



Trial of Jesus

Matthew 26:31-75

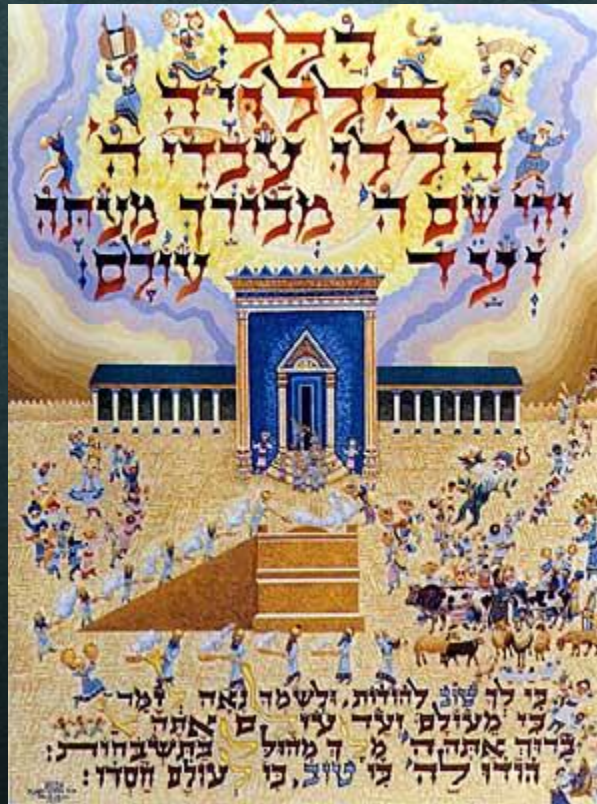
And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of naught; wherefore they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. Yea, they spit upon him, and he suffereth it, because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men. 1 Nephi 19:9



Hallel

And when they had sung an hymn...

Hallel is a Jewish prayer, a verbatim recitation, which is used for praise and thanksgiving that is recited by observant Jews on Jewish holidays. Wikipedia



The “hymn” the Savior and His disciples sang at the conclusion of the Last Supper was probably the traditional Jewish recitation from Psalms 113–18, called the *Hallel*.

Psalms 113–14 were traditionally sung at the beginning of the meal, and Psalms 115–18 were traditionally sung as part of the formal closing of a Passover meal.

Into the Night



... they went out into the mount of Olives.



As the Savior and His 11 disciples left the upper room and walked passed the city gates which was left open during a public festival, and crossed the ravine of the Cedron (Kidron) to the Mount of Olives, the Savior told the disciples that all of them would be offended because of Him that night.

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. Zechariah 13:7

“Mount of Olives”

“Garden of Gethsemane”



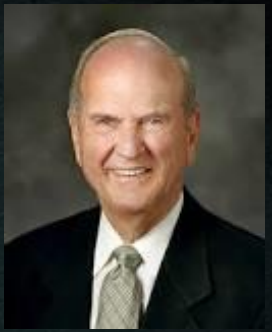
Gethsemane was a garden of olive trees located on the Mount of Olives just outside Jerusalem’s walls and that the name *Gethsemane* means “oil press.”



James Jeffery

Reconstruction of an ancient lever-type olive press found in Hazor, Israel. Weights hung on the lever would bring pressure down on the stack of baskets containing crushed olives, and oil would seep out of the baskets and drain into a stone basin.

“There in the garden bearing the Hebrew name of *Gethsemane*—meaning ‘oil press’—olives had been beaten and pressed to provide oil and food.



There at Gethsemane, the Lord ‘suffered the pain of all men, that all ... might repent and come unto him’

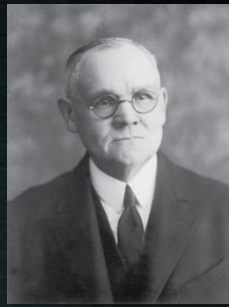
He took upon Himself the weight of the sins of all mankind, bearing its massive load that caused Him to bleed from every pore.”



Peter

thou shalt deny me thrice.

Peter responded by saying that he would never be offended because of the Master, but Jesus's reply to him illustrates that He knew Peter better than Peter knew himself—and that He likewise knows each of us better than we know ourselves.



Following the Savior's arrest later that night, His disciples temporarily became scattered and Peter denied the Savior three times.

However: Peter offers to be with Jesus in his death but is told "Thou shalt follow me afterwards," which gives a prophetic glimpse of the death he (Peter) should die...John 13:36-37



Guido Reni

Sorrowful



8 of the apostles were left at or near the entrance, with the instruction to “Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.”.



And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Watch With Me

By instructing His disciples to watch with Him, Jesus was warning them to be vigilant because their faith in Him would be tested.



Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Why would the disciples wonder if Jesus really was the Messiah?

Many Jews did not understand that the Messiah would suffer and die but rather expected that the Messiah would liberate the Jews by overthrowing the Romans.

And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, Luke 22:45

Let This Cup Pass From Me

Cup = symbolic expression for a bitter or poisonous potion typifying experiences of suffering

In Gethsemane, Jesus began taking upon Himself the sins and suffering of all people as part of His great atoning sacrifice.



“The Lord said, in effect, ‘If there is another path, I would rather walk it. If there is any other way—any other way—I will gladly embrace it.’ ... But in the end, the cup did not pass.”



Matthew 26:36-46

Focuses on the Savior's submission to the Father's will.



Mark 14:32-42

Addresses what Jesus suffered in Gethsemane.



Luke 22:40-46

Emphasizes the severity of His suffering.

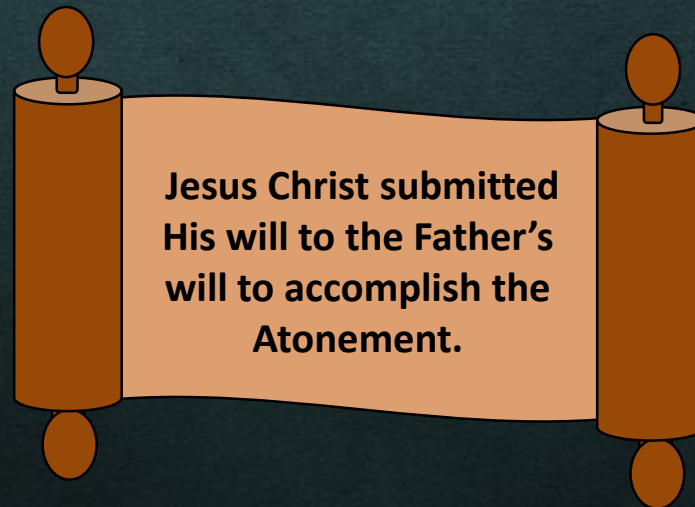
Nevertheless...

“He knew, for our sakes, that it could not pass and that He must drink that bitter cup to the dregs.”



“It was not physical pain, nor mental anguish alone, that caused Him to suffer such torture as to produce an extrusion of blood from every pore; but a spiritual agony of soul such as only God was capable of experiencing.” (3)

“His disciples, understandably, were weary and soon fell asleep. What of Christ’s sleep? What of His fatigue? What rest or slumber will sustain Him through such an agonizing ordeal? That is simply not His concern here, nor does it ever seem to be. He will endure. He will triumph. He will not falter nor fail us.”



“... one principal commitment in response to the Savior’s incomparable sacrifice for them, His payment for their transgressions, His sorrow for their sins, leave with them the necessity to obey—to yield in their own difficult domain and hours of decision to ‘the will of the Father’ [3 Ne. 11:11], whatever the cost.

...The thing Christ seems most anxious to stress about His mission—beyond the personal virtues, beyond the magnificent sermons, and even beyond the healing—is that He submitted His will to the will of the Father.”



Take Your Rest

Jesus prayed three times in the Garden of Gethsemane.



Each time He expressed His willingness to obey His Father's will.



Submitting Our Will

We follow Jesus Christ's example when we choose to submit our will to Heavenly Father's will



When have you chosen to submit your will to our Heavenly Father?

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Jesus Arrested and Tried

“Imagine [Jesus Christ,] the Being whose power, whose light, whose glory holds the universe in order, the Being who speaks and solar systems, galaxies, and stars come into existence—standing before wicked men and being judged by them as being of no worth or value!”



The Betrayal

Jesus is betrayed by Judas with a “kiss”

During New Testament times, it was customary for men to greet each other with a kiss on the cheek



Such greetings were a symbol of respect, particularly when bestowed by a pupil upon a great rabbi. They communicated brotherhood and friendship.

Summon Angels

The Savior's statement that He could pray and summon "more than twelve legions of angels" helps us appreciate His willing submission to His arrest and the abuse that followed.

Taken literally, "twelve legions of angels" would have been between 36,000 and 72,000 angels.

His cursing of a fig tree a few days before had shown that He could destroy with a word.

He had power to defend Himself but chose not to use it at this time. The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob taught his people of the Lord's power, saying, "He can pierce you, and with one glance of his eye he can smite you to the dust!"



Peter Follows

But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

The disciples flee but Peter follows afar off and sits with servants to see the trial.

The Savior's prophecy that the Apostles would turn away from Him was fulfilled. However, this turning away was only temporary.



Caiaphas

Joseph Caiaphas reigned from AD 18 to AD 36

He was the son-in-law of the high priest Annas and a Sadducee and presided over the Sanhedrin

He was the Jewish high priest during the ministry of Jesus and one of the leading supporters of the conspiracy to put the Lord to death

His responsibilities as high priest included controlling the temple treasury and overseeing temple rituals, which made him considerable money

Jesus was taken captive and led before a hearing chaired by Caiaphas

He condemned the Lord for blasphemy and referred Him to Pontius Pilate

After the Savior raised Lazarus from the dead, Caiaphas stated that it was necessary to put Jesus to death (John 11:50)

He was pleased with the ensuing developments leading to the Crucifixion

He along with Annas questioned Peter and John about their healing of a lame son, but released them because of the many witnesses of the miracle (Acts 4:1-22)



The Trial

Jesus Holds His Peace



Steps leading to Caiaphas' palace

During New Testament times, the position of high priest had become a corrupt political appointment rather than a legitimate priesthood office.



Mistreatment

The Son of God would have been in terrible physical condition as He stood trial before Jewish leaders.

During the hours prior to His interrogation, Jesus had experienced the agony of Gethsemane.

He had been back and forth across the Kidron Valley. He would have also been experiencing the effects of blood loss and likely the effects of chills from the night air upon His weakened body. He had also likely not slept in many hours.

It was in this weakened physical condition that He faced additional abuse at the hands of His accusers. Nephi prophesied that “because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men,” the Savior would willingly suffer the indignities and abuses heaped upon Him.



Some of Jesus' Trials between Gethsemane and the Crucifixion

- ❖ After Gethsemane, Jesus was physically weak and exhausted. Matthew 26: 36-46; Mosiah 3:7; D&C 19:16-19
- ❖ He was betrayed by a disciple and close friend, Judas. Matthew 26: 45-50
- ❖ Many, including disciples, forsook Him. Matthew 26: 55-56
- ❖ People lied about Him. Matthew 26: 59-62
- ❖ He was accused of blasphemy for telling the truth. Matthew 26: 63-65



❖ He was sentenced to death without a cause.

Matthew 26:66

❖ He was spit on, beaten, and mocked more than once.

Matthew 26: 67-68, 27: 29-30

❖ A government leader condemned Jesus to death, though he knew He was innocent.

Matthew 27: 11-26

❖ Jesus was scourged (a brutal form of whipping that frequently killed the person).

Matthew 27: 26

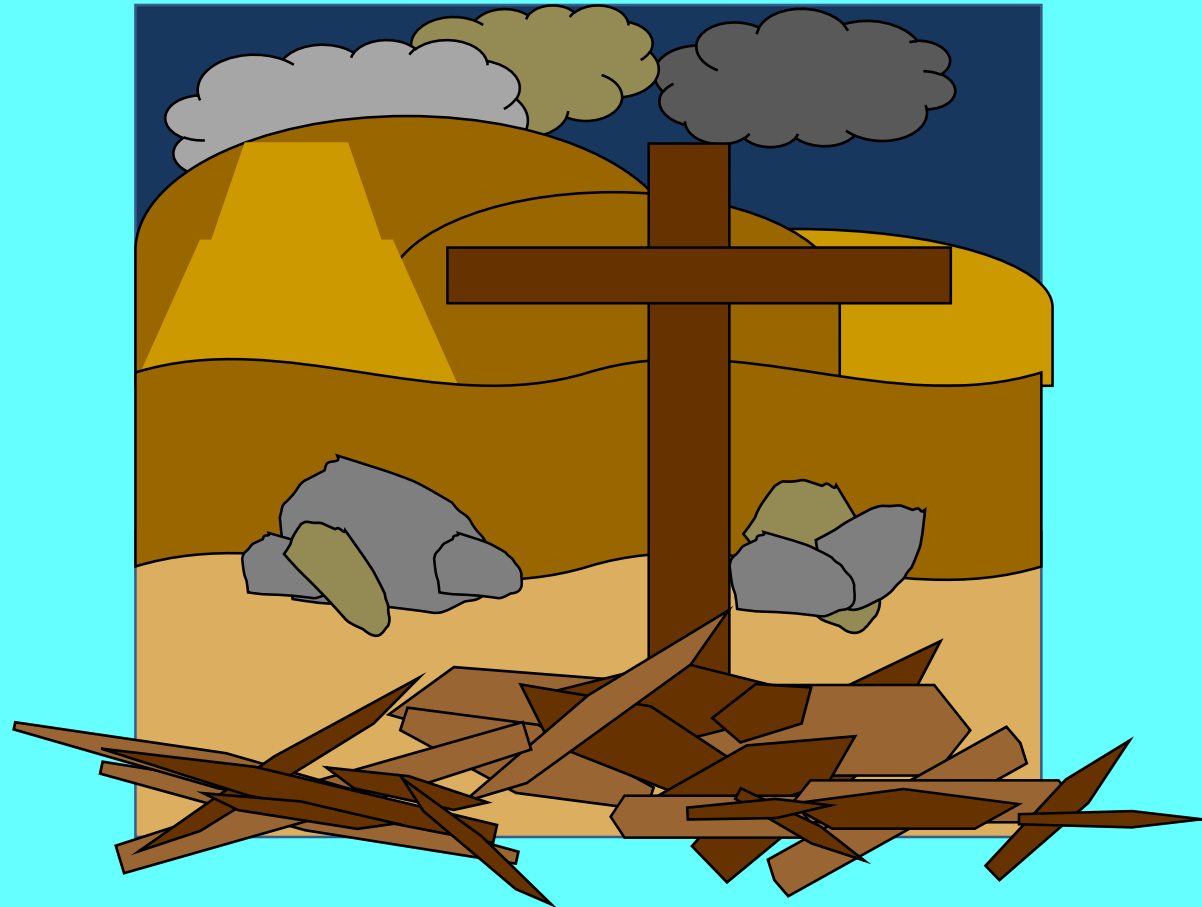


❖ He was stripped of His clothing.

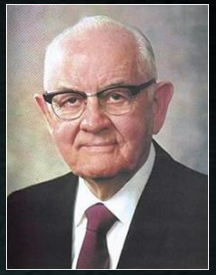
Matthew 27: 28, 35

❖ The soldiers pushed a crown of thorns onto His head.

Matthew 27: 29



Peter's Denial

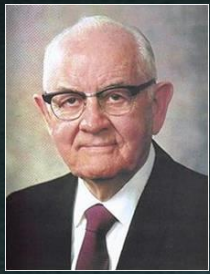


“I do not pretend to know what Peter’s mental reactions were nor what compelled him to say what he did that terrible night. But in light of his proven bravery, courage, great devotion, and limitless love for the Master, could we not give him the benefit of the doubt and at least forgive him as his Savior seems to have done so fully.

Almost immediately Christ elevated him to the highest position in his church and endowed him with the complete keys of that kingdom.

“... Hearing the bird’s announcement of the dawn reminded him not only that he had denied the Lord but also that all the Lord had said would be fulfilled, even to the crucifixion. He went out and wept bitterly.

Were his tears for personal repentance only, or were they mingled with sorrowful tears in realization of the fate of his Lord and Master and his own great loss?



Peter the Apostle

“Only hours passed until he was among the first at the tomb as the head of the group of believers.

Only weeks passed until he was assembling the saints and organizing them into a compact, strong, and unified community. It was not long before he was languishing in prison, being beaten, abused, and ‘sifted as wheat’ as Christ had predicted.”



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Sources:

Suggested Hymn: #193 *I Stand All Amazed*

Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uG1c3KVK_Jg Traditional Passover Song

“The Savior Suffers in Gethsemane” (time code 5:53–8:30)

“Jesus Is Tried by Caiaphas, Peter Denies Knowing Him” (time code 0:00–1:40)



1. New Testament Institute Student Manual Chapter 9
2. James E. Talmage *Jesus the Christ* p. 611, 613-614
3. Elder Russell M. Nelson (“The Atonement,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 35).
4. Jeffrey R. Holland (“Teaching, Preaching, Healing,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2003, 41) and *He will Never Let You Down* Sept. 2002 New Era
5. Gerald N. Lund (“Knowest Thou the Condescension of God?” in *Doctrines of the Book of Mormon: The 1991 Sperry Symposium*, ed. Bruce A. Van Orden and Brent L. Top [1992], 86).
6. *New Testament Who’s Who* by Richard J. Allen p. 23-24
7. President Spencer W. Kimball(*Peter, My Brother*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [July 13, 1971

| Event | Matthew | Mark | Luke | John |
|--|----------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Prayer and Agony of Gethsemane | 26:36-46 | 14:32-42 | 22:40-46 | 18:1 |
| The Betrayal by Judas | 26:47, 50 | 14:43-45 | 22:47, 48 | 18:2-9 |
| Peter Rebuked for Trying to Stop the Arrest | 26:51-55 | 14:47-49 | 22:49-53 | 18:10, 11 |
| The Arrest and the Apostles Flee | 26:50, 56 | 14:46, 50-52 | | 18:12 |
| Taken to the Palace of Annas and Caiaphas Followed by Peter and John | 26:57, 58 | 14:53, 54 | 22:54, 55 | 18:13-16, 18 |
| Questioned by Annas | | | | 18:19-24 |
| Examined Before Caiaphas and the Council | 26:59-66 | 14:55-64 | | |
| Mocking of Jesus | 26:67, 68 | 14:65 | 22:63-65 | |
| Peter Denies Knowing Jesus | 26:69-75 | 14:66-72 | 22:56-62 | 18:17, 25-27 |

Sung at the Beginning of a Meal

Psalm 113

1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD.

2 Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.

3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's name *is* to be praised.

4 The LORD *is* high above all nations, *and* his glory above the heavens.

5 Who *is* like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high,
6 Who humbleth *himself* to behold *the things that are* in heaven, and in the earth!

7 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;

8 That he may set *him* with princes, *even* with the princes of his people.

9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house, *and to be* a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalm 114

1 When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;

2 Judah was his sanctuary, *and* Israel his dominion.

3 The sea saw *it*, and fled: Jordan was driven back.

4 The mountains skipped like rams, *and* the little hills like lambs.

5 What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back?

6 Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams; *and* ye little hills, like lambs?

7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;

8 Which turned the rock *into* a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

Hallel

Sung at the End of a Meal

Psalm 115

1. Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake.

2 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where *is* now their God?

3 But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

4 Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

5 They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:

6 They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:

7 They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.

8 They that make them are like unto them; *so is* every one that trusteth in them.

9 O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield.

10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield.

11 Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield.

12 The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless *us*; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.

13 He will bless them that fear the LORD, *both* small and great.

14 The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children.

15 Ye *are* blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth.

16 The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.

17 The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.

18 But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.

Hallel--Sung at the End of a Meal

Psalm 116:

1 I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and* my supplications.
2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live.
3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.
4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.
5 Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God *is* merciful.
6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.
7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, *and* my feet from falling.
9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.
10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:
11 I said in my haste, All men *are* liars.
12 What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me?
13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.
14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.
15 Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints.
16 O LORD, truly I *am* thy servant; I *am* thy servant, *and* the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.
17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.
18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,
19 In the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalm 117:

1 O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.
2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalm 118:

1 O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: because his mercy *endureth* for ever.
2 Let Israel now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.
3 Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.
4 Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.
5 I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, *and set me* in a large place.
6 The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?
7 The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me.
8 *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.
9 *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.
10 All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.
11 They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
12 They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
13 Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me.
14 The LORD *is* my strength and song, and is become my salvation.
15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
17 I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.
18 The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.
19 Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, *and* I will praise the LORD:
20 This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.
21 I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.
22 The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner.
23 This is the LORD's doing; it *is* marvellous in our eyes.
24 This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.
25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.
26 Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.
27 God *is* the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.
28 Thou *art* my God, and I will praise thee: *thou art* my God, I will exalt thee.
29 O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

Hallel consists of six Psalms (113–118), which are recited as a unit, on joyous occasions which include the following: The three pilgrim festivals of Pesach (Passover), Shavuot, and Sukkot (the "bigger" Jewish holy days, mentioned in the Torah), as well as Hanukkah and Rosh Chodesh (beginning of the new month). Many Jewish communities, especially those that identify with religious Zionism, recite Hallel on Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israeli Independence Day). Some also recite it on Yom Yerushalayim (commemorating the re-unification of Jerusalem in 1967). On those occasions, Hallel is usually chanted aloud as part of Shacharit (the morning prayer service) following the Shacharit's Shemoneh Esreh ("The Eighteen", the main prayer). Hallel is recited during the evening prayers on the first (and, outside Israel, second) night of Pesach, except by Lithuanian and German Jews, and by all communities during the Pesach Seder service. According to the Talmud, there was a dispute between the school of Hillel and the school of Shammai regarding the reading of Hallel on Pesach. According to the school of Shammai, only the first psalm (Ps. 113) should be read before the meal, whereas the school of Hillel advocated reading the first two psalms (Ps. 113 and 114). The remaining Psalms would be said after the Grace After Meals (as always, the halacha follows the school of Hillel). Although Hallel generally refers only to the aforementioned psalms, the Talmud also refers to Psalm 136 as "the Great Hallel". Each verse of Psalm 136 concludes with the refrain, "for his mercy endures forever" and it contains mention of twenty-six acts of Divine kindness and sustenance for the world. It is recited at the Pesach Seder after the standard Hallel is completed. It is also said in the expanded Pesukei dezimra on the morning of Shabbat and festivals. In the Talmudic era, if rain fell on the morning of a fast day that was declared in response to a drought, this was seen as a sign of Divine favor, in which case "the Great Hallel" was added in the afternoon prayers. There is mention in some references that this Psalm may also be used antiphonally in Temple worship. Wikipedia

Zechariah's Message: Matthew 26:31

Jesus' purpose in calling attention to Zechariah's Messianic prophecy was to strengthen the apostles. Though he was smitten and they were scattered, yet he would come forth in the triumph of the resurrection, and they must rally together, gather in the scattered sheep, and do the work assigned them.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie *Doctrinal new Testament Commentary* p. 769

Peter

Peter is the classic example of how the power of conversion works on receptive souls. During our Lord's mortal ministry, Peter had a testimony, born of the Spirit, of the divinity of Christ and of the great plan of salvation which was in Christ. ...the Holy Ghost gave him utterance. (Matthew 16:13-19). When others fell away, Peter stood forth with the apostolic assurance. Peter knew, and his knowledge came by revelation.

Long after Peter had gained a testimony, and on the very night Jesus was arrested, Jesus said, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren (Luke 22:32.) Immediately thereafter, and regardless of his testimony, Peter denied that he knew Christ. After the crucifixion, Peter went fishing, only to be called back to the ministry by the risen Lord. (John 21:1-17.) Finally on the day of Pentecost the promised spiritual endowment was received; Peter and all the faithful disciples became new creatures of the Holy Ghost; they were truly converted; and their subsequent achievements manifest the fixity of their conversion. (Acts 3-4)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie *Doctrinal new Testament Commentary* p. 770-771

Gethsemane

Found on or near the Mount of Olives just outside Jerusalem's walls, Gethsemane was a garden of olive trees the Savior often visited (see Luke 22:39; John 18:1-2). On this night, the Savior had come to Gethsemane to suffer for the sins of all mankind and work out the infinite Atonement. The garden lay to the east of the temple in Jerusalem. As outlined in the law of Moses, when someone desired to make a burnt offering, he selected a "male [animal] without blemish" and presented it to the priest at the east door of the tabernacle (Leviticus 1:3). During New Testament times, the offering was presented to the priest at the eastern gate of the temple in Jerusalem. These acts can be seen as a similitude of the Savior presenting Himself to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. (1)

The name means "oil press" and probably has reference to a mill maintained at the place for the extraction of oil from olives there cultivated. John refers to the spot as a garden, from which designation we may regard it as an enclosed space of private ownership. That it was a place frequented by Jesus when he sought retirement for prayer, or opportunity for confidential converse with the disciples, is indicated by the same writer (John 18:1,2) James E. Talmage *Jesus the Christ* p. 620

Carrying Out the Atonement: Matthew 26:37-39
First, an enormous sense of responsibility, for He realized that except it be done perfectly, not one of His Father’s children could return to Him. They would be forever banished from His presence since there would be no way to repent for broken laws and no unclean thing can exist in the presence of God. His Father’s plan would have failed, and each spirit child would have been under the eternal control and torment of Satan.
“Second, in His absolutely pure mind and heart, He had to personally feel the consequences of all that mankind would ever encounter, even the most depraved, despicable sins.
“Third, He had to endure the vicious attack of Satan’s hordes while physically and emotionally pressed to the limit. Then, for reasons we do not fully know, while at the extremity of His capacity, at the time the Savior most needed succor, His Father allowed Him to shoulder the onerous responsibility with only His own strength and capacity” Elder Richard G. Scott (“He Lives! All Glory to His Name!” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2010, 76–77).

The Atonement: Matthew 26:37-39
“With merciless fury Satan’s forces must have attacked the Savior on all fronts. ... The Savior pressed forward in bold assault until every prisoner was freed from the tenacious tentacles of the Evil One. This was a rescue mission of infinite implications. Every muscle of the Savior, every virtue, every spiritual reservoir that could be called upon would be summoned in the struggle. No doubt there was an exhaustion of all energies, a straining of all faculties, an exercise of all powers. Only then, when seemingly all had been spent, would the forces of evil abandon their posts and retreat in horrible defeat. ... The Great Deliverer has rescued us—saved the day, saved eternity. But, oh, what a battle! What wounds! What love! What cost!” Ted R. Calister (*The Infinite Atonement* [2000], 130–31).

Put Him to Death: Matthew 26:59
The council referred to in Matthew 26:59 was the great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem—an assembly of 71 members, including Levites, chief priests, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and those of other political persuasions, all presided over by the high priest, who was Caiaphas at this time. It was the highest Jewish court of justice and the supreme legislative council in Jerusalem. Its main function was to interpret Jewish law and regulate Jewish life. The chief priests and others of this council “sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death,” implying that they were unable to find credible witnesses, that their case against Him was weak, and that their actions were premeditated (see also Bible Dictionary, “Sanhedrin”). (1)

Charge of Blasphemy Matthew 26:61-66:
By definition, *blasphemy* meant to revile, despise, mock, or curse God. Jesus Christ did none of these, but Caiaphas considered the Savior’s statement that He would sit “on the right hand of power” to be blasphemous (see Matthew 26:63–64). However, the Savior’s claim to divine power and authority would have been blasphemy only if it had been untrue. When Caiaphas heard this statement, he rent his clothes and declared that the Savior had spoken blasphemy—an offense punishable by death under the law of Moses (see Leviticus 24:11–16). He and the members of the council pronounced that the Savior was now “guilty of death.” However, since blasphemy was a Jewish matter and of no concern to the Romans, the Jewish leaders changed the charge to sedition when they took Jesus to Pilate. For more information on this charge of sedition, see the commentary for Mark 15:1–2. (1)

Jesus Was Without Sin: Matthew 26:66-68
The Atonement required the Savior to endure the abuses of the Jewish and Roman leaders without sinning: “The cruelties and indignities suffered by Jesus during the various trials represented a last-ditch effort by Lucifer to cause Christ to stumble. A single misstep—a cross word, an angry outburst, even a moment’s indulgence in self-pity or pride—and all was lost. Hence, every possible indignity was heaped upon the Savior: false accusations; blasphemous outbursts; a crown of thorns; the horrible scourging by bone-embedded whips; the mock robe of royalty; the spitting, taunting, and physical blows of the soldiers. The whole pitiable drama was masterminded by Lucifer in the hope that he might yet find a way to nullify the Redeemer’s triumph at Gethsemane” Elder Bruce D. Porter (*The King of Kings* [2000], 106–7).