

Things which Jesus didn't do.

SCRIPTURE

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, 'Sit here while I go and pray yonder'. And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed ...

And He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O my Father,¹ if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will' ... again a second time, He ... prayed, saying, 'O my Father, if this cup cannot pass away from me unless I drink it, your will be done' ... and He ... prayed the third time, saying the same words ...

While He was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people ...

One of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot call on my Father, and He will provide me at once with more than twelve legions of angels?'² ...

And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled ... they spit in His face, and buffeted Him, and some struck Him with the palms of their hands ...

And they bound Him and led Him away and delivered Him over to Pilate the governor ... the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him ... and they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head ...

Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots ... Those who passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads, and saying, 'You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross'.

Likewise, the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him'.

(Matthew 26. 36-37, 39, 42, 44, 47, 51-53, 57, 67; 27. 2, 27, 30, 35, 39-42.)

BACKGROUND

For many years, my wife, Linda, received and distributed numerous copies of the publication, 'Our Daily Bread'. Over twenty years ago, Linda drew my attention to a daily meditation entitled, 'What Jesus didn't do'. I was struck, in particular, by the following short extract from that article: 'While reviewing the incredible things Jesus did and said to accomplish our great salvation, I also noted a number of things Jesus *didn't* do ...' (emphasis original).³

As you may guess, that extract, together with the title of that article, started me thinking and prompted me to undertake the present devotional study.

INTRODUCTION

It goes without saying that the New Testament has much to tell us of what Jesus *did*.

For example:

(i) The apostle John closes his Gospel with the words, 'Now there are also many other things that Jesus *did*. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written'.⁴

(ii) And, on account of the way in which the New Testament is constructed, the very next book, Luke's 'Acts of the Apostles', opens with the words, 'The former treatise I made'—speaking, of course, of the Gospel according to Luke—'O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to *do* and to teach'.⁵

But the New Testament testifies not only to the quantity, but also to the quality of all that Jesus did.

The apostle Peter summarises the nature of our Lord's deeds in the words, He 'went about (literally, 'He passed through'⁶) doing good'.⁷

Mark, the author of the second Gospel,⁸ reports the verdict of the crowd on the *quality* of what the Lord Jesus did when He healed a deaf man with a speech impediment from Decapolis, 'He has done all things well'.⁹ We note then that He not only did good but that He also did it well.

And, given the wealth of material in the Gospels, we tend naturally to concentrate on the many things our Lord did. But I assure you that the New Testament has a great deal to tell us also of things which He didn't do. Let me select just a few examples—one each from several different writers of the New Testament:

I learn from Luke that the Lord did not authorise two of His disciples, when they asked, to call down fire from heaven to consume a Samaritan village which had refused to receive Him.¹⁰

I learn from John that the Saviour did not permit the Galilean crowd to 'take Him by force to make Him king'.¹¹

I learn from Paul that He 'did not please Himself'.¹²

I learn from the writer to the Hebrews that He 'did not glorify Himself to be made a high priest', being appointed to that office by God Himself.¹³

I learn from Peter that He 'did no sin'.¹⁴

Most certainly, the New Testament has much to tell us of things which the Lord Jesus didn't do. But, for the purpose of this brief study, I want to focus particularly on the closing scenes of His life on earth and to pinpoint just five instances from what is known as our Lord's passion. In order, I want to consider:

1. The One who did not insist on doing His own will;
2. The One who did not request angelic help and support;
3. The One who did not hide His face from shame and spitting;
4. The One who did not save Himself; and
5. The One who did not come down from the cross.

I don't pretend for one moment that this list is in any way exhaustive, even within the context of His passion. I could, for instance, point equally to:

(a) The One who did not accept the drugged wine which was offered to Him when He hung on the cross;¹⁵

(b) The One who did not speak out in His own defence;¹⁶ and

(c) The One who did not revile or threaten those who were responsible, humanly speaking, for His sufferings.¹⁷

EXPOSITION

Ponder the following five things which Jesus didn't do.

1. The One who did not insist on doing His own will.

We take up the story in the garden of Gethsemane and, in considering the One who did not insist on doing His own will, we need to tread most carefully and reverently.

For the Lord Jesus, it is zero hour. As never before, the cross casts its dark and ominous shadow over His soul.

A few days earlier, the Saviour had said, 'Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? "Father, save me from this hour"? But for this purpose, I have come to this hour'.¹⁸ But now, He has advanced far beyond that. All has now changed, as heralded by the opening words of His prayer on leaving the upper room, 'Father, the hour has come'.¹⁹

Jesus knows that, within much less than twenty-four hours, He would be plunged into the most fearful abyss of suffering imaginable. Make no mistake, our Lord's conflict in the garden was very, very real. I shudder at the very vocabulary used to describe it: His amazement, His distress, His sorrow and His agony. I shudder to read of how He—the Son of God, no less—shrinks back from that which He describes both as an 'hour' and as a 'cup': (a) 'He fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said; "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you; take away this cup from me".²⁰

Our Lord's question to Peter, 'Could you not watch one hour?',²¹ gives us some idea of how long He wrestled in prayer that night, as He offered up 'prayers and supplications' which were accompanied, we are told, not only by 'loud cries and tears'²² but also by prostration 'on His face'.²³ It seems clear that, at first—and by choice—He had *knelt* to pray²⁴ but that, then, He had *fallen* on the ground—and (as the tense of the verb²⁵ suggests) had fallen repeatedly.²⁶

Those gnarled and twisted olive trees knew Him well. Elsewhere, we read that 'Judas, who betrayed Him, knew the place, for Jesus often met there with His disciples'.²⁷ But those trees had never heard such prayers before nor would they ever hear such prayers again. Indeed, heaven itself had never heard such prayers before nor would it ever hear such prayers again!

Throughout the thirty-three years which our Lord Jesus spent in our world, He always chose to do His Father's will—never His own. We discover that God's will was ever (a) His delight,²⁸ in one sense, (b) ever His diet²⁹ and (c) ever His desire.³⁰

He Himself once said, 'I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent me'.³¹ But never before had that 'will' entailed such a cost as now.

The Saviour had once taught His disciples to pray, 'your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'.³² And I cannot help wondering whether, even as He had done so on the Galilean hillside,³³ He had been thinking of this time, then some three years later, when He would pray those very words Himself, 'Your will be done',³⁴ as He bows to the divine 'will' which leads Him to the suffering of the cross. But, characterised, as ever, by perfect and unreserved obedience, He submits to God's will for Him, saying, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will'.³⁵

But, if He did not 'insist on doing His own will', neither did He 'request angelic help and support'.³⁶

2. The One who did not request angelic help and support.

I am thankful, not only that the prayer which He prays when in Gethsemane wasn't cut short (for everything hinges on His word, 'nevertheless'), but also that there was another prayer which He did not even begin then. It was the prayer which He never prayed.

The story begins when His disciples, confronted not only by Judas Iscariot, but also by the 'band of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees'³⁷ which Judas had brought with him, ask Jesus, 'Lord, shall we strike with the sword?'³⁸

Peter, entirely in character, doesn't wait for any answer and immediately draws his sword³⁹ and lets fly. But he soon proves that he was far more skilled with a fishing net⁴⁰ or a hook⁴¹ than he ever was with a sword—and, although he clearly aimed to part Malchus's hair with his short sword,⁴² he succeeded only in severing his right ear.⁴³

As far as I know, the ear of Malchus was the only flesh wound that our Lord healed.⁴⁴ But Jesus had something for the ear of Peter as well as for the ear of Malchus. 'Put your sword back into its place', He says ('Return', that is, 'your weapon to its proper and appropriate home') 'for all who take the sword will perish by the sword'.⁴⁵ And, had the Saviour not intervened at that moment, Peter, doubtless, would have perished. For, at the time, Peter and the other disciples faced a great crowd, armed 'with swords and clubs (or cudgels)'⁴⁶ and they (the disciples) possessed only two short swords among them.⁴⁷

Think of it—the Lord Jesus performs the last recorded miracle of His earthly life to save Peter from being cut to ribbons!

But Peter's action is not only unwise—it is also altogether unnecessary. For the Lord proceeds to make it clear to him that His Father stood ready to render Him far more effective aid and support than the apostle's short sword ever could—that just one brief prayer was all

that stood between Him and 'more than twelve legions of angels' ... 'Do you think that I cannot now call on my Father, and He will provide me at once with more than twelve legions of angels?'⁴⁸

'Twelve legions'—Peter, just think of that. We know that a single Roman legion comprised ten cohorts, with a cohort numbering anything between 400 and 600 men.⁴⁹ Which meant, of course, that *'twelve legions' would have numbered anything between 48 and 72 thousand troops*. By way of contrast, I understand that, to control the whole of Palestine, Pilate had available no more than half a legion (five infantry cohorts, that is) and some cavalry.⁵⁰

It may well be that our Lord speaks to Peter in terms of *'twelve'* legions because that number would have meant that there would have been one legion each for the eleven apostles (Judas was now 'standing with' our Lord's foes⁵¹), together with one for Himself. Yet, note, not *'twelve legions'*, but *'more than twelve legions'*.

And what is more, these would be legions *'of angels'*. We cannot but recall that, back in the days of the prophet Isaiah and King Hezekiah, the Assyrian invasion and planned siege of Jerusalem⁵² came to an abrupt end when, in the words of scripture, 'the Lord sent an angel'⁵³ ... yes, just one, who 'smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand'.⁵⁴ Following which, the Assyrian monarch, Sennacherib (the so-called 'Great King') returned to the Assyrian capital, Nineveh, with his tail between his legs, so to speak.⁵⁵

Psalm 103 speaks of God's angels as those 'who excel in strength'.⁵⁶ If you have any doubt about that, ask Sennacherib!

Now, if just one angel might dispatch a hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrian warriors, what could twelve legions have done? Even taking the lowest estimate of 4,000 for the number of men in a legion—and crediting each angel with the destructive power of the angel who sorted out Sennacherib's army—simple arithmetic shows that twelve legions of angels could have wiped out a total of 8.8 billion men. They could, that is, have annihilated more than the entire world population, even as it stands today.⁵⁷

And I take our Lord's words to Peter seriously—that, *if He had* called on (the word translated 'call on' is sometimes used in a military context of calling on someone 'as an ally'⁵⁸) His Father, then *He would* immediately⁵⁹ have placed more than twelve legions of angels at His disposal.⁶⁰ And I note that the word translated 'provide' is used in military contexts with the meaning, 'to cause to stand beside', so as 'to help or defend'.⁶¹

Already the Father had sent one angel from heaven to strengthen Jesus in the Garden,⁶² and there can be no doubt that He would have responded instantly to any appeal by Him for further aid.

And, what is more, because God's throne is surrounded by an innumerable company of angels,⁶³ the departure of twelve legions would almost certainly have gone unnoticed. But we can take it that, although their *departure* might have gone unnoticed in heaven, their *arrival* would certainly *not* have gone unnoticed in Gethsemane! And the 'band of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees',⁶⁴ now arrayed against Jesus and His disciples, would have been crushed on the spot. To use a common idiom, *they 'wouldn't have had a prayer'*.

But speaking of 'not having a prayer', it is clear from the way in which our Lord speaks that, although He knew that just one brief call from Him would have drawn down 'at once' more than twelve legions of the army of heaven, He had no intention of voicing that cry. Yes, they were only a prayer away but it was a prayer that He wouldn't—and *didn't—pray*.

And so, the One who 'did not insist on doing His own will', did not 'request angelic help and support' either.

3. The One who did not hide His face from shame and spitting.

Then, thirdly, our Lord 'did not hide His face from shame and spitting'. I have borrowed this third heading from Isaiah chapter 50, where the Lord Jesus declares prophetically, 'I gave my back to the smiters ('to the scourges' in the Greek Old Testament⁶⁵), and my cheeks to them that pulled out the hair; *I hid not my face from shame and spitting*'.⁶⁶

I have discovered that men in Bible days had many ways of expressing contempt and disdain for others. They possessed a whole arsenal of scorn and derision:

(i) It was considered a shame to be seen naked or part-naked. One way, therefore, to humiliate an enemy was to strip him of his clothes, either in part or the whole. This is what, in Old Testament days, Hanun, the king of Ammon, did to David's servants to disgrace them.⁶⁷

In the case of our Saviour, 'When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, *they took His garments*'.⁶⁸

(ii) Another way to dishonour someone was to clap one's hands,⁶⁹ and wag one's head at him. In the Book of Lamentations, broken-hearted Jeremiah bewailed his beloved Jerusalem, 'all who pass by clap their hands at you; they ... wag their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem'.⁷⁰

In Psalm 22, the Lord Jesus declares prophetically, 'all who see me laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, *they wag the head*' (in malicious triumph, that is)⁷¹—words which were fulfilled literally.⁷²

(iii) Yet another way of expressing disdain was to damage a man's beard—as also happened to David's servants, when half their beards were shaved off by Hanun to expose them as objects of ridicule.⁷³ It was a great insult to an oriental, because the beard was cherished as a symbol of manly dignity. Many considered the removal of a beard so demeaning that they would prefer to die.⁷⁴

As quoted above, in Isaiah 50, the Lord Jesus declares prophetically, '*I gave ... my cheeks to them that pulled out the hair*'.⁷⁵ It goes without saying that, when experiencing that, the Saviour suffered not only deep disgrace, but also excruciating pain.

(iv) But an expression of utter and extreme contempt and scorn was to spit directly in someone's face.⁷⁶ I need do no more than refer to three Old Testament passages:

(a) According to Deuteronomy 25, if a man in Israel refused to raise up offspring to continue his late brother's name, his brother's widow would 'spit in his face' in the presence of the representatives of the nation.⁷⁷

(b) We read in Numbers 12 of a time when, following the unjustified criticism levelled against Moses by his sister and brother, Miriam was smitten with leprosy. Although, following Moses's prayer for her, she was healed, the Lord required that Miriam remain outside of the camp of Israel for a week on the ground that 'if her father had but spit in her face' she would have carried the shame of that for a full seven days.⁷⁸

(c) According to chapters 29 and 30 of the book which carries his name, Job bemoans the fact that, although once when he had entered a company, he had been accorded tremendous respect,⁷⁹ now even the youths scoff at him, and, as he said, 'do not hesitate to spit in my face'.⁸⁰

To spit in the face was then the extremity of humiliation and disgrace. And I note that when, for the last time, our Lord outlines the sufferings which awaited Him at Jerusalem, He specifically mentioned being 'mocked, shamefully treated and spit upon'.⁸¹

And, yes, in due time, both the leaders of the Jews⁸² and the soldiers of the governor⁸³ did just that to the Saviour: '*they spit in His face/on Him*'. How keenly He must have felt the shame and indignity on both occasions. Think of it, both Jews and Gentiles spitting on the One whose own spittle had previously played a part in more than one miraculous healing.⁸⁴

4. The One who did not save Himself.

Fourthly, our Lord didn't save Himself.

Taking Luke's account⁸⁵ together with that of Matthew⁸⁶ we learn that, at Golgotha, the challenge to save Himself came from all quarters:

(i) First, the Jewish rulers, who wouldn't stoop so low as actually to address Him, deride Him with their barbed and sarcastic taunt, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He is the Christ of God, the Chosen One'⁸⁷—'if He is', they are saying, 'the One of whom it was written by the prophet, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, *my chosen*, in whom my soul delights"'.⁸⁸

(ii) Then the people who are passing by at the time, 'revile' Him, shamelessly repeating the old misunderstanding, 'You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself'.⁸⁹

(iii) Then the soldiers jump on the bandwagon and (while offering Him some of their sour wine and likely gesturing in the direction of 'the superscription of His accusation'⁹⁰ over Him, 'This is the King of the Jews'⁹¹) 'mock' Him, jeering, 'If you are the King of Jews'—as this title⁹² alleges—'save yourself'.⁹³

(iv) And, finally, one of the 'malefactors' ('evil doers', 'criminals') who was crucified alongside Jesus, joining in the chorus, 'rails at Him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!"'⁹⁴

And so it was that the same taunt—the same challenge—was levelled at Him from every direction. All parties united to throw down the one gauntlet.

It is possible that some of them, at least, were aiming their jibes at the meaning of His name, 'Jesus'; namely, 'the Lord is salvation', or 'the Lord our salvation'. 'So', they may have been saying, 'you claim to be some kind of a Saviour, do you? Well, go on then, let's see you save yourself'.

But He didn't save Himself.

There is no doubt that, in one sense, He could have done just that. I recall the claim He made in Jerusalem previously, 'I lay down my life ... No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord'.⁹⁵ But, though He could have, He did not save Himself!

If the apostle Paul had been writing these notes, I shouldn't be surprised if he added at this point, 'No, He didn't save Himself—rather, He gave Himself ... and, what is more, He gave Himself for me'.⁹⁶ And, wonder of wonders, He gave Himself for me, too!

And fifth, and last, we consider ...

5. The One who did not come down from the cross.

As the Bible reading at the head of this study records, the people who passed by the place of His crucifixion issued the challenge to Jesus, 'If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross'.⁹⁷

And I cannot help wondering whether our Lord, when He heard that challenge, detected in it an echo of the first of the three crowning temptations put to Him by the devil over three years before in the wilderness of Judea: 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread'.⁹⁸

At that time, the argument of 'the tempter'⁹⁹ had run, 'If you really *are* God's Son, surely, you shouldn't be suffering the pangs of hunger in a wilderness—go on, make these stones bread'. Now the argument of the passers-by runs, 'If you really *are* God's Son, surely, you wouldn't be suffering the pangs of death¹⁰⁰ on a cross—come down'.

Adding their weight to the challenge, the Jewish rulers take up the theme. 'He is', they cry out sarcastically, 'the King of Israel [snigger, snigger]—let Him now ***come down from the cross***, and we will believe Him'.¹⁰¹ In other words, as so often before, they are saying, '... let Him show us a miraculous sign to rouse and inspire our faith!'¹⁰²

But, as you and I know well, the only miraculous sign He was to give *wasn't His coming down from the cross, but His coming up from the grave*.¹⁰³

No, He would not come down. And He who had recently refused to ease and alleviate His suffering by accepting drugged wine,¹⁰⁴ now refused to shun and avoid His suffering altogether by coming down from His cross.

I have long enjoyed associating our Lord's refusal to accept the united challenge to 'come down from the cross' with the response given, some 470 years before, by Nehemiah to the invitation issued to him by his adversaries to meet with them 25 miles from Jerusalem:¹⁰⁵ 'I am doing a great work and I cannot come down'.¹⁰⁶ Well indeed could our Saviour have

quoted those very words from His cross to the passers-by and to the Jewish rulers—'I am doing a great work and I cannot come down'.¹⁰⁷

The evening before His crucifixion, as Jesus and His disciples are about to leave the room where they had eaten the Passover to go to the Garden of Gethsemane, they sang a hymn together.¹⁰⁷ It is generally believed that the 'hymn' which they sang was the latter part¹⁰⁸ of a group of Old Testament psalms known as 'the Hallel'¹⁰⁹ and which more or less ends with the words, 'Bind the sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar'.¹¹⁰

But what, we ask, bound this 'sacrifice' (that of our Lord Jesus¹¹¹) to the altar of His cross? And, in answer, we can probably do no better than to ponder the second stanza of Katherine Kelly's hymn, 'Give me a sight, O Saviour':

Was it the nails, O Saviour,
That bound you to the tree?
Nay, 'twas Thine everlasting love,
Thy love for me, for me.

And there you have it in song. The cords which bound this 'sacrifice' to the altar of the cross was His matchless love.

We do well to thank God today that the One who 'came down from heaven' didn't 'come down from the cross'!¹¹²

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Prompted by part of a devotional article written over twenty years ago, we have focused our hearts and minds on the One who, during His passion:

- ... **did not** insist on doing His own will;
- ... **did not** request angelic help and support;
- ... **did not** hide His face from shame and spitting;
 - ... **did not** save Himself; and
- ... **did not** come down from the cross.¹¹³

Notes

¹ This form of address stresses the intimacy that the Lord Jesus knew and enjoyed with the Father. This is the only time, according to the Gospels, that Jesus specifically addressed Him in this way.

² Matt. 26. 51-53.

³ The meditation was dated the 12th of January in 2001. It was written by Mrs Joanie Yoder, who went to be with the Lord less than four years later.

⁴ John 21. 25.

According to the same Gospel, when interrogating Jesus and wanting to discover the real reason why the Jewish authorities had brought Him before him, Pilate had posed the question to Him, *'What have you done?'* (John 18. 35). Little did he suspect that, had the Lord Jesus chosen to answer that question directly and fully, *Pilate would have been there for a very long time!*

⁵ Acts 1. 1.

⁶ Luke uses the same word, for example, in Luke 17. 11; Acts 8. 40; 9. 32; 14. 24; 15. 3; 19. 1, 21.

⁷ Acts 10. 38.

⁸ In his Gospel, Mark probably put in writing 'what he had heard Peter narrating' (Jerome, *'De Viris Illustribus'*, Number viii). That is, the Gospel of Mark is substantially the Gospel of Peter. Note the following early testimony:

'This also the elder (John) said: Mark, having become the interpreter (ἐρμηνεύτης) of Peter, wrote accurately what he remembered of the things said or done by Christ, but not in order. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed Him; but afterward, as I said (he attached himself to) Peter who used to frame his teaching to meet the needs (of his hearers).'
(Source: Papias {circa AD 125}, quoted by Eusebius, *'Church History'*, Book III, Chapter 39, Section 15).

⁹ Mark 7. 37.

¹⁰ Luke 9. 52-56.

¹¹ John 6. 15.

¹² Rom. 15. 3.

Separately, with my eye on Phil. 2. 5-8, I note the comments of the English Puritan, John Owen: 'It is not said that He ceased to be in the form of God; but, continuing so to be, He "took upon Him the form of a servant" in our nature: He became what He was not, but He ceased not to be what He was ... He who is God, can no more be not God, than he who is not God can be God', *'Meditations and Discourses on the Glory of Christ'*, The Works of John Owen, Volume 1, page 326.

¹³ Heb. 5. 4-6.

¹⁴ 1 Pet. 2. 22.

¹⁵ Mark 15. 23.

¹⁶ Isa. 53. 7 (cf. Acts 8. 32); Matt. 27. 12 (cf. Mark 15. 3-5); John 19. 9-10.

¹⁷ 1 Pet. 2. 23.

¹⁸ John 12. 27.

¹⁹ John 17. 1.

²⁰ Mark 14. 35-36.

²¹ Mark 14. 37.

²² Heb. 5. 7.

²³ Matt. 26. 39.

²⁴ Luke 22. 41.

²⁵ The imperfect tense: 'ἔπιπτεν'.

²⁶ Mark 15. 35.

²⁷ John 18. 2.

²⁸ Psa. 40. 8; Heb. 10. 7.

²⁹ John 4. 34.

³⁰ John 5. 30.

³¹ John 6. 38.

³² Matt. 6. 10.

³³ Matt. 5. 1.

³⁴ Matt 26. 42.

³⁵ Matt. 26. 39.

³⁶ Matt.26. 53.

³⁷ John 18. 3.

³⁸ Luke 22. 49.

³⁹ Matt. 26. 51; John 18. 10.

⁴⁰ Luke 5. 4-6.

⁴¹ Matt. 17. 27.

⁴² 'Μάχαίρα ...“a short sword”', W. E. Vine, *'Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words'*, article 'Sword'.

⁴³ Luke 22. 50; John 18. 10. I shouldn't be surprised that Malchus had the sense to take some evasive action!

⁴⁴ Luke 22. 51.

⁴⁵ Matt. 26. 52.

⁴⁶ Matt. 26. 47.

⁴⁷ Luke 22. 38.

⁴⁸ Matt. 26. 53.

⁴⁹ On account of fragmentary and sometimes contradictory evidence, the size both of cohorts and of legions is disputed.

For example:

(i) 'An armed cohort, consisting of from 400 to 600 men', A. Edersheim, *'The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah'*, Volume II, page 541 (Book V, Chapter XII);

(ii) 'Ten cohorts made up one legion (4,800 men)', G. L. Thompson, *'Roman Military: The Legion'*, Dictionary of New Testament Background', IVP, page 992.

On the complex issue of the size of a Roman legion in the first century of our era, see, for example,

<http://www.josephus.org/FIJosephus2/romanArmy.htm>; <http://www.roman-empire.net/army/army.html>; <http://ancienthistory.about.com/od/romemilitary/qt/051611-Size-of-the-Roman-Legion.htm>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_legion.

⁵⁰ *Judea had seen legions in the past*; for example, brought in by Pompey in 63 BC: 'Pompey was angry; and taking with him that army which he was leading against the Nabateans, and the auxiliaries that came from Damascus, and the other parts of Syria, with the other Roman legions which he had with him, he made an expedition against Aristobulus', Flavius Josephus, *'Antiquities of the Jews'*, Book 14, Chapter 3, Paragraph 4. (See, too, Flavius Josephus, *'Wars of the Jews'*, Book 1, Chapter 6, Paragraph 5.) Later the legions were stationed in Syria. There were initially three legions under legate Varus. (Source: Flavius Josephus, *'Antiquities of the Jews'*, Book 17, Chapter 10, Paragraph 9). Under Emperor Tiberius, this was increased to four legions. (Source: Tacitus, *'The Annals'*, Book IV, Section 5).

We read, also, that, not long after our Lord's birth: 'As soon as Varus [the governor of Syria] was once informed of the state of Judea by Sabinus's writing to him, he was afraid for the legion he had left there; so he took the two other legions (for there were three legions in all belonging to Syria) and four troops of horsemen, with the several auxiliary forces which either the kings or certain of the tetrarchs afforded him, and made what haste he could to assist those that were then besieged in Judea ... Emmaus was also burnt by Varus's order, after its inhabitants had deserted it, that he might avenge those that had there been destroyed. From thence he now marched to Jerusalem; whereupon those Jews whose camp lay there, and who had besieged the Roman legion, not bearing the coming of this army, left the siege', Flavius Josephus, *'Antiquities of the Jews'*, Book 17, Chapter 10, Paragraph 9.

⁵¹ John 18. 5.

⁵² 2 Chron. 32. 1-2.

⁵³ 2 Chron. 32. 21. This was at night, 2 Kings 19. 35.

⁵⁴ 2 Kings 19. 35; Isa. 37. 36.

⁵⁵ 2 Kings 19. 36; 'so Sennacherib returned with shame of face to his own land', 2 Chron. 32. 21.

⁵⁶ Psalm 103. 20; cf. 'His mighty angels', 2 Thess. 1. 7. I note that Peter himself later spoke of 'angels, greater in might and power', 2 Pet. 2. 11.

⁵⁷ As of 10 May 2025, the world population is estimated to be little more than 8. 2 billion. (Source: <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>).

⁵⁸ 'The verb παρακαλεῖν has the special meaning of "to summon with authority", "to call upon as an ally"', A. L. Williams, *'The Pulpit Commentary'*, Volume 15, page . Herodotus (*'The Histories'*, Book VII, 158) wrote, 'Men of Hellas, it is with a self-seeking plea that you have made bold to come hither and invite me to be your ally against the foreigners' ... accessed at http://www.loebclassics.com/view/herodotus-persian_wars/1920/pb_LCL119.471.xml.

⁵⁹ The word 'απρι', Matt. 26. 53, means 'just now, even now, straightway', Liddell and Scott, *'Greek-English Lexicon'*.

⁶⁰ Compare 2 Kings 6. 17, where Elisha's servant had his eyes opened to see the mountain at Dothan 'full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha'.

⁶¹ 'Παριστάναι—cause to stand, place beside, to stand by; i.e. to help or defend', Liddell and Scott, *ibid.* ... accessed at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057:entry=pari/sthmi>. 'Can I not summon my Father to my aid as an ally ... and swiftly He will draw up by my side twelve legions of angels ... παρακαλεῖν and παριστάναι are both military terms', A. Carr, *'Matthew: Cambridge Greek Testament'*, page 295.

⁶² Luke 22. 43.

⁶³ See: 'An innumerable company of angels', Heb. 12. 22; 'the Ancient of Days took his seat... His throne was fiery flames ... and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him', Dan. 7. 9-10; 'I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne ... and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands', Rev. 5. 12. Also Deut. 33. 2; Ps. 68. 17; Jude 14.

⁶⁴ John 18. 3. Those sent to arrest Jesus may have numbered up to 200 (*a manipule*; being one translation of the word used in John 18. 3, 12). 'The noun *σπεῖρα* can refer to a 'maniple' of only 200 men, and it is not necessary to assume that an entire maniple was present', D. A. Carson, '*The Gospel according to John*', page 577. 'The word *σπεῖρα*, is used by Polybius for the Latin *manipulus* (not *cohors*; see Polybius, 11. 23), consisting of about two hundred men, the third part of a cohort', B. F. Westcott, '*The Gospel according to John: The Greek Text*', Volume II, page 266.

⁶⁵ The Greek word, 'μαστιγας'; cf. 'examined by scourging' ('μάστιξιν'), Acts 22. 24.

⁶⁶ Isa. 50. 6; cf. 'set His face as a flint', v. 7.

⁶⁷ 2 Sam. 10. 4-5; 1 Chron. 19. 4-5.

⁶⁸ John 19. 23.

⁶⁹ See Job 27. 23; Nahum 3. 19.

⁷⁰ Lam. 2. 15.

⁷¹ Psa. 22. 7.

⁷² Matt. 27. 39.

⁷³ 2 Sam. 10. 4-5; 1 Chron. 19. 4-5.

⁷⁴ "Cutting off a person's beard is regarded by the Arabs as an indignity equal to flogging and branding among ourselves. Many would rather die than have their beard shaved off" (C. D'Arvieux, "*Customs of the Bedouin Arabs*") ... In the year 1764, a pretender to the Persian throne, named Kerim Khan, sent ambassadors to Mir Mahenna, the prince of Bendervigk, on the Persian Gulf, to demand tribute from him; but he in return cut off the ambassadors' beards. Kerim Khan was so enraged at this, that he went the next year with a large army to make war upon this prince and took the city and almost the whole of his territory to avenge the insult', C. F. Keil, '*Commentary on the Old Testament by Keil and Delitzsch*', Volume 2, page 375, footnote 1.).

⁷⁵ Isa. 50. 6.

⁷⁶ Note:

(i) The Jewish Mishnah (*the first written collection of the Jewish oral traditions that are known as the Oral Torah. It is also the first work of rabbinic literature*) states:

'One who strikes another ... Rabbi Yehuda says in the name of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili that he must give him one hundred dinars. If he slapped another on the cheek, he must give him two hundred dinars ... If he spat at him and his spittle reached him ... he must give the injured party four hundred dinars. This is the principle of assessing payment for humiliation caused to another: It is all evaluated in accordance with the honour of the one who was humiliated'. (Source: '*Mishnah Bava Kamma 8*'; accessed at ...

https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Bava_Kamma.8.6?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en.)

(ii) 'Spitting in the face was the greatest contempt and disgrace which could possibly be shown', J. Benson, '*The New Testament of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, with Critical, Explanatory and Practical Notes*', page 223.

(iii) 'Spitting in the face was considered the greatest insult that could be offered to a person', J. M. Freeman, '*Manners and Customs of the Bible*', page 389.

⁷⁷ Deut. 25. 9.

⁷⁸ Num. 12. 1-14.

⁷⁹ Job 29. 7-10.

⁸⁰ Job 30. 1, 10.

⁸¹ Luke 18. 32.

⁸² Matt 26. 67.

⁸³ Matt. 27.30.

- ⁸⁴ Note cases of the healing of both the deaf and the blind, Mark 7. 33; 8. 23; John 9. 6, 11.
- ⁸⁵ Luke 23. 35-39.
- ⁸⁶ Matt. 27. 40.
- ⁸⁷ Luke 23. 35.
- ⁸⁸ Isa. 42. 1.
- ⁸⁹ Matt. 27. 40; cf. John 2. 19; Matt. 26. 61.
- ⁹⁰ Mark 15. 26.
- ⁹¹ Luke 23. 38.
- ⁹² 'Pilate wrote a *title*, and put it on the cross', John 19. 19.
- ⁹³ Luke 23. 37.
- ⁹⁴ Luke 23. 39.
- ⁹⁵ John 10. 17-18.
- ⁹⁶ '... the Son of God, who loved me and *gave Himself* for me', Gal. 2. 20.
- ⁹⁷ Matt. 27. 40.
- ⁹⁸ Matt. 4. 3.
- ⁹⁹ Matt. 4. 3; cf. 1 Thess. 3. 5.
- ¹⁰⁰ Acts 2. 24 (ESV); also Psa. 18. 4 (NKJV). The Greek Old Testament also renders the word by *ωδίνεις* ('pangs'), Psa. 17. 5.
- ¹⁰¹ Matt. 27. 42. 'General Booth commented: "*It is precisely because He did not come down that we believe on Him*"', William Barclay, '*Jesus as They Saw Him*', page 244.
- ¹⁰² Matt. 12. 38; 16. 1.
- ¹⁰³ Matt. 12. 39-40; 16. 4.
- ¹⁰⁴ Matt. 27. 34.
- ¹⁰⁵ Neh. 6. 2; 'the plain of Ono, to which Nehemiah's adversaries invited him for a meeting, lay about 25 miles west and a little north of Jerusalem near Ashdod and Judah's border with Samaria', T. E. Constable, '*Expository Notes*' comment on Neh. 6. 1-4.
- ¹⁰⁶ Neh. 6. 3.
- ¹⁰⁷ Mark 14. 26, 32.
- ¹⁰⁸ Psalms 115-118.
- ¹⁰⁹ A word meaning 'Praise God' and comprising Psalms 113-118. 'The Passover meal traditionally ended with the chanting of the latter part of the Hallel (Psalms 113-118) ... According to Mishnah Pesachim 10. 6-7, Psalms 113-114 were chanted after the second cup of wine, the remainder over the fourth', R. T. France, '*The Gospel of Matthew: The New International Commentary on the New Testament*', comment on Matt. 26. 30.
- ¹¹⁰ Psa. 118. 27.
- ¹¹¹ 'He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by *the sacrifice of Himself*', Heb. 9. 26.
- ¹¹² John 6. 38 with Matt. 27. 40, 42.

¹¹³ Doubtless, at one time or another, many of us have sung with Mary Bowley Peters:

O blessèd Lord, what hast Thou done!

How vast a ransom paid!
Who could conceive God's only Son
Upon the altar laid!

In the light of the present study, we might equally exclaim, '*O blessèd Lord, what hast Thou **not** done!*'