

God's Ultimate Gift to You



In the beginning there was a garden, where all created creatures, including man lived. Now among all the creatures of the garden which God had created, the serpent was more subtle and crafty than any living creature of the field.

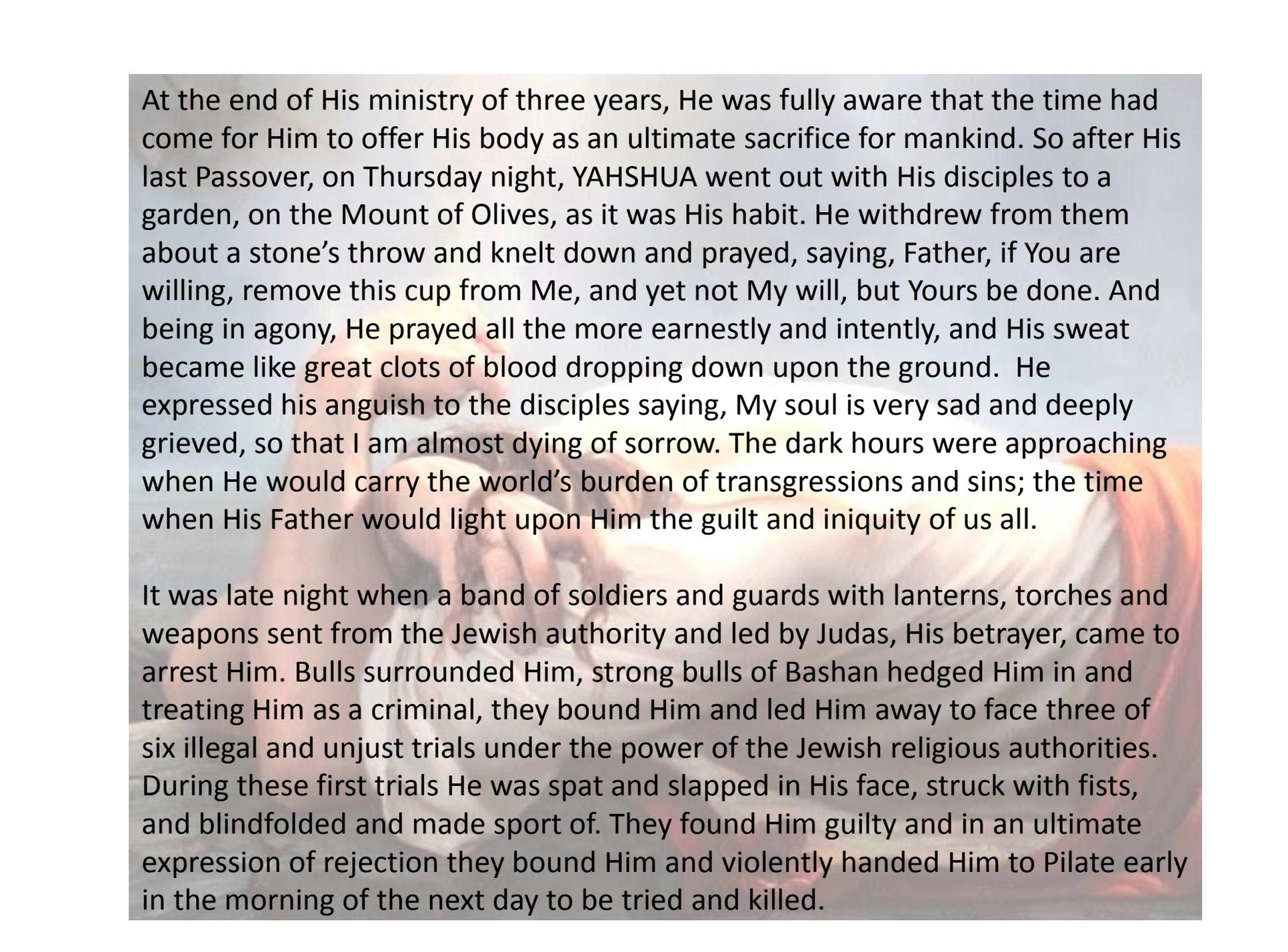
One certain day he asked Eve a question that changed the course of the world: “Can it really be that God has said, You shall not eat from every tree of the garden”? We may eat the fruit from the trees of the garden, said Eve, except the fruit from the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

You shall not surely die, said the serpent, for God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing the difference between good and evil and blessing and calamity. Eve believe him and perceiving the tree to be good for food and that it was delightful to look at, and a tree to be desired in order to make one wise, according to what the serpent had said, she took of its fruit and ate and she gave some also to her husband, and he ate.

And so it was that sin entered the world and we all sinned and came short of the glory of God. However the story did not finish here. God's mercy and grace overshadowed Men's sin and there in that day He promised them a Redeemer. Speaking to the serpent He said, I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her Offspring; He will bruise and tread your head underfoot, and you will lie in wait and bruise His heel.

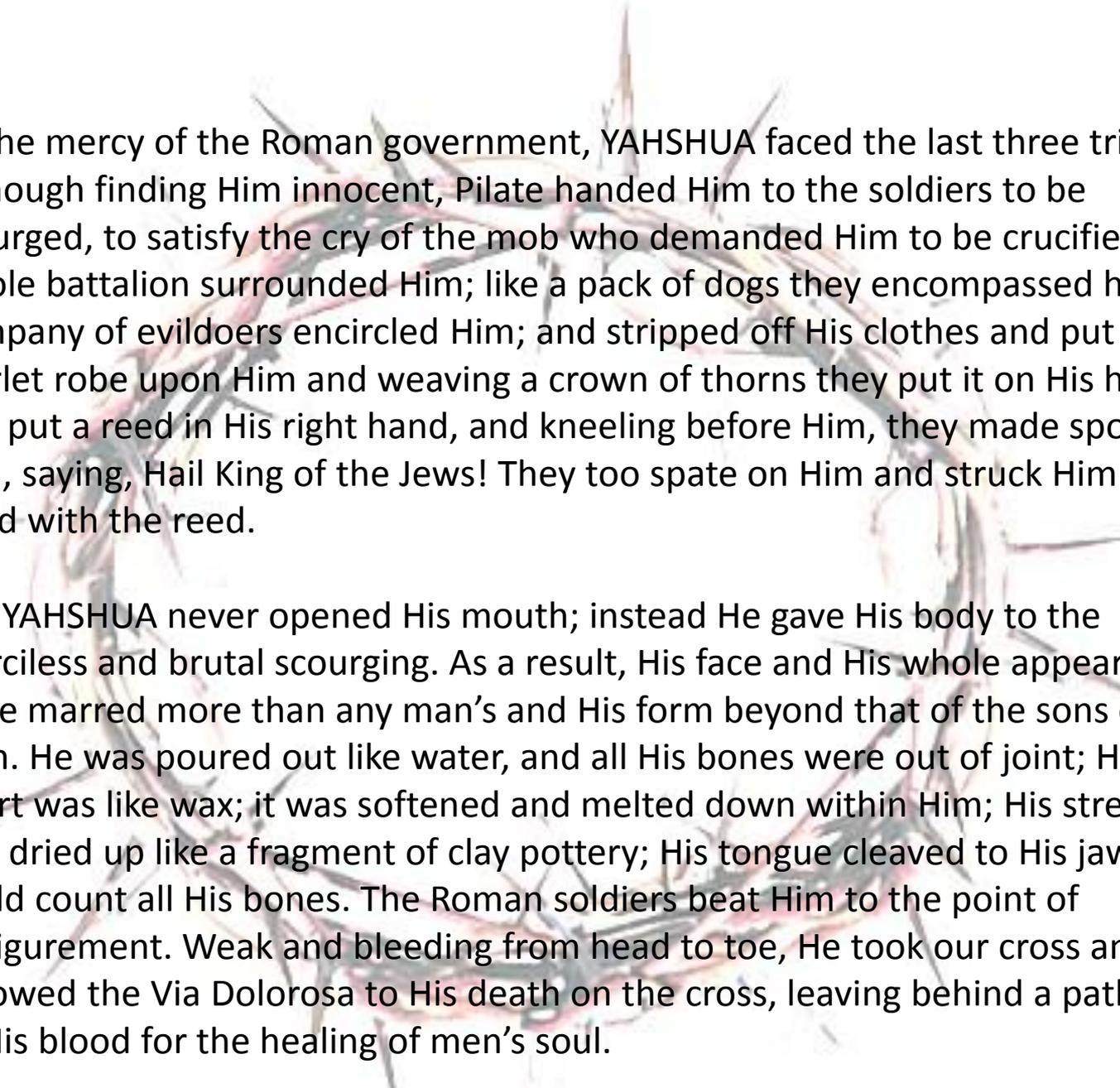
This promise was fulfilled in the plenitude of God's timing when He sent His only Son born of a virgin, born subject to the Law. A body God had made ready for Him and He said, Behold, Here I am, coming to do Your will, O God. Unto us a Child was born, to us a Son was given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called, Wonderful, counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom He is well pleased, sang the angels, who announced His birth.

He came into the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him; but to as many as did receive and welcome Him, He gave the authority to become the children of God, that is, to those who believe in His name.



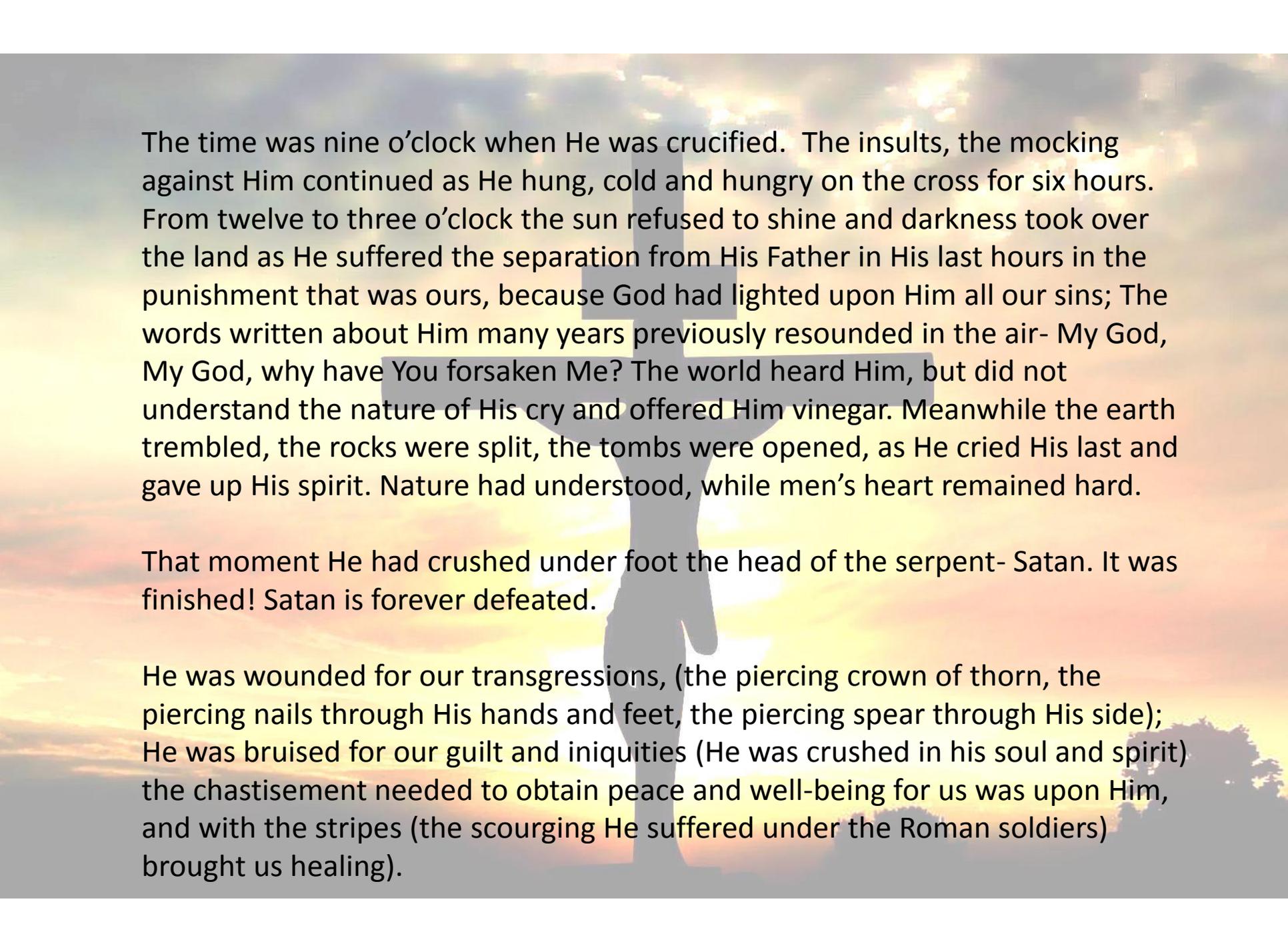
At the end of His ministry of three years, He was fully aware that the time had come for Him to offer His body as an ultimate sacrifice for mankind. So after His last Passover, on Thursday night, YAHSHUA went out with His disciples to a garden, on the Mount of Olives, as it was His habit. He withdrew from them about a stone's throw and knelt down and prayed, saying, Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me, and yet not My will, but Yours be done. And being in agony, He prayed all the more earnestly and intently, and His sweat became like great clots of blood dropping down upon the ground. He expressed his anguish to the disciples saying, My soul is very sad and deeply grieved, so that I am almost dying of sorrow. The dark hours were approaching when He would carry the world's burden of transgressions and sins; the time when His Father would light upon Him the guilt and iniquity of us all.

It was late night when a band of soldiers and guards with lanterns, torches and weapons sent from the Jewish authority and led by Judas, His betrayer, came to arrest Him. Bulls surrounded Him, strong bulls of Bashan hedged Him in and treating Him as a criminal, they bound Him and led Him away to face three of six illegal and unjust trials under the power of the Jewish religious authorities. During these first trials He was spat and slapped in His face, struck with fists, and blindfolded and made sport of. They found Him guilty and in an ultimate expression of rejection they bound Him and violently handed Him to Pilate early in the morning of the next day to be tried and killed.



At the mercy of the Roman government, YAHSHUA faced the last three trials. Although finding Him innocent, Pilate handed Him to the soldiers to be scourged, to satisfy the cry of the mob who demanded Him to be crucified. The whole battalion surrounded Him; like a pack of dogs they encompassed him; a company of evildoers encircled Him; and stripped off His clothes and put a scarlet robe upon Him and weaving a crown of thorns they put it on His head and put a reed in His right hand, and kneeling before Him, they made sport of Him, saying, Hail King of the Jews! They too spate on Him and struck Him on the head with the reed.

But YAHSHUA never opened His mouth; instead He gave His body to the merciless and brutal scourging. As a result, His face and His whole appearance were marred more than any man's and His form beyond that of the sons of men. He was poured out like water, and all His bones were out of joint; His heart was like wax; it was softened and melted down within Him; His strength was dried up like a fragment of clay pottery; His tongue cleaved to His jaws, He could count all His bones. The Roman soldiers beat Him to the point of disfigurement. Weak and bleeding from head to toe, He took our cross and followed the Via Dolorosa to His death on the cross, leaving behind a pathway of His blood for the healing of men's soul.

A silhouette of a person on a cross is centered in the background. The background is a sunset sky with warm orange and yellow tones and scattered clouds. The text is overlaid on this scene.

The time was nine o'clock when He was crucified. The insults, the mocking against Him continued as He hung, cold and hungry on the cross for six hours. From twelve to three o'clock the sun refused to shine and darkness took over the land as He suffered the separation from His Father in His last hours in the punishment that was ours, because God had lighted upon Him all our sins; The words written about Him many years previously resounded in the air- My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? The world heard Him, but did not understand the nature of His cry and offered Him vinegar. Meanwhile the earth trembled, the rocks were split, the tombs were opened, as He cried His last and gave up His spirit. Nature had understood, while men's heart remained hard.

That moment He had crushed under foot the head of the serpent- Satan. It was finished! Satan is forever defeated.

He was wounded for our transgressions, (the piercing crown of thorn, the piercing nails through His hands and feet, the piercing spear through His side); He was bruised for our guilt and iniquities (He was crushed in his soul and spirit) the chastisement needed to obtain peace and well-being for us was upon Him, and with the stripes (the scourging He suffered under the Roman soldiers) brought us healing).

Today He stands before you with pierced hands, feet and side, and scarred back, offering you His ultimate gift of salvation.

The choice is yours; eternity will reward or condemn you. What do you say?

