

WHY DID CHRIST DIE BEFORE THE TWO ROBBERS?



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Have you ever wondered WHY Christ died BEFORE the two robbers who were crucified alongside Him? Was our Savior LESS healthy, or NOT as physically fit as the other two? Was there some OTHER factor or agent in His death that we are unaware of? Did the spear wound in His side, or perhaps the scourging He received at the hands of the Romans, cause Jesus to succumb? The Old Testament sacrifice of the Red Heifer PREFIGURED the death of our Passover Lamb and provides us with clues to His death -- showing that the Jewish (or Mosaic) penalty for BLASPHEMY was what PRIMARILY caused His death!

John D. Keyser

The mode of Jesus' execution, as graphically portrayed in the Gospels, has long been the subject of historical research and, until recently, more than some skepticism. The April 16, 1990 issue of *U.S. News and World Report* makes this observation:

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, some scholars questioned the crucifixion story on a number of counts. Some have argued, for instance, that it was MORE COMMON in first-century Palestine for criminals to be executed by some other means -- stoning, burning, beheading or strangling -- and their bodies "hanged on a tree" as a WARNING to others. Other theologians have added that crucifixion was a Roman mode of execution and was not permitted in Jewish law. Consequently, it is unlikely that the Temple priests would call for Jesus to be crucified as the Gospels report...But ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

AND TEXTUAL RESEARCH in recent years have added considerable weight to the Gospel accounts. -- Article, "The Last Days of Jesus," p.46.

Let us make use of this recently recovered information, and determine WHY Christ died BEFORE the two robbers executed with Him.

The Survival Factors

In chapter 15 of the gospel of *Mark* we read:

It was now evening, and since it was the Preparation Day (that is, the vigil of the Sabbath), there came Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who himself lived in the hope of seeing the kingdom of God, and he boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate, ASTONISHED THAT HE SHOULD HAVE DIED SO SOON, summoned the centurion and inquired if he was

already dead. Having been assured of this by the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph....(Verses 42-46).

Notice Pilate was ASTONISHED that Christ had died so soon -- in fact he didn't believe it; so he sent for the centurion to confirm Joseph of Arimathea's assertion. WHY was Pilate so unwilling to believe Christ was already dead?

This has not gone unnoticed by the commentators. *The Imperial Bible Dictionary*, edited by Patrick Fairbairn, makes this observation:

Instances are on record of persons surviving on a cross for nine days. But in our Lord's case THERE WERE CIRCUMSTANCES ALTOGETHER PECULIAR, which must have GREATLY TENDED TO SHORTEN THE PERIOD OF SUFFERING.

Since those subjected to scourging often died at the hands of the lictor, it was quite probable, then, that Christ was treated less severely since Pilate FULLY INTENDED TO SET HIM FREE.

Ignorant of these, Pilate indicated his surprise that the death of Jesus should have occurred so soon, Mar. XV. 44. And as there were PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES TENDING TO PRODUCE AN UNUSUALLY SPEEDY DEATH, so there were reasons for effecting the removal of the body with the least possible delay. -- Vol. II, Blackie & Son, London.

Presumably Christ was as healthy, or healthier than the two robbers who were crucified with Him. He understood and observed the health laws of His Father; and this, therefore, should have guaranteed a LONGER survival time at Golgotha than those who suffered with Him.

Not only that, but there is evidence to suggest Christ was NOT scourged as harshly as the usual victim of crucifixion! Notice what ***Luke 23:20-23*** says:

Pilate was anxious to SET JESUS FREE and addressed them again, but they [the mob] shouted back, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" And for the third time he spoke to them, "Why? What harm has this man done? I have found no case against him that deserves death, SO I SHALL HAVE HIM PUNISHED AND THEN LET HIM GO."

The Greek word for punished is "paideuo," and it means "to train up a child, i.e. educate, or (by impl.) DISCIPLINE (by punishment):- chasten (-ise), instruct, learn, teach." This word in turn comes from "pais," meaning "a boy (as often BEATEN with impunity), or (by anal.) a girl." Pais comes from the primary root "paio," meaning "to hit (as if by a single blow and LESS VIOLENTLY than 5180); spec. to sting (as a scorpion):- smite,

strike." (See ***Strong's Concordance***, #3811, 3816 & 3817). The word "paideuo" in NO way denotes a severe scourging as is usually associated with crucifixion.

The Old Testament indicates the same thing! In ***Isaiah 53:5*** we read: "...The CHASTISEMENT for our peace [health, welfare] was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." The word "chastisement" here in the Hebrew means the same thing as "punished" does in the Greek: "Mowcar, moo-sawr; from 3256; prop. chastisement; fig. reproof, warning or instruction; also... correction, discipline... instruction, rebuke." (#4148 ***Strong's Exhaustive Concordance***).

Since those subjected to scourging often died at the hands of the lictor, it was quite probable, then, that Christ was treated LESS SEVERELY since Pilate FULLY INTENDED TO SET HIM FREE. An interesting work by Haim Cohn -- ***The Trial and Death of Jesus*** -- agrees with this completely:

...if the Roman governor had, indeed, before sentencing Jesus, ordered him to be scourged, as is reported in John and hinted at in Mark and Matthew, he was probably scourged, but NOT TORTURED AS SEVERELY AS IN THE NORMAL ROMAN PRACTICE respecting persons accused of "laesa maiestas," ...but...may have been given several blows or strokes, not with the view to extracting further confessions of guilt from him, but SOLELY with a view to compelling or inducing him to express regret and repentance and to promise that he would no longer air royal

pretensions. -- KTAV Publishing House, New York. 1977. Pages 206-7.

In fact, the scourging associated with crucifixion was NORMALLY administered AT THE EXECUTION SITE; and the "punishment" meted out by Pilate (**Luke 23:20-23**) WAS NOT part of the usual Roman practice. In the standard Roman crucifixion, the malefactor was first undressed then his head was covered, then a forked instrument with two prongs (called "furca") was placed on his back and his two hands bound to it -- each hand to one of the prongs. In this fashion the one condemned had to drag the furca to the place of crucifixion; and WHEN HE ARRIVED THERE he was scourged while remaining bound to the furca.

Roman records indicate a Milder Form of crucifixion was sometimes permitted. In this case the malefactor was allowed to FORGO THE USUAL SCOURGING at the execution site and, instead of dragging the furca, had to carry his own gallows. The transverse beam (patibulum) was loaded on the back

of the one to be crucified, and sometimes he was already bound or nailed to the patibulum when starting out on his final journey. Other times, the malefactor was allowed to carry the patibulum FREELY on his back, and would be bound or NAILED to it when he ARRIVED at his destination.

The vertical stake of the cross -- whether it be a TREE or an actual stake -- was a PERMA-

The gospel records clearly show Christ was allowed the Milder Form of crucifixion, probably because Pilate wanted to be as lenient as possible -- especially after his wife's warning (**Matt. 27:19**); or maybe he realized only too well what awaited Christ at Golgotha.

All these factors we have just mentioned should have ENSURED that Christ would OUT-LIVE the two robbers put to death with Him! But they didn't -- WHY?

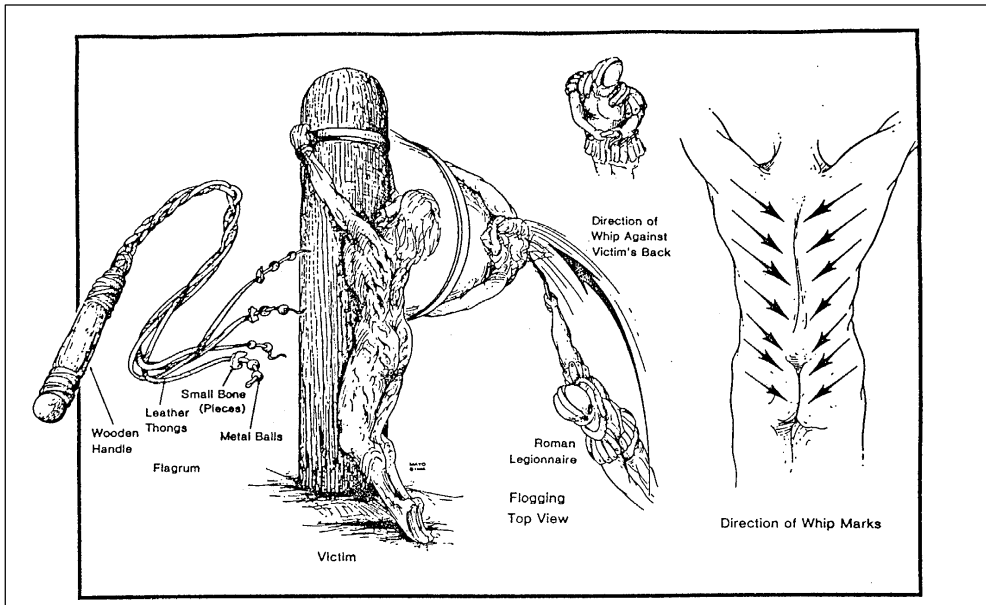
The Hypothesis of Herman L. Hoeh

In an attempt to circumvent this problem, Herman L. Hoeh of Ambassador College came up with an ingenious method involving grammatical

gymnastics and reliance on DEFECTIVE codices that have long been rejected by the mainstream of scholars and Bible authorities.

In a 1959 article entitled, **Did Christ Die of a Broken Heart?** Herman Hoeh makes this baffling assertion:

Now let us read Isaiah 53:8. "He was taken from prison and from judgment...he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression



Scourging

Left, Short whip (flagrum) with lead balls and sheep bones tied into leather thongs. Center left, Naked victim tied to flogging post. Deep striplike lacerations were usually associated with considerable blood loss. Center right, View from above, showing position of lictors. Right, Inferomedial direction of wounds.

NENT FIXTURE at the crucifixion site, or (in the case of a stake) already installed BEFOREHAND for each particular execution. (See: Mommsen, op. cit., pp. 919, 983; Hentig, **Die Strafe**, Vol. I, p. 254; Scott, op. cit., pp. 169ff.; Berger, op. cit., q.v. "Castigatio," p. 382; Seneca, **Ad Marciam**, 20, 3; **Lactantius**, 6, 17, 28; Plutarchus, **De Sera Numinis Vindicta**, 9; Plautus, **Miles Gloriosus**, 359.)

of my people WAS HE STRICKEN." Notice that in the margin of most Bibles, instead of the last three words, "was he stricken," you will find the words, "The stroke was upon him." Jesus didn't die of a broken heart, but "for the transgression of my people, the stroke was upon him." That is, THE MORTAL WOUND OF A SPEAR. In other words, A STROKE OF A SPEAR BROUGHT ABOUT HIS DEATH. -- Page 2.

Really? How in the world did he arrive at that conclusion? I would NEVER have associated the word "stroke" with the "jab" of a spear! Neither do any of the concordances I have consulted! *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* states, under #5061: "Nega, neh'-gah; from #5060; A BLOW." Number 5060 says: "Naga, naw-gah'; a prim. root; prop. to TOUCH, i.e. LAY THE HAND UPON;...violently, to STRIKE:- BEAT...smite, strike, touch." This NOWHERE implies jabbing or thrusting with a spear!

So why does Hoeh translate it in such a way? To back up his hypothesis that Christ died as the RESULT OF A SPEAR WOUND!

Instead of being content with the apostle John's account which PLAINLY says Christ was PIERCED with a spear AFTER HIS DEATH, Hoeh goes through all kinds of gyrations and maneuvers to try and prove our Savior died as the result of the spear thrust. Let's read John's account in chapter 19: "When they came to Jesus, THEY FOUND HE WAS ALREADY DEAD, and so instead of breaking his legs one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and

immediately there came out blood and water." (Verses 33-34).

That Jesus was already dead when the soldiers came to break His legs is clearly confirmed by the fact that blood and water BOTH flowed from His side when He was pierced with the spear. The SEPARATION of the water from the blood is an undeniable medical confirmation of death. This separation ONLY takes place after death, and since "immediately there came out blood and water" Jesus was already DEAD when the spear pierced His side. NOTHING short of death is known to modern medical science which can provide the phenomena of blood and water separating.

Grammatical Manipulations!

Hoeh explains all this away by the following ingenious grammatical exercise:

The verb "pierced," in the Greek, is in the aorist tense. In English we are familiar with the present, the imperfect, and the perfect tenses. The imperfect in English means that one "used to do" or "did" something. And the perfect tense, that he "has done" something. But in the Greek, the aorist means not TIME of action, but KIND of action. It leaves the past INDEFINITE. The aorist tense in Greek means that an action was done at a single moment, and not continuously...The aorist tense of the word "pierced" does not tell you when the spearing occurred -- whether they then speared Him or whether He HAD ALREADY BEEN SPEARED. You can know THE TIME only by putting John 19:34 with the rest of the scriptures. -- Page 4.

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What Herman Hoeh is trying to say here is that the spear wound occurred at an EARLIER time, and that John was reporting it (in *John 19:33-34*) AFTER THE FACT and OUT OF CONTEXT. Hoeh goes on to say that it would be ridiculous to spear Christ when he was already dead: "Now if they saw He was dead already, they didn't have any reason to pierce his side. He was dead already! If they were not sure, what would they have done? They would have broken His legs!"

Logic would indeed point to this conclusion, except for one thing that Hoeh completely overlooked -- verses 36 and 37! These verses COUPLE TOGETHER the breaking of the legs of the robbers and the spearing of Christ into the SAME TIME-FRAME, and state WHY Christ's legs were not broken and WHY He was pierced with the spear: "Because ALL this [the failure to break His legs and the piercing by the spear] happened to FULFILL THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE: 'NOT ONE BONE of His will be broken'; and again, in another place scripture says: "They will look on the one whom they have PIERCED.""

Notice the ORDER in which these actions took place -- the failure to break Jesus' legs (after BREAKING the robbers' legs) comes BEFORE the piercing of Christ's side with the spear. This surely indicates John intended the verse about the spearing (34) to be in the SAME

TIME-FRAME as the leg breaking (32-33) and NOT EARLIER as Hoeh would have it. Verses 36 and 37 also PLAINLY STATE that Christ was pierced with the spear to "FULFILL THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE" -- not necessarily to ensure His death! Therefore John DID NOT insert the statement after the fact and out of context. Hoeh's gymnastics are totally in vain and nothing but a smoke screen!

We can see here that quite a bit of TAMPERING (by various hands) has taken place in this codex, thus throwing doubt on the ACCURACY of the work.

Another point to consider is that John was a FLUID writer -- not one to insert statements after the fact and bounce around all over the place in random time sequences. An examination of the gospel of John AND his epistles backs this up.

The "Missing Verse."

Herman Hoeh doesn't stop here, however. A so-called missing verse in *Matthew 27:49* comes to his rescue! This verse, which reads: "Another man took a spear and pierced his [Christ's] side, and blood and water came out," is found inserted (according to Hoeh) in a number of manuscripts, notably the *Codex Vaticanus*, the *Codex Sinaiticus* and the *Codex Ephraemi*. The way this verse is inserted at *Matthew 27:49* gives the impression that Christ died AS A RESULT of the spear wound and, of course, contradicts *John*

19:33-34 (without the grammatical contortions, that is!).

Let's see how RELIABLE these sources quoted by Herman Hoeh REALLY are.

The Codex Vaticanus

Hoeh states, in his article, that:

We have at Ambassador College a copy of the Vaticanus -- a Greek New Testament manuscript written in the 300's A.D. It was first published in 1859 by Angelus Maius...In the Greek of Matthew 27:49 is this very verse. "And another took a spear and pierced His side and there came forth water and blood."

This verse is in the Greek text in this manuscript, which, as far as modern scholars know, is the oldest complete manuscript of the New Testament. -- Page 3.

The *Bible Dictionary*, Vol. II, published by Cassell, Petter and Galpin of London, has this to say about the Codex Vaticanus (B):

It appears to have belonged to the Vatican Library (where it is numbered 1,209) from a time not long subsequent to its formation by Pope Nicholas V [1328-30 A.D.]. It now consists of 146 leaves of thin vellum, written in three columns on a page, except in the poetical books of the Old Testament, where there are only two. THE ANCIENT WRITING IS DEFECTIVE in the first forty-six chapters of Genesis, in part of the Psalms, also in the NEW TESTAMENT from Heb. IX. 14 to the end of that book, the four pastoral epistles, and the Apocalypse. These DEFECTS (with the exception of the pastoral epistles) have been supplied by a much more RECENT HAND...ANOTHER HAND HAS RE-TOUCHED the ancient FADED letters, and the same (or some other posterior

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to the ORIGINAL scribe) has ADDED the accents and breathings. Large initial letters have been placed at the beginning of the several books, INSTEAD of those of the original scribe, which were of the same size as the others in the line. -- Article "Vaticanus, Codex (B)," p.542.

We can see here that quite a bit of TAMPERING (by various hands) has taken place in this codex, thus throwing doubt on the ACCURACY of the work.

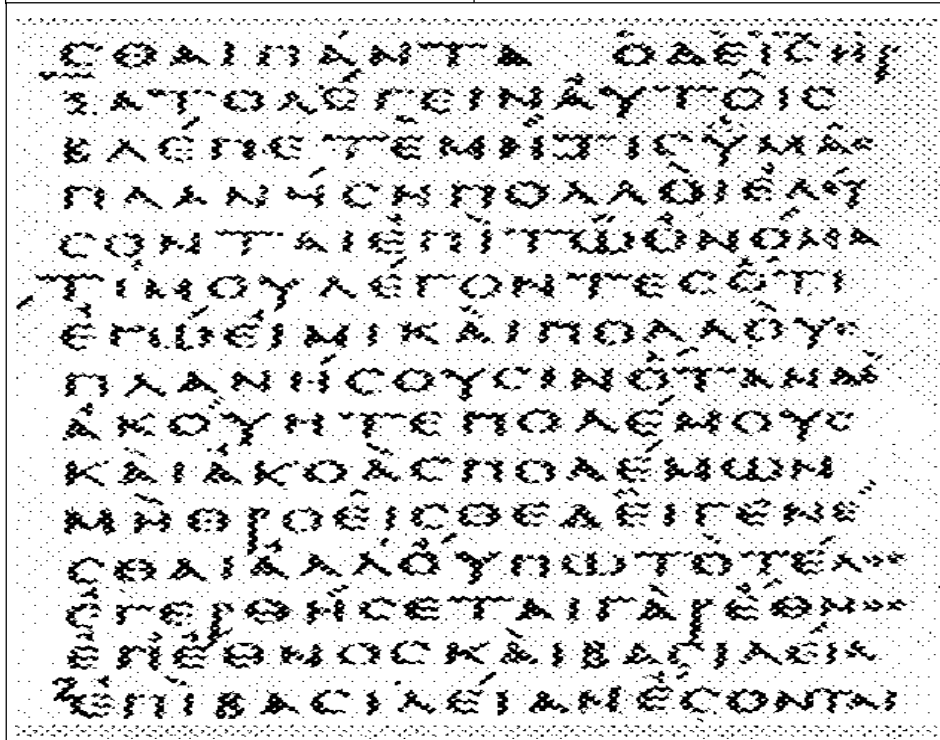
The *Bible Dictionary* continues:

In the ancient arrangement St. Paul's epistles are numbered continuously; and this brings to light the record of a CURIOUS AND IMPORTANT FACT -- namely, that in the MS. [Vaticanus] to which these sections were first appended, the Epistle to the Hebrews must have been placed BETWEEN Galatians and Ephesians...In 1669 Bartolucci made a collation of this MS. It is IMPERFECT, and the existing transcript (in the Bibliotheque at Paris) is NOT VERY EXACT. About the year 1720 a collation of this MS. was made for

Bentley by an Italian called Mico: the CORRECTIONS OF THE LATER HANDS were afterwards noted for the same critic by Rulotta. In 1799 Ford edited Mico's collation in his appendix to the Codex Alexandrinus; but this edition appearing to be OF DOUBTFUL ACCURACY, it was re-compared with the collation, partly for Tregelles (by the Rev. J. B. Lightfoot and the Rev. John E. B. Mayor), and partly by himself, for his critical Greek Testament...In 1836 it was announced that Cardinal Mai[us] was likely to publish an edition of the text of this MS., which, it was stated, he had commenced some years before, under the sanction of Pope Leo XII...A little more was known respecting this edition, when, in 1848-9, the Papal Government of Rome was superseded by the Republicans; for then Cardinal Mai[us] offered the whole edition to Mr. Asher, the publisher of Berlin, who, however, DECLINED IT, on the ground that the terms proposed by Mai[us] were too high; also, after inspecting the Cardinal's own copy, he thought that the NUMBER OF CORRECTIONS which were noted was so great, AS TO MAKE HIM DISTRUSTFUL OF THE WHOLE WORK...We must refer to the preface by Vercellone for an account of the STRANGE MANNER in which the work was got out by Mai[us], and of the INACCURACY which was the inevitable result, and also as to the MEANS TAKEN FOR CORRECTING the printed copy, after the work had been placed in his hands by Cardinal Altieri, one of Mai[us]' executors...In 1859 a smaller edition of the New Testament portion only was issued, also under the editorial care of Vercellone; though it appears from the preface that it had been, at least, COMMENCED BEFORE MAI[US]' DEATH.

This, then, is one of the manuscripts that Herman Hoeh puts so much faith in to back up his hypothesis about the death of Christ!

The Codex Vaticanus



The Codex Sinaiticus

The *Codex Sinaiticus* came to light under even stranger circumstances. The *Bible Dictionary* published by Cassell, Petter and Galpin explains some of these:

In 1844 Dr. Tischendorf found in the Convent of St. Catherine, at Mount Sinai, a portion of the LXX [Septuagint] version of the Old Testament, which APPEARED to be of extreme antiquity...everything about the MS. denotes extreme antiquity. This might be concluded on paleographical grounds alone; but it was confirmed by the examination of the character of the text, in which readings were noticed which had been cited by Eusebius, BUT WHICH ARE NOT KNOWN TO EXIST IN ANY OTHER MS...In 1846 the Russian Archimandrite Porphyrius visited Mount Sinai, where he saw and examined the New Testament portion of the SAME MS. His published account did not appear till 1856. But about the time of the visit of Porphyrius, or a little later, Major Macdonald described a very ancient MS. (kept wrapped up in a cloth) on early uncial letters [script with rounded letters, seldom used after the 10th century], written with several columns in a page, and containing the NEW TESTAMENT, which he distinctly stated to belong to the fourth century. Major Macdonald's description of this MS. was communicated to Professor Tischendorf, who MOST DISTINCTLY DENIED that any part of the New Testament was contained in the MS. which he had seen...Tischendorf, also, was SO POSITIVE that no such ancient MS. of the New Testament was in the monastery, that it was thought that Major Macdonald had made a mistake, and that further inquiry was superfluous.

Tischendorf paid a SECOND visit to Mt. Sinai:

In 1853 Tischendorf paid a SECOND VISIT to Mount Sinai, but he was NOT ABLE TO SEE the portion of the MS. with which he was already acquainted, NOR YET TO LEARN WHAT HAD BECOME OF IT; hence he conjectured that it had been carried to some part of Europe...He visited Mount Sinai for the THIRD TIME in the beginning of 1859, arriving there on the last of January..."while taking a walk with the steward of the monastery, I conversed on the subject of the LXX. version, of which I had brought some copies of my edition as well as of my New Testament, as presents for the brethren. On

I may be a suspicious fellow, but if a document came into my hands with a background like this, I would be somewhat DUBIOUS about its authenticity! Yet Herman Hoeh unabashedly uses this Codex to support his claims for the inclusion of the so-called missing verse of Matthew 27:49!

returning from our walk, we entered the steward's dormitory. He said that he, too, had there a copy of the LXX., and he placed before my eyes the cloth in which it was wrapped. I opened the cloth, and saw what far surpassed all my hopes; for there were contained very ample remains of the Codex which I had a good while before declared to be the most ancient of all Greek Codices on vellum that are extant; and amongst these relics, I saw not only what I had met with in 1844 and other books of the Old Testament, BUT ALSO THE WHOLE NEW TESTAMENT WITHOUT THE SMALLEST DEFECT; and to this were added the whole of the epistle of Barnabas and the former part of the Shepherd (i.e. Hermas). -- Article "Sinaiticus, Codex (N)," page 454.

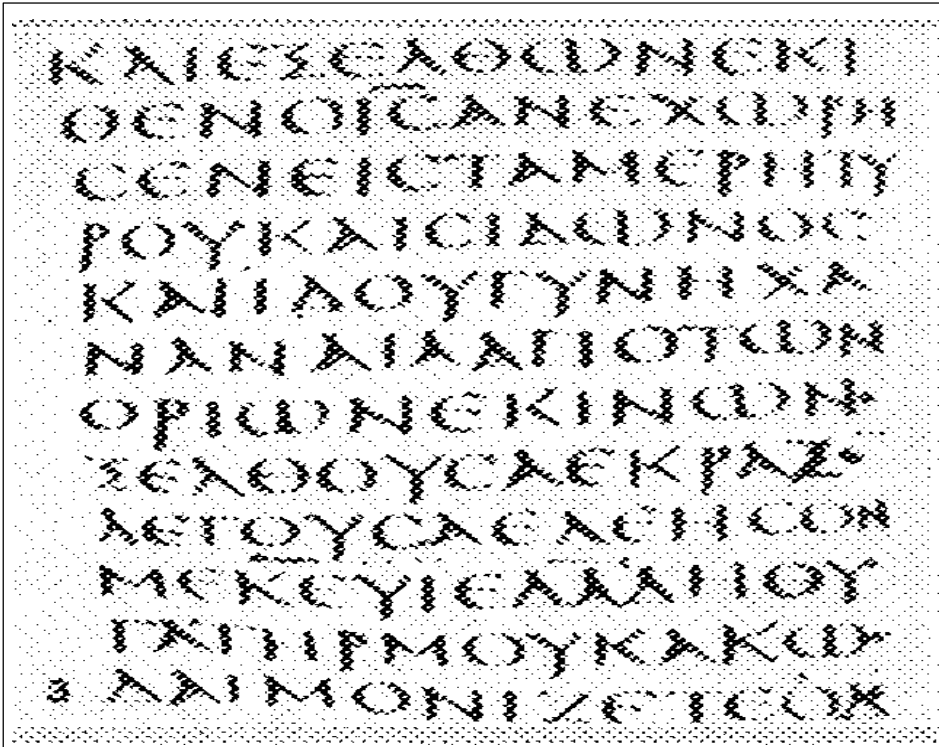
Something seems very STRANGE about the sequence of events here -- on Tischendorf's first trip to the monastery he views the Old Testament

manuscript; then, ten or so years later, Major Macdonald gets to see the same manuscript ALONG WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT, which Tischendorf vehemently claims was NOT WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPT when he saw it ten years earlier! On Tischendorf's SECOND TRIP to Mount Sinai in 1853, NEITHER THE OLD NOR THE NEW TESTAMENT PORTIONS OF THE MANUSCRIPT WERE THERE

at the monastery. Then, on his THIRD TRIP -- viola -- there they are, and not only that, the New Testament portion is "WITHOUT THE SMALLEST DEFECT"! Something just doesn't add up!

It gets STRANGER yet -- in fact, almost BIZARRE:

If the circumstances of the discovery and acquisition of this MS. have about them something romantic [strange would be a better word], the same may be said respecting the discussions which sprang from the CLAIM OF CONSTANTINE SIMONIDES THAT HE HIMSELF WAS THE WRITER. Simonides has long been known as an EXTREMELY CLEVER CALIGRAPHIST, and as having professed to be in possession of ancient MSS., palimpsests [manuscripts whose original text was scrapped off and written over with another text, OFTEN NOT BIBLICAL], and others, some of them containing the alleged works of writers whose names even had NEVER BEEN HEARD OF BEFORE...critical scholars were informed that Simonides CLAIMED TO BE THE WRITER HIMSELF OF THE WHOLE OF THE CODEX SINAITICUS. For some time, he and his friends circulated rumours on the subject, alleging that no



Codex Sinaiticus

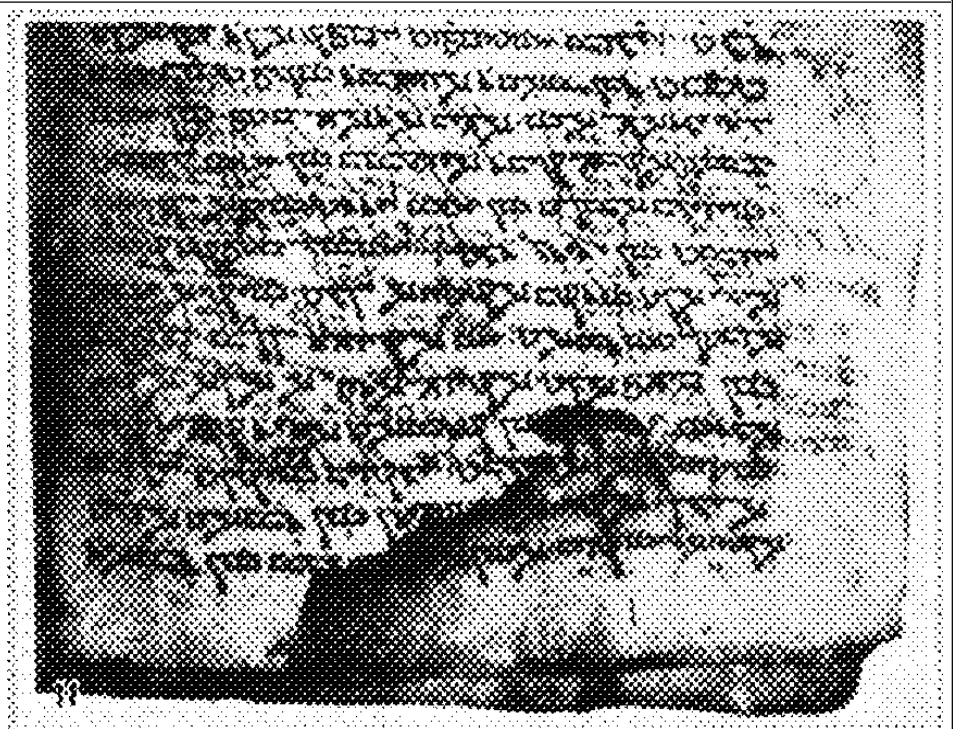
confidence could be placed in Professor Tischendorf, who, they affirmed, HAD MISTAKEN A MS. OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY FOR ONE OF THE FOURTH; and at length, in the summer of 1862, Simonides professed that...the Codex Sinaiticus had been a work of his youth. It was written by him, he said, at Mount Atlas, in the years 1839 and 1840; and as soon

as he saw, in 1860, the first facsimile published by Tischendorf in his "Notitia," he at once recognized it AS HIS OWN WORK...

Simonides now gives his account of the story:

The account given by Simonides is that, about the end of 1839, when living in Mount Atlas with his uncle, Benedict, head of the monastery of Panteleemon, it was the desire of his venerable relative to send some present to the Emperor of Russia. For this purpose, he wished to have prepared a vellum uncial MS. of the Old and New Testaments. Dionysius, the official calligrapher of the monastery, being afraid to undertake the task, SIMONIDES, AT HIS UNCLE'S REQUEST, BEGAN THE WORK, using a large book, containing much blank vellum, which they found. The text from which he copied was the MOSCOW EDITION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, altered on the authority of three ancient MSS. and the printed edition of CODEX ALEXANDRINUS. After finishing the Old and New Testaments, BARNABAS, and a portion of HERMAS, his stock of vellum was exhausted, and his uncle died. On this, he

Codex Palimpsestus Sinaiticus



Herman Hoeh admits that the Greeks were given the responsibility by God to preserve the New Testament in Greek, but makes AN EXCEPTION FOR THE EXCLUSION of the verse in Matthew 27:49!

got the book bound, and disposed of it to Constantius, Archbishop of Sinai. To that place he says that, in 1844, the archbishop told him he sent the MS. There he says he saw it in 1852, although mutilated. Such was the STRANGE STORY of Simonides.

A strange story indeed! Even if the claims of Simonides are not true, the background of the *Codex Sinaiticus* is more than a little odd. I may be a suspicious fellow, but if a document came into my hands with a background like this, I would be somewhat DUBIOUS about its authenticity! Yet Herman Hoeh unabashedly uses this Codex to support his claims for the inclusion of the so-called missing verse of *Matthew 27:49!*

I'm not the only one dubious of such documents:

The manuscript preferences cited in many CONTEMPORARY TRANSLATIONS of the New Testament are due to recent reliance on a RELATIVELY FEW manuscripts discovered in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dependence on these manuscripts, especially two, the SINAITIC AND VATICAN MANUSCRIPTS, is due to the greater age of these documents. However, in spite of the age of the material, some scholars have shown reasons to DOUBT THE FAITHFULNESS OF THESE MANUSCRIPTS TO THE ORIGINAL TEXT, since they often DISAGREE WITH ONE ANOTHER and show OTHER SIGNS OF UNRELIABILITY. -- *The Holy Bible: The New King James Version*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, N.Y. 1983. Preface p. V.

The Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus

The other Codex used by Herman Hoeh to prove that the verse "But another taking a spear pierced His side, when blood and water came out," should be included in *Matthew 27:49*, is known as a PALIMPSEST. A palimpsest is a manuscript whose original text was SCRAPPED OFF AND WRITTEN OVER with another text. In a large

During this ceremony the Red Heifer, which PREFIGURED CHRIST, was taken EAST from the Temple in Jerusalem...to the MIPHKAD ALTAR located on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. Here it was killed and the BLOOD SPRINKLED SEVEN TIMES ON THE GROUND before the east entrance of the Temple. Obviously, the scourging Christ received did NOT fulfill this, because it occurred within the city -- WITHIN THE CAMP.

number of cases the new text DOES NOT FOLLOW THE ORIGINAL and is frequently NOT BIBLICAL!

Such is the *Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus*. Known as "C," it "originally contained the whole NT. Now, however, approximately half of every book is lacking and *2 Thessalonians* and *2 John* are entirely gone... SEVERAL HANDS HAVE CORRECTED the MS. Brought to Italy from the East in the 16th cent., it came to France with Catherine de' Medici and is now in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris." (The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 4. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. P.816).

"Minuscule" Proof!

The number of sources Hoeh claims has this "missing verse" in the text is MINUSCULE in comparison to the total number of manuscripts that have come down to us -- reportedly 13,600! If Hoeh's sources do indeed contain this verse, then only 0.18% of the total available manuscripts provide evidence of Hoeh's assertions! That's not what I would call overwhelming proof! I have not been able to check out ALL off Herman Hoeh's sources, but *The Multilinear Translation of the New Testament*, edited by Jay Green, states that the enigmatic verse was inserted into the text of Matthew by B

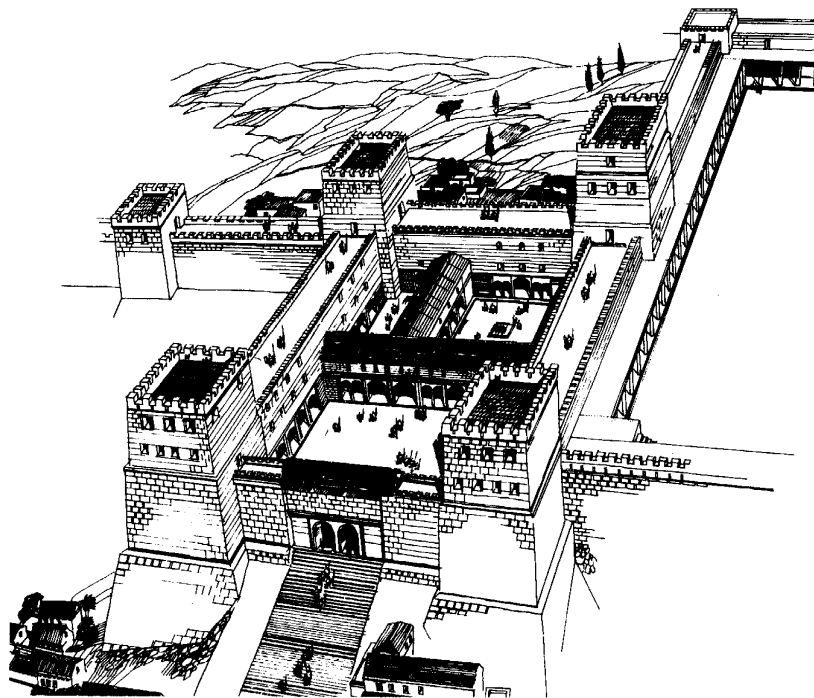
(Codex Vaticanus) and OMITTED BY EVERY OTHER MANUSCRIPT IN EXISTENCE! (Sovereign Grace Book Club, Indiana. 1958. Page 197).

The preface to the *New King James Bible* goes on to say:

On the other hand, THE GREAT MAJORITY of existing manuscripts are in SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT. Even though many are later [than Codex Vaticanus and Sinaiticus], and none is earlier than the fifth century, most of their readings are VERIFIED by ancient papyri, ancient versions, and quotations in the writings of the early church fathers. This LARGE BODY of manuscripts is the source of the Greek text underlying the King James Bible [which omits Herman Hoeh's verse]. It is the Greek text

Consider this: Christ's FACE and the FRONT PART OF HIS BODY could NOT have been so marred by the scourging He received! To undergo the scourging He was tied to a large flogging post THAT COVERED AND THEREBY PROTECTED THE FRONT PART OF HIS BODY from the Roman whip!

Fortress of Antonia where Jesus was Scourged



USED BY GREEK-SPEAKING CHURCHES FOR MANY CENTURIES, presently known as the Textus Receptus, or RECEIVED TEXT, of the New Testament.

Convoluting Reasoning!

Herman Hoeh admits that the Greeks were given the responsibility by God to preserve the New Testament in Greek, but makes AN EXCEPTION FOR THE EXCLUSION of the verse in *Matthew 27:49!*

Notice his convoluted reasoning:

The BULK of Greek manuscripts has OFFICIALLY NOT INCLUDED this text [verse about spearing Christ] YET God has seen to it that the Greek people, who are RESPONSIBLE FOR PRESERVING THE BIBLE IN GREEK, have themselves left us the witness that this verse originally was in Matthew! [How? On the basis of the Codices Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and Ephraemi?] And EVEN THOUGH they have OFFICIALLY NOT APPROVED IT in their text since

that day -- since around 510 to 511 A.D. -- NEVERTHELESS many Greek manuscripts [0.18%!!] that they copied still retain it.

Either the Greeks were given the responsibility to preserve accurately the New Testament, or they weren't! Herman Hoeh can't make an exception like this just to bolster his pet hypothesis! What biased and evasive reasoning! Notice how he skillfully maneuvers his way around to show that with God's sanction the Greeks preserved this verse -- even though officially NOT approved by them!!

He goes on to say:

It was still a marginal reading of the Greek text when the King James version was made!...But the translators THOUGHT IT BETTER TO LEAVE IT OUT! Thus, by the Greek's OWN ADMISSION this verse was in there till as late as 510 A.D. when they made the MISTAKE of removing it. HOWEVER, this does not mean they tampered with the REST OF THE BIBLE [just this one verse, evidently, to back up Hoeh's assertions!]. GOD COMMITTED THE NEW TESTAMENT TO THEIR CARE. But it does mean that when they did make this change, they were forced to leave us witness so that we might know what the true original reading of it is. NO OTHER VERSE HAS BEEN REMOVED BY THEM.

What incredible conceit! The Greeks did all this just for Herman Hoeh? Did you discern how SKILLFULLY Hoeh handled that? This man could MANIPULATE ANYTHING to suit his own purposes! Truly, another Herman L. Hoeh oxymoron!

It has been clearly demonstrated that his sources for

justifying the inclusion of the "missing verse" are HIGHLY DUBIOUS at best! The VAST MAJORITY of manuscripts DO NOT include this verse; and the Textus Receptus (Received Text) used by the Greeks for centuries has omitted it. It can therefore be safely said that the verse in question is obviously SPURIOUS AND DOES NOT BELONG in the New Testament!

The Blood On the Ground!

How, then, did Christ die? HOW did He shed His precious blood for humankind?

During the Passover Seder Christ's shed blood is emphasized time and time again. Did the blood our Savior lost while being SCOURGED by the Romans qualify for our atonement? True, He probably lost quite a bit of blood during this ordeal; but the Old Testament shows that His blood had to be shed at the PLACE OF HIS DEATH!

The sacrifice of the RED HEIFER clearly points to this. During this ceremony the Red Heifer, which PREFIGURED CHRIST, was taken EAST from the Temple in Jerusalem, across the arched bridge over the Kidron Valley, to the MIPH-KAD ALTAR located on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. (For further details read our article *Just Where in Jerusalem Did Our Savior Die?*). Here it was killed and the BLOOD SPRINKLED SEVEN TIMES ON THE GROUND before the

east entrance of the Temple. Obviously, the scourging Christ received did NOT fulfill this, because it occurred within the city -- WITHIN THE CAMP.

What about the blood released from Christ's hands and feet when He was nailed to the tree? Would this qualify? A recent article published by *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (March 21, 1986) shows that VERY LITTLE

Reading through the gospel of John it becomes readily apparent the Jews were indeed out to kill Jesus by STONING from an early date.

BLOOD was released by the crucifixion itself: "Although scourging may have resulted in considerable blood loss, crucifixion per se was a RELATIVELY BLOODLESS PROCEDURE, since no major arteries, other than PERHAPS the deep plantar arch, pass through the favored anatomic sites of transfixion."

Ernest L. Martin verifies this:

It has always been a mystery why so much EMPHASIS is given in the New Testament to the SPILLING OF CHRIST'S BLOOD, while in normal crucifixion LITTLE BLOOD EVER REACHED THE GROUND. Only a SMALL AMOUNT of blood would ordinarily have issued from Christ's wounds in his hands or feet while he was hanging on the tree (the blood that came forth by use of the spear WOULD NOT COUNT in a theological sense because that occurred AFTER HIS DEATH). -- *Secrets of Golgotha*, page 202.

What, then, occurred to Christ while He was hanging on the tree that would FULFILL the sacrifice of the Red Heifer, which PREFIGURED His own death?

The Marring of the Front of Christ's Body

Remember that Pontius Pilate was ASTONISHED Christ had died so early -- BEFORE the two robbers crucified with Him. SOMETHING ELSE

caused Christ to die more quickly, and it was this "something" which fulfilled the sacrifice of the Red Heifer.

Notice *Isaiah 53:5-6*:

But He was WOUNDED for our transgressions, He was BRUISED for our INIQUITIES; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His STRIPES we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has LAID ON HIM the INIQUITY of us all

In the margin of the New King James version of the *Bible*, published by Thomas Nelson (1983), the following words are given an ALTERNATE translation, as follows: "Wounded," PIERCED THROUGH; "bruised," CRUSHED; "stripes," BLOWS THAT CUT IN; and "laid on him," CAUSED TO LAND ON HIM. Using these ALTERNATE words in the above verses we get this: "But He was PIERCED THROUGH for our transgressions, He was CRUSHED for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His BLOWS

THAT CUT IN we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way; and the Lord has CAUSED TO LAND ON HIM the iniquity of us all." The phrase "pierced through for our transgressions" obviously refers to the CRUCIFIXION process itself, while "blows that cut in" must refer to the SCOURGING Jesus received.

But what about the phrase "CRUSHED for our iniquities"? If we couple this with the last phrase (both verses are talking about "our iniquities") we can readily see that whatever CRUSHED OR BRUISED our Savior was CAUSED TO LAND ON HIM!! Now, WHAT could that be? Let's look at *Isaiah 52:14*: "Just as many were astonished at you, so His VISAGE WAS MARRED more than any man, and His FORM more than the sons of men; so shall HE SPRINKLE many nations." Here we see His face and His body were MARRED and He SPRINKLED His blood for "many nations."

According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* the Hebrew word for marred is "moshchath," meaning "disfigurement:- corruption, marred" (#4893). This word comes from "shachath," a word that can mean "BATTER." It is easy to deduce that Christ's FACE AND BODY were disfigured BY BATTERING. WHAT caused this battering?

Another clue can be gleaned from *Psalms 22*, which

also highlights the suffering of the Messiah: "They pierced My hands and My feet; I CAN COUNT ALL MY BONES. They look and stare at Me." Think about this a minute. This "battering" that so marred the face and body of Christ by "crushing" or "bruising" had to have occurred ON THE FRONT OF HIS BODY! How else could He "count all [His] bones" that were exposed by whatever was "CAUSED TO LAND ON HIM"?

Consider this: Christ's FACE and the FRONT PART OF HIS BODY could NOT have been so marred by the scourging He received! To undergo the scourging He was tied to a large flogging post THAT COVERED AND THEREBY PROTECTED THE FRONT PART OF HIS BODY from the Roman whip! Also, the face was NOT flogged. The report in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* explains this: "For scourging, the man was stripped of his clothing, and his hands were tied to an upright post. The BACK, BUTTOCKS, AND LEGS were flogged either by two soldiers (lictors) or by one who alternated positions." Even *Isaiah 50* shows it was the BACK PART of Christ that received the whipping: "I gave MY BACK to those who struck Me" (Verse 6).

Another point to consider is the SPRINKLING of Christ's blood. To fulfill the SACRIFICE OF THE RED HEIFER our Savior was crucified FACING WEST towards the Temple and the Holy of Holies; and His

Putting all this together we can CLEARLY see the authorities were out to STONE Christ FOR BLASPHEMY, and from an early date. But they were not permitted to carry out their plan UNTIL CHRIST'S TIME HAD ARRIVED...

blood was sprinkled on the ground BEFORE the Temple -- BETWEEN Himself and the Temple. This in itself ELIMINATES SCOURGING as the agent responsible for me shedding of His atoning blood. The blood obviously had to come from the FRONT OF HIS BODY AND AT THE SCENE OF THE CRUCIFIXION! So WHAT was it that so BATTERED AND BRUISED the front of Christ's body?

The Key to the Enigma!

The book of *John* contains the key:

As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him [Christ], they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him. The Jews insisted, [saying] "WE HAVE A LAW, AND ACCORDING TO THAT LAW HE MUST DIE, because he claimed to be the Son of God." -- *John 19:7*.

What was this LAW the Jews were talking about? *Leviticus 24:16* reveals the answer: "And he that BLASPHEMES the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation SHALL, CERTAINLY STONE HIM: as well as the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemes the name of the Lord, shall be put to death. *The Acts of Pilate* (a 4th-century apocryphal work) contains verses PARALLELING *John 19:7* that irrefutably prove the Jews were indeed referring to the law in *Deut. 24:16*.

In these verses Pilate could not see any blasphemy in the utterance of Jesus:

If this word is blasphemy, take him, bring him into your synagogue, and JUDGE HIM ACCORDING TO YOUR LAW. The Jews answered Pilate: It is contained in our law, that if a man sins against a man, he must receive forty strokes save one, BUT HE WHO BLASPHEMES AGAINST GOD MUST BE STONED. Pilate said to them: Take him yourselves and punish him as you wish. -- *IV, 3-4*.

What do you think? "HE IS WORTHY OF DEATH," they answered.

And what was the PENALTY for blasphemy? STONING!

Ernest Martin notes, in his book *Secrets of Golgotha*, that this was NOT the first time the Jews tried to stone Him:

During the time of Christ's ministry many of the people who did not like his teaching had SEVERAL

TIMES tried to carry out this Mosaic Law against him. "Then they took up STONES to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the Temple, going throughout the midst of them, and so passed by" (*John 8:59*). "Then the Jews TOOK UP STONES AGAIN TO STONE HIM. Jesus answered them, many good works have I showed

you from my Father; for which of those works do you STONE ME? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we STONE you not; but FOR BLASPHEMY; and because you, being a man, make yourself God" (*John 10:31-33*). The fact is, TIME AND TIME AGAIN the authorities were trying to KILL, HIM BY STONING. "His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought TO STONE YOU; and go you [to Judea] again?" (*John 11:8*). It is made clear in the Gospel record that the people who were hostile to Christ were looking for EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO STONE HIM FOR HIS BLASPHEMY (as they considered it). And, THEY FINALLY GOT THEIR WISH when they went to Pilate and said: "We have a law, AND BY THAT LAW HE OUGHT TO DIE" (*John 19:7*). -- Page 188.

Reading through the gospel of *John* it becomes readily apparent the Jews were indeed out to kill Jesus by STONING from an early date. The first

It was to the HEAD AND EYES that the stones were mainly thrown, especially during the initial phases of the execution (see Mark 12:4); and remarkably, Paul indicates, in these verses, that his principal affliction had SOMETHING TO DO WITH HIS

THE REASON THE FRONT PART OF CHRIST'S FACE AND BODY WAS SO "CRUSHED" AND "BRUISED" BY OBJECTS THAT WERE "CAUSED TO LAND ON HIM" WAS BECAUSE HE WAS STONED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW OF MOSES!!

Was Christ accused of blasphemy? Indeed He was! Notice *Matthew 26:63-66*:

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "HE HAS SPOKEN BLASPHEMY! Why do we need any more witnesses: Look, now you HAVE HEARD THE BLASPHEMY.

His "visage" and His "form" -- the front parts of His body -- were **MARRED BEYOND RECOGNITION.** How do you account for the fact that Mary couldn't recognize her Master at the tomb?

mention of the Jews plotting to kill Him is found in chapter 5: "For this reason the Jews tried all the harder TO KILL HIM; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, MAKING HIMSELF EQUAL WITH GOD." (Verse 18). In the eyes of the religious authorities this amounted to BLASPHEMY -- the worst crime imaginable! And, as we have seen, the law of Moses required the penalty of STONING for blasphemy!

Later on, in chapter 7, we find this statement: "After this, Jesus went around Galilee, PURPOSELY staying away from Judea BECAUSE THE JEWS THERE WERE WAITING TO TAKE HIS LIFE" (Verse 1). And how were they planning to take His life? BY STONING!

Now notice verse 30: "At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, BECAUSE HIS TIME [HOUR] HAD NOT YET COME." What "time" is John talking about? The "time" for Christ TO BE KILLED -- to be sacrificed according to the preordained schedule of His Father! We see this again in **John 8:20**: "Yet no one seized him, BECAUSE HIS TIME HAD NOT YET COME." The "time" for Christ to die and fulfill ALL the Old Testament prophecies pertaining to Himself had not yet arrived!

In chapter 8 we see the Jews becoming so upset they tried to stone Him on the spot! "I tell you the truth," Jesus

answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" At this, THEY PICKED UP STONES TO STONE HIM, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple guards (Verse 58). In chapter 10 it is PLAINLY revealed the Jews were trying to STONE HIM FOR BLASPHEMY:

"I and the Father are one." Again the Jews PICKED UP STONES TO STONE HIM, but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you STONE me?" "We are not STONING you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for BLASPHEMY, because you, a mere man, CLAIM TO BE GOD."...Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp. -- Verses 30-33,39.

The disciples became very concerned and were aghast when Jesus determined to return to Judea: "Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to STONE you, and yet you are going back there?" (**John 11:7**). Christ knew exactly what He was doing -- His "time" had arrived and the events were to move inexorably towards the conclusion of His ministry and His life.

Putting all this together we can CLEARLY see the authorities were out to STONE Christ FOR BLASPHEMY, and from an early date. But they were not permitted to carry out their plan UNTIL CHRIST'S TIME HAD ARRIVED -- the time set aside at the end of a long series of events that had to be fulfilled before the Son of God could be offered up in our behalf. And when

that time arrived, the Jews WERE NO LONGER HELD BACK FROM STONING CHRIST FOR WHAT THEY CONSIDERED TO BE BLASPHEMY!

Haim Cohn came to the same conclusion! Notice what he says:

Two incidents, reported only in John, are often cited to prove JEWISH ENMITY against Jesus: they are INCIDENTS OF STONING, when that animus took violent form. When they heard him say in the temple -- of all places -- that he had been before Abraham, the Jews "took up stones to cast at him" (8:59); and again, when he proclaimed that he and God, his father, were one, "the Jews took up stones again to stone him" (10:31)...when Jesus had spoken and taught in the temple, "no man laid hands on him, for his hour WAS NOT YET COME" (7:30; 8:20). How then can it be that, though HIS HOUR WAS NOT YET COME and no man could lay hands on him, THE JEWS STONED HIM? If his hour was not yet come, why did they seek to take him, and he had to escape out of their hands (10:39)? The words "for his hour was not yet come" carry a DOUBLE MEANING. On the one hand, they PREPARE THE GROUND FOR WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN THE HOUR COMES: then, it appears, THE JEWS WILL BE FREE FROM ALL INHIBITIONS AND GIVE FULL PLAY TO THEIR MURDEROUS AGGRESSIONS. On the other, there is a hint of the predestination of JESUS' FATE, as if it were not the hostility and contumaciousness [rebelliousness, stubborn disobedience] of the Jews which DETERMINED THE EVENT [STONING], but solely the will of God, Who appointed His own time and CHOSE HIS OWN INSTRUMENTS. -- *The Trial and Death of Jesus* page 64.

There is absolutely no doubt that this is what the Jewish authorities were petitioning Pilate for permission to do. And what did Pilate do? "Pilate said, 'Take him yourselves and JUDGE HIM BY YOUR OWN LAW'" (*John 18:31*). In saying this Pilate permitted the Jews to execute Jesus ACCORDING TO THE BIBLICAL LAW. This was an UNCOMMON allowance because it subjected Christ to suffer BOTH the Roman method of

This historical reference in the Talmud shows that the Jews were aware that Jesus the Christ was actually STONED WHILE HANGING on the tree of crucifixion.

execution (crucifixion) for sedition and treason, and the scriptural (Mosaic) execution (STONING) for blasphemy, thus fulfilling all the Old Testament prophecies. To die for ALL of us -- BOTH Jew and Gentile -- He had to DIE ACCORDING TO BOTH JEWISH AND GENTILE LAW!

The apostle Paul, in the sixth chapter of Galatians, affirms that our Savior died as a result of STONING. This is what he claims: "Finally, let no one cause me trouble, FOR I BEAR ON MY BODY THE MARKS [SCARS] OF JESUS" (Verse 17). Obviously, these "marks" could NOT be the result of crucifixion -- Paul was never crucified; and, if he had been, he would NEVER have lived to tell the tale! Paul's scars, therefore, were the result of something else.

The book of Acts reveals that Paul was STONED about four years prior to his statement in the New Testament. The very first act of persecution against Paul that's recorded in the New Testament, was STONING -- see *Acts 14:19,20*. During this incidence, which occurred in Galatia, Paul was STONED and left for dead. By a miracle from God he got up and walked away from it, but suffered for many years as a result of the terrible punishment his body received.

Our Savior Was Blinded!

Just like Christ, Paul's face and EYES were the PRIME TARGETS of those hurling the stones. Paul mentions this in *Galatians 4:13-15*:

And you know that on account of a PHYSICAL INFIRMITY [Gr. WEAKNESS OF THE FLESH] I preached the gospel to you formerly; and though I was a trial to you IN MY FLESH, you did not reject or despise me; but you received me as an angel of God, EVEN AS CHRIST JESUS. Where then is your self congratulation? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have PLUCKED OUT YOUR VERY EYES AND GIVEN THEM TO ME.

It was to the HEAD AND EYES that the stones were mainly thrown, especially during the initial phases of the execution (see *Mark 12:4*); and remarkably, Paul indicates, in these verses, that his principal affliction had SOMETHING TO DO WITH HIS EYES!

Ernest Martin elaborates on this:

doubt CAME FROM THE WOUNDS HE SUFFERED DURING HIS STONING. -- *Secrets of Golgotha*, Page 198.

YES, CHRIST WAS STONED IN THE FACE AND BLINDED!

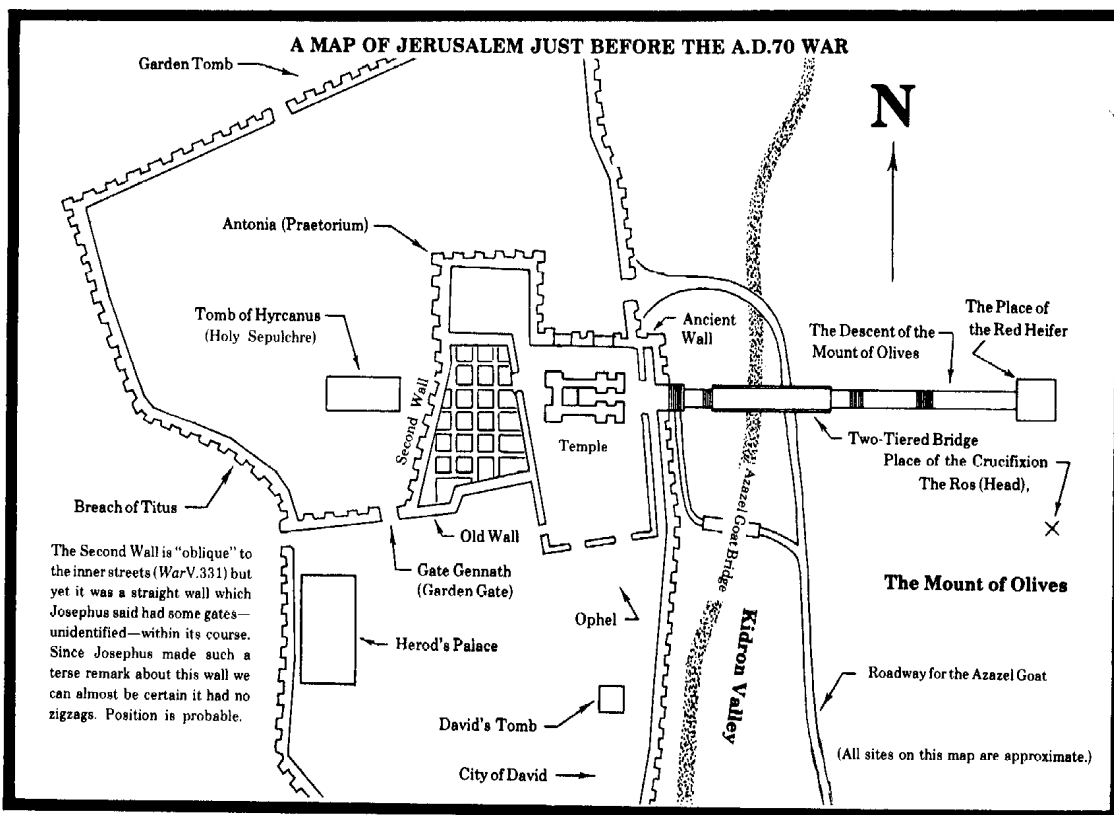
Notice *Psalm 38*, which is a prophecy of HOW the Messiah would have to suffer: "For thine arrows [piercers -- to chop into, pierce or sever] stick

fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore...My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: AS FOR THE LIGHT OF MINE EYES, IT ALSO IS GONE FROM ME." (Verses 2 and 10). *Psalm 69*, which is FULL of references to the sufferings of Christ, also indicates this! "I am weary with my crying; my throat is dry; MY EYES FAIL while I wait for my God." (Verse 3).

These verses show that Christ WAS TO BE BLINDED; and there can hardly be a doubt that sometime during the six hours Christ hung on the tree, being constantly struck by stones, some of them hit His eyes and blinded them!

Mangled Beyond Recognition!

His "visage" and His "form" -- the front parts of His



Recalling a Jewish Baraita (Jewish teaching that was not codified when the first part of the Talmud was put together), the author states that Christ met His death BY STONING and NOT by crucifixion alone.

Since it was common for hostile people to hurl stones at the FACE of a person, it can readily be understood why such a stoning could have ALMOST BLINDED Paul. He wrote with LARGE ALPHABETIC LETTERS (Gal. 6:11), and this may well indicate that he had difficulty in seeing clearly. The lacerations had apparently so injured Paul that there was permanent damage TO HIS EYES AND FACE. When he told the Galatians that "my trial in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected," it STRONGLY implies that his wounds (even four years after his stoning) were ostensibly so bad and unattractive that the common thing for people to do would be to reject him from being in their company. The Galatians, however, did not reject him, but treated him like an angel of God, "EVEN AS CHRIST JESUS" (BECAUSE THEY KNEW THAT CHRIST WAS ALSO STONED AND BLINDED). Since there were no plastic surgeons to improve Paul's outward appearance, this is no doubt why Paul made a special point in telling the Galatians that he BORE THE SCARS OF JESUS IN HIS BODY (6:17). Those SCARS no

body -- were **MARRED BEYOND RECOGNITION**. How do you account for the fact that Mary couldn't recognize her Master at the tomb?

They [the angels] asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, **BUT SHE DID NOT REALIZE THAT IT WAS JESUS**. "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" **THINKING HE WAS THE GARDENER**, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means teacher). -- *John 20:13-16*.

Christ's flesh was so mangled and His body so disfigured that even a close friend could not recognize Him! "His visage was so marred more than any man" (*Isaiah 52:14*). For six long hours our Savior was tormented by volleys of small, sharp flintstones (such as are found on the Mount of Olives to this day) hurled at the front parts of His naked body while He was nailed to the tree -- facing the east gate of the Temple and the great curtain that hung from the eastern portal. These stones struck His face, His midsection and His legs, breaking the skin and dislodging the flesh -- crushing and bruising and tearing, but without the force to break His bones. No wonder Christ was marred more than any man!

The Seder Symbolism

The Passover Seder or Service has long puzzled scholars. They have been unable to see how breaking off pieces of matzos (unleavened bread) could in any way represent the body of Christ at His crucifixion.

Ernest Martin explains:

When Christ instituted the Lord's Supper on the eve of his crucifixion, he took bread and **BROKE** it and he said

Once we realize that people were throwing sharp, flint-like stones (such as those found on the Mount of Olives) at Jesus' naked body for almost SIX HOURS, we can easily understand WHY he died so quickly.

this **BREAKING** was like his body **WOULD BE BROKEN** for them (Matt. 26:26). He spoke of the **BREAKING** of his body in the same context as the wine which represented his **BLOOD** which was shed at his crucifixion for the remission of sins...Since the New Testament specifically states that **NO BONES** in his body would be broken (John 19:36), many scholars can see no reference whatever to the death of Christ in the **BREAKING** of the unleavened bread...There are a number of Greek manuscripts and writings of several Church Fathers which provide a comment of explanation to the text of First Corinthians 11:24 concerning the **BREAKING** of the bread at the Lord's Supper and they associated it with the **BREAKING** of Christ's body at his crucifixion. They added their comments that the bread represented Christ's body: "**WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU**" (see The Greek New Testament, UBS, p. 604). **THIS MEANS THAT THERE WERE EARLY BELIEFS THAT THE "BROKEN BREAD" IN THE CEREMONY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER DID INDEED REPRESENT THE "BROKEN**

BODY" OF CHRIST AT THE TIME OF HIS CRUCIFIXION...Thus we have the beliefs of early Christians and the prophecy of Isaiah itself that Christ's body would indeed be **BROKEN** like **BREAKING OFF** pieces of unleavened bread. But the scourging of the soldiers before his crucifixion or the simple act of crucifixion itself **COULD NOT ACCOUNT FOR SUCH BREAKING OFF OF PIECES OF HIS BODY**. But the act of **STONING** would fit the description precisely. The hurling of small and sharp stones at Christ's body would tear away pieces of his flesh ever so slowly until after about six hours of such treatment he

would have been hanging on the tree of crucifixion as a person whose **VISAGE AND FORM** would have been so marred that he would not have resembled a normal human any longer. This is how Isaiah 52:14 describes the Suffering Servant, whom all the New Testament writers identified with Christ Jesus, and I see no reason for not believing it. **THIS IS JUST ANOTHER EVIDENCE THAT CHRIST MET HIS DEATH BY STONING** (his body torn to shreds in its frontal areas) and that he **DID NOT DIE BY CRUCIFIXION ALONE**. -- *Secrets of Golgotha, pages 189-190*.

The next time you observe the Passover Seder remember how, when you **BREAK** the unleavened bread, our Passover Lamb was **TORMENTED** for hours by the constant barrage of sharp, flint-like stones that bruised and crushed and gouged and **BROKE OFF** pieces of His flesh, **SPRINKLING** His atoning blood on the ground before the presence of His Father.

Remember the sacrifice of the Red Heifer, which **PRE-FIGURED** Christ's death so accurately -- right down to the very **LOCATION** of His death!

Ernest Renan, one of the leading biographers of Jesus during the nineteenth century, understood clearly that the Messiah had been STONED as He hung on the gallows or TREE.

Remember that Christ died for the ENTIRE human race -- you and me, Gentile and Jew (Israelite) -- and in so doing had to die ACCORDING TO GENTILE AND JEWISH LAW. Crucifixion satisfied the Gentile (Roman) law and the STONING satisfied Jewish (Mosaic) law. Without the stoning, Christ would have died for Gentiles ONLY! Remember that!

Jewish and Other Evidence

Are there other sources of information that show Christ died as a result of STONING? Indeed there are. The early Jewish people have long known that this was the way Christ was put to death. The *Talmud* (body of Jewish civil and religious law) has an account of His very death:

On the eve of Passover Yeshua the Nazarean [Hebrew for Jesus] WAS HANGED. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, "He is going forth TO BE STONED because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Any one who can say anything in his favor let him come forward and plead on his behalf." But since nothing was brought forward in his favor HE WAS HANGED on the eve of Passover. -- Sanhedrin 43b.

The word "hanged" in this instance does NOT refer to hanging by the neck but to being "attached" or "transfixed" to a tree. This historical reference in the *Talmud* shows that the Jews were aware that Jesus the Christ was actually STONED WHILE HANGING on the tree of crucifixion.

It is interesting to note that the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem had been PUBLICLY PROCLAIMING (during the forty days before the Passover in 30 A.D.) that Jesus deserved to be STONED for His teachings and statements. The *book of John* shows that the apostles were well aware of this pronouncement and constantly reminded Christ of it. Notice *John 11:8* once again: "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to STONE you, and yet you are going back there [to Judea]?"

Verses 55 to 57 show that the chief priests and Pharisees had issued orders for His arrest: "When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple area they asked one another, 'What do you think? Isn't he coming to the Feast at all?' But the chief priests and Pharisees HAD GIVEN ORDERS that if any one found out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him." And true to the words of the *Talmud*, they had Jesus STONED while hanging on the tree of crucifixion in order to fulfill the Law of Moses regarding a person who BLASPHEMED against God.

In the book *Rabbinic Essays*, by Jacob Z. Lauterback, we find FURTHER EVIDENCE our Savior died as a result of stoning. Recalling a Jewish Baraita (Jewish teaching that was not codified when the first part

of the *Talmud* was put together), the author states that Christ met His death BY STONING and NOT by crucifixion alone. After a long discussion on this subject, the Baraita says: "he [Christ] is going out TO BE STONED," followed by "they hanged him" (Pages 494-497). This early Jewish tradition PLAINLY SHOWS that our Passover Lamb was indeed STONED TO DEATH while hanging on the "accursed tree."

In *Luke 23:27-28* we read:

And a great multitude of the people followed Him [to Golgotha], and WOMEN WHO ALSO MOURNED AND LAMENTED HIM. But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

Mark notes what happened when Christ and the women arrived at the execution site: "Then they gave Him WINE MINGLED WITH MYRRH to drink, but He did not take it" (*Mark 15:23*). The "wine mingled with myrrh" was given to the condemned to deaden the pain, and was part of an old Jewish custom.

Haim Cohn explains this:

From Luke we know that "there followed him a great company of people, AND OF WOMEN, which also bewailed and lamented him" (23:27), and they would of a surety have followed him all the way to Golgotha. Combining both traditions [Luke 23:27 and Mark 15:23], it may, I think, be permissible to infer that it was the WOMEN ACCOMPANYING JESUS on his way to execution, and

attending him in his last hours on the cross, who BROUGHT THE WINE AND BEGGED HIM TO DRINK: it was an ancient Jewish custom that a condemned man, when led to the place of execution, had to be given a DRAFT OF WINE WITH INCENSE IN IT, "in order that he may lose his mind," that is, become unconscious; and it was "the dear women of Jerusalem who volunteered and brought the wine" and offered it to him [B Sanhedrin 43a]. This custom is told in the Talmud IN CONNECTION WITH CONVICTS ABOUT TO BE STONED..."the dear women of Jerusalem" saw to it that...a man ABOUT TO DIE BY STONING should be anesthetized against excess of pain...(The *Trial and Death of Jesus*, KTAV Publishing House, N.Y. 1977. Pp. 217-218).

This custom passed into law, Maimonides (Jewish philosopher of the 12th century) ruling that, when being led to his execution BY STONING, the convict had to be given a DRINK OF WINE WITH INCENSE, so that he may get intoxicated and insensible -- and ONLY THEN was he to be STONED. (*Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Sanhedrin 13, 2*). This is FURTHER PROOF Christ suffered according to the Mosaic law AND the Roman law!

Ernest Renan, one of the leading biographers of Jesus during the nineteenth century, understood clearly that the Messiah had been STONED as He hung on the gallows or tree:

And if ever a crime was that of a nation, it was the murder of Jesus. It was a "legal" murder, in the sense that its primary cause was THE LAW WHICH WAS THE VERY SOUL OF THE NATION. The MOSAIC LAW pronounced the death penalty for any attempt to CHANGE the established cult. Jesus, no doubt, attacked that cult

and aspired to destroy it...Christianity has been intolerant; but intolerance is not essentially Christian. It is Jewish, in this sense that Judaism was the first to vest religion with a theory of the absolute, postulating that every reformer -- EVEN THOUGH SUPPORTING HIS DOCTRINE WITH MIRACLES -- MUST BE DRAGGED TO THE GALLOWS [TREE, CROSS] AND STONED BY ALL AND SUNDRY. -- *La Vie de Jesus*, 8th ed., Paris, 1863. Pages 411-412.

The Final Fulfillment

Once we realize that people were throwing sharp, flint-like stones (such as those found on the Mount of Olives) at Jesus' naked body for almost SIX HOURS, we can easily understand WHY he died so quickly. *Isaiah 52 and 53* were PERFECTLY fulfilled. His flesh was so TORN AWAY from the bones on the front part of His body that bystanders could hardly tell He was a human being. His flesh was so mangled and His body so DISFIGURED that it was almost impossible to recognize Him. "His VISAGE was so marred MORE than any man, and His FORM more than the sons of man." (*Isaiah 52:14*).

In the initial stages of the stoning the head received the brunt of the punishment; and there can be no doubt several of the stones at least struck His eyes and BLINDED Him, thus fulfilling *Psalms 38*.

His body was truly BROKEN FOR US; and it is this terrible stoning that we commemorate when we break the matzos during the Passover Seder. How much MORE

MEANING the Passover Service will have for us now that we understand this crucial truth about the death of our Passover Lamb.

The tremendous symbolism pictured by the sacrifice of the Red Heifer really comes to life when we see how Christ SPRINKLED His blood on the ground before the Sanctuary. And the only action that could sprinkle the blood on the ground in such a manner, was the STONING He

received. CHRIST DIED FOR US PRIMARILY AS A RESULT OF THE TERRIBLE STONING HE ENDURED AS HE HUNG ON THE TREE -- THUS BECOMING AN ATONEMENT FOR BOTH JEW (ISRAELITE) AND GENTILE!

We should thank our Heavenly Father for giving up His only begotten Son; and thank our Lord and Savior for

the SACRIFICE He made on our behalf so we can qualify to become members of the God Family and inherit the entire universe. God help us to continually keep this in mind!

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