

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST

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For many years, students of the New Testament have used Gospel harmonies to study Jesus' ministry as described in the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. A Gospel harmony, sometimes called a synopsis (from the Greek *synoptos*), endeavors to weave all the details of the Gospel tradition into a single chronological strand, one composite order, or sequence.¹ A Gospel harmony usually presents the Gospels in parallel columns such that readers see all similarities in the texts at a single glance.² One Latter-day Saint author argues that Gospel "harmonies are based upon the Gestalt principle that the whole of anything is greater than the sum of its parts. Since each gospel represents a part, the greater message of the life of Jesus can only be seen when all four are arranged together."³ Although it is true that any study of Jesus' life should examine all relevant texts (in particular the four Gospels), it is not necessarily true that the Gestalt principle applies totally to a study of Jesus' life. The unwise use of a Gospel harmony—taking the four Gospels as a whole—can distort the historical setting of each story. Undoubtedly each writer preserved a separate and distinct account of Jesus' life and ministry for a good reason.

Jesus proclaimed the gospel, meaning the good news (the English word *gospel* is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *godspell*, which means "good tidings").⁴ Jesus declared the gospel that the kingdom of God had come through Him, and the New Testament writers presented the good news about Jesus.⁵ The title given to their work from the second century onward is significant: the Gospel *according to* Matthew, the Gospel *according to* Mark, and so on. So, although Jesus proclaimed a single gospel, the

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evangelists presented the life of Jesus in accordance with what they understood. Each writer thus gave his particular testimony, and as a result today we have four Gospels.⁶

In those Gospels we have four separate and distinct viewpoints of Jesus' suffering, betrayal, trial, and Crucifixion. The "Passion narratives" include most of the material found in Matthew 26–27, Mark 14–15, Luke 22–23, and John 12–19. Each was written at a different time for a different audience. To maintain the integrity of the story of the Passion as a whole, we must examine each narrative independent of the others, instead of making one Gospel of them. Attempting to harmonize the four accounts may lead us away from the messages and insights that each Gospel writer intended to teach. The phrase "Garden of Gethsemane" is an example of what can happen when we harmonize the Gospel narratives. The phrase "Garden of Gethsemane" does not exist anywhere in the New Testament text; rather, it is a hybrid term constructed from the "garden," in the Gospel according to John (see John 18:1) and "Gethsemane," in the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark (see Matthew 26:36; Mark 14:32). Such blending of the narratives may create concepts and historical notions that have no basis in the New Testament text itself, for, although each Gospel relates the historical events of the Passion, each has a particular tone.

The first three Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are called the synoptic Gospels because they share similar material (the Greek word *synoptikos* means "to see the whole together, to take a comprehensive view").⁷ John stands apart from the synoptic Gospels because his work has a significant amount of unique material. John's narrative contains several important discourses delivered by Jesus that are not recorded anywhere else (see John 13–17).

MATTHEW'S PASSION NARRATIVE

In Matthew, the Passion narrative (see Matthew 26:1–27:56) begins with Jesus' anointing in Bethany: "Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waster? . . . When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work

upon me. . . . For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial" (Matthew 26:6–12).

Jesus' statement "she did it for my burial" can mean only that He already knows that He will be crucified and buried without the customary anointing.⁸ Then we read of Judas's betrayal (see Matthew 26:1–5); the disciples prepare for the Passover (see Matthew 26:17–19); Jesus identifies the betrayer and institutes the Lord's Supper (see Matthew 26:20–30); Jesus ends the dinner in the upper room with a Passover hymn, possibly Psalms 113–18 (see Matthew 26:30).

Following His departure from the upper room, Jesus goes to Gethsemane, where He "saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder" (Matthew 26:36). Having separated Himself, Jesus begins to be "sorrowful and very heavy" (Matthew 26:37). Alternative translations from the Greek for *sorrowful* and *heavy* are "distressed" and "troubled" (see footnote 37*a* in the Latter-day Saint edition of the KJV). Eventually Jesus "fell on his face" (Matthew 26:39). In Matthew's account, Jesus begins His prayer sorrowful, troubled, and prostrate but ends on His feet, resolutely facing the mob that has approached. In Matthew 26:46, Jesus commands His disciples, saying, "Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me."

Judas, the traitor, greets Jesus, "Hail, master," and then kisses Him (Matthew 26:49). By using a kiss to show who the soldiers should arrest, Judas perverts a gesture of friendship he has had with his former Master. Matthew adds "hail" to the salutation as a further example of Judas's false-heartedness. After a brief skirmish between one of the disciples and the high priest's servant, "all the disciples forsook him, and fled" (Matthew 26:56).

Jesus is betrayed by one of His own, abandoned by the remaining disciples, and in the end is accused by His own religious leaders. Deserted by His disciples and surrounded by His enemies, Jesus is taken before the Sanhedrin (see Matthew 26:57–68). They take Him finally to the Gentiles for trial, mockery, and execution. In spite of these trials, Jesus is self-possessed when He confronts the Roman governor who can decree His death.

Only Matthew informs us of the custom of releasing a prisoner at the feast, thus giving Pilate a possible escape clause. Another overtly Matthean insight is the account of Pilate's wife, who as a Gentile recognizes Jesus' innocence and seeks His release, while the Jewish leaders work the crowd

to have the notorious Barabbas released and Jesus crucified. Some important manuscripts of Matthew compare Barabbas and Jesus in a unique way, for they phrase Pilate's question in 27:17 thus: "Who do you want me to release to you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus called Christ?" Since "Barabbas" probably means "Son of the Father," it would be a fascinating irony for Pilate to have faced two accused men named Jesus, one "Son of the Father," the other "Son of God."⁹ Presented with the choice between the two, the Jewish crowd seeks the release of Barabbas. Pilate then "took water, and washed his hands before the multitude" (Matthew 27:24). He "scourged Jesus, [and] delivered him to be crucified" (Matthew 27:26).

Crucifixion was an ancient and malicious form of punishment that the Romans used to kill an enemy. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus, who witnessed several crucifixions as an adviser to Titus during the siege of Jerusalem, tersely describes this form of Roman punishment as "the most wretched of deaths." He reports that a threat by the Roman besiegers to crucify a Jewish prisoner caused the garrison of Machaerus to surrender in exchange for safe conduct.¹⁰

The practice of crucifixion was remarkably widespread in the ancient world, not just among the Romans. But for the Romans it was a political and military punishment, inflicted primarily on the lower classes, slaves, violent criminals, and the unruly elements in rebellious provinces, not the least of which was Judea.¹¹ The dominant reason for its use seems to be its allegedly matchless efficacy as a deterrent. Crucifixions were, of course, carried out publicly. By publicly displaying a naked victim at a prominent place such as a crossroads, a theatre, high ground, or the place of his crime, the Romans also ensured a criminal's uttermost humiliation. Jews were particularly averse to this punishment in light of Deuteronomy 21:23, which specifically pronounced God's curse on the crucified individual.

Matthew identifies some of the participants in the actual crucifixion and gives the location as "Golgotha" (Matthew 27:33).¹² The name may have been given to a place that resembled a skull, or it may have been so named because it was a regular place of execution.

Matthew's allusions to the Old Testament underscore the emphasis laid on God's acts. One such parallel Matthew offers is the story of Judas's death. After betraying Christ, Judas "went and hanged himself" (Matthew 27:5), an echo of the story of King David. It reveals the similarity of David's own flight to the Kidron and the subsequent betrayal by Achitophel, who also hanged himself (see 2 Samuel 15:12, 14, 23; 17:23).¹³

Matthew's repeated use of the Old Testament provides a clue to his unique purpose, namely demonstrating the fulfillment of God's purposes in and through Jesus.¹⁴ Matthew is interested in themes rather than in history; the most superficial examination of his Gospel from a purely historical point of view reveals that a disproportionate amount of attention is devoted to the Passion narrative. Thus, Old Testament quotations in the Passion narrative combined with the familiar Matthean formula "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet" (Matthew 27:35), the Gospel of Matthew reemphasizes God's salvation proclaimed from the beginning of time. The emphasis on the Messiah is His redemption of mankind from the captivity of sin, not from military power as expected by the Jews.

MARK'S PASSION NARRATIVE

In Mark's Passion narrative (see Mark 14:1–15:47), the death plot (see Matthew 14:1ff) is followed by the anointing in Bethany (see Mark 14:3–9), Judas's betrayal (see Mark 14:10ff), the preparation of the last meal, announcement of the betrayal, and the institution of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (see Mark 14:12–25). Jesus leaves the upper room committed to the necessity that He must suffer and die.¹⁵ In Gethsemane, the prostrate Jesus suffers in anguish (see Mark 14:32–42). He is God's Son, yet endowed with the human will to live; He does not want to die. The name that Jesus uses in His cry to God, "Abba" (Father), heightens the pathos of this tragic scene: "He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be horror-stricken and desperately depressed. 'My heart is breaking with a deathlike grief,' he told them. 'Stay here and keep watch.' Then he walked forward a little way and flung himself in the ground, praying that, if it were possible, the hour might pass him by, 'Dear Father,' he said, 'all things are possible to you. Let me not have to drink this cup! Yet it is not what I want but what you want'" (Phillips Translation, Mark 14:33–36).¹⁶

It is the Father's will that Jesus die. His disciples, however, have not yet accepted this reality. Jesus states, "The sheep shall be scattered" (Mark 14:27). Peter characteristically denies that statement (see Mark 14:29), only to be told by the Master that he would yet deny the Lord three times (see Mark 14:30). The disciples at first stand in firm opposition to Jesus' arrest, but finally they all forsake him and flee. Mark's account emphasizes the complete abandonment of Jesus by everyone, even one unnamed follower (see Mark 14:52).

Peter's denial recorded in Mark 14:66–72 is really threefold. Peter at first pretends he does not understand what he has been asked. Next he endeavors to get away from the courtyard. Unable to leave, he then denies his status as a disciple. Peter swears an oath that he does not even know Jesus. Mark ends the scene with the statement, "And Peter recalled to mind the word that Jesus said to him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice" (Mark 14:72). Ironically, at the very moment when Jesus is mocked by the Sanhedrin's challenge to prophesy (see Mark 14:65), His prophecies are coming true. Mark's account of the first trial ends at this point, and the second trial begins.

The first trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin is the more decisive one, though from a legal perspective the Roman trial is more important. Throughout both trials, Jesus remains almost entirely silent. At the first trial, He is charged with threatening to destroy the temple at Jerusalem and committing blasphemy (see Mark 14:58, 64). In the second trial, He is accused of claiming to be "King of the Jews," a title that carries revolutionary overtones for the Romans (see Mark 15:2).

During the first trial, Caiaphas, the high priest, specifically questions Jesus about His claim to be the Savior Messiah. Jesus' affirmation gives the Jewish leaders the needed pretext to bring a charge of treason against Him. This charge would then be dealt with by Roman law and power, just as the Jewish leaders expected it to be (see Mark 14:61–62). Not only does Jesus give evidence to convict Himself under Roman law but He also gives Caiaphas grounds to convict Him of blasphemy, a capital crime under the law of Moses, as the claim of being a messiah is not.

New Testament scholar Joel Marcus argues that there must have been something different about Jesus' claim to be the Messiah: "Why should Jesus' claim to be 'the Messiah, the Son of God' [KJV, Mark 14:61: 'The Christ, the Son of the Blessed'] be considered blasphemous if 'Son of God' is merely a synonym for 'Messiah'? . . . One searches Jewish literature in vain for evidence that a simple claim to be the Messiah would incur such a charge."¹⁷ Mark's report of the first trial indicates that Jesus' claim to be God's literal Son is more crucial and controversial for the Jewish leaders.¹⁸ The Messiah-kingship issue is simply a ruse to get the Romans to take care of Jesus in the second trial.

Mark's presentation of the events after the second trial is a painful account, albeit succinct and unadorned. Characteristically, Mark reports the events with a few vivid words and without elaborating the detail: "And

so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him" (Mark 15:15–19).

At the time of Christ, scourging (flogging) was done with a whip made of several strips of leather with pieces of metal and bone embedded near the ends. The victim was bound to a pillar and then beaten with the whip. While it is true that the Jews limited the number of stripes to a maximum of forty (thirty-nine in case of a miscount), no such limitation was recognized by the Romans. Victims often did not survive this punishment. Jesus survives, only to be executed by crucifixion.

Two incidents prior to Jesus' death are recorded by Mark in this climactic part of the Passion narrative: the mockery (see Mark 15:16–20) and the actual crucifixion (see Mark 15:21–31). Mark's story of brutality ends with the veil of the temple being "rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Mark 15:38), a final act of disorder in a violent scene when Jesus is put to death at the hands of ruthless men agitated by a frenzied crowd incited by their leaders.

LUKE'S PASSION NARRATIVE

Luke begins his Passion narrative (see Luke 22:1–23:56) with the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, the Last Supper, and the farewell discourse (see Luke 22:7–38). The narrative continues with Jesus' arrival at the Mount of Olives, His arrest, the denial by Peter, the mocking of Jesus, the hearing before the Sanhedrin, the hearing before Pilate, Jesus' going before Herod Antipas, Jesus' walk to Golgotha, His words to the women of Jerusalem, His Crucifixion, and finally His burial (see Luke 22:39–23:56).

Luke's account is marked by delicacy and tenderness. He cannot bring himself to report some details that were too distressing: Luke does not say that Jesus was scourged nor that Judas actually kissed Jesus. Luke does, however, make us aware of the magnitude of the terrible struggle between Jesus and the powers of evil. The Passion is the last decisive struggle. Jesus comes out of it as victor through His patience—a word that is not a good rendering of the Greek *hypomone*, which suggests the attitude of the believer enduring blows in his trial as he is sustained by God.¹⁹

The decisive struggle occurs in “the place” at the Mount of Olives. Here in great agony, the Lord bleeds from every pore: “And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:39–42).

Then, comforted by God, Jesus emerges victorious. Now at peace, held in His Father’s arms, He can be wholly reconciled to His God.

Luke uses the Greek *agonia* in 22:44 to indicate Jesus’ intense anxiety over what will happen to Himself. The Greek meaning of *agonia* is the “athlete’s state of mind before the contest, agony, dread.”²⁰ As a result, Luke reports, Jesus “prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44). Although some ancient manuscripts omit Luke 22:43–44 (see, for example, Codex Vaticanus), it was known to Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tatian, and Hippolytus in the second century.²¹

Events happen swiftly in Luke. Judas arrives with his newfound allies and attempts to salute Jesus. Jesus reminds Judas that it is the Son of Man whom he thus betrays. Peter, anxious to do something, smites off the ear of the high priest’s servant. Jesus “touched [the servant’s] ear, and healed him” (Luke 22:51). He helps His opponent, even in the midst of His own danger. The physician Luke sees Jesus as the greatest healer. Whether for friend or foe, Jesus’ mission is one of reconciliation and healing.

The tearing of the veil of the temple just before Jesus’ death is another Lucan feature departing from the other Gospels (see Luke 23:45).²² After the curtain is rent, Jesus addresses God: “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). This action symbolizes Jesus’ communing with the Father, who may have been present in the temple, at the last moment before His death.

The cry Jesus utters on the cross is not a scream of human suffering before death; rather it is the evening prayer known to every Jew: “Into your hands I commend my spirit.” Jesus, however, prefaces it with the term that marks His unparalleled intimacy with God: “Father” (Luke 23:46). Jesus dies in peace, at one with God.

The Crucifixion itself is the last violent act by men in the life of Him who promised them life after death. Yet Jesus’ promise to the thief and to

all of us is not one of mere survival after death but, more accurately, a glorious future beyond death (see Luke 23:43).

JOHN'S PASSION NARRATIVE

John wrote his Gospel some sixty years after Jesus' death, so he had meditated on the Passion for a long time before committing it to writing. In his Passion account (see John 12:11–19:42) John chooses the episodes that have the most significance to the faithful. He presents the Passion as the triumphal progress of Jesus towards the Father. Jesus knows that He is going to die, He knows what kind of death it will be, and He goes to it freely: "No one taketh [my life] from me, but I lay it down myself" (John 10:18). John does not separate death and exaltation in his account but sees them as inextricably intertwined. The lifting up of Jesus on the cross is also the beginning of His Ascension into the glory of God, from whence He will send the Spirit upon the world (see John 19:30). "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," Jesus declares (John 12:32).

To draw all men to Himself is the essence of Jesus' mission, according to John's writings. He anticipates and accepts death not simply as the consequence of His prophetic calling but as His last service of love. The Passion of Christ is the climax of His ministry, which offers salvation by every action.

John's story of Jesus' Passion includes the farewell to His disciples: the foot washing at the meal, designation of the betrayer, the commandment of love, the allusion to Peter's denial, consolation for His own, the metaphor of Jesus as the true vine, a discussion of the hatred of the world, and the Intercessory Prayer (see John 13–17).

John's story continues at a special garden place where Jesus and His disciples "ofttimes resorted" (John 18:1–2). John began his Gospel by discussing the Creation narrative alluding to the first garden, where the conflict between Adam and Lucifer was played out. Now in a second garden, another conflict between the Savior and the serpent is played out: "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples" (John 18:1–2).

For John, Judas is the tool of Satan. Earlier that evening Judas had gone off into the night, the evil night of which Jesus had warned in John 9:10 and 12:35, the night in which men stumble because they have no light.

The lanterns and torches the Jews carried on the night of the arrest could perhaps illustrate that they have rejected the light of the world and so must rely on the artificial light they carry with them.

Now Jesus, completely in control of His fate, leaves the garden to confront the malevolent host before Him: “Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he” (John 18:4–5).

Jesus’ simple answer causes this large armed group of Roman soldiers and Jewish temple police to step backwards and fall to the ground (see John 18:6). The adversaries of Jesus are prostrate before His divine majesty, leaving us little doubt that John intends “I AM” as a divine name (Greek, *ego eimi*).²³ John emphasizes that Jesus, as God, has power over the forces of darkness. This statement reinforces our impression that Jesus could not have been arrested unless He permitted it. That belief is further substantiated by Jesus’ statement before Pilate, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above” (John 19:11).

After relating Jesus’ trial before Annas and Caiaphas, John tells of Jesus’ being brought to the “hall of judgment” to stand before the Roman governor (John 18:28). As Pilate examines Jesus, he asks the question, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). John seems intent on warning the reader that no one can avoid judgment when one stands before Jesus. The scene ends with an apotheosis: Pilate makes Jesus sit at his tribunal so he can proclaim Jesus king (see John 19:13). “Sit down” may mean that Pilate “made him [Jesus] sit down.”²⁴ For John, Christ is the legitimate judge of men; in condemning Him, the Jewish leaders are judging themselves.

John records the place of these events explicitly, even noting the time: “It was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour” (John 19:14). Passover Eve, he says—or, since *paraskeue* acquired in Jewish Greek the special sense of “Sabbath eve,” that is, Friday—could be rendered, “It was Friday of Passover Week at about twelve o’clock noon.”²⁵

John sees a deeper meaning in Pilate’s words, just as He had seen a prophecy in Caiaphas’s words (see John 11:49–51). The Roman governor exclaims, “Behold your King!” (John 19:14). Pilate implies that Jesus is the true king of the true Israel, of all the people of God who obey the voice of God. Spoken at midday on Passover Eve, we can infer that Jesus is the true Paschal Lamb about to be sacrificed at the appropriate hour of the appropriate day for the life of His people.

For John, the Jewish trial is a mockery of a prophet and the Roman trial a mockery of a king. Judas, a disciple, hands Jesus over to the Jewish leaders, the chief priest hands Jesus over to a Roman leader, and Pilate hands Jesus over to the soldiers to be crucified. While no one is completely responsible, each person or group hands Jesus over to another individual or group. Therefore, all collectively are responsible. John's Passion narrative ends with the scourging, crowning with thorns, crucifixion, the piercing of Jesus' side, and finally the removal of His body from the cross (see John 19:31–42).

CONCLUSION

Because the accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John of the Passion describe the same series of incidents, it is easy to blend all the narratives in our heads and produce for ourselves our own harmony, so that our version of the Passion story includes Matthew's earthquakes and his story of Pilate's wife and her dream; Luke's scene of agony; and John's memorable quote from Pilate, "What is truth?" In reality, the New Testament writers have actually preserved not one story but four separate versions of the same scenario. For each writer, the Passion narrative is the culmination of his entire Gospel story. Each testifies that Jesus' Passion fulfills the multiple prophecies and testimonies of the Lord.

Although we have a tendency to want one picture of Jesus' life—a single Gospel, as it were—the Gospel narratives do not make a single picture of Jesus, but four beautiful mosaics. They are the words and actions of Jesus as interpreted by authentic witnesses. We do not need to cut and paste them together to form a single picture. "[The first harmonies'] declared purpose," New Testament scholar Heinrich Greeven argues, was "to fuse parallel texts into one single text," and to do so, the compilers had to harmonize and diminish the differences or supposed contradictions between the stories.²⁶

If we had four mosaics giving different representations of the same scene, it would not occur to us to say, "These mosaics are so beautiful that I do not want to lose any of them; I shall demolish them and use the enormous pile of stones to make a single mosaic that combines all four of them." Trying to combine the pieces would be an outrageous affront to the artists. Because the four Gospels are different from each other, we must study each one for itself, without demolishing it and using the debris to reconstruct a life of Jesus by making the four Gospels into one Gospel. Even though it is useful to study the Gospels with the aid of such tools as

a harmony, we must remember that historical and exegetical methodology and scholarly tools can, in fact, divert our attention from the real drama and the essential issues raised by each of the Gospels. Any tool of study that prevents us from asking the eternally important questions “Whom seekest thou?” and “Lovest thou me?” (John 20:15; 21:15–17) is playing false to the very faith and mission of the Gospels themselves and the early Christians who read and heard these personal and authentic testimonies.

NOTES

1. Greek *synoptos*, “that can be seen at a glance, in full view” (H. G. Liddell and Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975], 779).
2. An excellent and accessible harmony is found in the Latter-day Saint Bible Dictionary under the subheading, “Gospel,” 684–96. Two harmonies with scholarly apparatus, noncanonical material, and variant manuscript readings are Burton H. Throckmorton Jr., *Gospel Parallels: A Synopsis of the First Three Gospels* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979) and Robert W. Funk, *New Gospel Parallels*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985). A recent technical synopsis that also included the so-called Q Document in parallel columns is John S. Kloppenborg, *Q Parallels: Synopsis, Critical Notes, and Concordance* (Sonoma: Polebridge Press, 1988). For a discussion concerning the process of making a harmony, see David Dugan, “Theory of Synopsis Construction,” *Biblica* 61 (1980): 305–29.
3. Thomas M. Mumford, *Horizontal Harmony of the Four Gospels in Parallel Columns* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), v.
4. Walter W. Skeat, *A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 218.
5. The Greek *evangelion* (good news) was known to secular authors and was used to announce a victory or great events in the life of the emperor. For a fuller discussion of its usage, see William F. Arndt and Wilbur F. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 318.
6. For a recent discussion on the relationship of the Gospels to each other, see Kloppenborg, *Q Parallels*, xxi–xxxiv.
7. An overview of the authorship, dating, audience, and purpose of the individual Gospel accounts may be found in the Latter-day Saint Bible Dictionary under the subheading “Gospels,” 682–83. This overview provides a sound historical context for any serious study of the Gospels.
8. For a discussion of this event, see W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), 314–15.

9. Bruce Metzger explains, "A majority of the Committee [Editorial Committee of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament] was of the opinion that the original text of Matthew had the double name in both verses (27:16–17) and that *Iesous* was deliberately suppressed in most witnesses for reverential consideration" (Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [London: United Bible Societies, 1975], 67–68).
10. Josephus, *De Bello Judaico* (Darmstadt, W. Germany: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1959), 7:202ff (the quotation comes from 203). For an English translation, see *The Jewish War*, trans. G. A. Williamson (New York: Penguin Books, 1969), 389–90.
11. For a survey of this subject, see Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).
12. The Greek place name is the transliteration of the Aramaic *gulgulta*, which means "skull." The traditional name for the place is "Calvary," which is taken from the Latin *calvaria*. It means the same as Golgotha, but is, strictly speaking, not a biblical name (see Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990], 628).
13. There are several other Old Testament allusions in Matthew including the darkness from noon to 3:00 P.M. (see Matthew 27:45), which may refer to the darkness over Egypt before the first Passover, or perhaps it is a reference to Amos 8:9. Whichever it is, they both are God's act. In both cases, "the day" belongs to God and not to the forces of evil.
14. For a complete list of Old Testament quotations in Matthew, see Robert G. Bratcher, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1984), 11.
15. Mark is generally credited with inventing the new literary genre of "the Gospel" (see discussion of this point in Frank Kermode, "Introduction to the New Testament," *Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987], 375–86).
16. J. B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 100–101.
17. Joel Marcus, "Mark 14:61: 'Are You the Messiah-Son-of-God?'" *Novum Testamentum* 31 (April 1989): 127.
18. Marcus, "Mark 14:61," 140.
19. Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 854.
20. See Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 237.
21. G. B. Caird argues, "Its omission is best explained as the work of a scribe who felt that this picture of Jesus overwhelmed with human weakness was incompatible with his own belief in the Divine Son who shared the

- omnipotence of his Father" (*The Gospel of Saint Luke* [New York: Penguin Books, 1985], 243).
22. The synoptic Gospels agree on this event, but Matthew and Mark place it after Jesus' death (see Matthew 27:51 and Mark 15:38).
 23. For a discussion of the use of *ego eimi* in John, see Gerhard Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 2:352–54.
 24. Robert G. Bratcher, *Marginal Notes for the New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 66. For a fuller discussion of this possible reading, see Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of John* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1980), 581; and Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 341.
 25. Arndt and Gingrich argue that for the "Jewish usage it was Friday, on which day everything had to be prepared for the Sabbath, when no work was permitted" (Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 637).
 26. Heinrich Greeven, in Albert Huck, *Synopse der drei ersten evangelien/Synopsis of the First Three Gospels with the Addition of the Johannine Parallels* (Tubingen, W. Germany: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1981), xxxvi.