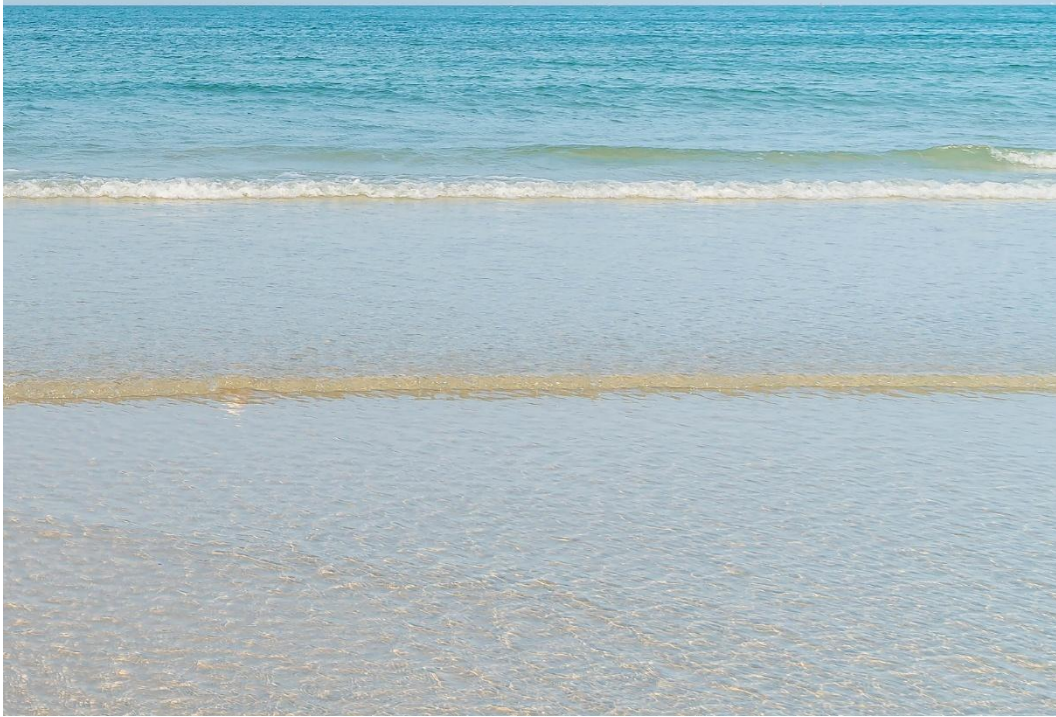


The Cross

The *Story*
of the last *24 Hours*



Special Note:

*So many have **heard OF Jesus and the Cross!***

*It is the **single Greatest event** in History.*

*Do you know the **details** of what **ACTUALLY Happened?***

*This is our **LONGEST** booklet because we are combining
all four Gospels into one seamless story.*

*All of the **other** booklets are **5-9 pages** and only take
5-10 minutes to read.*



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The Cross

When the **hour finally came**, **Jesus knew** it. Everything He had ever done—every miracle, every sermon, every answered prayer—had been **leading** to this **moment**.

John 13:1 “It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He now showed them the full extent of His love.”

That’s what this moment was about - the full extent of His love. It **wasn’t** an **accident**. It **wasn’t** a **tragedy**. It **was** the **completion** of the **plan** God had set in motion before time began.

The Shadow of the Cross

All through His life, Jesus had lived with the shadow of the Cross before Him. Every **lamb slain** in every temple sacrifice, every **Passover meal** eaten for 1,500 years, every **prophecy** pointing toward a Messiah—all of it was converging into this 24-hour period.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem that final week, He walked straight into the center of the Father’s plan. He told His disciples,

*“The **hour** has **come** for the Son of Man to be glorified.”*

Glorified—what a word. To the **human** mind, glory means fame, applause, and success. But to **God**, glory means obedience. It means the Cross.

The Final Supper

The night of the Last Supper was **tense**, **sacred**, and deeply **symbolic**. The disciples thought it was another Passover, but it was more than that—it was the **final** Passover, the **fulfillment** of every one that had come before.

*Luke 22:15 “And He said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you **before** I suffer.’”*

Every word He spoke that night was **charged** with **eternity**. As they gathered in the upper room, they were part of a ritual that had been **practiced** since the **days** of **Moses**: the eating of the lamb, the unleavened bread, the cup of wine, and the bitter herbs. But this time, something was **different**.

Jesus took the bread, broke it, and said,

“This is My body, which is given for you.”

Then He took the cup, saying,

*“This is the new covenant in My blood,
which is poured out for many.”*

Those words **shattered** the **old order**.

He was declaring that from **this moment forward**, **no** more lambs would die, **no** more priests would mediate, **no** more blood of bulls and goats would cover sin.

From this point forward, He was the Lamb. He was the Priest. He was the sacrifice.

Love and Betrayal

The Last Supper was also a room full of **contradictions**.

Love and **betrayal** sat at the same table.

Worship and **pride** shared the same meal.

Jesus **washed** the disciples' **feet**—every one of them—**including Judas**. He knew what Judas was going to do. He had known all along. And **yet** He **knelt** down and washed his feet.

Think about that. The **Creator** of the **universe** **knelt down** and washed the dirt off the feet of the man who was about to sell Him for the price of a slave.

Then He said the words that must have chilled the air:

“One of you will betray Me.”

John 13 tells us that Judas dipped his bread into the same bowl with Jesus—an **act** of **friendship**—and then went out into the night. The Bible says simply,

“And it was night.”

Those four words are some of the most haunting in Scripture.

They weren't just about the time of day.

They were about the state of the world.

It was night in **Jerusalem**.

It was night in **Judas's heart**.

It was night in **humanity**.

Peter's Boast

After Judas left, Jesus turned to Peter. He told him,

“Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.”

And Peter said what **we all** would **say**:

“Even if all fall away on account of You, I never will.”

Peter **meant** it. He **loved** Jesus. He was **sincere**. But **sincerity isn't enough** when fear comes. Jesus looked at him with compassion and said,

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail.”

Even here—on the **eve** of His **own suffering**—Jesus was **interceding** for His **friends**. He was praying for Peter's faith to survive his failure.

The Song of the Lamb

*Matthew 26:30 “When they had sung a **hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”*

That little verse is breathtaking. They sang a hymn. **What** hymn?

Jewish Passover tradition tells us what it was—the Hallel, a collection of Psalms (113–118) sung at every Passover.

These are songs of praise, songs about deliverance and the steadfast love of God. Imagine it.

Jesus, **knowing** He was about to be **betrayed, arrested, beaten, and crucified**, was **singing**:

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His mercy endures forever.” “The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation.” “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

He was **singing** about **Himself**.

While Judas gathered **soldiers**, while **Peter swore** his **loyalty**, while the **devil prepared** his **trap**—Jesus **sang**.

He sang of mercy, victory, and deliverance.

He sang **because** He **knew** something the others didn't know: that the Cross was **not** defeat—it was **destiny**.

It was the **doorway** through which glory would come.

The Mount of Olives

Then they went out to the Mount of Olives.

*Luke 22:39 “Jesus went out as **usual** to the Mount of Olives, and His disciples followed Him.”*

“As *usual*.” Those words are beautiful. It means that even in the face of death, Jesus stayed faithful to His **pattern** of **prayer**. It was His **habit**. His **rhythm**. His **place** of **intimacy** with the Father.

Gethsemane was a **familiar garden**—an olive press. And that’s exactly what it would become for Him—a place of **crushing**.

The Mount of Olives was the **most valuable** piece of **real estate** in Jerusalem, like owning a park in the middle of a modern city. Someone **wealthy** had given Jesus’ access to this garden long ago—a place where He could **rest**, **pray**, and **meet** with His disciples. It had become so much His **second home** that **Judas knew exactly** where to find Him later that night.

And **as** He **walked** there, He **knew** what was **coming**. He knew **who** was coming. But He **went anyway**.

The Shadow Deepens

The **disciples didn’t understand** any of it yet. They were **still arguing** about who was the greatest. They were still thinking about crowns instead of crosses.

But **Jesus** was **focused**. He could **feel** the **weight** of what was coming. The Lamb of God was **walking** toward His **altar**. The Son of Man was walking toward His judgment. The world was about to change forever. As He stepped into the garden, He stepped into the **beginning of His final agony**.

Gethsemane: The Crushing of the Olive Press

The Weight of the World

*Matthew 26:36–38 “Then Jesus went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to them, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with Him, and He began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then He said to them, ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the **point of death**. Stay here and keep watch with Me.’”*

Think about that— “to the **point of death**.”

This is the Son of God, who had **never exaggerated once** in His life. If He said His soul was overwhelmed to the point of death, it meant exactly that. He was **dying** from the inside out.

*Luke 22:44 “Being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was like **drops of blood** falling to the ground.”*

That is a **real medical condition** called **hematidrosis** — the bursting of tiny capillaries under extreme emotional distress, causing blood to mingle with sweat. It happens when someone **experiences unbearable psychological** pressure, such as facing death or terror beyond human endurance.

Doctors have **documented** it in victims awaiting execution or soldiers before battle. The **skin** becomes **tender** and **fragile**, like parchment. The body’s stress response is so intense that the person literally sweats blood.

Jesus wasn’t afraid of dying. He was **facing something infinitely worse**. He was about to **drink the cup of God’s wrath** — the total, **unfiltered judgment of every sin** that had **ever** been **committed**.

The Cup

When Jesus said, “*Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me,*”

He **wasn’t** begging for mercy. He wasn’t afraid of nails, whips or thorns. The “cup” in **Scripture** **always represents** the **wrath** of God against sin.

Psalm 75:8 “In the hand of the Lord is a cup full of foaming wine mixed with spices; He pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth drink it down to its very dregs.”

That’s the cup Jesus was referring to — the cup filled with every **sin**, every **rebellion**, every **blasphemy**, every **act of cruelty**, every **betrayal**, every **murder**, every **rape**, every **lie**, every **perversion**, every **selfish thought** ever committed by humanity.

He wasn’t recoiling from pain; He was **recoiling from becoming sin**. The Holy One, who had **never known** even a **whisper of corruption**, was about to become the **embodiment of everything evil** — for **us**.

The Battle for Obedience

Jesus fell on His face in the dirt and prayed,

“Yet not as I will, but as You will.”

Those are the **most powerful words** ever **spoken** on this planet. **That’s** where **salvation** happened — not first on the Cross, but here, in Gethsemane. Before the nails, before the whip, before the crown of thorns, the victory was won in the garden.

Because **this** is **where** Jesus **surrendered completely** to the Father’s will.

The Angel’s Strength

Luke adds a fascinating detail:

“An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him.”

That doesn’t mean the angel comforted Him emotionally — it means the angel **literally strengthened** His body so He **wouldn’t die** before the Cross. The stress, the blood loss, the emotional agony — it was **already killing Him**. He was on the verge of **physical collapse**. But He **had** to **make** it to the Cross.

So **heaven intervened**—not to stop the suffering, but to sustain Him through it.

The Arrival of the Mob

And then the **stillness shattered**. **Torches flared** at the edge of the garden. The sound of **footsteps** and **metal** on **stone echoed** through the night. A mob of soldiers and temple guards approached, led by Judas.

He walked straight up to Jesus and **kissed** Him. That’s how you **identified** someone for **arrest** in those days — with a kiss.

Jesus said,

“Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

Even now, His tone wasn’t angry — it was **sorrowful**.

It was the voice of a man who loved the one betraying Him.

“I Am He.”

John’s Gospel records something the others don’t. When the soldiers asked, “Are you Jesus of Nazareth?” Jesus answered, “*I am He.*”

But in the **Greek**, He **didn’t** actually say the word “**He**.”

He said “*Ego eimi*” — “**I AM.**” The divine name of God, the same words He had spoken to Moses at the burning bush: “*I AM WHO I AM.*”

When He said those words, the **power** of **His identity** burst forth.

*John 18:6 “When Jesus said, ‘I AM,’
they drew back and fell to the ground.”*

An entire detachment of soldiers **hit** the **ground** at the sound of His voice. Even in that moment, Jesus was **showing** them that He **wasn’t** being **overpowered**; He was **surrendering**. They couldn’t take Him unless He let them.

The Sword and the Ear

As the soldiers recovered and grabbed Him, **Peter reacted** the only way he knew how. He pulled out his sword and swung wildly, slicing off the ear of the high priest’s servant, Malchus.

Jesus immediately said, “*Put your sword away!*

Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?”

Then He reached out, **touched** the man’s ear, and **healed** him. Think of that: His **last** miracle before the Cross was to heal the ear of an **enemy arresting** Him. The **same hands** that would soon be **nailed to wood** were **still healing**. Even in betrayal, even in arrest, **love** was **still** His **reflex**.

The Disciples Scatter

The soldiers bound Jesus and led Him away. And just **like He said** they would, every disciple scattered. Peter followed at a distance — close enough to see, but far enough to stay safe.

And Jesus, bound and beaten, was taken first to **Annas**, the **former** high priest and the **real power** behind the **priesthood**. He was the “**godfather**” of the religious establishment — **wealthy**, **manipulative**, **feared** by all.

The priests wanted Jesus dead, but they had a **problem**: the **Roman law forbade** executions without Roman approval. They had to **find a charge** that would **stick** both in **their** courts and in **Rome's**. They needed Him convicted of blasphemy before **dawn**, then of **treason** before **noon**.

The Trial Before Annas

John 18:12–14 “They bound Him and brought Him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year.”

Annas questioned Jesus about His teaching and His disciples. But Jesus **refused to defend** Himself.

He said, *“I have spoken openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. Why question Me? Ask those who heard Me. Surely, they know what I said.”*

Then one of the officials **struck** Him in the face and said,

“Is that any way to answer the high priest?”

Jesus replied calmly, *“If I said something wrong, testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike Me?”*

No **anger**. No **fear**. Just **dignity**. Truth in flesh.

The **One** who **created** that **soldier's arm stood still** as it **hit** Him.

The Transfer to Caiaphas

Annas sent Him to Caiaphas, the acting high priest — his son-in-law — for a **formal** trial. By now it was between 1am and 2am in the morning. **Every law of justice** was about to be **broken**.

Jewish legal codes were designed to **protect** the **accused**. In capital cases, **no trials** could take place at **night**. **No one** could be **tried** without **formal charges**. The **accused** could **not** be **forced** to **testify**. And **at least 24 hours** had to **pass** between **conviction** and **sentencing** to allow for prayer and fasting.

They **broke all** of it. In **every possible** way, the trial of Jesus was a **legal farce**. And yet, it **fulfilled prophecy perfectly**.

The False Witnesses

*Mark 14:55 “The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were **looking** for **evidence** against Jesus so that they could put Him to death, but they did not find any.”*

They began **searching** the **crowd** for witnesses. They couldn't find two who agreed. Finally, a few stepped forward and said,

“We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days build another.’”

But even **their testimonies didn't match**. They were **quoting** Him **wrong**. Jesus hadn't said He would destroy the temple — He had said,

“Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

He was talking about **His body**, not the **building**.

But the priests **twisted** His words and called it **blasphemy**.

The High Priest's Rage

Caiaphas was furious. He stood up and shouted,

“Aren't You going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against You?”

But Jesus remained **silent**. Then Caiaphas **played** his **last card**.

*Matthew 26:63 “The high priest said to Him, ‘I **charge** You under oath by the living God: **Tell us** if You are the Christ, the Son of God.’”*

And Jesus said two words that **shook eternity**: “I AM.”

Then He **added**,

*“And you will **see** the **Son of Man sitting** at the right hand of **Power**, and **coming** on the **clouds** of heaven.”*

With those words, **Caiaphas exploded**. He tore his robes — a **direct violation** of Leviticus 21:10, which **forbade** the **high priest** from **ever** tearing his garments, because those garments symbolized the authority and anointing of God.

When Caiaphas ripped his robes, he was **tearing away** his **own authority**. The priesthood of **man** was **ending**. The **priesthood** of **Christ** was **beginning**. From that moment on, there would **never again** be a **human mediator** between God and man. There would **only** be **Jesus** — the true High Priest, whose robe would never be torn.

The Beating

The trial **dissolved** into **chaos**. Mark 14:65 *“Then some began to spit at Him; they blindfolded Him, struck Him with their fists, and said, ‘Prophesy!’ And the guards took Him and beat Him.”*

They mocked the very One who held their breath in His hands. They **blindfolded** Him so He **couldn’t brace** for the blows. **Each punch** landed with **full force** — bone against bone, muscle against face. When a man is **blindfolded** and struck, he **can’t roll** with the **punch** — he takes the **entire impact**. Every strike ripped His skin, bruised His face, and shattered His jaw. Isaiah 50:6 *“I offered My back to those who beat Me, My cheeks to those who pulled out My beard; I did **not hide My face** from **mocking** and **spitting**.”*

Peter’s Denial

While all this was happening inside, Peter was outside in the courtyard. A servant girl saw him and said, *“You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus.”* Peter denied it, *“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”*

A few minutes later, another servant girl saw him and said to those standing nearby, *“This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.”*

Again, he denied it with an oath. Finally, some bystanders said, *“Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.”*

And Peter called down curses and swore, *“I don’t know the man!”*

Immediately, a rooster crowed. Luke’s Gospel says Jesus turned and **looked straight** at Peter. Their eyes met and Peter remembered. He ran outside and wept bitterly. That was the breaking point. The **bravest** man among them had fallen apart. And Jesus knew. He had told him it would happen — **not to condemn** him, but to **prepare** him for **grace**.

The Dawn

By now, the **eastern** sky was turning **gray**. The priests had their **verdict**. The Sanhedrin **declared** Him **guilty** of **blasphemy** and **worthy** of death. They had **spit** on Him, **mocked** Him, and **beaten** Him nearly **unconscious**. But there was one problem: they didn’t have the authority to execute anyone. So as the sun rose over Jerusalem, they bound Him again and led Him away — first light, first trial over. The priests had done their part. Now they would hand Him over to Rome.

The Second Trial: Illegal Justice

The sun was barely up when they dragged Jesus from Caiaphas's house to the **palace** of the **Roman governor**, Pontius Pilate. It was the early morning hours — cold, gray, and tense. Jerusalem was stirring awake for the Passover, and the priests were already **outside** the governor's **gates**, clutching their robes and **pretending** to be **holy**.

John 18:28 "Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover."

Do you see the **hypocrisy**?

They were **plotting** the **murder** of the **Son of God** — but they **didn't want to step** into a Gentile **building** for fear of being **defiled**. They were **terrified** of being **ceremonially unclean** while **spiritually corrupt**. They wouldn't walk into Pilate's palace — but they would **walk over truth, mercy, and justice** to get what they wanted.

The Governor Who Wanted Nothing to Do with It

Pilate wasn't a **Jew**. He wasn't **religious**. He wasn't even **particularly interested** in Jesus. To him, this was just **another messy case** brought by these fanatical people he despised. But history tells us there was far more going on.

Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea, appointed by Emperor Tiberius. He wasn't there because he was talented or noble — he was there because of politics.

According to the Jewish historian Philo and the Roman historian Josephus, **Pilate owed his position** to a man named **Aelius Sejanus**, a powerful Roman courtier and close advisor to Tiberius. When **Sejanus** was **executed** for treason against the emperor, anyone **connected** to him **fell under suspicion** — including Pilate. His entire career was hanging by a thread. He was **terrified** of being **accused** of **disloyalty**.

Tiberius, meanwhile, was dying of **venereal disease** and **losing his mind**. In his paranoia, he **executed anyone** who seemed **disloyal**. Pilate was stuck in a volatile political climate — hated by the Jews, distrusted by Rome, and terrified for his life.

Pilate's History with the Jews

Pilate had **already had** 3 major **explosive clashes** with the Jewish people. By the time they arrived at his door that morning, Pilate was **walking on eggshells**. He **hated** them — but he **couldn't** afford **another riot**.

The Early Morning Scene

Picture it. Pilate had been **asleep** — probably **after drinking** late into the night. The pounding on his door came around **6 a.m.**

He groaned, rolled over, and shouted, “Tell them to **come back later!**” But his servant whispered nervously, “They **insist** it is **urgent**, Your Excellency. They say they **must** speak to you now.”

When Pilate said, “Then send them in,” his servant **hesitated again**. “Your Excellency... they **refuse** to come inside. They said something about **unclean Gentiles** and Passover.”

Pilate **clenched** his **teeth**. These people who had caused him **endless political grief** were now **demanding** that he go **outside** to meet them — **before breakfast** — because they didn't want to be contaminated by walking on his marble floors.

He muttered curses under his breath and stormed out.

The First Exchange

John 18:29 “So Pilate came out to them and asked, ‘What charges are you bringing against this man?’”

Their answer was **pure arrogance**: “If He were **not** a **criminal**, we would **not** have **handed Him over** to you.”

In other words, “Just trust us — He's guilty.”

Pilate **wasn't having** it. “Take Him yourselves and judge Him by your own law.”

But they shot back, “We have no right to execute anyone.”

That was the point. They needed Rome to kill Him — not just to silence Him, but to make **Him** a **public warning** of anyone who challenges the Priest's power.

Pilate and Jesus

Pilate went back inside, irritated and hungover, and summoned Jesus.
John 18:33 “Are You the King of the Jews?”

Jesus looked at him — **beaten, swollen, bloodied** — and replied,

“Is that your own idea, or did others talk to you about Me?”

That question **stunned** Pilate. **No prisoner** had **ever spoken** to him in this manner — **calmly, intelligently, without fear**.

He snapped back, *“Am I a Jew? Your own people and chief priests handed You over to me. What is it You have done?”*

Jesus said, *“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest. But now My kingdom is from another place.”*

Pilate frowned, trying to make sense of it. *“So You are a king, then?”*

Jesus answered, *“You are right in saying that I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world — to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me.”*

And Pilate — **jaded, cynical, exhausted** — muttered the saddest question in history, because Pilate did not want an answer. *“What is truth?”*

Truth Meets Cynicism

In that moment, **two worlds collided** — the most **powerful government** on earth and the most **powerful truth** in heaven. Pilate was the **face** of Roman power; Jesus was the **face** of eternal authority. One sat in **judgment**; the other stood in **surrender** — and yet, the One **standing** held the **power** to **judge all men**.

And the **truth** was standing **right in front** of Pilate, but he had **long since stopped believing truth** even **existed**. His words — *“What is truth?”* — weren’t an honest question. They were the **sign** of a man who had **given up hope** that **anything pure** could be found in this world.

And yet, Jesus’ eyes — even swollen shut and rimmed with blood — were **full of compassion**. If you’ve ever met someone who **truly loves you**, you can **see** it in **their eyes**.

That’s what Pilate saw. No accusation. No manipulation. Just mercy.

Pilate's Wife

While Pilate was still debating what to do, a messenger ran up with a note. It was from his wife.

Matthew 27:19 "While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: 'Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of Him.'"

At that very moment, Pilate had the **perfect opportunity** to **release** Jesus. He had **found no fault** in Him. His **wife warned** him in **terror**. His **instincts** told him this was **no ordinary** man.

But **hesitation** is the **birthplace** of **compromise**. And in the **time** it took Pilate to **read** that letter, the **priests** had **worked** the **crowd**. They **bribed** people, whispered **threats**, and turned the mob against Jesus.

The Custom of the Prisoner

There was a Passover custom — a Roman political trick — where the governor would **release one prisoner** chosen by the crowd to keep peace during the feast. Pilate thought he'd **found** a way **out**. He brought out the **worst** criminal in his prison — a murderer named Barabbas. Then he stood before the crowd and shouted,

*"Which one do you want me to release to you:
Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"*

He thought the **choice** was **obvious**. Surely, they would choose Jesus. But the priests had already poisoned the mob. The people roared back, "*Barabbas!*"

Pilate's jaw dropped. "*Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?*" They screamed, "*Crucify Him!*"

He said, "Why? What crime has He committed?" But they shouted **louder**, "*Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*"

The crowd was out of control. And Pilate, fearing yet another riot — fearing the emperor's wrath — washed his hands in front of them and said, "*I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your responsibility.*"

And the people answered with words that would echo through history: "*Let His blood be on us and on our children.*"

Barabbas and the Exchange

Then Pilate released Barabbas — a murderer, a rebel, a man who deserved death — and condemned Jesus, the innocent One, to die in his place.

Even in this moment of injustice, God was preaching the **Gospel**. The **guilty** man went **free**. The **innocent** man **took** his **place**. The Son of the Father — **Bar-Abbas** literally means “**son of the father**” — was **released** because the **true Son** of the Father was **condemned**.

It was **substitution** in its **purest** form. That’s the **Cross** in **miniature**: the innocent dying for the guilty so the guilty could live as sons and daughters of God.

And as the crowd chanted, as Pilate **caved**, as soldiers prepared the whips — the plan of redemption moved forward. The **Judge** of **all creation** had **allowed Himself** to be **judged** by **men**. And by that very injustice, He was bringing justice to the world.

Pilate and Herod: The Politics of Cowardice

By the time dawn broke fully over Jerusalem, Jesus had already endured **two trials** — one before **Annas**, and another before **Caiaphas** and the Sanhedrin. **Both** were **illegal**, and both ended the same way: the priests declared Him guilty of blasphemy.

Now Jesus is in his **third** trial in a few hours.

Then someone **mentioned** a **detail** that gave Pilate an **out**. They said Jesus was from Galilee. And Galilee was under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas.

Luke 23:6–7 “On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.”

Pilate’s **relief** was **instant**.

“Send Him to Herod,” he said. “Let him deal with it.”

He thought he’d just **passed** the **problem** off to someone else. But God had other plans.

Herod Antipas — The King Who Wanted a Show

Herod Antipas was the **son** of Herod the **Great** — the **same** Herod who had **slaughtered** the **infants** of Bethlehem. **This** Herod had inherited his father's **cunning** but **none** of his **strength**. He was a **weak** man with a **strong ego**. A **puppet ruler** under Rome. A man who spent his life throwing **parties** and **chasing pleasure**.

This was the man who had imprisoned John the Baptist for rebuking his adulterous affair with his brother's wife, Herodias. And it was Herodias's daughter — dancing at one of his drunken banquets — who had asked for John's head on a platter.

So when Herod heard Jesus was coming, Luke 23:8 says,

*“When Herod saw Jesus, he was **greatly pleased**, because for a long time he had been wanting to see Him. From what he had heard about Him; he hoped to see Him **perform** some **miracle**.”*

Herod wasn't interested in truth. He wanted **entertainment**. He wanted Jesus to do a trick. This was trial # 4

The Mockery of the King

Luke 23:9–11 continues:

“He plied Him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing Him.

Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked Him. Dressing Him in an elegant robe, they sent Him back to Pilate.”

Herod **wanted** a show; Jesus gave him **silence**. That **silence infuriated** him. So, they **mocked** Him. They dressed Him in a bright robe — a **parody** of **royalty**. They slapped Him, laughed at Him, and sent Him back to Pilate.

It was one of the **ugliest** moments in history: the **Son of God**, standing before a **petty, drunken ruler**, silent while **heaven wept**.

Isaiah had seen it 700 years earlier:

“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.” (Isaiah 53:7)

Pilate's Fear Deepens

When the soldiers brought Jesus back from Herod, Pilate thought the nightmare was almost over. Herod had **found** Him **innocent**. Surely this was the end of it. But the crowd had grown. The mob was larger, louder, angrier. This is the fifth and final trial in just a few hours.

John 19:7 "The Jews insisted, 'We have a law, and according to that law He must die, because He claimed to be the Son of God.'"

When Pilate heard that, he was **even more afraid**. Something in him **cracked**. This **wasn't just politics** anymore. He had seen many men die — but **none like this one**. He had watched **hundreds** of prisoners beg **for** their lives — but this one was **calm, composed**, and compassionate. And **now** they were saying He **claimed** to be the **Son of God**. The thought **chilled** Pilate's blood.

A Frantic Governor

*John 19:9 "He went back inside the palace and asked Jesus, 'Where do You **come from**?' But Jesus gave him no answer."*

Pilate pressed Him again: "Do You refuse to speak to me? Don't You realize I have power either to free You or to crucify You?"

Jesus looked at him — bruised, bloodied, steady — and said,

*"You would have **no power** over Me if it were not **given** to you from **above**. Therefore, the one who handed Me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."*

In that moment, Pilate **realized** he **wasn't** in **control** of anything. **Jesus** was the one in **control** — even while in **chains**.

The Final Blow

Pilate **still tried** to **release** Him. He told the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." But they **played** their **trump** card:

*"If you let this man go, you are **no friend** of **Caesar**.
Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."*

That was the **fatal strike**. They **knew** his **weak** spot — his fear of Rome. **All** it would **take** was **one letter** to the emperor, one **accusation** of **disloyalty**, and Pilate's **head** would **roll**.

The **priests** had **checkmated** him.

The Politics of Cowardice

Pilate went to his seat of judgment, known as Gabbatha — “The Stone Pavement.” It was around noon. He brought Jesus out and said, “*Here is your King.*”

But they shouted, “*Take Him away! Take Him away! Crucify Him!*” He asked one last time, almost pleading,

“Shall I crucify your King?”

And the chief priests answered with words that **sealed** their **own** fate: “*We have no king but Caesar.*”

They had just **renounced** the **God** of Israel as their **King**. The nation that had once cried out for Yahweh’s deliverance was now bowing to Rome. Their rejection was complete.

Pilate’s Final Act

*Matthew 27:24 “When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that an uproar was starting, he took **water** and **washed** his hands in front of the crowd. ‘I am **innocent** of this man’s blood,’ he said. ‘It is **your responsibility.**’”*

But **no amount** of **water** could wash away guilt. Pilate may have rinsed his hands, but the blood of the Son of God would **never come off**.

Then he handed Jesus over to be **flogged** — the most **brutal prelude** to **execution** ever devised by men.

The Flogging and the Crown

When Pilate handed Jesus over to be flogged, it was not an act of mercy. It was an **attempt** at **compromise** — a political half-measure to **satisfy bloodthirsty** priests without crucifying Him.

Pilate thought, “Maybe if I have Him beaten badly enough, they’ll pity Him and let Him go.” But there was no mercy in what was about to happen. It was one of the most brutal punishments ever conceived by man.

The Roman Scourging

The Romans called it the **flagellum**, or the **cat-o'-nine-tails**. It was not a single whip — it was a handle with **twelve** leather thongs, **each embedded** with bits of **sharpened bone, metal, or lead**. Each strand ended with a jagged weight designed to **dig** into flesh and **rip it away** when pulled back.

They tied Jesus to a seven- or eight-foot **pole**, stretching His arms **high** above His head so His **back** was **tight** and **vulnerable**. His **toes barely touched** the ground — He **couldn't move**, couldn't **twist**, couldn't **protect** Himself.

Then two men stood behind Him — two Roman lictors, trained executioners. They **weren't** aiming to kill Him quickly. Their **goal** was **agony** — not mercy. One would **whip** from the **right**, one from the **left**. Each strike was designed to **tear away** flesh.

When the whip came down, it **wrapped around** His body — across His **shoulders, back, sides, and legs** — and then they jerked it back with full force. Chunks of skin, muscle, and tissue tore free.

By the **tenth** strike, His back was shredded. By the twentieth, His **shoulders** and **ribs** were exposed. By the **thirtieth**, His **lungs** could be **seen moving** beneath the torn flesh.

The scourging was so severe that many men never made it to crucifixion. They died on the post — from shock, blood loss, or sheer pain. But Jesus didn't die there. He couldn't. The Scriptures had to be fulfilled.

*Isaiah 52:14 “His **appearance** was **so disfigured beyond** that of any man, and His form marred **beyond human likeness**.”*

And Isaiah 53:5 “By His stripes we are healed.”

Every strike was a prophecy fulfilled — a **wound** that would become **someone's healing**. (Isaiah 53:5)

The Mockery of the Soldiers

When they finished, they untied Him and let Him **collapse** to the ground. Most victims fainted or vomited uncontrollably after flogging. But the soldiers **weren't finished**. *Matthew 27:27–29* “Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around Him. They stripped Him and put a **robe** on Him and then twisted together a **crown of thorns** and set it on His **head**. They put a **staff** in His right hand and knelt in front of Him and mocked Him. ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ they said.”

There were 400 to 600 soldiers in a Roman cohort. Each of them joined in. They were **bored, cruel, and drunk on hatred**. **Demons filled** the room, feeding on mockery.

They stripped Him naked and threw a scarlet robe — the color of royalty — over His shredded back. The rough fabric **clung** to the **wounds**, soaking up the blood like a sponge.

Then they took **thorn branches** from a local plant called the Ziziphus spina-christi, with thorns **two to three** inches long, as strong as **steel** and **sharp as needles**.

One of them — wearing **thick leather gloves** — twisted those branches into a circle and **shoved** them down onto His scalp. The thorns **pierced through skin**, through the network of **nerves** and **blood vessels** that cover the head. **Blood poured** down His face, into His **eyes**, and into His **mouth**.

Then they **jammed** a **reed** — a mock scepter — into His hand and knelt in front of Him, sneering.

“Hail, King of the Jews!” Then they **took** the reed back and **beat Him** on the **head** again and again, **driving** the **thorns deeper**.

They spat on Him. They laughed. They bowed. They mocked. They slapped Him **repeatedly** and **pulled out** His beard — just as Isaiah 50:6 had foretold:

*“I offered My back to those who beat Me, my cheeks to those who
pulled out My beard.*

I did not hide My face from mocking and spitting.”

They turned the Savior of the world into a joke. The soldiers had no idea that every act of mockery was crowning the true King.

The Purple Robe and the Crown

John 19:4–5 “Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, ‘Look, I am bringing Him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against Him.’

When Jesus came out **wearing** the **crown** of **thorns** and the **purple robe**, Pilate said to them, ‘Behold the man!’” It was one of the most **ironic** sentences ever spoken. Pilate said it in sarcasm, but heaven heard it in truth: Behold the Man. The **perfect** Man. The **second Adam**. The **One** who had come to **undo** the **curse**.

When Adam sinned, the ground was cursed to produce **thorns**. Now the **second Adam** **wore** those **thorns** as a crown. He was literally **bearing the curse** of creation on His **head**.

The soldiers thought they were mocking Him. In reality, they were crowning the King of Glory.

Medical Reality

By this point, Jesus had lost a **catastrophic** amount of blood. He was in what doctors call **hypovolemic shock** — the loss of over **40%** of His blood volume.

The symptoms were textbook: His skin was pale and clammy. His lips were dry and cracked. His pulse was rapid but faint. His body was trembling. His kidneys had likely stopped producing urine. His heart was racing to pump what little blood remained.

That’s **why** He **collapsed** under the **weight** of the cross later. He wasn’t weak — He was **dying**. Yet even then, there was no bitterness in Him. Only love.

The Prophetic Precision

Every detail of this moment had been written centuries earlier. Isaiah said He would be “*numbered with the transgressors*.” Zechariah said, “*They will look on Me, the one they have pierced*.” David wrote in Psalm 22: “*They **divide My garments** among them and **cast lots** for My clothing*.”

Even the tearing and gambling over His garments would soon fulfill Scripture. And every lash, every thorn, every insult, every drop of blood — was fulfilling what God had written before the world began.

The Silence of the Lamb

Through all of it, He never cursed. Never cried out for revenge. Never called down angels. He stood silent — bruised, bloodied, crowned, mocked, but calm. Isaiah 53:7 “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did **not open His mouth.**”

The **soldiers couldn’t understand** it. They had seen thousands of men curse, scream, plead for mercy. But this one was different.

Even as they laughed in His face, He **loved** them. Even as they tore His flesh, He was **preparing forgiveness** for them.

At **any moment** He could have whispered one word and **obliterated** them all. But He stayed silent — because He **wasn’t** dying at their command. He was dying at His Father’s desire to be restored to His Children.

The King in Mockery

When they were done beating Him, they **ripped** the robe **off** His back — **reopening** every wound. Blood poured again. Then they dressed Him in His own torn clothes and handed Him the horizontal beam of the cross — a rough piece of wood weighing **75 to 100** pounds. *John 19:17 “Carrying His own cross, He went out to the place of the skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.”*

But He couldn’t carry it far. He had been **awake** for **36 hours, beaten beyond recognition, dehydrated**, and in **shock**. Within a few steps, He stumbled and fell. The soldiers shouted at Him to get up. When He couldn’t, they seized a man named Simon of Cyrene and forced him to carry the cross. And so, the Son of God — wearing a crown of thorns — began His final procession up the hill of death.

The Road to Calvary

After the flogging, Jesus was led out through the streets of Jerusalem. The **crossbeam** — called the patibulum — was strapped to His shoulders, weighing roughly a **hundred** pounds. The **vertical stake** was already **waiting** on the hill outside the city, at a place called Golgotha — the Place of the Skull. Roman law required **every condemned man to carry his own** cross to the place of execution. It was part of the humiliation — a public declaration that Rome owned your life and your death.

Simon of Cyrene

Simon was from Cyrene, a city in North Africa — in modern-day **Libya**. He was almost certainly a **black Jewish pilgrim** who had come to Jerusalem for Passover. He had likely been **saving for years** to make the journey — the **dream of every devout Jew**, to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem at least once in their life. He had come to remember how God's people had been delivered from Egypt.

And **suddenly**, he was standing face to face with the **true Passover Lamb**. The soldiers grabbed him from the crowd, forced the beam onto his shoulders, and shouted, "Carry it!"

It's fascinating how the Bible gives his **full name** — Simon of Cyrene, the father of **Alexander** and **Rufus**. That's because his **sons** later became **well-known leaders** in the early church. In Romans 16:13, Paul greets "*Rufus, chosen in the Lord.*"

That means this **one moment** — this forced act of carrying the cross — **changed Simon's entire family**. He came to Jerusalem to sacrifice a lamb. He left having met the Lamb of God.

A Bloody Road

The procession wound through narrow streets lined with **jeering** crowds. People shouted **curses**, **spat**, and threw **stones**. Roman soldiers marched ahead and behind, shouting for people to move back.

The air was thick with dust, sweat, and the metallic scent of blood. Women wailed. Children cried. It was **chaos** — the city celebrating its greatest feast while the Son of God was being paraded to His death.

The Daughters of Jerusalem

Luke 23:27–31 gives us a moment most people overlook. "*A large number of people followed Him, including **women who mourned and wailed** for Him.*"

Jesus turned and said to them, "*Daughters of Jerusalem, do **not weep** for Me; weep for **yourselves** and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed. 'Then they will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?'*"

That was one of His last public statements before the Cross — and one of the most **haunting**. Imagine it. He could barely stand. Blood was dripping from His body. Every nerve was on fire. And yet, even then, His heart was **not** on **Himself**. He turned to **comfort** them.

He said, *“Don’t weep for Me. Weep for yourselves.”* He was saying, If humanity can do this to the **only perfectly good person** who ever lived, what will happen when there is **no goodness** left?

“If men do this when the tree is green, what will they do when it’s dry?”

He was warning them — and us — that **depravity** has **no bottom**.

The Cross and the Thieves

The soldiers reached the top of the hill. It was called **Golgotha** in Aramaic — “the Place of the Skull.” In Greek, it was **Cranion**, where we get our word cranium. In Latin, it was **Calvaria**. That’s where we get the word Calvary — the Hill of the Skull.

The place was named because it was shaped like a skull — and because there were scattered skulls everywhere. It was Rome’s **trash heap** for the dead, the place where criminals were crucified and left to **rot**.

They brought Jesus to that hill, **stripped** Him **naked**, and threw Him down onto the rough, splintered wood of the crossbeam.

The Nails

Archaeologists and medical researchers have reconstructed what happened next. When the soldiers nailed Him to the cross, the nails were **not through** His palms as often pictured — that wouldn’t support the weight of a human body. They drove the spikes through a **small space** in the wrist called **Destot’s space** — between **four major bones** — where a **huge nerve bundle runs** through the hand. The Romans called it “the place of **supreme agony**.” Each nail was **7 to 9 inches long**, square at the tip, like a railroad spike. It tore through **nerves, tendons, and bone**, sending bolts of fiery pain through His arms that locked His hands into a **claw-like** position. Then they **bent** His **knees** and **nailed** His feet one over the other through the middle of the arch — through the second metatarsal bones — pinning Him to the wood.

Each strike of the hammer was prophecy fulfilled. *Psalm 22:16 “They have pierced My hands and My feet.”*

The Mechanics of Crucifixion

Crucifixion was not designed to cause bleeding to death — it was designed to make you **suffocate slowly**.

When the cross was raised and dropped into its socket with a jolt, Jesus' arms were stretched **six inches** beyond their **normal** reach. The **shoulders dislocated**. The **elbows partially dislocated**. The body hung downward in a V-shape, compressing the chest and locking the ribcage.

To **inhale**, He had to **push up** on the **nail** through His feet, scraping His **shredded back** against the rough wood. Every breath was excruciating.

To exhale, He had to relax again — hanging by His wrists — and that's when the **suffocation began**. Crucifixion was death by exhaustion and asphyxiation.

Most victims lasted **one to two** days. Jesus would last about **six hours**. But every moment of those six hours was **deliberate**.

“Father, Forgive Them”

Luke 23:33–34 “When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified Him, along with the criminals — one on His right, the other on His left.

Jesus said, ‘Father, **forgive** them, for they do **not know** what they are doing.’”

Those words stunned the crowd. No one had ever heard anything like it. Crucified men cursed their executioners, spat at the soldiers, screamed for mercy, or shouted for vengeance. But **this one** — covered in blood, wracked with pain, gasping for breath — looked up toward heaven and said, “*Father, forgive them.*”

He **didn't** say, “I forgive you.” He said, “**Father, forgive them.**” He was still interceding, still standing between man and God, even while nailed to a cross. That's what the Cross is — God forgiving the very world that was killing Him.

The Soldiers' Mockery

The soldiers laughed. They divided His clothes, fulfilling

Psalm 22:18 "They divide My garments among them and cast lots for My clothing."

It was a **game** to them. A blood-soaked **gambling** match.

They had no idea they were **standing** in the **middle** of the **holiest moment** in **history**.

Above His head, Pilate ordered a sign to be nailed. It read:

"JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS."

It was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek — the three main languages of the known world. Every passerby could read it.

The priests objected, saying, *"Don't write 'King of the Jews,' but that He claimed to be king."* Pilate sneered and said,

"What I have written, I have written."

Without realizing it, he was fulfilling another prophecy: The whole world was now reading a declaration of Jesus' kingship — three languages symbolizing every tribe and tongue.

The Two Thieves

Jesus wasn't crucified alone. Two criminals hung beside Him — one on His right, one on His left. They were thieves, rebels, insurrectionists — men who had spilled blood. At first, both mocked Him. They joined the crowd, shouting, *"If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us!"*

But then **something happened**. One of them — gasping for breath, watching Jesus suffer in silence — **suddenly** saw the **truth**. He looked at the other criminal and said,

"Don't you fear God? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

In that moment, **something broke** inside him. His pride. His rebellion. His excuses. He turned his head toward Jesus — a face barely visible through blood and swelling — and whispered,

"Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

The Second Saying

Luke 23:43 “Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise.’”

That sentence is the **Gospel** in a **single breath**. There was no time for baptism, no chance for penance, no opportunity for good works — just **faith**. The thief couldn’t climb down and start over. He couldn’t pay anyone back. He simply believed that Jesus was who He said He was. And Jesus saved him on the spot.

“Today you will be with Me...” — not next week, not after purgatory, not when you’ve proven yourself. *“Today-in paradise.”*

That word paradise means “a **walled garden**.” It was the **same word** used to describe the **Garden of Eden**. Jesus was saying, “Today, you’ll **walk** with Me **where Adam** once **walked**.”

It was the first conversion at the Cross — proof that salvation is by faith alone.

Three Crosses, Three Destinies

On that hill stood three crosses — and the entire human race was represented in them.

1. The first thief mocked — the heart that rejects grace.
2. The second thief believed — the heart that receives grace.
3. The third cross held the One who gave grace.

The world is the same today. **Every** person who hears of Jesus must **choose which thief** they will be.

“Woman, Behold Your Son”

John 19:25–27 “Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus saw His mother there, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, ‘*Dear woman, here is your son,*’ and to the disciple, ‘*Here is your mother.*’ From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.”

Try to imagine that moment. Mary, standing at the foot of the cross — 18 inches from His face — looking up at her son, so mutilated she could barely recognize Him. The prophecy of Simeon from decades earlier came true right then: “*A sword will pierce your soul also.*” (Luke 2:35)

Jesus' love was so complete that **even** in **agony** he **continued** to **care** for others. He was still **arranging provision** for His mother. He turned His pain into protection. He looked at John — the only disciple who hadn't run away — and said, "Take care of her for Me." And from that moment, John took Mary into his home.

Love is **strongest** when it **hurts** the most. Even when bleeding out, Jesus was still loving, still providing, still putting others first.

Faith, Forgiveness, Family

The first 3 sayings from the Cross tell the story of salvation itself:

1. "Father, forgive them." - The prayer of **mercy**.
2. "Today you'll be with Me in paradise." - The promise of **grace**.
3. "Woman, behold your son." - The provision of **love**.

Forgiveness for enemies. Grace for sinners. Family for the broken. Even while dying, Jesus continued to give.

Darkness and the Cry of Abandonment

By now, Jesus had been on the cross for **nearly three** hours. It was approaching noon — the **brightest** part of the day — but something **extraordinary** was about to happen. *Matthew 27:45* "From the **sixth** hour until the **ninth** hour **darkness** came over all the land."

The sixth hour was noon. The ninth hour was 3 p.m. For three whole hours, the sun disappeared. This was **not** a passing cloud. It was **not** an **eclipse**. The Passover always took place at the full moon, when an eclipse was astronomically impossible. It was a **supernatural darkness** — or perhaps a natural phenomenon orchestrated by supernatural timing. Either way, it covered the entire region.

Historians outside the Bible confirm it. The Greek historian Phlegon, who had no connection to the Jews or Christianity, wrote that in the 33rd year A.D., "there was a great eclipse of the sun, and it became night in the sixth hour of the day, so that stars appeared in the heavens." He said there was also "a great earthquake in Bithynia," the same one mentioned in Matthew 27.

God was making it clear — the **earth** itself was **testifying**. Creation was reacting to what was happening on that hill.

The Silence

During those three hours, the Gospels record **no words** from Jesus. He had spoken three times earlier — to forgive His executioners, to save the thief, to care for His mother. But **now**, for **three hours**, He was **silent**. **Why?**

Because something **unseen** was happening. The **wrath** of God — the **judgment** for the **sins** of the world — was **being poured out** on Him. Every lie, every murder, every rape, every act of greed, pride, cruelty, and hatred — past, present, and future — was placed upon Him. *Isaiah 53:6* “*The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*”

Paul would later write in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “*God made Him who **knew no sin to become sin** for us, so that in Him **we might become the righteousness of God.***”

Those **three hours** were the **moment** when that happened.

For **all eternity**, the Son had known **perfect fellowship** with the Father and the Spirit. He had never been out of step with the Godhead — not for one heartbeat. But now, for the first and only time, that fellowship was severed.

The Father turned away. The Spirit withdrew. And Jesus was left utterly alone. It wasn't the nails that broke Him. It wasn't the pain, or the blood loss, or the suffocation.

It was this — **spiritual abandonment**. For the **first** time in **eternity**, the perfect Son was **separated** from perfect love. The light of the world was plunged into total darkness — physically and spiritually.

The Cry That Shook Heaven

At the end of those three hours, the silence broke. *Matthew 27:46* “*About the **ninth** hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ — which means, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’*”

It wasn't a whimper. It was a roar — a scream that tore through the heavens. The word “cried” in Greek is **anaboao** — a **deep, guttural cry** from the chest. Doctors say that when the lungs begin to collapse from suffocation, a man has only **seconds** of oxygen left — just enough for **one last shout**. And He used that last breath to speak directly to the Father who had turned away.

“My God, My God” — He **didn’t say “Father”** this time. For the first time, He spoke to God not as Son to Father, but as a **sinner crying out** to his **Judge**.

Jesus was **quoting** the **first** line of **Psalm 22** — a Messianic prophecy written a thousand years earlier by David. Every Jewish listener would have recognized it immediately. Psalm 22 begins with those same words: “*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*” The Psalm continues: “*All who see Me mock Me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads.*” “*They pierce My hands and My feet.*” “*They divide My garments among them and cast lots for My clothing.*”

It was as if **Jesus** were saying, “Look — **this** is the Psalm that is **happening now**.” Even in His agony, He was **teaching, declaring, and fulfilling**.

The Physical and Spiritual Collapse

Medically, He would have been in shock. His blood pressure would have dropped. His heart was straining to pump what little blood remained. His lungs were filling with fluid — what doctors call pericardial effusion and pleural effusion — the early stages of cardiac rupture. He was **dying** of a **broken heart** — **literally** and **spiritually**. That’s **why**, when the soldier pierced His side later, both **blood** and **water** flowed out (John 19:34). It was evidence of **heart failure**.

But in the spiritual realm, He was paying the unpayable price — the full penalty for sin. Romans 8:3 “*For what the law was powerless to do, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a **sin offering**.*” God condemned sin in the flesh — in the flesh of His Son.

The Humanity of Thirst

After the darkness lifted, Jesus spoke again. John 19:28 “*Later, knowing that **all** was now **completed**, and so that the **Scripture** would be **fulfilled**, Jesus said, ‘I am thirsty.’*”

Those words may seem **small**, but they were **monumental**.

For six hours, He had refused to take the vinegar wine that numbed pain. He wanted to feel every ounce of wrath, every nerve of agony. But now, the debt was nearly paid. The prophecies had been fulfilled. But there was one more to complete. Ps. 69:21 “*They gave Me vinegar for My thirst.*”

Even here, hanging between life and death, He was consciously fulfilling prophecy. A soldier dipped a sponge into sour wine, stuck it on a hyssop branch, and lifted it to His lips. **Hyssop** was the **same plant** the Israelites used to **apply lamb's blood** to their doorposts at the first Passover. The **symbolism** was **perfect**: The Lamb of God was **tasting** the **final drop** of **judgment** so that death would pass over us forever.

“It Is Finished”

Then came the greatest declaration ever made in human history. *John 19:30 “When He had received the drink, Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.”*

In Greek, it's one word — **Tetelestai**. It means “Paid in full.” It was the word written across **receipts** when a **debt** was cancelled. Merchants used it when a **transaction** was **complete**. Servants used it when a **task** was **accomplished**. Judges used it when a **sentence** had been **served**.

Jesus used it to announce that the **entire work** of **salvation** was **finished**. The law was satisfied. The sacrifice was complete. The curse was broken. The debt of sin was paid — not partially, not mostly, but fully.

The Last Breath Before Victory

He took one last breath — a deep, trembling inhale. And with that final exhale, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world offered up His life. He didn't die by exhaustion or crucifixion alone — He gave His life.

*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**”.*

The Resurrection

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the most documented and proven facts in all of history, meeting the highest standards of historicity.

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