

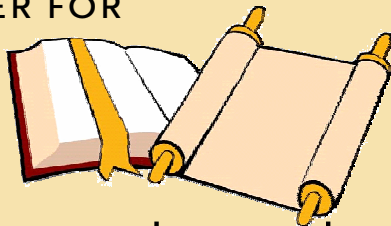
BOSTON
COLLEGE

THE GOSPELS, CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIES OF JUDAISM AND ANTISEMITISM

Philip A. Cunningham



CENTER FOR

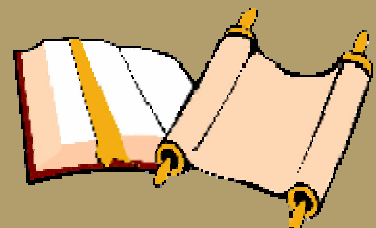


CHRISTIAN-JEWISH LEARNING

Encouraging mutual knowledge between
Christians and Jews at every level

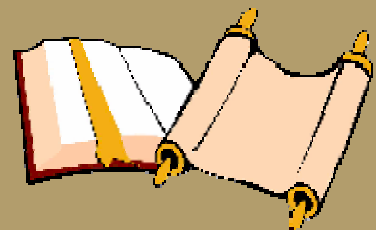
- ❖ The Gospel Passion Narratives and their Theologies of Jesus
 - The Socio-political Context
 - Analysis by Scene
 - Conclusions about the Four Gospels' Theologies of Jesus
 - A Historical Reconstruction of the Execution of Jesus

- ❖ The Development of Anti-Jewish Theologies in the Patristic Era
- ❖ *Nostra Aetate* and Subsequent Catholic Teaching on Presenting the Passion





The Gospel Passion Narratives and Their Theologies of Jesus





THE GOSPEL
PASSION
NARRATIVES

THE THREE STAGES OF GOSPEL TRADITION

- **Stage 1: The Ministry of Jesus**

traditions dating from Jesus' words and deeds during his ministry in the late 20s, early 30s.

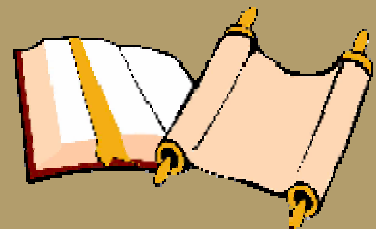
- **Stage 2: Post-Resurrectional Preaching of the Apostles**

ideas about Jesus that arose after the Resurrection, especially that he was the divine "Lord" and "Son of God".

- **Stage 3: The Writing of the Gospels by the Evangelists**

texts about Jesus that are shaped by the situations, concerns and insights of the Gospel writers themselves. Concerns include when Jesus as Lord would return, the Church's mission to the Gentiles, the destruction of the Temple in the year 70, and living a life of faith in the Church community.

See Pontifical Biblical Commission, *Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels* (1964), 6-10.





THE GOSPEL
PASSION
NARRATIVES

SOME IMPORTANT POINTS



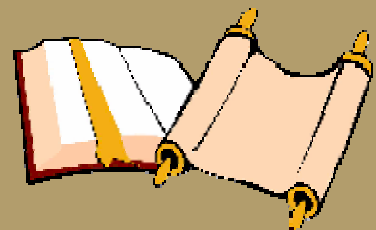
The evangelists didn't write the Gospels to give us "histories," as we understand the term. They were written "so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).



For Christian faith, stage 3 is most important. It gives the evangelists' inspired reflections on the meaning of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.



To ask historical questions of the Gospels is to ask something they were not meant to provide. But since we have a historical consciousness, we do so anyway.





SOME POLEMICAL AND APOLOGETIC CONCERNS OF THE EVANGELISTS

THE GOSPEL PASSION NARRATIVES



To have the Church accepted as a legitimate religion within the Roman Empire.



To argue for the Church's way of being Jewish in the aftermath of the Temple's destruction by the Roman in the year 70.



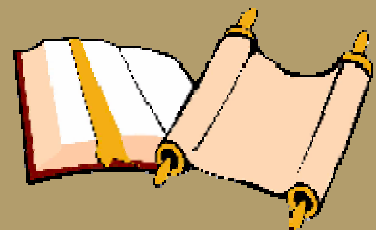
To explain why the Temple was destroyed.



To show that the Church's claim that the Crucified One has been raised is consistent with the Scriptures of ancient Israel.

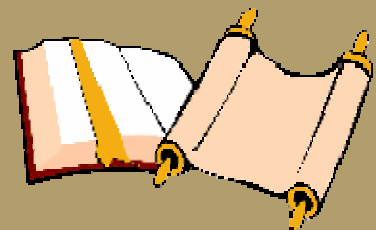


In the case of the Passion Narratives, these concerns contribute to a tendency to de-emphasize Roman responsibility and to highlight the role of Jewish figures.





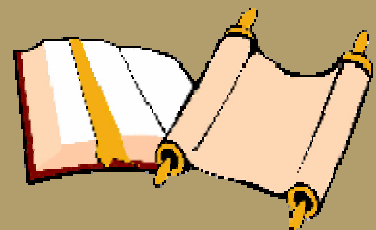
The Socio-political Context

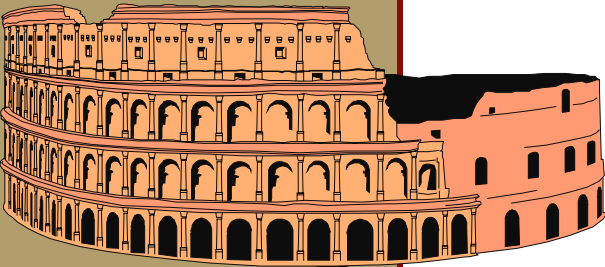




ROMAN
PERIOD
SOCIETY

Israel in the 1st century was an agrarian society with a simple social structure: a ruling group (5% of pop.) with a virtual monopoly on political and military power and the majority peasants (90% of pop.). The rulers took the "surplus" produce in the form of tax, rent, tribute, or tithes. The rulers, their servants and retainers lived mainly in cities with the peasants living in the surrounding countryside.

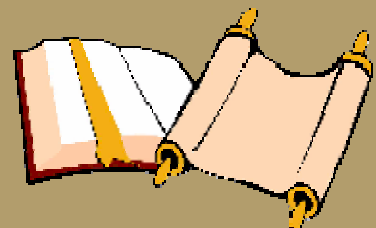




THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

Rome

The Roman Empire exacts a bi-annual tribute of about 25% of the region's produce, collecting through the local aristocracy. Imperial toll collectors also charge tariffs and customs duties on roads and trade routes.



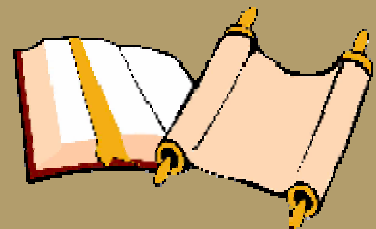


THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT



Pontius Pilate

is a Roman official who is Prefect of Judea and Samaria. He rules from Caesarea Maritima, but travels to Jerusalem in times of unrest there. He appoints the High Priest of the Temple and oversees the keeping of the Roman peace.



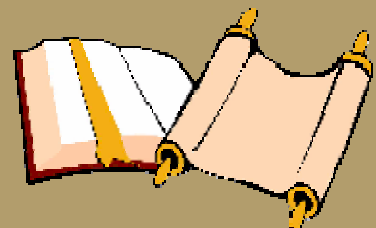


THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT



Herod Antipas

is tetrarch or king (under Roman patronage) of Galilee and Perea. He collects taxes for his own expenses and is responsible to collect the imperial tribute. His first capital is at Sepphoris, but he builds a completely new capital city at Tiberias, on the shore of the Lake of Galilee.

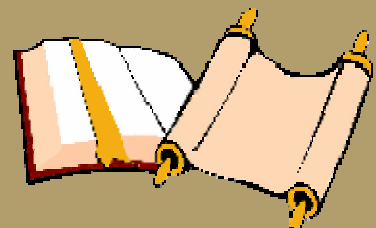




THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

Priestly Aristocracy

The Temple priests manage the sacrificial Temple system and the city of Jerusalem. They are charged by the Romans to keep the peace. Besides exacting the annual half-shekel Temple tax, they are responsible for collecting the tribute to Rome in Judea. These priestly families seem to the Sadducees mentioned in the Gospels and Josephus. The High Priest, Caiaphas, is effectively appointed by the Roman Prefect, Pilate.

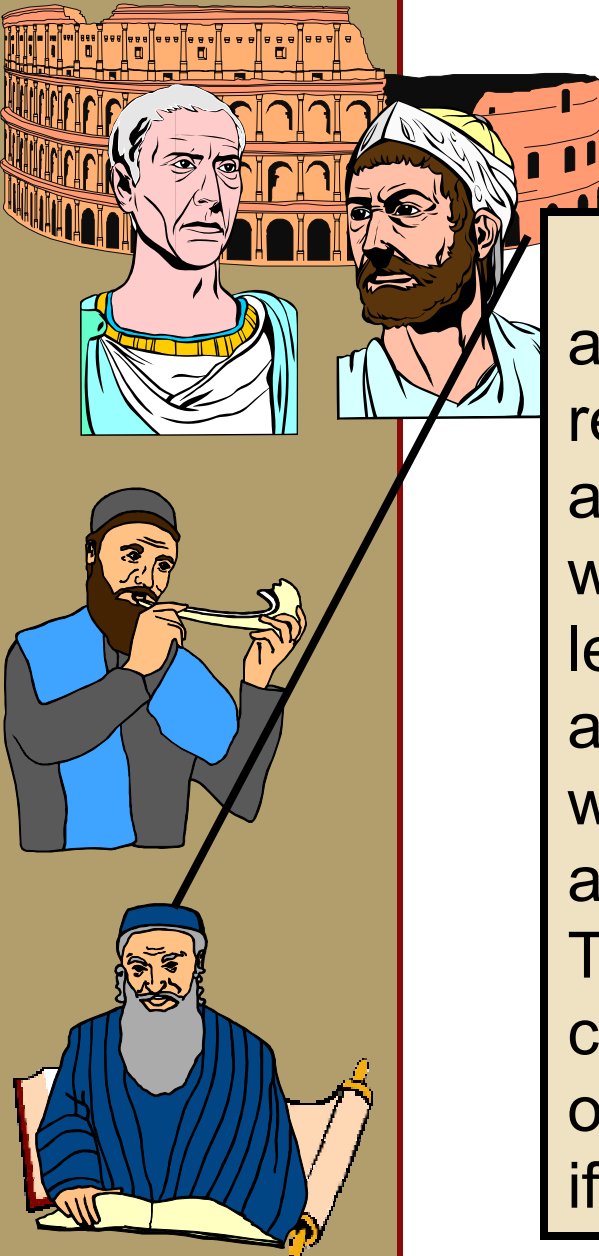




THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

Scribes

are the literate class who function as retainers for the priestly class or Herodian aristocracy. They are also Torah scholars who attain some independence and leverage. They may have served as local agents of the priesthood in the rural areas who collected imperial and Temple taxes and sought to engender loyalty to the Temple. Among them, the Pharisees creatively apply the Torah to daily life in order to make ordinary life as ritually pure as if one were within the Temple precincts.





THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

Peasants

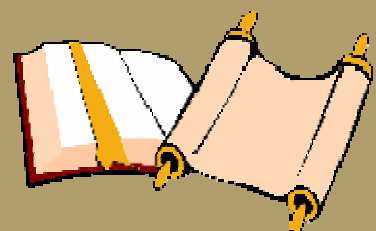
comprise 90% of the population. They face indebtedness, the loss of their land, the disruption of traditional family and village relationships, and are at the mercy of famines and droughts. These factors cause feelings of communal powerlessness, of being beset by demonic forces, and of needing God's intervention.



RESPONSES
TO JESUS

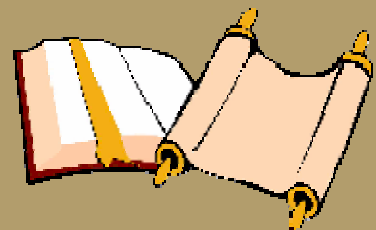
Flowing from his conviction that the Kingdom of God was dawning, Jesus seems to have sought to reinvigorate local village life in accordance with the ideals of the Torah and the prophets, perhaps esp. Elijah. His healings, parables, choice of Twelve, table fellowship customs all stem from this conviction.

- **Fellow peasants:** generally seem to have welcomed Jesus' words. He was popular enough among them to appear as threat to the status quo.
- **Pharisees:** in their various groups, some would have liked his stress on prayer and conversion, others would object to his disregard for ritual purity at his meals. On other issues, a mixed reception is likely.
- **Sadducees:** disliked his assertions that the Temple and its leaders would face God's judgment.
- **Herodian aristocracy:** would be concerned with yet another popular prophet announcing a new age.
- **Romans:** talk of a coming Kingdom is sedition.



POINTS TO
NOTE

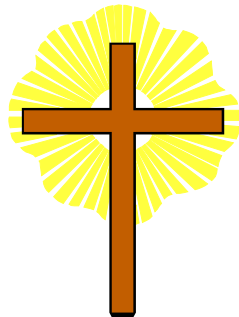
- Ancient societies did not make modern distinctions between religion, politics, or economics. “Religion” was imbedded with politics and economics in the concrete social forms of family, local community, and authority structures; e.g., the Temple.
- Passover in Jerusalem could be a volatile time. The celebration of freedom from foreign domination inspired riots against Roman rule with some regularity.
- Jesus’ Kingdom preaching and his causing of a disturbance in the Temple after arriving in the city would alarm the Romans and the Temple leadership.



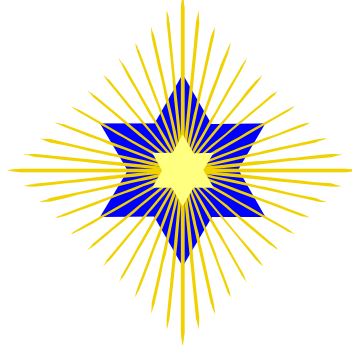


Analysis by Scene

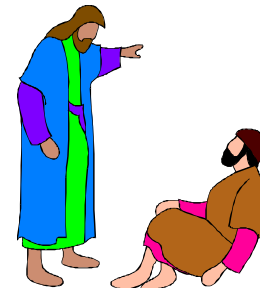
1. The Arrest
2. Before Temple Priests
3. Before Pilate
4. The Execution
5. The Burial



Mark



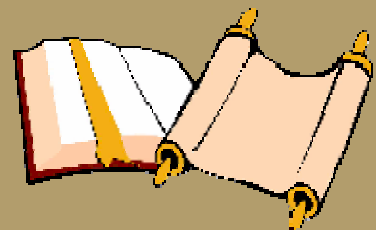
Matthew



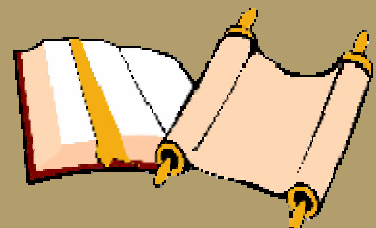
Luke



John



SCENE 1:
THE
ARREST



Mark

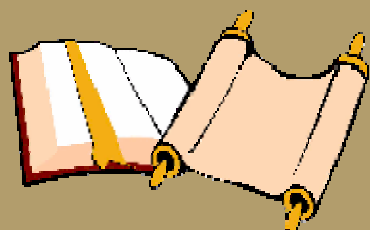
- Jesus prays three times for “this cup to pass me by,” but will do his father’s will.
- The disciples cannot keep awake.
- A servant’s ear is severed.
- “All of them abandoned him and fled” (14:50).
- 14⁵¹ “A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, ⁵² but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.”

Mark

SCENE 1: THE ARREST



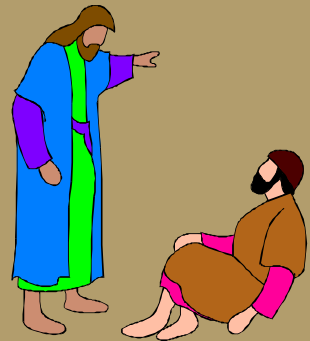
1¹⁶ As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.



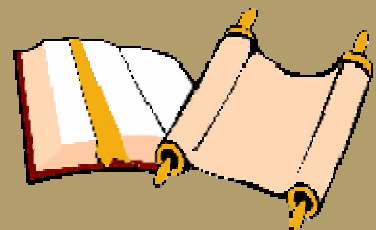


Luke

SCENE 1: THE ARREST



- Jesus prays only once.
- “When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief” (22:5).
- “Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, ‘No more of this!’ And he touched his ear and healed him” (22:51).



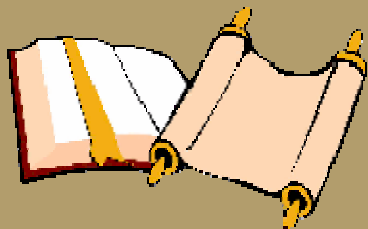


John

SCENE 1: THE ARREST



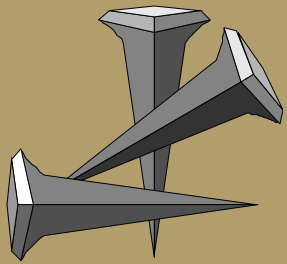
- Roman soldiers are in the arresting party.
- “Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, ‘Whom are you looking for?’ ⁵ They answered, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus replied, ‘I am he.’ . . . ⁶ When Jesus said to them, ‘I am he,’ they stepped back and fell to the ground. ⁷ Again he asked them, ‘Whom are you looking for?’ And they said, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ ⁸ Jesus answered, ‘I told you that I am he’” (18:4-7).
- “Jesus said to Peter, ‘Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?’” (18:11).



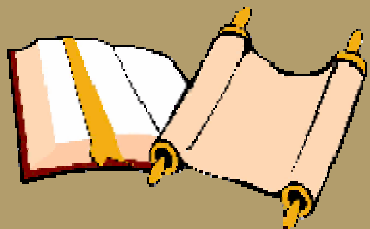


Historical Conclusions

SCENE 1: THE ARREST



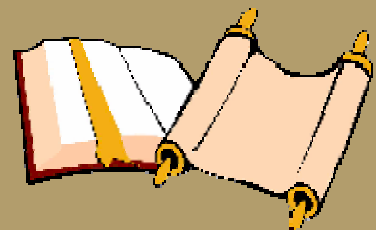
- Jesus was quietly arrested on the Mount of Olives. This means that his foes were concerned about triggering a riot (cf. Mk. 14:2).
- The composition of the arresting party is unclear, but given the close working relationship of the prefect and the high priest, this may not really matter.
- Although Jesus does not resist arrest, there was swordplay that Jesus stops.
- His followers fled.





SCENE 2:
BEFORE
TEMPLE
PRIESTS

- The Gospels, not surprisingly, are not consistent in presenting this “behind closed doors” scene.
 - Mark/Matthew: “the chief priests and whole council” convene on first night of Passover [?]
 - Luke: morning “assembly of the elders of the people”
 - John: Annas questions Jesus about his teaching on night before the Passover preparation day.





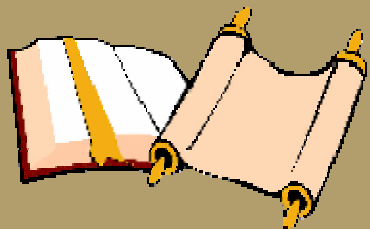
Mark

SCENE 2: BEFORE TEMPLE PRIESTS



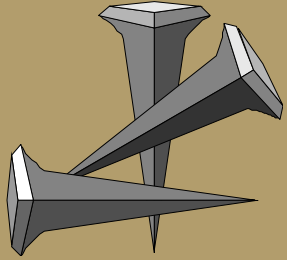
- [Mark 14:] Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” ⁶² Jesus said, “I am; and ‘you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,’ and ‘coming with the clouds of heaven.’*” ⁶³ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “Why do we still need witnesses? ⁶⁴ You have heard his blasphemy!

* = Dan 7.13 blended with Ps 110.1.



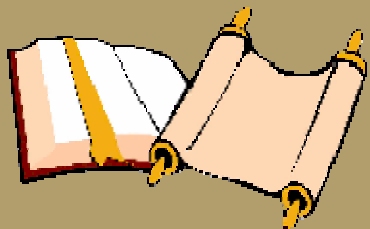


SCENE 2:
BEFORE
TEMPLE
PRIESTS



Historical Conclusions

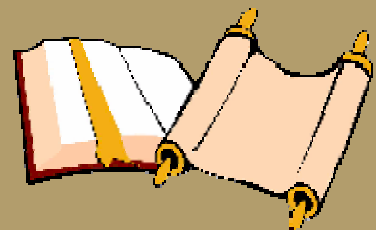
- Jesus is brought before the high priest and questioned on his disciples and teachings.
- A “trial” before a Sanhedrin is implausible for several reasons. Whether or not there was a council meeting prior to Jesus’ arrest, his questioning is most likely restricted to the high priest(s) and their cronies.
- Jesus is sent to Pilate for:
 - speaking and acting destructively toward the Temple
 - arrogance (= blasphemy) toward priests
 - speaking about a coming Kingdom
 - to pre-empt an expected Passover riot?





SCENE 3:
BEFORE
PILATE

- Again, there are many inconsistencies among the Gospels in this scene.
- Among the common features are:
 - caution in the portrayal of Roman justice
 - Jesus being asked if he is “the king of the Jews”
 - a “crowd” demanding Barabbas’ release and Jesus’ execution

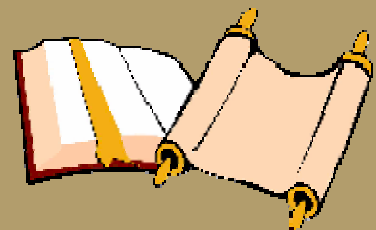




BARABBAS

SCENE 3: BEFORE PILATE

- Synoptics: Pilate has a custom to release a Passover prisoner; John: It is a Jewish custom that Pilate observes.
- No extra-biblical evidence.
- Would Pilate release a murderer or insurrectionist or brigand (Mk, Lk)?
- Bar-abbas = son of the father
- Mt (var): release Jesus Barabbas or Jesus, king of the Jews?



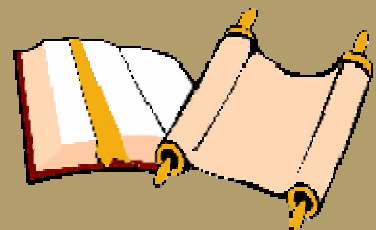


BARABBAS

SCENE 3: BEFORE PILATE

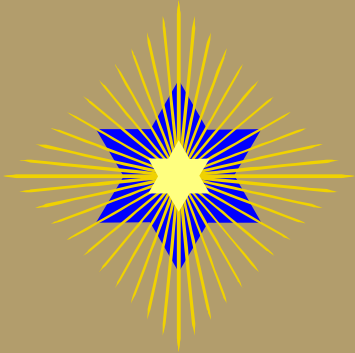
“A man with the name Barabbas was arrested after a riot that had caused some deaths in Jerusalem. Eventually he was released by Pilate when a feast brought the governor to Jerusalem to supervise public order. Presumably this took place at the same time that Jesus was crucified, or not far from it, or on another Passover. In any case, this release struck Christians as ironic: The same legal issue was involved, sedition against the authority of the emperor. Although they knew Jesus was innocent, he was found guilty by Pilate, while Barabbas was let go. The storytelling tendency to contrast the released Barabbas and the crucified Jesus by bringing them together at the same moment before Pilate’s ‘justice’ would have been enhanced if both had the same personal name, Jesus.”

Raymond Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 819-820.





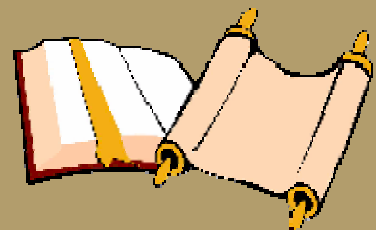
SCENE 3:
BEFORE
PILATE



Matthew

27 ²⁰Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. . . .

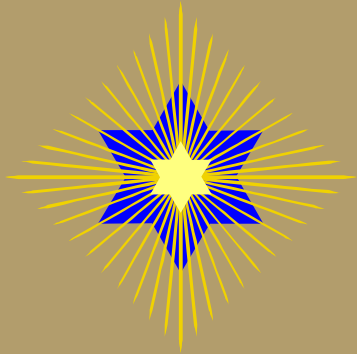
²⁴So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” ²⁵Then the people as a whole answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!”





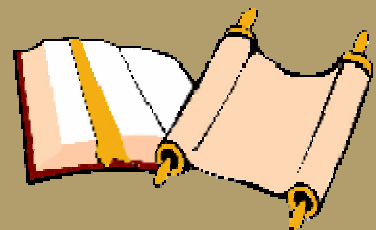
Matthew

SCENE 3: BEFORE PILATE



Two important parables:

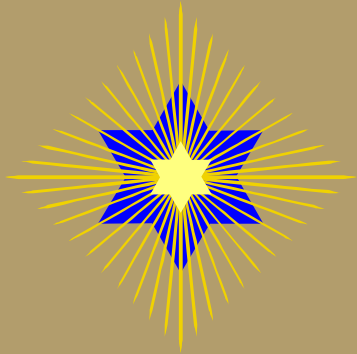
22 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying:
2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king
who gave a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his
slaves to call those who had been invited to the
wedding banquet, but they would not come. 4 Again he
sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been
invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and
my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is
ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ 5 But they made
light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to
his business, 6 while the rest seized his slaves,
mistreated them, and killed them. 7 The king was
enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers,
and burned their city.



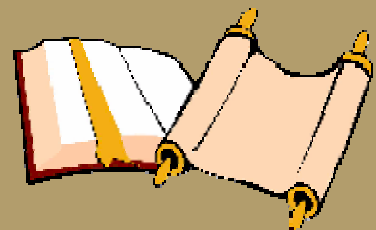


Matthew

SCENE 3: BEFORE PILATE

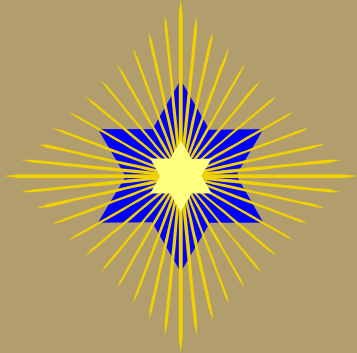


21 ²³Jesus said to the chief priests . . . ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ ³⁹ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰ Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” ⁴¹ They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.” ⁴²Jesus said to them, ⁴³ Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.



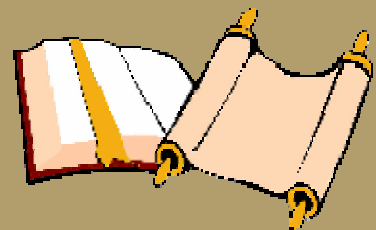


SCENE 3:
BEFORE
PILATE



Matthew

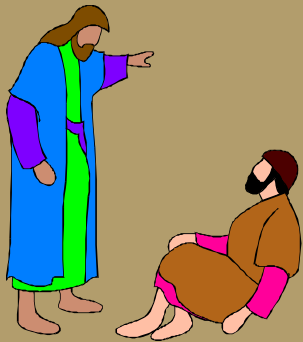
- After the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70, different groups of Jews blamed one another for its demise. Matthew is doing the same thing.
- He blames the Temple priests for leading the people of Jerusalem astray in demanding Jesus' death. They and their children are destroyed for doing this.
- Now leadership in the Jewish community is given to "another group;" namely, Matthew's church.
- Matthew warns his readers not to follow the leaders he considers corrupt in his day, the Pharisees. They are blind guides who will also lead to destruction.



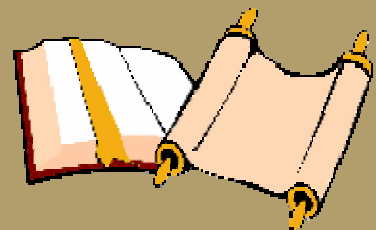


Luke

SCENE 3: BEFORE PILATE



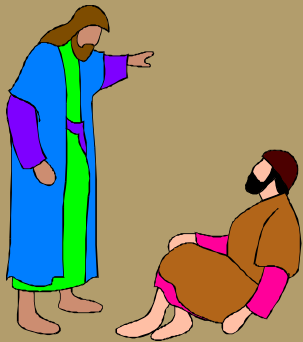
- 23 ¹Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. ² They began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.”



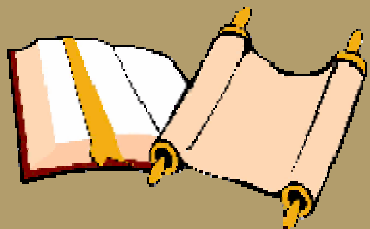


Luke

SCENE 3: BEFORE PILATE



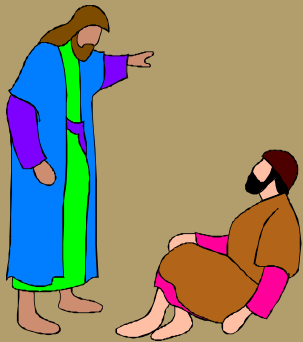
- ³Then Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He answered, “You say so.” ⁴Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no basis for an accusation against this man.”



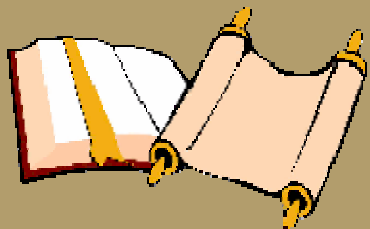


Luke

SCENE 3: BEFORE PILATE



- Pilate declares Jesus innocent three times (23:4;14;22)
- Jesus is brought to Herod Antipas. “That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies” (23:12).
- Encounter with women of Jerusalem while carrying cross.

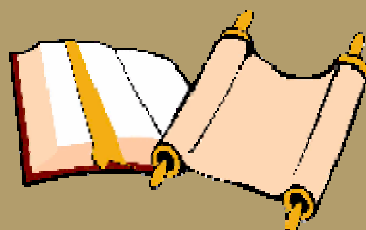


John

SCENE 3: BEFORE PILATE



- Jesus remains in full control.
- He and Pilate engage in philosophical discussions about kingship and truth.
- Jesus' divine identity is stressed - his kingdom is "not of this world."
- *Hoi Ioudaioi* [= "the Jews"]: "We have no king but Caesar!" Why?
- Pilate shuttles inside and outside the praetorium, reflecting his inner confusion.
- He has Jesus scourged in a vain effort to free him.
- The crowd exclaims, "He ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God" (19:7); and "We have no king but Caesar!" (19:15).
- Pilate "seats *him* on the judgment seat" (19:13).
- Jesus carries his cross by himself (19:17).





John

The Chiasm of the Johannine Jesus before Pilate scene

SCENE 3: BEFORE PILATE



1. *Outside* (18:28-32)
Hoi loudaioi demand
Jesus' death.

2. *Inside* (18:33-38a)
Pilate questions Jesus
about kingship.

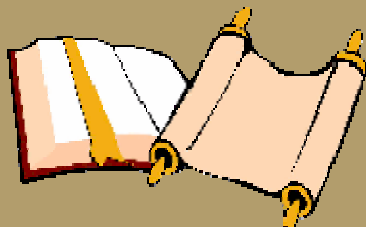
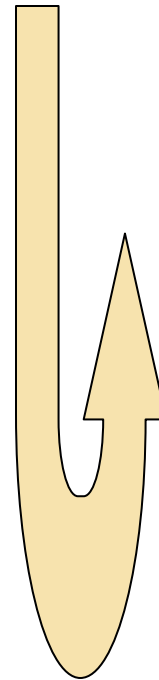
3. *Outside* (18:38b-40)
Pilate: Jesus not guilty.
Choice of Barabbas.

4. *Inside* (19:1-3)
Soldiers scourge Jesus.

7. *Outside* (19:12-16a)
Hoi loudaioi obtain
Jesus' death.

6. *Inside* (19:9-11)
Pilate and Jesus discuss
authority.

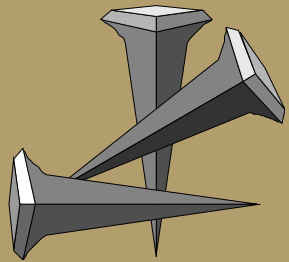
5. *Outside* (19:4-8)
Pilate: Jesus not guilty.
"Behold the man!"



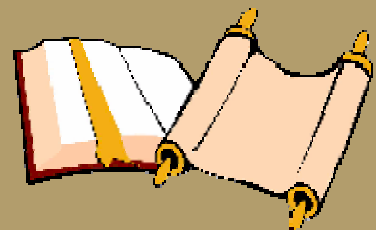


Historical Conclusions

SCENE 3: BEFORE PILATE



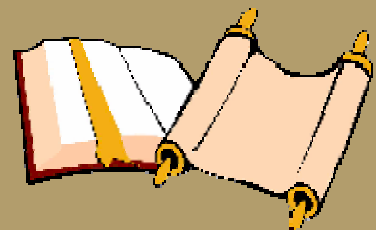
- It is impossible to discern Pilate's opinions or motives.
- Whether enthusiastically, apathetically, or reluctantly, Pilate orders Jesus' execution as a seditious "king of the Jews." This suggests a degree of plausibility in the Lucan charges.
- Jesus is scourged as part of the Roman crucifixion process.
- The role, composition, and size of the "crowd" is very unclear, esp. if the Barabbas episode did not occur simultaneously with the proceedings against Jesus of Nazareth. The most plausible picture is a group of priests or Temple staff.





SCENE 4:
THE
EXECUTION

- There are more common features among the Gospels in this scene. Some of these are rooted in Psalm 22: “For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me. My hands and feet have shriveled; ¹⁷ I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me; ¹⁸ they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.” (22:16-18). Other common features are:
 - three men being crucified
 - “King of the Jews” as the capital offense
 - darkness over the land
 - women disciples watch



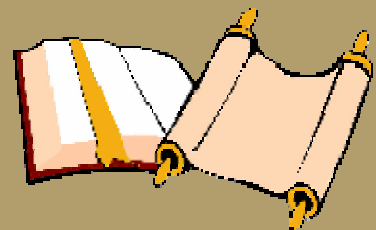


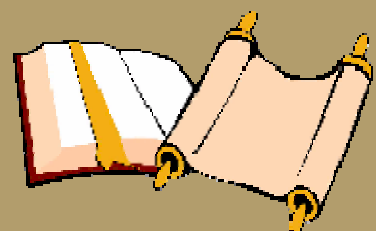
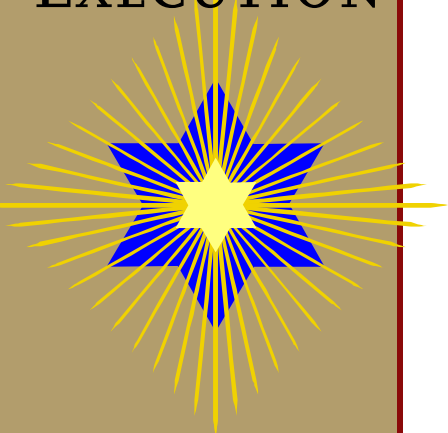
SCENE 4:
THE
EXECUTION



Mark

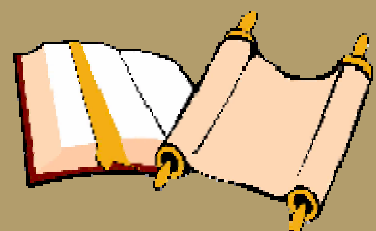
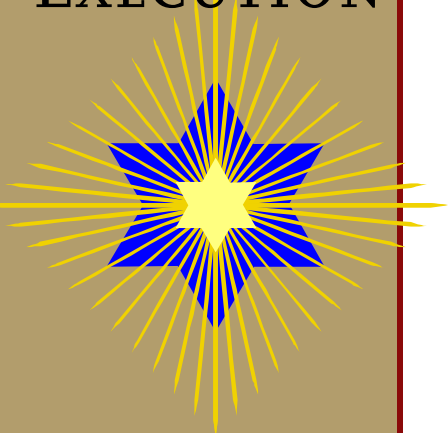
- Everyone mocks Jesus.
- Jesus' last cry is the scream, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Ps. 22:1).
- At his death, the Temple curtain is torn.
- Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!" (15:39).



SCENE 4:
THE
EXECUTION

Matthew

- Parallels Mark until Jesus' dying moment.
- "At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵² The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³ After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴ Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!' (27:51-54).

SCENE 4:
THE
EXECUTION

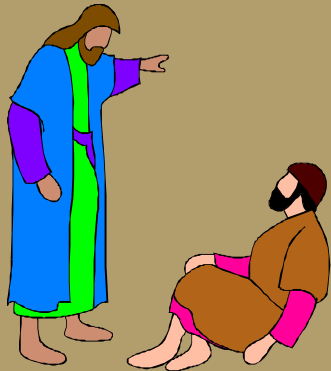
Matthew

The significance of Matthew's earthquake:

- Magi from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage" (2:1-2).
- Why is Jesus linked with phenomena of nature? Because, for Matthew, Jesus is the embodied "Wisdom of God," the divine plan which pervades the world (see 11:18-19,28-29). He is the Living Torah who is greater than the Temple, any prophet, and Solomon (see 12:6,41,42). Therefore, Jesus can teach the Torah authoritatively and provide its definitive interpretation (5:17-48), which the disciples are to teach to the nations (28:19-20).

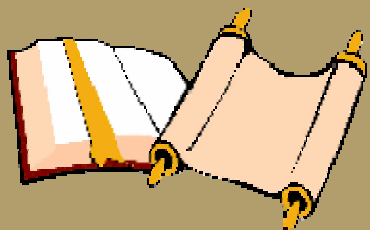


SCENE 4:
THE
EXECUTION



Luke

- “Father, forgive them” (23:34).
- The people watch, the leaders scoff (23:35).
- The penitent criminal (23:39-43).
- The temple curtain tears *before* Jesus dies, so that he can pray directly to God, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (23:46).
- The centurion exclaims, “Surely, this man was innocent!” (23:47).
- The crowd departs sorrowfully (23:48) and “all his acquaintances” see these things (23:49).



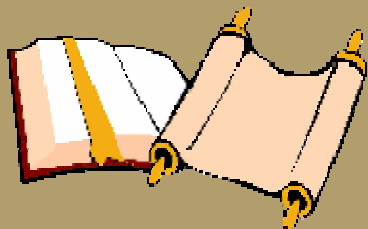


SCENE 4:
THE
EXECUTION



John

- Jesus has a “seamless tunic” (19:23).
- The mother of Jesus (seen only in John) is given into the care of the beloved disciple (19:25-27; cf. 2:2-9).
- Jesus dies as lambs are being killed in the Temple for the Passover meal. His last words: “It is finished (accomplished)” (19:30).
- Soldiers come to break the legs of the crucified, but, finding Jesus dead, one spears him. Blood and water gush out (19:34), symbols of the Spirit being unleashed into the world (2:9; 7:38-39)

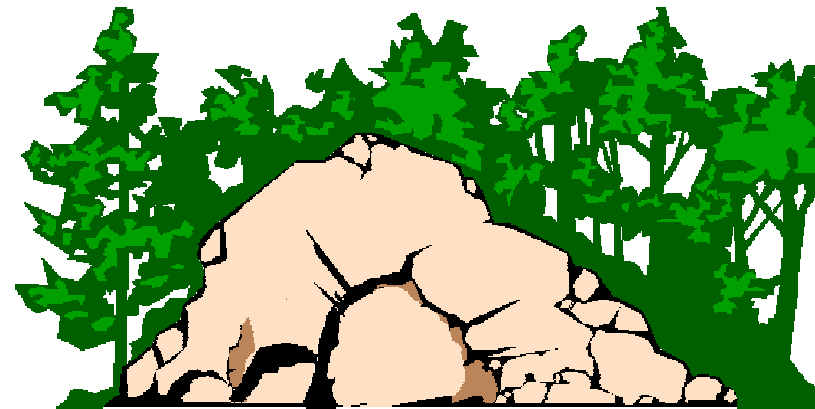
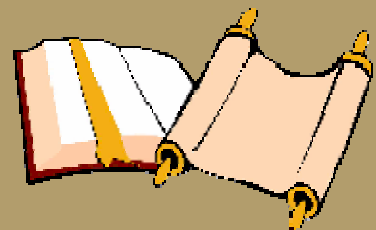




SCENE 5:
THE
BURIAL

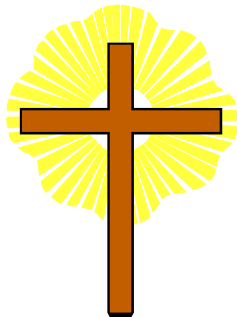
The four Gospels are all very similar in this scene:

- Joseph of Arimathea (variously described) entombs the body.
- The body is wrapped.
- The tomb is sealed with a large stone.

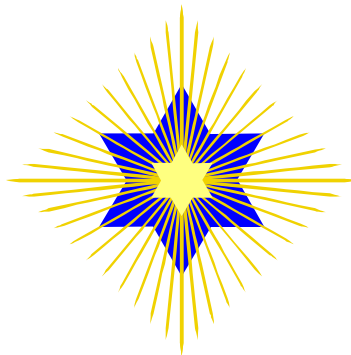




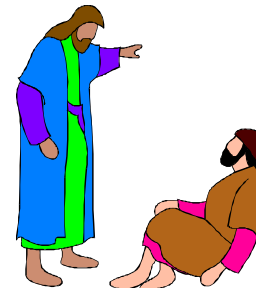
CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE FOUR GOSPELS' THEOLOGIES OF JESUS



Mark



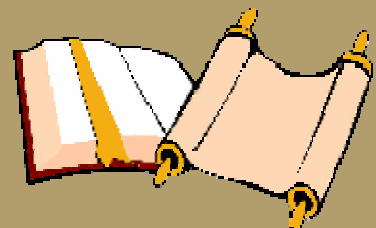
Matthew



Luke



John

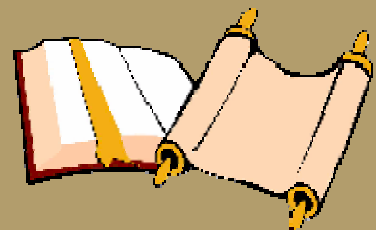




MARK

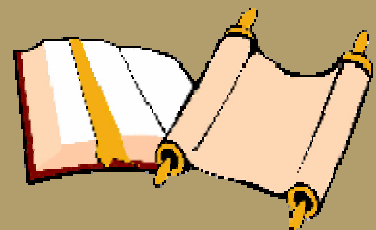
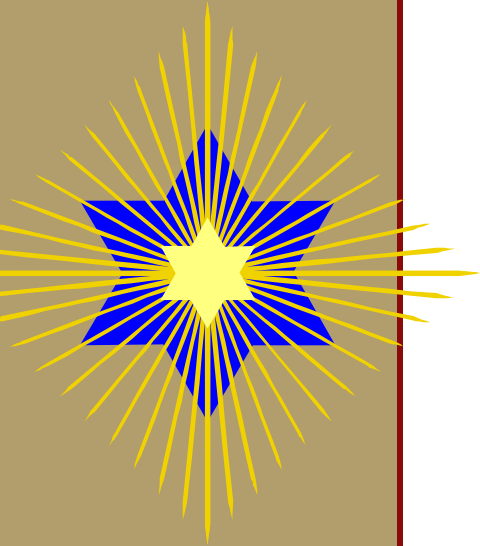


- For Mark, no one can understand who Jesus truly is, or comprehend what divine Sonship really means, unless they are willing to embrace his crucifixion.
- For Mark, glorious portrayals of Jesus do not lead to authentic faith.
- Jesus' suffering service on behalf of God's Kingdom reveals the presence of God. God is here, sharing in and undefeated by human misery.





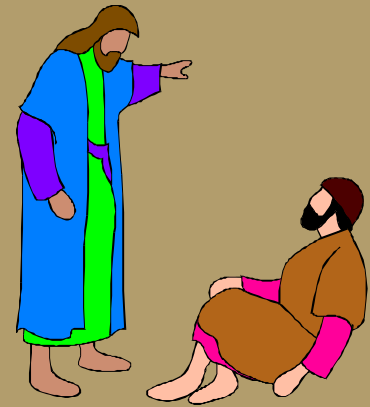
MATTHEW



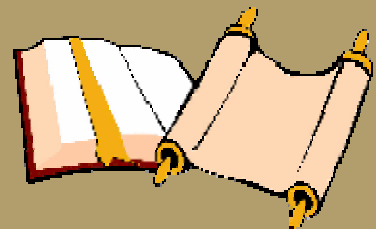
- For Matthew, Jesus is the living Torah who has become human in order to reveal definitively the divine wisdom by which Jews and all people are to live.
- Although rejected, the Wisdom of God has been raised to the life of the Age to Come and commands the disciples to spread his teachings to the world.



LUKE

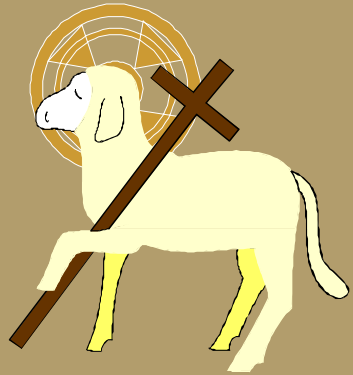


- For Luke, Jesus is the healing savior who makes people whole, reconciles enemies, and brings true peace into the world.
- His followers, therefore, should be healers, reconcilers, and peace-bringers to a divided world, and should be especially concerned with the plight of the weak and vulnerable.

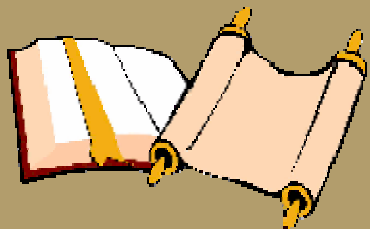




JOHN

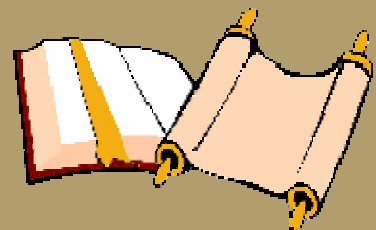
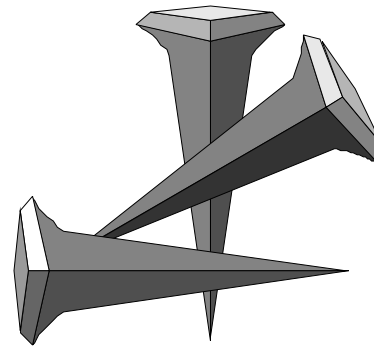


- This evangelist conceives of reality in terms of a world above and the human world below.
- For him, Jesus is the one who has been sent from the world above down into human history in order to reveal the Father's love.
- By his being "lifted up" (3:14; 8:28; 12:32), Jesus unleashed God's Spirit into the world, thereby making it possible for believers to share in the life of the world above.





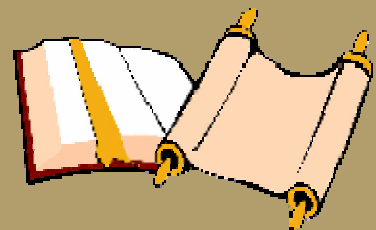
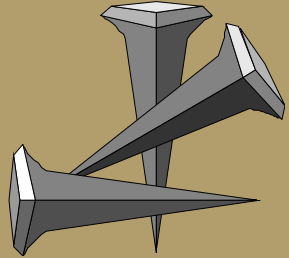
A HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EXECUTION OF JESUS





SUMMARY:

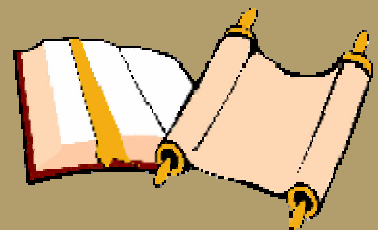
A HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EXECUTION OF JESUS



- Before arriving in Jerusalem for Passover, Jesus may have already come to the negative attention of Pilate and Caiaphas. Which of them first took action cannot be determined.
- Within a few days of his arrival and causing a disturbance in the Temple (thereby confirming possible earlier concerns), Jesus was arrested in a secluded spot at night, and questioned by Caiaphas and his associates. They determined he was arrogantly presumptuous (“blasphemy”) and saw him as a threat to the Temple and to the peace during the volatile Passover feast.
- Pilate, the Roman Prefect, assented to this judgment and ordered Jesus publicly executed by crucifixion to forestall violence on the Passover.
- Jesus was crucified, possibly as early as 9 A.M. (Mk).

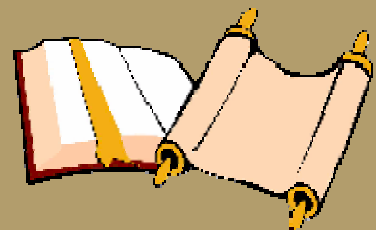


INTERMISSION



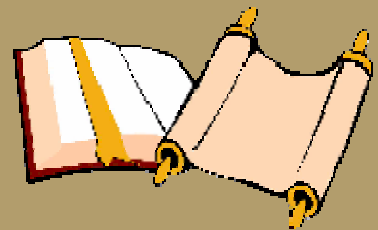


THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANTI-JEWISH THEOLOGIES IN THE PATRISTIC ERA





“Jews are slayers of the Lord,
murderers of the prophets,
enemies of God, haters of God,
congregation of demons.”
- St. Gregory of Nyssa
ca. 350

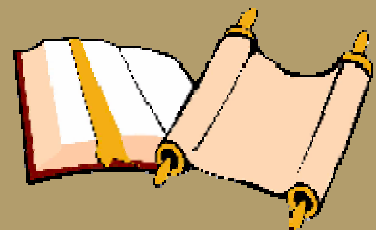




"He who can never love Christ enough
will never have done fighting against
those who hate him. I hate the Jews
because they outrage the Law....
Indeed, they have surpassed the
ferocity of the wild beasts, for they
murder their offspring and immolate
them to the devil."

- St. John Chrysostom

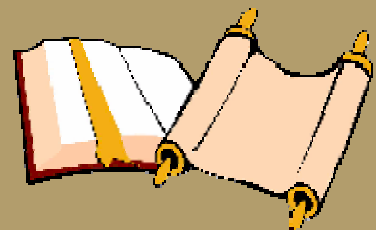
ca. 380





"The Jews held [Jesus]; the Jews insulted him, the Jews bound him, they crowned him with thorns, dishonored him by spitting on him, they scourged him, they heaped abuses upon him, they hung him on a tree, they pierced him with a lance."

- St. Augustine of Hippo
ca. 400

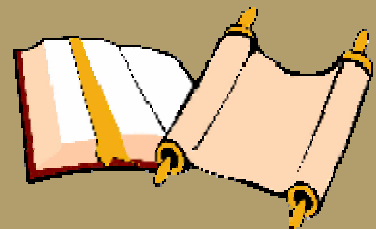




"The Jews, against whom the blood of Jesus Christ calls out, although they ought not to be killed, . . . Yet as wanderers they must remain upon the earth, until their countenance be filled with shame and they seek the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord."

- Pope Innocent III

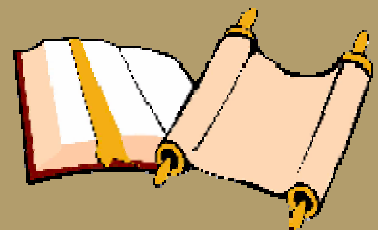
ca. 1200





"[The Jews] committed the most impious crime of all, when they conspired against the Savior of mankind, in the city where they performed to God the customary rites which were symbols of profound mysteries. Therefore that city where Jesus suffered these indignities had to be utterly destroyed. The Jewish nation had to be overthrown, and God's invitation to blessedness transferred to others, I mean to the Christians, to whom came the teaching about the simple and pure worship of God."

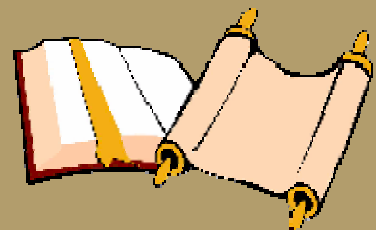
- Origen (ca. 220)





“[When a Christian utters the Lord's Prayer, he or she] reproaches and condemns the Jews, because they not only faithlessly spurned Christ . . . but also cruelly slew him; who now cannot call the Lord ‘Father,’ since the Lord confounds and refutes them, saying, ‘You are born of the devil as father, and you wish to do the desires of your father [citing John 8:44].’”

- Saint Cyprian [ca. 240]

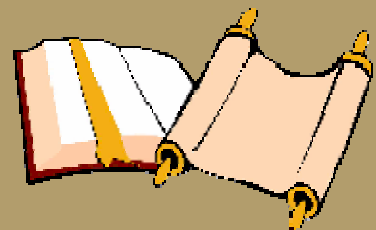




“Oh no, not the Jewish people, crucified by us for so long, not the crowd which will always prefer Barabbas because he repays evil with evil, not them, but all of us, each one of us [are crucifiers], because we are all murderers of love.”

-Pope John Paul II

Meditation on the First Station of the Cross, 1998





2ND - 4TH
CENTURIES

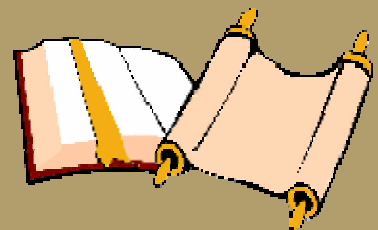
- In this time the Church was not a legal religion in the Roman Empire. It felt threatened by Jews' comparatively high social status and renewed vitality, especially in the Diaspora.
- In Sardis a 2nd-3rd century synagogue was 130 yards long, part of a larger complex, adorned with fine marble and mosaics, and situated on the main street.
- In Aphrodisias a 3rd-century stylae listed 55 Jews and 52 *theosebeis* as donors to a building project.





2ND - 4TH
CENTURIES

- The Church's claim to understand the Hebrew Scriptures better than Jews seemed incredible to pagans. Christian failure to follow the Law of Moses, which they acknowledged had come from God, was unfathomable to the Roman intelligentsia. Christianity seemed to them to be a heretical deviation from Judaism.
- The Church had to prove to Jews, pagans, and its own members that it was the true Israel, that Judaism was a pretender to that title, and that the Church need not follow the Mosaic law - all of this using Jewish sources as proof-texts, together with the New Testament.

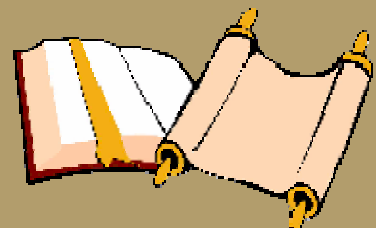




2ND - 4TH CENTURIES

Thus, an exposition of Christianity demanded a detailed refutation of Judaism.

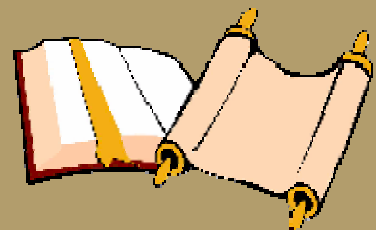
- ◆ The strict Law of Moses was given by God in a futile effort to control Jewish sinfulness. It was temporary.
- ◆ God told the prophets of the divine plan to send Jesus who would bring the new Law of love and mercy.
- ◆ The true, spiritual meaning of the Bible is found by reading it in reference to Christ and the Church.
- ◆ “The Jews” killed Jesus. So they were rejected by God and their Temple and nation were forever destroyed.
- ◆ Although replaced in God’s favor by the Church, God permits the Jews to endure as a people in hopeless wandering as a sign of the punishment awaiting the faithless. Christians must not do violence to the Jews, but must be on constant guard against their errors.
- ◆ Jewish obstinacy in rejecting the truth is caused by their association with the demonic.





2ND - 4TH
CENTURIES

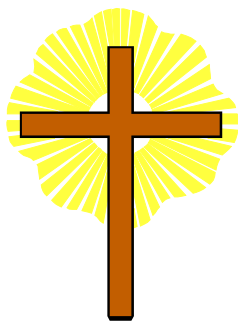
The Church fathers drew upon polemical texts from the Gospels and combined them into a theological system predicated upon the assertions that the Jews were collectively responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus and so were collectively cursed by God to homeless wandering and to replacement by the Church.





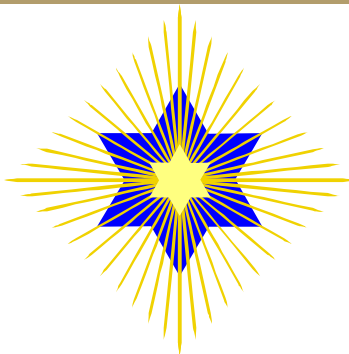
2ND - 4TH
CENTURIES

COMBINING
THE FOUR
PASSION
NARRATIVES



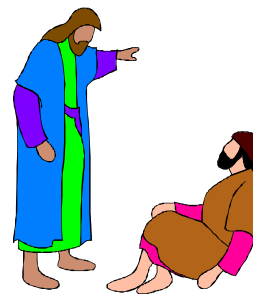
Mark

Whole council find Jesus guilty of blasphemy as "Son of the Most High"



Matthew

All the people, "His blood be on us and on our children."



Luke

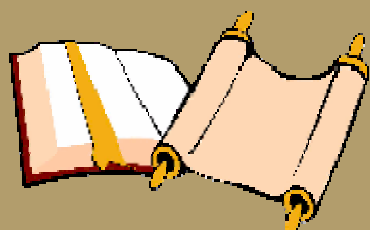
Pilate declares Jesus innocent three times.



John

Pilate scourges Jesus to release him. "We have a law and he must die."

Combined Passion Narrative
with heightened anti-Jewish features

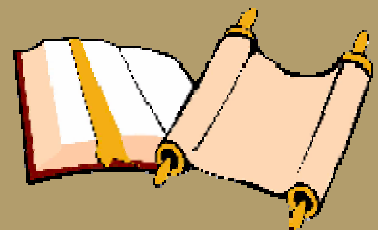




BOSTON
COLLEGE

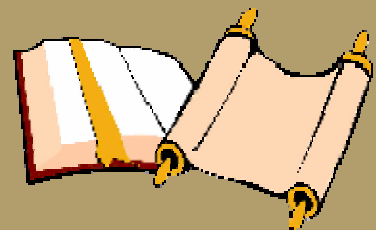
CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN-JEWISH LEARNING

SERMONS AND PASSION PLAYS





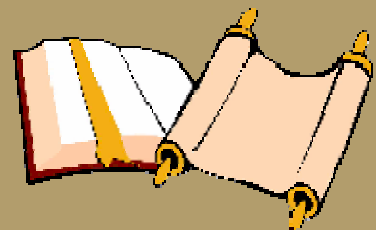
NOSTRA AETATE AND SUBSEQUENT
CATHOLIC TEACHING ON
PRESENTING THE PASSION





VATICAN
COUNCIL II

*NOSTRA
AETATE*
(1965), 4



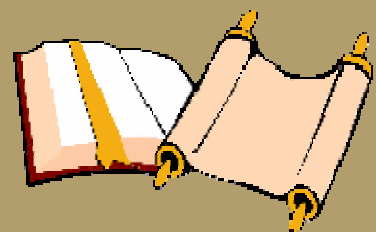
The apostle Paul maintains that the Jews remain very dear to God, for the sake of the patriarchs, since God does not take back the gifts He bestowed or the choice He made (cf. Rom. 11:28-29).

Even though the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ, neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his passion. It is true that the church is the new people of God, yet the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from Holy Scripture. Consequently, all must take care, lest in catechizing or in preaching the word of God, they teach anything which is not in accord with the truth of the Gospel message or the spirit of Christ. Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy scripture. Consequently, **all must take care, lest in catechizing or in preaching the word of God, they teach anything which is not in accord with the truth of the Gospel message or the spirit of Christ.**



PONTIFICAL
BIBLICAL
COMMISSION,

*THE
INTERPRETATION
OF THE BIBLE IN
THE CHURCH
(1993)*

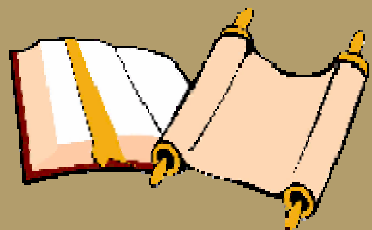


Particular attention is necessary, according to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council (*Nostra Aetate*, 4), to avoid absolutely any actualization of certain texts of the New Testament which could provoke or reinforce unfavorable attitudes toward the Jewish people. The tragic events of the past must, on the contrary, impel all to keep unceasing in mind that, according to the New Testament, the Jews remain “beloved” of God, “since the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom. 11:28-29) [IV,A,3].



PONTIFICAL
COMMISSION
FOR RELIGIOUS
RELATIONS WITH
THE JEWS,

*NOTES ON THE
CORRECT WAY
TO PRESENT JEWS
AND JUDAISM IN
PREACHING AND
TEACHING IN
THE ROMAN
CATHOLIC
CHURCH (1985)*

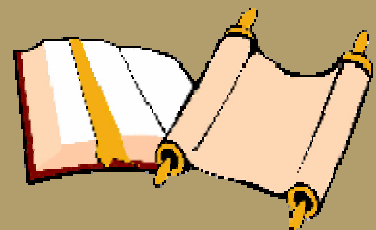


The Gospels are the outcome of long and complicated editorial work. [...] Hence, it cannot be ruled out that some references hostile or less than favorable to the Jews have their historical context in conflicts between the nascent Church and the Jewish community. **Certain controversies reflect Christian-Jewish relations long after the time of Jesus. To establish this is of capital importance if we wish to bring out the meaning of certain Gospel texts for the Christians of today.** All this should be taken into account when preparing catechesis and homilies for the last weeks of Lent and Holy Week. [21,A]



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It is necessary to remember that the passion narratives do not offer eyewitness accounts or a modern transcript of historical events.

Rather, the events have had their meaning focused, as it were, through the four theological "lenses" of the gospels. By comparing what is shared and what distinguishes the various gospel accounts from each other, the homilist can discern the core from the particular optics of each. One can then better see the significant theological differences between the passion narratives.

These differences also are part of the inspired Word of God. [23]

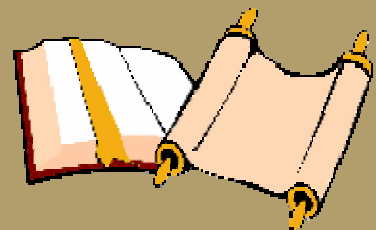


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Many other elements, such as the crowds shouting "His blood be on us and on our children" in Matthew, or the generic use of the term "the Jews" in John, are unique to a given author and must be understood within the context of that author's overall theological scheme. Often, these unique elements reflect the perceived needs and emphases of the author's particular community at the end of the first century, *after* the split between Jews and Christians was well underway. [24]

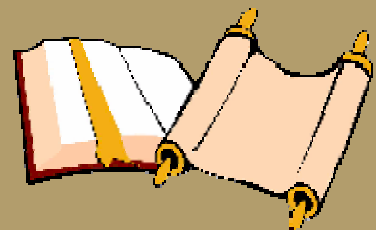
Christian reflection on the passion should lead to a deep sense of the need for reconciliation with the Jewish community today. [25]





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*CRITERIA FOR
THE EVALUATION
OF
DRAMATIZATIONS
OF THE PASSION
(1988)*

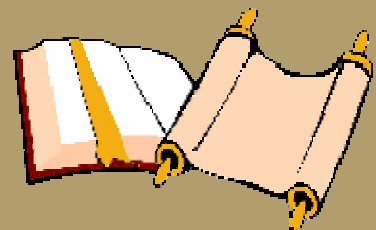


The greatest caution is advised in all cases where "it is a question of passages that seem to show the Jewish people as such in an unfavorable light" (*Guidelines II*). A general principle might, therefore, be suggested that if one cannot show beyond reasonable doubt that the particular gospel element selected or paraphrased will not be offensive or have the potential for negative influence on the audience for whom the presentation is intended, that element cannot, in good conscience, be used. [C,1,d]



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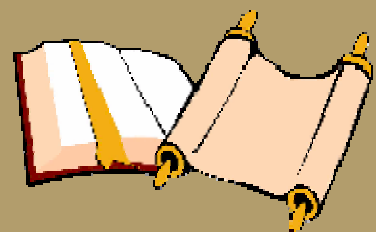


[T]he central criterion for judgment must be what the [1974 Vatican] *Guidelines* called "an overriding preoccupation to bring out explicitly the *meaning* of the [gospel] text while taking scriptural studies into account." Anything less than this "overriding preoccupation" to avoid caricaturing the Jewish people, which history has all too frequently shown us, will result almost inevitably in a violation of the basic hermeneutic principle of the [Second Vatican] Council in this regard: "the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God as if this followed from Sacred Scripture" (*Nostra Aetate*) [A,4].



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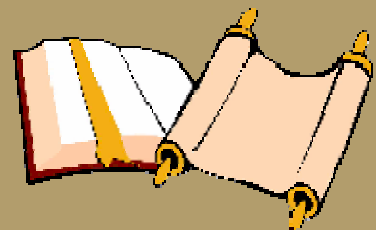


Jews should not be portrayed as avaricious (e.g., in Temple money-changer scenes); blood thirsty (e.g., in certain depiction's of Jesus' appearances before the Temple priesthood or before Pilate); or implacable enemies of Christ (e.g., by changing the small "crowd" at the governor's palace into a teeming mob). Such depictions, with their obvious "collective guilt" implications, eliminate those parts of the gospels that show that the secrecy surrounding Jesus' "trial" was motivated by the large following he had in Jerusalem and that the Jewish populace, far from wishing his death, would have opposed it had they known and, in fact, mourned his death by Roman execution (cf. Lk 23:27). [B,3,d]



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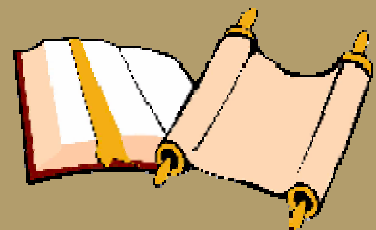


The Role of Pilate. Certain of the gospels, especially the two latest ones, Matthew and John, seem on the surface to portray Pilate as a vacillating administrator who himself found "no fault" with Jesus and sought, though in a weak way, to free him. Other data from the gospels and secular sources contemporary with the events portray Pilate as a ruthless tyrant. We know from these latter sources that Pilate ordered hundreds of Jews crucified without proper trial under Roman law, and that in the year 36 Pilate was recalled to Rome to give an account. Luke, similarly, mentions "the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices" in the Temple (Lk 13:1-4), thus corroborating the contemporary secular accounts of the unusual cruelty of Pilate's administration.. [C,2,b]



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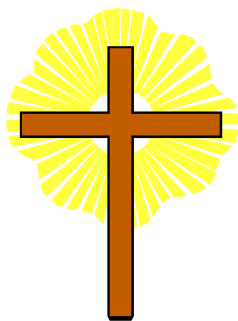
*CRITERIA FOR
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[I]t must be understood that the gospel authors did not intend to write "history" in our modern sense, but rather "sacred history" (i.e., offering "the honest truth about Jesus") (*Notes* IV, 29 A) in light of revelation. To attempt to utilize the four passion narratives literally by picking one passage from one gospel and the next from another gospel, and so forth, is to risk violating the integrity of the texts themselves. [...] A clear and precise hermeneutic and a guiding artistic vision sensitive to historical fact and to the best biblical scholarship are obviously necessary. Just as obviously, it is not sufficient for the producers of passion dramatizations to respond to responsible criticism simply by appealing to the notion that "it's in the Bible." One must account for one's selections.

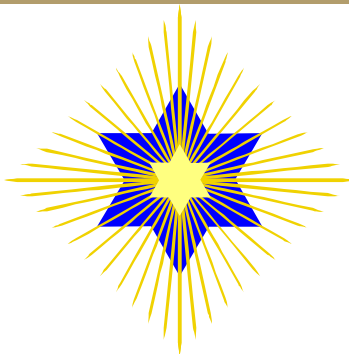


COMBINING
THE FOUR
PASSION
NARRATIVES



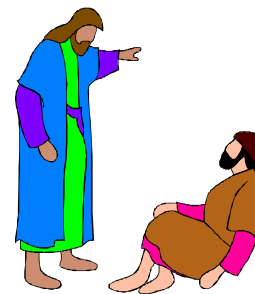
Mark

Whole council find Jesus guilty of blasphemy as "Son of the Most High"



Matthew

All the people, "His blood be on us and on our children."



Luke

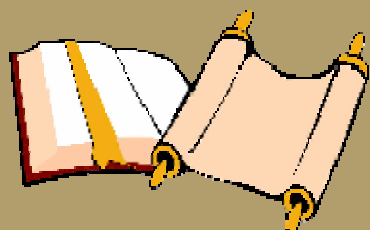
Pilate declares Jesus innocent three times.



John

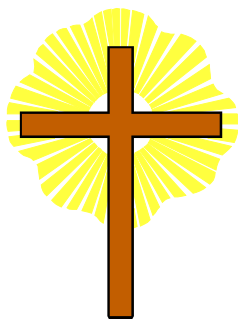
Pilate scourges Jesus to release him. "We have a law and he must die."

Combined Passion Narrative
with heightened anti-Jewish features





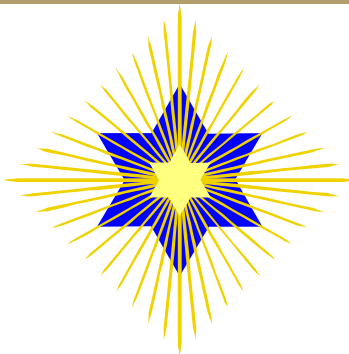
COMBINING THE FOUR PASSION NARRATIVES



Mark

Jesus arrested secretly due to his popularity to avoid riot (14:2).

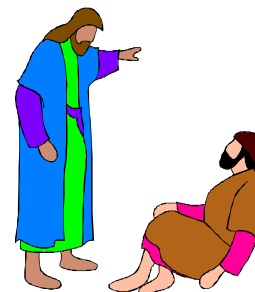
Jesus' was executed hastily (15:25).



Matthew

Scourging is part of execution (27:26)

Priests mislead people (27:20).



Luke

Jesus charged with three anti-Roman crimes (23:3).

Pilate used violence to keep order (13:1)

The people grieve at Jesus' execution (23:48)



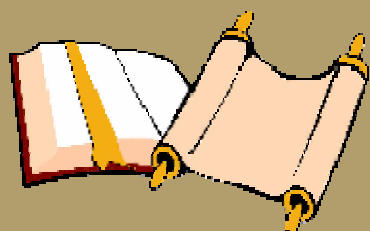
John

Romans among arrestors (18:3).

Caiaphas afraid Romans will level Temple if there is a riot (11:48).

Jesus questioned by priests, not whole council (18)

Combined Passion Narrative
alert to anti-Jewish features



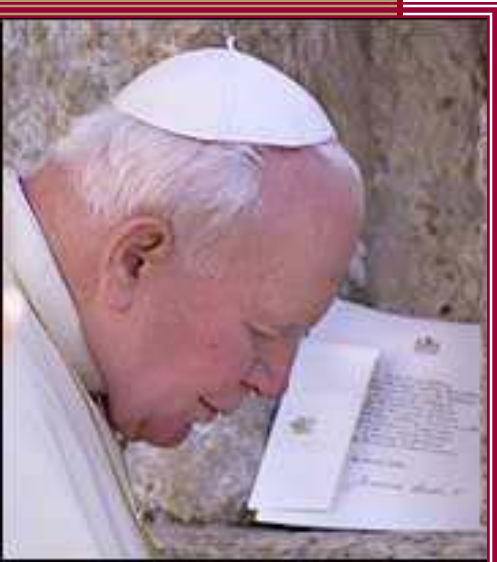


A SOLEMN COMMITMENT FOR THE 3RD MILLENNIUM

God of our fathers,
you chose Abraham and his descendants
to bring Your name to the nations:
we are deeply saddened by the behavior of those
who in the course of history
have caused these children of Yours to suffer
and asking Your forgiveness
we wish to commit ourselves
to genuine brotherhood
with the people of the Covenant

Jerusalem, 26 March 2000.

Joannes Paulus II





For many resources in Christian-Jewish relations, please visit the website of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at:

www.bc.edu/cjlearning