Charles Swindoll states, "**the charge in the Jewish trials is blasphemy; in the Roman trials it is treason**. Since the Jews are not allowed to administer capital punishment, they turn to the Roman authorities, which explains why Jesus is crucified instead of stoned."

The Jews broke at least five laws in arresting Jesus that night. The Talmud, which is a book containing the interpretation of the Mosaic Law, was supposed to be used in references to legal matters. Charles Swindoll writes of the injustice done to Jesus:

1. Arrest for a capital crime must be made in **broad daylight, not at night**. Verdict: law ignored.
2. **Arrest** for a capital crime may not be made **based on information by the offender's follower**--for if the accused were a criminal, so were his followers. Verdict: law ignored.
3. No Jewish trial may be held at night; that is, between 6 P.M. and 6 A.M. Furthermore, **never is a trial to be held before only one person**, so that partiality or prejudice can be avoided. Verdict: laws ignored. Two of the three trials occur some time **between 2 and 6 A.M.**, and **they are before single members**.
4. Members of the Jewish court, after hearing testimony regarding the one accused of a capital crime, **are not permitted to render an immediate verdict**, but are required instead to return to their homes for two days and nights eating only light food, drinking only light wines, and sleeping well. Then they are to **return and hear again** the testimony against the accused and cast their vote. Verdict: law ignored.

5. The Sanhedrin must vote one at a time, the younger men first, so as not to be influenced by the older men on the council. **In the third trial, they all vote simultaneously.** Verdict: law ignored. Conclusion: this entire set of Jewish trials is a gross miscarriage of procedural law.

THE THREE JEWISH TRIALS

Jesus is first taken to the house of the seventy-year-old **Annas**, the ex-high priest and father-in-law of high priest Caiaphas (**John 18:13**). "Annas is comparable to a Mafia boss." Chuck Swindoll further states, "he is the wealthiest and most influential man of the city. He owns and operates the entire money-changing system, which is corrupt to the core and behind the group Jesus chased out of the temple... Ever since Jesus upset his business in the temple courtyard, Annas has had a personal vendetta against Him." Josh McDowell further states, "they feared He might upset commercializing inside the Temple."

Next, Jesus was bound and taken to **Caiaphas**, the current high priest (**Matt. 26:57**). Jesus was then tried illegally before the **Sanhedrin** (**Matt. 26:59-66**). The Lesser Sanhedrin was a group of twenty-three men who judged important cases including capital punishment. Chuck Swindoll states:

The ultimate court was the Greater Sanhedrin, consisting of seventy to seventy-three men... The Sanhedrin was the supreme court of the Jews, with complete jurisdiction over all religious and theological matters... Because, under Roman law, the Jews were prohibited from putting someone to death, they had to stand trial before the governor--Pilate. But this posed a problem. **The Sanhedrin accused Jesus of blasphemy.** But that wouldn't hold water in the Roman court of an empire that recognized no Supreme Being beyond Caesar. **So the accusation was altered, to treason.**

From the Jewish authorities' point of view, Dr. Flusser of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem writes:

Failure to bring the potential menace to the governor's attention while it could be checked might well prove costly to them in the long run and lead to **reprisals and to stricter oversight.** Moreover, it would be a very smart move. Should there be an **outbreak of protest** from the self-styled prophet's supporters, far better that the object of the popular **hatred** be the **Roman governor** rather than they. Thus, **regardless of whether Jewish authorities could or could not logically themselves inflict the death penalty, it was but common sense to let Pilate take the step.**

THE THREE ROMAN TRIALS

Jesus was taken to **Pilate** and charged with treason. Pilate asked Him if He was the King of the Jews, and Jesus said, "it is as you say," which gave Pilate grounds for execution. Justice Haim

Cohn, a learned member of the Supreme Court of Israel, says, "There can be no doubt that a confession such as this was sufficient in Roman law for conviction of the defendant." However, Charles Swindoll states that Pilate was convinced that "Jesus is not a threat to Rome and that His activities aren't treasonous" (**John 18:33-38**). The religious leaders insisted that Jesus, from Galilee, be dealt with. Pilate, realizing that a Galilean man belongs to Herod's jurisdiction, found a way out of his dilemma.

Pilate sent Jesus to **Herod**, who was in Jerusalem for the Passover. Herod Antipas had beheaded John the Baptist and heard rumors of Jesus. **Luke 23:8-12** says that Herod "wanted to see Jesus for a long time, hoping to see some sign performed by Him." Herod questioned Jesus, but He made no response. Herod and his soldiers mocked Him and sent him back to Pilate.

Jesus is brought to **Pilate** again, but he found no guilt in Him. According to Josh McDowell, Professor R. E. Grant believes both Jews and Romans alike interpreted Christ's remark as a reference to kingship. Grant believes the idea of kingship that Jesus preached was interpreted by both the Jews and the Romans as carrying with it the seeds of rebellion against the Roman power. To satisfy the crowd Pilate said, "I will therefore **punish Him and release Him**" (**Luke 23:13-16**). However, the people are not satisfied with just a simple punishment.

Pilate then thought of another way out and suggested to the crowd that he release a prisoner of their choice in recognition of their Passover. Pilate offered to release either Barabbas, a "notorious" prisoner and murderer, or Jesus. He hoped they would reason rationally and say 'Jesus', but the hardened crowd chanted, "release Barabbas." The Jews said to Pilate concerning Jesus, "**If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar**" (**John 19:12**). Pilate gives in and the crowd shouts to Pilate "crucify Him. We have no king but Caesar." British scholar William Barclay says that when the Romans first came to Palestine to arrange a taxation, the Jews rebelled "insisting that God alone was their King, and to Him alone they would pay tribute... The Jews were prepared to abandon every principle they had in order to eliminate Jesus." Ian Wilson offers two possible explanations for the crowd betraying Jesus:

First is that **they were a carefully orchestrated gathering of the Sadducees' own paid employees**. After all with twenty thousand Temple servants and eighteen thousand workmen on their payroll, the Temple's controllers would scarcely have had any difficulty in finding a mob to perform whatever tune they called. Another possible explanation, however is that Jesus was indeed **disowned by those who had welcomed him to Jerusalem**--because He had failed to sanction the abortive uprising against the Romans that arguably they had launched in His name.

THE AGONY OF BEING SCOURGED

C. Truman Davis, M.D., says, "there is much disagreement among authorities about scourging **as a prelude to crucifixion**. Most Roman writers do not associate the two. Many scholars believe that Pilate originally ordered Jesus scourged as His full punishment and that the death sentence came only in response to the taunt by the mob."

Both the Jews and the Romans had their own kind of scourging. **Deut. 25:1-3** states that **Jewish law limits the number of lashes, that a victim can receive, to forty**. The Pharisees strictly kept the law and allowed only thirty-nine lashes to be given. This was done in case of a miscount

according to **2 Cor. 11:24**. W.J. Cameron states that the Jews used a "three-thonged whip." Another scholar states that the Jewish whip had three prongs of leather which made three stripes on each blow. Therefore only thirteen blows could be given (for thirty-nine stripes) since the fourteenth blow would give three more stripes for a total of forty-two stripes. **Roman law, on the other hand, had no limit to the number of lashes that could be administered by the lictor.** Josh McDowell says, "out of disgust or anger, the Romans could totally ignore the Jewish limitation, and probably did so in the case of Jesus."

Jesus was sentenced to be crucified and was taken to be **scourged between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m.** Dr. Truman states that Jesus had to go across "Jerusalem to the Praetorium of the **Fortress Antonia**, the seat of government of the Procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate." The Romans used a **whip with a sturdy handle made of a short circular piece of wood.** The whip was called a **flagrum** or a flagellum. Attached to the handle was **several heavy strips of long leather thongs of varying lengths. Sharp jagged pieces of [sheep] bone and lead were woven into them near the ends,** which would greatly lacerate human flesh. John Mattingly states, "The adjudged criminal was usually first forcefully **stripped of his clothes**, and then **tied to a post** or [stone] pillar in the tribunal."

Jim Bishop describes the pain Jesus endured under the mercy of the soldier:

He then moved to a position about **six feet behind Jesus**, and spread his legs. The flagellum was brought all the way back and whistled forward and made a dull drum sound as the **strips of leather smashed against the back of the rib cage.** The bits of bone and chain curled around the right side of the body and raised small subcutaneous hemorrhages on the chest.

Dr. C. Truman Davis, a medical doctor, also describes the effects:

The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus' shoulders, back, and legs. At first the heavy thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continued, they cut deeper into the subcutaneous tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles. The small balls of lead first produce large, deep bruises which are broken open by subsequent blows. Finally **the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue.** When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is finally stopped.

Eusebius, a third-century historian, confirms this account, "the sufferer's veins were laid bare, and the very muscles, sinews, and bowels of the victim were open to exposure." Another scholar says, "the blood pours out; shreds of skin become detached and hang down. **The whole of the back is now no more than a red surface.**"

THE ROBE AND THE CROWN OF THORNS

The soldiers put a **short scarlet robe** on Jesus and weaved a crown of thorns and put it on His head and mocked Him and spit on Him and beat Him (**Matt. 27:27-31**). The **short cloak**

(chlamus in Greek) was worn over the shoulders, leaving Jesus **naked from the waist down**. Dr. Davis says, "a small bundle of flexible **branches covered with long thorns** (commonly used for firewood) are plaited into the shape of a crown and this is pressed into His scalp. Again there is copious bleeding (the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body.)" Dr. Pierre Barbet writes, "**the wood is flexible and covered with long thorns, much longer and sharper and harder than those of the acacia.**"

Scholars are uncertain of the exact type of thorn that was used. Josh McDowell states:

One comes from a plant called the **Syrian Christ Thorn**, a shrub about 12 inches high with **two large, sharp, recurved thorns** at the bottom of each leaf. This plant is **common in Palestine**, especially around the site of Golgotha where Christ was crucified. Another plant, simply called the **Christ Thorn**, is a dwarf-sized shrub anywhere from 4' to 8' high. Its thorns are easy to pick. The branches also can be **bent easily** to form a crown, and the thorns, in pairs of different lengths, are **stiff--like nails or spikes**.

After their torment is completed, the robe is torn from Jesus' back. Dr. Davis says, "this had already become **adherent to the clots of blood** and serum in the wounds, and its removal, just as in the **careless removal of a surgical bandage, causes excruciating pain.**" Rice Broocks says, "there is no picture, there is no painting that has yet to come close to explaining the horrors of the physical punishment of what He endured." Isaiah prophesied that "His appearance was marred more than any man" (**Is. 52:14**). Michael Green sums up Jesus' physical suffering:

After a sleepless night in which He was given no food, endured the mockery of [six] trials, and His back lacerated with the cruel Roman cat-o'-nine-tails, He was led out to execution by crucifixion. This was an excruciatingly painful death, in which every nerve in the body cried aloud in anguish.

THE HISTORY OF CRUCIFIXION

Charles Swindoll says:

Crucifixion was a barbaric form of capital punishment that **began in Persia [559-486 B.C.]**. The **Persians** believed that the earth was sacred to **Ormazd, the earth god**. They felt that death should not contaminate the earth; therefore, criminals were fastened to vertical shafts of wood by iron spikes and hung to **die from exposure, exhaustion, or suffocation**. **Death was painfully slow and publicly humiliating**. The vultures and carrion crows finished the work. Cicero describes crucifixion as "the most cruel and horrifying death."

Dr. Davis says, "**Alexander the Great** and his generals brought it back to the Mediterranean world--to Egypt and to **Carthage [334-323 B.C.]**. **The Romans apparently learned the practice from the Carthageans** and (as with almost everything the Romans did) rapidly developed a very high degree of efficiency in carrying it out." Josh McDowell says, "crucifixion was so gruesome and degrading that the Romans usually **excluded Roman citizens** and reserved it **for slaves** to

discourage uprisings, or **for those rebelling against the Roman government**. It was mainly used in political cases." Roman soldiers guilty of desertion could also be crucified.

Ian Wilson describes the archeological evidence:

Undoubtedly because crucifixion was so abhorred, only the scantiest of contemporary information about it has survived, most of this in the form of a handful of **artistic representations**. Two of these are **crude graffiti**, one from Pozzuoli, just outside of Naples, the other from Palatine Hill, near Rome. Two others are **tiny depictions on gems**, one being [held in] the Pereire Collection in Paris. Although many thousands were crucified during the Roman era--in 71 B.C. alone the Roman consul Crassus had six thousand rebels of the Spartacus uprising strung up along Italy's Via Appia--there has been a marked dearth of crucifixion victims...

In [June] 1968, however, in the course of the Giv'at ha-Mivtar excavations, one of the ossuaries examined was found to contain an adult skeleton, **the two heel bones of which were securely joined together by a nail nearly 17cm long [6.7 inches]**. The ossuary's inscription identified this individual as one '**Jehohanan**', and it is evident from the skeletal remains that he was a gracefully built, cleft-palated male in his mid-twenties, who undoubtedly died of crucifixion... Whatever the exact method used for Jehohanan, Jesus was not necessarily crucified the same way. **Crucifixion procedures [and positions] are known to have varied...** Jehohanan had his legs savagely smashed.

Josh McDowell says, "this discovery from the time of Christ adds solid archaeological evidence that the method of nailing individuals to a wooden cross as a means of execution, as mentioned in the New Testament, no longer is based solely upon literary evidence." Dr. Davis states, "Roman historical accounts and experimental work have shown that the **nails were driven between the small bones of the wrist** and not through the palms... Anatomists, both modern and ancient have always considered the **wrists as part of the hand**". **Square cut iron spikes approximately 7 inches long and 1/3 inch in diameter [near the head] and weighing approximately 1/4 pound were used.**

In crucifixion, victims' arms were nailed or tied to a horizontal crossbar (**patibulum**) and then this plank was lashed or nailed to a **permanent upright post or pole**. The feet were tied or nailed to the vertical pole (**stipes**), which was usually **fixed permanently in the ground** at the execution site. Dr. Davis mentions the types of crosses used in crucifixion:

The upright portion of the cross (or stipes) could have the cross-arm (or patibulum) attached two or three feet below its top--this is what we commonly think of today as the classical form of the cross (the one which we have later named the **Latin cross**); **however, the common form used in our Lord's day was the Tau cross** (shaped like the Greek letter Tau or **like our T**). In this cross the patibulum was placed in a notch at the top of the stipes. There is fairly overwhelming **archeological evidence** that it was on **this type of cross that Jesus was crucified**.

Death usually resulted from a slow process of exhaustion rather than from loss of blood. Twelve hours was the average time period between crucifixion and death. Ian Wilson writes about the process used to speed up death:

The important feature here is that the **'breaking of the legs [crucifracture]** was a procedure carried out **only on Jewish crucifixion victims**. In other countries victims would be left on the cross during the night, and it might take **up to three days** for them to expire. But in Jewish milieu, **because it was against the Mosaic Law for a body to be left on a cross after sundown [Duet. 21:23], the legs were broken to hasten death**. The body was buried the same day so they would not defile the land which God gave them.

THE AGONY GOING TO THE CROSS

After Jesus was scourged and his **garments were returned**, He was **paraded through town** as part of his criminal punishment, which was common for a criminal. Charles Swindoll states:

Generally, the victim was **surrounded by four Roman soldiers and led by a centurion**. As Jesus marched to His execution [with two criminals], He did not carry the entire cross--only the **six foot [about 110 pound] crossbeam [patibulum]** that would later be attached to the larger vertical post. Around his neck hung a **12 by 24 inch placard [titulus in Latin] declaring His crime**. This charge was then placed on the cross for all to see: "Jesus the Nazarene, the king of the Jews" (**John 19:19**).

The small sign, titulus, was **nailed to the cross above Jesus' head**. Dr. Davis says, "this sign would have given it somewhat the characteristic **form of the Latin cross**." A trilingual inscription on the sign would be necessary in Jerusalem for **Latin** was the official language of the **administration**, **Greek** the language of **international commerce and culture**, **Hebrew** (i.e. Aramaic) the language spoken by **Palestinian Jews**.

Jesus journeyed 650 yards along Via Dolorosa (one of the principal east-west streets of ancient Jerusalem) from the fortress Antonia to the hill of Golgotha. The Hebrew word Golgotha comes from the Aramaic word galgalta, meaning "**skull**". **The Place of a Skull** was so named because the hill was a skull shaped mound. It was **located by the north wall of Jerusalem**, but is unidentifiable today since the Romans sieged Jerusalem in 68-70 A.D. and landscaped the area. Golgotha is also commonly called **Calvary**.

Rice Broocks states, "they put a **110 pound cross** upon his back, that was **not real sanded down** and finely brushed up and decorated like we put on top of our church building. **It was a rough cut cross that dug right into the back**, that freshly beaten back. And He carried it up this long hill." Dr. Pierre Barbet explains the origin of the crossbar:

The **furca** was a piece of wood in the form of an inverted V on which the shaft of the two-wheeled carts was rested when they were in the stables. When a slave was to be punished, the furca was placed astride the nape of his neck, his hands were bound to the two arms and he was marched through the neighborhood while he was made to proclaim his offense. A furca was not always obtainable, so they began to use a **long piece of wood, which was used for barring doors and was called the patibulum (from patre, to be open)**.

The weight of the heavy wooded beam **causes Jesus to stumble** and fall. The centurion compels **Simon of Cyrene**, a stalwart North African who is the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry the crossbar. **Upon reaching Golgotha, Jesus is stripped** and set for crucifixion.

THE AGONY OF THE CROSS

Jesus was **crucified probably on Friday at 9 a.m.**, but possibly on Wednesday morning, and He rose from the dead on Sunday morning. Jim Bishop describes the horrors and pains experienced by Jesus in His crucifixion:

The executioner laid the crossbeam behind Jesus and brought him to the ground quickly by grasping his arm and pulling him backward. As soon as Jesus fell, the beam was fitted under the back of his neck and, on each side, soldiers quickly knelt on the inside of the elbows. Jesus gave no resistance and said nothing, but **he groaned as he fell on the back of his head and the thorns pressed against his torn scalp.**

Once begun, the matter was done quickly and efficiently... With his right hand, the executioner **probed the wrist of Jesus to find the little hollow spot.** When he found it, he took one of the square-cut iron nails from his teeth and held in against the spot, directly behind where the so-called life line ends. Then he raised the hammer over the nail head and **brought it down with force...**

Two soldiers grabbed each side of the crossbeam and lifted. As they pulled up, they dragged Jesus by the wrists. With every breath, he groaned. When the soldiers reached the upright, the four of them began to lift the crossbeam higher until the feet of Jesus were off the ground. The body must have writhed with pain.

Dr. Truman Davis further describes the pain:

The legionare feels for the depression at the **front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood.** Quickly, he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. **The patibulum is then lifted in place at the top of the stipes** and the titulus reading "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" is nailed in place.

The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The victim is now crucified. As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, **excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain--the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves.** As He pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, **He places His full weight on the nail through His feet.** Again there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet.

At this point, another phenomenon occurs. **As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain.** With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by His arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. **Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath.** Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. **Spasmodically, He is able to push Himself upward to exhale during these periods that He uttered the seven short sentences.**

Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint rendering cramps, intermittent, partial asphyxiation, searing pain, as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as **He moves up and down against the rough timber;** then another agony begins, a deep, crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

Maret H. Dinsmore further adds:

Death by crucifixion is horrible. **In reality it is death by suffocation.** For several hours on the cross, driven by the fierce pain, the body weight is consciously distributed between the spikes in the hands and legs. During this initial time, breathing (while painful) is done nevertheless with regularity. Soon, however, the body begins to weaken. Loss of blood, dehydration, and expending energy to maintain a semblance of erect posture drains its strength... **The sagging body weight** against the nailed hands now pulls the chest diaphragm up, **compressing the lungs, and making breathing impossible. In order to [exhale and then] inhale air, the weight must be shifted to the legs again.** This is done with great agony. When the body is raised enough to [exhale and] permit a gasp of air to be taken in, it collapses back to the position of being supported on the spikes through the hands.

THE CROSS

Part Two: JESUS' SEVEN STATEMENTS ON THE CROSS

FINAL WORDS

Christ spoke seven times from the cross after much agony. "Since speech occurs during exhalation, these short, terse utterances must have been particularly difficult and painful," according to the American Medical Association.

1. "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM" LUKE 23:34

The first statement that Jesus cried after being nailed on the cross at 9 a.m. was, "**Father**, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." This is one of the most persistent themes in the New Testament. These words are utterly foreign for a crucified person. Crucifixion was not a nice religious service. It was terrible. Normally cursing would flow forth from the criminal on the cross toward the crowd and the soldiers; yet, Jesus prayed.

In the midst of the agonies of the cross, the first word Jesus said was "**Father**". "In the midst of trials, no matter what happens to you, that doesn't mean God abandons you." Many people looked at Jesus' calamities, and they figured He must have sinned and done something wrong, just as Job's friends thought of Job. Jesus did not cry out in agony, "O God, help Me." Instead, **He held on to His Sonship** and said "Father". **As Christians we, should be immovable in the confidence that we are a son or daughter of God.** Nothing can separate us from the love of God (**Rom. 8:35-37**). In hardships, **God will help us through the trials**, but He won't deliver us from them. When we are at our weakest, then the power of God comes upon us.

Jesus was totally centered on others when He said, "**forgive them.**" **Them includes** not only the Romans or the Jews, but **everyone who has ever lived or will live.** Jesus prayed for His enemies. **We will have many enemies, and we must pray for them and love them (Luke 6:27,28; Matt. 5:44).** If you are truly a Christian, then you can expect to have enemies that hate you and mistreat you. If we do not forgive them, then our Father will not forgive us (**Matt. 6:14-15**).

Jesus said, "**they do not know what they do,**" and **recognized the ignorance of their sin.** The ignorance of the soldiers was circumstantial ignorance. The ignorance of the Jews was "judicial" ignorance. "The Bible does say that we sin in ignorance. You're born with a sinful nature, and you grow up just doing what everybody else does. You don't even consider that maybe you are defying God and defying His holiness and slapping Him in the face." **For every sin we commit, we are actually hitting a nail into Jesus' hands and feet.** Self-righteousness is also a sin. This is when a person thinks that there is some act he can do to be acceptable to God.

Although people do not understand the full implications of their sin, "**there is no excuse for ignorance.**" We have laws and if we don't know one and violate it, we still will be punished. Although people don't seem to know the truth, God is constantly giving them chances to know. **Rom. 10:17-18** says, "So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. But I say, **surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have.**" **Verse 21** says, "All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people." God has made himself known to everyone (**Rom 1:20-21**). "Even though you didn't know and you were ignorant, you could have known. We have more Bible today and preaching in America. **We are the most spiritually fed people in the world, and yet we ignore what we hear.**

2. "TODAY YOU SHALL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE" LUKE 23:39-43

Jesus was crucified in the middle of two thieves. The Romans scoffed at Jesus because they had the power of the world at their finger tips, and Jesus from Nazareth called himself a king. As the Romans drove the nails through Him (the King), **they "compared Him and His defeated look to their power of Rome."** **Both robbers joined** the bystanders and Sanhedrists **in mocking Jesus (Mark 15:32, Matt. 27:44).** **Luke 23:39** says, "One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him saying 'Are You not the Christ [the Messiah]? Save Yourself and us!'" Luke then distinguishes a repentant from the other obdurate sinner. "All of a sudden **something happened to that one thief that made him change** what he was saying to his fellow criminal friend:"

But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since **you are under the same sentence of condemnation?** And we indeed **justly**, for we are receiving what **we deserve** for our deeds; but **this man has done nothing wrong.**" And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in **Your kingdom!**" And He said to him, "**Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.**" (Luke 23:40-43)

It is hard to imagine how **this thief had faith** in the midst of this horrible situation. "To a natural man, who is going to believe on a dying, helpless, beaten man, and say 'You got a kingdom.'" The Romans and the religious were scoffing Jesus. **A miracle** must have happened for the **thief to have faith.**

Three things led to the saving faith of the thief. First, "**he admitted his guilt.** He said, 'we deserve what we got.' Everyone is innocent in their own eyes. Every criminal on death-row thinks they had a bad rap." Second, **he admitted the righteousness of Jesus.** Jesus never committed a sin and did nothing deserving of such a terrible punishment. Third, the criminal **saw the sign over Jesus' head** that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The Spirit of God opened the thief's hardened heart to realize that this is the King. **He accepted Jesus' messianic claim** as he said, "Jesus, [when You come again as king] remember me."

Many sinners and religious people use the story of the thief on the cross as an **escape from living for Jesus.** They say, "look at the thief on the cross. He lived a life of sin, a life of pleasure. It didn't really matter. He just lived the way he wanted and then got to the **last minute and then he prayed.**" Many people think that this is what they are going to do. **They are going to live all their life in sin, thinking they can have Jesus any time they want Him,** and then accept Jesus and go to Paradise. "There was something different in that thief than is with most people. **That was the first time that thief ever heard [the Gospel]. That thief didn't live in America where he heard the Gospel everyday.**" There is no guarantee that you will live till tomorrow. There is no guarantee that you will accept Jesus after denying Him so many times.

The penitent criminal is promised more than he asked. **He will begin this very day in Paradise, not in some far off future.** Paradise is a word borrowed from the Persians. **Disembodied spirits would dwell in Sheol pending the resurrection and final judgment,** as explained in Jesus' story (not parable) of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus (Luke 16:19-32). This prison house of departed spirits was **located in "the lower parts of the earth"** (Eph. 4:9).

This place is called "sheol" in the Old Testament and "hades" in the New Testament. Myer Pearlman gives a sound teaching on this matter:

Man's body was laid in the grave while the soul passed into Sheol (translated "hell," "the pit," "the grave"), the abode of departed spirits... **Sheol was inhabited by both the righteous** (Job 14:13; Ps. 88:3; Gen. 37:34,35) **and the wicked** (Prov. 5:3-5; 7:27; Job 24:19; Ps. 31:17). From the incident of the Rich Man and Lazarus we learn that there were two parts in Sheol--**a place of suffering** for the wicked (Luke 16:23,24) and another part for the righteous, **a place of rest and comfort** [Abraham's bosom] (Luke 16:15-25).

However, Old Testament believers were not without hope. God's Holy One, **the Messiah, would descend into Sheol: God's People would be redeemed from Sheol** (Ps. 16:10, Ps. 49:15). This was fulfilled when Christ, after His death, descended into the world of departed spirits (Matt. 12:40, Luke 23:42,43), and **delivered the Old Testament saints from Sheol to the upper paradise** (Eph. 4:9,10,8). This last scripture seems to indicate that a change took place in the world of spirits, and that **the place where the righteous await their resurrection is now located in the heavenlies** (Eph. 4:8; 2 Cor 12:2). Since then the spirits of the righteous go up to glory and the spirits of the wicked go down to condemnation (Rev. 20:13,14).

It should be carefully noted that the righteous do not enter into their final reward, nor the wicked into their final punishment, until after their respective resurrections. Both classes are in an intermediate state, awaiting that event. **Departed Christians go to be "with the Lord"**. (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor 5: 8), but do not receive their final reward [yet].

The penitent thief accompanied Jesus into Abraham's bosom, while the other thief went into the tormenting part of Sheol. "There was a place called Abraham's bosom where the righteous went in waiting for the time when Jesus would come to pay the price for the sins of the world so that all their sins could be forgiven and they could then be ushered into the kingdom of heaven." The thief on one side who accepted Jesus, the Word of God, went to heaven, while the thief on the other side of Jesus did not. **The Word of God, Jesus, divides people into two groups: Those going to heaven and those going to hell.**

3. "WOMAN, BEHOLD YOUR SON!" JOHN 19:26-27

Jesus **entrusted His mother to the care of the Beloved Disciple**--John, when He said to the disciple, "Behold your Mother" (**verse 27**). Christ showed His thoughtfulness toward His mother. Christ with all his huge ambitions for us in things spiritual, nonetheless put first the duties of the home. God commands us in one of the ten commandments to **"honor your father and your mother"** (**Ex. 20:12, Deut 5:16**). There are many ways we can honor them, including providing for them economically when they get old. In **Matt. 15:1-9** Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and scribes for being hypocrites: They thought they were pleasing God by giving Him their money that could have helped their needy parents (**verse 5**).

On the other hand, Jesus would say on occasions that **homely duties would have to give**

way for spiritual matters:

Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to **set a man against his father**, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. **He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me**, and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of Me. (Matt. 10:34-37)

Jesus is saying that **sometimes father and mother, wife and child, have to be left in order to fully serve Him and glorify God.**

Jesus lived in perfect balance between these two principles. Although His heart's desire was the dream of saving a whole world, He Himself worked on for years and years in the workshop in Nazareth putting through the ordinary duties of a village carpenter--until the fullness of time came. **Luke 2:41-52** tells that when Jesus was 12, He was in the temple going about His Father's business while his parents were frantically searching for Him after the Feast of Passover. His parents did not understand His response to them, but "**Jesus continued in subjection to His parents**" (verse 51). "Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (verse 52). **Jesus needed to deal with His parents in wisdom.** God will require divisions to come in our families, but we need wisdom to deal with our parents. **We need to have a proper balance, not neglecting our family, but keeping God first.** **Acts 4:18-20** says that Peter and John were told by the authorities not to preach in the name of Jesus; however, they replied that **they must obey God rather than men.**

At 12 noon (after Jesus made His first three statements), "**darkness fell over the whole land until 3 p.m.**" (Mark 12:33). This was not an eclipse. The moon is full as always at the Passover; it is faintly visible far to the right on the horizon. The sun is directly above and disappearing.

4. "WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" MATT. 27:46, MARK 15:34

Jesus is not only expressing his feelings of abandonment by God, but also of **loneliness and perplexity over the betrayal, the desertion, and the cross.** When Pilate held up Jesus before the crowd and asked, "what should we do with this man?", there was not one cry to release Him (according to the Bible's account). The crowd shouted, "crucify him, crucify him." "Jesus had healed many of them in that crowd. He had fed them. They had all come out to hear him at one time. They had been blessed by Him. They had sat at His feet and knew that what He had said was true." Part of the agony of the cross was knowing that He had helped and healed many of the people and seeing them turn on Him and be silent in the face of accusers. No one can say with dogmatic assurance what Jesus meant when he quoted **Ps. 22:1** at about 3 p.m. "I don't think we'll ever understand, until we get to heaven, fully what happened in that moment of time when Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'"

"Jesus had never, at one time in His life, been separated from God. You can go back to the book of Genesis and realize in **Gen. 1:26** when God had created the heavens and the earth **God said**, "Let **US** make man in **OUR** image." This "US" refers to the plural personality of the one God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (**Matt. 28:19**). **Deut. 6:4** says, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord is **our** God,

the Lord is one." Myer Pearlman states:

From the fact that the word "our God" is in the **plural (Elohim)**, we conclude that a **compound unity** may be inferred. **The doctrine of the Trinity teaches...** The Divine Unity is a **compound unity [not an absolute unity]**, and that in this unity there are really **Three distinct Persons, every One of whom is the Godhead**, and yet is supremely conscious of the other Two. So we see that there was an Eternal Fellowship before any finite creatures were created.

There was not a moment in all of eternity when Jesus had broken fellowship with God. **What was it that caused God to turn His back on Jesus** for a brief time on the cross?

"God gathered the accumulated sins of men and placed it upon Jesus", which caused Jesus to cry out to God, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" **Is. 53:4-6** prophesies of Jesus' suffering and taking upon Himself our sins and iniquities. **2 Cor. 5:21** says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf." **I Pet. 2:24** says, **"He Himself bore our sins in his body on the cross."** Maret Dinsmore says of this moment:

It is the only time in all eternity when one member of the Godhead is separated from the others. The Son has become sin, and sin is intolerable to God. God is light (**I John 1:5**) and a natural consequence, therefore, of the Father's turning from the Son resulted in darkness at noonday.

Hab. 1:13 says, "Thine eyes are too pure to approve [look at] evil." Therefore, God turned His "face" from Jesus Who had become sin.

Many people feel forsaken by God because of their sin. "Your sins have made a separation between you and your God" (**Is. 59:2**). Sin causes a separation from God. Jesus took upon our punishment as a substitute as he took upon our sins on the cross. **1 Pet 3:18** says, "Christ also **died for sins** once for all, the just for the unjust, **in order to bring us to God.**" **2 Cor. 5:21** says, "He made Him who knew no sin **to be sin** on our behalf, **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** **I Pet 2:24** says, "He Himself bore our sin in His body on the cross, **that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.**" **"He did not do that just so that we could honor it at Christmas and Easter.** He took upon Himself the horrors and the agonies of not only physical death but the burying of sin **so that you and I could be set free from all the power of it and not live under sin's power anymore.** Praise God."

5. "I AM THIRSTY" JOHN 19:28

As Jesus struggled to endure, His tissues became dehydrated. The prophetic **22nd Psalm** says in verse **14 and 15**, "I am poured out like water... And My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and **my tongue cleaves to my jaw.**" It was characteristic of our Lord that only after he had arranged matters for His mother and looked out for the needs of others could he entertain a thought of His own desperate need. His nature was such that **He always was thinking about others before Himself.** This is the essence of Christlikeness that all believers should follow.

As someone heard Jesus' cry for relief from His sufferings, **a sponge full of vinegar, (or**

sour wine) upon a reed was held to the Lord's parched and dying lips. This was a fulfillment of **Ps. 69:21**, "They also gave me gall for my food, and my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Such wine was supplied for the use of the crucified, supposedly to **deadens the pain**, according to Jewish sources. **Whether the drink was given out of kindness or out of mockery and cruelty, no one can say for sure**; but, **apparently He did not take it** (according to most scholars). On the other hand, A. R. Fausset believes that **Jesus drank the vinegar** the second time it was offered since it was unmixed:

Twice vinegar was offered to the Savior on the cross--first vinegar mixed with gall (**Matt. 27:34**), and myrrh (**Mark 15:23**); but when He had tasted it, He would not drink it; for He would not meet His sufferings in a state of **stupefaction**, which is **the effect of myrrh**. As given to criminals, it was a kindness; as given to the righteous Sin-bearer, it was an insult. Next, in order to fulfill the Scripture, He cried 'I thirst,' and **vinegar was given Him to drink** (**John 19:28, Matt. 27:48**).

Jesus' cry, "I am thirsty," seems ironic from one who claimed that **"he who believes in Me shall never thirst"** (**John 6:35**) and that **"the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life"** (**John 4:14**). Jesus does give us that living water; but, to secure it for us, He Himself had to pass through "a dry and weary land where there is no water" (**Ps. 63:1**).

Jesus is the bread and water of life (**John 6:35**). Water is a symbol in the Old Testament of the **satisfaction of man's highest need**. He is as necessary to us as our food. When people feel forsaken by God because of their sin, they "thirst." **There is an end to craving and discontentment in Jesus**. People are always hungering and thirsting for something more and are never at peace and satisfied. Real purpose and meaning in life comes in believing and committing yourself to Jesus. All that Jesus is in Himself and His messages, gives life and sustains life in such abundance that **no unsatisfied desire remains to frustrate the believer** (**John 4:14**).

Whoever lives with Christ and in Christ, has an inexhaustible spring of water in his heart. He has a peace that passes understanding, a joy deeper than any other, a life far more abundant than anyone else can know, and a power that can meet every call upon it. **The living water is a gift of God that is eternal and true and having spontaneous energy**. The gift of God is Jesus Christ, and His gift to us is the Holy Spirit which is creative and energizing.

6. "IT IS FINISHED" JOHN 19:30

As Jesus was close to death, the people thought the last chance and hope for the world was gone. However, **Christ died with the shout of a conqueror**, still full of faith, trusting God. Jesus asserted that what God had asked of Him had been accomplished. He said, "it is finished," not just to imply in an exacerbated tone that He was through with what He had to endure. **Jesus had accomplished at least four things**, as implied by His statements.

First, all prophecies concerning the LIVING Christ were fulfilled when Jesus "committed His Spirit into His Father's hands" (**Ps. 31:5/Luke 23:46**). Later, several other prophecies were fulfilled pertaining to Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. Floyd Hamilton writes, "Canon Liddon is authority for the statement that **there are in the Old Testament**

332 distinct predictions which were literally fulfilled in Christ." Out of over 300 references to the Messiah, **at least 68 are major prophecies.** Josh McDowell states of these, **at least "29 prophecies** from the Old Testament, which speak of the betrayal, trial, death, and burial of our Lord Jesus Christ, were spoken at various times by many different voices during the five centuries from 1000-500 B.C., and yet all of them **were fulfilled in Jesus in one 24-hour period of time."** In addition to **450 B.C.** being the historic date for the completion of the Old Testament, the **Septuagint** (Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) was **initiated in 250 B.C.** under the reign of **King Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.).** Therefore, **the Septuagint document alone shows that all the prophecies were written at least 250 years before the birth of Christ.**

Was the fulfillment of all these prophecies a coincidence? Were they deliberately achieved through human manipulation? Although Jesus was conscious of fulfilling many of the prophecies, **many others were totally beyond Jesus' human control,** such as: Place of birth (**Micah 5:2**), Manner of birth (**Is. 7:14**), Heritage, Manner of death (**Ps. 22:16**), Piercing, etc. **Professor Peter W. Stoner used the mathematical law of compound probability to calculate the chances of one man in history fulfilling these prophecies.** Professor Stoner reported his calculations in his book, **Science Speaks.** In the forward of this book, H. Harold Hartzler, of the American Scientific Affiliation, writes:

The manuscript for **Science Speaks** has been **carefully reviewed by a committee** of the American Scientific Affiliation members and by the Executive Council of the same group and has been found, in general, to be **dependable** and **accurate** in regard to scientific material presented. The mathematical analysis included is based upon principles of probability which are **thoroughly sound** and Professor Stoner has applied these principles in a **proper and convincing way.**

Peter Stoner considered the probabilities of fulfilling eight particular prophecies including:

1. Birth at Bethlehem (Micah 5:2/Matt. 2:1).
2. Preceded by a messenger (Mal. 3:1/Matt. 3:1-2).
3. Enter Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech. 9:9/Luke 19:35-37).
4. Betrayed by a friend (Ps. 41:9/Matt. 10:4) and hands and feet pierced (Ps. 22:16/Luke 23:33).
5. Sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12/Matt. 26:15)
6. Money to be thrown in God's House (Zech. 11:13/Matt. 27:5) and price given for potter's field (Zech. 11:13/Matt. 27:7).
7. Didn't answer His accusers (Is. 53:7/Matt. 27:12).
8. Hands and feet pierced (Ps. 22:16/Luke 23:33) and crucified with thieves (Is. 53:12/Matt. 27:38).

Peter Stoner states:

We find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and **fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th power.** [To illustrate this number (1 followed by 17 zeroes)] we take 10 to the 17th silver dollars and lay them on the face of **Texas. They will cover all the state two feet deep.** Now **mark one** of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. **Blindfold a man** and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must **pick**

up one silver dollar and say this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these **eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time**, providing that they wrote them in their own wisdom.

Furthermore, considering **16 particular prophecies**, Professor Stoner calculated that the odds of a person fulfilling them is **1 in 10 to the 45th power**. This number is about the size of a **stellar ball**, filled with silver dollars, with diameter **20 times the distance** as that between the Earth and the sun (93 million miles). Moreover, Stoner says, "we find the chance that any man fulfilled **all 48 [particular] prophecies to be 1 in 10 to the 157th power**." There are approximately **1.6 x 10 to the 46th power of electrons in one cubic inch**; yet, 10 to the 157th power electrons would fill an **inconceivable amount of galaxies**.

Th. M. Bruce Wilkinson describes the different types of prophecies found in Psalms. These types of prophecies are also found throughout the Old Testament:

Many of the Psalms specifically anticipated the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the One who came centuries later as the promised Messiah ("Anointed One"). There are **five different kinds of messianic psalms**:

(1) **Typical Messianic**. The subject of the psalm is in some respect a type of Christ (see 34:20; 64:4,9).

(2) **Typical Prophetic**. The psalmist uses language to describe his present experience, which points beyond his own life and becomes historically true only in Christ (see 22).

(3) **Indirectly Messianic**. At the time of composition the psalm refers to a king or the house of David in general, but awaits final fulfillment in Christ (see 2; 45; 72).

(4) **Purely Prophetic**. Refers solely to Christ without reference to any other son of David (see 110).

(5) **Enthronement**. Anticipates the coming of Yahweh and the consummation of His Kingdom, and will be fulfilled in the person of Christ (see 96-99).

Second, "the endless sacrifices [of animals for sins] each day, year after year, had ended." Maret Dinsmore writes:

Under the law no sin was ever forgiven in the New Testament sense of forgiveness. **Sins were merely covered by animal blood**. The innocent blood of the slain lamb would allow God to **pass over the sin** without executing judgment until, in the fullness of time, **the precious blood of Jesus Christ would wash them away forever (Heb. 10:4-14)**.

In the beginning of time, God instituted that the **shedding of blood** of pure, undefiled animals **would cover man's sin** and restore him to a right relationship with God (**Lev. 17:11**). Just as the innocent **animals' blood was free from a nature bent toward sin**, so was the blood of the "Lamb of God." **Jesus' blood line came from His sinless Father**, since Jesus was born of the virgin Mary who was impregnated by the Holy Spirit. **Jesus was without sin (Heb. 4:15) and became a perfect sacrifice (Heb. 9:13-14) for all of time--past, present, and future (Heb. 10:12)**. Jesus'

death was the **final sacrifice**.

Third, Jesus' perfect obedience to His Father was finished. "He obeyed every word and purpose of His Father... Going to [His] deathbed knowing that there was nothing that [He] was suppose to do that [He] didn't do." The Apostle Paul had a similar attitude in **2 Tim. 4:7**, "I have fought the good fight, **I have finished the course**. I have kept the faith." He further says in **Acts 20:24**, "I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, **in order that I may finish my course**, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God." King David is also known to have completed the full purposes of God for his life. Similarly, God has a purpose, destiny, and course for us to travel. **Ps. 37:5, 23** says, "**commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him and He will do it...** The steps of a man are established by the Lord; And He delights in his way." **We need to find the will of God for our lives' and "fling" ourselves into it, trusting God to help us and guide us.** As a result, we can be like Christ, who was perfectly obedient to His Father.

Fourth, "when Jesus said 'It is finished', He said that **the power of Satan is broken...** There is no reason why any man or any woman has to live under the **power of sin** and Satan." Jesus literally cancelled our debt of sin and nailed them to the cross, as explained by Kenneth N. Taylor in **The Living Bible**:

God blotted out the charges proved against you, the list of His commandments which you had not obeyed. He took this list of sins and **destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross**. In this way **God took away Satan's power to accuse you of sin**, and **God openly displayed to the whole world Christ's triumph** at the cross where your sins were all taken away. (**Col. 2:14-15**)

I John 3:8 says, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose that He might **destroy the works of the devil**." **Jesus destroyed the power of sin over believers in Christ**. **1 Pet. 2:24** says that Jesus died so "**that we might die to sin and live to righteousness**."

Jesus died so that "**He might render powerless him who had the power of death**, that is the devil" (**Heb. 2:14**). Jesus went down to the pit of hell, but three days later He exploded out with the keys of death and hell and **let the devil know he was finished**. Jesus said in **Rev. 1:18**, "I was dead and behold, I am alive forever more, and **I have the keys of death and of Hades**." "Our Savior Christ Jesus **abolished death**, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (**2 Tim. 1:10**). Jesus is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (**1 Tim. 6:15**).

Rom. 10:9 says, "if you **confess** with your mouth **Jesus as Lord**, and **believe** in your heart that **God raised Him from the dead**, you shall be **saved**." By believing in the historical fact of Christ's resurrection, then the same Spirit that raised Him from the dead will dwell in your mortal body and quicken you, (i.e. make you alive). The Spirit of God will come in and destroy the power of sin, just as He broke the power of sin and death in raising Jesus. If the repentant thief would have gotten off the cross, he probably would not have just rested in his salvation and **gone back to steal with his old thief friends**. Instead, he would probably have been a **replacement for Judas** and "kicked in the gates of hell."

7. "INTO THY HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT" LUKE 23:46

Luke 23:46 says, "And Jesus crying out with a **loud voice**, said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit.' And having said this, He breathed His last." Jesus was crucified at 9 a.m. and died just after 3 p.m., for a total of about **six hours on the cross**. The early church Fathers claimed that the **loud voice** Jesus gave, was evidence of the fact that **Jesus died quite voluntarily** "breathing forth His spirit" by a free act of His own will (**John 10:17-18**). Therefore, Jesus was more than just a martyr, because He did not give His life unwillingly, but willingly. Jesus' loud cry was really "a great shout"--not a cry of despair or relief or the broken body's last expiring protest against pain, but the shout of a victor. **Jesus did not die in despair, but in triumph.**

Jesus committed His human spirit into God's hands. Maret H. Dinsmore states, "Jesus was put to death in the flesh, that is His **physical body (Matt. 27:50)** was separated from His human **soul (John 12:27)** and human **spirit (Luke 33:46)**. Jesus' human spirit was energized by the Holy Spirit throughout His ministry.

As sun light returned to Jerusalem, "behold, **the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom**, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split" (**Matt. 27:51**). John B. Graybill states:

Between the *Hekhal* [Holy Place] and the *Devir* or the Most Holy Place hung **two curtains**, with **eighteen inches** (forty-six cm.) **space between them**. On the Day of Atonement the high priest entered the *Devir* with his censer by going to the south side, passing between the curtains to the north side and thus emerging into the Most Holy Place. **The Gospels refer to these as one veil**, which was torn in two at the time of Jesus' crucifixion (Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).

Westerholm documents:

According to Mish. *Yoma* v.1 (cf. *Middoth* iv.7) two curtains a cubit apart from each other separated the nave from the holy of holies. The "**veil**" is described in Mish. *Shekalim* viii.5 as being **one handbreadth thick**, and measuring **40 cubits by 20**.

E. M. Cook states that the word for cubit originally meant the "length from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger." A **cubit** was approximately equivalent to **18 inches** and a **handbreadth** was approximately equivalent to **3 inches**. According to the research, the veil had two curtains, each approximately **60 feet high, and 30 feet wide, and 3 inches thick**. **The veil separated the Holy of Holies** from the rest of the temple. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, the presence of God, once a year. Maret Dinsmore explains:

On the **day of atonement** the High Priest went behind the veil with blood for his own sins and for the sins of the people. Around his garment were **rows of tinkling bells**. Around his waist there was a **cord** which extended outside the veil. The people were silent, listening for the bells. **If the bells failed to tinkle**, they would draw the priest out by the cord. He would be dead.

The Old Testament had man attempting to approach the presence of God. In the New Testament we have **God approaching man**. With Christ's substitutionary

death accomplished, "there is no more offering for sin" (**Heb. 10:18**). We are now bidden to **come boldly to the throne of grace** for mercy. Not through the blood of bulls and goats which could never [fully] take away sins, **but by the precious blood of Jesus**.

Christ's death made it possible for people to have direct access to God. Kenneth Hagin states that the veil was torn from **top to bottom**, signifying "that **it was God who tore down the curtain--the barrier--separating man from God!** The presence of God moved out of that man-made Holy of Holies never to dwell there again. Now His divine presence indwells us" (**2 Cor. 6:16**).

God has provided a way for you to know Him and live for Him. **1 Pet. 3:18** says that **Christ died to "bring us to God."** **Into whose hands will you commit your spirit?**



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