



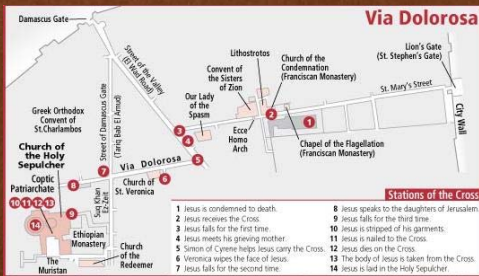
26. Arrest, Trial, and Abuse

Mark 14:43-15:20; Matthew 26:47-27:31; Luke 22:47-23:25; John 18:2-19:17a.



The Arrest and Trial Narratives—Jews and Romans, Israel and Gentiles. Judas and the Betrayal; the Arrest; Jesus Before the Jewish Authorities; Peter’s Denial. Jesus in the Hands of the Romans—Delivered to Pilate; the Charge and the Trial; Pilate and Jesus—“What is Truth?”; Sent to Herod Antipas; Before the Mob; Judged, Scourged, and Mocked.

Left: Carravaggio “The Taking of Christ”;
Way of Sorrows sign in the Old City of Jerusalem



The Franciscans established the current Via Dolorosa, or “Way of Suffering,” as a Catholic pilgrimage route in the 13th century.



Via Dolorosa: “The Way of Suffering”

Down the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem that day
The soldiers tried to clear the narrow street
But the crowd pressed in to see
The Man condemned to die on Calvary



He was bleeding from a beating, there were stripes
upon His back
And He wore a crown of thorns upon His head
And He bore with every step
The scorn of those who cried out for His death

Down the Via Dolorosa called the way of suffering
Like a lamb came the Messiah, Christ the King,
But He chose to walk that road out of
His love for you and me.
Down the Via Dolorosa, all the way to Calvary.



“O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown” (hymn 197)

1. O Savior, thou who wearest
A crown of piercing thorn,
The pain thou meekly bearest,
Weigh'd down by grief and scorn.
The soldiers mock and flail thee;
For drink they give thee gall;
Upon the cross they nail thee
To die, O King of all.

2. No creature is so lowly,
No sinner so depraved,
But feels thy presence holy
And thru thy love is saved.
Tho craven friends betray thee,
They feel thy love's embrace;
The very foes who slay thee
Have access to thy grace.

3. Thy sacrifice transcended
The mortal law's demand;
Thy mercy is extended
To ev'ry time and land.
No more can Satan harm us,
Tho long the fight may be,
Nor fear of death alarm us;
We live, O Lord, thru thee.

4. What praises can we offer
To thank thee, Lord most high?
In our place thou didst suffer;
In our place thou didst die,
By heaven's plan appointed,
To ransom us, our King.
O Jesus, the anointed,
To thee our love we bring!

The Arrest and Trial Narratives

The perils of harmonization: even though the four gospels follow a basic progression, perhaps found in the primitive passion narrative, there are significant variations

- **Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus** (Mark 14:43–52; par Matt 26:47–56, Luke 22:47–53; cf. John 18:2–3)
- **Jesus Before the Jewish Authorities** (Mark 14:53–65; par Matt 26:57–68, Luke 22:54–71; cf. John 18–28)
- **Jesus in the Hands of the Romans** (Mark 15:1–21; par Matt 27:1–32, Luke 23:1–32; cf. John 18:29–19:17a)
- Be careful about the issue of **culpability**—that is, who was responsible for the arrest, conviction, and execution of Jesus
 - First, Jesus **needed to die** to complete the atoning act of redemption and to put him in a position to overcome death through the atoning act of resurrection
 - Second, the passion narratives signal **parallel acts of abuse, cruelty, and judgment** on the parts of both Jews and Romans
 - **Jews** = Israel, **the people of God**
 - **Romans** = Gentiles, **all other people**
 - Third, because we are all sinners and are all mortals, **we are all responsible**

Reflection on the Problem of Culpability

God So Loved the World, 77

Reading the accounts of Jesus' arrest and the false judgment, abuse, and cruel death that he suffered at the hands of his captors naturally raises the issue of culpability—that is, who was responsible for the arrest, mistreatment, conviction, and execution of Jesus? Opinions vary, with some claiming that the onus of responsibility lies mainly with the Jewish leaders who orchestrated his arrest, made the initial charges against him, and then, after he had been delivered to Pilate, worked to make sure that he was convicted and crucified. Pilate's seeming unwillingness to convict Jesus, followed by his washing his hands of Jesus' blood and the crowd's supposed acceptance of responsibility for it (Matthew 27:24–25), could be taken to support this view. Others note, however, that fear of the Romans' reaction to potential revolution was part of what had motivated the Jewish leaders in the first place. They may well have been working with Pilate's knowledge and perhaps even his support. In the end, it was the Roman governor who delivered Jesus to be crucified.

But arguments over culpability miss the point. First, it was necessary for Jesus to die to complete the atoning act of redemption and to put himself in a position to overcome death through the Resurrection. Did we not want Jesus to die for our sins or overcome death for us? Second, the Passion narratives signal parallel acts of abuse, cruelty, and false judgment on the part of both Jews and Romans. Indeed, Jesus' experience in the hands of the Romans, as well as briefly before Herod Antipas, matches almost incident for incident what he had suffered before the Jewish authorities the previous evening. And yet, just as the Jews were preoccupied with the law of Moses, so the Romans were also obsessed with legal process, making it ironic that the two "trials" of Jesus took place before the two peoples who were most dedicated to the law and obsessed by it. Third, the Jews and the Romans of that time themselves represent wider groups: the Jews represent all of Israel, or the people of God, and the Romans represent the Gentiles, or everyone else. In other words, all people were responsible for the mistreatment and death of Jesus.

The issue of culpability is thus placed squarely at our own feet. Because we are all sinners and we are all mortals, we are all in a very real way responsible for the circumstances of that terrible day. And yet those terrible events were for our good, and in the end the suffering and death of Jesus are things for which we should be grateful. As Ernst Bammel has noted, "Everyone became guilty—... (Luke 24:7)—so that everyone might have a share in the fruits of Christ's death."

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Between Gethsemane and Golgotha

Part of the Atoning Journey

"To all such, I speak of the loneliest journey ever made and the unending blessings it brought to all in the human family. I speak of the Savior's solitary task of shouldering alone the burden of our salvation. Rightly He would say: "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me. ... I looked, and there was none to help . . ." (Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "None Were with Him," Ensign, May 2009.

- **Prophesied Suffering: Rejection, mocking, physical abuse, false judgment, and condemnation**
 - These experiences all are a part of the Savior's "descending below all things" and were part of **the atoning journey** from Gethsemane to Calvary and at last to Easter morning
- **Issues and Experiences that were part of "descending below all things"**
 - **Betrayal**
 - **Abandonment**
 - **Abuse**
 - **Rejection**
 - **False (or unjust) Judgment**

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Reflection on Jesus' Lonely Atoning Journey

God So Loved the World, 66

Among other things, the sacrificial model of Jesus' atonement presents his various saving acts as a journey. The journey began when our burdens were placed upon him in Gethsemane, just as an Israelite worshiper claimed his sacrificial victim by laying hands on it, symbolically transferring both ownership and guilt. It continued as Jesus was led away captive from the garden, carrying that burden, even as the scapegoat carried Israel's guilt. It culminated when he died upon the cross, just as a sin offering was slain for atonement or as the paschal lamb was slaughtered so that the sinful might live. And then, just as the smoke of the sacrifice rose to God, so did Jesus rise with newness of life through the Resurrection to ascend to his Father.

Understanding that the Atonement, a miraculous event in itself, began in the Garden of Gethsemane, we are sometimes tempted to rush through the succeeding unpleasantness of the Passion. As a result we may skip over much of the betrayal, abandonment, abuse, and false judgment to give quick, painful acknowledgment to his death on the cross, eager to get to the joy of Easter morning as quickly possible. But the truth is that each phase of this atoning journey was somehow crucial to his descending below all things so that he would understand all that we suffer (D&C 122:8).

After experiencing the agony in the garden, our Lord suffered blow after blow: betrayal by his friend Judas, the indignities of his arrest and trial, and abuse at the hands of his captors. Through the atoning journey, Jesus experienced our sins, pains, and sorrows, and he also experienced the terrible realities of betrayal, false judgment, arrest, and rejection. No wife betrayed by a husband, no child abused by a parent, no friend rejected by another will fail to resonate with Jesus' being betrayed by the kiss of a friend, abandoned by his disciples, and denied, if only briefly, by Peter. No one who has ever been falsely judged can fail to relate to how Jesus, innocent and pure, was falsely accused and condemned.

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James Jacques Tissot, "The Kiss of Judas (Le baiser de Judas)"

The Arrest of Jesus: Judas and the Betrayal

- **Judas Leads Arresting Party to Jesus** (Mark 14:43; Matt 26:47; Luke 22:47a; John 18:2-3)
- **Judas Identifies Jesus with a Kiss** (Mark 14:44-46; Matt 26:48-50; Luke 22:47b-48)
 - A kiss may have been a customary greeting of a teacher by a disciple
 - Functioned to identify Jesus among other similar looking men in a dark setting
 - It is Jesus who notes the irony of Judas' kiss representing his betrayal
- **Judas' motivations?**
 - Unclear, although many have been suggested: greed, disaffection, disappointment in his messianic expectations, trying to "force the hand" of Jesus, etc.
 - Was it necessary?
 - Judas' act made Jesus' arrest possible or at least easier that night, but the Jewish authorities or Roman soldiers could have found him eventually
- **The importance of the act was in that Jesus, who needed to "descend below all" experienced the terrible act of betrayal**

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The Arrest of Jesus: the Power and Dignity of the Johannine Jesus

- **Jesus' "I Am" Proclamation to the Arresting Party (John 18:4-8a)**
 - **The Power of the Johannine Jesus:** "As soon then as he had said unto them, **I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.**" (John 18:6; note the use of the divine name "I Am")
 - Perhaps just Jewish shock and revulsion at hearing the divine name *YHWH* pronounced
 - Perhaps a visible sign of the power of Jehovah's name
- **Jesus Rebukes the Arresting Party (Mark 14:48-50; Matt 26:55-56a; Luke 22:52-53)**
 - "... Are you come out as against a thief [*lēstēs*] in the night?"
 - *Lēstēs* means "bandit, insurrectionist, violent revolutionary, or 'insurgent'"



Giotto, "The Arrest of Jesus (The Kiss of Judas)"

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The Arrest of Jesus: Peter's Zeal and the Lucan Jesus' Compassion



- **Servant of the High Priest Wounded (Mark 14:47; Matt 26:51; Luke 22:49-50; John 18:10)**
 - Jesus Rebukes the Defending Disciple (Matt 26:52-54; Luke 22:51a; John 18:11)
- **Jesus Heals the High Priest's Servant (Luke 22:51b; restored JST Mark 14:47)**
 - John names him Malchus

Giuseppe Cesari, "Die Gefangennahme Christi"

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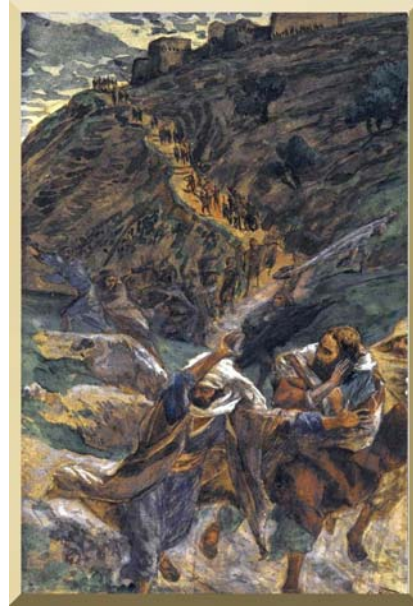
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The Disciples Abandon Jesus

- **Jesus Intervenes for His Disciples (John 18:8b-9)**
 - Christ's concern for his disciples in Luke 22:40 realized in John 18:8-9
 - "... *Let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, of them which thou gavest me have I lost none*"
- **Disciples Abandon Jesus (Mark 14:50; Matt 26:56b)**
 - Young Man in the Linen Cloth (Mark 14:51-52)
 - Many interesting suggestions, but the primary image may be that while the disciples had given all to follow Jesus, ***they are now willing to give up everything to abandon him and escape***

James Tissot, "The Flight of the Apostles"



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Retracing Jesus' Steps: Maundy Thursday Candlelight Procession in Jerusalem



Jesus Before the Jewish Authorities

(Mark 14:53-65; Matt 26:57-68; Luke 22:54-71; John 18-28)

- **Jesus before the former High Priest Annas** (John 18:12-14; 19-24)
 - Father-in-law of Caiaphas, Annas had been high priest himself from A.D. 6-15
 - Position of high priest had become a political appointment under the Herods; the Roman prefect or governor inherited the right to appoint or dismiss
 - The “other disciple” (John?) was “known unto then high priest” and gained access for himself and Peter
- **Jesus Mocked by the Jewish Guards** (Mark 14:65; Matt 26:67-68; Luke 22:63-65)
 - *Foreshadows the mocking he will suffer at the hands of the Romans*
- **Jesus Before the High Priest/Caiaphas** (Mark 14:54-65; Matt 26:57-68; Luke 22:66-71 [after the denial and the mocking]; John 18:24, 28)
 - Traditionally this has been examined as “The Jewish Trial of Jesus”
 - Scholars and Church commentators have noted the various irregularities (although much of this is based on later Mishnah evidence)
 - It was most likely a legal hearing, trying to establish the charges that would be given to Pilate
 - False witnesses fail to establish the charge of planning to destroy the temple
 - ***Blasphemy is settled upon when he does not deny that he is the Son of God***

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Carl Bloch, “Renunciation of Peter”

Peter’s Denial

(Mark 14:66-72; Matt 26:69-75; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18; 25-27)

- **Denials elude easy harmonization** (Peter responds to different people in different places), but they all agree that as pressure mounted, Peter insistently denied that he knew Jesus or was one of his followers
- “Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, ***I know not the man.*** And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, ‘Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.’” (Matt 26:74-75)
- **Denials are knowing Jesus, being one of his followers, having been with him**
 - They are not denials that Jesus is the Christ or the Son of God, testimonies that came to Peter by revelation
 - Carefully distinguish between **the historical figure** and **the literary character**

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Why the Denial?

Huntsman, “The Accounts of Peter’s Denial,” *MoP*, 127–49 (packet 331–54)

- **Suggestions that it was a command rather than a prophecy do not find definitive support in Greek grammar**
 - Again, as in the case of Peter (he had to be “Rocky” not “Rockette”) the discussion may be academic—*Jesus was not speaking Greek!*
 - Mark and Matthew’s “you *shalt* deny me thrice” is a future, probably a “predicative future” but it *could* be an “imperative future”
 - Luke and John actually write “before” or “till thou has denied me thrice,” using constructions that use a subjunctive verb here, not a future (i.e., in these two gospels it *cannot* be a command)
- **President Kimball’s “Peter My Brother” talk is often cited**
 - *It stresses Peter’s repentance and subsequent faithfulness*
 - “I do not pretend to know what Peter’s mental reactions were nor what compelled him to say what he did that terrible night. But in light of his proven bravery, courage, great devotion, and limitless love for the Master, *could we not give him the benefit of the doubt and at least forgive him as his Savior seems to have done so fully?*” (“Peter, My Brother,” *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 1971).
- **Theologically important issues**
 - Jesus is **forsaken** by almost all, even his friends = **the complete rejection of the Messiah**
 - Even the serious mistake of denying knowing or being a disciple of Jesus was something that Peter could receive forgiveness for and go on and do great things = **emphasizes the power of Christ’s grace**
 - He does **not** deny who Jesus is or the testimony that came to him by revelation

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Jesus in the Hands of the Romans

(Mark 15:1–21; Matt 27:1–32; Luke 23:1–32; John 18:29–19:17a; see also Huntsman, “Before the Romans,”)

- **Before Pilate** (Mark 15: 2–5; Matt 27:2–14; Luke 23:1–12; John 18:28–38a)
- **Suicide of Judas Iscariot** (only Matt 27:3–10)
- **Jesus Before Herod** (only Luke 23:6–12)
- **Pilate and the Mob** (Mark 15:6–11; Matt 27:15–23; Luke 23:13–23; John 18:38b–19:12)
 - *What is truth?*
 - The charge: **treason**
 - Jesus or Barabbas?
- **Pilate Hands Jesus over to Be Crucified** (Mark 15:12–15; Matt 27:24–26; Luke 23:24–26; John 19:13–16)



Antonio Ciseri, “Ecce Homo!”

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The Charge and the Trial



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- **The Accusation of the Jewish Authorities (Luke 23:2; John 18:29–32)**
 - The Jewish leaders moved from the religious charge of **blasphemy** (claiming to be the **Son of God**) to a **political charge** (claiming to be a **king**)
- **Usually non-citizens would be tried by local courts**
 - A Roman trial was called for if the case involved a Roman citizen, if two subjects came from different jurisdictions, or if provincial or imperial security was threatened
- **Could the Sanhedrin and other Jewish courts inflict capital punishment? Still an open question . . .**
 - John 18:31 *seems* to suggest that it was not “lawful” for “the Jews” to put anyone to death (Roman Law? Jewish Law about Passover?)
 - **The Jews could and did execute people in the Roman period for religious infractions**
- If the Jewish authorities could have stoned Jesus **for blasphemy**, what was the advantage of having the Roman convict him on a **political charge** (claiming to be a king and hence inciting rebellion) and having him crucified?
 - **Crucifixion was the equivalent of “hanging him on a tree” (Deuteronomy 21:23), and would thus demonstrate that Jesus was cursed according to the Mosaic law**
 - Paul wrote that Christ “was made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” (Galatians 3:13)

Titian, “The Crown of Thorns”

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The Soldiers Mock and Scourge Jesus

(Mark 15:16–20a; Matt 27:27–31)

- The **threat of scourging in Luke** and **earlier whipping of Jesus in John** may have been attempts to palliate the mob but still allow Jesus to be released
- **Mark and Matthew**, however, record **terrible scourging that was part of the capital punishment** Pilate had just declared
 - Meant to traumatize and weaken the body in order to make crucifixion kill more quickly
 - The preliminary mocking—dressing him a purple robe, pressing the crown of thorns upon his brow, and giving him a “scepter” to carry—was meant to ridicule the charge that he was, in fact, a king

“. . . is the placement of the scourging by Matthew and Mark after the final judgment correct, did John move it for dramatic purposes, or were there really two? Was it a flogging preliminary to execution, or was it a whipping meant to serve as a chastisement, excite pity, or reach a compromise punishment?

“In the end, however, the type and timing of the scourging are not in and of themselves important. **Instead, the fulfillment of prophecies regarding this suffering make this incident a fundamental part of the Atonement accomplished by Jesus Christ.** While Jesus had himself predicted the scourging and humiliation that He would suffer, some of the most powerful recorded prophecies of the abuse and mockery are found in the Book of Mormon in such passages as 1 Nephi 19:9, 2 Nephi 6:9, and Mosiah 3:9.

“The focus there is not with when and how the scourging, hitting, and spitting took place, but why. Christ was willing to suffer these things ‘because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men.’” (Huntsman, 316–317, emphasis added)

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Conclusion

“While those details remain unknown, **what remains important is that judgment took place**, and it is both significant and ironic that the two ‘trials’ of Jesus took place before the two peoples who were most dedicated to and obsessed by law. ***Just as the two trials reflect the two realities of Christ’s identity—as both Son of God and King—so the Jews and the Romans represent all Gentiles and all of Israel*** (Acts 4:27).

“Examining the trial should not be for us an issue of assigning culpability—to Judas, the chief priests, or Pilate—for the betrayal and condemnation were necessary parts of the Atonement. As Wright has recently written, all of us have a share in what each of them did in that they reflect the bad in all of us. Likewise, Bammel has observed that **‘Everyone becomes guilty (Luke 24:7) so that everyone might have a share in the fruits of Christ’s death.’**” (Huntsman, 317)