

PREFACE

I suppose the Church of Jesus Christ for the most part, is in agreement that prophecies of the end time are rapidly coming to pass, and we are truly at a time in history when all the evil Satan can spread will be spread. The Bible tells us that he (Satan) is as a roaring lion, seeking to destroy all that gets in His way. He is a thief and a liar, and he comes to kill, steal and to destroy.

I have respect for any entity who has power enough to destroy my body. But I have no fear of him who can only destroy my body. My fear must be for the One who can destroy both body and soul in hell. I know what the weapons of warfare are. I know how to use them. By God's grace, by His own beloved Son, and through the Holy Ghost, all these weapons are being utilized today by the Church in accomplishing the will of the Father.

The will of the Father relayed to the Son and in turn relayed to His Church for these days, wrapped up in one single sentence is, to "destroy the works of the devil". That's our goal today and tomorrow, Church; for as long as His church has breath, that's our goal. It soon will be accomplished in final judgment because Jesus is really *Who He said He is*.

Chapter one, Part One is a work I originally received while reading in the Pentecostal Evangel an article written by C.M. Ward, the Assembly of God's beloved Radio minister long retired, at least forty years ago. Having lost the article long ago, I searched out notes I had made on the story. While the notes weren't very good, I felt I had enough information that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, I could give a relatively accurate account. Therefore, Part One was indeed compiled and formatted by the author of this book.

I also compiled and formatted Part Two. This information was garnered from a number of authors and works including sermons I have heard, mimeographed papers given to me by college and seminar instructors, along with hours of painstaking Biblical research.

God seemed to assign to me this task because of questions asked me by others who were seeking for answers. Much of His Church is sleeping today, not realizing just where she stands in this age and it is my sincere desire this very simple, easy to understand paper will be a means by which a few may find the real purpose for His Church before these final days actually come to a close.

Church of Jesus Christ, come alive!

Tom Stephens

CHAPTER ONE
THOUGH HE WAS CRUCIFIED
COMPILED AND FORMATTED BY TOM STEPHENS

Unlike any other religion, Christianity centers on the cross and the empty tomb. They enable every Christian to say, "He took my place so that I might have life". Not only did Christ die, but He was resurrected three days later, and because He was, you can be too!

What did Christ endure in our atonement? Crucified! His death was thorough, His shame complete!

"THE SCOURGING"

The scourging post the Roman soldiers used was two feet tall. An Iron ring, placed close to the top projected from two sides. The prisoner was stripped naked, The Roman "lictors" were professional. They could beat their victim till only the barest spark of life remained.

The wrists were firmly shackled to the iron rings. Then the victim was stretched, facedown, with the feet pointing away from the post. The Roman scourge was a "Flagra", a short-handled whip consisting of several thin, iron chains which ended in small weights or iron or bone chips. Scourging was called the "little" death. It preceded the big death-crucifixion. "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him." John 19:1

"(Jesus) for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God". Hebrews 12:2

The tension of waiting was cruel. The body was rigid, with muscles knotted in tormenting cramps. The lips were drawn tight against the teeth. The chains cut "V" shapes across His body. The weights suspended from the "flagra" crashed into the ribs and bit into His chest, Sweat burst from the brow and stung His eyes. Each stroke caused His body to jerk like a beheaded chicken. Jesus was able to hold back the high pitched wail of agony, though the flagra could flay a man alive.

Two executioners, working alternately, lash in cadence at His back, shoulders, loins, thighs, and calves, leaving livid furrows in the already sore muscular frame (from many small hemorrhages, affected by the sweating of blood). The weights begin tearing at the flesh and muscle tissue. Blood begins to pour out onto the ground. The skin is shredded as deep gashes are cut into His body. His strength begins to fail Him.

Under Hebrew law, lashes were limited to thirty-nine. The Roman punishment was not limited. There was only one rule for the lictor. The victim must not die! A spark of life must be sustained for the cross. Men have bitten their tongues into under such beatings. Only blessed unconsciousness could bring relief. The limp body was then cut from the scourging post, the wounds washed.

A purple legionnaire's cape denoting royalty is thrown over His shoulders and a crown of thorns is plaited on His head. Nothing bleeds more than a scalp wound, pouring blood into His tangled hair. The comedy of adoration begins. There are mock bows, more blows to the face and head, shouts of "Hail, King of the Jews!" But Jesus answers nothing. Exasperated, His mockers spit in His face. Back to Pilate they go; scourging has not satisfied them. "Crucify Him," they cry. Jesus is condemned to die. Then He was prepared for the long slow parade along public street to...

"THE CROSS"

"And they led him away to crucify him". Matthew 27:31

“And He bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of the skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha”. John 19:17

“And there followed him a great company of people.” Luke 23:27

“He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”. Phil. 2:8

The cloak, already sticking to the wounds, is torn from Jesus’ back. The blood starts to flow once more. Then the cross is placed on His shoulders.

Barefoot and bound, with soldiers pulling His cords and wondering if He’ll die before they get there, Jesus falls several times during the 650-yard journey. The cross slips and scrapes His back, again opening the wounds. Simon of Cyrene is finally pressed into carrying the cross.

At Calvary He is stripped and His coat is roughly yanked off. Excruciating pain, like millions of hot needles, shock the nervous system.

Wounds on the back, legs, and thighs are caked with dust and fine gravel as He is laid on His back at the foot of the cross. His shoulders on the cross piece, one executioner drove large five-inch square spikes into the center of His palm. Five, sometimes six strokes drove the spike solidly into the wood, then another turned the spike so that the hand could not slip free. A small projection resembling a rhinoceros horn, or a sedile, fitted through the crotch, taking much of the weight off the hands. After that, each foot was nailed solidly to the cross.

Jesus’ knees are bent and the bottom of the foot is placed flat against the wood. With several blows, a spike is driven between the second and third metatarsal bones. The right foot is placed underneath the left and the spike is driven through both feet and into the wood.

Jesus is silent. His face is grossly contorted. The median nerve has been touched but not severed. His thumb is striking the palm of His hand. Inexpressible pain darts like lightning through His entire body. Man’s most unbearable pain is caused by wounding the great nerve centers. Each movement of the body revives this horrible pain. Hand wounds sent fire down through the arms. Pain and darkness became excruciatingly real. The back, arms, hands, feet, and crotch were throbbing. Pain continued to build and multiply. “When he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to Him who judgeth righteously.” 1 Peter 2:23

An anesthetic – gall and wine – is offered but Jesus refuses it. His arm muscles are grossly contracted and the fingers are cramped and forced sharply inward. Huge ridges of muscle stand out on the thighs and calves. Tetanus sets in. Stomach and neck muscles tighten, then the respiratory muscles.

“I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. Part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” Psa 22:14-18

“THE AGONY”

Short breaths enter in a whistling sound but don’t come out. He thirsts for air like one suffering an acute asthmatic attack. His pale face turns purple, then blue. He is asphyxiating. His lungs,

loaded with air, are unable to empty. Extreme thirst. Lips dry, mouth parched, blood hot, skin fevered. The greatest “need of a drop of cool water”, was denied.

“After this, Jesus...saith, I thirst.” John 19:28

The sun shone directly into the eyes of the dying man. Even with eyes closed, a red glare penetrated. The tongue thickened. Saliva changed to uncombed wool. Swelling in the hands and feet increased. The sedile dug deeply into the genitals. It was impossible to turn, or change positions. The muscles twitched. The back muscles and the muscles of the abdominal area knotted up, causing cramps.

After two hours, every muscle was knotted up beyond endurance. Men screamed themselves into insanity at this point. Lockjaw, tetanus both flooded the body. Death by crucifixion prolonged the horrible agony of tetanus to an eternal death.

Flies, insects, and dogs, with a smell of blood in their nostrils, swarmed and cowered closely. Birds of prey, and scavengers of the skies circled lower and lower. Prayers seemed to mock a man, but he prayed...or else he cursed.

Tiny blood vessels began to close shut as muscles tensed, and a paralyzing numbness followed for lack of circulation. Mucous membranes dried up. The thin slippery tissue which lines and lubricates much of the human body, dried to the consistency of fine gravel. It scraped tender tissues of the anus. It tore at a tortured throat, and lay like stones in the sinuses. It ripped layers of tissue from the eyes every time the pupil was moved or eyes blinked.

“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” Luke 23:46

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the last which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith there came out blood and water.” John 19:32-34

The next hours pass in total blackness. His agony is greatest when God withdraws from Him. His pain, thirst, cramps, and asphyxiation have not drawn one complaint from Him. But separation is unbearable. Three hours later the sun returns and he cries,

“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Matthew 27:46

In His sixth hour on the cross Jesus cries, “Into Thy hands I commend my Spirit.” With a final sigh the head drops slowly forward, the chin above the breastbone. He is dead.

Roman law required that any body claimed by the family or friends (Joseph Arimathea had asked for the body) must first be pierced to make death certain. This ruled out the possibility of a victim fainting, being claimed, and revived. A spear is thrust into Jesus’ body just under the breastbone, piercing the pericardial sack of the heart, and the heart’s right auricle which is always filled with blood. Water and blood gushed out.

“THE GALLOWS”

In ancient Persia, a gallows was not what we think of as in some Western “hang’em high” movie. The literal word means “tree”, or “pole”. There, they did not hang their victim, rather they impaled them. A stake was run through the body, and then the body was hung on a pole. The Romans learned their techniques from these Persians. The Romans developed the practice of driving nails into the hands. But the Persians simply impaled the body on a pole.

Jesus. His story is like none other. They put Him on a pole...to die. More people hated Him than loved Him. More cheered than wept. When He died, more applauded than sighed. Why do we sing to Him, worship Him then? Because He is like no other who had died. He rose from the grave. He lives today, and gives *us* a song.

Do you know why He died? Not because some men hated Him and decided to put Him on a pole. He died because you and I are sinners. And the only way to satisfy the demand of a holy God in dealing with humanity was to pay the penalty for sin. And that required the price of blood from the unspotted Lamb of God, Jesus. He gave His life for a lost world....will we?

Jesus said, "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Mt. 12:28).

Paul said, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Romans 10:9-10.

CHAPTER ONE – PART II

THOUGH HE WAS CRUCIFIED

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The Roman centurions threw the hood over His head. They punched Him and slapped Him. One yelled in a deep, hoarse voice, “If you are a prophet, then tell me this! Which of us just slapped you? Tell me who was it that just hit you!”

Never has there ever been any power in all creation that could cause the Father to be separated from the Son until the day Adam fell and opened the door to the devil. At that time, every created thing fell under the curse. But in order to redeem you and I, He sent Jesus, His only begotten Son to the cross where Jesus cried out:

“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)

GETHSEMANE

“And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” (Luke 22:44)

What kind of pressure is a man under when blood will actually pour out of his sweat ducts and run down his forehead? When the stress is so great the nervous system will react in the muscles, and in the skin the tiny hair-line blood vessels will come under so much stress the vessels will break and literally leak into the sweat ducts. That’s the stress Jesus felt.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was resisting the coming horror. He knew where He was going. It wasn’t the cross He was afraid of. You see, many have died terrible deaths. They’ve had their Fingernails and toenails pulled out one by one; they’ve been nailed to crosses just as Jesus was; They have been forced to stand naked in below zero degree weather for hours on end...just to be drug back in to thaw, cast into a damp, rat infested dungeon, and finally dragged right back outside in freezing temperatures anew.

It wasn’t the long walk from Jerusalem to Golgotha that terrified Jesus. Not the intense scourging and beating, nor the six hours on the cross. That was the easy part of the penalty He was to pay for our sins. While carrying on His back the sins of the entire world to come, it was the three day trek that terrified our Lord. And He went *the entire distance of Separation from His Father*.

THE BLOOD

Blood is a strange substance. Never has man understood the life giving substance in blood. Man knows nothing about life. He cannot create life, though he continues to attempt it in the laboratories. God created man in His likeness. Psalm 139:14 states that man is fearfully and wonder-fully made.

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11).

The makeup of Jesus’ blood was perfect. Peter rightly describes it as “precious” blood (1 Peter 1:19). It is God’s price for the redemption of the whole human race. Picture in your mind the scene at Calvary. No artist has ever pictured Calvary as it really was. There was no loin cloth. No courtesy given there!

The crown of thorns was put roughly on His head. Many thorns, up to one-and-a-half inches long jabbed into His scalp, producing such serious wounds that blood spurted out and ran into His hair and beard, matting both in dark red. The spikes were driven into the palms of His hands, and His blood coursed down His arms and was literally sprinkled by His own fingers onto the ground beneath on behalf of the sins of the whole world . Later the spear was thrust into His side and His

blood spurted out and ran down the sides of the cross to the ground below. His feet were driven through with spikes and more blood ran down the sides of the altar.

“As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men” (Isaiah 52:14).

Every bone was out of joint (Psalm 22:14). His face was dreadful to look upon. Those who looked on Him saw only blood. He was a spectacle of blood. His body was mangled so badly that He no longer looked human. His hair and beard were soaked in His own blood; His back from 39 stripes was lacerated and covered in His own blood; the cross was covered in His blood. The earth beneath the cross was soaked. It was blood, blood, blood. Every single type of the atonement was fulfilled in Christ that day. Jesus cried out, “It is finished”, and the veil was rent from the top to the bottom.

THE DESCENSION¹

The Godhead has no beginning and no ending. It has always been, and always will be. From the beginning, God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit enjoyed each others presence in sweet communion. In all eternity, there was never a force strong enough to separate the Father and the Son except for the time on the cross when the Father showed His intense love for all mankind. And when Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”, He knew His trek to the lower parts of the earth was the torment that man cannot describe.

“I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man *that hath* no strength: Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. Se’lah. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction:

Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee” (Psalm 88:4-9).

David the Psalmist prophesied here that Jesus would be penalized for the sins of the entire world, that He would be laid in the very deepest part of hell (the lowest pit, actually was under submission to Satan for a portion of the three days and nights), and, being as far from God as possible, He saw the rejection by the Father as He (God) violently turned away from the Son in great wrath. The Son had become an abomination unto God!

THE ASCENSION/RESURRECTION!²

I can see the scene in my mind. Jesus, standing in victory before Satan and all the hordes of hell. He rocks the lower regions as His voice echoes throughout the place of torment: “You lost the eternal battle, Satan! Look! I have the keys to hell and death, and have fully defeated you for all eternity. My lambs hear my voice and will follow Me. Satan, your day of reckoning is at hand, and you are eternally judged”.

“Fear not, I am the first and the last: I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, A’men; and have the keys of hell and death.” (Rev. 1:17,18)

Jesus enters the bosom of Abraham. He preaches Christ crucified. He gives each soul the opportunity to publicly confess the name of the eternal son of God. For their deliverance is come. No longer the

¹ This section was donated by Dave Roberson; World Prayer Center Monthly Newsletter, Tulsa, Oklahoma

² Ibid.

blood of animals to cover sins, but the precious blood of Jesus which cleanses us from all sin.

Hallelujah! Because He is forever, so are we also!

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water.” (1 Peter 3:18-20).

As the Old Testament saints cheer in joyous victory, they begin to feel rapturously light. Yes! They are soaring through the air...millions of miles per hour into the zone where time does not exist, that is, all except for Five hundred, who wanted to stop on the earth to see their loved ones, dine with them and partake in their kind of salvation! Praise God.

He has obtained a glorious victory for you and I over the powers of darkness; “*And, having spoiled powers and principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it*” (Colossians 3:15).

“Wherefore he saith, ‘When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)’” (Ephesians 4:9-10; Psalm 68:18).

He led captivity captive. The devil and all the powers of hell were conquered and disarmed by the slain redeemer. The first promise pointed to this; the bruising of the heel of Christ in His sufferings was the breaking of the serpents head (Genesis 3:15). The expressions are magnificent; Jesus conquered in His death. The crown of thorns became a crown of laurels. He spoiled them, broke the devil’s power, conquered and disabled him, and made a show of them openly - exposed them to public shame, and made a show of them to angels and all in the universe. Satan’s kingdom has never before seen such a blow as when the Lord Jesus Christ claimed victory for mankind. He tied them to His chariot wheels, and rode forth conquering and to conquer - alluding to the custom of a general’s triumph, who returned victorious - triumphing over them by His cross.

“Wherefore he saith, ‘When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)’” (Ephesians 4:9-10; Psalm 68:18).

John 20:16,17 tells us when Jesus met with Mary soon after the resurrection, and she recognized Him, she approached Him. Jesus said, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God”.

Because Jesus had not yet been with the Father, He could not have delivered His own blood to the heavenly holy place, as recorded in Hebrews 9:12-13:

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, *but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

The above verses state Jesus took His own blood into the heavenly Holy Place (the purpose was to present it before the Father as the High Priest did in the Old Covenant for His glory). Then, and only then was the full work of Calvary complete. His substitutionary work was not completed on the cross. Neither was it finished in the Resurrection. What did you say? Jesus Himself stated while on the Cross “it is finished?”

You must remember that, even though Jesus did make that statement while on the Cross, He also made a similar statement while in the garden when He was praying. His statement at that time went something like this. “Father, I have finished all You have commanded of me”. Since Jesus had made this statement *before* He was actually on the Cross, we may assume He spoke in answer to a prophecy, for He was truly the Lamb of God slain before the very foundations of the world, and in that very powerful sense of the Word, it was finished.

And Jesus had already committed Himself to the cross...with Resurrection following in three days!

Jesus did not allow Mary to touch Him just after His resurrection because He had not yet ascended to the Father. He had not yet presented His own precious and perfect blood in the Holy of Holies for His Father’s stamp of approval. As I previously stated, the fullness of the work of Christ came when this event in Heaven took place. Legally, that is.

And He sits at the right hand of the Father...until His time comes...to come. Even so, come, Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:20)

In the first sermon preached after the resurrection of the Lord, Peter says these remarkable words, “Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.” (Acts 2:23-24)

A better rendering of the words, “pangs of death” is the “birth pangs of death,” suggesting that the church was born out of the birth pangs of the Spirit of Jesus.

We read in Acts 2:27: “Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto (in) Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.” (In Joseph’s tomb).

Peter’s message was striking. He spoke by revelation. He told them Jesus was then seated at the right hand of God, yet no intimation had been given him.

Jesus was actually delivered up by our trespasses, and He was raised when He had satisfied the claims of justice. The work of our salvation was finished, not at the cross, or in the pit, but it was completed when Jesus arose victoriously over the enemy and death and carried His own blood into the Holy of Holies of heaven, and the supreme court of the universe had accepted that blood and made our redemption complete (Hebrews 9:12).

So, if you do not have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and would like to, here’s how: Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. And learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Its that simple. Jesus said if we would come to Him, He promised to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If you feel that tug on your heart to come to Jesus, now is the perfect time. Don’t wait any longer. No matter how young or aged you are...if you want to live out the rest of your life knowing the peace only

Jesus can give. Ask Him to forgive you of your sin, cleanse your heart, and commit yourself wholly to Him.