

THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS CHRIST

by

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Our Lord Jesus Christ did the will of God. That is what he came to do. The account of the last forty hours of our Lord's life is probably the most written about and the most detailed section in God's Word. It is so needful for us to understand this incredible period of time as it is presented in the Scriptures.

The night in which he was betrayed, our Lord and Savior was with his fellow believers. He was with the individuals that he trusted and loved the most. And he was teaching them the Word of God. He taught them all day long, and he taught them all that night. He ate the last supper with them, he washed their feet, and he taught them many things.

That evening, Judas Iscariot, one of his most trusted apostles, sold him out for thirty pieces of silver. A man with a ministry, a man who was ordained an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, sold him out for a handful of change. He was a man to whom he had given the sop that night- a man who he honored, a man whose feet he had washed. And he sold him out for change. Jesus knew that this was coming, and yet he washed his feet.

After Judas left, Jesus Christ continued to teach the others and he walked with them to the Garden of Gethsemane. In Matthew 26, we read of the events which happened there.

Matthew 26:36 and 37:

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.
And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee [James and John], and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

This was not an easy day. This was a very, very intense time because he knew what was coming. He began to be very heavy.

Verses 38 and 39:

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.
And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

He didn't want to have to do this. But if there were no other way to accomplish God's will, he said, Not as I will, but Your will be done.

Verses 40-44:

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing but the flesh *is* weak.

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Luke 22:45 says that he found them sleeping for sorrow. He was so sorrowful. Our Lord was praying. He knew what he was going to have to do. He knew what he was going to face, and yet he was alone. Completely alone. They couldn't even stay awake and pray with him in that hour.

It says in Luke 22:43 that God sent an angel to comfort him at that time. Remember what God said in Isaiah 50:7? He said that He would strengthen him and help him. In this time, when he was so alone, God sent him an angel to comfort him.

Luke 22:44:

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

This was quite an intense time. He came back to his disciples again and they were still sleeping. He said to them, Sleep on now, for the Son of man is betrayed.

As he was speaking, he could see a great multitude of soldiers coming in the distance. I don't know how many there were, but it was probably a very great number. They were the chief priest's temple guard coming up with torches and they had knives and swords, and Judas was with them. He had already told them that the man that he would kiss is the one they want. And they walked up to the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 18:4:

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

With all of his boldness and with all of his love, he said to this whole band of soldiers, Who do you seek? He understood what was going on.

Verses 5 and 6:

They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*.

And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

What authority and boldness he had! This was a man who could stop the sea and the wind. When he said, I am he, this band of military men were hit so hard by the boldness that it says they stepped back and fell to the ground.

Verse 8:

Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

He was referring to the men that were with him. Don't take them also, he said, just take me. He literally handed himself over, knowing what was going on.

Verse 9:

That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

Our Lord so continued to love and to be concerned about fulfilling God's Word.

Judas betrayed him at that moment with a kiss. And Peter got excited. Old Pete, he was a good man. He took out his knife and cut the high priest's servant's ear.

Jesus Christ was trying to get them out of the jam, and Peter's putting them in. Jesus turned and told Peter to put up his sword. They that live by the sword will die by the sword. Then he touched the man's ear and healed it. Can you imagine what went through those soldiers' minds?

He turned to the whole band and said, Why do you seek me out like a thief, with swords and knives? Wasn't I with you every day in the temple? Didn't I teach openly? And then they took him.

He let them take him. He didn't have to do this. He chose to do this. We can see his magnificent power in the words he said to Peter before they took him.

Matthew 26:53:

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

Don't you know, Peter, that God will give me twelve legions of angels at this particular moment? A Roman legion is equal to six thousand men. Twelve legions is seventy-two thousand soldiers. Don't you know, Peter? I just have to ask my Father and He'll give me the armies of heaven.

Verse 54:

But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

He was fully intent on doing God's Word. His will. He had options. He chose to worship God by the freedom of his will and to do his Father's will.

Then they took him to be interrogated by Annas, the high priest. He willingly gave himself. He's been betrayed by Judas, one of his own, one of the twelve. The Scriptures say that all the rest of them fled, and they left him there. Can you imagine what he felt like?

John 18:19:

The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

Who are those that were with you? What have you been teaching?

Verses 20-22:

Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers [one of the temple guards] which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

He struck him with the palm of his hand. The Greek word for this is *rapisma*. This word can mean that he hit him sharply with his hand or with a rod, repeatedly.

Verse 23:

Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

The word smite means "to flay" or "to flog." We're not talking about a little slap. We're talking about this man beating Jesus Christ repeatedly with a rod or a whip. He beat him and he flayed him. And remember, he's dealing with men who hate him. I'm sure that they were not just a few little beatings. They hated him and had planned to kill him for a long time. The hate was built up within these men and they did their best to lay as much pain on our Lord as they could.

From there, Annas sent him that same night to the official high priest, Caiaphas.

Matthew 26:57:

And they that had laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

There were about seventy men assembled, the head elders of Israel.

Verse 58:

But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

Peter went there to see.

Verse 59:

Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

They had a lot of people lined up to accuse him. They were false witnesses. This was a setup. The whole trial was a mockery. It was all a setup to accuse this man and to make sure that he would die. But, it says, they couldn't find two of them to agree, and you needed at least two witnesses in order to get the job done.

Then two false witnesses came to testify against Jesus.

Matthew 26:61-64:

And said, This *fellow* said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said...

It was definitely a positive answer. He's looking the high priest in the eye. The high priest said to him, I adjure thee by the living God, tell me whether you're the Christ or not. And he answered affirmatively. He answered, and then he says this, and it runs a chill down my spine. I would not want to be this high priest.

Verse 64:

...nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

You want to know whether I'm the Christ or not? Well the next time you see me, Mr. high priest, you're going to see me sitting on the right hand of the throne of God, coming in power.

Verses 65-67:

Then the high priest rent his clothes [he ripped his garments], saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. [They passed sentence.]

Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him [they beat him repeatedly with their fists]; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands.

Remember that word? It means “to whip with a cane or a whip.” There are seventy men there. They hate him with all of their heart. They’re spitting in his face. They’re beating on him. They’re hitting him as hard as they can. They blindfolded him and said, Who hit thee, thou Christ? And they did this all night long.

Many other blasphemers spoke against him with complete deceit, dishonesty, illegality, and cruelty. They showed their hatred for the Son of God, the Messiah, their King. They did everything in their power to make sure that this man would die – even if they had to lie, which is exactly what they did. And when they finally got the result they wanted and had passed judgment upon him, they beat him and beat him and beat him. They flayed his skin from his flesh.

The Scriptures don’t tell us everything that went on that night. Seventy men who hated him tortured him cruelly. In Isaiah it says that he would be beaten almost beyond recognition of being a man. Our Lord was bloodied and beaten. And he walked into this openly. At any time he could have cried to his Father, but he didn’t.

While this is going on, Peter is outside, and he denies the Lord several times. He denies him vehemently. In fact, the last time he denies him, he does it cursing. At some time during this whole event, Peter can see Jesus and Jesus can see Peter.

Luke 22:61 and 62:

And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Can you imagine our Lord Jesus Christ’s heart? One of his most beloved, the man with whom he had worked so closely, denies him while these men are in the process of beating him. Would that tempt you to quit? Besides the physical torture that was going on, everyone to whom he has ministered and poured out his heart in love has run away from him.

Early the next morning, the seventy elders have what is the semblance of a normal trial. The Lord is completely beaten, and he is bleeding from the night before.

Luke 22:66-70:

And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:

And if I also ask *you*, ye will not answer me, nor let *me* go.

Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.

Again, this is a positive answer to the question, because of the reaction that comes later.

Verse 71:

And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

Luke 23:1:

And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

John 18:28:

Then let they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early...

Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas unto the judgment hall. They've taken him to Pilate. They have crossed town with him. He's been beaten. All seventy of them, who hate him, come and bring him to Pilate and they read the charges.

Luke 23:2:

And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

These charges were unfounded, but they were standing before the Roman governor, so they had to stretch it a bit more.

John 18:31:

Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

They needed to make the Romans do it. Then Pilate took our Lord into the judgment hall and interrogated him.

John 18:33-38:

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. [Again, this is an affirmative answer.] To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should

bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? [How many times have you heard that? What is truth?] And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault *at all*.

Pilate never took the kingship of Jesus Christ seriously. The Romans never considered him a threat. The Jews did. They hated him, and they totally rejected their Messiah. They said, This man says he is the Christ, the Son of God, and they wanted him killed because he even said it.

Then Pilate found out that Jesus Christ was a Galilaean. Now he had a way out, he thought. He said, this man's a Galilaean, send him off to Herod. Herod had jurisdiction over the Galilaeans, and he was in Jerusalem at that time. So they marched our Lord across town again.

Herod was really interested in seeing Jesus Christ do a magic trick, but he wouldn't even talk to him. He wouldn't even answer the man. So Herod and his soldiers began to mock him. They said, You're the king? They put a purple robe upon him and spat in his face and started to beat him. And they mocked him because this beaten man had the audacity to even consider that he would be a king, anywhere. But they could find no fault in him, and they sent him back again to Pilate.

Pilate at this time goes back in to question Jesus Christ again. Who are you? What have you done? And, again, he can find no fault in our Lord. He goes out and says to the Jewish leaders, I find no fault in this man. Then they vehemently – with all of their boldness and all of their heart – do everything they can to change Pilate's mind and force him to kill our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Pilate goes back in again, recognizing that the Jewish leaders are envious against Jesus. They're doing this for a reason. They want this man killed, but Pilate thinks it's ridiculous. There's nothing wrong, he's just a man who thinks he's a king.

Then Pilate comes up with a plan. Every year at this feast, one prisoner is released unto the people. So he decides to go into the jails and to take the most treacherous man that he can find, a man condemned with sedition and murder, the scripture says. His name is Barabbas, a man who has killed the Jews' own people. He's a murderer who is famous, like Charles Manson, and he's going to put him up against Jesus. This is Pilate's plan. Then he goes back in and interrogates Jesus.

Pilate determines that if he treats Jesus badly and scourges him that the people will change their minds. They will see that he has been dealt with properly and he won't have to crucify him. He sends Jesus Christ to the soldiers and they beat him. They tie him to a post and they beat him with a whip, like a cat-o'-nine-tails. It has nine cords on the edge to which little pieces of metal or bone are attached. When it hits your back, it takes off the muscle and the flesh and it cuts down to the bone.

They beat him and they beat him. And after they're done beating him, they sit him down and plait a crown of thorns on his head and push it into his skull. The thorns are not like the thorns that you see in a little rose bush that we have in America. I've seen them. They are about an inch-and-a-half to two inches in length. They're almost like steel. They went into his skull and pushed away the flesh from the bone....and his head is bleeding.

Then they put a purple cloak around him. They dressed him up like a puppet, and walked him out and Pilate said, "Behold the man." Your king. Then he brings out Barabbas and says, Should I release your king unto you? He doesn't look much like a man anymore. Most people would be merciful and say, What have you done? Let him go! But not these people.

The high priest and the religious leaders hated him so much. They got the people riled up to the point that they said, Let Barabbas go! Let Barabbas go! And crucify Jesus. And the people started screaming. Pilate was out of his mind. He couldn't figure this out. He wanted to let Jesus go so badly. And they said, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" with all of their heart and soul.

Pilate's wife sent him a note and told him that she had suffered many things in a dream about this just man. She told him to have nothing to do with this. He started to get worried. He went back in to question Jesus again saying, Where do you come from? Don't you know that I've got the power to crucify you or to let you go?

Jesus Christ looked him in the eye and he said, You've got no power except that it's been given to you from above. Then Pilate goes back out the third time to the people and to the priests, because he really does not want to do this. And they begin to accuse him saying, You're not Caesar's friend. If you were Caesar's friend you would judge any man who says he's a king.

Pilate couldn't take that. That was really cutting into his territory. That was really scaring him. So he took a bowl of water and he washed his hands and said, This is on you. This is on you. I am clean of this man's blood. And the people say to Pilate openly, "His blood *be* on us, and on our children." We'll gladly accept the responsibility. Crucify him!

Pilate orders the crucifixion and sends our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to the common hall where four hundred Roman soldiers live. And it says that they beat him with their fists and plaited the crown of thorns on his head and took sticks and beat his head with the thorns on it.

How much of a beating can four hundred men give a man? Isaiah 52:14 says that "his visage was so marred more than any man." And again, at this particular point, the Scriptures go silent until the next morning. Jesus Christ did this. He allowed this. All that our Lord and Savior would have had to say is, "Father!" And God would have sent

him those seventy-two thousand angels. But he wouldn't say it. He took it. He took it for you and for me...to pay for our sins.

This is all about paying for our sins. Don't tell me that sins don't cost something. They beat him mercilessly all that day and all that evening. Then the Scriptures are silent, and the next morning they led him out to be crucified.

Consider these things. Consider what our Lord and Savior did for us. It's not pretty. But he was our substitute. We deserved it. He didn't. Jesus Christ suffered and gave his life for every single person in mankind. Every person who loves, and every person who hates. He took those beatings and he hung on the cross to pay the price for the sins of every single person.

Many of them curse him still. Many of them could care less and think that his kingship is a joke, like the Romans. Many of them curse him in the morning before breakfast and curse him in the evening as they get drunk. It is amazing grace that God would give His only begotten Son for our lives.

We should be so thankful and so incredibly humbled to know that the God of the universe, the God who inhabits eternity, who lives in the past, the present, and the future all at the same time so loves us. The One who has created every living thing and every physical thing that you can see, feel, taste, touch, or smell cares so much for each of us, individually. He sees our hearts and so loves us that He gave His Son. We should wake up every day with a smile on our face, praising Him for what He has done.

Our Lord and Savior was beaten the night before he was crucified. Four hundred soldiers had their way with him. He was so badly beaten, the scripture says, that he didn't look like a man.

Matthew chapter 27 records the events of the next day.

Matthew 27:31:

And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify *him*.

The word "led" should be understood as "dragged." They dragged him away to be crucified.

Verse 32:

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

On the way, on the road to Calvary, that place called the skull where they crucified him, certain events occurred and our Lord said certain things.

Luke 23:27:

And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

They saw him that morning and were screaming out and lamenting him. They loved the man. They were wailing and crying. How would you feel if you had seen him being dragged down the street? Jesus turned and spoke to them.

Verses 28 and 29:

But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

Blessed is the day coming when no one is born.

Verse 30:

Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

Can you imagine that kind of day, where people would pray that the mountains cover them and fall upon them?

Verse 31:

For if they do these things in a green tree [at this time, with me here], what shall be done in the dry?

What's going to be done when I'm gone?

I understand this verse in two different ways. If they do this when the Prince of Peace is here, when the Lord Jesus Christ is here, who came to preach the Kingdom of God and the truth to God's people, then what's going to be done when he's gone?

The other understanding I have of it is that there is a day coming when he will return and God's judgment again will come. During that judgment, people will cry out and say, Let the mountains fall upon us. Because then, just as Jesus said to that high priest, he will be sitting on the right hand of the throne of power, coming in the clouds.

And he is not coming back meek and mild the next time. He is coming back as King of kings and Lord of lords, and there is no one, no one on the planet earth, who will curse his name. But that day is not today. Today, in the Scriptures, he said this to these women.

Matthew 27:33 and 34:

And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.

He wouldn't drink it. As far as I understand, this was to reduce his pain. Gall was to deaden the senses and reduce pain, and he wouldn't take it.

Verse 35:

And they crucified him...

It's a little word in the Bible. It just says they crucified him.

They took our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and they dragged him to that place. This other man carried his cross. The cross is a big pole, like a telephone pole. It wasn't as fancy as they make it out to be on the wall. Most people look at the crucifixion and it's like a cross, but the truth is, it was a tree. The Roman government didn't think much of spending money on dead men.

They just took a post made of a tree, notched out a place for the feet, and laid the post out on the ground. Then they took our Lord and Savior and laid him on top of that post. They took his hands and put them together over his head. Then they took a nail and drove it through his hands with a hammer.

Then they took his feet and put them together. They took a spike and drove it through his feet. And the scripture says that he did not cry out... that he was like a sheep, dumb before the shearer. Then they stood up that tree and they stuck it in a hole. This was about nine o'clock in the morning.

Verse 35:

And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

They stripped him. And they took the cloak that he had, the seamless robe, and cast lots for it. God had foretold even this in Psalms 22:18.

Verse 36:

And sitting down they watched him there;

They dragged him out and crucified him. They drove the nails through him and then they sat there and watched him.

Luke 23:35 and 36:

And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided *him*, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God [the king, the Messiah].

And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar...

They offered him vinegar to drink. They mocked him. They stood there while he was hanging on the cross, and the religious leaders were saying, He saved others; if he's the Messiah, let him come down. Let's see if he can save himself. And the other men, the soldiers, mocked him also, saying, You think you're the king? Have some wine, have some vinegar to drink, oh king... if thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

A period of time went by. As they were sitting there, they decided to put a superscription above his head. So they went back to Pilate and said, What would you like to put as a superscription above this man's head?

Matthew 27:37:

And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

This is Jesus, the king of the Jews. All of this was to mock him, to mock the true King of the earth. They laughed at him and they scorned him. They spit at him and showed him as much disrespect as is possible.

The Jews wanted him killed because he dared to say that he was the Messiah, the Son of God. And they hated him so much because he did not meet up to their expectations. They wanted a fancy king, they wanted a deliverer from the tyranny of Rome. They wanted a conqueror. That's how they had wrongly read the Scriptures.

They read the Scriptures about Jesus being a servant, but they could not believe that their Messiah could be a servant. They thought that this must have been referring to someone else. And when you don't rightly understand the Scriptures, you can do some very evil things. And they hated him. They said he was a bastard child. They were offended by his whole life. This man is going to teach us? And they wanted him crucified so badly, yet Pilate couldn't find anything wrong in him. But because of politics, he said, Crucify him, it's on your head.

They stood by the cross and tormented and belittled him all that day. They set up this accusation over his head and the Jews were very offended. They said to Pilate, don't say, Jesus the king of the Jews, say that he said he is the king of the Jews. And Pilate finally got some guts and said to them, I've written what I've written.

Verse 38:

Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

When they had come out originally, two men were brought out with him and crucified with him. Now you have two other men. The picture that most people have is the center cross with one on either side. When you read it accurately, you see that there is the center cross with Jesus on it, and there are two on either side.

Verses 39-43:

And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,
And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days,
save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.
Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders,
said,
He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let
him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.
He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he
said, I am the Son of God.

He trusted in God, they said. Let God deliver him now, if he will have him. In Isaiah it said that he was smitten. They thought that he was smitten...smitten of God and afflicted. Yet God had said, he is doing My will.

Verse 44:

The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

Both of these two thieves cast the same kind of ridicule, the same kind of condemnation into his teeth. He is hanging there in pain and in agony, beaten beyond recognition. He is held up by nails in his feet and in his hands. And these people are acting in such a manner as to torment him to his last moment.

In Luke 23, we read of the two others which were crucified with him.

Luke 23:39:

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

There are two thieves and there are two malefactors hanging there with him. One of the malefactors said this as soon as they hung up the accusation. He said, Hey, if you're the king over there, save yourself.

Verse 40:

But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

You're going to die too. Don't you fear God at all?

Verses 41-43:

And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

The only man in these forty hours to stand up for the Lord Jesus Christ was a man who was condemned to death. And the Lord said unto him, I'm telling you today, you will be with me in paradise.

Verse 44:

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

That's from twelve noon to about three o'clock in the afternoon. Our Lord has been hanging on the cross since nine o'clock in the morning. All of these events have taken place. The two thieves had cast the same as the high priest into his teeth. One of the malefactors did the same saying, Save thyself. But one of those malefactors rebuked that man and said, Don't you fear God? And he said to the Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

There were four with him that day, that the scripture might be fulfilled which says that he was numbered "among" the transgressors.

Matthew 27:45:

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

From noon until three, it was black as night. Three o'clock in the afternoon is the exact time that the Passover lamb was to be slaughtered.

Verse 46:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

This is a very bad translation of this verse. Our Lord cried, My God, my God, for this purpose have I come. This is the reason that I am here.

And those that were around him thought he called for Elijah, or something else. And they ran and got more vinegar and put it in his mouth for him to drink. And then they said, let's wait and see if Elijah comes.

Jesus Christ knew what he was doing. He was in command of his mind and of his heart. He knew his purpose. He never believed that God forsook him. He knew that his Father was with him and that He was strengthening him. He knew that he was doing the Father's will and he said, My God, my God, for this purpose was I spared. For this purpose I am here.

He knew that he was the sacrifice for sin for all mankind. And he did it willingly. He did it lovingly, doing it for his God...for our God, so that we could have the privilege of saying that He is our God.

Verse 50:

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

He died. It says in John 19 that before he died, while he was hanging on the cross, he looked down and saw his mother and some of the women that were with him, and a certain disciple that he loved. And he said to that disciple and to his mother, Behold thy son, and behold thy mother.

Even while he was hanging on the cross, he took care of those he loved. He was a man who never did anything except teach the truth and proclaim God's love, His blessings, and His deliverance. He came to show the power of God, the compassion of God, and the mercy of God. He came. He loved. And they crucified him. He loved all the way through the end of his life. And he took care of those that he loved.

What a man! That sacrifice was for us. He hung there for me. He went through all of that for me. He went through all of that for you. He went through all of that for those who curse him this day. He did it for his Father. And then he said, It is finished, and he yielded up the ghost. He yielded up his life, and he died.

It was the darkest hour of all humankind, of all history. The Messiah was killed, and he gave his life for us. And if that were the end of the story, there is no hope...no hope.

In Hebrews chapter 12, it says that for the joy that was set before him he endured this cross. What does that mean? Our Lord and Savior has the hope of being with God forever, as we do. He has the hope of paradise on earth, forever... in a perfect world with God, as you and I do.

And for the joy that was set before him, for that which he saw coming, for that which he had told the high priest, he was willing to endure the cross, despising the shame. He despised the shame of that cross, but he was willing to endure it for the blessed hope.

And he trusted in his God... that God who had promised that he would raise him from the dead three days later. That's a lot of trust, isn't it? He trusted that God would raise him from the dead. And then on the third day, three days and three nights later, God raised him, and the angel said, He is risen!

What a glorious day! From the darkest day to the brightest day of mankind, in three days time. And if God had not raised him, we are of all people most miserable. And in that resurrection, God Almighty proved to everyone that Jesus was the Messiah.

Someone recently asked me how my life was affected when I first learned this. It changed my life completely.

I was a man going nowhere. I used to love to hurt people. That was my hobby, causing people great pain- beating on them, stealing, doing drugs, hustling. I was trying to make people feel worse than I did, so I could feel better than they. I knew I was going nowhere, and I decided to hate because I didn't know how to love, nor did I really receive much love.

And when I learned these things at that particular time in my life, I was functionally illiterate. I couldn't believe that anyone could love me so much and could have done such things for me - that God Almighty would consider even me, and I chose to change. I chose to change my life and to do whatever was necessary so that I could tell other people about what He had done for us. And I learned how to read. My wife taught me how to read, so that I could teach.

I decided that I wanted to learn to love, as best as possible, and I wanted to share what God had done for all of us with other people. And that is my purpose in life. That's how it affected me.

That's also how it affected these men, after the resurrection. Jesus Christ continued to preach to them the gospel of the kingdom of God during those forty days before his ascension. Our Lord told them to tarry in Jerusalem until the promise of the Father, the holy spirit, had come. He had told them of this at the last supper. On the day of Pentecost, they received the God-given enablement to stand as never before. What changed the lives of these men? What was their response to what had happened? What was their response to this man dying for them and having been given as a sacrifice by God?

They stood up boldly and they spoke out boldly. Boldly. They didn't let anything silence them. They didn't let their feelings or their emotions get in their way. They stood up boldly in the middle of thousands of people, after being behind closed doors filled with fear. Now that they had received the spirit, they stood up boldly.

And Peter stood up with them and spoke to thousands of them that day.

Acts 2:22-28:

You men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as you yourselves also know.

Him, being delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Peter is speaking to the same religious leaders and many of the same people responsible for the crucifixion. Look at his boldness and his fearlessness.

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

For David speaketh concerning him [in Psalms 16:8-11], I foresaw the Lord [the Messiah] always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope [I will rest in the hope, knowing of his coming and of his ultimate Kingdom]:

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [in the grave], neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.

Thou hast made known unto me [David] the ways of life [God you have made known unto me the way of life - the resurrection]; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance [with your presence].

In that wonderful day, David had the same hope as our Lord. The hope of the resurrection from the dead and to be forever with God in eternity.

Verses 29-32:

Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ [the Messiah], that his soul was not left in hell [the grave], neither his flesh did see corruption.

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

This Jesus of Nazareth, Peter said- the one who was with you, the one who walked among you, the one who did signs and wonders, the one that you crucified- this Jesus of Nazareth hath God raised up, and we are all witnesses.

Acts 2:33-35:

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord [Jehovah] said unto my Lord [the Messiah], Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

That day is coming.

Verse 36:

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

The Christ. The Messiah. The resurrection is the proof who he is.

This is how their lives changed. This is to be the response of those of us who have chosen to be his disciples, also. We are to boldly proclaim the message that this Jesus is both the Lord and the Messiah, the Christ. This is what he wants us to do.

If you want to walk for your God, this is the proper response to what our Lord has accomplished. Preach the word of God as they did and as our Lord commanded.

Mark 16:15:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.