



CROSS – SINGLE OR DAILY SACRIFICE?



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<https://www.searaagape.com.br/livrosevangelicosonline.html>

I thank the One and true God in the person of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who created me, knew me, called me, chose me, healed me, delivered me, protected me, sustained me and made me walk until here with His love. I thank you, Lord, for being my faithful and inseparable companion and my constant source of inspiration.

*I dedicate this work to those who eagerly seek peace,
love, joy and deliverance through Jesus and surrender
their life to Him and for Him.*

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“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” (Jn. 3: 16)



INTRODUCTION

Cross, single or daily sacrifice?

The answer to that question is: it depends on the point of view.

The purpose of this work is to show on a biblical basis that on the part of God, in the person of Jesus, the sacrifice of the cross was unique and definitive, but from our part it is daily, in the sense that our victory as Christians consists in surrender to His will and let Him touch in the dead areas of our lives, taking from us what is not good anymore, as well as to take possession of Christ's victory and enjoy its benefits. In other words, everything that the Lord had to do, He did; what is daily is to appropriate ourselves of the blessings resulting from His sacrifice on the cross. If we do not, we are nullifying what He did for us and denying our salvation. It's as if we were condemning Him to death again. Thus, we exclude Him from our existence (*Heb. 6: 6 b*, "and then have fallen away, since on their own they are crucifying again the Son of God and are holding him up to contempt").

The cross was the center of His mission as the Son of God in His human incarnation, in accordance to a predetermined divine plan to restore our true identity after the fall that occurred in Eden. Through the sacrifice of Christ, the man could once again be justified before his Creator and have restitution of his rights and divine purposes for him: to be the likeness of His eternal Father and have dominion over all Creation.

The word of God says that the sacrifice of Jesus was single, perfect, effective and definitive, once for all, once and forever:

Heb. 7: 26-27: "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself."

Heb. 9: 11-12; 14: "But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption... how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God."

Heb. 9: 26-28: "For then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him."

1 Pet. 3: 18: "For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."

Looking for the meaning of words *single* and *definitive* in the dictionary, we will find:

Single = that is only one, one of which there is no other kind, unique, nothing is comparable, superior to all others. One only; one and no more; individual; separate and distinct from others of the same kind; without another or others; alone; solitary.

Definitive = that defines, determinant, decisive, conclusive, peremptory, absolute, categorical, unwavering, without appeal, final and total. That decides or settles in a final

way; decisive; conclusive most nearly complete and accurate; serving to define; limiting or distinguishing precisely.

Considering our imperfection and the perfection of Jesus and the implications of His sacrifice on the cross, we conclude that we could never do it, only Him; and which sacrifice except His could fill all the definitions above?!

We can imagine that the cross was in God's plan since the creation of the world. In the Old Testament some 'shadows' of the sacrifice of the cross can be observed:

1) The tree of life:

Gen. 2: 9; cf. Isa. 53: 2: "Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" ... "For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him."

2) Sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham:

Gen. 22:12; 16-18: "He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me'... and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.'"

3) Serpent in the wilderness:

Num. 21: 8-9; cf. Jn. 3: 14: "And the Lord said to Moses, 'Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live'. So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live" ... "And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up."

The book will be divided into two parts:

1) The sacrifice of Jesus and His conquest.

2) Our cross and our conquest.

The cross is a fascinating, vast and comprehensive subject, which is summarized not only in the natural and bloody form as was done, but reverberates deeply in the spiritual world, conquering all the fullness of God's purpose for His children. The cross shows us that there is not any kind of physical, emotional or spiritual suffering that has not been experienced by God Himself in the person of the Son, and does not have a victorious solution. This makes us to resize our problems and our enemies.

At the same time, the cross brings us back to our humility, confronts us with our humanity and smallness before the Most High and makes us feel gratitude for being loved and chosen by Him. The cross shows us that in our weakness we are powerful and can win with Jesus what seems impossible.

The bible says that Christ died for us:

Lk. 22: 19: "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

Jn. 10: 11; 15: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" ... "Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep."

Jn. 10: 17-18: "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I

have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

Rom. 5: 8: “God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.”

Eph. 5: 2: “and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

1 The. 5: 10: “who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him.”

Tit. 2: 14: “He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.”

The bible also says that the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but power of God to us who are being saved (*1 Cor. 1: 18; 23-24*). As it is written in *Songs 2: 3*, we must wish to be under His shadow, letting the love of that blood which was shed be a true mantle of protection over us as His imitators (*1 Cor. 11: 1*).

I ask the Lord Jesus that my heart and yours may be increasingly aware of this sacrifice and filled with gratitude and love for Him, who showed us what *LIFE* is.

I love you in Jesus.

Tânia Cristina Giachetti

Notes:

- Words or phrases enclosed in brackets [] or parenthesis (), in *italics*, were placed by me, in most cases, to explain the biblical text, although some verses already contain them [not in italics].

- The version used here is the New Revised Standard Version, NRSV–1989 (1995)

- NIV = New International Version (will be used in brackets in some verses to make it easier for readers to understand).

- This book was written in 1999 as a monograph (‘school of leaders’ in the church), and I later converted it into a book.

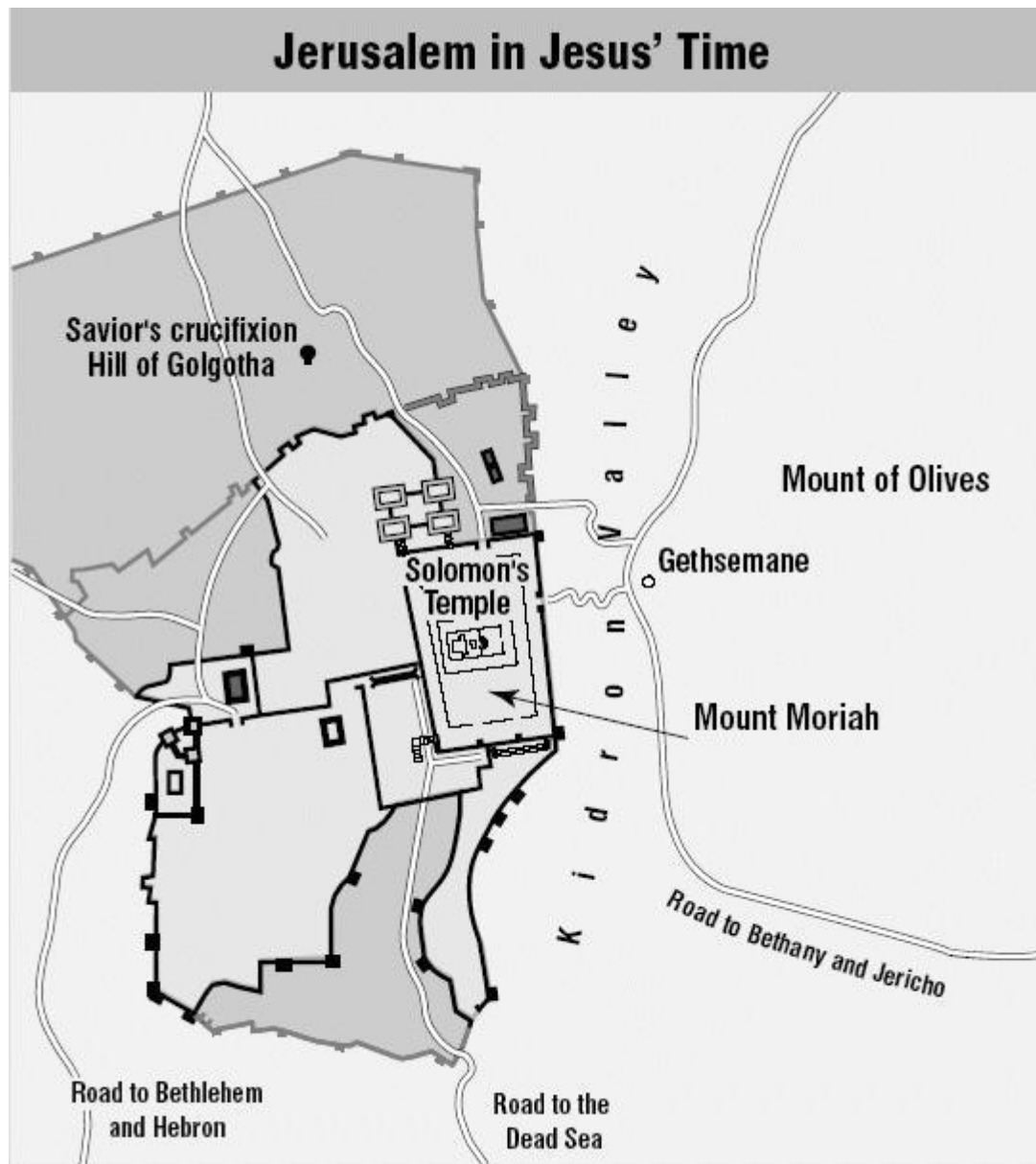
“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” (Jn. 10: 10-11)



Part 1

The sacrifice of Jesus and His conquest





JERUSALEM IN TIME OF JESUS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

Chapter 1 – The cross was the center of Jesus’ mission



“For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Mk. 10: 45)

Jesus knew that the cross was the center of His mission.

He Himself said it was necessary even to fulfill the previous prophecies about Him:

Matt. 26: 24: “The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born!”

Lk. 12: 50: “I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed!”

Lk. 18: 31-33: “Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, ‘See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again.’”

In fact we can see in the Old Testament some prophetic references to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross:

Ps. 22: 1: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?”

Ps. 22: 7-8: “All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads; ‘Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver—let him rescue the one in whom he delights!’”

Ps. 2: 11-21: “Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. Many bulls encircle me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me; they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me. My hands and feet have shriveled; I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me; they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots. But you, O Lord, do not be far away! O my help; come quickly to my aid! Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog! Save me from the mouth of the lion! From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.”

Ps. 69: 18-21: “Draw near to me, redeem me, set me free because of my enemies. You know the insults I receive, and my shame and dishonor; my foes are all known to you. Insults have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me *poison* [NIV: gall] for food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”

Ps. 129: 3: “The plowers plowed on my back; they made their furrows long.”

Isa. 50: 6-7: “I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.”

Isa. 52: 13-15: “See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals—so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.”

Isa. 53: 2-12: “For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised; and we held him of no account. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Jer. 31: 34: “No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, ‘Know the Lord’, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.”

Jesus Himself spoke of our redemption through the cross:

Mk. 10: 45: “For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Lk. 19: 10: “For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

He willingly embraced the Father’s purpose in order to save the sinners:

Jn. 6: 38-39: “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.”

Jesus, indeed, was killed, obeying a human and divine plan together. In **human plan**, the cross was the result of the hostility of the Jewish national leaders, because Jesus was a threat to their position and authority and, therefore, they envied Him. For the Romans, He was a revolutionary, someone who has upset the ‘*status quo*’, therefore, with their mediocrity, they killed Him:

Matt. 27: 18: “For he realized [*the bible is talking about Pilate*] that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over.”

Mk. 15: 10: “For he realized [*the bible is talking about Pilate*] that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over.”

Pilate put Him to death, even though he knew He was innocent, by the ambition to keep his position and by cowardliness, thinking about Caesar:

Matt. 27: 24-25: “So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, ‘I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.’ Then the people as a whole answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’”

Mk. 15: 15: “So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.”

Lk. 23: 1-7: “Then the assembly rose as a whole and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, ‘We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.’ Then Pilate asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ He answered, ‘You say so.’ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, ‘I find no basis for an accusation against this man.’ But they were insistent and said, ‘He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.’ When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time.”

Lk. 23: 20-25: “Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; but they kept shouting, ‘Crucify, crucify him!’ A third time he said to them, ‘Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.’ But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.”

Jn. 19: 6-16: “When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, ‘Crucify him! Crucify him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.’ The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.’ Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, ‘Where are you from?’ But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, ‘Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?’ Jesus answered him, ‘You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.’ From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, ‘If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.’ When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge’s bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, ‘Here is your King!’ They cried out, ‘Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!’ Pilate asked them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but the emperor.’ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus.”

Judas handed him over out of greed; perhaps because he believed in the promise of the Messiah and hoped that Jesus would manifest Himself as such before the Roman

and Jewish authorities to free His people from oppression. Because of his greedy nature, he was used by the devil so that the Scriptures were fulfilled:

Zech. 11: 12-14: “I then said to them, ‘If it seems right to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.’ So they weighed out as my wages thirty shekels of silver. Then the Lord said to me, ‘Throw it into the treasury—this lordly price at which I was valued by them’. So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them into the treasury in the house of the Lord. Then I broke my second staff called Union, annulling the family ties between Judah and Israel.”

Zech. 12: 10: “And I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that, when they look on the one whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.”

Zech. 13: 6-7: “And if anyone asks them, ‘What are these wounds on your chest?’ [in NRSV; NIV writes: ‘What are these wounds on your body?’] (Or ‘What are these wounds between your hands?’)] the answer will be, ‘The wounds I received in the house of my friends.’ ‘Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my associate’, says the Lord of hosts. ‘Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones.’”

Matt. 26: 14-16: “Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What will you give me if I betray him to you?’ They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.”

Lk. 22: 3-6: “Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve; he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them. They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money. So he consented and began to look for an opportunity to betray him to them when no crowd was present.”

Psalms 69 talks about the suffering of the Messiah. So, we can see that He felt the sins, the outrage and our wrong attitudes, and that’s what led Him to death. He felt and still feels sadness when we expose Him to contempt, moving away from Him; when we do not give ourselves completely to Him; when we opt for a lukewarm commitment; when we deny Him in our hearts; when we are greedy, envious, ambitious and irreverent, and much more.

In the divine plan, the Father gave Him for love:

Isa. 53: 10: “Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper.”

Jn. 3: 16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

Before moving to the next chapter, I want to put **some important details of the crucifixion** of Jesus so that we can understand the depth of His sacrifice and conquest, as well as His love for us.

The word crucifixion comes from Latin *cruci figo* (from the verb, ‘figere’, to pin, to nail, to stick), which means: ‘a nail in a cross.’ In the New Testament is always used the verb *stauroō*, to nail, which derives from the noun *stauros*, stake. The cross was a practice of Phoenician origin (to northwest of Israel) and Carthaginian (related to Carthage, in Africa) origin, but there is also evidence of its use in Persia in the sixth and fifth centuries BC. The Greeks and Romans adopted crucifixion from the Phoenicians and it was a kind of punishment reserved for slaves, provincials and the lowest types of

criminals. Roman citizens were exempt. It was finally abolished in the Roman Empire by Constantine in 315 AD.

Three types of crosses are known by ancient writers: the *crux decussata* or cross of Saint Andrew (X), the *crux comissa* or cross of St. Anthony (T) and the *Latin cross* or *crux immissa* (†). The *Greek cross*, in which the joist is more or less in the middle of the vertical post and has the same size as this (+), is of later origin. The cross of Jesus was probably the *crux immissa* that tradition turned into a Christian symbol.

In *Isa. 50: 6-7*; *Isa. 52: 14*; *Isa. 53: 2-3* we see a description on how the face of Jesus was disfigured because of the strokes of the soldiers.

- *Isa. 50: 6-7*: “I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.”

- *Isa. 52: 14*: “Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals”

- *Isa. 53: 2-3*: “For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.”

In *Ps. 22: 11-21*, David wrote: “Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. Many bulls encircle me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me; they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me. My hands and feet have shriveled; I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me; they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots. But you, O Lord, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid! Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog! Save me from the mouth of the lion! From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.”

Ps. 69 (of David) – LEB: A Plea for Deliverance from Persecution [For the [music] director, according to [The] Lilies. Of David] – has other prophetic words about the cross.

Ps. 69: 3: “I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God.”

Ps. 69: 7: “It is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that shame has covered my face.”

Ps. 69: 9: “It is zeal for your house that has consumed me; the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”

Ps. 69: 19: “You know the insults I receive, and my shame and dishonor; my foes are all known to you.”

Ps. 69: 21: “They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”

Ps. 69: 26: “For they persecute those whom you have struck down, and those whom you have wounded, they attack still more.”

They spat on Him, pulled out His beard and tortured Him with punches, strokes and blasphemies while He was in the Sanhedrin:

Matt. 26: 67-68: “Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, saying, Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?”

Mk. 14: 65: “Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, ‘Prophecy!’ The guards also took him over and beat him.”

Lk. 22: 63-65: “Now the men who were holding Jesus began to mock him and beat him; they also blindfolded him and kept asking him, ‘Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?’ They kept heaping many other insults on him.”

The face is a part of the body, full with blood vessels and bleeds a lot when traumatized. The soldiers who beat Him were part of an elite group (*The Cohorts*) of the Roman guard (*Matt. 27: 27 – NRSV: Cohort; NIV: the whole company of soldiers*) sent to Judea and all the Roman provinces of Asia Minor (300 to 600 soldiers, sometimes 480, rarely reaching a thousand); therefore, they were the strongest, sturdy, violent and prepared for big fights. Their punches and blows probably came over Jesus with great force, causing bruises and hematomas and, consequently, disfiguring His face completely. The Passover lamb (for Jews) could not have any bone broken (*Ex. 12: 46; Num. 9: 12; Ps. 34: 20; Jn. 19: 36*), as Jesus had none of His bones broken.

After pronounced the sentence, it was customary that the victim was flogged with the *flagellum*, a whip of leather tongues with small pieces of metal or bone. This occurred after Pilate having interrogated Jesus and released the sentence of crucifixion:

Matt. 27: 26: “So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.”

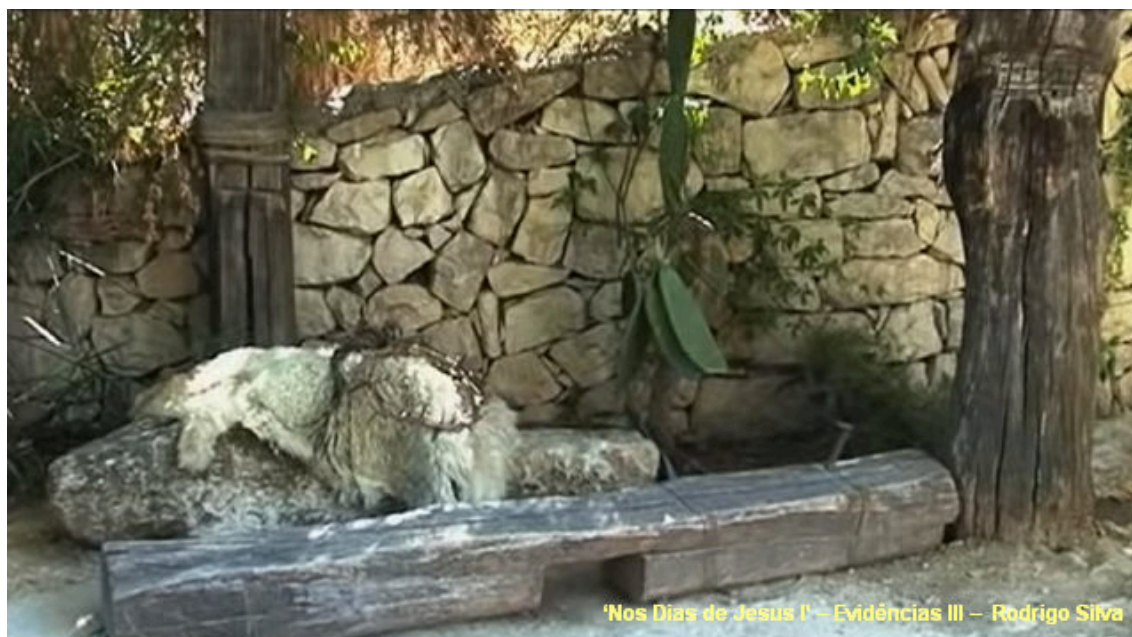


By the violence with which the blows were applied, for the metal and bones of the whip tore pieces of skin and muscles, it was unlikely that the victim endured and survived to this type of scourge, but Jesus survived. In *Ps. 129: 3* we can see a reference on how were Jesus' back by the blows, like a land full of furrows after passing the plow, that is, the deep wounds of the blows took pieces of His flesh and skin, “The plowers plowed on my back; they made their furrows long.” It is worth remembering that the same back that suffered and bled with the whips was traumatized again when the soldiers tore the clothes of Jesus to put Him on the cross and when His back came into contact with the rough timber. When the blood of the earlier wounds coagulated, another torture made Him bleed again.

After the flogging, Jesus was handed again to the soldiers who clothed Him with purple (*Mk. 15: 17*), as it was known the dyed wool, ‘a scarlet robe’ (*Matt. 27: 28*). They put on His head a crown of thorns and traumatized His scalp with strokes once more. More blood was shed:

Matt. 27: 27-31 (Mk. 15: 16-20): “Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.”

Crucifixion was held outside the city (*Deut. 16: 3-8 cf. Heb. 13: 10-13*) and the victims carried the cross, probably only the *patibullum* (the horizontal beam), also called *antenna*, with the title around the neck or carried ahead by a herald. The *patibullum* could weight 30 to 60 kilograms. Jesus probably carried the entire cross, from what we can understand when we read the gospels. There is no reference about how the title of Jesus was carried; we only know that Pilate wrote it and pinned it on the cross (*Jn. 19: 17-19*: “and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, ‘JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS’”).



The patibullum (the horizontal beam)

In Judea, before the executions, wine mixed with myrrh was given to the convicted by an association of Jewish women obedient to God’s Word, in order to relieve the pain of the crucified but Jesus refused:

Prov. 31: 6-7: “Give strong drink to one who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no

more.” This text about the advice of King Lemuel’s mother, and which in v.4 talks about the duty of a king to abstain from wine and strong drinks, as it would be dangerous for his ability to judge, as well as it would apply to any person, for the use of these drinks would only be a temporary escape from the problems of life, in verses 6 and 7 we can see that their use would be permitted in the case of the dying (perhaps to relieve them of intense pain – “to one who is perishing” – NRSV; or “to those who are perishing” – NIV) and to cheer the souls of those who were very depressed and discouraged (“to those in bitter distress” – NRSV; “to those who are in anguish” – NIV), so that they would not be so distressed by their afflictions. Therefore, it would not be surprising that these drinks were mixed with myrrh so that they could withstand the pain of crucifixion.

Lk. 23: 27: “A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him.”

• *Matt. 27: 34:* “they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.”

• *Mk. 15: 23:* “And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it.”

Some information about myrrh, before we continue:

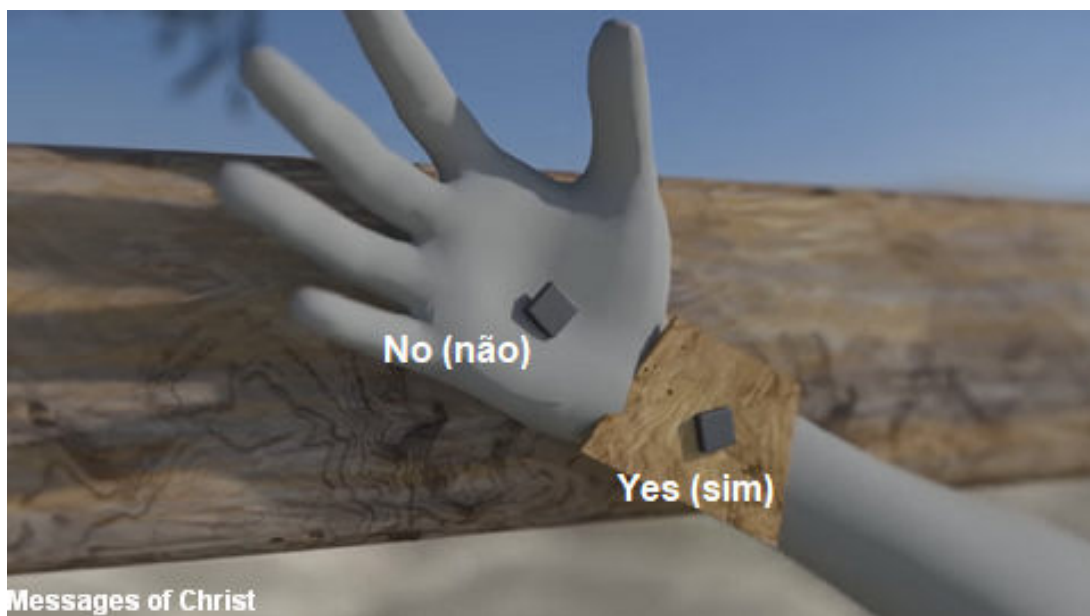
In pharmacology, myrrh has been used as an antiseptic, as an analgesic in liniments applied to bruises, aching muscles, and sprains. There is evidence to suggest certain compounds in myrrh interact with central opioid pathways in the brain (source: wikipedia.org). Natural opiates such as morphine and codeine are derived from the plant *Papaver somniferum*, commonly known as the ‘opium poppy’ or ‘breadseed poppy.’ A semi-synthetic opiate, for example, is heroin, obtained from morphine through a small chemical modification. Synthetic substances produced in the laboratory are called opioids (for example: meperidine, propoxyphene, methadone) and they all have an analgesic effect (remove pain) and a hypnotic effect (they make you sleepy). Because these drugs have these two effects, they are also called narcotics (source: ‘Ópio, opiáceos/opioides, morfina’ – CEBRID – Centro Brasileiro de Informações – UNIFESP). What is known is that myrrh was used by the ancient Egyptians to embalm mummies, and the Jews used it as an ointment. Greeks and Romans used it on wounds and infections (due to its antiseptic effect). Research was carried out at the University of Florence and three chemical compounds called sesquiterpenes (derived from the terpene group) were found in myrrh, two of which had an analgesic effect on animals. The third is still in the research phase. Just as in ancient times myrrh may have been used in analgesia (through interaction with the central opioid pathways in the brain), recent compounds derived from opium, such as morphine, have become its substitutes as a potent analgesic. It is possible, then, that the mixture wine with myrrh actually had an analgesic and numbing effect.

Now, I would like to relate an experience I myself had with myrrh oil. Perhaps it will corroborate the hypothesis of analgesia and numbness; a kind of in vivo experience, I can say better and more reliable than in animals, for they cannot tell what they feel, but I can. I was a new convert and had heard recent preachings in church about the oils used in the Bible and their healing effects, and I think God allowed me to have this experience to better understand, not just the effects of an anointed oil, in this case myrrh, as well as the power of His blood. I had bought a bottle of myrrh oil at the evangelical bookstore and I prayed over it and consecrated it in my home. I no longer remember what I said. Once, I was kneeling by the bed praying and I felt an itch and a rash on the skin on my neck, probably from an insect bite. I took the oil and applied it to the area, and the rash was close to the carotid artery. But I rubbed a little more. Then, the skin absorbed the myrrh and carried it through the artery to my brain. Suddenly, I began to

feel as if I were being anesthetized for surgery, with altered consciousness, as if numb. I reacted quickly, I got up from the floor, went to the refrigerator and took some grape juice that I kept at home and prayed, crying out for the power of the blood of Jesus. I rubbed the oil over the rash and prayed again, rebuking that. Soon after, everything passed and my consciousness returned to normal. This not only made me aware of the pharmacological qualities of myrrh, but also the spiritual power of the blood of Jesus when used for a purpose. If you want to believe what I am telling you, you will be able to understand why myrrh and wine was offered to those condemned to the cross and why Jesus refused them: to suffer what He had to suffer for us, without becoming numb or minimizing His suffering. For me, after that, no laboratory experience with animals is no longer necessary. I tasted myrrh.

Returning to the crucifixion of Jesus:

It seems more likely that the hands were nailed to the antenna, first the right, and then the left, with sharp nails from 11 to 18 centimeters (*cravi trabales*), being the victim lying down, and then the *patibullum* was raised and nailed to the vertical beam (*stauros – stake*). There was no rest for the feet, but a *pegma* (in Greek), *cornu* or *sedile* (in Latin) was placed on the wrist to prevent that hands were torn and the body fell. It was a piece of wood placed between the hand and the nail pinned in the wrist. The person's arms were not tied with ropes to the horizontal beam, only the nails supported the body. The arms could be more or less extended. If they were outstretched, death was faster; if they stayed looser, death was generally slower. The person had to make an upward movement from time to time to be able to breathe, because the weight of the body pulling it down made it difficult to breathe, and death occurred by asphyxia. Blood loss was also a factor to be taken into account because with each movement that the condemned man made to raise his body in order to be able to breathe, his back already injured by the whip was scratched in the contact with the rough wood.



There was another possibility, besides that of hoisting the *patibullum* and then attaching it to the vertical beam. Sometimes the person was nailed in a lying position on both the horizontal and vertical beams, and then the entire wooden set was raised. The convict was not always nailed to a sawn wooden cross and prepared for this purpose. As

the Romans executed many people in this way and there was not so much wood available in Judea to do this, most of the time those condemned to death on the cross were nailed to trees and, depending on the circumstances, several people could be nailed to the same tree, if their branches were propitious to this.



The convict's feet were not nailed one over the other, but the nails were driven into the sides of the feet, close to the heels, and in the same way as in the hands, a piece of wood was used to help fixing it to the vertical pole. This can be confirmed by the archaeological findings of the bones of a young man crucified in the first century of the Christian era, in whose ossuary the bones of his foot were found with a nail going through it laterally and some wood fragments attached to it. Perhaps, because of this the

bible wrote: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” (*Gen. 3: 15*).



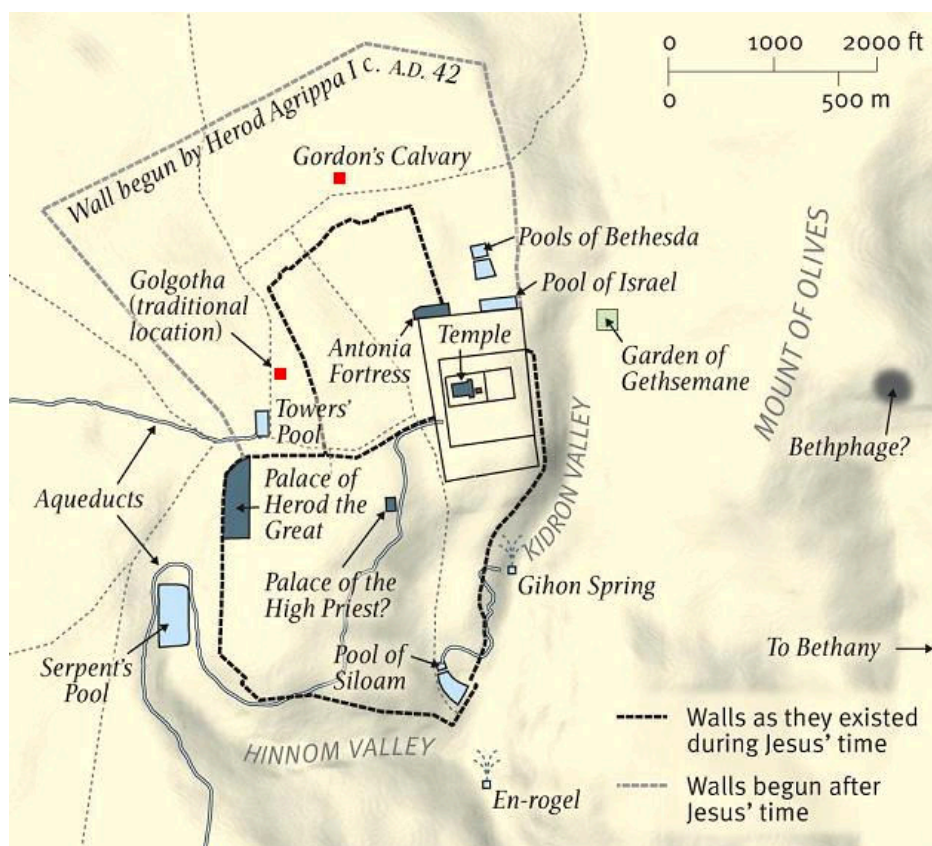
Another detail about the crucifixion is that the cross was not very high and it was not common to crucify criminals on hills, but the cross was usually of little height and erected in places visible to passersby. For this reason, the four synoptic gospels do not say that Calvary or Golgotha was situated on a hill; they just say that Jesus was crucified in a place called Golgotha, which in Hebrew means ‘Place of a Skull’:

Matt. 27: 33-34: “And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.”

Mk. 15: 22: “Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull).”

Lk. 23: 33: “When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.”

Jn. 19: 17-18: “and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.



The exact location of Calvary or Golgotha (Γολγοθᾶ, in Greek; In Hebrew, gulgōlet – גולגולת = skull) is unknown. All landmarks were destroyed in the siege of Jerusalem; so, identification is uncertain. The place of execution was outside the city walls (*Hb 13: 12*), however, close to it (*Jn. 19: 20*) and to a road of great traffic and accessible to people (*Matt. 27: 39; Mk. 15: 29*). Opinions today are divided between the traditional site at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, or Gordon Calvary, just north of the Damascus Gate. Calvary (Latin) or Golgotha (Aramaic) means “Place of the skull”. The place was so named or because of the configuration of the grounds, which had the appearance of a skull. Charles George Gordon (1833–1885) was a British Army officer and administrator who visited Palestine and made researches about the likely place of Jesus’ crucifixion. He endorsed the view of a German theologian and biblical scholar from Dresden named Otto Thenius who, in 1842, published a proposal that the rocky knoll north of Damascus Gate was the biblical Golgotha, beneath a cliff that contains two large sunken holes, which Gordon regarded as resembling the eyes of a skull. Nearby is an ancient rock-cut tomb known today as ‘the Garden Tomb’ or ‘Gordon’s Calvary’, which Gordon proposed as the tomb of Jesus, but later discovered by the archaeologists as dating to the 7th century BC, along with several other ancient tombs that may have been abandoned around the 1st century CE.



The Church of the Holy Sepulcher



The Garden Tomb

A sponge on a branch of hyssop with vinegar was offered to Him:

Jn. 19: 29: “A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.” The sponge was attached to a branch of hyssop, not the point of a spear, which speaks in favor of the low height of the cross in relation to the ground.

In *Lev. 14: 49-51* it is written about the cleansing of the house because of leprosy: “For the cleansing of the house he shall take two birds, with cedar wood and crimson yarn and *hyssop*, and shall slaughter one of the birds over fresh water in an earthen vessel, and shall take the cedar wood and the *hyssop* and the crimson yarn, along with the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slaughtered bird and the fresh water, and sprinkle the house seven times”. What this means for us is that to purge the sin, whether our own or our family’s (‘house’), only the blood of Jesus can do it. Not only His blood, but the constant action of His Spirit (‘running water’ or ‘fresh water’), until

everything is truly freed from evil ('seven times'). In Egypt, by passing the *Destroyer* (the 'angel of the abyss' or 'the angel of death'), in the houses where he saw the mark of the lamb's blood on the lintels of the doors, he passed, but did not touch, because they were protected and had an owner. So, the family that has the seal of Jesus' blood upon its members is freed from sin and spared from destruction:

- *Ex. 12: 12-13*: "For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and *no plague shall destroy you* when I strike the land of Egypt."

- *Ex. 12: 23*: "For the Lord will pass through to strike down the Egyptians; when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over that door and will not allow the *Destroyer* to enter your houses to strike you down."

- *Ps. 78: 49*: "He let loose on them his fierce anger, wrath, indignation, and distress, a company of destroying angels" (the bible was talking about the *Destroyer*).



Hyssop



To sprinkle the house

Hyssop is a symbol of purification, so David said in *Ps. 51: 7*: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

With reference to the cleansing power of *hyssop*, we saw that in the final moments of Jesus' life when He was on the cross in an extreme level of dehydration, He said, "I am thirsty!" So, someone dipped a sponge in vinegar, putting it on a branch of hyssop and gave Him to drink. It was actually an act of mercy because the body of Jesus in the face of dehydration and the vinegar would die. By receiving the sponge on a branch of hyssop and drink it, Jesus has expired, meaning that *the cleansing of mankind was accomplished*. His sacrifice was finished and the *leprosy (sin) of the world* was cleansed. The text says: "After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), 'I am thirsty!'" A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit (*Jn. 19: 28-30*)."

Returning to the cross, death by this method was usually rather long, rarely occurring before 36 hours, and at times it took up to nine days, so, a centurion and four guards were put on guard to prevent the removal of Jesus from the cross (*Jn. 19: 23*:

“When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top”). But Jesus was on the cross for six hours, so much that Pilate marveled that He had already died (*Mk. 15: 44*: “Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time”). He was crucified at the 3rd hour (9:00 am: *Mk. 15: 25*: “It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him”) and died on the 9th hour (3:00 p.m.: *Mk. 15: 34; 37*: “At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘Eliot, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? ... Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last”). He was taken from the cross in the evening, before 6:00 p.m. not to desecrate the *Sabbath* (*Mk. 15: 42-46*: “When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb”). Another reason why Jesus was removed from the cross can be found in *Josh. 10: 27*: “At sunset Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves; they set large stones against the mouth of the cave, which remain to this very day” and *Deut. 21: 22-23*: “When someone is convicted of a crime punishable by death and is executed, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse must not remain all night upon the tree; you shall bury him that same day, for anyone hung on a tree is under God’s curse. You must not defile the land that the Lord your God is giving you for possession.” The man who was executed for penalty of death was cursed and should be buried on the same day (*cf. Gal. 3: 13*: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written: cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”).

The pain was obviously intense, since the entire body was under stress, while the hands and feet, which are masses of nerves and tendons lose little blood. After some time, blood was diverted into the arteries of the head and stomach and they were dilated, causing abdominal pain and a splitting headache, and occasionally, fever and tetanus were manifested. When, for whatever reason, it was proposed to rid the victim of his intense suffering before the end, as if to compensate him with the abbreviated suffering, his legs were broken with blows of a bludgeon or hammer (*crurifragium or skelocopia*), and the mercy killing was given with a sword or spear, usually on the side of the victim (*perforatio subalas*). As we have seen, the Passover lamb (for Jews) could not have any bone broken (*Ex. 12: 46; Num. 9: 12; Ps. 34: 20; Jn. 19: 36*), as Jesus had none of His bones broken.

Another factor that occurred on the cross, as mentioned above, was dehydration (*Jn. 19: 28*: “After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), ‘I am thirsty!’”) We can wonder that Jesus was really dehydrated by the amount of blood He had lost and being without eat and drink since the last night at supper. Therefore, there was vinegar next to the cross: to accelerate the death of the crucified:

Jn. 19: 29: “A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.”

Ps. 69: 21: “For food they gave me gall and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”

In *Ps. 22: 15* we can see a reference to the extreme level of dehydration caused by the scourges: “My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death” In NIV is written, “My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me [Or I am laid] in the dust of death.”

Jesus knew He would go through all this suffering, but it would not be in vain, because, through it, His work of redemption would be complete (*Isa. 53: 11*: “Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities”).

Only after the physical suffering of the crucifixion, the emotional suffering of the mockery of those who were there, and the spiritual suffering of separation from the Father by the darkness of humanity's sins, which He carried upon Himself, the Lord could say, “It is finished” (*Jn. 19: 30*), that is, “it was and will forever be finished (Tetelestai – τετελεσται in Greek = ‘it is finished’, ‘it’s totally paid’; in the case of payment of debts, for example, means: settled, liquidated, or paid off).” He carried out on the cross what He came to accomplish in the world.

All kinds of sin that there can be upon the face of the earth were present there in those wounds. When we think about it, is it even difficult to understand how a man of flesh and blood could bear this if he were not God either? The color of His soul was so ugly because of our sins that even God turned His face away from Jesus, so He cried out, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (*Matt. 27: 46; Mk. 15: 34; Ps. 22: 1*).



If we pay attention to what is written in the gospels, at the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, that is, from noon to three in the afternoon (*Mt 27: 45; Lk 23: 44*), and Jesus was crucified at 9:00 am, that is, the third hour (*Mk. 15: 25*). This means that Jesus was on the cross for six hours; the first three hours of which He was under the mockery of men and Satan, and the final three hours were reserved for

bearing the punishment, divine wrath upon Himself for the sins of mankind. This shows us the size of Jesus' suffering and the size of God's wrath towards men for their sins. It's as if for three hours Jesus was the lamb sacrificed on the altar and consumed with fire until everything was just ashes. Therefore, He said before expiring: "It is finished!" And this brings us full certainty that all of God's wrath was consummated on the cross and all of man's salvation was also completed there, which shows us that Jesus did not have to go to hell, as some Christian doctrines preach, based on *1 Pet. 3: 18-19* (it is good to understand the context in which this was written –

<https://www.searaagape.com.br/estudoevangelicosobreasmorte.html#1pe3:18-19>).

Luke writes what Jesus said to the repentant criminal beside him, "And he added [the man said]: Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Jesus answered him, Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise" (*Lk. 23: 42-43*). If Jesus told him that, why would he stay in hell? If the evildoer, as a sinful being received redemption at that moment and his soul went to heaven that same day like the souls of all the righteous who believe in Jesus, why would Jesus' own soul descend to hell? If He consummated His mission on the cross ("It is finished!") and God the Father consummated His wrath for the sins of humanity there, we can think that Jesus' spirit went to heaven, since the spirit of every human being belongs to God (*Job 12: 10; Eccl. 12: 7; Ps. 146: 4*) and returns to Him. His soul, like that of the repentant thief, went to heaven like that of a righteous man (*Ezek. 18: 4* – all souls also belong to God), His body remained in the tomb, fulfilling the prophecy that He would not see corruption, i.e. would not deteriorate; and only on the third day He rose again, showing Himself to men on earth. Only after His ascension, He resumed His position of glory at the Father's side. The fallen human being attracted to the ugly and even has horrifying fantasies around the redemptive mission of Jesus on the cross. Beware! Hell is not a compelling horror movie that you watch and then forget about; it's much worse than that.

Second, throughout the crucifixion process Jesus was conscious, both physically and spiritually. His brain was alert and aware, fully awake. I am saying this because despite the sufferings that He went through from Gethsemane to the crucifixion, Jesus did not have a hypovolemic shock due to dehydration or because of blood loss; nor a cardiogenic shock, as some scholars often try to explain, for that would cause Him lose consciousness. He, then, could not have said all that He spoke during those six hours to Mary, to John, to the soldiers, to the evildoers, and to the Father. He knew what He was doing and talking about.



A supernatural event that can be mentioned during the crucifixion of Jesus was the darkness mentioned in the Gospels (*Matt. 27: 45; Mk. 15: 33; Lk. 23: 44*) and which occurred from noon to three o'clock in the afternoon. Much historical research has been done to explain this event, including the possibility of a solar eclipse, but this would be impossible, as in addition to no historian at the time having witnessed the fact or written about it, the Jewish Passover is celebrated from sunset on the 14th day of month of Nisan (March-April), which is when the first full moon of the spring equinox begins, in the Northern Hemisphere (or autumnal equinox, in the Southern Hemisphere). Equinox is when the inclination of the axis and the direction of the orbit are perpendicular, that is, when the sun, in its apparent annual movement (as seen from Earth) cuts the celestial equator, occasions when day and night last the same time. A solar eclipse occurs when the moon comes between the Earth and the sun, completely or partially obscuring its light. And this is more likely to happen during the new moon phase, when the moon is invisible from Earth. A full moon is being illuminated by the sun in opposition to it, for it is the earth that lies between the moon and the sun. Thus, the darkness described in the bible during the death of Jesus was indeed a supernatural event from God, not an astronomical event.

When Jesus commended His spirit to the Father and cried with a loud voice and breathed his last (*Matt. 27: 50; Lk. 23: 46; Mk. 15: 37* – ‘a loud cry’), the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom (*Matt. 27: 51; Mk. 15: 38; Lk. 23: 45*), there was an earthquake and the dead saints (those of that generation probably) were raised (*Matt. 27: 52*), but only after Jesus’ resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city, since He is the first to rise from the dead, ‘the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep’ – *Acts 26: 23; 1 Cor. 15: 20*. The curtain of the temple was torn by the hands of God, not by the hands of men, which was also a supernatural sign for the Jewish priests who witnessed it.

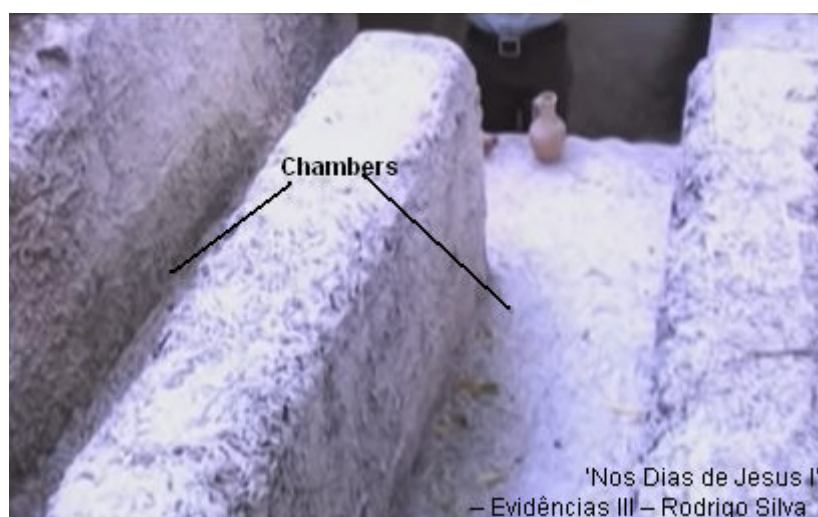
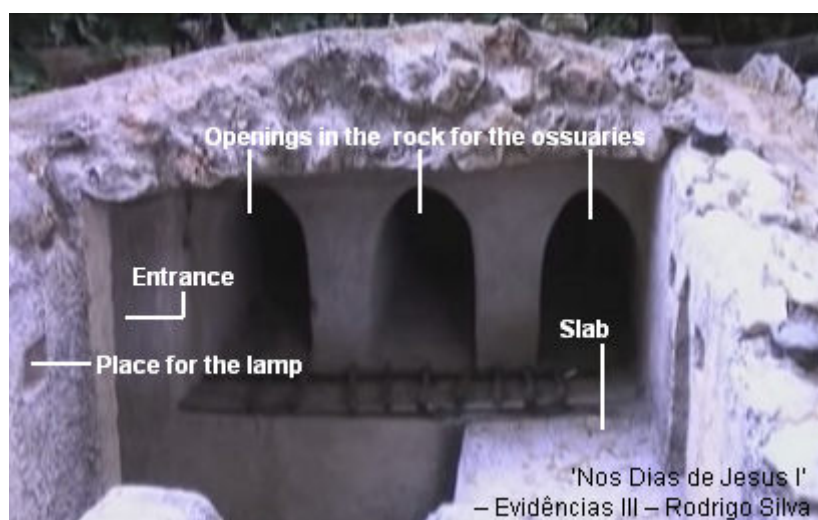
Upon seeing all these events, the centurion and the soldiers who were in front of the cross recognized that Jesus was really God’s Son (*Matt. 27: 54; Mk. 15: 39* mentions only the centurion, who said: “Surely this man was the Son of God!” and *Lk. 23: 47* writes that the centurion praised God and said, “Certainly this man was innocent”). Living among the Jews for some time, most likely this centurion was already believing in Jesus, so much so that he was sensitive to all those events and could say this phrase. Perhaps, one more detail that must have surprised the centurion present there, and who certainly had already witnessed other crucifixions before, was the fact that Jesus cried out in a loud voice (or with ‘a loud cry’), an unexpected reaction on the part of a crucified: injured, weakened, dehydrated, in pain and about to die of asphyxia. How could someone who was barely able to breathe cry out to God in loud voices?

Therefore, all the events that have occurred since Jesus’ arrest in Gethsemane, with no resistance on His part and still healing the servant’s ear that was cut off by Peter; His judgment by Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod, where He kept silent and did nothing to defend Himself; His submissive behavior at the hands of Roman soldiers in Pilate’s palace and His forgiving attitude toward those who crucified Him, not to mention the supernatural events in nature, would be enough to convince anyone of His divinity and His atoning and saving mission to mankind, which was prophesied in *Isa. 52: 13-15*: “See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals [NIV writes: his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness]—so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which

they had not heard they shall contemplate.” Just this description of the Messiah by Isaiah is enough to describe the degree of His suffering and convert skeptics of His intentions towards human beings.

What burial was like at that time?

In the NT, the corpse was washed and then anointed (*Mk. 16: 1; Jn. 19: 39; Lk. 23: 56*), wrapped in linen cloths impregnated with spices (*Mk. 14: 8; Jn. 19: 40*). Finally, members were tied up and the face covered with a linen cloth (*Jn. 11: 44; Jn. 20: 7*). Explaining in more detail, the body was placed on a slab, washed thoroughly by the women with water, oil and perfumes, including hair and nails, well brushed. Then the wrapping process began, that is, a set of bands involving the body from the neck down, the members separately, and another group of bands on the head, over which a linen cloth was placed (*Jn. 11: 44; Jn. 20: 7*).



This process took 7 to 8 hours and was not done at night. The body, thus prepared, was placed in one of the chambers. After a year or more, the bones were placed in ossuaries and deposited in the openings of the rock. The tombs were small, and there

wasn't enough room for many people to be in the process of placing the strips of cloth. It was also dark, so there was a place on the rock for a lamp. In the case of Jesus, that work was interrupted because of Sabbath. Therefore, the evangelists describe only that Jesus was wrapped in a linen cloth (like a sheet), but not wrapped with linen bands (*Jn. 19: 40; Jn. 20: 4-8; Lk. 23: 53; Mk. 15: 46; Matt. 27: 57-60*).

It's interesting to notice what the bible tells about the clean linen cloth with what Joseph of Arimathea wrapped Jesus' body and how it was found by Peter and John on Sunday, after His resurrection. In *Jn 20: 4-8*, it is written: "The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but **rolled up** in a place by itself [NIV: the cloth was **folded up** (Strong #1794, *entulissó*, *ἐντυλίσσω*) by itself, separate from the linen]. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed."

This means that there was something supernatural there. The fact that the linen cloth that had been on Jesus' head was separated from the clean linen cloth that Joseph of Arimathea wrapped the body of Jesus (*Matt. 27: 57-60*), this means that no one had entered there quickly to steal the body of the Master before Roman soldiers noticed. There was a careful and deliberate act of folding or rolling the cloth that covered the head and leaving it in a separate place. 'Rolled up' or 'folded up' (Strong #1794, *entulissó*, *ἐντυλίσσω*) means, in Greek, to wrap up, roll round, envelop. *Entulissó* comes from 'en' and 'tulisso' (to twist; probably akin to *heilisso*); to entwine, i.e. wind up in; wrap in (together). And the linen wrappings were not laid out carelessly, as if they had been hastily unrolled, but as if the Lord was passing through them; they were the way they had involved Jesus. Even because Matthew writes: "And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men... While they [*the women that saw Jesus resurrected*] were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. After the priests had assembled with the elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers, telling them, 'You must say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' If this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.' So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told among the Jews to this day." If the guards who witnessed this were instructed to lie, it was because there was a very striking spiritual event for them that many unbelievers wanted to stifle.

Women that were present at the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus

Regarding the crucifixion of Jesus, the bible describes the presence of four women (*Matt. 27: 56; Matt. 28: 1-10; Mk. 15: 40; Jn. 19: 25*): a) Mary, the mother of Jesus. b) Mary (known as 'the other Mary'), mother of James the younger [or 'the less'] and wife of Clopas (Also called Alphaeus – *Matt. 10: 3; Mk. 3: 18; Lk. 6: 15*). c) Mary Magdalene and d) the sister of Mary (*Jn. 19: 25 cf. Matt. 27: 56; Mk. 15: 40 – Salome*), the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John, Jesus' cousins (*cf. Mk. 1: 19*).

In the resurrection of Jesus the bible describes the presence of several women: Mary Magdalene (coming from Magdala or Magadan; she was freed from seven demons) and the women of Galilee who followed Jesus [*Lk. 23: 55; Lk. 24: 1-12*:

‘Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, mother of James the less [NRSV; NIV, ‘the younger’], and others’, and Suzanna among them. Joanna was the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward (Herod Antipas) [NIV, the wife of Chuza the manager of Herod’s household]. According to the bible, these women provided assistance to Jesus with their goods (*Lk. 8: 3*)]. The bible tells us in *Matt. 28: 1-10* about the women who saw the risen Christ: Mary Magdalene and ‘the other Mary’, the mother of James the younger. In *Mk. 16: 1-11* it mentions Mary Magdalene and Salome and Mary the mother of James the less. And in *Jn. 20: 1-18* the Lord appears to Mary Magdalene.

Chapter 2 – Jesus prepared His disciples for His sacrifice and prepared Himself for it



“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.” (Jn. 6: 54)

Jesus spoke of His own sacrifice a few hours before He died, in the upper chamber, as a way to prepare the disciples for what was to come and teach them about the purpose of all that. He spoke about the blood of the covenant that would be shed for the remission of sins:

Lk. 22: 15-20 (Matt. 26: 26-28; Mk. 14: 22-24; 1 Cor. 11: 23-26): “He said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’ Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’” **He also taught them about the personal need of taking possession of His death**, of the benefits of it, that is, His body and His blood, through the bread and wine (*cf. Jn. 6: 53-58*: “So Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever’”).

He thought of His death as a sacrifice of the Old Testament:

Deut. 16: 3-8: “You must not eat with it anything leavened. For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it—the bread of affliction—because you came out of the land of Egypt in great haste, so that all the days of your life you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt. No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days; and none of the meat of what you slaughter on the evening of the first day shall remain until morning. You are not permitted to offer the Passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the Lord your God is giving you. But at the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name, only there shall you offer the Passover sacrifice, in the evening at sunset, the time of day when you departed from Egypt. You shall cook it and eat it at the place that the Lord your God will choose; the next morning you may go back to your tents. For six days you shall continue to eat

unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly for the Lord your God, when you shall do no work”.

Ex. 12: 1-28: (When God established the Passover before taking His people out of Egypt): “The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ‘This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall hold a solemn assembly and on the seventh day a solemn assembly; no work shall be done on those days; only what everyone must eat, that alone may be prepared by you. You shall observe the festival of unleavened bread, for on this very day I brought your companies out of the land of Egypt: you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a perpetual ordinance. In the first month, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day, you shall eat unleavened bread. For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether an alien or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread.’ Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, ‘Go, select lambs for your families, and slaughter the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood in the basin. None of you shall go outside the door of your house until morning. For the Lord will pass through to strike down the Egyptians; when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over that door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you down. You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children. When you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this observance. And when your children ask you, ‘What do you mean by this observance?’ you shall say, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses’. And the people bowed down and worshiped. The Israelites went and did just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron.”

John the Baptist confirmed this by saying to his disciples: “The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, ‘Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” (*Jn. 1: 29*). Jesus was sacrificed to save us and deliver us from all sin. So, God the Father has appointed His death on the very day of Jewish Passover to create the parallel between the old covenant, in the blood of the slaughtered lamb, and the new covenant, in the blood of Jesus Himself that was slain.

The unleavened bread means sanctification, dominion of the Spirit over the flesh (= yeast). Leaven symbolizes the flesh, human wickedness and malice in opposition to the holiness of the Spirit (*1 Cor. 5: 6-8*). The Word says that the Passover lamb could not be sacrificed inside the cities but outside them, in a place designated by God (*Deut. 16: 3-8 cf. Heb. 13: 10-13*). Similarly, Jesus was not crucified inside the city walls, but outside them. The bible also says that the lamb should be sacrificed in the afternoon, before sunset; that was when Jesus died (3:00 p.m.) and was taken from the cross (before 6:00 p.m.). The lamb could not have any of its bones broken (*Ex. 12: 46; Num. 9: 12; Ps. 34: 20; Jn. 19: 36*), as Jesus had none of His bones broken.

An interesting particularity that we can notice at the Last Supper, was the teaching given there. In chapters 13 to 17 of John’s Gospel there are great lessons:

1) *Jn. 13: 1-20: Humility and service*, as well as *sanctification* of the disciples, so that they could receive the Holy Spirit later. Here Jesus washed their feet, something that only the servants did for the visitors. Just like the kiss and the oil, washing the feet was a customary ritual among the Jews when they received a visitor at home (*Jn. 12: 3: “Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’ feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume”*). This Mary was not Mary Magdalene but Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

“Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill” (*Jn. 11: 2*).

“Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’ feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume” (*Jn. 12: 1-3*).

We can see the same episode described in *Lk. 7: 37-38; 44-46*: “And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment... Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.’” Furthermore, in *Matt. 26: 6-13* (*Jn. 12: 1-8; Mk. 14: 3-8*), Jesus commended her for having anointed Him for His burial (it was a prophetic act): “Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, ‘Why this waste? For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum and the money given to the poor.’ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, ‘Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. Truly I tell you,

wherever this good news proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.”

Taking into account the biblical passages from *Lk. 7: 36; 39-40; 43; Matt. 26: 6-7; Mk. 14: 3 and Jn. 12: 3*, and assuming that it was the same Mary who anointed the feet and the head of Jesus (*Jn. 11: 2*), we can say that these are two different moments: in one moment she anointed Jesus’ feet and was cleansed from her sin. Now (*Matt. 26: 6-7 and Jn. 12: 3*), already forgiven and more aligned with spiritual things, she performed a prophetic act regarding the death of Jesus. She might not know exactly why she anointed Him (perhaps she felt touched by God to do so), but her spirit was certainly in tune with Jesus. The evangelists suggest that the host of the house was Simon (*Matt. 26: 6; k. 14: 3; Jn. 12: 1-2*). The names “Lazarus”, “Simon the Leper” (*Matt. 26: 6; Mk. 14: 3*) and “Bethany” appear together in all these texts, did you notice?

Foot refers to *base, pedestal*, mainly in the wash basin of the tabernacle (*Ex. 30: 18-19*: “You shall make a bronze basin with a bronze stand for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it; with the water Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet”). The word *foot* in Hebrew, *regel* (רגל; sometimes written as ‘*reguel*’ or ‘*raghl*’; from the root: *rgl*), means *to be firm*, and indicates both in Greek (‘*podas*’ or ‘*pous*’) and in Hebrew, *position, destination, inclination of the individual*:

Prov. 3: 23: “Then you will walk on your way securely and your foot will not stumble.”

Prov. 6: 18: “... feet which hurry to run to evil” (In relation to the six things the Lord hates).

Foot also symbolizes the *defeat of the enemies*, when the winner puts his own foot on the neck of the vanquished foe:

Josh. 10: 24: “When they brought the kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned all the Israelites, and said to the chiefs of the warriors who had gone with him, ‘Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.’ Then they came near and put their feet on their necks.”

Ps. 110: 1: “The Lord says to my lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’”

1 Cor. 15: 25: “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.”

In the bible, *to fall at the feet of someone* means *homage or supplication* (*Lk. 8: 41 – Jairus begged Jesus to heal his daughter*).

Sitting at the feet of someone means *discipleship, learning* (*Lk. 10: 39*, in reference to Mary, Martha’s sister, who sat at Jesus’ feet to learn from Him).

Throwing something at the feet of someone means an *offering to this one*, for example, the blind man at Jericho, Bartimaeus, who sat by the roadside, expecting people to give him some money or offering (*Mk. 10: 46*).

Washing the feet of the visitor was to take away the dust from the roads, a *sign of cleanliness, comfort and hospitality* usually done by the lowest slaves.

In *Ruth 4: 7-8*, we can also see the significance of *removing the shoes*, which was for *negotiations* between the kinsmen-redeemers of someone to be rescued. And in *Ex. 3: 5* and *Josh. 5: 15* when the Lord said to Moses and Joshua on different occasion to take off the sandals from their feet, the connection between *taking off one’s shoes* and *surrender* is implicit, *a sign of submission and respect*, “Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” *Sandals* are related to *authority, occupation, material possessions*.

Thus, in addition to teach *humility* to His disciples in this act of washing their feet, Jesus was showing them that God desires to lead us by *rights paths*, clean from the

contamination of the world; in other words, teaching us to walk in holiness and reverence to Him, and thus, having the authority to trample the enemy's head and take possession of our blessings.

2) The second teaching of Jesus at the supper was to warn them of the betrayal to come (*Jn. 13: 21-30, referring to Judas*).

3) Commandment of love (*Jn. 13: 31-35*).

4) To warn them about the danger (*Jn. 13: 36-38 – especially Peter*) in the hands of Satan (*Jn. 14: 30*), and the persecutions (*Jn. 15: 18-23; Jn. 16: 33*).

5) Comfort and consolation (*Jn. 14: 1-3; Jn. 14: 16; Jn. 14: 25-27*).

6) To make it clear who He is: the way, the truth and the life (*Jn. 14: 6*).

7) To strengthen the faith (*Jn. 14: 9-11; 13-14*).

8) To prophesy about the ministry of the disciples and emphasize the importance of service to God, increasing confidence and self-esteem in their heart (*Jn. 14: 12*).

9) To teach the true meaning of love that is linked to obedience; to rejoice at the victory of the other and release him to be happy (*Jn. 14: 15; 23-24; 28*).

10) To remove the anxiety and give true peace (*Jn. 14: 27*).

11) To remind them that they are connected to God by being His chosen and His friends and that they are dependent on Him (*Jn. 15: 1-27, about the true vine*).

12) To clarify the mission of the Holy Spirit, which would come upon them (*Jn. 16: 1-15*).

13) To teach to intercede and show clearly the gentle purpose of His heart (*Jn. 17: 1-26, on the priestly prayer of Jesus*).

They needed to know these things in order to go through the pain with dignity and to face, like us, their own crosses. The cross was the calling of Christ. To exercise our calling we also need to know the meaning of: surrender, humility, holiness, to be in communion with God to be warned of the wiles of the enemy in our way, to learn to intercede, to be sure of His Fatherhood over us; to be immersed in His peace and exercise the true love toward the Lord through obedience and selflessness of our hearts and to know that we will be always comforted.

After the Last Supper, Jesus goes to Gethsemane and discovers that it is a path that He has to walk alone: *Matt. 26: 36-46 (Mk. 14: 32-42; Lk. 22: 39-46, with emphasis on verses 43-44 that talks about the angel who came to comfort Him)*, because in the very moment when He needed support and assistance He found no one on His side:

“Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, ‘I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.’ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.’ Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, ‘So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ Again he went away for the second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.’ (*Lk. 22: 43: [Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength]*). Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.’”

Gethsemane is a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Matthew and Mark (*Matt. 26: 36; Mk. 14: 32*) say that Jesus went to a ‘place’ [chóron – χώριον – Strong #g5564] called Gethsemane; and John (*Jn. 18: 1*) makes it clear that it was a garden [Strong #g2779 – képos – κῆπος].

Matt. 26: 36: “Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’”

Mk. 14: 32: “They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray.’”

Jn. 18: 1: “After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.”



Gethsemane (in Greek: Γεθσημανή, transl. Gethsēmani; in Hebrew: גת שמנים, transl. Gath Shmanim; from Aramaic, Gath Shmānê or Gath Shemen), literally means ‘an oil press’ (Gath – גת = oil press or winepress; olive oil = shemen). The garden was so named not because of the amount of olive trees in it, but because of the great number of oil presses that were there.

The mill stones were used to crush the freshly harvested olives (Zayit = olives), and then this ‘paste’ was placed in bags similar to car tires, stacked on top of each other and taken to another place where others stones with different weights pressed them, thus extracting the oil. The extra virgin oil, as we know it today, was the purest oil that was extracted with the first stone and generally given as firstfruits for the anointing oil in the Temple for the anointing and consecration ceremonies of kings and priests and mixed with aromatic spices. The second press – with a heavier stone than the first – generated an oil of inferior quality and that was used by people for domestic use, generally, in the preparation of food. The third, extracted by the press with an even heavier stone than the previous ones, was used in the lamps, to illuminate the houses. What was left of the olives squeezed by a fourth press contained practically the seeds and peels, therefore an oil of a much lower quality, for other uses, such as soap making.



The bags with the olives...



... were piled up before going to the stone presses



The lamp



Rodrigo Silva – Evidências NT

When we look at the images of the mill and pressing stones, we can understand the meaning of the name of the Garden (Gethsemane, ‘an oil press’) and the similarity with what Jesus went through there in His agony before being arrested. He felt an enormous oppression, like an olive being crushed by a huge stone.

He was feeling a sharp emotional pain that caused profuse sweating (Lk. 22: 44: [In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground]), as He looked at His sacrifice to come, the ‘bitter cup’, with apprehension and almost terror.

About the agony of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane and the sweat of blood, science tries to explain it with a rare condition called hematidrosis.

Hematidrosis, also called blood sweat, is a very rare condition in which a human being sweats blood. The term is from Ancient Greek *haîma*/*haîmatos* (αἷμα/αἵματος), meaning blood, and *hīdrōs* (ἰδρώς), meaning sweat. Science knows that this phenomenon is related to psychogenic causes, such as extreme physical or emotional

stress, severe mental anxiety, for these emotional conditions have a direct impact on capillary blood vessels supplying the sweat glands and whose rupture causes them to exude blood, along with sweat. There were no changes in coagulation, red blood cells or platelets, nor vasculitis or abnormalities of skin glands.

Some researches note the presence of hematidrosis in people awaiting execution or in individuals in fear for their lives. Leonardo da Vinci described a soldier who sweated blood before battle. A case occurred during the London blitz (German bombing campaign in London in World War II), and a case of fear of a storm while sailing.

Science can even understand and explain the relationship between hematohidrosis and severe conditions of emotional stress, but it cannot perceive or understand the degree of spiritual oppression that Jesus was feeling at that moment for all humanity. This is something inexplicable for the carnal man, but perfectly understandable for the children of God who have the sensitivity given by the Holy Spirit. The oppression of darkness certainly brings tragic and harmful effects on the health of those who do not have the necessary spiritual covering to face certain battles. If we've ever felt the weight of darkness trying to overwhelm us, imagine the anguish Jesus endured in Gethsemane for all of us. This makes us value His sacrifice even more and makes us value our salvation.

This makes us bravely face the enemy's provocations and encourages us to glorify and believe in the strength of an extremely greater God, who can defend us from all evil and who is today at the right hand of God in power and glory, watching over those who belong to Him.

We no longer have to sweat in fear before Satan and his envoys. God Himself and His valiant angels protect us from all danger.

"For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace" (Rom. 6: 14). Neither sin nor the temptation of the devil has power over an anointed of God.

The bitter cup did not symbolize the physical or mental pain, but the spiritual agony of carrying the sins of the world and withstand the divine judgment that those sins deserved. **The cup contained the wrath of God:**

Isa. 51: 17: "Rouse yourself, rouse yourself! Stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl of staggering."

Isa. 51: 22-23: "Thus says your Sovereign, the Lord, your God who pleads the cause of his people: 'See, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering; you shall drink no more from the bowl of my wrath. And I will put it into the hand of your tormentors, who have said to you, 'Bow down, that we may walk on you'; and you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to walk on.'"

Isa. 63: 3: "I have trodden the wine press alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their juice spattered on my garments, and stained all my robes."

Jer. 25: 15-16: "For thus the Lord, the God of Israel, said to me: 'Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. They shall drink and stagger and go out of their minds because of the sword that I am sending among them!'"

Rev. 19: 15: "From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty."

As we saw, the cup contained the wrath of God, which caused a complete physical and mental disorientation like drunkenness. He moved away in horror from the

experience of alienation from His Father that the judgment of the sin would bring upon Him. The purpose of God's love was to save the sinners and save them fairly. The cup also symbolized our requests before the suffering that Satan would impose on all men. There, Jesus saw the suffering of all mankind and the terrible plans of Satan against us. From His agony of dread, while He meditated on the implications of His death, Jesus emerged of that intercession with serene and absolute confidence, emotional balance and a great anointing, for those who approached fell before Him (*Jn. 18: 6*: "When Jesus to them, 'I am he,' they stepped back and fell to the ground").

Through the **sweat of blood**, the Lord broke here **our curse of abandonment, rejection and loneliness**. We no longer have to sweat with fear before the enemy and his threats. We no longer have to feel alone and abandoned in the face of certain circumstances. He had already suffered for us. We no longer have to feel abandoned by friends, for He already experienced this in our place and He tells us that He is our best and most reliable friend. He does not leave us nor forsake us and He is with us at all difficult times. So, in all our 'sufferings in Gethsemane' we can be sure to have Him on our side. Once, the Lord told me: "I fulfill everything that I promise in order to reveal my power to my children, and increase in their heart the faith and the hope in my provision. You feel alone in your darkest moments, as I felt in Gethsemane, but I did it willingly so that you could remember that at these moments I am with you and I'm able to make you overcome any pain. Wait on me and you will get the victory."



Chapter 3 – The experience of the cross



“At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” (Mk. 15: 34)

It’s worth remembering that when Jesus came to the cross He had already been beaten, spat upon, scourged, crowned with thorns and He had just endured the extreme suffering of the crucifixion. The bible says that **on the cross He was humiliated and ashamed**, more than He had been until here:

Phil. 2: 7-8: “but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.”

Heb. 12: 2: “Looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfected of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.”

On the cross, the Lord was **humiliated and ashamed not only by the devil**, before the spiritual world, but **by people**. The form of execution (the cross), by itself, it was shameful. In addition to face the cross and His physical nakedness before those who were there, He also had to overcome and leave aside the voices He heard:

Ps. 22: 7: “All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads.”

Matt. 27: 39-44: “Those who passed by derided shaking their heads and saying: ‘You, who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the crosses. In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, ‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, ‘I am God’s Son’. The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.”

He had to leave aside those voices to remember the Father’s voice saying, “You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” for He knew that the cross was necessary, and the Father’s love for Him and for us was greater than the humiliation and affronts. Actually, it was Satan who used those people to affront His relationship with God and to put doubts within Him about the Father’s loyalty and love. Then the Lord could feel the abandonment and the loneliness of human beings, but it was not the abandonment as great as that would follow, when He felt the spiritual abandonment of the Father:

Matt. 27: 45-46: “From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”

In *Matt. 27: 46*, Jesus said: “‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”, in Greek, *êli êli sabachthani*. The Greek word *Sabachthani* (Strong #g4518) is a cry of distress, which means, ‘thou hast left me.’ The word *sabachthani* is originated from the verb ‘*sabac*’, which means ‘forsake.’ In *Psalms 22: 1*, the same verse (“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?”), in Hebrew is, *'êliy'êliy lâmâh 'azabhtâniy*. The expression *âzav-tani* or *'azabhtâniy* means ‘thou hast abandoned me.’ The verb *'azab* (Strong #5800) is a primitive root, which means: to relinquish, to fail, to forsake, to leave destitute, to leave off, to refuse; the same meaning of ‘forsake’ in English: renounce, relinquish, give up on, abandon, desert, to leave off. Thus, what Jesus felt on the cross was definitive helplessness, a deep and total abandonment by the Father. The bible says that from the sixth hour to the ninth hour (noon to three p.m.) there was darkness over the land, meaning the separation of God the Father from His Son, because of our sins (the spiritual darkness). When this process reached its apex, finishing the wrath of God, is that Jesus cried out and delivered His spirit. **Darkness means separation from God (= death).** The Lord felt such separation from the Father, that His cry of helplessness was a genuine cry of total abandonment. He suffered in His soul the terrible torments of a man condemned and abandoned – a real and frightening separation happened between Father and Son and was willingly accepted by both due to our sins and their just reward. In other words, Jesus fulfilled everything to the end:

Mk. 15: 33-41: “When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, ‘Listen, he is calling for Elijah.’ And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, ‘Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.’ Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last [*Lk. 23: 46*: “Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’ Having said this, he breathed his last]. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was God’s Son!’ There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, the younger, and of Joseph, and Salome. These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.”

The bible says that He endured all this with patience:

Isa. 53: 5-7: “But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”

1 Pet. 2: 23-24: “When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”

The darkness, the sin, makes a separation between God and us:

Eph. 2: 14: “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both (*Paul spoke of Jews and Gentiles*) groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us”, and it’s this hostility that He came to break. Here again, Jesus breaks our curse of loneliness, abandonment and rejection generated by sin, through the

false accusations that are cast upon us, and that are barriers set up by Satan to prevent us from enjoying God's presence. Although the text speaks of the breaking of hostility between Jews and Gentiles by the cross, we can also extrapolate this meaning for our relationship with God.

The curtain (*Matt. 27: 51 cf. 2 Cor. 3: 16-18*: "At that moment the curtain (*KJV*; *ASV*, *veil*) of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split... but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit") symbolized **the alienation of sinners from God**, and with this act of Jesus (to withstand God's judgment in our place), it was torn, that is, our fellowship with God was restored. The veil symbolizes also **His torn flesh** [*Heb. 10: 20*: "by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh)"].

He opened the way to His presence:

Eph. 2: 16: "and might reconcile both groups (*Jews and Gentiles – men and God*) to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it."

Heb. 4: 16: "Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Heb. 10: 19-22: "Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

Only after this, the Lord could say, "It is finished" (*Jn. 19: 30*), that is, "*it was and will forever be finished* (*Tetelestai – τετελεσται* in Greek = 'it is finished', 'it's totally paid'; in the case of payment of debts, for example, means: settled, liquidated, or paid off)." He carried out on the cross what He came to accomplish in the world.

Curse is the word that comes out of the mouth of God as His judgment against sin, especially the eternal condemnation of the disobedient and unrepentant. In the OT this was quite visible in the curses reported in *Deut. 28: 15-68*. The person suffered the consequences of sin because of God's judgment (David, for example, was forgiven in the case of Uriah, but had the sentence of God as a curse on his descendants – *2 Sam. 12: 10*: "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house"). On the cross, Jesus broke the curse of God on the sin of men (the curses written in the Book of the Law), opening the door to His throne and to eternal life. Therefore, we are no longer under the curse of the Law, that is, it is not by our good deeds that we will be saved (fulfilling the Law of the Old Covenant), but by the blood of Jesus. God's curse is no longer on us, for Jesus suffered it in our place (*Gal 3: 13*). Whoever receives Him in his life is justified and freed. Who rejects Him, remains under God's wrath (*Gal 3: 10*).

However, when we sin and He forgives us, even so our sinful act and what came out of our mouth ('a curse of sentence') had a bad consequence for us and for others, which will only be broken in fact with our new positioning in Christ: breaking with our mouth the curses we utter, learning to bless lives, asking forgiveness from those we hurt and releasing forgiveness for those who hurt us, restoring what was stolen, acting as a true disciple of Christ and fighting for God's justice on earth. This part is our task.

In Christ, we are new a creation (*2 Cor. 5: 17*), we have been forgiven and now we are entitled to His blessing if we walk according to His will for our lives. However, the simple fact that we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior does not make us perfect and holy

beings. Our spirit is completely new and recreated, but our soul and body do not follow this immediate transformation. For this reason, the apostle Paul speaks of working out our salvation with fear and trembling and confirms that even he was unable to reach perfection (*Phil. 2: 12b; Phil. 3: 12-16*). In other words, we achieve in the material life the blessing that Jesus has already left us in the heavenly realms (*Eph. 1: 3; 20-23; Eph. 2: 6; Eph. 3: 10; Eph. 6: 12*).

I'd like to say a word about spiritual war and the heavenly realms mentioned above:

God the Father is directly related to our spirit, because the spirit of any being on earth belongs to Him (*Eccl. 12: 7*: “and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the breath returns to God who gave it”) and, in the bible the word ‘heaven’ is found as the symbol of the spiritual places where the dwelling of God is, His throne, where things are not visible. In the so-called ‘heavenly places’ (known by people as ‘the spiritual world or heavenly realms’), as mentioned in Ephesians (*Eph. 1: 3; 20-23; Eph. 2: 6; Eph. 3: 10; Eph. 6: 12*), are angels and demons, and correspond to our soul, the place of our emotions, thoughts and will and that Satan truly dispute. That’s why Jesus came to rescue it, setting the example through a holy life as a man on earth, subject to the same weaknesses than us. The Holy Spirit corresponds to the spiritual power of God given to us when we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior and who came to take possession of our being as a whole, also of our flesh (physical body), being responsible for it as the sanctuary where God inhabits. Hence, we need the power of the Holy Spirit, in order to stand firm against the onslaughts of the enemy, keeping our bodies holy and unstained by (*Jam. 1: 27b*). This way, our emotions will also be protected and strengthened, aligning them with our spirit and with the sovereign will of God. Furthermore, it’s through the Holy Spirit that the power to perform miracles coming from the Father manifests.

In the dictionary, the word ‘curse’ has the meaning of: act or effect of cursing; plague; misfortune, disgrace, calamity or imprecation, execration, a profane oath, a curse word; a solemn utterance intended to invoke a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on someone or something. Thus, not only does God have a word of curse against sin, but man can also curse. This means to us that ‘curse’ is the authorization given to the devil by someone who exercises authority over another to damage the life of the person who is cursed, from derogatory words to swearing oaths in confirmation of the accursed word being released or invoking evil powers. Authority figures such as parents, grandparents, spouses (especially the husband), teachers, religious leaders, doctors and other health professionals can positively or negatively influence people who are submissive to them. The negative word becomes a curse, especially when it comes with emotional strength or spiritual capacity to generate ‘life’ to what is being said. One of the worst examples is: “Go to hell” or “May the devil take you.”

Here comes an interesting detail because it is something very subtle, used by the enemy as a legality to interfere in the lives of people, believers and non-believers, but unaware of it all. A curse word, a word of constant complaint or a ‘family saying’ that is repeated for years among the members of that family, and that are often heard by young children who spend many hours of the day beside these adults who do not know the word of God, these words can be incorporated by their unconscious, even if they are not cursed words directed against them on purpose, but they become anchors, through which the enemy manipulates their lives and attitudes for long years. Therefore, certain believers do not understand why they cannot ‘release’ their life. They believe in God, they prophesy His word with faith, they work to conquer their blessings, they walk on the word, but they obtain nothing. It is not just a spiritual barrier from darkness. It is because there is an unconscious human barrier; and this happens until the Holy Spirit

reveals this trap, that is, certain words come to light. Then, yes, under spiritual anointing, they can be broken and there is real liberation.

On the cross, through His sufferings and the blood that was shed, the Lord broke all the curses that afflict us, the curse of the Law and the curse of men.

1) The first was reported in *Gethsemane* through *the blood lost by sweating*. We will never be alone in our grief. When we are experiencing some difficulty, we will know that Jesus continues to intercede before the throne of God for our lives (*Rom. 8: 34*). Through the sweat of blood, the Lord broke here our curse of abandonment, rejection and loneliness. We no longer have to sweat with fear before the enemy and his threats. We no longer have to feel alone and abandoned in the face of certain circumstances. He had already suffered for us. We no longer have to feel abandoned by friends, for He already experienced this in our place and He tells us that He is our best and most reliable friend. He does not leave us nor forsake us and He is with us at all difficult times. So, in all our 'sufferings in Gethsemane' we can be sure to have Him on our side. No attitude or curse word, neither ours nor anyone else's, has power to make us feel isolation, abandonment and loneliness anymore. Jesus said: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (*Matt. 28: 20b*). He also said: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate [*NIV: Counselor*], to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. 'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.'" (*Jn. 14: 16-18*)... "And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him" (*Jn. 8: 29*). In the moment of affliction, our flesh really feel the effects of it, but when we remember to pray and ask God for spiritual strength, relief comes and that discomfort ceases to oppress us. The Lord does not allow this uncomfortable feeling to persist. The solution comes from God.

2) *Face disfigured by the blows*. Here He broke our curse of *shame* and *humiliation*. Cursed words slap us, deforming our self-image and our self-esteem, making us feel embarrassed and humiliated before the situations that we are not managing to solve. Jesus took upon His own face the affronts so that our face can show His light and confidence every day before all our challenges. "yet surely my cause is with the Lord, and my reward with my God" (*Isa. 49: 4b*)... "And my people shall never again be put to shame" (*Jl. 2: 27b*)... "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you." (*Jam. 4: 10*). Once again, our comfort comes from God, and evil does not perpetuate; relief comes.

3) *Crown of thorns*. His eyes were blurred by the blood so that we could see far. He broke our curse of *mediocre mentality*, the limiting thoughts that other people impose on us and the spiritual blindness brought by the enemy so that we do not see the truth and cannot make correct and conscious decisions in life. The crown squeezed His head and His mind so that our minds were free from all the mediocrity and the undesirable thoughts and memories that hurt us like thorns. The bible says we have the mind of Christ (*1 Cor. 2: 16*); therefore, having His thoughts in our mind puts on us a crown of glory. The thoughts of the world are thorny for us and we no longer must let them be part of our being. No word of curse has power against the living and liberating word from the mouth of God for those who are covered by the blood of His Son. The Holy Spirit gives us God's wisdom.

4) *Whips on His back*. Through the scourge that Jesus suffered, He took away all oppression, violence and aggression that try to hit us. He brought us *physical and emotional healing*. Sometimes we feel physically, emotionally, mentally, morally and spiritually abused by Satan or by the people and situations around us. Cursed words

may have given him the legality to act with hatred on us until we came to know the mystery of the cross. As we recall the violence and aggression that Jesus suffered, we can realize that all aggression and desolation of our souls are nothing before that. Therefore, through His blood and His sacrifice we can feel freed and healed from all the memories of the violence we suffered. We can understand *Isa. 25: 8-9* and have our eyes dry of every tear because of the shame we went through. He (Jesus) is our shield that surrounds us behind and before, protecting us from the fiery darts of the devil and the “anchors of past learning” that are hidden and buried in our unconscious, hindering us from seeing the truth and preventing the Holy Spirit from acting freely in us. The outrage is no longer ours but the Lord’s. *Isa. 25: 8-9* says: “He will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” Through His blood shed there, He also brought us physical healing, and we only achieve this when we reach another level of understanding; not mental, but spiritual. And this is granted by the Lord.

5) *Hands stuck by the nails.* He broke our curses of *hands tied* by selfishness, and hands that do not love, do not embrace, do not carry out. He broke our curses of failure, limitations, defeat, things that are started but not ended; sometimes, even by curses of violent words that come to try to destroy our work or thwart a project that has already been determined by the Lord for us. However, the bible says in *Deut. 28: 8* that I shall rejoice in everything I do, and everything I put my hand will prosper: “The Lord will command the blessing upon you in your barns, and in all that you undertake; he will bless you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.” In the NT Luke writes (*Acts 5: 13a*): “Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles” or in KJV: “And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch.” How many healings and deliverances were done by the hands of Jesus and those of the apostles? Our hands are free to serve, touch, perform miracles, sow and prosper, work and see the fruit of our work: “You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you” (*Ps. 128: 2*). No cursed word can stop us from doing what God Himself has commanded us. And no cursed word or weapon of darkness can prevent us from receiving the reward for the work of our hands. When we believe these promises we act. Nothing can stop us.

6) *Feet stuck by the nails.* He broke our curse of *paralysis* in the face of barriers and boundaries placed by the enemy. He allowed us to take possession of all the land we walk on (*Deut. 11: 24*: “Every place on which you set foot shall be yours; your territory shall extend from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the Western Sea” and *Josh. 1: 3*: “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses”). Thus, Jesus fills us with courage to walk by the paths determined by Him for our lives. “I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (*Josh. 1: 9*). We will go where the Lord sends us and we will take His word and His anointing to accomplish what He has already commanded. Good goes with us, evil gets out of the way.

7) *Spear in His side* (*Jn. 19: 34*: “Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out”). This means that *from the side of Jesus came out water (symbol of purification of men, acquitting them from guilt) and blood (symbol of protection of God and atonement for sin, for with it we were bought,*

propitiated). The blood confirmed that the atonement for our sins and our guilt was completed; and the water showed that the stain left by them before God was washed by the Holy Spirit, acquitting men. In *Rev. 12: 11* and *Rev. 17: 14* we read: “But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death”; “they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.” Many times in our Christian walk we receive the enemy’s arrows (through cursed words and bad feelings), especially on our heart, on our emotions; arrows that destabilize us and go ‘killing’ and ‘poisoning’ us little by little. But the Lord has not only suffered as the target of arrows of the devil and of the people around Him, arrows of all kinds, but He also had a spear thrown in the side, reaching His heart. He was already dead but Satan, for cowardice, threw on Him this final blow (*Jn. 19: 33-34*: “But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out”). Jesus received a spear in His chest so that our chest was protected from arrows and darts. Through His love, we know His righteousness. Therefore, we can put on the breastplate of righteousness, which is part of our armor as Christians. We no longer need to receive arrows in our heart, especially those that prevent us from loving and force us to think or to nurture revenge. When we give revenge to God, we find out that now we’re exercising the ‘crucifying’ of our defeats and failures, because we handed our cause with confidence to the One that can truly defend us from evil. Without the feeling of revenge in our hearts, we can actually exercise the authority that God gives us and demand that evil get out of our lives. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (*Jam. 4: 7*) ... “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.” (*1 Jn. 4: 7-8*) ... “...Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord” (*Rom. 12: 19b*).

I would like to put here an experience, among many, that I had with the power of Jesus’ blood on that cross. A certain person, used by the devil with hatred in my life, decided to use words completely “poisoned” against me because of a brother in Christ with whom I had prayed a day or two before. Suddenly I felt a lot of darts and a lot of violence reaching my spirit and started to pray for deliverance, since I had done nothing wrong. I felt the violence and oppression of darkness, but to my surprise, I found myself nailed to the cross with Jesus. I saw the darkness coming with fury and, suddenly, a “very light anointing” came out of my heart, but with a lot of determination, and then, I realized that it was not exactly from my heart that it came out, but from the heart of Jesus, nailed there with me. The darkness started to retreat and I began to feel relief and liberation. As a result, the Lord showed me that His love was there, neutralizing that destructive force, that is, His love and the power of His blood at that moment confirmed to me what was done on the cross for me and for all men, especially when He released forgiveness for His executioners. The love of Jesus protects us from all kinds of scourges and aggression, whether physical, emotional or spiritual, through the cursed words that try to reach us, loaded with destructive power. The secret is to conquer this type of experience in the spiritual level, not just on the emotional. And this is granted by the Lord.

8) The Lord *was silent* before all the pain He suffered at the hands of the Romans (*Isa. 53: 7* and *1 Pet. 2: 23-24*: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth”; “When he was abused, he did not

return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed”). He stayed in silence and in no time He used His authority and identity of the Son of God to shorten His suffering; on the contrary, He submitted to human court: *Matt. 26: 53*: “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?” (1 legion corresponds to 3 to 6 thousand soldiers, that is, the Lord might summon for more than 36 or 72 thousand angels); *Jn. 19: 11*: “Jesus answered him, ‘You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.’” He stayed silent so that we could have freedom of speech, freedom to say and be who we really are, to make manifest our identity as children of God before our enemies and to use the authority that He gave us over darkness. *Here He broke our curse of muteness and cowardice* in face of the situations that the devil makes us ‘swallow.’ He also *taught us to quiet* before his provocations, forcing us to say what he wants and then, we repent of what we said without thinking (return the outrages – *Ecc. 7: 20-22*: “Surely there is no one on earth so righteous as to do good without ever sinning. Do not give heed to everything that people say, or you may hear your servant cursing you; your heart knows that many times you have yourself cursed others”). This is wisdom: when to be quiet and when to speak and learn to fight in the way of God: praying, praising and prophesying His word, not denying His truth. “But the word of God is not chained” (*2 Tim. 2: 9b*); “‘And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus’. When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.” (*Acts 4: 29-31*) ... “So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.” (*Lk. 21: 14-15*).

9) Another curse broken on the cross was the ‘*labels*’ that people place on us throughout our lives and that sometimes we put on ourselves or on others; truly limiting and destructive phrases. In *Jn. 19: 19-22* we can see that it was Pilate (Satan) who put the label (*v.22*), not Jesus: “Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, ‘Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews’ [INRI, the acronym for the Latin phrase: *Iēsus Nazarēnus, Rēx Iūdæōrum* – my note]. Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, ‘Do not write, The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’ Pilate answered, ‘What I have written I have written.’” Pilate wrote it and did not allow anyone change it. Labels are curses of sentence, and under the authority of the Holy Spirit we must break them and take on our identity as children of God with authority over all evil and capable of rewriting our own story. Even being affronted, we must behave as a new creature in Christ taking on the identity He has given us, the one the devil wanted to give us. Only God can say what we are: “in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (*Rom. 8: 37*)... “it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him” (*Rom. 8: 16-17*)... “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all” (*Prov. 31: 29*) ... “I can do all things through him who strengthens

me.” (*Phil. 4: 13*) ... “You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off” (*Isa. 41: 9b*).

10) *To tear the clothes.* In *Jn. 19: 23* it is written: “When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes [*His cloak or robe, that’s what it means*] and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic [*the undergarments, that’s what means*]; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top.”

Clothes – Strong #2440, ἱμάτιον, himation, a long flowing outer garment, apparel, cloak, clothes, garment, raiment, robe, vesture.

Tunic – Strong #5509, χιτών, chitón, a tunic or shirt, garment, undergarment, clothes, coat, garment.

His clothes (cloak) were divided among the four soldiers, but they cast lots for his tunic to see who would get it. Without knowing, they fulfilled David’s prophecy recorded in the messianic psalm, *Ps. 22: 18* (“they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.” – NRSV; “They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.” – NIV).

To a Jew, the clothes represented the personality. Torn clothes were a sign of painful interior wound. So, Jesus allowed His clothes (outer garments; His body, His human personality and His will) were torn so that we could have new and whole spiritual clothes, of holiness and justice, as children of the King. With that attitude, He took our clothes of mourning and gave us robes of joy and victory. He let Satan tear His garments as Son of God to give them to us, instead of letting the devil tear our clothes of holiness and turn us into spiritual beggars because of sin. Jesus prevented that our emotional wounds were exposed to the enemy. The mouth shapes the spiritual world; what enters the ear can build or destroy the soul; and what the eyes see is brought into our physical life. Many cursed or derogatory words heard for many years destroy a person’s personality, and consequently, his/her emotions, mind and spirit. Jesus came to bring us soul restoration through His words of life. Therefore, reading or listening to them frequently helps to restore our wounded soul, His Spirit rebuilds what was destroyed by the enemy’s wickedness. In *Ps. 30: 11* it is written: “You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.” And in *Isa. 61: 3* we read: “To provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.” It is interesting to comment on the tunic of Jesus be woven in one piece without seams. Likewise were the robes of the priests, made of linen and seamless. This is to confirm his eternal priesthood. More than that, His clothes whole and without tears or seams means to us that He was a righteous man, without sin and therefore His soul had no gaps, His spirit was whole. That’s what He wants for us too.

Conclusion:

This victory was already conquered by Jesus for us, but we conquered in material life the blessing that Jesus already left us in the heavenly realms, through our new position in Christ: breaking with our mouths the curses we uttered, learning to bless lives, asking forgiveness to those we hurt and releasing forgiveness to those who hurt us, restoring what was stolen, acting as a true disciple of Christ and fighting for God’s justice on earth. This part is up to us. Did you realize that it requires self-discipline and perseverance? Did you notice that this is a daily practice? It doesn’t come for free.

When we talk about to crucify our sins, curses and problems on the cross, we often do not know how to do it or what really happens when we accept this word as truth in

our hearts. We know that everything happens by faith, but our soul, our human rationality, seeks to understand the process and this is not necessarily bad, but a human curiosity that must be satisfied by God so that our faith is increased. The Lord knows the hearts of each of His sons and also knows how each one 'works' internally in relation to His Word. In other words, we know that Jesus has already taken on the cross our pains, infirmities, etc. but we don't know how to get rid of them. It is not enough to just declare with our lips that He has already taken our curses, pains, sufferings and sins, and to ignore the deformities that exist in our flesh. It's not so easy to get rid of 'stains.' *Isa. 53: 4-5* is not a 'prayer' or an amulet against Satan that we speak at times of danger, but a powerful and living Word which confronts us with the cross and brings us true repentance through the revelation of our mistakes. With the heart in this interior willingness we will be ready to be truly freed. Praying before the cross is to make the exchange: to give Him our bad and receive from Him His best. **To crucify is to make the decision not to satisfy our tastes and desires that lead to sin. In short: giving up our reasons and arguments, feelings and desires so that God may prevail.**

As mentioned earlier, we must fully trust in God's righteousness, not ours, and let the whole spiritual process that only He can make be manifested in our lives. When I sought clarification and revelation of God to write this topic (because some people had asked me before how the release occurs or what they should do to have it) the Spirit of God reminded me of two situations in the Old Testament that illustrate the process of the Cross: **Surrender**. That's what happened, for example, to Hezekiah when Sennacherib came to defy him (*Isa. 37: 14-20*). He did not react for himself, but he showed the affronts before the Almighty and transferred them to Him, for indeed, the enemy was affronting Hezekiah's faith, and therefore the God that he believed. He didn't take revenge for himself because he knew that his opponent was stronger; however, he let the arm of God act for him and thus, he won. That's what we should do: to present, through our prayers before the cross, all that weighs on us and let the blood of Jesus purifies us from what is not ours. Another passage that the Lord showed me is in *Josh. 10: 26-27*: "Afterward Joshua struck them down and put them to death, and he hung them on five trees. *And they hung on the trees until evening*. At sunset Joshua commanded, and they *took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave* where they had hidden themselves; they *set large stones* against the mouth of the cave, which remain to this very day."

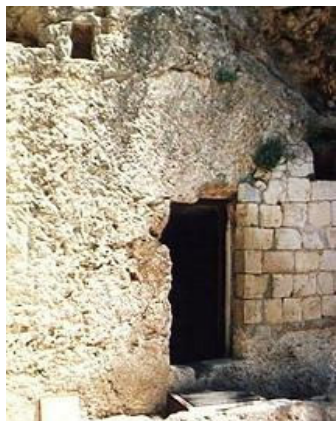
The words in *italics* are important revelations for us. *Hung on the trees until evening* means that we should pray, deliver our problem on the cross and wait for God's answer. It does not take days, but seconds, because it is the instantaneous process of blood which comes by faith. Then Joshua commanded that they *took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave*, that is, we should bury and forget what has already been cleansed, forgiven and healed. Soon after, the bible says that they *put large stones*, namely, to build walls, to put the word of God in the place of what was healed and work so that it acts and rebuilds what was destroyed before. It is to have a new behavior after the act of repentance and forgiveness by the blood.

In other words, liberation does not come only from the knowledge we have about the matter written above, nor is it conquered by our rationality or will, but by the spiritual action of God, which touches our soul in a profound way. He alone accomplishes this kind of healing. So when you identify your problem, pray as if standing before the cross and speak to Jesus all that is in your heart, until you feel the Holy Spirit touching 'the wound', for it is a sign that your soul is prepared to receive the healing. Probably the emotions will spring up and you will cry. But keep talking to Him

and let Him finish the process. Open the bible and listen to what He has to say to you. The relief will come as a sign that the liberation has been won.

Thus, through the sacrifice of the cross we are transformed into new creatures and what we were before we met Jesus becomes part of yesterday, because with Him we begin to live our today and sow and build our tomorrow.

Chapter 4 – The time that Jesus spent in the tomb



“For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth.” (Matt. 12: 40)

By dying on the cross Jesus accomplished a great victory over darkness. But the victory went further, when after His death **He stayed in the tomb for three days**, like Jonah in the belly of the fish, and rose from that place and showed Himself alive again. The book of Jonah, especially chapter 2, is a ‘shadow’ of what happened to Jesus; hence, Jesus said that the only sign He would give the Pharisees would be the sign of Jonah:

Matt. 12: 38-41 (Lk. 11: 29-30): “Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, ‘Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you’. But he answered them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here!’”

What He meant is that the Ninevites didn’t see great signs from God, yet they repented with Jonah’s preaching, after he stayed three days and three nights in the fish’s belly. However, the teachers of the law, even though they heard Jesus’ preaching during His ministry, still did not believe in Him. Perhaps some would be converted after seeing His resurrection or, at least, an account of it through the mouths of the disciples and apostles.

The prophet Hosea had already mentioned the resurrection of Christ (*Hos. 6: 1-2*): “Come, let us return to the Lord; for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us; he has struck down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.” We can confirm and compare this text with *Lk. 24: 46*, which says: “and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day’” and *1 Cor. 15: 3-4*: “For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.” Here we have an important revelation: the ‘yesterday’ in our lives, when we were in Egypt (the world) and did not know Jesus, was a moment when God struck us and torn us so that we could approach Him and be redeemed and healed. ‘After two days he will revive us’ speaks of ‘today’ (the second day) when we have Jesus and we are strengthened by His power and His grace that work

in us. And *'the third day'* refers to our future that is logically linked to our choice of today to walk with Him and serve Him, that is, *to the resurrection and eternal life*. So it is important to live everyday our *'today'* in His presence, because this way our past will be only a testimony of victory, healing and deliverance; now there is no condemnation over our lives. The present is our moment of victory and resurrection of the problems of *'yesterday,'* and our future will always be glorious because it was generated and shaped by our attitudes of our present time. *We will live eternally with Him*. According to Jewish interpretation up to the 1st century, the 1st day corresponded to the time of sin; the 2nd day, the day of God's forgiveness, and the 3rd, the time of the redemption of God's people.

One of the victories won by Jesus was the victory over death, because the human being was always afraid of death. Therefore, Paul wrote: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died [NIV: have fallen asleep] ... For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. 15: 17-20; 25-26).

It's interesting to notice that in the bible the word fear or dread (or awe) comes from several Hebrew and Greek roots, such as: a) **Phobos** (Greek) = rapture, fear, terror, alarm; the object or cause of fear; reverence, respect; to be put in fear; alarm or fright (phobos φόβος – Strong #5401; Matt. 14: 26; Matt. 28: 4; 8; Mk. 4: 41; Heb. 2: 15 etc. = 47 times in the NT. b) **Deilia** (Greek) = fear, cowardice, timidity (deilia δειλία – Strong #1167, as it in 2 Tm 1: 7 – only once in the NT); c) **Eulabeia** (Greek) = prudence, reverence, caution, fear of God, piety; Strong #2124, eulabeia, εὐλαβείας, as in Heb. 12: 28; Heb. 5: 7 = only twice in the NT). d) **Pachad**, the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek word Phobos (Pachad, Strong #6343; פָּחַד, as in 1 Sam. 11: 7; Ex. 15: 16; Gen. 31: 42; 53; Deut. 2: 25; Deut. 11: 25, Ps. 119: 120, etc. = 49 times in the OT) = dread, dreadful, fear, great fear, terror; a (sudden) alarm; to fear, to be anxious or terrified; a helper or a companion for life (referring to death), until Jesus came to free us from fear of it (ref.: Heb. 2: 15).

There still a Hebrew word for fear (or to fear), which is **yirah**, יִרָא, Strong #3374, and means fear; excessive fear or to fear exceedingly; dreadful, or fearfulness; (morally) reverence. It appears 45 times in the OT, usually referring to God or together with the expressions, 'fear of the Lord', 'fear of God' or 'fear of the Almighty' [Gen. 20: 11; Ex. 20: 20; 2 Sam. 23: 3; 2 Chr. 19: 9; Neh. 5: 9; Neh. 5: 15; Job 4: 6; Job 6: 14; Job 15: 4; Job 22: 4; Job 28: 28; Ps. 2: 11; Ps. 5: 7; Ps. 19: 9; Ps. 34: 11; Ps. 90: 11; Ps. 111: 10; Ps. 119: 38; Ps. 1: 7; Prov. 1: 29; Prov. 2: 5; Prov. 8: 13; Prov. 9: 10; Prov. 10: 27; Prov. 14: 26-27; Prov. 15: 16; Prov. 15: 33; Prov. 16: 6; Prov. 19: 23; Prov. 22: 4; Prov. 23: 17; Isa. 11: 2-3; Isa. 29: 13; Isa. 33: 6; Isa. 63: 17; Jer. 32: 40; Ezek. 30: 13 (fear throughout the Land of Egypt); Jon. 1: 10; Jon. 1: 16]. Only 3 times, this word appears as a reference to fear or calamities or the enemy (Deut. 2: 25; Ps. 55: 5; Isa. 7: 25) and only once (Ezek. 1: 18), referring to his fear of the rims of the wheels of the cherubim (KJV: dreadful; NIV: awesome), but anyway, fear of the supernatural.

In Heb. 2: 14-15 it is written: "Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death." The fear of death brought slavery to the soul of man.

Jesus became a man, went through the experience of death and has risen, to show men that *He has the power to resurrect us from death and give us eternal life*, because

He paid for us the penalty of sin. The devil had the power of death (*Heb. 2: 14-15*) because all men had sinned and he imprisoned their souls; but Jesus came as a man, without sin (*Rom. 8: 3*), condemning it in His own flesh, buying us through His blood.

On the third day the Holy Spirit came back into Him, bringing life and resurrection. By resurrecting and returning to earth, *He brought the keys of death and hell with Him*, therefore, taking away Satan's dominion over the souls of men (*Rev. 1: 18*: "and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades").

More than physical death, Jesus delivered us from eternal death, which is the definitive separation from God generated by sin, and which we know as 'hell', which He referred to in His teachings: a place of eternal torment, a separate place for all the wicked who rejected Him:

"...while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (*Matt. 8: 12*)

"The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (*Matt. 13: 41-42*)

"So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (*Matt. 13: 49-50*)

"Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" (*Matt. 22: 13*)

"The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know. He will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (*Matt. 24: 50-51*).

"As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (*Matt. 25: 30*).

"There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out." (*Lk. 13: 28*)

The expression 'gnashing of teeth' can be used in the sense of hatred and anger against someone (*Job 16: 9*). 'Weeping' indicates suffering, grief, sadness. But in the above texts, Jesus went a little further in its meaning, indicating the moment of final condemnation, on the Day of Judgment, when His justice will be applied to those who rejected Him (*Lk. 13: 28*), portraying the suffering and despair of the wicked in the face of divine condemnation, as well as hatred, discontent and anger at their situation ('gnashing of teeth'), that is, a very great degree of distress.

In the verses before Luke it is no longer about the moment of judgment, but the moment of condemnation to hell, where the wicked will already be suffering the penalty: torment and terrible pains and the eternal separation from God, which is the greatest pain that anyone can suffer. This will cause the weeping and gnashing of teeth of agony to be going through such a great and just condemnation.

In *Mk. 9: 43-48*, Jesus says the same thing, using other words, "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. [Where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched] (*). And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell, [Where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched]*. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is

never quenched.” Cf. *Isa. 66: 24*: “And they shall go out and look at the dead bodies of the people who have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh [NIV: they will loathsome to all mankind].” (*) The eldest manuscripts do not bring this verse.

Then, He returned to the earth where He had been ashamed and *exposed the hell to scorn and to shame, proving to be alive* (*Col. 2: 15*: “He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it [*the cross*]”).

The region of the dead was considered by ancient Jews as hell, in Hebrew Sheol (Strong #7585: grave, hell, pit, lower world, underworld); Hades and Geenna (Gehenna) in Greek. The Jews thought Sheol was like a shell where the dead remained and were put on trial. There, could have a separated place for the righteous and the wicked. The word Hades (Greek: hadés, ᾠδης – Strong #g86) comes from ‘a’ (as negative particle) and ‘eido’; properly, unseen, i.e. ‘Hades’ or the place (state) of departed souls; grave, hell; the dwelling of the dead in the underworld until the last judgment. In the Latin Vulgate, the Greek word Hades was translated as ‘inferna’ (= hell). The other Greek word ‘Geenna’ (Greek: Gehenna, γέεννης – Strong #g1067), comes from ‘ge’ (Valley of) ‘Hinnom’, where idolatrous sacrifices were made to the south of Jerusalem or a place of punishment for criminals; also used (figuratively) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment; hell. The Greek word Gehenna can be found in the NT in the following verses: *Matt. 5: 22; 29; 30; Matt. 10: 28; Matt. 11: 23; Mk. 9: 43; 45; 47; Lk. 12: 5; Jam. 3: 6*. The word Hades is written in *Lk. 10: 15; Lk. 16: 23; Rev. 1: 18; Rev. 6: 8; Rev. 20: 14*. In *2 Peter 2: 4*, in our translation, ‘hell’ (NIV), it’s written the Greek word ‘tartarus’ (tartaroó, τάρταρος – Strong #g5020: cast down to hell; the deepest abyss of Hades; to incarcerate in eternal torment). There seems to be a difference between the words Hades and Gehenna, for Hades conveys the idea of ‘the place (state) of departed souls; hell, grave’, whereas Gehenna seems to refer to something stronger than simple grave or physical death. It suggests spiritual death, true hell or eternal punishment, as we saw in the definition.

What we know is that in the OT the dead didn’t have the chance of getting the salvation coming through Jesus the Messiah, the way we know it today, after His sacrifice on the cross. The characters of the OT received the grace of Christ through the Holy Spirit who acted in them and were saved, as happened with Noah, with the ark being the symbol of God’s salvation. Perhaps that is why Peter wrote in *1 Peter 3: 18-19*: “For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit (NIV: ‘He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit’, with capital letter, meaning the Holy Spirit), in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison.”

In the text of *1 Peter 3:18-22*, the word Hades (hell, grave) is not explicitly written. Did Jesus descend into hell to preach (make a proclamation)?

“How did Jesus go and preach?”

“The Bible itself explains in the following verses” (*1 Peter 3: 20-22*):

“... who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.”

The Bible never uses the word ‘spirits’ for ghosts or disembodied beings, but always for living people. In fact, Peter was speaking within a context where the expression ‘spirits in prison’ refers to the people of the pre-flood era who did not repent because of Noah’s preaching, because Jesus, before His incarnation, poured out His Spirit on Noah to preach repentance to those people who were in the devil’s prison because of their sin; or, then, to those who, because they were disobedient, are now – Peter saying, in his time – already condemned to eternal fire, to eternal prison.

Another verse in favor of Jesus not going to hell: James (*Jam. 2: 26*) says that the body without the spirit is dead; therefore, when Jesus came in the flesh, He preached as a human being, not just in the spirit. And He preached to people who were alive in the body, with the ability to hear a sermon and receive it or not, although they were spiritually dead because of their sins. Jesus came to free them from this death and this prison (*Lk. 4: 18-19; Isa. 61: 1-2*). Isaiah and Psalms write that only the living praise God (*Isa. 38: 18-19; Ps. 150: 6*). If a person is physically dead, without the spirit, he cannot have consciousness or receive a sermon, therefore, Jesus could not preach to the physically dead; therefore, He did not preach in hell (Hades, Sheol, whatever name is given to ‘the grave’).

Therefore, there no reason to think that Jesus went to hell after His death (neither His soul nor His spirit), for He Himself said:

- *Matt. 12: 40*: “For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth”, that is, in the grave (‘In the heart of the earth’), like any man.

The Spirit belongs to God and returns to God:

- *Ecc. 12: 7*: “and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the breath returns to God who gave it.”

- *Job 12: 10*: “In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.”

Jesus said:

- *Lk. 23: 46*: “Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’ Having said this, he breathed his last.” Cf. *Ps. 31: 5*: “Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.”

Matthew writes: “Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.” [NIV: ‘And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.’] (*Matt. 27: 50*).

So, His spirit returned to God and His body remained in the tomb. Therefore, in *Rom. 6: 4*, the apostle Paul says that our baptism in waters resembles the death and resurrection of Jesus to a new life: “Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” And he goes on saying: “But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God (*Rom. 6: 8-10*).” When he says: “death no longer has dominion over him” it’s the same to say that Jesus has in His hands the keys of death and hell (“I have the keys of Death and of Hades” – *Rev. 1: 18*), for His resurrection proved His sovereignty over death, physical and spiritual.

As I wrote in chapter 1, Luke writes what Jesus said to the repentant evildoer beside him, “And he added [*the man said*]: Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Jesus answered him, Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise” (*Lk. 23: 42-43*). If Jesus told him that, why would He stay in hell? If the

repentant evildoer, as a sinful being received redemption at that moment and his soul went to heaven that same day like the souls of all the righteous who believe in Jesus, why would Jesus' own soul descend to hell? If He consummated His mission on the cross ("It is finished!" He did not say, "It will yet be completed!") and God the Father consummated His wrath for the sins of humanity there, we can think that Jesus' spirit went to heaven, since the spirit of every human being belongs to God (*Job 12: 10; Eccl. 12: 7; Ps. 146: 4*) and returns to Him. His soul, like that of the repentant criminal, went to heaven like that of a righteous man (*Ezek. 18: 4* – all souls also belong to God), His body remained in the tomb, fulfilling the prophecy that He would not see corruption, i.e. would not deteriorate; and only on the third day He rose again, showing Himself to men on earth.

At the moment of His ascension, Jesus resumed His position of glory at the Father's side.

If the Holy Spirit broke the chains and the doors closed upon Jesus, He will also do in our lives because we have His power within us. Nothing can hold us anymore. The hand of God can reach us in the deepest and most hidden places and rescue us. If He triumphed over the darkness, we will also triumph over what oppresses us. We no longer need to fear death; the keys are now with Jesus, not with Satan. Death, which means *separation from God*, no longer frightens us because we are continually with Him within us.

Therefore, the work of the cross was completed with the resurrection of Jesus.

Once, the Lord told me: "As a loving and mindful father I care for you and I can identify your voice and your moans, even when you're afraid, hid in caves, or when you fall in the pits of the enemy. My hand will be always extended to rescue. But what I have for you is more than to rescue you from danger; it is to make you wield the sword with confidence and win."



Chapter 5 – The salvation of sinners



“In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.” (1 Jn. 4:10)

The bible says that the Lord died for our sins to redeem us and save us:

Isa. 53: 11-12: “Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Jn. 3: 14-16: “And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

1 Cor. 15: 3: “For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.”

Gal. 1: 4: “who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”

Eph. 1: 7: “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.”

Eph. 2: 16: “and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.” Note: As was said previously, here the Lord was speaking of the hostility between Jews and Gentiles, but we can also extend this word to the hostility between Him and us.

Heb. 9: 26: “for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Heb. 9: 28: “so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”

Heb. 10: 12: “But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.”

1 Pet. 1: 18-19: “You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.”

1 Pet. 3: 18: “For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”

1 Jn. 1: 7: “but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Rev. 1: 5-6: “and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Sin is the obstacle that prevents us from receiving the gift that God wants to give us and its salary is death:

Rom. 6: 23: “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Rom. 14: 23b: “for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.”

1 Cor. 15: 56: “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.”

The word of God says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God:

Rom. 3: 23: “since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

So, Jesus also suffered our death:

1 Pet. 2: 21-24: “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed”.

In creating man, God thought for him other purpose than death. In *Gen. 5: 24* and *Heb. 11: 5*, the bible says that Enoch was taken (“Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him” ... “By faith Enoch was taken so that he did not experience death; and he was not found, because God had taken him. For it was attested before he was taken away that he had pleased God”), the same way as was Elijah (*2 Kin. 2: 11*: “As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven”). In the epistles of *1 Cor. 15: 50-52* and *1 The. 4: 17* the Lord tells us about the Rapture when Jesus returns, “What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed” ... “Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.”

As we said, the Lord’s plan for His children was another, not death, but with the disobedience of Adam, death came as divine judgment:

Gen. 2: 17: “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

Gen. 3: 19: “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Rom. 5: 12-14: “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.” Therefore, Jesus suffered the death that our sins deserved.

5.1. Propitiation

One of the meanings of the word *sin* in Greek is HAMARTIA = to err the target. But there are others like: ADIKIA = iniquity, injustice; PONERIA = evil, of a vicious or degenerate kind; PARABASIS = transgression, to go beyond a known limit; ANOMIA = lack of law, disrespect or violation of law.

Sin is the failure to love God with our whole being; it's the active refusal to recognize Him and obey Him as our Creator and Lord, independence, to claim the position that only God can occupy, hostility toward God (*Rom. 8: 7*: "For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot"), manifested in active rebellion against Him; to take from God what is His. And the bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins:

Lev. 17: 11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement."

Heb. 9: 22: "Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."

Blood is the symbol of life:

Gen. 9: 4: "Only, you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."

Lev. 17: 11; 14: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement. For the life of every creature—its blood is its life; therefore I have said to the people of Israel: You shall not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off."

Deut. 12: 23: "Only be sure that you do not eat the blood; for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the meat."

As was mentioned before, **blood is the symbol of life ended usually by violent means**. It's worth remembering that who started this was man, and God was not pleased with this act:

Gen. 4: 10-11: "And the Lord said, 'What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.'"

Thus, the blood was a means of atonement provided by God Himself, for His love of man lest to keep him away from Him:

Lev. 16: 3: "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering."

Lev. 16: 5-6: "He shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house."

Lev. 16: 9-10: "Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the Lord, and offer it as a sin offering; but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel [NIV, scapegoat] shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel [NIV, scapegoat]."

Ezek. 18: 23; 32: "Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that they should turn from their ways and live?... For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live."

Ezek. 33: 11: "Say to them, As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?"

In *Heb. 9: 22*, the Lord speaks about forgiveness (remission): "Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" and in *Lev. 16: 1-34*, God uses **animals as atonement for sin**.

However, in some cases, as in death of man by man, the OT does not speak to make atonement for sin, but about a penalty:

Gen. 9: 6: “Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person’s blood be shed; for in his own image God made humankind.”

Ex. 21: 12; 14: “Whoever strikes a person mortally shall be put to death. But if someone willfully attacks and kills another by treachery, you shall take the killer from my altar for execution.”

Ex. 21: 23-25: “If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”

Here I want to open a parenthesis to talk a little about the sin offering. In *chapters 4, 5 and 6 of Leviticus*, the Lord talks about the offerings. Some animals were separated for the atonement of sins as *calf (young bull)*, for the high priest and the congregation; *goat*, for the case of Prince; *female goat or lamb* for the people and *turtledove or pigeon* in the case of the poor. *A tenth of an ephah [about 2 liters] of fine flour* was used in case someone very poor.

The interesting thing is that God in that time spoke **of love as a way to avoid evil**: *Lev. 19: 18*: “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”

But the bible also says it is impossible for the blood of goats and bulls to take sins away (*Heb. 10: 4*: “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins”); that’s why Jesus came as innocent blood to make atonement for all our sins and iniquities. Only He was adequate for this atonement:

1 Pet. 1: 19-20: “but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake.”

Our substitute, who took our place and died our death, was God Himself in Christ who was truly and fully God and man. His will and the Father’s were always in perfect harmony:

Jn. 4: 34: “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.’”

Jn. 5: 30: “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge [*as man, He could do nothing, just with the divine action upon Him*]; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me.”

Jn. 6: 38-40: “for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.”

Jn. 7: 17: “Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own.”

Jn. 17: 24: “Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

Matt. 26: 39; 42: “And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want’... Again he went away for the second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.’”

Mk. 14: 36: “He said, ‘Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.’”

Lk. 22: 41-42: “Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.’”

Phil. 2: 6-8: “who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.”

The Father was acting through the Son:

Jn. 3: 16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

1 Jn. 1: 8-10: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

1 Jn. 2: 1-2: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”

1 Jn. 4: 10: “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

Instead of inflicting upon us the punishment that we deserved, God in Christ endured it in our place for us to be clothed with His righteousness:

2 Cor. 5: 21: “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

The wrath of God is His firm, constant, continuous and uncommitted antagonism with sin in all its forms and manifestations:

Rom. 1: 18: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth [NIV: The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness].”

The wrath of God should be propitiated.

It's interesting what is written in *Ps. 2: 12*, because it is one more Messianic Psalm (*Acts 13: 33; Heb. 1: 5; Heb. 5: 5*) where the words ‘Anointed’ (see v. 2) and ‘Son’ (vs. 7 and 12) in *NIV* are written with capital letter. Although in the OT, the words ‘anointed’ and ‘son’ refer often to the kings, we can see that in v. 12, the psalmist says: “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.” This means that rejecting the Son of God, Jesus, the Anointed, the Messiah, brings the wrath of God; moreover, death (‘destroyed in your way’ [*NIV*] or ‘perish in the way’ [*NRSV*]).

5.2. Redemption

Through His sacrifice we got the redemption of our sins:

1 Cor. 1: 30: “He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”

Heb. 9: 15: “For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.”

To redeem is to buy back, either as a commercial transaction or as a ransom. We were redeemed by Christ, not merely freed:

1 Cor. 6: 20: “For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.”

We were redeemed from guilt and judgment, therefore, we are His:

Rom. 3: 24-25: “are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed.”

1 Cor. 6: 19-20: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.”

1 Cor. 7: 23: “You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters.”

Eph. 1: 7: “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.”

1 Pet. 1: 18-19: “You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.”

Rev. 5: 9: “They sing a new song: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation.’”

5.3. Justification

Through the sacrifice of Jesus we also have been justified, that is, we were forgiven, accepted, right with God:

Rom. 3: 26: “... it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus”.

Rom. 5: 9: “Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God”.

Rom. 6: 7: “For whoever has died is freed from sin”.

Rom. 8: 1: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”.

Man is not justified by works of law but through faith:

Gal. 2: 16: “yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law.”

Gal. 3: 6-14: “Just as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.’ For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed. For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law’ (*Deut. 27: 26*). Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for ‘The one who is righteous will live by faith.’ But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, ‘Whoever does the works of the law will live by them’ (*Lev. 18: 5*). Christ redeemed us from the curse of

the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

Eph. 2: 8-9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Tit. 3: 5: “he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”

The grace of God is the source and the blood of Christ is the foundation of our justification.

Sometimes, we find it difficult to accept the sacrifice of the cross because, first, our pride does not allow us to recognize our sins, and second, because our pride does not allow that, even acknowledging our sins, someone pays the debt for us. We want to pay it by ourselves. It is humiliating to recognize that we cannot do anything for us, that someone has to give account for our mistakes and difficulties, even more if that person is innocent like Jesus. But this is where our victory lies: to see that only someone like Him can overcome what is stronger than us.

Ps. 18: 17: “He delivered me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me; for they were too mighty for me.”

Ps. 35: 10: “All my bones shall say, ‘O Lord, who is like you? You deliver the weak from those too strong for them, the weak and needy from those who despoil them.’”

In Him lies the justification and salvation of our soul. So, the message of the cross is foolishness to those who do not believe, but power to those who believe (*1 Cor. 1: 18*).

5. 4. Reconciliation

Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that propitiated us, redeemed us and justified us, we were also reconciled with God and men. **God is the author of reconciliation.** The barrier between us and God was constituted both by our disobedience to Him and by His wrath on us because of our attitude. The work of reconciliation is a finished work; it is already done from God’s part. Our part is to accept His sacrifice and repent of our sins to be reconciled with Him. **God is the author; Christ is the agent and we are ambassadors of His reconciliation:**

Rom. 5: 9-11: “Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

Rom. 8: 15-17: “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.”

2 Cor. 5: 18-20: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

Eph. 2: 16: “and might reconcile both groups [*Jews and Gentiles*] to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.”

Col. 1: 20-22: “and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him.”

Heb. 10: 19-22: “Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”

1 Pet. 3: 18: “For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”

When we are His, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, we can bring other lives that are in sin to be reconciled with Him. In *2 Cor. 5: 19* the bible says that He gave us the *word of reconciliation*. By ministering His word to the needy, to those who are in distress, we are bringing these people back to a state of beatitude.

In Greek, the word for ‘reconciliation’ is *katallagé, καταλλαγή*, Strong’s #2643, which means: *to change mutually, to compound a difference (adjustment of differences), restoration to divine favor* (the restoration of the favor of God to sinners that repent and put their trust in the expiatory death of Christ), *atonement, reconciliation, restoration to favor, working out differences so that the other may be favored*. It comes from the verb *katallásson, καταλλάσσω*, Strong #2644, meaning: *to change, exchange, reconcile; according to Aristotle: exchange; of the business of money-changers, exchanging equivalent values*.

Ministry (or *Deaconry – Diakonia*, in Greek) means: *service, to favor someone, who promotes links between men*.

Reconciliation breaks the yokes. It is a fragrant anointing to the nostrils of God, therefore, a way for Him to bless us.

Chapter 6 – The revelation of God’s character



*“God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.”
(1 Jn. 4: 9)*

Another achievement of the cross, beyond the salvation of sinners, is the **revelation of God’s character. He demonstrated on the cross His love and justice:**

Rom. 3: 22-26: “... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Rom. 5: 8: “But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.”

6.1) Love

Without the cross, the world would have never known the true love, pure, unstained by ulterior motives:

1 Jn. 3: 16: “We know love by this: that he laid down his life for us – and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.”

1 Jn. 4: 10: “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

The Holy Spirit confirms the historical testimony as it fills our hearts with the knowledge that we are loved:

Rom. 5: 5: “and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”

1 Jn. 4: 19: “We love because he first loved us.”

When we have this truth firmly planted in our hearts, i.e., that we are loved by Him, we gain confidence to face any challenge because we know that He Himself will be the strength and protection around us, preventing the enemy’s weapons to reach us with his hatred and violence. For us, there’s no importance anymore if we are pleasing others, but we were happy to be pleasing to God because we are doing His will. When we speak of **God’s love**, we must divest ourselves of human concepts preconceived and wrong about love. **He associates it to obedience, to surrender and donation**, as written in *Jn. 15: 13-14:* “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.” Jesus gave everything that was His own life, and it is this love that He pours into our hearts through the Holy

Spirit, so that we may also be available in His hands, in order to meet the needs of all those whom He desires to bless and redeem. **Moreover, His love is something strong and firm that keeps us from evil and encourages us to walk and overcome limits.** Once, the Lord told me: “My love is a cozy and protective mantle around you in your times of sleep and rest, but it is a shining armor and a wall of fire when you rise up for battle. Feel my love around you today, because it protects you and empowers you to new achievements. It will be a force in your life, which will cause you to be in unity with your brothers and to destroy all the weapons forged against you. It will lead you to know my peace and my abundance. It will never be lacking, but will be an inexhaustible source of life and health. It will never forsake you; therefore, feel its safety in your heart to direct your actions.” It’s good to make clear that although the **love of God** (Greek: *Agape*) goes beyond our human understanding by the greatness and the intensity of its manifestation, it is not exempt of feeling as many think. The cross is proof more than sufficient to us to understand that **God also feels.**

God demonstrates His own love toward us on the cross. By sending His Son, He was giving of Himself to the utmost, to the torture of crucifixion and the horror of the removal of sin and the abandonment of God:

Phil. 2: 7-8: “but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.”

God gave everything for those who deserved nothing. And His love is love to give of Himself without limits, love that took the risk without being sure of success, a love that made (and makes) itself vulnerable to the possibility that His children despised it and turned their back on it, as they do still today.

The Lord loved both the ones who have accepted His love and those who did not accept it. He didn’t care if His love was being thrown away or not. Quite different from us, who worry if our love will be accepted by others! The difference between to accept or not His love does not affect Him, but affects us because if we accept it, we will also receive the power to be made His children and therefore inherit what is His, becoming like Him:

Jn. 1: 10-13: “He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.”

Jn. 14: 12: “Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.”

Rom. 8: 16-17: “it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.”

Rom. 8: 29-30: “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.”

2 Cor. 3: 18: “And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.”

Gal. 4: 6-7: “And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba, Father!’ So you are no longer a slave, but a child and if a child then also an heir, through God.”

In other words, He **shed His love unconditionally** to all who need it, which means that it is available to all beings, twenty-four hours a day for more than two thousand years. It behooves us to accept it and welcome it in our lives. God does not expect that, first, we receive Him as our Savior to pour His love on us after; on the contrary, He poured this love first, and it is this love that touches us and enables us to give ourselves unconditionally to Him.

The cry of abandonment on the cross shows His loving willingness to identify Himself with rejected humans. Both the suffering of the Father by the death of the Son and the suffering of the Son by the separation of the Father are important. His love was exposed to the pain of loss so that we could win it and have it always available to us. In other words: God, as a Father, knows the pain of losing a child, and as a Son, He knows the pain of not having a Father. So, whatever our pain or our need we can be sure that Jesus is the most qualified person to fill our empty spaces and restore and rebuild us. He is above the rejection that the devil tries to throw over our lives, because His love is infinitely stronger and more powerful to defend and supply us.

6.2) Justice

God’s justice is His righteous way of justifying the unrighteous. Through the sacrifice of the cross, we sinners could return to the position of God’s beloved, purified, as in the beginning (made in His image and likeness). God looks at us and sees His Son, no longer sinful or imperfect beings, but His heirs. This is His justice.

It is here where we’ll make a distinction between the **divine justice**, in its biblical significance, and **human justice**, as we understand it from the legal point of view. In the Old Testament, the word *justice* was commonly used to refer to *rectitude*, the rectitude that God required of His people in following His law:

- *Am. 5: 24*: “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”
- *Mic. 6: 8*: “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

In the New Testament, God’s justice required in the Old Testament, i.e., *the straight and faithful obedience to His word* was fulfilled in the person of Jesus.

In *Phil. 3: 1-11*, when Paul warns about false teachers and false workers, he says (v. 9-11): “... and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

When we read the text about *God’s armor* in *Eph. 6: 10-17*, we understand that the *justice* achieved on the cross through Jesus is the *breastplate* that protects our feelings of what is hate and injustice. **Justice conquered on the cross is the connection of man with God through repentance and forgiveness of sins.** The breastplate of righteousness prevents that all the bad feelings of the devil lead us astray from the presence of God’s love. When Jesus was already dead, the Roman soldier pierced His side with a spear, that is, Jesus’ heart was pierced by the spear, which represents our transgressions and the action of violence and hatred of the devil, so that we might be protected from the fiery darts he tries to throw on us.

When we are under the love and justice of God in the person of Jesus we are spared and protected from evil. There is a parable in *Matt. 20: 1-16* where Jesus gives the example of God's righteousness in relation to salvation and service to Him: "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning [*that is, six o'clock in the morning*] to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last." [KJV: "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."]

The first hypothesis (in relation to salvation) concerns the Jews, as the first chosen by God to work in His 'vineyard', and the Gentiles who, receiving Jesus as their Lord, also received the right to salvation, being "the last" who were called to serve Him. The condition for the reward would be acceptance of the grace of the Lord of the vineyard. The hired workers represent Israel; they were the ones who had the promises and the covenant (*Rom. 3: 1-2; Rom. 9: 4*). Those who did not have a contract represent the Gentiles, who would be similar to the Jewish people when salvation was given to all through faith in Jesus Christ (*Rom. 3: 22-24; 28-29; Rom. 11:17; 24; Gal. 3: 13-14; Eph. 2: 13-16; Eph. 3: 6*).

The second hypothesis (in relation to service to Him) concerns the intentions of the heart with this service to God, that is, without selfishness, without interest, without bargaining, without 'work contract', just the confidence that they will receive what is right. In other words: the desire to serve and trust in the grace of the Lord of the vineyard comes before the interest of receiving a reward from Him for the work done. Verse 16 here [*Matt. 20: 16*: "So the last will be first, and the first will be last." (KJV: "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.")] is the repetition of the previous teaching of *Matt. 19: 30*: "But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first." Thus, this parable is for those who have a relationship with the Lord Jesus and are called by Him to serve in the kingdom of God.

Human thinking about justice is different from God's thinking in these three groups of laborers. Although all true disciples will be rewarded, the order of rewards will be determined by the spirit in which the disciple served. The first group of workers [from 6 o'clock: "early in the morning"] negotiated the wages for the day's work. The second group [at 9, 12 and 15 o'clock] simply trusted that they would receive what was right ["You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right."]. The last group of laborers, who were standing around because no one had hired them yet, were called

at five o'clock, and simply went to the vineyard, without even being sure who they would receive anything for just one hour of work ["They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'"].

The men of the six o'clock worked all day and were jealous of those who worked less and who, in the end, received the same salary as them. Apparently it wasn't fair. Their spirits were greedy and charged for what they did (As if the lord of the vineyard owed them anything!), but the lord of the vineyard paid based on the men's needs, what they needed for themselves and their families, not based on their greed. The service of the men in this first group was motivated by pride and selfish ambition. The others who served out of love and gratitude, even without negotiating their salary, were honored by him. Thus, the teaching is: what matters to God is fidelity to the call. Only He knows the motivation of each heart to serve Him, so each one will receive his reward, for the parameter is God's grace and sovereignty towards those He calls. The other workers were honored because they trusted in the grace of the Lord of the vineyard. Therefore, the reward not only depends on the kind character of the Lord of the vineyard and His right judgment; It also depends on the way in which each person decides to serve God. This is still an expression of what is written in the parable of the talents (*Matt. 25: 14-30*) and in *2 Cor. 8: 12* about each person serving with good will and with what he has. It doesn't matter what gifts each person receives from God, whether they are many or few in human eyes, what matters is to serve Him wholeheartedly with what we have gained from Him and not bury our talent. In any case, each one will receive his reward from God (*1 Cor. 4: 5*).

"The last will be first, and the first will be last", because it is about the sovereignty of God. The Lord leaves no work unpaid, but values simple faith in Him more than the greatest effort made for His sake. This is the faith of someone who goes out without thinking about salary, but because He sends him. Faith and love for Him as the motive for His service are more important to Him than the actual work that needs and can be done. True servants of Christ desire Him to be glorified and their fellow men to be served.

In conclusion, justice, as understood in the NT, is the union of men with God again, made through the cross, bringing us salvation. Thus the text above, does not talk about finances or employment, but on the prize of salvation, eternal life and the reward for serving God, which is equal for everyone, both those of the past, those of today, and those to come. The price is the same for everyone: to accept the Son and carry one's own cross (= calling, vocation) and serve out of love and joy.

Justice is linked to the trial or judgment that, at principle, is prerogative of God (*Isa. 33: 22*: "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our ruler, the Lord is our king; he will save us"); hence, He guides us with respect not to judge our brothers in faith without really knowing what goes on in their heart or their lives:

- *Matt. 7: 1-5*: "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck [NIV = speck of sawdust] in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log [NIV = plank] in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye."

- *Lk. 6: 37-38*: "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

- *Rom. 2: 1*: “Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things.”

- *Rom. 14: 4*: “Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.”

- *1 Cor. 4: 3-5*: “But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.”

- *Jam. 4: 11*: “Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. Whoever speaks evil against another or judges another speaks evil against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.”

Despite everything we read above, however, the Word shows us many examples where Jesus teaches us how **to judge, not by flesh but by the Spirit**, i.e., not according to appearance, but by the straight righteousness:

Jn. 7: 24: “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

Lk. 12: 57: “And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?”

The bible also tells us to judge all things and keep only what is good (*1 The. 5: 21*: “but test everything; hold fast to what is good”).

In *Matt. 12: 18* it's written: “Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles [NVI, ‘he will proclaim justice to the nations’]”.

The word above ‘justice’, in Greek is *krisin* – κρίσιν’ (Strong #g2920 – *krísis*: a decision, judgment, judging, divine judgment). *Krísis* is a feminine noun derived from a cognate, *krínō* (Strong #g2919), meaning: to separate, distinguish, judge, judgment, emphasizing its qualitative aspect that can apply either to a positive verdict (for righteousness) – or more commonly, a negative verdict which condemns the nature of sin that brings it on. *Krínō* (κρίνω) or *krinó* (transliteration) means: to judge, decide, I judge, decide, I think (it) good.

This makes us think that **to judge** means **to discriminate**, that is, **to separate right from wrong**. Thus, we understand that He has given us the ability to judge the evil, the situations that surround us, the false prophecies and false teaching, what we choose for our life, etc., as Paul says in *1 Cor. 14: 20*, “Brothers and sisters, do not be children in your thinking; rather, be infants in evil, but in thinking be adults.”

However, He did not give us permission to judge people by what we imagine of them. An example is the adulteress who was to be stoned (*Jn. 8: 1-11*) and Jesus said, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her” (v.7). God does not approve adultery, because the Lord was the first to criticize this commandment in the Law but what Jesus meant is that the reasons that led this woman to commit adultery were hidden from the eyes of men, so they had no right to judge her, stoning her without hearing her reasons first. They were exercising the Law in a blind and hard way, accusing the adulteress, but without examining the whole situation because they were judging according to the flesh, not by the Spirit.

It seems contradictory, then, that God has used servants as Paul and Peter to exercise severe trial and judgment on some people as Ananias and Sapphira (*Acts 5: 1-11*), for example, and Elymas the magician (*Acts 13: 4-12*). However, they were not in the flesh, but acting through the Spirit of God:

• *Acts 5: 1-11*: “But a man named Ananias, with the consent of his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property; with his wife’s knowledge, he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles’ feet. ‘Ananias’, Peter asked, ‘why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us but to God!’ Now when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard of it. The young men came and wrapped up his body, then carried him out and buried him. After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter said to her, ‘Tell me whether you and your husband sold the land for such and such a price.’ And she said, ‘Yes, that was the price.’ Then Peter said to her, ‘How is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.’ Immediately she fell down at his feet and died. When the young men came in they found her dead, so they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear seized the whole church and all who heard of these things.”

• *Acts 13: 4-12*: “So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they [*Barnabas and Paul*] went down to Seleucia [*Old harbor of Antioch in Syria*]; and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John [*John Mark, the writer of the second gospel, not the same John, the disciple of Jesus*] also to assist them. When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they met a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet, named Bar-Jesus. He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and wanted to hear the word of God. But the magician Elymas (for that is the translation of his name) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, ‘You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? And now listen—the hand of the Lord is against you, and you will be blind for a while, unable to see the sun.’ Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he went about groping for someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.”

Other texts where we read about to judge are the ones where Jesus says that the Father has given Him authority to judge and those that say that He judges no one (seemingly contradictory), but came to save:

• *Jn. 5: 22-30*: “The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life. ‘Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live’ [*Jesus was speaking of those who were spiritually dead and would hear His call to salvation*]. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself; and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation [*He was referring to the future, to His second coming, about the*

resurrection of the dead, when those who made the choice for Jesus will receive eternal life, and those who did not opt for Him will be judged and condemned]. ‘I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge’ [as a man He could do nothing; only with the divine action upon himself He could do things]; ‘and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me.’”

- *Jn. 8: 15-18*: “You judge by human standards; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf.”

- *Jn. 12: 31-32*: “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world [*Satan defeated by Jesus on the cross*] will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

- *Jn. 12: 47-50*: “I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge, for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me.”

This brings us back to God’s justice, which is linked to salvation and the Last Day when it will be completed. *In the first coming Jesus came to save (to do justice); in the second coming He’ll come to judge (exercise judgment on those who rejected His justice).*

Repeating what we said before: justice is linked to the trial that, at principle, is God’s prerogative, which does not mean that it will only be done on the Last Day, because God still cares for His own words written in the OT, which say that He judges between the righteous and the wicked. At present, His justice and judgment are still made to see His precepts fulfilled. He can show this in various ways: repaying us from what have been stolen from us, putting us in honor before those who humiliated us in the past; another way is to bring repentance to the hearts of those who have hurt us; or justifying us before those who falsely accused us or have a misconception relating to us; or else, making be manifest His truth in a given situation etc. In other words, bringing into existence His promises for our lives.

To complete our reasoning, God does not omit to enforce human justice (from legal point of view, for example), since He Himself placed the human authorities on earth to be respected:

- *Rom. 13: 1-10*: “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God’s servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, busy with this very thing. Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due. Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not

covet'; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'. Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law."

The exercise of divine justice by His Church is to *preserve its salvation and generate salvation in other lives*. The negative side of this characteristic, which can be distorted by the enemy, is the lack of understanding of its biblical significance, mixing it with the false human justice for own benefit or thinking that God doesn't care about the injustice that we experience. Therefore, He says in *Isa. 61: 8*: "For I the Lord, love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them" and *Lk. 18: 7-8*: "And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

In short: Jesus expects of His Church to preserve its salvation and generate salvation in other lives. He also wants that we exert human justice properly, according to the commandments of God, avoiding the distortion generated by the enemy on His justice and fair trial on our lives. In other words: that we know to discriminate things, separating right from wrong.

Thus, through the sacrifice of the cross we can trust the good intentions of God for us, even if the enemy has tried to prove us otherwise. The bible says that God is love and that His thoughts towards us are of peace and not evil. His will for us is always good, acceptable and perfect.

Chapter 7 – The victory over evil



“But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God and since then has been waiting until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet.” (Heb. 10: 12-13)

The donation of His love brought us the victory:

Rom 8: 37: “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

1 Cor. 15: 27; 57: “For God has put all things in subjection under his feet. But when it says, ‘All things are put in subjection’, it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him... But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2 Cor. 2: 14: “But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him.”

Col. 2: 15: “He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.”

The victory brought us prizes:

Rev. 2: 7: “Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God.”

Rev. 2: 11: “Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Whoever conquers will not be harmed by the second death.”

Rev. 2: 17: “Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.”

Rev. 2: 26: “To everyone who conquers and continues to do my works to the end, I will give authority over the nations.”

Rev. 3: 5: “If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white robes, and I will not blot your name out of the book of life; I will confess your name before my Father and before his angels.”

Rev. 3: 12: “If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.”

Rev. 3: 21: “To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.”

Rev. 5: 5: “Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.’”

Rev. 12: 11: “But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death.”

Rev. 17: 14: “they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

Rev. 21: 7: “Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.”

Obedience, love, forgiveness and meekness made Jesus conquer the victory over the powers of evil. These attitudes kept Him free, not defiled and uncommitted. In *Heb. 5: 5-10* we see that He did not seek His own glory, but the Father’s and His obedience ensured to Him the post of *high priest*: “So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’; as he says also in another place, ‘You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.’ In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.” The resurrection was the confirmation and announcement of the conquest. The victory of the Christians, therefore, is to take possession of Christ’s victory and enjoy its benefits. **Resurrecting** of a difficulty or problem means to be healed and freed from what afflicted us and overcome it by faith, having the right to write a new story. It is to remain alive, strong and firm after the fight and the challenge. It is to have the victory by having resisted evil bravely and, like Jesus, exercised obedience, love, forgiveness and meekness. Resurrecting of a problem is the prize for our daring.

7.1. Victory over the devil

One of the greatest victories of Jesus on the cross was over the devil. God delivers us from bankruptcy only by paying our debts on the cross of Christ. **He canceled the debt and destroyed the document in which it was recorded:**

Col. 2:13-15: “And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.”

Heb. 2: 14: “Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Jesus also overcame the devil by the total resistance to his temptations through obedience:

Phil. 2: 8: “he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.”

Heb. 2: 18: “Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.”

By forgiving His executioners (*Lk. 23: 34:* “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they cast lots to divide his clothing”),

He closed the emotional wound in Himself so as not to be ‘snatched’ by Satan; He defeated evil with good, because the wound is an ‘open door’, a gap for the enemy.

In *Ps. 68: 18a* (“You ascended the high mount, leading captives in your train” ...) and *Eph. 4: 8* (Therefore it is said, ‘When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people’) the Lord says that **He has freed us from our sin and our accuser and left us His protection** (*Gifts, Greek: DOMA*) through His blood and His Holy Spirit, who would not come to us if Jesus had not died, resurrected and ascended to heaven.

We are therefore protected from our former captivity and free from condemnation:

Rom. 8: 1: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

7.2. Victory over death and the Law

Through Christ we are no longer under the tyranny of the Law:

Rom. 8: 2: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”

Gal. 2: 19: “For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ.”

We are no longer under the tyranny of the Law, of the flesh, of the world and of death. Death = nature of the devil, separation from God. The flesh is the foothold that the devil has within us, and we’ll talk about it later. The world is the means by which the devil exerts pressure on us from outside. When we believe in Jesus Christ our values change:

Rom. 12: 1-2: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Sin is what causes death and brings the divine judgment, but Jesus destroyed he who had the power of death, the devil:

Acts 2: 24: “But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.”

Heb. 2: 14: “Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Rev. 1: 18: “and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.”

Taking our sins, death lost its power of harming us and therefore to bring us dread:

Isa. 25: 8: “he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.”

Rom. 6: 8-9: “But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.”

1 Cor. 15: 55-57: “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Heb. 2: 15: “and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.”

Rev. 2: 11: “Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Whoever conquers will not be harmed by the second death.”

7.3. Victory over the world

About us and the world, Jesus said in *Jn. 17: 16-17* (“They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth”) and how His word, which is the truth, can keep us away from the snares of Satan and the temptations of the world. He tells us not to love the world (*1 Jn. 2: 15-17*: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world. And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever”).

In *Jn. 16: 33* Jesus says, “I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!”

The world means everything that has to do with time, with people and with the natural life. In *1 Jn. 5: 4-5* the Lord says that the force that overcomes the world is our faith. The devil we defeat with the blood of Jesus and in His name (*Mk. 16: 17-18*: “And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover”); the world we conquer with our faith: “for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (*1 Jn. 5: 4-5*).

7.4. Victory over the flesh and the disease

Repeating, the Lord has conquered the enemies of the cross: death, the devil, the Law, the world and the flesh. Among them, the flesh has great weight:

Rom. 7: 18: “For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.”

Gal. 4: 29: “But just as at that time the child who was born according to the flesh persecuted the child who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.”

As I said previously, the flesh is the foothold of the devil inside of us to afflict us and move us away from the cross. No wonder that the bible speaks so much to strip ourselves of the works of the flesh:

1 Cor. 6: 9-11: “Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers – none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

1 Cor. 6: 18: “Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself.”

Gal. 5: 16-21: “Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Gal. 5: 24: “And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

Gal. 6: 14: “May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

Eph. 4: 22-32: “You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.”

Col. 3: 5-10: “Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.”

1 Pet. 1: 14: “Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance.”

The sacrifice of Jesus leads us to be aware of the need to crucify our flesh so that our bodies also remain sanctified (*1 Cor. 6: 20*: “For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body”). Through the cross, we are united to the Lord in spirit and begin to have dominion over the flesh (*1 Cor. 6: 17*: But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him”).

To crucify is to make the decision not to satisfy our desires and tastes that lead to sin. It is to let the Holy Spirit take away of us the tendency to sin, that is, to fully carry out in us the process of sanctification; it is to erase the old memories and put in our minds the new ones, His. **Flesh is the part of our soul (thoughts, feelings and will) that tends to sin.** In short: giving up our reasons and arguments, feelings and desires so that God may prevail.

When talking about victory over the flesh, we also have to talk about the diseases. As the disease began to take place in man’s life after his fall in consequence of sin, it also moved us away from the original plan of God for us: the perfect health.

The disease, sometimes in the bible, was described as a form of punishment or penalty for sin or as a consequence of sin itself:

Num. 12: 10: “When the cloud went away from over the tent, Miriam had become leprous, as white as snow. And Aaron turned towards Miriam and saw that she was leprous.”

Deut. 28: 21-22: “The Lord will make the pestilence cling to you until it has consumed you off the land that you are entering to possess. The Lord will afflict you with consumption, fever, inflammation, with fiery heat and drought, and with blight and mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.” [NIV: “The LORD will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish.”]

Deut. 28: 27-28: “The Lord will afflict you with the boils of Egypt, with ulcers, scurvy, and itch, of which you cannot be healed. The Lord will afflict you with madness, blindness, and confusion of mind.”

Deut. 28: 59-61: “then the Lord will overwhelm both you and your offspring with severe and lasting afflictions and grievous and lasting maladies. He will bring back upon you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were in dread, and they shall cling to you. Every other malady and affliction, even though not recorded in the book of this law, the Lord will inflict on you until you are destroyed.”

2 Kin. 5: 27: “Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you, and to your descendants forever. So he left his presence leprous, as white as snow.”

2 Chr. 21:14a-15: “see, the Lord will bring a great plague on your people, your children, your wives, and all your possessions, and you yourself will have a severe sickness with a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out, day after day, because of the disease.” (Related to King Jehoram).

2 Chr. 26: 19b: “and when he became angry with the priests a leprous disease broke out on his forehead, in the presence of the priests in the house of the Lord, by the altar of incense.” (Related to King Uzziah).

Mk. 2: 5: “When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’”

Other times, was to manifest the glory of God. The diseases here were not directly related to the sin of the person or the ancestors, but He allowed them so that through them His power could be manifested:

Lk. 8: 42: “for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, who was dying.” (Jesus resurrects Jairus’ daughter).

Jn. 9: 3: “Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.’” (Jesus heals the man born blind).

Jn. 11: 4: “But when Jesus heard it, he said, ‘This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.’” (Lazarus).

In other cases, such as the case of the woman cured of hemorrhage for twelve years (*Mk 5: 25-34*), the very fragility and human imperfection favored the onset of the disease, because Adam’s sin brought imperfection to the human body and its genetics and at birth these deformities are established, even if there is no sin of the ancestors. Thus the glory of God was able to show itself to men as a way to express His divine perfection that heals and frees us from all deformity and imperfection.

Other times, it was described as generated by unclean spirit:

Mk. 5: 5: “Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones.” (The wounds were done by unclean spirits).

Mk. 9: 17-18: “Someone from the crowd answered him, ‘Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so.’” (The boy with an evil spirit).

Lk. 13: 11-12: “And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, ‘Woman, you are set free from your ailment.’”

Other times, physical illness can be generated by a depression of soul and spirit (*Prov. 17: 22*: “A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones”) or be sent by God with a purpose (sterility, in the case of some women in the OT and NT) and this one lead to emotional illness (sadness, bitterness), which in turn may aggravate the initial physical illness or cause another. That’s what we can see, for example, in *1 Sam. 1: 5-8* in the case of Hannah: “but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. Her rival used to provoke her severely, to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb. So it went on year by year; as often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. Her husband Elkanah said to her, ‘Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?’” The bible does not say that sterility was a curse for her sin or her ancestors’ (unlike the case of Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel because they were descendants of idolatry), but had been allowed by the Lord to accomplish His purpose in the life of Hanna, through Samuel (*1 Sam. 1: 19b-20*: “and the Lord remembered her. In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, ‘I have asked him of the Lord’”). The fact of Hanna be sad and embittered by the sterility and refuse to eat because of it, this could aggravate her sterility or take her to another type of illness, for example, anemia or inanition. Another barren woman was Samson’s mother and, through her, God exercised His purpose to give Samson to Israel as judge and deliverer and show to His people that He still continued to do miracles (*Judg. 13: 2-5*). In the NT, also Elizabeth was barren (*Lk. 1: 5-7; 36*) and through the miracle of God, she gave birth to John the Baptist to fulfill the divine purpose as a forerunner of the Messiah.

It is worth commenting on the difference between the words “disease” or “illness” and “sickness”, sometimes used in the NT by Jesus:

- *Matt. 4: 23*: “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease [NIV uses this word; KJV uses: sickness] and every sickness [NIV uses this word; KJV uses: disease] among the people.”

- *Matt. 9: 35*: “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease [NIV uses this word; KJV uses: sickness] and every sickness [NIV uses this word; KJV uses: disease].”

- *Matt. 10: 1*: “Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease [NIV uses this word; KJV uses: sickness] and every sickness [NIV uses this word; KJV uses: disease].”

“Disease”, in Greek, νοσος, nosos – Strong #G3554 means: a disease, malady, infirmity, sickness. And “sickness”, μαλακίαν, malakia – Strong #G3119 means: weakness, illness, sickness, bodily weakness. It comes from ‘malakos’, meaning: softness, i.e. enervation (debility): a feeling of being drained of energy or vitality; fatigue.

Cassell (An American physician and bioethicist, Eric Jonathan Goldstein, who changed their name to Eric Jonathan Cassell – 1928-2021; in his work ‘Illness and disease’ – published in 1976) defines ‘illness’ (the bible writes, ‘sickness’) as ‘what the patient feels when he goes to the doctor’ and ‘disease’ as ‘what the patient has when he leaves the doctor.’ ‘Disease, then, is something that an organ has; sickness is something that a man has.’ Sickness is the patient’s subjective response to the fact that he is not well, the experience and the feeling of poor health; change in a person’s health status. The disease refers to abnormalities in the structure and function of body organs and systems (Eisenberg 1977), such as diabetes, tuberculosis, etc.

In other words, illness means that a person is not or does not feel in full health. On the other hand, disease is a disorder of structure or function that produces specific signs or symptoms or that affects a specific location of the body and is not simply a direct result of physical injury. Leon Eisenberg (1922-2009), an American child psychiatrist, established the usefulness of distinguishing ‘disease’ from ‘illness.’ For him, the term illness refers specifically to the patient’s personal experience of his or her disease. A person can have a disease without being ill, that is, he (she) can have an objectively definable medical condition, but not feel sick or distressed by it; or then, to be ill without being diseased (a person feels unwell without having a physical sickness, and feels embarrassed for not being in total vigor and interprets this feeling as sickness rather than normal emotions).

Whatever the cause of disease or infirmity, the sacrifice of Jesus came to rescue us from it:

Isa. 53: 4-5: “Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.”

1 Pet. 2: 24: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”

It is true that we will have total redemption of the body with the return of Jesus, an incorruptible body (*1 Cor. 15: 42-44; 51-53*), glorified, as He had. But until that happens, I think we must take possession of our blessing and fight the disease for the health of our body, this one we have now, and not allow any disease takes place in it. I believe it is God’s plan for us that, while we live in this body and in this world, we are healthy. The bible says that we have the mind of Christ (*1 Cor. 2: 16*); therefore, we can believe in miracles. It also says that we have within us the very Spirit of Jesus who rose Him from the dead:

Rom. 8: 11: “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.”

We need to remember that the Lord is God and it’s up to Him to determine how to heal us and not for us to determine the way to be healed. The treatment of our spirit is reflected in the healing of soul and body. In other words, during the process of sanctification of our soul we may be faced with some physical symptoms that externalize, so to speak, what was hidden in our emotional or spiritual area. Therefore, the disease allows us to know more of God and more about ourselves. For example, a person who lived many years under yokes and curses and acquired physical diseases resulting from emotional stress, first he must free himself from the spiritual bondages so that his soul may have emotions healed and balanced, and thus he can resume his physical balance. Who misused his free will smoking three packs of cigarettes a day for thirty years and now have bronchitis or emphysema, must assume the consequences of

his actions and not simply blame the devil. He only acts in our lives when we give him legality.

Anyway, we were benefited by the cross. Now, regarding the fact that some of us to have total victory over our physical diseases and others do not, it's up to God to explain it, not to us, without criticism or the judgment of the other about having faith or not. I like the word written in *Deut. 29: 29* which says: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the revealed things belong to us and to our children forever, to observe all the words of this law." This means that if God gives you a revelation, you take possession of it, because He is releasing it upon you, but if the revelation is still hidden, it is because the solution belongs to Him.

I want to finish this chapter by writing a message that God gave me some time ago: "When I decree victory in the life of a child, it is established, because my word is firmed in heaven and on earth. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words shall not pass away. What I liberated over you was love, peace, joy, rescue and victory and you will receive them because you believed in me. You have nothing to be ashamed of. You were washed and justified by my blood."

These words are also upon you to give you the assurance of victory over all areas that the Lord has won for us on the cross: the devil, the Law and death, the flesh (and disease) and the world.

Chapter 8 – New relationship with God



“Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus,... let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”(Heb. 10:19;22)

We spoke that by the cross we were reconciled to God, but Jesus took this benefit further, that is, **He put us in a new level of relationship with the Father, giving us boldness in our communication with Him as well as joy and love.**

8.1. Boldness

We can talk to Him openly, with sincerity and simplicity:

Eph. 3: 12: “in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.”

Heb. 4: 16: “Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Heb. 10: 19-23: “Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful.”

2 Tim. 1: 7: “for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.”

8.2. Love

We love because He first loved us. His love has freed us from sin and makes us serve Him in love. Before, we were afraid of Him, of His wrath. Now His love cast out fear, and as children of God, we can talk openly to Him about what we feel, to ask what we need, receive His love and enter into His throne whenever we need or desire, covered only by the blood of Jesus:

2 Cor. 5: 14-15: “For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.”

Col. 3: 14: “Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”

1 Jn. 4: 18-19: “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. *We love because he first loved us.*” His love has allowed us to love Him and love our brothers too.

Before His death, at the Last Supper with His disciples Jesus said: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (*Jn. 13: 34-35*). He also told them, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (*Jn. 15: 12-13*).

With the cross we can call God Father, because we were adopted as His children, so Jesus said that when we pray we should say: Our Father, Daddy (*Abba Father*, in Aramaic).

Since the time of Moses, God was seen as the *Father of mankind and the Father of Israel* (*Isa. 63: 16; Isa. 64: 8; Jer. 3: 19*) but with an imposing image of Almighty God and Lord, and without the intimacy that Jesus had through the love for Him. After the coming of Jesus, we got to know the Father as He really is, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (*Jn. 14: 9b*).

8.3. Joy

We rejoice in the Lord who redeemed us from bondage, which was too oppressive for us. Therefore, we should celebrate and praise the Lord:

Acts 2: 46-47: “Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” The early Christians rejoiced in the salvation, and thus, those who did not know Jesus were brought to Him for the joy that His people manifested.

Rom. 14: 17-18: “For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval.” The joy is part of God’s kingdom.

2 Cor. 3: 17: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” We are free to rejoice and praise through the Spirit.

Eph. 5: 19-20: “as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Joy is like a commandment of the Lord, for we now have a master and a defender; we already have someone who solves our problems and defends us and this is cause for joy.

Phil. 4: 4: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.”

Phil. 4: 11: “Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have.” The fact that we are His enables us to live happily forever, no matter the circumstances that surround us. Although it is not an easy attitude to assume, it is developed, as with Paul, running along to the degree of spiritual growth and the revelations that we receive from Him. With Him, everything has a good end.

Col. 1: 11-12: “May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.” We can have joy for the certainty that now we are heirs of a great heritage.

1 The. 5: 16: “Rejoice always.”

1 Pet. 4: 13: “But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ’s sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed.” As we suffer with Him, we are also glorified and resurrected from our afflictions.

Rev. 22: 14: “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates.” We are happy to be with the Lord in eternity.

As I said above, it is not easy for the soul to feel joy when circumstances around us are adverse; however, our spirit, with the vision of God on them, brings us comfort and makes us remember the victories that we have for being His. Then, we can feel the joy of entering into His presence, receiving His comfort, His solace, and being sure of the solutions we seek.

Now that we are His, we are children, washed in His blood, redeemed, forgiven and justified. We were rescued from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love; therefore, we are princes, having boldness to enter His presence and ask for help. Today we can rejoice in the freedom that we have spiritually, and because we can be who we truly are: children of God, with authority over evil, stepping on the enemy and winning all our battles. We can rejoice because we are ready to carry out God’s purpose for us here on earth. We can have joy of being rescued and restored, of seeing our dreams being born, because we have a covenant with Him forever.

I want to finish, putting a message from the Lord:

“I will be with you that you take my presence and my perfume to the poor of life and light. Speak of my love; especially exude my love so that others may know that I’m real. The language of the heart is wiser than the language of the mind. Draw near to me and I will reveal you the secrets of my heart”.

Revision of the first part

“My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.” (Jn. 10: 27-28)



In this first part I described the sacrifice of Jesus and His conquest. He Himself said it was necessary to fulfill the earlier prophecies about Him. Jesus died for us, following both the divine and the human plan. He talked about His death during His ministry on earth, but with more emphasis in the final hours that preceded it, that is, in the upper chamber and in Gethsemane.

The sin committed by man in Eden, influenced by the devil, led him to an increasing separation from God. He loves the same people with whom He is angry and we can say that it brought Him pain. As He cannot deny Himself or the laws established by Him, the breaking of the enmity between Him and us and vice versa could only be made from an act of reconciliation on His part. Thus, God, in the person of His Son, gave up His majesty, and humbled Himself so that there were no more chasms between us. He sent His own Son to die for us and in our place for us to be propitiated, redeemed, justified and reconciled to Him.

In His experience on the cross I tried to describe not only His feelings as God and man, but the spiritual achievements and the divine purpose in all of them, including our curses broken there. The time He spent in the tomb also brought us victory, especially the victory over death. The keys of death and hell are with Jesus. Death was the only enemy that we could not win, only Him.

Thus, the accomplishment of the cross included the **salvation** of sinners by *propitiation of sins, redemption, justification and reconciliation*. It also included the **revelation of God's character** through this act, namely, *His love and His justice*; finally, the **conquest over evil**, represented by the *victory over the devil, the flesh, the world, the Law and death*. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross brought, moreover, a **new level of relationship with God**, based on *boldness, love and joy*.

Part 2

Our cross and our conquest



Our cross and our conquest



*“This is my commandment,
that you love one another
as I have loved you.”
(Jn. 15: 12)*

In this part, I make a parallel of our sacrifice with Jesus’ and how important it is to our growth as disciples.

As it was said in the first part, the bible says that Jesus’ sacrifice was definitive, perfect and effective. However, the word of God also says that **our sacrifice is daily**:

Ps. 44: 22: “Because of you we are being killed all day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

Lk. 9: 23: “Then he said to them all, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.’”

Rom. 8: 36: “As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.’”

We take on our frail body the death of Jesus, but at the same time His life:

Rom. 6: 5-14: “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.”

2 Cor. 4: 7-11: “But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.”

Gal. 2: 20: “and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

In other words, **the flesh dies without the vivification of the Spirit**. The tendency to sin causes death; however, the life of the Holy Spirit makes us overcome it (the tendency).

The bible also says we should be imitators of God (*Eph. 5: 1-2*: “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”). Walking in love is to obey the command given by Jesus and live His love, denying ourselves, dying to sin in order to live, then, His Holiness:

Jn. 13: 34: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”

Jn. 15: 12: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

Gal. 6: 14: “May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

1 Pet. 1: 15-16: “Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”

Everything is done by the presence of the Spirit in us, not by our own strength: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts” – *Zech. 4: 6b*. The secret of all is, therefore, **surrender**. This is not necessarily painful, because the love (His for us and ours for Him) ease the process and frees us from any power struggle with God.

When we accept Jesus, we live symbolically His death and His saving work through baptism:

Acts 2: 38: “Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Rom. 6: 3-4: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

Col. 2: 11-13: “In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses.”

It is a profession of faith. We die and resurrect with Him so that our old life of sin, guilt and shame was ended and began a new life of holiness, forgiveness and freedom. This is what happens symbolically with our spirit in the water baptism, but it is needed a **daily change** with our new self. The bible also says that we should work out our own salvation with fear and trembling:

Rom. 6: 5-14: “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No

longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.”

Phil. 2: 12: “Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

The process of healing of our soul is summed up in letting the sanctification come. Unfortunately, the indulgence with sin, which justifies the imperfection and forgets the free will, hinders the process. Therefore, the lives of many Christians are fruitless and cannot exceed certain levels because the person accepts the deformity and human imperfection, trying to justify his indulgent and conformist attitudes. The truth is that we can do nothing for ourselves, as Jesus said: “Without me you can do nothing” (*Jn. 15: 5b*). It is also a fact that our human nature will never be perfect, but the Lord says that we can do all things through Him who strengthens us (*Phil. 4: 13*). He also says, “Be holy because I am holy” (*1 Pet. 1: 15-16*) and “[He will] make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you” (*1 Pet. 5: 10b – KJV*); therefore, everything depends on our willingness to want to be like Him and rebel against the will of the devil which forces us to sin and get out of His holy presence: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (*Jam. 4: 7*). The acknowledgement of our mistakes is the surrender that the Lord expects of us. He made a covenant with us and we must keep ours with Him. We don’t need to punish us or charge us for anything; just surrender to Him and He Himself will go, naturally, perfecting us through our daily relationship with His Spirit.

Jesus emphasized the need for a disciple to take up his cross: in *Matt. 16: 24-27* and *Lk. 14: 26-27; 33*, He talks about to find their lives (soul), those who lose it because of Him, and to lose their lives those who turn away from Him. He also talks about to love less our parents, relatives and land to be His, namely, to put Him in the first place. In all these texts Jesus emphasizes self-denial. *Cross is the symbol of the death of the self. To deny (Greek: aparneomai) = disinherit, disown or repudiate, turn his back on something, to renounce.* It is to deny or disown our own beings, renouncing our supposed right to follow our own path. It is the decision not to satisfy our tastes and desires that lead to sin. *It is a symbol of surrender and victory.*

Jesus also uses words like *soul* and *life*, showing His concern about this part of our being, for it was for this that He came: *to save our soul*. And still in relation to the soul, He uses verbs like to lose, to win, to exchange (*Mk. 8: 37*, “Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?” or “Let a man give in exchange for his soul?”). Surely He teaches us that He was the only one who could make a fair exchange, through His innocent blood; that we could not do anything for ourselves, we had nothing to exchange for our lives but through the acceptance of His sacrifice and His words we would be united with Him. We would die and rise with Him. We would have our souls saved (*Jam. 1: 21*: “Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls”). He also tells us in these texts that is necessary to lose our soul to the world, in order to win it for Him, and consequently, experiencing real life. In *Lk. 9: 23* Jesus says that this process is daily.

In several other texts of the bible, we find God’s guidance to deny the desires of our flesh daily, to die to sin and to the world:

1 Cor. 6: 9-10: “Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites,

thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.”

Gal. 5: 16-21: “Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Gal. 6: 14: “May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

Eph. 4: 22-32: “You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.”

Phil. 3: 7-8: “Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.”

Col. 3: 5-8: “Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth.”

Even in the Old Testament we find the message of *death of the self* to stay in God’s presence:

2 Sam. 14: 14: “We must all die; we are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up. But God will not take away a life; he will devise plans so as not to keep an outcast banished forever from his presence.”

This means to die to *the false being* we are because of the fall of Adam in order to live to *the true being* that we are through the Creation. It’s not to deny our imperfections, but leave them under the dominion of the Holy Spirit to be transformed. It means not to be afraid or ashamed to let the Lord work within us, for He will only take away what is bad and will leave only what is good.

The self that was created by God is our rationality, a sense of moral obligation, sexuality, family life, gifts of aesthetic appreciation and artistic creativity, stewardship of the fruit of the earth, our hunger for love and community experience, our consciousness of divine transcendental majesty, our innate impulse to bow down and worship God. This nature was tainted and distorted by sin. Christ came to redeem it, not to destroy it.

The *self* that came with the fall was the irrationality, moral perversity, blurring of sexual distinctions and lack of mastery in this area, selfishness that distorts family life, fascination by the ugly, refusal to develop the gifts of God, pollution, environmental damage, antisocial tendencies that inhibit true community, proud autonomy, idolatrous refusing on worship the living and true God. Christ came to destroy it (*1 Jn. 3: 8*).

Through our cross we can experience in our lives what Christ felt. Our tests are similar to His:

- 1) Helplessness and abandonment for being different from the world or for doing His work
- 2) To suffer unfairly
- 3) To learn to see forgiveness as a way of deliverance
- 4) To learn to overcome the voices that affront our faith
- 5) To learn how to donate ourselves, especially for those who do not deserve or betray us
- 6) To be made perfect till holiness.

The cross was the calling, the mission of Jesus. Our cross is our calling, our mission on earth.

Therefore, all the trials and unpleasant experiences we pass are proof that we are carrying our cross and, just as Jesus surpassed it, we will surpass it, because the cross is today for us who are saved, a symbol of surrender and victory. The cross is the end of a story and the beginning of another. We carry the marks of Jesus but also His victories. As Christ was restored, glorified and exalted, we too will be resurrected with Jesus from the situations of shame and humiliation:

Isa. 53: 12: “Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Rom. 8: 17: “and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.”

Rom. 8: 28-30: “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.”

Rom. 8: 37: “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

2 Cor. 4: 14: “because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence.”

Gal. 6: 14; 17: “May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world... From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body.”

Phil. 2: 9-11: “Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The cross of Christ is the hope of final glory:

Eph. 1: 12: “so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.”

Col. 1: 27-28: “To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is

he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”

When we obey His will we are blessed.

If we do not appropriate the blessings and benefits of the cross, if we refuse to accept His sacrifice and if we refuse to repeat it in our flesh, we are rejecting Jesus as Lord of our lives; we are sinning and, thus, condemning Him to the cross again, like the Pharisees and unbelievers (*Heb. 6: 6 b*, “they are crucifying again the Son of God and are holding him up to contempt”).

Our cross becomes heavy when we accept the will of men and the oppression of the enemy and allow him to deceive us by bringing a distorted image of God to us. It is not the Lord who gives us a heavy cross to bear, for He has already empowered us to carry out our mission on earth. Our cross becomes lighter when we perform with love what He has asked us to do, and when we deliver Him our imperfections and desires, seeking sanctity.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (*Matt. 11: 29-30*).

Epilogue

Jesus' sacrifice was complete and definitive, so that it was no longer needed another kind of sacrifice or covenant, since all previous covenants between God and men failed. His sacrifice was the only one, complete and definitive, but ours is daily, in the sense that, day by day, we took possession of the blessings and benefits that He achieved for us. Only then we can come holy, blameless and victorious before Him, as written in His Word, knowing that the greatest reward is to have His presence living within us and be able to spend the eternity with Him.



“Then he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.’” (Rev. 21: 6-7)

Prayer

If you have been moved by the Spirit of God and want to be a partaker of the victories of Christ won on the cross, repeat out loud this prayer with me:

“Father, in the name of Jesus, I declare that I believe in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to save me, and in His resurrection. Therefore, I ask forgiveness for my sins and the same blood that was shed on the cross may cover my whole life and purify me from all sin and injustice. I confess Jesus as my only Lord and Savior and receive your Holy Spirit into my heart so that from now on I can be transformed into the person that you want me to be. Straighten my ways, Lord. Write my name in the Book of Life and make me a participant in your eternal inheritance. In the name of Jesus, I break all ties I have with darkness. Amen.”

Now turn the page and receive the gifts from God to you.



*Your Gifts: Cure, Life, Love, Joy, Justice, Meekness, Salvation, Self-control,
Boldness, Honor, Humility, Conquest, Goodness, Victory, Peace,
Faith, Strength, Restoration, Holiness, Covenant.*

Biblical References (OT):



<i>Gen 2: 9</i>	<i>Deut 16: 3-8</i>	<i>Ps 18: 17</i>	<i>Isa 25: 8-9</i>
<i>Gen 2: 17</i>	<i>Deut 21: 22-23</i>	<i>Ps 22: 1</i>	<i>Isa 33: 22</i>
<i>Gen 3: 19</i>	<i>Deut 28: 8</i>	<i>Ps 22: 7-8</i>	<i>Isa 37: 14-20</i>
<i>Gen 4: 10-11</i>	<i>Deut 28: 21-22</i>	<i>Ps 22: 11-21</i>	<i>Isa 45: 17</i>
<i>Gen 5: 24</i>	<i>Deut 28: 27-28</i>	<i>Ps 30: 11</i>	<i>Isa 50: 6-9</i>
<i>Gen 9: 4; 6</i>	<i>Deut 28: 59-61</i>	<i>Ps 35: 10</i>	<i>Isa 51: 17</i>
<i>Gen 14: 14</i>	<i>Deut 29: 29</i>	<i>Ps 35 13-16</i>	<i>Isa 51: 22-23</i>
<i>Gen 22: 12; 16</i>	<i>Josh 1: 3</i>	<i>Ps 42: 3; 10</i>	<i>Isa 52: 13-15</i>
<i>Ex 3: 5</i>	<i>Josh 5: 15</i>	<i>Ps 44: 22</i>	<i>Isa 53: 2-12</i>
<i>Ex 12: 1-28</i>	<i>Josh 10: 24-27</i>	<i>Ps 51: 7</i>	<i>Isa 54: 4</i>
<i>Ex 21: 12; 14</i>	<i>Jdg 13: 2-5</i>	<i>Ps 68: 18a</i>	<i>Isa 61: 3; 8</i>
<i>Ex 21: 23-25</i>	<i>Rut 4: 7-8</i>	<i>Ps 69: 18-21</i>	<i>Isa 63: 3</i>
<i>Ex 30: 18-19</i>	<i>1 Sam 1: 5-8</i>	<i>Ps 78: 49</i>	<i>Isa 63: 16</i>
<i>Lev 14: 49-51</i>	<i>1 Sam 1: 19b; 20</i>	<i>Ps 94: 11</i>	<i>Isa 64: 8</i>
<i>Lev 16: 1-34</i>	<i>2 Sam 12: 7-15</i>	<i>Ps 110: 1</i>	<i>Jer 3: 19</i>
<i>Lev 17: 11; 14</i>	<i>2 Sam 14: 14</i>	<i>Ps 129: 3</i>	<i>Jer 25: 15-16</i>
<i>Lev 19: 18</i>	<i>2 Kin 2: 11</i>	<i>Prov 3: 23</i>	<i>Jer 31: 34</i>
<i>Lev 26:11- 12</i>	<i>2 Kin 5: 27</i>	<i>Prov 6: 18</i>	<i>Ezek 18: 23; 32</i>
<i>Num 12: 10</i>	<i>2 Chr 26: 19b</i>	<i>Prov 17: 22</i>	<i>Ezek 33: 11</i>
<i>Num 21: 8-9</i>	<i>2 Chr 21: 14a; 15</i>	<i>Prov 23: 7^a</i>	<i>Jon 2: 1-10</i>
<i>Deut 11: 24</i>	<i>Job 5: 13</i>	<i>Prov 31: 6-7</i>	<i>Hos 6: 1-2</i>
<i>Deut 12: 18; 23</i>	<i>Ps 2: 1-12</i>	<i>Song 2: 3</i>	<i>Zech 4: 6</i>

Biblical References (NT – Gospels and Acts):



<i>Matt 5: 43-48</i>	<i>Mk 14: 32-42</i>	<i>Lk 22: 15-20</i>	<i>Jn 13: 1-30</i>
<i>Matt 6: 12-15</i>	<i>Mk 14: 65</i>	<i>Lk 22: 39-46</i>	<i>Jn 13: 31-35</i>
<i>Matt 7: 1-5</i>	<i>Mk 15: 10</i>	<i>Lk 22: 63-65</i>	<i>Jn 13: 36-38</i>
<i>Matt 12: 38-41</i>	<i>Mk 15: 15-20</i>	<i>Lk 23: 1-7</i>	<i>Jn 14: 1-3</i>
<i>Matt 16: 24-27</i>	<i>Mk 15: 25</i>	<i>Lk 23: 20-25</i>	<i>Jn 14: 6-16</i>
<i>Matt 20: 1-16</i>	<i>Mk 15: 33-41</i>	<i>Lk 23: 27</i>	<i>Jn 14: 23-30</i>
<i>Matt 26: 14-16</i>	<i>Mk 15: 42-46</i>	<i>Lk 23: 34</i>	<i>Jn 15: 1-27</i>
<i>Matt 26: 24-28</i>	<i>Mk 16: 17-18</i>	<i>Lk 24: 46</i>	<i>Jn 16: 1-15</i>
<i>Matt 26: 36-46</i>	<i>Lk 1: 5-7; 36</i>	<i>Jn 1: 10-13; 29</i>	<i>Jn 16: 33</i>
<i>Matt 26: 53</i>	<i>Lk 6: 37-38</i>	<i>Jn 3: 14-16</i>	<i>Jn 17: 1-26</i>
<i>Matt 26: 67-68</i>	<i>Lk 7: 37-38</i>	<i>Jn 5: 22-30</i>	<i>Jn 18: 6</i>
<i>Matt 27: 18</i>	<i>Lk 7: 44-46</i>	<i>Jn 6: 38-39</i>	<i>Jn 19: 6-16</i>
<i>Matt 27: 24</i>	<i>Lk 8: 41-42</i>	<i>Jn 6: 53-58</i>	<i>Jn 19: 17-23</i>
<i>Matt 27: 26-31</i>	<i>Lk 9: 23</i>	<i>Jn 7: 24</i>	<i>Jn 19: 28-30</i>
<i>Matt 27: 39-44</i>	<i>Lk 10: 39</i>	<i>Jn 8: 1-11</i>	<i>Jn 19: 33-34</i>
<i>Matt 27: 45-46</i>	<i>Lk 11: 29-30</i>	<i>Jn 8: 15-18</i>	<i>Jn 20: 17-20</i>
<i>Matt 27: 51</i>	<i>Lk 12: 50</i>	<i>Jn 9: 3</i>	<i>Act 2: 24</i>
<i>Mk 2: 5</i>	<i>Lk 12: 57</i>	<i>Jn 10: 10-15</i>	<i>Act 2: 38</i>
<i>Mk 5: 5</i>	<i>Lk 13: 11-12</i>	<i>Jn 10: 17-18</i>	<i>Act 2: 46-47</i>
<i>Mk 5: 25-34</i>	<i>Lk 14: 26-27; 33</i>	<i>Jn 10: 27-28</i>	<i>Act 5: 1-11</i>
<i>Mk 8: 37</i>	<i>Lk 18: 7-8</i>	<i>Jn 11: 2; 4</i>	<i>Act 13: 4-12</i>
<i>Mk 9: 17-18</i>	<i>Lk 18: 31-33</i>	<i>Jn 12: 3</i>	
<i>Mk 10: 43-46</i>	<i>Lk 19: 10</i>	<i>Jn 12: 31-32</i>	
<i>Mk 14: 22-24</i>	<i>Lk 22: 3-6</i>	<i>Jn 12: 47-50</i>	

Biblical references (NT – Epistles and Revelation):



<i>Rom 1: 18</i>	<i>1 Cor 15: 42-44</i>	<i>Col 1: 27-28</i>	<i>Jam 4: 7</i>
<i>Rom 2: 1</i>	<i>1 Cor 15: 50-57</i>	<i>Col 2: 11-15</i>	<i>Jam 4: 11</i>
<i>Rom 3: 22-26</i>	<i>2 Cor 3: 14-18</i>	<i>Col 3: 5-10</i>	<i>1 Pet 1: 14-19</i>
<i>Rom 5: 3-5</i>	<i>2 Cor 4: 7-11</i>	<i>Col 3: 13-14</i>	<i>1 Pet 2: 19-24</i>
<i>Rom 5: 8-14</i>	<i>2 Cor 4: 14</i>	<i>Col 3: 17</i>	<i>1 Pet 3: 18-22</i>
<i>Rom 6: 3-14</i>	<i>2 Cor 5: 14-15</i>	<i>Col 3: 23-24</i>	<i>1 Pet 4: 12-16</i>
<i>Rom 6: 23</i>	<i>2 Cor 5: 18-21</i>	<i>1 The 4: 17</i>	<i>1 Pet 5: 10</i>
<i>Rom 7: 18</i>	<i>2 Cor 12: 9-10</i>	<i>1 The 5: 10</i>	<i>1 Jn 1: 7</i>
<i>Rom 8: 1-2</i>	<i>Gal 1: 4</i>	<i>1 The 5: 16</i>	<i>1 Jn 2: 1-2</i>
<i>Rom 8: 7</i>	<i>Gal 2: 16</i>	<i>1 The 5: 21</i>	<i>1 Jn 2: 15-17</i>
<i>Rom 8: 11</i>	<i>Gal 2: 19-20</i>	<i>2 Tim 1: 7</i>	<i>1 Jn 3: 8</i>
<i>Rom 8: 15-17</i>	<i>Gal 3: 13</i>	<i>2 Tim 4: 5</i>	<i>1 Jn 3: 16</i>
<i>Rom 8: 28-30</i>	<i>Gal 4: 6-7</i>	<i>Tit 2: 14</i>	<i>1 Jn 4: 9-10</i>
<i>Rom 8: 36-37</i>	<i>Gal 4: 29</i>	<i>Tit 3: 5</i>	<i>1 Jn 4: 18-19</i>
<i>Rom 12: 1-2</i>	<i>Gal 5: 16-21</i>	<i>Heb 2: 10</i>	<i>1 Jn 5: 4-5</i>
<i>Rom 12: 18-21</i>	<i>Gal 5: 24</i>	<i>Heb 2: 14-15</i>	<i>Rev 1: 5-6</i>
<i>Rom 13: 1-10</i>	<i>Gal 6: 14;17</i>	<i>Heb 2: 18</i>	<i>Rev 1: 18</i>
<i>Rom 14: 4</i>	<i>Eph 1: 7</i>	<i>Heb 4: 16</i>	<i>Rev 2: 7</i>
<i>Rom 14: 17-18</i>	<i>Eph 1: 12</i>	<i>Heb 5: 5-10</i>	<i>Rev 2: 11</i>
<i>Rom 14: 23b</i>	<i>Eph 2: 8-9</i>	<i>Heb 7: 17</i>	<i>Rev 2: 17</i>
<i>1 Cor 1: 18; 23-24</i>	<i>Eph 2: 14-16</i>	<i>Heb 7: 26-28</i>	<i>Rev 2: 26</i>
<i>1 Cor 1: 30</i>	<i>Eph 3: 12</i>	<i>Heb 9: 11-15</i>	<i>Rev 3: 5</i>
<i>1 Cor 2: 11-16</i>	<i>Eph 4: 8</i>	<i>Heb 9: 22</i>	<i>Rev 3: 12</i>
<i>1 Cor 3: 16-21</i>	<i>Eph 4: 22-32</i>	<i>Heb 9: 26-28</i>	<i>Rev 3: 21</i>
<i>1 Cor 4: 3-5</i>	<i>Eph 5: 1-2</i>	<i>Heb 10: 4</i>	<i>Rev 5: 5</i>
<i>1 Cor 6: 9-11</i>	<i>Eph 5: 19-20</i>	<i>Heb 10: 12-13</i>	<i>Rev 5: 9</i>
<i>1 Cor 6: 17-20</i>	<i>Phil 2: 6-12</i>	<i>Heb 10: 19-23</i>	<i>Rev 12: 11-12</i>
<i>1 Cor 7: 23</i>	<i>Phil 3: 7-8</i>	<i>Heb 11: 5</i>	<i>Rev 17: 14</i>
<i>1 Cor 11: 23-26</i>	<i>Phi 4: 4</i>	<i>Heb 12: 12</i>	<i>Rev 19: 15</i>
<i>1 Cor 14: 20</i>	<i>Phil 4: 11-13</i>	<i>Heb 13: 10-13</i>	<i>Rev 21: 6-7</i>
<i>1 Cor 15: 3</i>	<i>Col 1: 11-12</i>	<i>Jam 1: 2-4</i>	<i>Rev 22: 14</i>
<i>1 Cor 15: 25; 27</i>	<i>Col 1: 20-22</i>	<i>Jam 1: 21</i>	

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