

## Jesus Death

“I gave My back to those who strike, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard;  
I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.” (Isa. 50:6).

### Prequel: Psalm 22

Lament psalms are composed with generic language appropriate for any who find themselves in a similar situation so that they might use the patterned prayer to make their request to God.<sup>1</sup> David composed Psalm 22 as a lament psalm and thus a passionate cry for God’s help in a difficult situation. We don’t know what the situation was out of which he cried these words, but many have found that the psalm describes events that Jesus could have verbalized surrounding His death. The most compelling connection to the psalm is John’s mention in John 19:24 that fulfills the quote from Psalm 22:18 “They divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.” Such a Davidic pattern is filled out by Jesus’ situation rather fully. The author of Hebrews even has Jesus own praise from Psalm 22:22 to identify us as His brethren (Heb. 2:12). Other points are sometimes made (the verbal abuse, the exposure, the finishing of the event) but none of the gospels explicitly state that other things from this psalm are fulfilled in Jesus’ death. So I include Psalm 22 here as a prequel from David’s life to show some of the level at which Jesus also suffered.

For the choir director in the tune of “The Hind of the Morning.”  
A Psalm of David.

My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?  
Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.  
O my God, I cry by day, but Thou dost not answer;  
And by night, but I have no rest.  
Yet Thou art holy,  
O Thou who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel.  
In Thee our fathers trusted;  
They trusted, and Thou didst deliver them.  
To Thee they cried out, and were delivered;  
In Thee they trusted, and were not disappointed.

But I am a worm, and not a man,  
A reproach of men, and despised by the people.  
All who see me sneer at me;  
They separate with the lip, they wag the head, *saying*,  
Commit *thyself* to the Lord; let Him deliver him;  
Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Anderson, *Out of the Depths: The Psalms Speak for Us Today* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), p. 83 and 1970 edition, p. 59; Claus Westermann, *The Psalms: Structure, Content & Message* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980), pp. 63–64.

Yet Thou art He who didst bring me forth from the womb;  
Thou didst make me trust upon my mother's breasts.  
Upon Thee I was cast from birth  
Thou hast been my God from my mother's womb.

Be not far from me, for trouble is near;  
For there is none to help.  
Many bulls have surrounded me;  
Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled me.  
They open wide their mouth at me,  
As a ravening and roaring lion.  
I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint;  
My heart is like wax; it is melted within me.  
My strength is dried up like a potsherd,  
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;  
And Thou dost lay me in the dust of death.  
For dogs have surrounded me;  
They pierced my hands and feet.  
I can count all my all my bones.  
They look, they stare at me;  
They divide my garments among them,  
And for my clothing they cast lots.

But Thou, O Lord be not far off;  
O Thou my help, hasten to my assistance.  
Deliver my soul from the sword,  
My only *life* from the power of the dog.  
Save me from the lion's mouth;  
And from the horns of the wild oxen Thou dost answer me.

I will tell of Thy name to my brethren;  
In the midst of the assembly I will praise Thee.  
You who fear the Lord, praise Him;  
All you descendents of Jacob, glorify Him;  
And stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel.  
For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;  
Neither has He hid His face from him;  
But when he cried to Him for help, He heard.

From Thee *comes* my praise in the great assembly;  
I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him.  
The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;  
Those who seek Him will praise the Lord.  
Let your heart live forever!  
All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord,  
And all the families of the nations will worship before Thee.

For the Kingdom is the Lord's,  
And He rules over the nations.  
All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship,  
All those who go down to the dust will bow before Him,  
Even he who cannot keep his soul alive.  
Posterity will serve Him;  
It will be told of the Lord to the *coming* generation.  
They will come and will declare His righteousness  
To a people who will be born, that He has performed *it*.

### Jesus Death as Presented by the Synoptics

When an evangelical considers the death of Jesus Christ it is often viewed as vicarious atonement for the believer's salvation. This understanding is foreign to the synoptics.<sup>2</sup> For example, when an interpreter uses Jesus' words like "the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost" (Lk. 19:10) as referring to the effectiveness of Jesus atonement, the interpreter ignores the contextual meaning of this text. These words do not come in a context of Jesus death, but rather Jesus present earthly ministry to forgive sin.<sup>3</sup> That is, they show that Jesus is committed to include among His disciples unto Kingdom, even the unattractive, like a short tax collector named Zaccheus.

The synoptic treatment of Jesus death is almost entirely just a straightforward historical narrative. This means that the story of Jesus death is valued on its own merits, without rendering it into a forum of apologetics or a fountain of theological significance. That is, the synoptic death narrative is not repeatedly punctuated by statements of fulfilling Scripture, or miracle, or Spirit fostered prophecy or explanation of a deeper meaning, as in the birth narratives. Therefore, John's passion narrative, which is punctuated by specifically fulfilling Scripture texts has this additional evidential emphasis not developed by the synoptics (Jn. 18:32; 19:24, 28, 36). It is as though this section of the synoptic gospels has joined Luke's emphasis in recounting an exact account of what the eye witnesses said occurred (Lk. 1:1-4). The other comments about Jesus death and resurrection are rare in the synoptics but tend to fit into two other basic categories: 1) prediction that Jesus would suffer, die and resurrect, and 2) statements about a cup. This chapter examines these three developments of Jesus death in the synoptics, namely: predicted, cup statements, and the historical story.

### Jesus Death in Prediction

Jesus predicts His death and resurrection as historical events. For example, Jesus predicts that He must suffer many things from the elders, chief priests and scribes, and be condemned to death (Mt. 16:21; 17:12, 22-23; 20:18; Mk. 8:31; 9:12, 31; Lk. 9:22, 44; 17:25; 18:31; 22:22). In the synoptics, Jesus does not explain why this must happen; He just said it must take place. These wicked religious leaders were simply following in the

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<sup>2</sup> Marvin Pate and Douglas Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet: The New Testament and the Great Tribulation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), pp. 316-325, 413-421, 461-467.

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Darrel Bock, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), vol. 2, p. 1523.

foolish way to kill the righteous man who showed up their evil ways.<sup>4</sup> Jesus predicts that His death would be by crucifixion and that He would resurrect on the third day (Mt. 16:21; 17:9, 23; 20:19; Mk. 9:31; Lk. 9:22). At times the disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying (e.g., Lk. 9:44).

Jesus sets his resolve like flint to suffer (Isa. 50:6–7) because He realized that the Kingdom is only obtainable by going through the Messianic woes (Dan. 9:24–27). It is these Messianic woes that begin His martyrdom and the potential martyrdom of His disciples. Albert Schweitzer developed this briefly as follows:

In order to understand Jesus' resolve to suffer, we must first recognize that the mystery of this suffering is involved in the mystery of the kingdom of god, since the kingdom cannot come until the [tribulation] *peirasmōs* has taken place... The novelty lies in the form in which [the sufferings] are conceived. The tribulation, so far as Jesus is concerned, is now connected with an historical event: He will go to Jerusalem, there to suffer death at the hands of the authorities... In the secret of His passion which Jesus reveals to the disciples at Caesarea Philippi the pre-Messianic tribulation is... concentrated upon Himself alone, and that in the form that they are fulfilled in His own passion and death at Jerusalem. That was the new conviction that had dawned upon Him. He must suffer for others... that the Kingdom might come.<sup>5</sup>

These predictions of Jesus' crucifixion, provide a call to the cost of discipleship and reassurance that the death and resurrection were God's plan. The main contextual implication for Jesus death in these predictive comments is an under-girding of the cost of discipleship; since Jesus is heading for crucifixion, the true disciple must follow him by taking up their cross in impending martyrdom as well (Mt. 10:38–39; 16:24–26; Mk. 8:34–37; Lk. 9:23–26; 14:27).<sup>6</sup> That is, they must be ready for the live possibility that those who will kill Christ, may kill them as well (e.g., Acts 7:54–60; 12:1–6).<sup>7</sup> This mimetic atonement view was common in Jewish,<sup>8</sup> Greek and Roman literature.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This fits the Jewish pattern spoken by *Wis.* 2.12–20.

<sup>5</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (London: A. & C. Black, 1906, 1954), pp. 384–90; for an expansion of this perspective see Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*.

<sup>6</sup> This emphasis is in line with that of scholarly commentators on these verses. E.g., W. D. Davies and Dale Allison, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), vol. 2, pp. 222–223, 670–671; Donald Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in Matthew* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier Press, 1985), pp. 40–45; Robert Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 452–454; Darrel Bock, *Luke*, vol. 1, pp. 850–857, and vol. 2, pp. 1286–7; Brian Beck, “‘*Imitatio Christi*’ and the Lucan Passion Narrative” in *Suffering and Martyrdom in the New Testament* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 28–47.

<sup>7</sup> E.g., Nero's persecution of Christians, Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44; *1 Clement* 6; *Did.* 16.3–5.

<sup>8</sup> *1 Macc.* 2.27–28; *2 Macc.* 6.12–7.42; *4 Macc.* 1.8–11; 6.27–30; 7.8–9; 9.23–24; 10.10; 11.12–27; 12.16–18; 16.16, 24–25; 17.2, 11–22; 18.1–5; *Wisdom* 2.12–20; 3.5–6; 4.18–5.14; 7.14; 11.19; 12.22; *T. of Moses* 9–10.10; cf. Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*, pp. 29–71; David Seeley, *The Noble Death. Greco-Roman Martyrology and Paul's Concept of Salvation. JSNT Supp. Ser. 28* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); Joel Green, *The Death of Jesus: Tradition and Interpretation in the Passion Narrative, WUNT 2/33* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1988), p. 168.

<sup>9</sup> E.g., Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales. LCL.* trans. R. M. Gummere (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947) 24.4–7; 98.12–14; Silius Italicus, *Punica LLC*, Trans. J. D. Duff (Cambridge:

Likewise, the one contextual implication for Jesus' resurrection predictions is to point out that Jesus' resurrection will be a sign like that of Jonah so that others will later (when it happens) know who Jesus is as One greater than Jonah (Mt. 12:38–41).<sup>10</sup> Likewise, John also reflects an enigmatic prediction from Jesus of His resurrection as a sign which was misunderstood as His opposition to the Temple (Jn. 2:18–22; Mt. 26:61; 27:40; Mk. 14:58; 15:29).<sup>11</sup> Instead, Jesus referred to the raising of the temple of His body.

Most of these predictive statements about Jesus' death and resurrection are removed some distance from the narrative of Jesus' death and resurrection showing that especially Mark and Matthew's *narrative of Jesus death and resurrection* does not set up an evidential demonstration. Of course, when the events of Jesus life in history are taken as a whole the fact that He has predicted His death and resurrection do show that they were within His and God's plan. The narratives that recount Jesus death and resurrection draw along this sense from the historical to the retold. However, only in John's gospel is the retelling of Jesus' death and resurrection emphasizing a fulfillment theme by punctuating it with fulfilled prophecy statements. Matthew and Luke's birth narratives show that they could have included this fulfillment theme. The narrative of Jesus death is a straight forward retelling of what happened.

The primary predictions that are close to the crucifixion narrative are predictions about Judas' betrayal, Peter's denials, and the disciples scattering. All three of these predictions occur at the celebration of Passover. Jesus identifies that one of His disciples would betray Him, the one who dips his hand in a bowl with Jesus and to whom Jesus gives a bread piece (Mt. 26:23–25; Mk. 14:18–21; Lk. 22:21–22). This identifies Judas as the betrayer. In regard to this betrayal, there are several details itemized as *fulfilling* O.T. prophecy, namely: 1) the betrayal money was thirty pieces of silver and that it bought a potter's field, and that 2) Judas forfeits his portion and position through this betrayal (Pss. 69:25; 109:8; Zech. 11:12–13; Mt. 26:54–56; 27:9–10; Mk. 14:49; Acts 1:20). Jesus does not develop His own death here but rather the horrible consequences of dishonor and damnation that await Judas, since he is described as "lost" as "the son of perdition" (Jn. 17:12).<sup>12</sup> The potential damnation is also hinted at: 1) by Jesus through His statement that "it would have been better for him to have never been born," (Mt. 26:24; Mk. 14:21),<sup>13</sup> 2) by Luke's description that Satan enters Judas (Lk. 22:3), and 3)

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Harvard, University Press, 1949) 6.531–38; Tacitus, *Annals LLC*. Trans. J. Jackson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951) 15.62 and 16.35; *Epictetus* 4.1.168–172; cf. Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*, pp. 19–28; David Seeley, *The Noble Death*; Charles Talbert, *Learning Through Suffering. The Educational Value of Suffering in the New Testament and Its Milieu* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), pp. 17–29.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 242–5.

<sup>11</sup> The Messiah is predicted to be the builder of the Temple (2 Sam. 7:13; 1 Chr. 17:12; Zech. 4:7–10; *Sib. Or.* 5.420–33). *4QFlor.* 1.1–13 identifies that in the end times (utilizing 2 Sam. 7:13) the Jerusalem Temple will be built but by someone other than the Messiah. Elsewhere, God is portrayed to be the builder of the Temple: *1 En* 90.28–29; *Jub.* 1.17; *2 Bar.* 4.3; 32.4; *11QTemple* 29.8–10; *4QFlor.* 1.3, 6; *Midr. Ps.* 90.17; *Mekilta* of R. Ishmael 3.

<sup>12</sup> Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John (xiii–xxi)* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co. 1970), p. 760; This is the more damning evidence against Judas, but the other two notes to follow, speak in this direction.

<sup>13</sup> Compare: Mt. 18:6–9; 2 Pet. 2:20; *1 En.* 38.2; *1 Clem.* 46.8; *Hermas, Vis.* 4.2; *m. Hag.* 2.1.

that Peter mentions that Judas goes “to his own place” (Acts 1:25).<sup>14</sup> The disciples are clearly upset about such a revelation and repeatedly claim that they will be loyal.

In contrast, Jesus predicts that the disciples will all scatter (Zech. 13:7; Mt. 26:31–32; Mk. 14:27). The disciples are not as loyal as they think when brought face to face with their impending martyrdom. Peter’s denials (which Jesus predicts) are a special example calling down this overconfidence (Mt. 26:33–35; Mk. 14:29–31; Lk. 22:31–34). Jesus disorients Peter with the claim that Satan will sift him, which results in Peter denying Jesus three times. Jesus reassures Peter that he will strengthen the disciples after his denials. The passion narrative alludes to this prediction very softly by recounting that after Peter denied Jesus and the cock crowed, then Peter remembered Jesus’ statement that he would deny Him.

Only Luke 22:37 mentions as they are leaving the upper room that Jesus is to be classed among criminals. This mention of Isaiah 53:12 is the section of the servant song that emphasizes how to recognize this servant, much like Luke cites from the same section in Acts 8:32–33 (Isa. 53:8–9), Luke does not develop any atonement issue surrounding these Isaiah quotes, they only serve as issues of recognizing the servant.<sup>15</sup> Without Luke developing the atonement theme, it would be a reader’s assumption to claim that it was there. In fact, Luke diminishes this quote by preceding it with what to take and then following it with disciples acknowledging that they have two swords. None of these predictions develop the significance of Jesus death; all of them explain the disciples’ own lives as the drama unfolds around them.

Luke is unique among the synoptics in developing two resurrection appearances in which Jesus recounts from the O.T. why the Christ had to suffer these things to enter glory (Lk. 24:26–27, 44–46). Both of these appearances of the resurrected Christ that allude to predictive evidence as given by Christ are unique to Luke. These mentions of Christ’s predictive suffering are: 1) to disciples on the Emmaus road, and 2) when these disciples told the other disciples what happened. Both O.T. allusions are presented by Luke as brief recitals of what Jesus said with no more specifics than the mention that Christ must suffer, die and rise again on the third day. These prophecies come from Moses, the prophets and the Psalms, though no specific texts are mentioned. Presumably, the O.T. texts to which Jesus pointed are the ones pointed at by the apostles in the Acts gospel presentations.<sup>16</sup> These two accounts reacting to Jesus’ death do not reflect an evidential emphasis but rather, since they are mere summaries of much longer discussions, Luke downplays the potential evidential apologetic for a simple retelling of the dramatic narrative of Jesus’ death.

### Cup Descriptions of Jesus’ Death

There are three cup descriptions of Jesus’ death: 1) the cup that the Zebedee brother’s will also take, 2) the cup in the Gethsemane prayer, and 3) the last supper cup.

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<sup>14</sup> John Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica. Matthew–1 Corinthians. Volume 4 Acts–1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, originally 1859, 1979), p. 19.

<sup>15</sup> Notice Biblical theology’s goal is not to expound what is in the mind of the Biblical author, but to expound what the Biblical author actually said. Luke never said Jesus atones as in Isaiah 53:5–6, 10, Luke merely claims Jesus death is recognizable by his silence (quoting Isaiah 53:7–8 in Acts 8:32–33). Likewise, Matthew only connects this Servant song to be an expression of Jesus’ healing (Mt. 8:17).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. chapter on “Jesus as Gospel.”

The first two cup accounts allude to Jesus' death through the O.T. metaphor of the cup of God's wrath (Pss. 11:6; 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15, 17, 27; 49:12; 51:7; Rev. 16:1–18:6), as evident by the juxtaposing of Jesus' suffering and cross closely to these cup references (Mt. 20:18–19, 22–23; 26:36–44; Mk. 14:33–41; Lk. 22:42 with ch. 23). These cup references apply God's judging wrath in Babylonian conquest of Israel and ultimately in God's conquest of Babylon the Great. In the application of this to Jesus and those who share such tribulation with Him. This cup becomes the Messianic woes.

In the first account, Mother Zebedee asked for her sons to sit at Jesus' right and left in the kingdom (Mt. 20:18–24; Mk. 10:35–41). Jesus responds to the Zebedee boys and mother, that they do not know what they are asking. "Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?"<sup>17</sup> The Zebedee boys do not realize that Jesus is alluding to God's cup of wrath poured out for Jesus' martyrdom. However, they say, "we are able." To which Jesus responds, "My cup you shall drink," fulfilling their disciple role of being like their master in martyrdom. James dies under the zeal of Herod to persecute the church (Acts 12:2), and John dies exiled to Patmos after boiling in oil under Domitian persecution and survived till Nerva's reign.<sup>18</sup> Bear in mind that if the disciples partake of the cup of God's wrath in mimetic atonement, then Jesus' experience as developed in this context is not a unique vicarious atonement. It is better to see neither the disciples' nor Jesus' cup taking *developed in this context* as depicting a vicarious atonement than to fund a conjectured vicarious atonement off the martyrdom of the disciples and Christ, because mimetic atonement coheres within the second Temple Jewish pattern.

However, the role of sitting on Jesus right or left is not Jesus' but the Father's to designate. Jesus then deals with the deeper issue in their lives. Greatness in the kingdom is not that of lording over others but of serving others (Mt. 20:25–28; Mk. 10:42–45). It is in this context that Jesus says, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45).<sup>19</sup>

Here Jesus' life given includes his death (through the cup imagery) but He emphasizes His life spent in service as the example of true Kingdom greatness which His disciples are to follow. That is, mimetic atonement has Jesus' servanthood life as the price of ransom (λύτρον) rescuing the many from an ambiguous bondage into His Kingdom way. If λύτρον is defined by the other synoptic references, such ransoming has to do with God's raising up a Davidic King to deliver Israel from their enemies (Lk. 1:68–69; 2:38; 24:21), not a vicarious atonement for sin. This follows the Jewish pattern

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<sup>17</sup> This mimetic atonement suffering is additionally supported by Jesus' metaphor of baptism within an O.T. concept of suffering by submersion (2 Sam. 22:4–7, 17–18; Pss. 18:4–6, 16–17; 32:6; 42:7; 69:1–2, 13–17; 124:1–5 [repeated liturgically as a song of ascent]; 144:7–11; Job 22:11).

<sup>18</sup> Ireneaus, *Her.* 3.1.1; Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.34.13; John Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956), pp. 513–31.

<sup>19</sup> A defense of the authenticity of this statement, cf. A Feuillet, "La coupe et le baptême de la passion (Mc, x, 35–40; Mt. xx, 20–23; Lc., xxii, 50) *RB* 74(1967): 356–91; V. Howard, "Did Jesus Speak About His Own Death?" *CBQ* 39(1977): 515–27; M. Casey, *Aramaic Sources of Mark's Gospel. SNTSMS 102* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 206; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 147; Scot McKnight, *Jesus and His Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005), pp. 356–8 conjectures that Mark reflects Isaiah 53. However, in Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*, pp. 316–18, 328–332, we explore the possibility of Isaiah 53 lying beneath these verses, examining the alternatives and concluding that the near context emphasis should not be overruled by the pendulum swing of plausible academic conjecture.

where martyr's death ransom the Covenant people Israel from the sins of the nation.<sup>20</sup> For example, in *4 Maccabees* 6.29 a prayer is uttered by those on the battlefield, "Make my blood their purification, and take my life in exchange for theirs." The speaker goes on to exhort others to "imitate me" in remaining faithful on the battlefield even if martyrdom is their lot.<sup>21</sup> *4 Maccabees* 17.20–22 goes on to praise the martyrs for becoming "a ransom for the sin of our nation. And through the blood of those devout ones and their death as an atoning sacrifice, divine Providence preserved Israel." In second Temple Jewish Greek manuscripts of mimetic atonement, this atonement is conveyed by words like: through (διὰ), example (ὑπόδειγμα), and the contextual pattern imitative death.<sup>22</sup> George Nickelsburg explains this second Temple Jewish mimetic atonement option from passages in *2 Maccabees* 6:18–7:44, *1 Maccabees* 2 and the *Testament of Moses* 9.

Each instance recounts the event which the respective author interprets as the catalyst that turns God's wrath from Israel and brings release from the persecution. Each is a story about parent and sons who are ready to die rather than transgress the Torah. The *Testament of Moses*, written in the heat of persecution, anticipates an apocalyptic denouement in which God will avenge the innocent blood of his servants, notably Taxo and his sons. The Deuteronomic scheme of the *Testament of Moses* turns on this author's interpretation of Deuteronomy 32:43 (9:7; 10:2). For the pro-Hasmonean author of *1 Maccabees*, Mattathias' zealous deed stays God's wrath (cf. Num. 25:8, 11). The Maccabean victories are an answer to the dying patriarch's appeal to execute judgment on the Syrians (2:66–68; cf. Deut. 32:43). The version of the story in *2 Maccabees* 7 takes cognizance of the fact that it was Judas Maccabeus who turned back the Syrian armies and brought deliverance to Israel. However, although Taxo's prediction has not been fulfilled as stated, our author nevertheless espouses in part the ideology of the *Testament of Moses*. The innocent deaths of the martyrs and their appeal for vengeance before and after death (7:37; 8:3) contribute to turn God's wrath to mercy (8:5) and facilitate the Maccabean victories that are recounted through the rest of the book.<sup>23</sup>

However, in this synoptic context, battlefield service is not in view but rather serving through humility as Jesus provides the example. However, gaining Kingdom is the goal in both the Maccabean and in Jesus' humble service. Jesus had repeatedly called His disciples to take up their cross and follow Him in this mimetic atonement (Mt. 10:38; 16:24–27; Mk. 8:34–38; Lk. 9:22–26; Jn. 12:24–25).

In the synoptic passages, "the many" is the New Covenant people, whom Jesus is gathering around Him. Such a Kingdom meaning fits delightfully in this passage that acknowledges Jesus as the King in His Kingdom but not like other kings (Mt. 20:21, 25;

<sup>20</sup> *1QpHab.* 8.1–3; *2 Macc.* 6.30; 7.9, 11, 14, 16–17, 22–23, 29, 30–38, 36–38; *4 Macc.* 6.27–29; 9.23–24; 17.21–22.

<sup>21</sup> *4 Macc.* 9.23–24.

<sup>22</sup> E.g., *2 Macc.* 6:31; *4 Macc.* 17:20–22.

<sup>23</sup> George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah. A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 119–120.

Mk. 10:42). This ransom is “for” (ἀντὶ) the many in this gospel context. That word ἀντὶ has the sense of “on behalf of” or “in place of.” In this case both could apply. Jesus shows His greatness as King in taking the place of servants and serving on their behalf throughout His kingly life on earth and as supremely exemplified in His death with God’s wrath. The point of the passage is not vicarious atonement but by contextual emphasis this passage shows that disciples are also to be servants after Jesus’ pattern. As such, this passage follows the Jewish mimetic atonement pattern.<sup>24</sup>

The Gethsemane prayer also develops the cup of God’s wrath. Such a wrathful metaphor usually develops a severe judgment (Pss. 11:6; 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15, 17, 27; 49:12; 51:7; Rev. 16:1–18:6). Jesus identifies this judgment imagery with his impending death (Mt. 26:37–38; Mk. 14:33–34). Jesus is deeply grieved sweating what looked like drops of blood (Lk. 22:44). Jesus prayed, “If it is possible let this cup pass from Me” (Mt. 26:39, 42, 44; Mk. 36, 39, 41; Lk. 22:42). Jesus is not trying to get out of His death in a moment of weakness; He knows full well and is committed to taking the cup God provides in His death (Jn. 18:11). Rather Jesus knows His death is imminent. It is a death which in the Jewish tradition could be either vicarious<sup>25</sup> or mimetic atonement.<sup>26</sup> Both options are available in Jewish literature, though mimetic atonement has more emphasis in the Jewish literature and is the only option clearly developed in the synoptics. However, in this context, neither Jesus nor the Biblical authors explain which option is to be understood. Jesus has been prophesying throughout His ministry and just a few moments before at the Passover that He was about to die. So since Jesus is not asking “Do not let Me die” then His request must be: “Father let the wrathful judgment pass on from Me after I die.” That is, Jesus is praying for His own resurrection on the other side of the judgment.<sup>27</sup> Matthew 26:42 implies that the cup cannot pass away unless He drinks it. This would mean that Jesus’ “will” is for release from judgment to obtain resurrection, though He is open to the Father’s will if it should run counter. As understood, Jesus actually received from the Father the passing on of the cup in resurrection after His death, as Jesus had asked for in His prayer. This interpretation also best fits with the description of the Gethsemane prayer in Hebrews 5:7 as being answered in the affirmative since the word “heard” means a positive answer (e.g., 1 Jn. 5:14–15 and in the Psalms). So while the cup briefly alludes to the precariousness of Jesus’ death, the Gethsemane passages actually emphasize the effectiveness of Jesus’ prayer life to obtain resurrection on the other side of death.

In the account of Passover or Lord’s Supper, brief allusions to Jesus’ impending death are made. Jesus desired to eat the Passover with His apostles before He suffered

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<sup>24</sup> *1 Macc.* 2.27–28; *2 Macc.* 6.12–7.42; *4 Macc.* 1.8–11; 6.27–30; 7.8–9; 9.23–24; 10.10; 11.12–27; 12.16–18; 16.16, 24–25; 17.2, 11–22; 18.1–5; *Wisdom* 2.12–20; 3.5–6; 4.18–5.14; 7.14; 11.19; 12.22; *IQ5* 5.6; *IQS* 9.4–5; *IQ34* bis 3 1, 5; *4Q508* 1,1; *4Q513* frag. 2 2.4; *11Q10* (*Tg. Job*) 38.2; *Sipre Deut.* Pisqa 333.5; *T. of Moses* 9–10.10; cf. Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*, pp. 29–71; Robert Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 869.

<sup>25</sup> Isa. 53; *1 En.*; cf. Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*, pp. 73–115.

<sup>26</sup> *1 Macc.* 2.27–28; *2 Macc.* 6.12–7.42; *4 Macc.* 1.8–11; 6.27–30; 7.8–9; 9.23–24; 10.10; 11.12–27; 12.16–18; 16.16, 24–25; 17.2, 11–22; 18.1–5; *Wisdom* 2.12–20; 3.5–6; 4.18–5.14; 7.14; 11.19; 12.22; *T. of Moses* 9–10.10; cf. Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*, pp. 29–71.

<sup>27</sup> cf. Craig Blaising, “Gethsemane a Prayer of Faith,” *JETS* 22(1979): 333–43; this view is not sufficiently countered by the disjunction (contrary to Gundry, *Mark*, p. 870) because Jesus is willing to be damned (as the alternative to resurrection) if the Father wills, but Jesus asks for resurrection.

(Lk. 22:14–15).<sup>28</sup> These synoptic accounts contrast with John, who instead has the Passover celebrated by those in Jerusalem on the night after Jesus dies (Jn. 18:28). Presumably, those who were visiting in Jerusalem had to fit their celebration of Passover around the availability of rooms, which were of course already booked at the regular time by those who lived in Jerusalem.

A Passover celebration had a liturgical pattern to it. The meal would begin with the head of the family blessing the feast day and then passing the first cup of wine, which is followed by passing preliminary dishes of bitter herbs and fruit purée. The Passover liturgy would follow with some instruction on the meaning of the commemoration and likely singing of Psalms 113–4. The liturgy concludes with a second cup of wine. The meal would follow with the roasted lamb, the breaking of the unleavened bread, and bitter herbs with fruit purée (Ex 12:8). This portion of the meal is concluded with the third cup of wine, which is blessed as the cup of blessing. A further time of praise (normally singing Psalms 115–8) is followed by the praise or Kingdom cup.

In Jesus' celebration of the Passover, Matthew and Mark describe the bread broken as "This is My body" symbolizing Jesus' impending death. Jesus in Luke says, "This is My body given for you" (Lk. 22:19, ὑπὲρ). Here Jesus' body is given in death for the disciples benefit. Jesus' death in the Jewish tradition could be vicarious<sup>29</sup> or mimetic atonement.<sup>30</sup> However, no specific benefit is developed in the bread/body phrases. Only Luke 22:16 develops that Jesus will not eat bread again until the Kingdom comes. The cup<sup>31</sup> statement is a little more fruitful since it is developed as Jesus' blood poured out for many (Mt. 26:27–28, περὶ; Mk. 14:24 and Lk. 22:20, ὑπὲρ). The covenant alluded to in Matthew and Mark is rendered explicit in Luke as the New Covenant. However, the New covenant in the O.T. passages develop Kingdom imagery rather than death imagery (Jer. 31:31 and perhaps a future predicted everlasting covenant of Kingdom peace in Isa. 55:3; Jer. 32:40; Ezek. 16:60–63; 37:26). This could be a sacrificial statement either as was required: 1) to begin the Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 24:5–8), or 2) in mimetic atonement as the Maccabean revolt to brought by the sacrifice of the soldiers on the field of battle.<sup>32</sup> If the synoptic gospels had developed Levitical sacrifice imagery or imagery of sprinkling the people, as Hebrews 9:11–10:18 and 1 Peter 1:2 develop, then the synoptics would be clearly developing a vicarious atonement, but there is no development of vicarious atonement in these synoptic passages. Likewise, if this passage developed the need for disciples to take up their cross and follow Him, then this passage would be explaining a mimetic atonement. However, no synoptic gospel

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<sup>28</sup> Because the Last Supper is with Jesus and the apostles (Lk. 22:14–15), Mary Magdalene would not be present, since she is nowhere described as an apostle.

<sup>29</sup> Isa. 53; *1 En.*; cf. Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*, pp. 73–115.

<sup>30</sup> *1 Macc.* 2.27–28; *2 Macc.* 6.12–7.42; *4 Macc.* 1.8–11; 6.27–30; 7.8–9; 9.23–24; 10.10; 11.12–27; 12.16–18; 16.16, 24–25; 17.2, 11–22; 18.1–5; *Wisdom* 2.12–20; 3.5–6; 4.18–5.14; 7.14; 11.19; 12.22; *T. of Moses* 9–10.10; cf. Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*, pp. 318–319, 332–333.

<sup>31</sup> There is no evidence that the cup (holy grail) has been preserved though many medieval quests pursued the possibilities. Likewise, there is no evidence from Da Vinci's Renaissance rendering of the "Last Supper" that Mary Magdalene is a holy grail as Dan Brown's fanciful *Da Vinci Code* ([N.Y.: Doubleday, 2003], pp. 230–239) claims.

<sup>32</sup> *1 Macc.* 2.27–28; *2 Macc.* 6.12–7.42; *4 Macc.* 1.8–11; 6.27–30; 7.8–9; 9.23–24; 10.10; 11.12–27; 12.16–18; 16.16, 24–25; 17.2, 11–22; 18.1–5; *Wisdom* 2.12–20; 3.5–6; 4.18–5.14; 7.14; 11.19; 12.22; *T. of Moses* 9–10.10; cf. Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*, pp. 29–71.

explains this Last Supper atonement in this passage. So perhaps this reference should be seen as making the point of identifying many, especially the disciples, with Kingdom. In Matthew 26:28 the manner of benefit of Jesus' death is explained as for (εἰς) or to the outcome of forgiveness of sins. As previously developed such forgiveness is granted by fiat from the Divine and His King as part of the Jubilee ministry in Jesus life.<sup>33</sup> The time of forgiveness is not explained here but by connecting Matthew with Luke, this forgiveness can be seen as the forgiveness in the New Covenant, which Jeremiah identifies as in the days when Israel will be responsive to the Law and the Lord, such that there will be no need for evangelism (Jer. 31:33–34), which has not happened yet. Eschatological forgiveness is not required by Matthew here but it would be consistent with his development elsewhere (Mt. 18:22–35). Thus, the manner in which Jesus death brings about forgiveness is not developed in the synoptics, and since it is merely one obscure clause in the synoptics it is certainly not an emphasis.

As the Lord's Supper finishes, Luke identifies that Judas would betray Him (Lk. 20:21–23). Jesus identified Judas as His betrayer by dipping bread in the bitter herbs at the same time as Judas and giving it to him (Mt. 26:21–25; Mk. 14:18–21; Lk. 22:21–23; Jn. 13:18–27). The only encouragement<sup>34</sup> Jesus gives Judas for doing the deed is present in John 13:27–30, "What you do, do quickly." No other disciple understood this comment, expecting Judas to either be told to give alms to the poor, or buy something for the feast.

### Jesus Passion

The historicity of the passion accounts is assumed here, and has been treated elsewhere by other authors,<sup>35</sup> so that the focus of this section is theological. That is "What is trying to be communicated by such brief, streamlined recounting of what took place in Christ's passion?" The three synoptic passion accounts each treat the death and resurrection of Jesus in a straight forward historical manner, without embellishments of fulfilling prophecy or explaining their theological significance. If there is an emphasis beyond the historical witness, it is that Jesus is the King of the Jews. However, the accounts flow with plenty of narrative material which emerges in the tapestry of the context. The narrative unfolds.

The first event in the Johannine account is Lazarus' sister Mary anointing Jesus, which occurs about a week and a half before Jesus dies (Jn. 12:1–8). At a celebration supper for Lazarus' resurrection, Mary took her dowry oil of spikenard and anointed Jesus feet and wiping them with her hair. Judas pretended to care for the poor and berated her for the waste. Jesus stood up for the purity of her worship, explaining that she has reserved this anointing for the day of Jesus' burial.

Coming closer to Jesus' passion, Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss (Mt. 26:47–50; Mk. 14:42–45; Lk. 22:47–48). As the mob closes in, Peter cuts off the ear of Malchus, the servant (Mt. 26:50–56; Mk. 14:49; Lk. 22:49–53). Jesus heals the ear and tells

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. discussion of this in the chapter: "Kingdom Miracle Worker."

<sup>34</sup> *Gos. Judas* 5b identifies Judas as exceeding all evil or in gnostically freeing Jesus from His body. This is followed by poetic lines which speak of Judas' wrath kindled. These lines are not clear enough to be Jesus encouraging Judas.

<sup>35</sup> One of the best current examinations is: Scot McKnight, *Jesus and His Death*.

everyone to put up their weapons for He has twelve legions of angels available to Him if He desired their aid. He asked the mob why they came to Him in secret with weapons as to a robber. They seize Jesus and the disciples fled. One young man<sup>36</sup> escaped naked (Mk. 14:51–52).

John reports that Jesus first has a hearing before Annas (Jn. 18:13–24). During this hearing, Jesus speaks freely. Then Annas sent Him to Caiphas.

Jesus had a hearing before Caiphas where conflicting false testimony could not convict Him (Mt. 26:57–68; Mk. 14:55–66; Lk. 22:63–71; Acts 4:6).<sup>37</sup> The witnesses testified that Jesus claimed to be able to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Jesus had begun to be a real annoyance in running the money changers out of the Temple possibly three times, maybe twice in one week (Jn. 2:14–20; Mt. 21:12–13; Lk. 19:44–46; Mk. 11:11, 15–18). However, one of the primary charges is that Jesus claimed to be the Temple rebuilders, which role was understood at that time to be primarily a Divine role, though it also could be a Messianic claim (Mt. 26:61; Mk. 14:58; Acts 6:13–14).<sup>38</sup> Later the *Babylonian Talmud* claimed the charges to be: “because he practiced sorcery and enticed and led Israel astray.”<sup>39</sup> However, the conflicting testimony at this hearing did not allow any of these charges to stick. Jesus did not defend Himself before the Sanhedran (Mk. 14:61).<sup>40</sup> N. T. Wright sums up the reason the Jewish authorities had Jesus killed as a fivefold answer<sup>41</sup> and I add a sixth.

- 1) Because many (not least many Pharisees, but also, probably, the chief priests) saw him as ‘a false prophet, leading Israel astray’;<sup>42</sup>
- 2) because, as one aspect of this, they saw his Temple–action as a blow against the central symbol not only of national life but also of YHWH’s presence with his people.<sup>43</sup>
- 3) because, though he was clearly not leading a real or organized military revolt, he saw himself as in some sense Messiah, and could thus become a focus of serious revolutionary activity;
- 4) because, as the pragmatic focus of these three points, they saw him as a dangerous political nuisance, whose actions might well call down the wrath of Rome upon Temple and nation alike;<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The young man might be John Mark since his is the only account of this event.

<sup>37</sup> There are abundant irregularities of what becomes Jewish mishnaic judicial regulation: *Susannah* 44–59; *11QTemple* 61:9; *m. Sanh.* 4.1 prohibits night trials, 4.5; 7.5 a capital verdict cannot be passed against a blasphemer unless his blasphemy includes the divine name; cf. D. Juel, *Messiah and the Temple. SBLDS 31* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 59–64; Gundry, *Mark*, pp. 893–894.

<sup>38</sup> God is portrayed to be the builder of the Temple (*1 En* 90.28–29; *Jub.* 1.17; *11QTemple* 29.8–10; *4QFlor.* 1.3, 6; *Midr. Ps.* 90.17; *Mekilta* of R. Ishmael 3). Messiah is also claimed to be the Temple builder (2 Sam. 7:13; 1 Chr. 17:12; Zech. 4:7–10; *Sib. Or.* 5.420–33).

<sup>39</sup> *b. Sanh.* 43a and 107b.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Isa. 53:7; Acts 8:32–33; 1 Pet. 2:22–23; *Barnabas* 5.2, 14; *Sib. Or.* 8.288–293; *Odes of Sol.* 31.10–11; *Gos. Peter* 4.10; *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 8.3.

<sup>41</sup> N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, pp. 551–552; Kennard added the following notes.

<sup>42</sup> Point one is supported by *b. Sanh.* 43a and 107b.

<sup>43</sup> Point two is supported by Jer. 26:11 and Josephus, *War.* 6.300–309.

<sup>44</sup> Points three and four are virtually the same except point three fears Jewish abuse (as in Mt. 26:5) and point four fears Roman abuse (as emphasized in Jn. 11:48–50).

5) because, at the crucial moment in the hearing, he not only (as far as they were concerned) pleaded guilty to the above charges, but also did so in such a way as to place himself, blasphemously, alongside the god of Israel.<sup>45</sup>

6) because, Jesus was seen as a royal messianic pretender, which rendered the death sentence legal as an act of the Roman governor.<sup>46</sup>

As Wright mentioned in his fifth reason and I in the sixth reason, the high priest put Jesus under oath to truthfully tell whether He is the Christ (anointed as the King of the Jews), the Son of God (Mt. 26:63; 27:11; Mk. 15:2; Lk. 20:20; 22:67, 70; 23:2-3; Jn. 18:29-33; 19:7-9).<sup>47</sup> Jesus answers “yes” to these appellations and then identifies Himself as Daniel’s Son of Man who will come in the clouds to judge all and reign. This statement combines phrases from Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13 similar to what second Temple eschatological texts had done.<sup>48</sup> On this basis, Caiphas accuses Jesus of blasphemy for identifying Himself as the Messiah and sentences Jesus to death. Such a death sentence in the context of Jesus’ claims renders these religious leaders sentencing themselves to utter defeat and destruction under the conquest of the Son of Man. Ignorant of this, the other Sanhedrin participants<sup>49</sup> mock and beat Him.

Meanwhile Peter, who was warming himself in the courtyard, denies Jesus three times, even to a slave girl with an oath (Mt. 26:69–75; Mk. 14:66–72; Lk. 22:54–62).<sup>50</sup> Those around Peter could tell by his accent (probably the dropping of his H’s)<sup>51</sup> that he

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<sup>45</sup> The Biblical text has the religious leaders claim Jesus blasphemes in His claim to be Daniel’s Son of Man (Mt. 26:64–65; Mk. 14:62–64; Lk. 22:69–71).

<sup>46</sup> Tacitus, *Annales* 15.44.3; cf. A. E. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (London: Duckworth, 1982), ch. 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Gos. Peter* 3.6–9; 4.7, 11; 11.45–46; 15.32; around 200 A.D. Serapion discovered that the greater part of the *Gospel of Peter* was in accordance with the historical Jesus, but he rejected its authority, pointing out that there were heretical additions.

<sup>48</sup> *I En.* 62.5; *T. Benj.* 10.6; *T. Job* 33.3–9; *Apoc. Elijah* 1.8; Peter claims that the Psalm 110:1 claim is already realizable in Christ’s ascension to be seated God’s right hand (Acts 2:33–36; cf. Heb. 1:3, 13; 10:13).

<sup>49</sup> Jack T. Sanders (“The Pharisees in Luke-Acts” In *The Living Text: Essays in Honor of Ernest W. Saunders*, edited by Dennis E. Groh and Robert Jewett [Lanham: University Press, 1985], pp. 141–188, especially p. 148) argues that unlike Matthew and Mark which place the Pharisees as active opponents of Jesus to bring about Jesus death, Luke does not develop the Pharisees in this negative light. Sanders argues that the Pharisee’s only problems with Jesus in Luke is the repeated affirmation of His Messiahship and His claims to forgive sins (pp. 153–4). However, in this context surrounding Jesus death, Matthew 22:34, 41; 23:2, 13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29 and Mark 12:13 merely place the Pharisees as opponents to Jesus’ teaching. Matthew 27:62 includes the Pharisees as concerned to secure Jesus tomb, as though they were concerned that Jesus’ followers would not co-op the Pharisaic inclination to believe in resurrection; perhaps the Pharisees saw Jesus and His following as a rival Pharisaic sect. With regard to the death of Christ, the trial account actually describes the involvement to be especially the: chief priests, scribes, Sadducees, and the elders (Mt. 26:14, 47, 59, 62–65; 27:1, 6, 20, 41; Mk. 14:53, 55, 60, 63; 15:1; Lk. 22:2, 66; 23:1, 13). So that in fact, none of the synoptic accounts places the Pharisees as particularly culpable for Jesus death, though all synoptics recognize the Pharisees as opponents to Jesus’ teaching during His life time. Luke presents less Pharisaic rejection of Jesus’ teaching than is found in Matthew and Mark.

<sup>50</sup> Peter’s oath could have been in using the oath phrase, “I neither know nor understand what you’re saying;” *m. Šebu.* 8.3, 6.

<sup>51</sup> Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian’s Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 52–53 explains the Galilean tendency to drop H’s from pronunciation and cites a *Talmud* text *bErub.* 53b to example this with a purchase of something in Aramaic called ‘amar’ as follows, “You stupid

was a Galilean and accused him further of being one of Jesus' disciples. Peter denied her accusation with an oath. The cock crowed. Peter remembered Jesus' statement and notices Jesus' glance at him, so he ran away weeping.

After Jewish sentencing, the Romans had to grant permission for carrying out the death sentence (Jn. 18:31; 19:7).<sup>52</sup> With this in mind, Pilate questioned Jesus in the Praetorium and tried to release Him (Mt. 27:11–26; Mk. 15:1–15; Lk. 23:1–5, 13–25; Jn. 18:38–40). However, the Jewish leadership did not themselves enter the Praetorium so that they might not be defiled, but might be able to eat the Passover after sunset (Jn. 18:28). Pilate attempts to frustrate the Jewish leadership through his indifference to Jewish sensibilities.<sup>53</sup> Jesus was silent before Pilate and His accusers (Mk. 15:5).<sup>54</sup> Pilate's first attempt to release Jesus was to send Him to Herod. Luke recounts a unique hearing before Herod (Lk. 23:6–12), who previously wished to kill Jesus because he thought Jesus was John the Baptist resurrected (Mt. 14:1; Lk. 9:7; 13:31). Jesus was silent before Herod as the chief priests and scribes accused him vehemently.<sup>55</sup> Herod and his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt, mocking Him (Lk. 23:11; Acts 4:11). Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate declaring Him innocent and having Jesus dressed in a gorgeous robe of royalty.<sup>56</sup> Pilate now wished to release Jesus referring to him in His crown of thorns as "the man" (Jn. 19:5). Pilate even offered to punish and release Jesus instead of capital punishment (Lk. 23:16). However, the mob asked for Barabbas instead, and demanded Jesus be crucified, claiming that to not kill a pretender to kingship is a disloyalty to Caesar (Lk. 23:2; Jn. 19:12). Pilate was vulnerable to this insistence because he was a brute who bullied and took bribes.<sup>57</sup> The Jews pressed Pilate that if he did not kill Jesus then he was no "friend of Caesar" for letting a publicly proclaimed king not be condemned.<sup>58</sup> The Jews already had amassed a series of charges against Pilate but in about four years after this trial, when Pilate killed a mob of Jews, a delegation was sent to Rome. Tiberius recalled Pilate and had him executed. At this point, Pilate washed his hands in a play for innocence<sup>59</sup> but he still retained the power to thwart Jesus death and thus remained culpable. However, the mob claimed that Jesus' blood was on them and their children, thus affirming their greater culpability. Pilate had Jesus scourged and

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Galilean, do you want something to ride on (a donkey=*hamār*)? Or something to drink (wine=*hamar*)? Or something for clothing (wool=*amar*)? Or something for a sacrifice (lamb=*immar*)?"

<sup>52</sup> Josephus, *Bell.* 6.126; y. *Sanh.* 18a, 24b; However, the described stonings that occurred to Stephen (Acts 6–7) and James (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.200) do not include this feature. On the other hand, Acts 12:1–2 describes Herod as actively having James killed under his authority.

<sup>53</sup> Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius* 302; Josephus, *War* 2.169–77; *Ant.* 18.55–62, 85–87.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Isa. 53:7; Acts 8:32–33; 1 Pet. 2:22–23; *Barn.* 5.2, 14; *Sib. Or.* 8.288–293; *Odes of Sol.* 31.10–11; *Gos. Peter* 4.10; *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 8.3; in contrast John 18:33–38 includes Pilate and Jesus dialog with more detail, which will be commented on in the next section.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Isa. 53:7; Acts 8:32–33; 1 Pet. 2:22–23; *Barnabas* 5.2, 14; *Sib. Or.* 8.288–293; *Odes of Sol.* 31.10–11; *Gos. Peter* 4.10; *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 8.3.

<sup>56</sup> *Gos. of Peter* 1.2 and 2.5 has Herod deliver Jesus over to the Jewish people to be killed. However, the *Gos. of Peter* 11.47–48 identifies that Pilate has governance over Jesus' death and tomb.

<sup>57</sup> E.g., Philo, *Leg.* 302f.

<sup>58</sup> Tiberius policy was to not disturb the Jewish customs (Philo, *Leg.* 161, 304–5), so the Jewish leadership had leverage in 33 A.D. to press Pilate (who was vulnerable by this time because of the record of his abuses) to do their bidding.

<sup>59</sup> Corroboration also implied by the beginning to *Gos. of Peter* 1. Similar to: Pss. 26:6; 73:13; Aristeas, *Ep.* 305–6; Herodotus 1.35; Sophocles, *Ajax* 654; Ovid, *Fast.* 2.45–46; Virgil, *Aen.* 2.719.

delivered over to be crucified (Mt. 27:24–26; Mk. 15:15; Lk. 23:24; Jn. 19:16–21).<sup>60</sup> Matthew and Mark identify that the death of Christ was performed by the Praetorian Guard from the Roman cohort, specifically indicating their culpability (Mt. 27:27; Mk. 15:16). In this, Jesus was mocked by Pilate’s Roman soldiers as the king of the Jews in the same manner as Herod’s soldier’s had done (Mt. 27:27–31; Mk. 15:16–20; Jn. 19:2–3). In this mockery, the Romans gave Jesus the accoutrements of royalty: robes, crown and reed as scepter. Lagrange argues that in contrast to this account by Matthew and Mark, by leaving the scourging account out, Luke states that the Jewish leadership and presumably their guard carried out the crucifixion (Lk. 23:25–26).<sup>61</sup> However, John specifically states that Pilate had Jesus scourged (Jn. 19:1). Additionally, the Lukan statements in Acts continue to show additional Roman culpability for Jesus’ death from Luke’s perspective (Acts 2:23 “Lawless men;” 4:25–27 “Gentiles,” Pontus Pilate, and Herod).<sup>62</sup>

While normal crucifixion had the criminal tied by rope to the crossbeam (*patibulum*), so that he would walk with it to the execution site and then be lifted by forked poles into the notch of the stationary upright,<sup>63</sup> Jesus is presented as possibly carrying the whole cross, and then Simon the Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus) is pressed into service to carry the whole cross (στανυρόν; Mt. 27:32; Mk. 15:21; Lk. 23:26; Jn. 19:17). While ropes were normally used to hold the crucified in place, John has Thomas and Jesus mention that Jesus had been nailed to the cross and then raised into place (Jn. 20:25, 27; Acts 2:23; Col. 2:14).<sup>64</sup>

On His way to be crucified, Jesus said to the crowd, weep not for Me but for yourselves and your children because wrathful times are coming in which you will cry for the hills to cover you but God’s judgment will find you out (Lk. 23:27–31; phrases from Hos. 10:8). That is, Jesus is warning the Jews of the impending destruction of Israel. Jesus urged them to weep for themselves and for their children in light of this impending judgment.

Jesus was crucified at the place of the skull under the charge “The King of the Jews” (Mt. 27:32–54; Mk. 21:39; Lk. 23:33–49).<sup>65</sup> John especially emphasizes this charge by mentioning that it was in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek and that the religious leaders took issue with its text, for it actually claimed Him to be the King of the Jews,

<sup>60</sup> Mara bar Serapion; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.3.3; Agapius, *Book of the Title*; Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44; Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Sanh.* 43a; cf. Bock, *Luke*, 2:1843 for texts.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Isa. 50:6; Zech. 12:10; *Epis. Barnabas* 5.14; 7.6–11; *Sib. Or.* 8.285–309; *Gos. Peter* 3.6–9; John Dominic Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 114–159; M. J. Lagrange, *Evangile selon Saint Luc* (Paris: Gabalda, 1948), p. 548; cf. Jack T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 18.63–64; Ignatius, *Smyrmaeans* 1.2; \_\_\_\_\_. *Trllians* 9.1; Justin *I Apology* 40.5–7; \_\_\_\_\_. *Dialog with Trypho* 103.3–4; Irenaeus, *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* 74; 77; Melito of Sardis, *Homily on the Passion* 93; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 20.4; *Didascalica Apostolorum* 5.19.4–5; *Dialogue of Adamantius* 5.1; Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44.

<sup>63</sup> Pliny, *Natural History* 28.11.

<sup>64</sup> Lucan, *Civil War* 6.547; *m. Šab.* 6.10; J. W. Hewit “The Use of Nails in the Crucifixion.” *Harvard Theological Review* 25(1932): 29–45; R. E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah from Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), pp. 949–951.

<sup>65</sup> *Gos. Peter* 4.2.

rather than as they desired, that Jesus had wrongly claimed to be such a king (Jn. 19:19–21). However, Pilate kept the text how he wrote it as a slam against the Jews.

Jesus was taunted by mob and Jewish leadership with such statements as: “Ha! You who were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!”, “He trusts in God: let Him deliver now, if He takes pleasure in him; for he said, ‘I am the Son of God’” and “He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Messiah of God, His Chosen One” (Mt. 27:42–43; Mk. 15:29–32; Lk. 23:35). Jesus was mocked by the mob and the robbers (based on the plural: λησται). The mocking demanded Jesus come down off the cross so that they might believe in Him. The robbers on their crosses chimed in, also “bring us down too.” When one robber repented and defended Jesus, Jesus reassured him that today he would join Him in paradise (Mt. 27:42, 44; Mk. 15:31; Lk. 23:39–44).<sup>66</sup> Jesus asked the Father to forgive them for they do not know what they are doing (Lk. 23:34). The Romans tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh, to dull His senses (Mt. 27:34; Mk. 15:23; Jn. 19:29).<sup>67</sup> The Roman soldiers divided Jesus’ clothes between them, gambling with lots for the seamless robe (Mt. 27:35; Mk. 15:24; Lk. 23:34; Jn. 19:23–24).<sup>68</sup> There was darkness in the land (Mt. 27:45; Mk. 15:33; Lk. 23:44–45).<sup>69</sup> The *Gospel of Peter* 5.15 describes that the people were afraid that the sun might set in such darkness while Jesus was on the cross, which would render the land unclean (Deut. 21:23). In the darkness, Jesus called out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me” and then Jesus prayed to His Father yielding up His spirit (Mt. 27:46–50; Mk. 15:34–37; Lk. 23:46; cf. Acts 7:59). The Temple veil was torn without explaining its meaning.<sup>70</sup> An earthquake split rocks but the account does not identify which ones, except that tombs are also opened by the earthquake. In response, a centurion pronounced that Jesus was innocent and truly a son

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<sup>66</sup> *Gos. Peter* 4.4 has one of the dying criminals defend Jesus as innocent.

<sup>67</sup> This was a usual offer on the basis of Prov. 31:6; *b. Sanh.* 43a; *Barn.* 7.3, 5; *Gos. Pet.* 5.16.

<sup>68</sup> Ps. 22:18; *Gos. Peter* 4.12; *Barn.* 6.6; Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 35.5–8. This results in Jesus probably wearing only a loincloth, in the execution pattern of *Jub.* 3.30–31; 7.20.

<sup>69</sup> *Gos. Peter* 5.15.

<sup>70</sup> Some commentators (Josephus, *Bell.* 5.212–14; 6.288–309; *b. Yoma* 39b; *y. Yoma* 6.43c; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 4.42; Chrysostom, *Hom. on Mt.* 88.2; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol. 3, p. 631) hold that this veil is the outer veil and thus symbolizes the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. as had been predicted by Habakkuk (*Liv. Proph. Hab.* 12; 2 *Bar.* 6.7–9) and *T. Levi* 10.3 predicts that the curtain of the Temple will be torn so that their sins would no longer be concealed. Notice that no gospel account develops that the outside veil looked like the starry sky (*b. B. Mes.* 59a), even though D. C. Allison (*The End of the Ages has Come* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985], p. 33) suggested that it represented the rending of the heavens on the Day of the Lord (Job 14:12 LXX; Ps. 102:26; Isa. 34:4; 63:19; Hag. 2:6, 21; Mt. 24:29; Lk. 21:25; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 6:14; *Sib. Or.* 3.82; 8.233, 413). Corroborating this, the tractate *Yoma* 6.3 recounts repeated miraculous opening of the Temple gate at night around 40 years before 70 A.D., which “Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai said, ‘O Temple, why do you frighten us? We know that you will end up destroyed. For it has been said, “Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars!”’ (Zech. 11:1).” Other commentators (e.g., Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King: A Study of Matthew* [Portland: Multnomah Press, 1980]) interpret this to be the inner veil and symbolizing the sacrificial system is obsolete. Such a view would have limited communication value for there would be no way for the populous to know if the inner veil had torn unless priests officiating at the incense altar or Levites replacing the holy oil or bread spoke of these things, and there is no mention of this. Additionally, such an anti-Law rationale doesn’t fit Jewish-Christian practice in Jerusalem, which continued to offer sacrifices until the destruction of the Temple (e.g., Mt. 5:23–24; Acts 21:21–28). Note that the book of Hebrews with its Tabernacle (rather than Temple) description is probably sent to Jewish-Christians in the dispersion.

of God, indicating Jesus' kingly role (Mt. 27:54; Mk. 15:39; Lk. 23:47). The legs of the thieves on their crosses were broken as usual to speed their death, but Jesus' did not have his legs broken because He had already died (Jn. 19:32–36).<sup>71</sup> The spear thrust into Jesus' side showed that with the water and blood mixed, Jesus had already died (Jn. 19:34–37).<sup>72</sup>

As was standard practice, the bodies were taken down before night fall (Mt. 27:57; Mk. 15:42).<sup>73</sup> This locates the time of Jesus' death as during the time of the sacrificing of the Passover lambs, but no gospel develops this significance. Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus in his own newly carved tomb (Mt. 27:57–66; Mk. 15:42–47; Lk. 23:50–56; Jn. 19:38–42; Acts 13:29).<sup>74</sup> Pilate gave the priests a guard to seal the tomb (Mt. 27:63–27:17; Mk. 16:1–8; Lk. 24:1–11).<sup>75</sup>

In conclusion, the synoptic account of Jesus' death does not develop great soteriological work but the narrative account of witnesses telling what they saw. Both the O. T. and Jesus predicted several of the events but the synoptics play down an evidential perspective surrounding His death. The most emphasized feature of Jesus' death is that Jesus is King. The fact, that Jesus is already King identifies that He will judge and rule all forever, when He returns on the clouds. Prior to then He shows His kingdom greatness by leaving a pattern of service for all disciples to follow epitomized by His martyrdom. This martyrdom entailed more than the rejection of humans, for it also included the cup of God's wrath, but disciples drink of the same wrathful cup as they head toward their martyrdoms so it is best not to see this cup metaphor developed in the synoptics as a vicarious atonement. Thus, Jesus' death begins the New Covenant with its eschatological forgiveness in the Kingdom for those who repent and identify themselves with the King and His Kingdom virtues.

### Fulfillment of Scripture

John's passion narrative is punctuated by saying that Jesus death specifically fulfills Scripture texts and thus adds an additional evidential emphasis not developed by

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<sup>71</sup> *Gos. Peter* 4.13–14; 4.4–5 claims that Jesus' legs would not be broken because when dying criminals claimed Jesus was innocent, the soldiers plotted to increase Jesus' agony; *Martyrium Andreae alterum* 1.13–16. Jesus died during the time that the Passover lambs were being killed, afternoon on until evening (Ex. 29:39; *Jub.* 49.10, 19; Philo, *Laws* 2.145; R. Natan in *Mek. Bo* 5; *m. Pesah* 5.1; Josephus, *Wars* 6.423; *Ant.* 14.65). Such timing fits nicely with Paul identifying Jesus as the Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7), but none of the Biblical authors explain the meaning of this allusion or timing. Some commentators suggest that Jesus legs not being broken identify Him as the Paschal Offering, which was not to have a bone broken (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12). None of the gospels develop Jesus as the Paschal sacrifice, nor develop the meaning of this time or lack of bone breaking under a Passover metaphor, in spite of there being some apotropaic tendencies to develop the non-breaking of the bones of the Paschal Sacrifice as a metaphor for Israel's bones to not be broken (*Jub.* 49.13). The timing of Passover only affects the gospel accounts in that the Jewish leadership desired the execution to be complete before the Passover begins, so that the nation would not riot (Mk. 14:2) and perhaps also be rendered unclean (Deut. 21:22–23). So I conclude that the mention of non-breaking of Jesus' bones simply indicates that He was already dead.

<sup>72</sup> This is likely a natural phenomena of separation of serous fluid from dark red fluid, rather than lance breaking his heart or a miracle as Catholic tradition maintains; cf. Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John (xiii–xxi)* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1970), vol. 29A, pp. 946–947.

<sup>73</sup> Josephus, *War* 4.317.

<sup>74</sup> *Gos. Peter* 6.23–24.

<sup>75</sup> *Gos. Peter* 8.29–33; 9.35–10.42; 11.45–49.

the synoptics (Jn. 18:32; 19:24, 28, 36). Apart from this evidential reminder, the same events are recounted by all four gospels, so I have included John's contribution to the narrative above.

Fifty percent of Luke's prediction statements about Jesus death mention that they fulfill Scripture, joining the gospel of John in this evidential emphasis. For example, Luke's resurrection accounts (which will be developed in the chapter on resurrection) also add this emphasis of fulfilling the prophets (Lk. 24:25–26, 46). I mention these here because in passing they mention that Jesus must suffer and resurrect, to then say that these fulfill the prophets. So their emphasis by placing them within the resurrection narrative, is that especially Jesus resurrection is seen as fulfilling Scripture. However, in Luke 18:31 the rejection, suffering and resurrection are seen as together fulfilling Scripture (in contrast to parallel accounts in Mt. 20:17–19 and Mk. 10:32–34, which do not explain why these events must occur). Additionally, in the Acts gospel sermons, both Jesus' death and resurrection are seen as fulfilling Scripture (death: Acts 3:18; 4:11; 8:32–35; 13:26–29; resurrection: Acts 2:24–31; 13:33–37). Furthermore, in Paul's defense before King Agrippa, both Jesus death and His resurrection are seen as together fulfilling the prophets (Acts 26:22–23, 27).

The closest that Matthew and Mark come to this evidential element is that about 20 % of their texts that address Jesus' death develop this fulfillment theme. However, nearly all of these emphasize that the aspect being fulfilled in Scripture is especially circumstances of Jesus' betrayal. For example, in His betrayal, there are several details itemized as *fulfilling* O.T. prophecy, namely: 1) the betrayal money was thirty pieces of silver and that it bought a potter's field, 2) Judas forfeits his portion and position through this betrayal, and 3) the rest of the disciples will scatter when the shepherd is killed (Pss. 69:25; 109:8; Zech. 11:12–13; 13:7; Mt. 26:31, 54–56; 27:9–10; Mk. 14:49; Acts 1:20). Jesus does not develop His own death in these texts as fulfilling Scripture, but does underscore that these circumstances around Jesus' death fulfill Scripture. In addition, Mark 9:12–13 shows that both Elijah's coming and the Son of Man's suffering are issues which fulfill Scripture. However, no synoptic gospel (not even Luke) has the passion narrative punctuated with fulfillment language like the gospel of John's emphasis.

Paul's writing also expressed fulfillment of Scripture as an issue for Jesus' death but not an emphasis since the discussion is imbedded within a context on resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3–4).

### John's Extra Interviews

In contrast to the synoptics which emphasize that Jesus is silent before Pilate, John informs the reader of some unique details of interchange between Pilate and Jesus (Jn. 18:33–38; 19:9–11). When Pilate asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews, Jesus wanted to know whether Pilate really wanted to know. Pilate explained that it was because Jesus was on trial, and wanted to know what He had done. Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My Kingdom is not of this realm." Pilate recognized that Jesus claimed to be a king. Jesus acknowledged that "I am a King for this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears My voice." At

this point Pilate scoffed, “What is truth?” and then went out to the religious leaders to announce to them that Jesus was not guilty.

An additional interchange unique to John 19:25–27, is that of dying Jesus giving the caretaking role of his mother over to John. This shows Jesus as generously caring for Mary, even as He is in His death throws. He did all things well. Apart from these brief additions, all the death accounts record the same story and thus corroborate each other as witnesses.

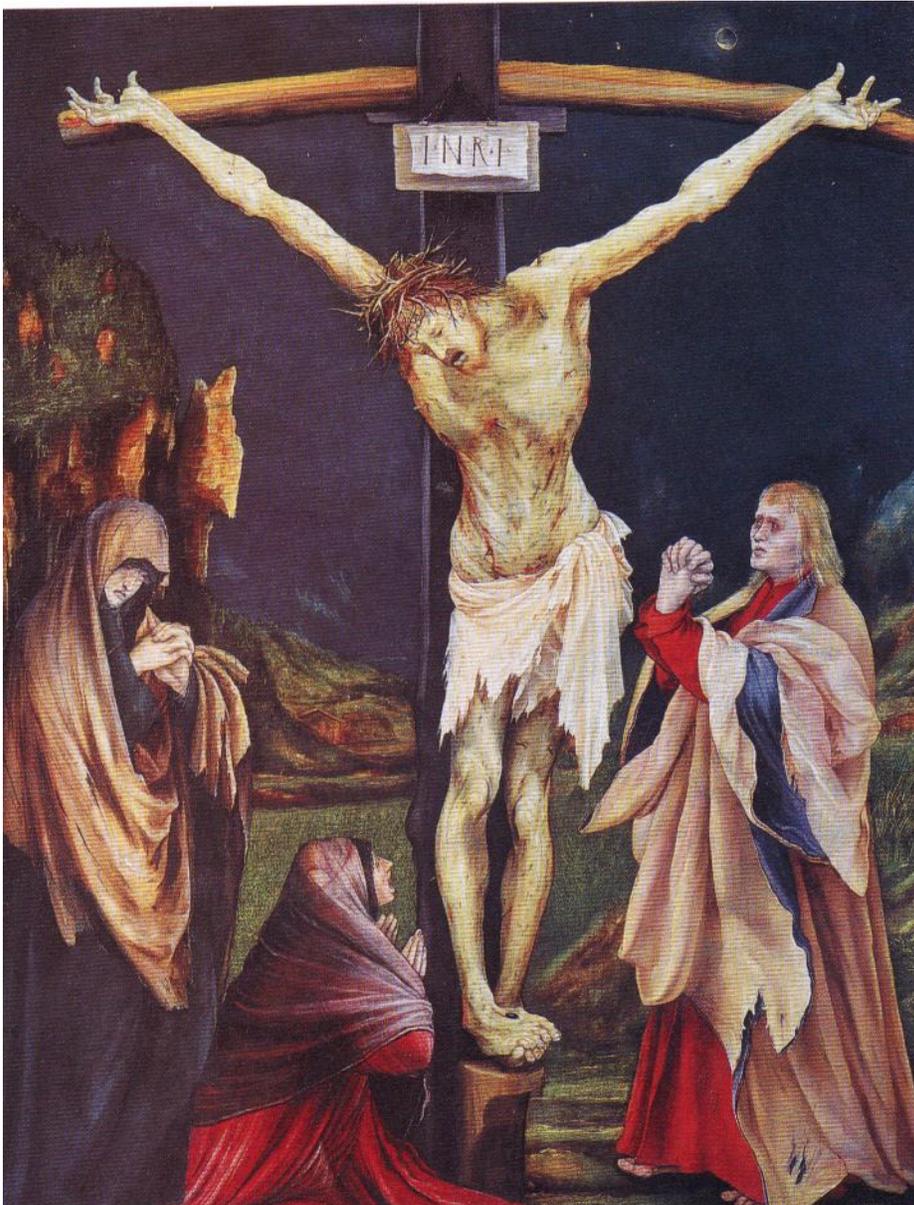
#### Echoed in the Arts:

Mel Gibson’s 2004 movie *The Passion of the Christ* is a brutal Catholic portrayal of many of the abuses that happened to Jesus in the last day of Jesus life. The Catholic emphasis is apparent in the stages of the cross and the special emphasis of Mary’s perspective. The use of Aramaic and Latin create a fly-on-the-wall immediacy at this pivotal moment of history. The flogging scene is a particularly brutal 10 minute segment but Jesus’ scourging would do the kind of damage that they showed. As a movie it is probably about as accurate as the population will tolerate for crucifixion, because we may not be wanting a nude Jesus on the cross heaving to overcome the suffocating posture, growing paralysis and loss of bladder control that crucifixion brings. The flashbacks into Jesus’ life and the brief ending resurrection scene bring a perspective that Jesus was about more than this death.

There are many pieces of art to show Jesus death, so perhaps a contrast of a few pieces might represent them. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Antonio Ciseri painted “Behold the Man” as Pilate appeals to the crowd, who are overflowing out of the temple courts to respond back with “crucify him.” Pilate’s advisors on his right study the crowds to see how the issues will resolve, while the soldiers on Jesus’ left are all too ready to carry out the scourging and crucifixion.



In contrast, Matthias Grünewald's crucifixion of Christ in Isenheim shows a brutalized and bruised Jesus on the cross (much like Gibson's portrayal) surrounded by bruised victims afflicted by St. Elmo's fire.



In contrast to this, Peter Paul Ruben's life size "Christ on the Cross" in the Louvre is equally pungent with the brutality of the cross, but not in such a distracting way, upon

a muscled Jesus' body. For, above Him the charge is clearly readable as "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" and below Him the life sized respondents fall in adoration or stand close or from afar, as if to either identify with or distance themselves from the crucified Lord. Furthermore, in the center altar piece in the cathedral at Antwerp in Belgium, Rubens painted in 1612 Jesus' "Descent from the Cross" as a brilliantly lit Jesus, surrounded by impending darkness, sliding limply from the loosened nails and the grasp of the helpers of Joseph of Arimathea. The fact of Jesus' death is evident by the limp members, head dropping forward and Jesus' livid eyes. Here only the faithful remain in grief and duty.



Ivan Karamazov in Fyodor Dostoevsky's, *The Brothers Karamazov*<sup>76</sup> presents a poem called "The Grand Inquisitor" which includes the following drama of a retrial prompted by the possibility of Jesus coming again:

"Mary, shocked and weeping, falls before the throne of God and begs for mercy for all in hell-for all she has seen there, indiscriminately. Her conversation with God is immensely interesting. She beseeches Him, she will not desist, and when God points to the hands and feet of her Son, nailed to the Cross, and asks, 'How can I forgive His tormentors?' she bids all the saints, all the martyrs, all the angels and archangels to fall down with her and pay for mercy on all without distinction. It ends by her winning from God a respite of suffering every year from Good

<sup>76</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), pp. 127–130, 132–135.

Friday till Trinity Day, and the sinners at once raise a cry of thankfulness from hell, chanting, 'Thou art just, O Lord, in this judgment.' Well my poem would have been of that kind if it had appeared at that time. He comes on the scene in my poem, but He has nothing, only appears and passes on. Fifteen centuries have passed since He promised to come in His glory, fifteen centuries since the prophet wrote, 'Behold I come quickly'; 'Of that day and hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father.' As He Himself predicted on earth. But humanity awaits him with the same faith and with the same love. Oh, with greater faith, for it is fifteen centuries since man has ceased to see signs from heaven.

*No signs from heaven come to-day  
To add to what the heart doth say.*

There was nothing left but faith in what the heart doth say. It is true there were many miracles in those days. There were saints who performed miraculous cures; some holy people, according to their biographies, were visited by the Queen of Heaven herself. But the devil did not slumber, and doubts were already arising among men of the truth of these miracles. And just then there appeared in the north of Germany a terrible new heresy. 'A huge star like a torch' (that is, to a church) "fell on the sources of the waters and they became bitter.' These heretics began blasphemously denying miracles. But those who remained faithful were all the more ardent in their faith. The tears of humanity rose up to Him as before, awaited His coming, loved Him, hoped for Him, yearned to suffer and die for Him as before. And so many ages mankind had prayed with faith and fervour, "O Lord our God, hasten Thy coming"; so many ages called upon Him, that in His infinite mercy He deigned to come down to His servants. Before that day He had come down, He had visited some holy men, martyrs, and hermits, as is written in their lives. Among us, Tyutchev, with absolute faith in the truth of his words, bore witness that

*Bearing the Cross, in slavish dress,  
Weary and worn, the Heavenly King  
Our mother, Russia, came to bless,  
And through our land went wandering.*

And that certainly was so, I assure you."

"And behold, He deigned to appear for a moment to the people, to the tortured, suffering people, sunk in iniquity, but loving Him like children. My story is laid in Spain, in Seville, in the most terrible time of the Inquisition, when fires were lighted every day to the glory of God, and "in the splendid *auto da fé* the wicked heretics were burnt.' Oh, of course, this was not the coming in which He will appear, according to His promise, at the end of time in all His heavenly glory, and which will be sudden 'as lightning flashing from east to west.' No, He visited His children only for a moment, and there where the flames were crackling round the heretics. In infinite mercy He came once more among men in that human shape in which He walked among men for thirty-three years fifteen

centuries ago. He came down to the 'hot pavements' of the southern town in which on the day before almost a hundred heretics had, *ad majorem gloriam Dei*, been burned by the Grand Inquisitor, in a magnificent *auto da fé*, in the presence of the king, the court, the knights, the cardinals, the most charming ladies of the court, and the whole population of Seville."

"He came softly, unobserved, and yet, strange to say, everyone recognized Him. That might be one of the best passages in the poem. I mean, why they recognized Him. The people are irresistibly drawn to Him, they surround Him, they flock about Him, follow Him. He moves silently in their midst with a gentle smile of infinite compassion. The sun of love burns in His heart, light and power shine from His eyes, and their radiance, shed on the people, stirs their hearts with responsive love. He holds out His hands to them, blesses them, and a healing virtue comes from contact with Him, even with His garments. An old man in the crown, blind from childhood, cries out, 'O Lord, heal me and I shall see Thee!' and, as it were, scales fall from his eyes and the blind man sees Him. The crowd weeps and kisses the earth under His feet. Children throw flowers before Him, sing, and cry hosannah, 'It is He-it is He!' all repeat, 'It must be He, it can be no one but Him!' He stops at the steps of the Seville cathedral at the moment when the weeping mourners are bringing in a little open white coffin. In it lies a child of seven, the only daughter of a prominent citizen. The dead child lies hidden in flowers. 'He will raise the child,' the crowd shouts to the weeping mother. The priest, coming to meet the coffin, looks perplexed, and frowns, but the mother of the dead child throws herself at His feet with a wail. 'If it is Thou, raise my child!' she cries, holding out her hands to Him. The procession halts, the coffin is laid on the steps at His feet. He looks with compassion, and His lips once more softly pronounce, 'Maiden, arise!' and the maiden arises. The little girl sits up in the coffin and looks around, smiling with wide-open wondering eyes, holding a bunch of white roses they had put in her hand. There are cries, sobs, confusion among the people, and at that moment the cardinal himself, the Grand Inquisitor, passes by the cathedral. He is an old man, almost ninety, all and erect, with a withered face and sunken eyes, in which there is still a gleam of light. He is not dressed in his gorgeous cardinals' robes, as he was the day before, when he was burning the enemies of the Roman Church-at this moment he is wearing his coarse, old monk's cassock. At a distance behind him come his gloomy assistants and slaves and the 'holy guard.' He stops at the sight of the crowd and watches it from a distance. He sees everything; he sees them set the coffin down at His feet, sees the child rise up, and his face darkens. He knits his thick gray brows and his eyes gleam with a sinister fire. He holds out his finger and bids the guards take Him. And such is his power, so completely are the people cowed into submission and trembling obedience to him, that the crowd immediately makes way for the guards, and in the midst of deathlike silence they lay hands on Him and lead Him away. The crowd instantly bows down to the earth, like one man, before the old Inquisitor. He blesses the people in silence and passes on. The guards lead their prisoner to the close, gloomy vaulted prison in the ancient palace of the Holy Inquisition and shut Him in it. The day passes and is followed by the dark, burning, 'breathless' night of Seville. The air is 'fragrant with laurel and lemon.'

In the pitch darkness the iron door of the prison is suddenly opened and the Grand Inquisitor himself comes in with a light in his hand. He is alone; the door is closed at once behind him. He stands in the doorway and for a minute or two gazes into His face. At last he goes up slowly, sets the light on the table and speaks.”

“‘Is it Thou? Thou?’ but receiving no answer, he adds at once. ‘Don’t answer, be silent. What canst Thou say, indeed? I know too well what Thou wouldst say. And Thou hast no right to add anything to what Thou hadst said of old. Why, then, at Thou come to hinder us? For Thou hast come to hinder us, and Thou knowest that. But dost Thou know what will be to-morrow? I know not who Thou art and care not to know whether it is Thou or only a semblance of Him, but to-morrow I shall condemn Thee and burn Thee at the stake as the worst of heretics. And the very people who have kissed Thy feet, to-morrow at the faintest sign from me will rush to heap up the embers of Thy fire. Knowest Thou that? Yes, maybe Thou knowest it,’ he added with thoughtful penetration, never for a moment his eyes off the Prisoner.”

“I don’t quite understand, Ivan. What does it mean?” Alyosha, who had been listening in silence, said with a smile. “Is it simply a wild fantasy, or a mistake on the part of the old man—some impossible *quid pro quo*?”

“Take it as the last,” said Ivan, laughing. “if you are so corrupted by modern realism and can’t stand the fantastic. If you like it to be the case of mistaken identity, let it be so. It is true,” he went on, laughing, “the old man was ninety, and he might well be crazy over his set idea. He might have been struck by the appearance of the Prisoner. It might, in fact, be simply his ravings, the delusion of an old man of ninety, over-excited by the *auto da fé* of a hundred heretics the day before. But does it matter to us after all whether it was a mistake of identity or a wild fantasy? All that matters is that the old man should speak out, that he should speak openly of what he has thought in silence for ninety years.”

“And the Prisoner too is silent? Does He look at him and not say a word?”

“That’s inevitable in any case,” Ivan laughed again. “The old man has told Him He hasn’t the right to add anything to what He has said of old. One may say it is the most fundamental feature of Roman Catholicism, in my opinion at least. ‘All has been given by Thee to the Pope,’ they say, ‘and all, therefore, is still in the Pope’s hands, and there is no need for Thee for Thee to come now at all. Thou must not meddle for the time at last.’ That’s how they speak and write too—the Jesuits, at any rate. I have read it myself in the works of their theologians. ‘Hast Thou the right to reveal to us one of the mysteries of the world from which Thou hast come?’ my old man asks Him, and answers the question for Him. ‘No, Thou hast not; that Thou mayest not add to what has been said of old, and mayest not take from men the freedom which Thou didst exalt when Thou wast on the earth. Whatsoever Thou revealest anew will encroach on men’s freedom of faith; for it will be manifest as a miracle, and the freedom of the faith; for it will be manifest as a miracle, and the freedom of their faith was dearer to Thee than anything in those days fifteen hundred years ago. Didst Thou not often say then, ‘I will make you free’? But now Thou hast seen these “free” men,’ the old man

adds suddenly, with a pensive smile. "Yes, we've paid dearly for it,' he goes on, looking sternly at Him, 'but at last we have completed that work in Thy name. For fifteen centuries we have been wrestling with Thy freedom, but now it is ended and over for good. Dost Thou not believe that it's over for good? Thou lookest meekly at me and deignest not even to be wroth with me. But let me tell Thee that now, to-day, people are more persuaded than ever that they have perfect freedom, yet they have brought their freedom to us and laid it humbly at our feet. But that has been our doing. Was this what Thou didst? Was this Thy freedom?"

"I don't understand again," Alyosha broke in. "Is he ironical, is he jesting?"

"Not a bit of it! He claims it as a merit for himself and his Church that at last they have vanquished freedom and have done so to make men happy. 'For now' (he is speaking of the Inquisition, of course) 'for the first time it has become possible to think of the happiness of men. Man was created a rebel; and how can rebels be happy? Thou wast warned.' He says to Him. 'Thou hast had no lack of admonitions and warnings, but Thou didst not listen to those warnings, but Thou didst not listen to those warnings; Thou didst reject the only way by which men might be made happy. But, fortunately, departing Thou didst hand on the work to us. Thou hast promised, Thou hast established by Thy word, Thou hast given to us the right to bind and to unbind, and now, of course, Thou canst not think of taking it away. Why, then, hast Thou come to hinder us? ... We have corrected Thy work and have founded it upon *miracle, mystery* and *authority*. And men rejoiced that the terrible gift that had brought them such suffering was, at last, lifted from their hearts. Were we right teaching them this? Speak! Did we not love mankind, so meekly acknowledging their feebleness, lovingly lightening their burden, and permitting their weak nature even sin with our sanction? Why hast Thou come now to hinder us? And why dost Thou look silently and searchingly at me with Thy mild eyes? Be angry. I don't want Thy love, for I love Thee not. And what use is it for me to hide anything from Thee? Don't I know to Whom I am speaking? All that I can say is known to Thee already. And is it for me to conceal from Thee our mystery? Perhaps it is Thy will to hear it from my lips. Listen, then. We are not working with Thee, but with *him*-that is our mystery. It's long-eight centuries-since we have been on *his* side and not on Thine. Just eight centuries ago, we took from him what Thou didst reject with scorn, that last gift he offered Thee, showing Thee all the kingdoms of the earth. We took from him Rome and the sword of Caesar, and proclaimed ourselves sole rulers of the earth, though hitherto we have not been able to complete our work. But whose fault is that? Oh, the work is only beginning, but it has begun. It has long to await completion and the earth has yet much to suffer, but we shall triumph and shall be Caesars, and then we shall plan the universal happiness of man. But Thou mightest have taken even then the sword of Caesar. Why didst Thou reject that last gift? Hadst Thou accepted that last counsel of the mighty spirit, Thou wouldst have accomplished all that man seeks on earth-that is, someone to worship, someone to keep his conscience, and some means of uniting all in one unanimous and harmonious ant-heap, for the craving for universal unity

is the third and last anguish of men. Mankind as a whole has always striven to organize a universal state. There have been many great nations with great histories, but the more highly they were developed the more unhappy they were, for they felt more acutely than other people the craving for world-wide union. The great conquerors, Timours and Ghenghis-Khans, whirled like hurricanes over the face of the earth striving to subdue its people, and they too were but the unconscious expression of the same craving for universal unity. Hadst Thou taken the world and Caesar's purple, Thou wouldst have founded the universal state and have given universal peace. For who can rule men if not he who holds their conscience and their bread in his hands? We have taken the sword of Caesar, and in taking it, of course, have rejected Thee and followed *him*. Oh, ages are yet to come of the confusion of free thought, of their science and cannibalism. For having begun their tower of Babel without us, they will end, of course, with cannibalism. But then the beast will crawl to us and lick our feet and spatter them with tears of blood. And we shall sit upon the beast and raise the cup, and on it will be written, "Mystery." But then, and only then, the reign of peace and happiness will come for men. Thou art proud of Thine elect, but Thou hast only the elect, while we give rest to all. And besides, how many of those elect, those mighty ones who could become elect, have grown weary waiting for Thee, and have transferred and will transfer the powers of their spirit and the warmth of their heart to the other camp, and end by raising their *free* banner against Thee. Thou didst Thyself lift up that banner. But with us all will be happy and will no more rebel nor destroy one another as under Thy freedom. Oh, we shall persuade them that they will only become free when they renounce their freedom to us and submit to us. And shall we be right or shall we be lying? They will be convinced that we are right, for they will remember the horrors of slavery and confusion to which Thy freedom brought them. Freedom, free thought, and science will lead them into such straits and will bring them face to face with such marvels and insoluble mysteries, that some of them, the fierce and rebellious, will destroy themselves, others, rebellious and weak, will destroy one another, while the rest, weak and unhappy, will crawl fawning to our feet and whine to us: "Yes, you were right, you alone possess His mystery, and we come back to you, save us from ourselves!"

"Receiving bread from us, they will see clearly that we take the bread made by their hands from them, to give it to them, without any miracle. They will see that we do not change the stones to bread, but in truth they will be more thankful for taking it from our hands than for the bread itself! For they will remember only too well that in old days, without our help, even the bread they made turned to stones in their hands, while since they have come back to us, the very stones have turned to bread in their hands. Too, too well will they know the value of complete submission! And until men know that, they will be unhappy. Who is most to blame for their not knowing it?-speak! Who scattered the flock and sent it astray on unknown paths? But the flock will come together again and will submit once more, and then it will be once for all. Then we shall give them the quiet humble happiness of weak creatures such as they are by nature. Oh, we shall persuade them at last not to be proud, for Thou didst lift them up and thereby

taught them to be proud. We shall show them that they are weak, that they are only pitiful children, but that childlike happiness is the sweetest of all. They will become timid and will look to us and huddle close to us in fear, as chicks to the hen. They will marvel at us and will be awe-stricken before us, and will be proud at our being so powerful and clever that we have been able to subdue such a turbulent flock of thousands of millions. They will tremble impotently before our wrath, their minds will grow fearful, they will be quick to shed tears like women and children, but they will be just as ready at a sign from us to pass to laughter and rejoicing, to happy mirth and childish song. Yes, we shall set them to work, but in their leisure hours we shall make their life like a child's game, with children's songs and innocent dance. Oh, we shall allow them even sin. We shall tell them that every sin will be expiated, if it is done with our permission, that we allow them to sin because we love them, and the punishment for those sins we take upon ourselves. And we shall take it upon ourselves, and they will adore us as their saviors who have taken on themselves their sins before God. And they will have no secrets from us. We shall allow or forbid them to live with their wives and mistresses, to have or not to have children-according to whether they have been obedient or disobedient-and they will submit to us gladly and cheerfully. The most painful secrets of their conscience, all they will bring to us, and we shall have an answer for all. And they will be glad to believe our answer, for it will save them from the great anxiety and terrible agony they endure at present in making a free decision for themselves. And all will be happy, all the millions of creatures except the hundred thousand who rule over them. For only we, we who guard the mystery, shall be unhappy. There will be thousands of millions of happy babes, and a hundred thousand sufferers who have taken upon themselves the curse of the knowledge of good and evil. Peacefully they will die, peacefully they will expire in Thy name, and beyond the grave they will find nothing but death. But we shall keep the secret, and for their happiness we shall allure them with the reward of heaven and eternity. Though if there were anything in the other world, it certainly would not be for such as they. It is prophesied that Thou wilt come again in victory, Thou wilt come with Thy chosen, the proud and strong, but we will say that they have only saved themselves, but we have saved all. We are told that the harlot who sits upon the beast, and holds in her hands the *mystery*, shall be put to shame, that the weak will rise up again, and will rend her royal purple and will strip naked her loathsome body. But then I will stand up and point out to Thee the thousand millions of happy children who have known no sin. And we who have taken their sins upon us for their happiness will stand up before Thee and say: "Judge us if Thou canst and darest." Know that I fear Thee not. Know that I too have been in the wilderness, I too have lived on roots and locust, I too prize the freedom with which Thou hast blessed men, and I too was striving to stand among Thy elect, among the strong and powerful, thirsting "to make up the number." But I awakened and would not serve madness. I turned back and joined the ranks of those *who have corrected Thy work*. I left the proud and went back to the humble, for the happiness of the humble. What I say to Thee will come to pass, and our dominion will be built up. I repeat, to-morrow Thou shalt see that obedient flock

who at a sign from me will hasten to heap up the hot cinders about the pile on which I shall burn Thee for coming to hinder us. For if anyone has ever deserved our fires, it is Thou. To-morrow I shall burn Thee. I have spoken.”

Charles Dickens portrays that during the French revolution in *A Tale of Two Cities*,<sup>77</sup> that for a good person someone might dare to die (Rom. 5:7). Mr. Carton exchanged places with Evrémonde in his cell and taking his place at the guillotine.

“I bring you a request from her.”

“What is it?”

“A most earnest, pressing, and emphatic entreaty, addressed to you in the most pathetic tones of the voice so dear to you, that you well remember.”

The prisoner turned his face partly aside.

“You have no time to ask me why I bring it or what it means; I have no time to tell you. You must comply with it—take off those boots you wear and draw on these of mine.”

There was a chair against the wall of the cell behind the prisoner. Carton, pressing forward, had already with the speed of lightning got him down into it, and stood over him, barefoot.

“Draw on these boots of mine. Put your hands to them; put your will to them. Quick!”

“Carton, there is no escaping from this place; it never can be done. You will only die with me. It is madness.”

“It would be madness if I asked you to escape; but do I? When I ask you to pass out at that door, tell me it is madness and remain here. Change that cravat for this of mine. That coat for this of mine. While you do it, let me take this ribbon from your hair, and shake out your hair like this of mine!”

With wonderful quickness and with a strength both of will and action that appeared quite supernatural, he forced all these changes upon him. The prisoner was like a young child in his hands.

“Carton! Dear Carton! It is madness. It cannot be accomplished; it never can be done; it has been attempted and has always failed. I implore you not to add your death to the bitterness of mine.”

The next day, as Evrémonde crossed the English channel, Carton was led out of the jail cell to a cart to take Evrémonde’s judgment under the guillotine, this conversation occurred in the cart.

“I heard you were released, Citizen Evrémonde. I hoped it was true?”

“It was. But I was again taken and condemned.”

“If I may ride with you, Citizen Evrémonde, will you let me hold your hand? I am not afraid, but I am little and weak, and it will give me more courage.”

As the patient eyes were lifted to his face, he saw a sudden doubt in them and then astonishment. He pressed the work-worn, hunger-worn young fingers, and touched his lips.

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<sup>77</sup> Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (Roslyn: Walter J. Black, 1868 edition), pp. 324, 328, 333.

“Are you dying for him?” she whispered.  
“And his wife and child. Hush! Yes.”  
“O you will let me hold your brave hand, stranger?”  
“Hush! Yes, my poor sister; to the last.”

The 1989 Paulist Picture *Romero*, starring Roul Julia portrays the martyrdom of archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador on March 24, 1980. The presentation draws the whole El Salvador church and its archbishop into mimetic atonement of Jesus. Words spoken by Romero in a phone interview just two weeks prior to his murder (and appended to the movie) show his mimetic atonement view.

I have often been threatened with death. I must tell you, as a Christian, I do not believe in death without resurrection. If I am killed, I shall arise in the Salvadoran people. I say so without boasting, with the greatest humility.

As a shepherd, I am obliged by divine mandate to give my life for those I love-for all Salvadorans, even for those who may be going to kill me. If the threats are carried out, from this moment I offer my blood to God for the redemption and for the resurrection of El Salvador.

Martyrdom is a grace of God that I do not believe I deserve. But if God accepts the sacrifice of my life, let my blood be a seed of freedom and the sign that hope will soon be a reality. Let my death, if it is accepted by God, be for my people’s liberation and as a witness of hope in the future.

You may say, if they succeed in killing me, that I pardon and bless those who do it. Would, indeed, that they might be convinced that they will waste their time. A bishop will die, but God’s church, which is the people, will never perish.

Though Romero’s words here might support our viewing him as a Christ-figure, the more consistent theme in Romero’s homilies and radio broadcasts is that it is the poor who are the church and who should properly be understood collectively as following in mimetic atonement, as evidenced by Romero’s words taken from the film:

You have not suffered alone, for you are the church. You are the people of God. You are Jesus in the here and now. He is crucified in you, just as surely as he was crucified 2,000 years ago on that hill outside Jerusalem. And you should know that your pain and suffering, like his, will contribute to El Salvador’s liberation and redemption.

Paul Gerhardt composed a hymn in 1656, “O sacred head now wounded.”

O sacred head, now wounded, With grief and shame weighed down,  
Now scornfully surrounded With thorns, thy only crown,  
O sacred head, what glory, What bliss, till now, was thine!  
Yet though despised and glory, I joy to call thee mine.

What language shall I borrow To thank thee, dearest Friend,  
For this, thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end?

O make me thine forever; And should I fainting be,  
Lord, let me never, ever Outlive my love to thee.

Be thou my consolation, My shield when I must die;  
Recall to me thy passion When my last hour draws nigh.  
Mine eyes shall then behold thee, Upon thy cross shall dwell;  
My heart by faith behold thee: Who dieth thus dies well.