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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Luke 23.

(2013)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Luke 23.

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### Topics.

- Jesus is brought before Pilate and Herod.
- When the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?
- They will say to the mountains fall on us, and to the hills, cover us.
- Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.
- The inscription on the cross, "this is the King of the Jews."
- Today you will be with me in paradise.
- Father, into your hands I commit my spirit! And Jesus breathed his last.
- The curtain of the temple was torn in two.
- Joseph, of Arimathea places Jesus body in his tomb.
- Women prepare spices for Jesus body.

**The Previous Chapter:** in the previous chapter Jesus ate the Passover meal with the apostles and prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. He told Peter he would deny him three times and Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Jesus was led away into the High Priest's house and mocked and Peter fulfilled Jesus previous words by denying him three times.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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### Jesus is brought before Pilate.

Luke 22:1-7 ----- <sup>1</sup>Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. <sup>2</sup>And they (chief Priest's, Scribes, officers and elders) (Luke 22:66) began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king." <sup>3</sup>And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." <sup>4</sup>Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." <sup>5</sup>But they were urgent, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place (Jerusalem)" <sup>6</sup>When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. <sup>7</sup>And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time.

**Galilee:** is a region in northern Israel on the west side of the lake or Sea of Galilee, Jesus resided in Galilee, the disciples were chiefly from here, much of Jesus public ministry took place along Galilees north shore and after Jesus resurrection he appeared to his disciples in Galilee.

### The Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Passover meal was eaten at sunset in the evening on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan (also called Abib) the first month of the Jewish calendar, it was held on the exact day God led Israel out of Egypt, (also called the house of bondage). Immediately following Passover Day was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the first day (15<sup>th</sup>) and the last day (21<sup>st</sup>) of the seven Day Feast of Unleavened Bread were Sabbath Days in which no secular work could be done.

Food offering were to be presented to the LORD during these seven days (they became food for the priesthood and their families). If any Israelite ate leavened bread during the Feast they were to be cut off from Israel because only unleavened bread was to be eaten. (Unleavened bread was a symbol of affliction).

**Jesus is falsely accused before Pilate:** the previous chapter finished with the council of the high priest, chief priest's, scribes and elders of God's temple accusing Jesus of blasphemy and condemning him to death, now very early in the morning of Passover Day they bring him to Pilate (Mark 15:1) (Luke 23:1) (John 18:28-29) so they could have him put to death.

**Jesus accusers tell Pilate that: -**

- Jesus was teaching his followers not to pay taxes to Caesar.
- Jesus was saying that he is Christ, a king.

These were blatant lies Jesus told his followers to give to Caesar the things that are Caesars (Matt. 22:21) and it was the people and others who proclaimed Jesus to be the King of the Jews, but Jesus himself never did.

**The Majestic Beauty and Wonder of the Bible.**

Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus could have easily said to Pilate, "Yes I am the King of the Jews," since he was the promised Messiah, King and Christ all the prophets of Israel prophesied was to come to Israel, but Jesus never claimed to be King of the Jews because that would limit his rule and his Kingdom. Jesus is the King not only the Jews but also of the Gentiles and will be final and ultimate glorious King of the entire world. To the enormous frustration of the chief priest's, scribes and elders Pilate could find no guilt in Jesus. Pilate learns that Jesus belonged to Herod's jurisdiction and knew that Herod was in Jerusalem at this time (Luke 23:7) so he sends Jesus to Herod.

**Jesus is Brought Before Herod.**

Luke 23:8-12 ----- <sup>8</sup>When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. <sup>9</sup>So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. <sup>10</sup>The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. <sup>11</sup>And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. <sup>12</sup>And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

- It is still very early in the morning of Passover Day.

Herod being the governor of Galilee (where much of Jesus public ministry took place) would have heard nearly everything about Jesus and the miracles he did so of course he is excited thinking he also is going to have an opportunity to see a miracle, but Jesus made no answer, simply because he knew whatever he said no-one was going to believe him.

Look at the hatred of the chief priests and the scribes they are vehemently accusing him with lies because they are aggressively determined to have him killed. Jesus is certainly not going to perform any miraculous signs simply for the curiosity and pleasure of Herod whose soldiers were treating Christ with contempt. Herod has Jesus dressed like a king and sends him back to Pilate. It is interesting to notice that through this encounter two enemies, Herod and Pilate became friends.

**Here is the majestic wonder and beauty of Bible prophecy:** when the rulers of the people and elders of Jerusalem released Peter and John from their custody (they had been arrested for speaking of Jesus) Peter and John went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them and when their friends heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said: -

- Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, " 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'— for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place (Acts 4:23-28).

Peter and John's friends are quoting the words of David who inspired by the Holy Spirit wrote the following words thousands of years prior to these events: -

- Why do the nations rage and the peoples (chief priests elders Pharisees and scribes) plot in vain? <sup>2</sup>The kings (Herod and Pilate) of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup>"Let us burst their (Christ and those who belong to him) bonds apart (the gospel) and cast away their cords (influence) from us." <sup>4</sup>He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. <sup>5</sup>Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, <sup>6</sup>"As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." <sup>7</sup>I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. <sup>8</sup>Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. (The entire Psalm is about Christ) (Psalm 2:1-8).

The first section of David's words refer to Herod and Pilate and Christ's crucifixion, but the words of the second half of the Psalm, "I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill, I will make the nations his heritage, and the ends of the earth his possession." Refers to when Jesus returns as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign.

In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish.

The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called

the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

**For further information see titles: -**

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**Pilate nor Herod could find any fault in Jesus.**

Luke 23:13-15 ----- <sup>13</sup>Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, <sup>14</sup>and said to them "You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. <sup>15</sup>Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him.

- It is still very early in the morning of Passover Day.

How incredibly stunning is this the two secular rulers are more just than the religious leaders of Jesus generation, neither Pilate nor Herod could find any fault in Jesus especially one worthy of death which means that they could not find any truth in the chief priests and rulers accusations. Jesus never spoke one word to defend himself nor did he have lawyers speak on his behalf and yet the two chief Roman rulers of the region still found him to be an innocent man. No-wonder Jesus said: -

- Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, (sepulchres in KJV) which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness (meaning all kinds of corruptness) (Matt 23:27).

**The First time Pilate pleads for the Jews to release Jesus.**

Luke 23:16-19 ----- <sup>16</sup>I (Pilate) will therefore punish and release him." <sup>17</sup>For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast <sup>18</sup>But they (chief priests, rulers and the people) (v13) all cried out together, "Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas"—<sup>19</sup>a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder.

Barabbas means, arrogance, excellency and majesty, it carries the idea of swelling pomp and pride. Barabbas was in prison for rebellion because he had started a revolution to overthrow the Romans and obviously killed some of their soldiers. This is what the disciples of Jesus thought Jesus was going to do when he arrived at Jerusalem, they mistakenly supposed that the Kingdom of God was to appear immediately when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the colt (Luke 19:11) and the people were shouting and proclaiming Jesus to be the King who came in the name of the Lord (Luke 19:38).

They thought Jesus was going to be made King when he arrived in the city. The people could not possibly have understood why Jesus would surrendered to his accusers and his enemies so it no-doubt was an easy task for the chief priests and religious rulers of Jerusalem to stir them up against Christ especially since they were now looking at the man they thought was going to be exalted as the King of Jerusalem standing before them now bloody and bleeding, his body physically weak, from his brutal torture and being treated with contempt. Added to this he has done nothing to rise up against his enemies whereas Barabbas was the total opposite he more than likely would have formed an army and gone to battle.

**The Second time Pilate pleads for the Jews to release Jesus.**

Luke 23:20-21 ----- <sup>20</sup>Pilate addressed them (chief priests, rulers and the people) (v13) once more, desiring to release Jesus, <sup>21</sup>but they kept shouting, "Crucify, crucify him!"

From this verse we learn that Pilate did not want to have to sentence Jesus to death.

### **The Third time Pilate pleads for the Jews to release Jesus.**

Luke 23:22-23 ----- <sup>22</sup>A third time he said to them "Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him." <sup>23</sup>But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed.

Three times Pilate tells the Jews that he could find no fault in Jesus especially one worthy of death, but the Jews had enormous of power especially the chief priests and religious rulers and it was Pilates' job as a Roman governor to maintain peace in his jurisdiction. Pilate did all he could to avoid putting Jesus to death, but the rulers of the Jews were determined to have Christ killed, they yelled out and demand that Pilate has Jesus put to death.

### **Barabbas is released and Jesus delivered over to the will of the People.**

Luke 23:24-26 ----- <sup>24</sup>So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. <sup>25</sup>He released the man (Barabbas) who had been thrown into prison for insurrection (rebellion and revolution) and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will. <sup>26</sup>And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus.

Pilate submits to what the religious rulers and the people demanded Barabbas is released and Jesus is led away to be crucified.

- It is just before 9am in the morning of Passover Day

Jesus bloody and bleeding body is so battered and bruised that Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus) was given Jesus cross to carry.

### **They will say to the Mountains, "Fall on us," and to the Hills, "Cover us."**

Luke 23:27-31 ----- <sup>27</sup>And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. <sup>28</sup>But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup>For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' <sup>30</sup>Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' <sup>31</sup>For if they (chief priests, rulers and the people v13) do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

**Daughters of Jerusalem:** the word daughter literally refers to a female child or by Hebrew language a descendant or inhabitant. Figuratively daughters refer to the people who belong to a nation or nations who belong to a parent nation. Throughout the Bible Jerusalem is often personified as a mother with daughters her daughters are the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, prophets, husbands, wives and their children (they can be loved or rebellious).

When they are spoken of as virgin daughters it carries the idea of them having only one husband who is God contrasted to pagans who have many gods.

### **Weep for yourselves and for your Children.**

Amongst the crowd were a great multitude of women and men who were devastated at the Lord's suffering, there was enormous weeping and sorrow as multitudes looked on the battered and bleeding body of this innocent man who had only done good to everyone who came to him, but Jesus even in this horrific moment is still more concerned for those who love him than he is for himself. Feeling compassion for the sorrow of those who are emotionally hurting as they watch him being led to his torturous death he comforts them by saying: -

- Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children (v28)

Jesus knows that as soon as he is murdered Rome and the religious leaders of Jerusalem will aggressively pursue those who confess the name of Christ and have them cast into prison and even killed.

### **When the Wood is Green, what will Happen when it is Dry?**

Jesus words, "When the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" Refers to Jesus himself, he is saying when the religious leaders of Israel are able to murder their own Messiah the Christ an innocent man in front of the entire nation and convince the masses that they are doing God's will what will they do to those who confess to believe in his name when he is killed. History shows that they treated them as heretics had them imprisoned, tortured, killed and burned etc., and the book of Hebrews tells us: -

- Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy— wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth (Heb. 11:35-38).

### **Say the Mountains, "Fall on us," and to the Hills, "Cover us."**

Jesus words, "They will say to the Mountains, "Fall on us," and to the Hills, "Cover us." Refer to the prophecies in Matthew, Mark and Luke which have Jesus speaking to the disciples about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and his warnings to the inhabitants of the city to flee to the mountains when they see Jerusalem surrounded by armies (Rome destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D). In Jewish culture it was considered a shame for a woman to be barren, since there would be no child remaining to receive the inheritance of land, therefore Jesus words: -

- The days are coming when they will say, "Blessed are woman who have no children.

Shows how great the suffering and sorrow will be at this time simply because no Jew would ever say a barren Jewish woman was blessed. The suffering and death of human life will be so great that the emotional agony and pain will be overwhelming for women who have children because of the enormous slaughter of families, husbands, wives and children in the region. All of these things would have happened when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD, but these words may also be echoing a future time to come at the end of this age when the Lord Jesus Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace of earth. For further information of the destruction of Jerusalem and the return of Christ see the following chapters: -

- (Matthew 24) (Mark 13) (Luke 21).

In Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

### **Father, Forgive them, for they Know Not what they Do**

Luke 23:32-34 ----- <sup>32</sup>Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. <sup>33</sup>And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>34</sup>And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments (spoken of in Psalm 22:18).

- It is now 9am in the morning of Passover Day

**Skull:** (kranion) (Calvary in KJV) literally means a skull or cranium, the place of the skull it is also called Golgotha the place where Jesus was crucified.

How stunning is this, Jesus has been brutally beaten, whipped and cruelly tortured by the Romans, but as he looks down toward the soldiers casting lots for his garments he understands that they are simply carrying out their duty. As far as they know the innocent man they have nailed to the cross is a criminal just like the ones on either side of him.

Jesus understanding their ignorance prays that his heavenly Father will not hold this horrendous crime against them. Truly the only anger Christ ever displayed was toward the prideful, hypocritical priests and religious rulers who were in God's service, but instead of serving God and the people were only concerned about their own religious empire. Truly Jesus not only taught the word of God, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," but he lived it as no-one else could.

For further information see Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount in: -

- (Matthew 5) (Luke 6).

In, Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

### **The inscription on the Cross, "This is the King of the Jews."**

Luke 23:35-38 ----- <sup>35</sup>And the people stood by, watching, but the (religious) rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" <sup>36</sup>The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine <sup>37</sup>and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" <sup>38</sup>There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

Remember in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed to his heavenly Father if there was any other way to save mankind please remove this cup of suffering from him. Jesus is nailed to this cross not for himself, but because, "God his heavenly Father so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Jesus bloody and bleeding body is nailed to this cross so that you and I and everyone else who will come to him could be reconciled to God and be raised to eternal life and everlasting glory.

### **Sceptics and the inscription on the Cross.**

Sceptics say that the Bible is in error, because the title placed over Jesus head reads differently in the book of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. This is foolishness and a vain attempt to support their arguments that the Bible is full of contradictions. Of course it is not going to be word for word exact simply because each book is written by four different authors. Common sense will see that though they may use different words they all say the same thing (i.e., Jesus is the King of the Jews).

Many people have been taught that the Bible is the inspired word of God and therefore every single word is inspired, but this is a mistaken idea, certainly the Bible contains the inspired word of God, but it is the messages the individual words teach that is inspired not the individual words themselves.

Individual words form sentence and a paragraph etc., it is the messages that are taught by these sentences and paragraphs when individual words are put together that is the inspired word of God. There are many Bibles that use different words, but all teach the same message, it is these messages that are inspired by God. If it was the individual words that were inspired the Bible could never be translated into other languages (i.e., Chinese, Mexican, Russian etc.), and remain inspired because these languages do not have the same individual words that the English language does. Added to this the original Manuscripts are written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, so none of us would be reading the inspired word of God but the good news is that every language on planet earth can use their own language and individual words to translate the messages that God has spoken.

### **The inscription on the Cross.**

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John record different inscriptions on the Cross: -

**Matthew says:** this is Jesus the King of the Jews (Matt 27:37) (KJV).

**Mark says:** the King of the Jews (Mark 15:26) (KJV).

**Luke says:** this is the King of the Jews (Luke 23:38) (KJV).



**John says:** Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews (John 19:19) (KJV).

**It probably read:** This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. Though all inscriptions are slightly different the message they proclaim is very clear.

**Today you will be with me in Paradise.**

Luke 23:39-43 ----- <sup>39</sup>One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" <sup>40</sup>But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" <sup>41</sup>And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup>And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." <sup>43</sup>And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

This criminal (near death) acknowledge his guilt, fears God, accepted his punishment, rebuked those who mocked Christ, knew Jesus was innocent and that he was the Christ of God we know this because if he didn't believe Jesus was who he said he was then his asking Jesus to remember him when he comes into his Kingdom would be pointless.

Ponder for a moment the truth of Jesus words: -

- All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out (John 6:37).

This criminal had committed a crime deserving of death, he knows he is guilty and only moments away from his last breath he is repentant and asks Jesus for acceptance and Jesus promises he will be with him in paradise. There is a beautiful message in this for us all, no-one is beyond the forgiveness of God, this criminal in the last moments of his life repented and accepted Christ and in doing so was forgiven, his entire life was wiped clean before God such is the power of the blood of Christ.

**Paradise:** from Strong's Concordance can refer to any of the following, a special forest, an orchard, an Eden or place of future happiness in this world or the world to come.

**Today you will be with me in Paradise.**

Jesus words, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (v43) has been held to provide evidence that Jesus expected an immediate presence in heaven for himself and the thief on the cross. Certainly upon reading this it seems to imply that the criminal would be with Jesus in paradise that very day, but Jesus did not ascend to heaven for another three days, so the criminal could not possibly have been with Jesus in paradise with Jesus on that very day, so what did Jesus mean? It is helpful to remember that the original manuscripts of the Bible did not have the verse references or commas in them; it was the translators of the original manuscripts who have added them to make it easier for people to find a particular verse. The comma in this sentence should be after the today instead of before it, thus it would read: -

- Truly, I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise.

Jesus is saying to the criminal, "Today I am telling you that you will be with me in Paradise," meaning when everyone is resurrected to be with Christ the criminal will be with them, this is in total harmony with all the Bibles teaching regarding the resurrection.

**The following are some Old Testament examples of the coma being used in this manner: -**

- You shall keep every commandment which I command you today, that you may be strong (Deut. 11:8).
- Therefore you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, on Mount Ebal (Deut. 27:4).

- Moses said I am one hundred and twenty years old today. I am no longer able to go out and come in (Deut. 31:2).

These verses show that it would be perfectly natural to punctuate (Luke 23:43) as follows: -

- Truly I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise.

Paul uses a similar turn of phrase saying: -

- Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men (Acts 20:26).

In view of the thief's request, the reply of Jesus makes good sense to be punctuated in this way he had asked that Jesus remember him when he came in the power of his Kingdom, that is, at the resurrection when the Kingdom is to be manifested in glory. The Lord's assertion more than satisfies the thief's request since he assures the criminal that he is remembered on that very day, in advance of the coming of the Kingdom. The thief will indeed be with Jesus in the paradise of the future Kingdom.

**The following gives us two more evidence that this is how Luke 23:43 should be read: -**

1. Jesus said, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt 12:40) and King David spoke concerning the resurrection of the Lord saying that "Christ's soul was not left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption" (Acts 2:31). According to King David's prophecy of Jesus death, cited by Peter, Jesus was in the tomb until the resurrection, therefore, Jesus could not have been in paradise on the day of his crucifixion.
2. Jesus said to Mary, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.'" Even on the Sunday of his resurrection Jesus had not yet ascended to the Father (John 20:17).

**Ever wondered where Paradise is:** John in the book of Revelations wrote, "To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Rev 2:7). Paradise refers to when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice joy and peace on earth (the restored Garden of Eden).

**"Father, into your Hands I commit my Spirit!" And Jesus Breathed his Last.**

Luke 23:44-46 ----- <sup>44</sup>It was now about 12 noon (6<sup>th</sup> hour) and there was darkness over the whole land until the 3pm (9<sup>th</sup> hour) <sup>45</sup>while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. <sup>46</sup>Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.

- It is 12 noon Passover Day and there is darkness over the entire land until 3pm.

It is interesting to notice Jesus has been on the cross from 9am to 3 pm a total of six hours the number of man. From 12 noon darkness covered the land until 3pm, so there was darkness in the middle of the day.

**The Curtain of the Temple was, Torn in Two.**

How blessed are all New Testament believers, under the Old Covenant only the high priest could enter behind the curtain of the temple into the Most Holy Place of God's Presence. The curtain stopped the average or common person from entering into the Most Holy Place of God's presence, but now it is torn in two, symbolising that everyone can come into God's presence and fellowship with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ (he is now the curtain to God). Today no-one who belongs to Christ needs a human priest to intercede for them since Jesus is now the perfect and eternal High Priest and the only one anyone needs to intercede for them.

**Jesus breathed his last:** Jesus words, "Into your hands I commit my spirit!" Means he was committing his life into the hands of God and trusting God would raise him from the dead.

### **Multitudes return Home in Great Sorrow.**

Luke 23:47-49 ----- <sup>47</sup>Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" <sup>48</sup>And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating (smote in KJV) their breasts. <sup>49</sup>And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.

**Beating:** (smote in KJV) means to thump or pummel by repeated blows. Figuratively it carries the idea of offending the conscience or is used as an extreme expression of deep and overwhelming regret, sorrow and remorse. Remember there would have been many of the common people who had been miraculously healed, forgiven and blessed by this humble man Jesus.

Multitudes of lowly Jews and Gentiles would have seen the goodness, kindness and compassion of Jesus who the powerful, and self-serving religious leaders had lied about for the purpose of fulfilling their own agenda and having him killed, a man who not even the two most powerful secular Roman rulers (Herod and Pilate) of the region could find fault with.

### **Those who followed Jesus stood at a distance watching these Things.**

Many no-doubt initially went out to view the so called "spectacle" of the man named Jesus being crucified for simple entertainment, much like they would go out to see the Roman Gladiators fight or we go out today to view a football game, but after the event it appears they saw something in Jesus that caused them to go home in an attitude of deep sorrow.

I am sure they like the centurion realised that this man the Romans had crucified was innocent. Those who knew Jesus (i.e. his friends and the women who followed him from Galilee) already knew this so they stood at a distance separated from the crowds who initially were only there to watch the spectacle of Jesus and others being crucified. It appears those who knew the Lord did not leave with the crowd most likely because of the bond they had with Christ. It is certain they would have been overwhelmed with grief and being in deep sorrow stayed behind to ponder the moment as a person who remains at a grave site does when someone who they deeply loved dies.

- It is now sometime after 3pm Passover Day.

### **Joseph, of Arimathea places Jesus body in his Tomb.**

Luke 23:50-54 ----- <sup>50</sup>Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, <sup>51</sup>who had not consented to their (the chief priests and rulers) decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. <sup>52</sup>This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. <sup>53</sup>Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. <sup>54</sup>It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning.

Joseph came from the town of Arimathea in Palestine he was a Jewish adviser and special councillor of the Jewish Sanhedrim at Jerusalem. He obviously believed Jesus was who he said he was and was looking for the Kingdom of God.

### **It was the Day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was Beginning.**

The Day of Preparation is the same day as Passover Day; it is called the Day of Preparation at this particular time because immediately following it was the seven Day Feast of Unleavened Bread. This Passover Day is referred to as Preparation Day because during it they had to prepare for the seven Day Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The words, "It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning," refers to two Sabbath Days, firstly the first day of the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread which immediately followed Passover Day was a Sabbath Day and secondly it refers to the Jewish weekly Sabbath (Saturday) we know it was Saturday because all four Gospels record that the two Mary's went to the tomb after the Sabbath Day near the dawn of the First Day of the week (Sunday) so it was a double Sabbath, called a High Sabbath.

(Matt. 28:1) (Mark 16:1-2) (Luke 24:1-5) (John 20:1-2).

It is now late in the afternoon of Passover Day (14<sup>th</sup>) and the first Sabbath (15<sup>th</sup>) of the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread is about to begin.

### **Women Prepare Spices for Jesus Body.**

Luke 23:55-56 ----- <sup>55</sup>The women who had come with him from Galilee followed (Joseph) and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. <sup>56</sup>Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James and Salome the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John were the women who followed Joseph (Mark 16:1) (Luke 24:10-11). Sometime before Sunset of Passover Day they followed Joseph to the tomb and saw him lay Jesus body in it so they knew where the tomb was, but it is now late afternoon of Passover Day and sunset is approaching so the Sabbath High Day is beginning so the women returned to their homes and prepared spices for Jesus body.

They remained in their homes during the Saturday High Sabbath as the law commanded and then when it had finished sometime around sunrise early Sunday morning they returned to the tomb to put the spices on Jesus body.

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End