

**The Gospel
Of
Nicodemus
Acts Of Pilate**

Library Of Dr. Wesley A. Swift



**Ella Rose Mast
Review**

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PROLOGUE: I, ANANIAS, AN OFFICER OF THE GUARD, being learned in the law, came to know our Lord Jesus Christ from the sacred scriptures, which I approached with faith, and was accounted worthy of holy baptism. And having searched for the reports made at that period in the time of our Lord Jesus Christ (and for that), which the Jews committed to writing under Pontius Pilate, I found these acts in the Hebrew language and according to God's good pleasure I translated them into Greek for the information of all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the eighteenth year of the reign of our Emperor Flavius Theodosius and in the fifth year of the 'Nobility' of Flavius Valentinianus, in the ninth indictment. Therefore all you who read this and copy it out, remember me and pray for me that God may be gracious to me and forgive my sins which I have sinned against him. Peace be to those who read and hear it, and to their servants. Amen.

In the nineteenth year of the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, when Herod was king of Galilee, in the nineteenth year of his rule, on the eighth day before the Kalends of April, that is, the 25th of March, in the consulate of Rufus and Rubellio, in the fourth year of the two hundred and second Olympiad, when Joseph Caiaphas was high priest of the Jews.

What Nicodemus after the passion of the Lord upon the cross recorded and delivered concerning the conduct of the chief priests and the rest of the Jews and the same Nicodemus drew up his records in the Hebrew language, runs approximately as follows:

1. The chief priests and scribes assembled in council, Annas and Caiaphas, Semes, Dathaes and Gamaliel, Judas, Levi and Nephthalim, Alexander and Jairus and the rest of the Jews, and came to Pilate accusing

Jesus of many deeds. They said: 'We know that this man is the son of Joseph the carpenter and was born of Mary; but he says his is the Son of God and a king. Moreover he pollutes the Sabbath and wishes to destroy the law of our father.'

Pilate said: 'And what things does he do that he wishes to destroy it?' The Jews say: 'We have a law that we should not heal anyone on the Sabbath. But this man with his evil deeds has healed on the Sabbath the lame, the bent, the withered, the blind, the paralytic, and the possessed.' Pilate asked them: 'With what evil deeds?' They answered him: 'He is a sorcerer, and by Beelzebub the prince of the devils he casts out evil spirits, and all are subject to him.' Pilate said to them: 'This is not to cast out demons by an unclean spirit, but by the god Asclepius.'

2. The Jews said to Pilate: 'We beseech your excellency to place him before your judgement-seat and to try him.' And Pilate called them to him and said: 'Tell me! How can I, a governor, examine a king?' They answered: 'We do not say that he is a king, but he says his is.' And Pilate summoned his messenger and said to him: 'Let Jesus be brought with gentleness.' So the messenger went out, and when he perceived him, he did him reverence, and taking the kerchief which was in his hand, he spread it upon the ground, and said to him: 'Lord, walk on this and go in, for the governor calls you.' But when the Jews saw what the messenger had done, they cried out against Pilate and said: 'Why did you not order him to come in by a herald, but by a messenger? For as soon as he saw him the messenger revered him, and spread out his kerchief on the ground, and made him walk on it like a king.'

3. Then Pilate called for the messenger and said to him: 'Why have you done this, and spread your kerchief on the ground and made Jesus walk on it?' The messenger answered him: 'Lord governor, when you sent me to Jerusalem to Alexander, I saw him sitting on an ass, and the children of the Hebrews held branches in their hands and cried out; and others spread their garments before him, saying: 'Save now, thou that art in the highest! Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord!'

4. The Jews cried out to the messenger: 'The children of the Hebrews cried out in Hebrew; how do you know it in Greek?' The messenger replied: 'I asked one of the Jews, and said: 'What is it that they cry in Hebrew? And he interpreted it to me.' Pilate said to them: 'And what did they cry out in Hebrew?' The Jews answered: 'Hosanna membrome baruchamma Adonai.' Pilate asked again: 'And the Hosanna and the rest, how is it translated?' The Jews replied: 'Save now, thou that art in the highest. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.' Pilate said to them: 'If you testify to the words of the children, what sin has the messenger committed?' And they were silent. The governor said to the messenger: 'Go out and bring him in whatever way you wish.' And the messenger went out and did as before and said to Jesus: 'Enter, the governor calls you.'

5. Now when Jesus entered in, and the standard-bearers were holding the standards, the images of the emperor on the standards bowed and did reverence to Jesus. And when the Jews saw the behavior of the standards, how they bowed down and did reverence to Jesus, they cried out loudly against the standard-bearers. But Pilate said to them: 'Do you not marvel how the images bowed and did reverence to Jesus?' The Jews said to Pilate: 'We saw how the standard-bearers lowered them and revered him.' And the governor summoned the standard-bearers and asked them: 'Why did you do this?' They answered: 'We are Greeks and servers of temples, and how could we reverence him? We held the images; but they bowed down of their own accord and revered him.'

6. Then Pilate said to the rulers of the synagogue and the elders of the people: 'Choose strong men to carry the standards, and let us see whether the images bow by themselves.' So the elders of the Jews took twelve strong men and made them carry the standards by sixes, and they were placed before the judgment-seat of the governor. And Pilate said to the messenger: 'Take him out of the Praetorium and bring him in again in whatever way you wish.' And Jesus left the praetorium with the messenger. And Pilate summoned those who before carried the images, and said to them: 'I have sworn by the safety of Caesar that, if the standards do not bow down when Jesus enters, I will cut off your heads.' And the governor

commanded Jesus to enter in the second time. And the messenger did as before and besought Jesus to walk upon his kerchief. He walked upon it and entered in. And when he had entered in, the standards bowed down again and did reverence to Jesus.

II

1. When Pilate saw this he was afraid, and sought to rise from the judgement-seat. And while he was still thinking of rising up, his wife sent to him saying: Have nothing to do with this righteous man. For I have suffered many things because of him by night (Mt. 27:19). And Pilate summoned all the Jews, and stood up and said to them: 'You know that my wife fears God and favors rather the customs of the Jews, with you.' They answered him: 'Yes, we know it.' Pilate said to them: 'See, my wife sent to me saying: Have nothing to do with this righteous man. For I have suffered many things because of him by night.' The Jews answered Pilate: 'Did we not tell you that he is a sorcerer? Behold, he has sent a dream to your wife.'

2. And Pilate called Jesus to him and said to him: 'What do these men testify against you? Do you say nothing?' Jesus answered: 'If they had no power, they would say nothing; for each man has power over his own mouth, to speak good and evil. They shall see (to it).'

3. Then the elders of the Jews answered and said to Jesus: 'What should we see? firstly, that you were born of fornication; secondly, that your birth meant the death of the children in Bethlehem; thirdly, that your father Joseph and your mother Mary fled into Egypt because they counted for nothing among the people.'

4. Then declared some of the Jews that stood by, devout men: 'We deny that he came of fornication, for we know that Joseph was betrothed to Mary, and he was not born of fornication.' Pilate then said to the Jews who said that he came of fornication: 'Your statement is not true; for there was a betrothal, as your own fellow-countrymen say.' Annas and Caiaphas say to Pilate: 'We, the whole multitude, cry out that he was born

of fornication, and we are not believed; these are proselytes and disciples of his.' And Pilate called to him Annas and Caiaphas and said to them: 'What are proselytes?' They answered: 'They were born children of Greeks, and now have become Jews.' Then said those who said that he was not born of fornication, namely Lazarus, Asterius, Antonius, Jacob, Amnes, Zeras, Samuel, Isaac, Phinees, Crispus, Agrippa, and Judas: 'We are not proselytes, but are children of Jews and speak the truth; for we were present at the betrothal of Joseph and Mary.'

5. And Pilate called to him these twelve men who denied that he was born of fornication, and said to them: 'I put you on your oath, by the safety of Caesar, that your statement is true, that he was not born of fornication.' They said to Pilate: 'We have a law, not to swear, because it is a sin. But let them swear by the safety of Caesar that it is not as we have said, and we will be worthy of death.' Pilate said to Annas and Caiaphas: 'Do you not answer these things?' And Annas and Caiaphas said to Pilate: 'These twelve men are believed (who say) that he was not born of fornication, and is a sorcerer, and claims to be the Son of God and a king, and we are not believed.'

6. And Pilate sent out the whole multitude, except the twelve men who denied that he was born of fornication, and commanded Jesus to be set apart. And he asked them: 'For what cause do they wish to kill him?' They answered Pilate: 'They are incensed because he heals on the Sabbath.' Pilate said: 'For a good work do they wish to kill him?' They answered him: 'Yes.'

III

1. And Pilate was filled with anger and went out of the praetorium and said to them: 'I call the sun to witness that I find no fault in this man.' The Jews answered and said to the governor: 'If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over to you' (Jn.18:31). Pilate said: 'Has God forbidden you to slay, but allowed me?'

2. And Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus apart and asked him: 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus answered Pilate: 'Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?' Pilate

answered Jesus: 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' Jesus answered: 'My kingship is not of this world; for if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews. But now is my kingship not from here.' Pilate said to him: 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered him: 'You say that I am a king. For this cause I was born and have come, that every one who is of the truth should hear my voice.' Pilate said to him: 'What is truth?' (Jn. 18:33-38). Jesus answered him: 'Truth is from heaven.' Pilate said: 'Is there not truth upon earth?' Jesus said to Pilate: 'You see how those who speak the truth are judged by those who have authority on earth.'

IV.

1. And Pilate left Jesus in the praetorium and went out to the Jews and said to them: 'I find no fault in him. The Jews said to him: 'He said: I am able to destroy this temple and build it in three days' (Mt. 26:61). Pilate said: 'What temple?' The Jews said: 'That which Solomon built in forty-six years; but this man says he will destroy it and build it in three days.' Pilate said to them: 'I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see to it yourselves.' The Jews replied: 'His blood be on us and on our children' (Mt. 27:24).

2. And Pilate called to him the elders and the priests and the Levites and said to them secretly: 'Do not act thus; for nothing of which you have accused him deserves death. For your accusation concerns healing and profanation of the Sabbath.' The elders and the priests and the Levites answered: 'If a man blasphemes against Caesar, is he worthy of death or not?' Pilate said: 'He is worthy of death.' The Jews said to Pilate: 'If a man blasphemes against Caesar, he is worthy of death, but this man has blasphemed against God.'

3. Then the governor commanded the Jews to go out from the praetorium, and he called Jesus to him and said to him: 'What shall I do with you?' Jesus answered Pilate: 'As it was given to you.' Pilate said: 'How was it given?' Jesus said: 'Moses and the prophets foretold my death and resur-

rection.' The Jews had been eavesdropping and heard, and they said to Pilate: 'What further need have you to hear of this blasphemy?' Pilate said to the Jews: 'If this word is blasphemy, take him, bring him into your synagogue and judge him according to your law' (Jn. 18:31). The Jews answered Pilate: 'It is contained in our law, that if a man sins against a man, he must receive forty strokes save one, but he who blasphemes against God must be stoned.'

4. Pilate said to them: 'Take him yourselves and punish him as you wish.' The Jews said to Pilate: 'We wish him to be crucified.' Pilate said: 'He does not deserve to be crucified.'

5. The governor looked at the multitudes of the Jews standing around, and when he saw many of the Jews weeping, he said: 'Not all the multitude wishes him to die.' But the elders of the Jews said: 'For this purpose has the whole multitude of us come, that he should die.' Pilate said to the Jews: 'Why should he die?' The Jews said: 'Because he called himself the Son of God and a king.'

V.

1. Now Nicodemus, a Jew, stood before the governor, and said: 'I beseech you, honorable (governor), to allow me a few words.' Pilate said: 'Speak.' Nicodemus said: 'I said to the elders and the priests and the Levites and to all the multitude in the synagogue: What do you intend (to do) with this man? This man does many signs and wonders, which no one has done nor will do. Let him alone and contrive no evil against him. If the signs which he does are from God, they will stand; if they are from men, they will come to nothing (Acts 5:38).'

For Moses also, when he was sent by God into Egypt, did many signs which God commanded him to do before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And there were there servants of Pharaoh, Jannes and Jambres, and they also did signs not a few which Moses did, and the Egyptians held them as gods, Jannes and Jambres. And since the signs which they did were not from

God, they perished themselves and those who believed them. And now let this man go, for he does not deserve death.'

2. The Jews said to Nicodemus: 'You became his disciple and speak on his behalf.' Nicodemus answered them: 'Has the governor also become his disciple, and speaks on his behalf? Did not Caesar appoint him to this high office?' Then the Jews raged and gnashed their teeth against Nicodemus. Pilate said to them: 'Why do you gnash your teeth against him, when you hear the truth?' The Jews said to Nicodemus: 'Receive his truth and his portion.' Nicodemus said: 'Amen, may it be as you have said.'

VI.

1. Then one of the Jews hastened forward and asked the governor that he might speak a word. The governor said: 'If you wish to say anything, say it.' And the Jew said: 'For thirty-eight years I lay on a bed in anguish of pains, and when Jesus came many demonics and those lying sick of diverse diseases were healed by him. And certain young men took pity on me and carried me with my bed and brought me to him. And when Jesus saw me he had compassion, and spoke a word to me: Take up your bed and walk. And I took up my bed and walked' (Mk.2:1 Jn.5:1). The Jews said to Pilate: 'Ask him what day it was on which he was healed.' He that was healed said: 'On a Sabbath.' The Jews said: 'Did we not inform you so, that on the Sabbath he heals and casts out demons?'

2. And another Jew hastened forward and said: 'I was born blind; I heard any man's voice, but did not see his face. And as Jesus passed by I cried with a loud voice: Have mercy on me, Son of David. And he took pity on me and put his hands on my eyes and I saw immediately' (Mk.10:46). And another Jew hastened forward and said: 'I was bowed, and he made me straight with a word.' And another said: 'I was a leper, and he healed me with a word.'

VII.

1. And a woman called Bernice (Latin: Veronica) crying out from a distance said: 'I had an issue of blood and I touched the hem of his

garment, and the issue of blood, which had lasted twelve years, ceased' (Mk.5:25). The Jews said: 'We have a law not to permit a woman to give testimony.'

VIII.

And others, a multitude of men and women, cried out: 'This man is a prophet, and the demons are subject to him.' Pilate said to those who said the demons were subject to him: 'Why are your teachers also not subject to him?' They said to Pilate: 'We do not know.' Others said: 'Lazarus who was dead he raised up out of the tomb after four days.' Then the governor began to tremble and said to all the multitude of the Jews: 'Why do you wish to shed innocent blood?'

IX.

1. And he called to him Nicodemus and the twelve men who said he was not born of fornication and said to them: 'What shall I do? The people are becoming rebellious.' They answered him: 'We do not know. Let them see to it.' Again Pilate called all the multitude of the Jews and said: 'You know the custom that at the feast of unleavened bread a prisoner is released to you. I have in the prison one condemned for murder, called Barabbas, and this Jesus who stands before you, in whom I find no fault. Whom do you wish me to release to you? But they cried out: 'Barabbas.' Pilate said: 'Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' The Jews cried out: 'Let him be crucified' (Mt.27:15). But some of the Jews answered: 'You are not Caesar's friend if you release this man (Jn.19:12), for he called himself the Son of God and a king. You wish him therefore to be king and not Caesar.'

2. And Pilate was angry and said to the Jews: 'Your nation is always seditious and in rebellion against your benefactors.' The Jews asked: 'What benefactors?' Pilate answered: 'As I have heard, your God brought you out of Egypt out of hard slavery, and led you safe through the sea as if it had been dry land, and in the wilderness nourished you and gave you manna and quails, and gave you water to drink from a rock, and gave you the law. And despite all this you provoked the anger of your God: you wanted a molten calf and angered your God, and he wished to destroy

you; and Moses made supplication for you, and you were not put to death. And now you accuse me of hating the emperor.'

3. And he rose up from the judgement-seat and sought to go out. And the Jews cried out: 'We know as king Caesar alone and not Jesus. For indeed the wise men brought him gifts from the east, as if he were a king. And when Herod heard from the wise men that a king was born, he sought to slay him. But when his father Joseph knew that, he took him and his mother, and they fled into Egypt. And when Herod heard it, he destroyed the children of the Hebrews who were born in Bethlehem.'

4. When Pilate heard these words, he was afraid. And he silenced the multitudes, because they were crying out, and said to them: 'So this is he whom Herod sought?' The Jews replied: 'Yes, this is he. 'And Pilate took water and washed his hands before the sun and said: 'I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man. You see to it.' Again the Jews cried out: 'His blood be on us and on our children' (Mt.27:24).

5. Then Pilate commanded the curtain to be drawn before the judgement-seat on which he sat, and said to Jesus: 'Your nation has convicted you of claiming to be a king. Therefore I have decreed that you should first be scourged according to the law of the pious emperors, and then hanged on the cross in the garden where you were seized. And let Dysmas and Gestas, the two malefactors, be crucified with you.'

X.

And Jesus went out from the praetorium, and the two malefactors with him. And when they came to the place, they stripped him and girded him with a linen cloth and put a crown and put a crown of thorns on his head. Likewise they hanged up also the two malefactors. But Jesus said: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' (Lk.23:34). And the soldiers parted his garments among them. And the people stood looking at him. And the chief priests and the rulers with them scoffed at him, saying: 'He saved others, let his save himself. If he is the Son of God, let

him come down from the cross.' And the soldiers also mocked him, coming and offering him vinegar with gall, and they said: 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself' (Lk.23:35). And Pilate after the sentence commanded the crime brought against him to be written as a title in Greek, Latin and Hebrew, according to the accusation of the Jews that he was king of the Jews (Jn.19:19).

2. One of the malefactors who were crucified said to him: 'If you are the Christ, save yourself and us.' But Dysmas answering rebuked him: 'Do you not at all fear God, since you are in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly. For we are receiving the due reward of our deeds. But this man has done nothing wrong.' And he said to Jesus: 'Lord, remember me in your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him: 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise' (Lk.23:39).

XI.

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the land until the ninth hour, for the sun was darkened. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus cried with a loud voice: 'Father, baddach ephkid rouel,' which means: 'Into thy hands I commit my spirit.' And having said this he gave up the ghost. And when the centurion saw what had happened, he praised God, saying: 'This man was righteous.' And all the multitudes who had come to this sight, when they saw what had taken place, beat their breasts and returned (LK. 23:44-48).

2. But the centurion reported to the governor what had happened. And when the governor and his wife heard, they were greatly grieved, and they neither ate nor drank on that day. And Pilate sent for the Jews and said to them: 'Did you see what happened?' But they answered: 'There was an eclipse of the sun in the usual way.'

3. And his acquaintances had stood far off and the women who had come with him from Galilee, and saw these things. But a certain man named Joseph, a member of the council, from the town of Arimathea, who also

was waiting for the kingdom of God, this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in a rock-hewn tomb, in which no one had ever yet been laid (LK.23:50-53).

XII.

When the Jews heard that Joseph had asked for the body, they sought for him and the twelve men who said that Jesus was not born of fornication, and for Nicodemus and for many others, who had come forward before Pilate and made known his good works. But they all hid themselves, and only Nicodemus was seen by them, because he was a ruler of the Jews. And Nicodemus said to them: 'How did you enter into the synagogue?' The Jews answered him: 'How did you enter into the synagogue? You are an accomplice of his, and his portion shall be with you in the world to come.' Nicodemus said: 'Amen, amen.' Likewise also Joseph came forth (from his concealment?) and said to them: 'Why are you angry with me, because I asked for the body of Jesus? See, I have placed it in my new tomb, having wrapped it in clean linen, and I rolled a stone before the door of the cave. And you have not done well with the righteous one, for you did not repent of having crucified him, but also pierced him with a spear.'

Then the Jews seized Joseph and commanded him to be secured until the first day of the week. They said to him: 'Know that the hour forbids us to do anything against you, because the Sabbath dawns. But know also that you will not even be counted worthy of burial, but we shall give your flesh to the birds of heaven.' Joseph answered: 'This word is like that of the boastful Goliath, who insulted the living God and the holy David. For God said by the prophet: Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord (Rom.12:19/ Deut.32:35). And now he who is uncircumcised in the flesh, but circumcised in heart, took water and washed his hands before the sun, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man. You see to it. And you answered Pilate: His blood be on us and our children (Mt. 27:25). And now I fear lest the wrath of God come upon you and your children, as you said.' When the Jews heard these words, they were embittered in their hearts, and laid hold on Joseph and seized him and shut him in a

building without a window, and guards remained at the door. And they sealed the door of the place where Joseph was shut up.

2. And on the Sabbath the rulers of the synagogue and the priests and the Levites ordered that all should present themselves in the synagogue on the first day of the week. And the whole multitude rose up early and took counsel in the synagogue by what death they should kill him. And when the council was in session they commanded him to be brought with great dishonor. And when they opened the door they did not find him. And all the people were astonished and filled with consternation because they found the seals undamaged, and Caiaphas had the key. And they dared no longer to lay hands on those who had spoken before Pilate on behalf of Jesus.

XIII.

1. And while they still sat in the synagogue and marveled because of Joseph, there came some of the guard which the Jews had asked from Pilate to guard the tomb of Jesus, lest his disciples should come and steal him. And they told the rulers of the synagogue and the priests and the Levites what had happened: how there was a great earthquake. 'And we saw an angel descend from heaven, and he rolled away the stone from the mouth of the cave, and sat upon it, and shone like snow and like lightning. And we were in great fear, and lay like dead men (Mt.28:2-4). And we heard the voice of the angel speaking to the women who waited at the tomb: Do not be afraid. I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here. He has risen, as he said. Come and see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead and is in Galilee' (Mt.28:5-7).

2. The Jews asked: 'To what women did he speak?' The members of the guard answered: 'We do not know who they were.' The Jews said: 'At what hour was it?' The members of the guard answered: 'At midnight.' The Jews said: 'And why did you not seize the women?' The members of the guard said: 'We were like dead men through fear, and gave up hope of seeing the light of day; how could we then have seized them?' The

Jews said: 'As the Lord lives, we do not believe you.' The members of the guard said to the Jews: 'So many signs you saw in that man and you did not believe; and how can you believe us? You rightly swore: As the Lord lives. For he does live.' Again the members of the guard said: 'We have heard that you shut up him who asked for the body of Jesus, and sealed the door, and that when opened it you did not find him. Therefore give us Joseph and we will give you Jesus.' The Jews said: 'Joseph has gone to his own city.' And the members of the guard said to the Jews: 'And Jesus has risen, as we heard from the angel, and is in Galilee.'

3. And when the Jews heard these words, they feared greatly and said: '(Take heed) lest this report be heard and all incline to Jesus.' And the Jews took council, and offered much money and gave it to the soldiers of the guard, saying: 'Say that when you were sleeping his disciples came by night and stole him. And if this is heard by the governor, we will persuade him and keep you out of trouble. (Mt. 28:12-14).

XIV.

1. Now Phinees a priest and Adas a teacher and Angaeus a Levite came from Galilee to Jerusalem, and told the rulers of the synagogue and the priests and the Levites: 'We saw Jesus and his disciples sitting upon the mountain which is called Mamilch. And he said to his disciples: Go into all the world and preach the gospel tot the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover (Mk. 16:15-18). And while Jesus was still speaking to his disciples, we say him taken up into heaven.'

2. Then the elders and the priests and the Levites said: 'Give glory to the God of Israel, and confess before him if you indeed heard and saw what you have described.' Those who told them said: 'As the Lord God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lives, we heard these things and saw

him taken up to heaven.' The elders and the priests and the Levites said to them: 'Did you come to tell us this, or did you come to offer prayer to God?' They answered: 'To offer prayer to God.' The elders and the chief priests and the Levites said to them: 'If you came to offer prayer to God, to what purpose is this idle tale which you have babbled before all the people?' Phinees the priest and Adas the teacher and Angaeus the Levite said to the rulers of the synagogue and priests and Levites: 'If the words which we spoke <concerning what we heard and saw are sin, see, we stand before you. Do with us as it seems good in your eyes.' And they took the law and adjured them to tell this no more to any one. And they gave them to eat and drink, and sent them out of the city, having given them money and three men to accompany them, and ordered them to depart as far as Galilee; and they went away in peace.

3. But when those men had departed to Galilee, the chief priests and the rulers of the synagogue and the elders assembled in the synagogue, and shut the gate, and raised a great lamentation, saying: 'Why has this sign happened in Israel?' But Annas and Caiaphas said: 'Why are you troubled? Why do you weep? Do you not know that his disciples gave much money to the guards of the tomb, <took away his body> and taught them to say that an angel descended from heaven and rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb?' But the priests and the elders replied: 'Let it be that his disciples stole his body. But how did the soul enter again into the body, so that Jesus now waits in Galilee?' (But they, unable to give an answer, came with difficulty to say: 'It is not lawful for us to believe the uncircumcised.')

XV.

1. And Nicodemus stood up and stood before the council and said: 'What you say is right. You know, people of the Lord, that the men who came from Galilee fear God and are men of substance, that they hate covetousness, and are men of peace. And they have declared on oath: We saw Jesus on the mountain Mamilch with his disciples. He taught them what you have heard from them. And we saw him (they said) taken up into heaven. And no one asked them in what manner he was taken up. Just as the holy scriptures tell us that Elijah also was taken up into heaven, and Elisha cried with a loud voice, and Elijah cast his sheepskin cloak upon

Elisha, and Elisha cast his cloak upon the Jordan, and crossed over and went to Jericho. and the sons of the prophets met him and said: Elisha, where is your master Elijah? And he said that he was taken up into heaven. But they said to Elisha: Has perhaps a spirit caught him up and cast him on one of the mountains? But let us take our servants with us and search for him. And they persuaded Elisha, and he went with them. And they searched for him for three days and did not find him, and they knew that he had been taken up (2 Kings 2). And now listen to me, and let us send to every mountain of Israel and see whether the Christ was taken up by a spirit and cast upon a mountain.' And this proposal pleased them all. And they sent to every mountain of Israel, and searched for Jesus and did not find him. But they found Joseph in Arimathea and no one dared to seize him.

2. And when they told the elders and the priests and the Levites: 'We went about to every mountain in Israel, and did not find Jesus. But Joseph we found in Arimathea.' And when they heard about Joseph, they rejoiced and gave glory to the God of Israel. And the rulers of the synagogue and the priests and the Levites took council how they should meet with Joseph, and they took a roll of papyrus and wrote to Joseph these words. 'Peace be with you. We know that we have sinned against God against you, and we have prayed to the God of Israel that you should condescend to come to your fathers and your children, because we are all troubled. For when we opened the door we did not find you. We know that we devised an evil plan against you; but the Lord helped you, and the Lord himself has brought to nothing our plan against you, honoured father Joseph.'

3. and they chose from all Israel seven men who were friends of Joseph, whom also Joseph himself acknowledged as friends, and the rulers of the synagogue and the priests and the Levites said to them: 'See! If he receives our letter and reads it, know that he will come with you to us. But if he does not read it, know that he is angry with us, and salute him in peace and return to us.' And they blessed the men and dismissed them. and the men came to Joseph and greeted him with reverence, and said to him: 'Peace be with you!' He replied: 'Peace be with you and all Israel!' And they gave him the roll of the letter. Joseph took it and read it and

kissed the letter, and blessed God and said: 'Blessed be God, who has delivered the Israelites from shedding innocent blood. And blessed be the Lord, who sent his angel and sheltered me under his wings.' And he set a table before them, and they ate and drank and lay down there.

4. And they rose up early in the morning and prayed. And Joseph saddled his she-ass and went with the men, and they came tot the holy city Jerusalem. And all the people met Joseph and cried: 'Peace be to your entering in!' And he said to all the people: 'Peace be with you!' And all kissed him, and prayed with Joseph, and were beside themselves with joy at seeing him. And Nicodemus received him into his house and made a great feast, and called the elders and the priests and the Levites to his house, and they made merry, eating and drinking with Joseph. And after singing a hymn each one went to his house; but Joseph remained in the house of Nicodemus.

5. And on the next day, which was the preparation, the rulers of the synagogue and the priests and the Levites rose up early and came to the house of Nicodemus. Nicodemus met them and said: 'Peace be with you!' They answered: 'Peace be with you and with Joseph and with all your house and with all the house of Joseph!' And he brought them into his house. And the whole council sat down, and Joseph sat between Annas and Caiaphas. And no one dared to speak a word to him. And Joseph said: 'Why have you called me?' And they beckoned to Nicodemus to speak to Joseph. Nicodemus opened his mouth and said to Joseph: 'Father, you know that the honorable teachers and the priests and the Levites wish information from you.' Joseph answered: 'Ask me.' And Annas and Caiaphas took the law and adjured Joseph, saying: 'Give glory to the God of Israel and make confession to him. For Achan also, when adjured by the prophet Joshua, did not commit perjury, but told him everything and concealed nothing from him (Joshua 7). So do you also not conceal from us a single word.' Joseph answered: 'I will not conceal anything from you.' And they said to him: 'We were very angry because you asked for the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in a clean cloth, and placed it in a tomb. And for this reason we secured you in a house with no window, and locked and sealed the door, and guards watched where you were shut up.

And on the first day of the week we opened it, and did not find you, and were much troubled, and all the people of God were amazed until yesterday. And now tell us what happened to you.'

6. And Joseph said: 'On the day of preparation about the tenth hour you shut me in, and I remained the whole Sabbath. And at midnight as I stood and prayed, the house where you shut me in was raised up by the four corners, and I saw as it were a lightning flash in my eyes. Full of fear I fell to the ground. and someone took me by the hand and raised me up from the place where I had fallen, and something moist like water flowed from my head to my feet, and the smell of fragrant oil reached my nostrils. And he wiped my face and kissed me and said to me: Do not fear, Joseph. Open your eyes and see who it is who speaks with you. I looked up and saw Jesus. Trembling, I thought it was a phantom, and I said the (ten) commandments. And he said them with me. Now as you well know, a phantom immediately flees if it meets anyone and hears the commandments. And when I saw that he said them with me, I said to him: Rabbi Elijah! He said: I am not Elijah. And I said to him: Who are you, Lord? He replied: I am Jesus, whose body you asked for from Pilate, whom you clothed in clean linen, on whose face you placed a cloth, and whom you placed in your new cave, and you rolled a great stone to the door of the cave. And I asked him who spoke to me: Show me the place where I laid you. And he took me and showed me the place where I laid him. And the linen cloth lay there, and the cloth that was upon his face. Then I recognized that it was Jesus. And he took me by the hand and placed me in the middle of my house, with the doors shut, and led me to my bed and said to me: Peace be with you! Then he kissed me and said to me: Do not go out of your house for forty days. For see, I go to my brethren in Galilee.'

XVI.

And when the rulers of the synagogue and the priests and the Levites heard these words from Joseph, they became as dead men and fell to the ground and fasted until the ninth hour. And Nicodemus and Joseph comforted Annas and Caiaphas and the priests and Levites, saying: 'Get up and stand on your feet, and taste bread and strengthen your souls. For

tomorrow is the Sabbath of the Lord.' And they rose up and prayed to God, and ate and drank, and went each to his own house.

2. And on the Sabbath our teachers and the priests and the Levites sat and questioned one another, saying: 'What is this wrath which has come upon us? For we know his father and his mother.' Levi the teacher said: 'I know that his parents fear God and do not withhold their prayers and pay tithes three times a year. And when Jesus was born, his parents brought him to this place, and gave God sacrifices and burnt offerings. And the great teacher Simeon took him in his arms and said: Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother: I give you good tidings concerning this child. And Mary said: Good, my Lord? And Simeon said to her: Good. Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed' (Lk.2:28-35).

3. They said to Levi the teacher: 'How do you know this?' Levi answered them: 'Do you not know that I learned the law from him?' The council said to him: 'We wish to see your father.' And they sent for his father. And when they questioned him, he said to them: 'Why did you not believe my son? The blessed and righteous Simeon taught him the law.' The council said: 'Rabbi Levi, is the word true which you have spoken?' He answered: 'It is true.' Then the rulers of the synagogue and the priests and the Levites said among themselves: 'Come let us send to Galilee to the three men who came and told us of his teaching and of his being taken up, and let them tell us how they saw him taken up.' And this word pleased them all. And they sent the three men who before had gone to Galilee with them, and said to them: 'Say to Rabbi Adas and Rabbi Phinees and Rabbi Angaeus: Peace be with you and all who are with you. Since an important inquiry is taking place in the council, we were sent to you to call you to this holy place Jerusalem.'

4. And the men went to Galilee and found them sitting and studying the law, and greeted them in peace. And the men who were in Galilee said to those who had come to them: 'Peace be to all Israel.' They answered: 'Peace be with you.' And again they said to them: 'Why have you come?' Those who had been sent replied: 'The council calls you to the holy city Jerusalem.' When the men heard that they were sought by the council, they prayed to God and sat down at table with the men and ate and drank, and then arose and came in peace to Jerusalem.

5. And on the next day the council sat in the synagogue and questioned them, saying: 'Did you indeed see Jesus sitting on the mountain Mamilch, teaching his eleven disciples? And did you see him taken up?' And the men answered them and said: 'As we saw him taken up, so we have told you.'

6. Annas said: 'Separate them from one another, and let us see if their accounts agree.' And they separated them from one another. And they called Adas first and asked him: 'How did you see Jesus taken up?' Adas answered: 'As he sat on the mountain Mamilch and taught his disciples, we saw that a cloud overshadowed him and his disciples. And the cloud carried him up to heaven, and his disciples lay on their faces on the ground.' Then they called Phinees the priest and asked him also: 'How did you see Jesus taken up?' And he said the same thing. And again they asked Angaeus, and he said the same thing. Then the members of the council said: 'At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every matter be established' (Deut.19:15).

Abuthem the teacher said: 'Also we have heard of the death of the holy Moses, and we do not know how he died. For it is written in the law of the Lord: And Moses died as the mouth of the Lord determined and no man knew of his sepulcher to this day' (Deut.34:5). And Rabbi Levi said: 'Why did Rabbi Symeon say, when he saw Jesus: Behold, this (child) is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against?' (Lk.2:34). And Rabbi Isaac said: 'It is written in the law: Behold,

I send my messenger before your face. He will go before you to guard you in every good way. In him my name is named' (Exod.23:20).

7. Then Annas and Caiaphas said: 'You have rightly said what is written in the law of Moses, that no one know the death of Enoch and no one has named the death of Moses. But Jesus had to give account before Pilate; we saw how he received blows and spitting on his face, that the soldiers put a crown of thorns upon him, that he was scourged and condemned by Pilate and then was crucified at the place of a skull; he was given vinegar and gall to drink, and Longinus the soldier pierced his side with a spear. Our honorable father Joseph asked for his body; and, he says, he rose again. And the three teachers declare: We say him taken up into heaven. And Rabbi Levi spoke and testified to the words of Rabbi Symeon: Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against.' And all the teachers said to all the people of the Lord: 'If this is from the Lord, and it is marvelous in your eyes, you shall surely know, O house of Jacob, that it is written: Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree (Deut.21:23). And another passage of scripture teaches: The gods who did not make the heaven and the earth shall perish (Jer.10:11).' And the priests and the Levites said to one another: 'If Jesus is remembered after fifty years, he will reign for ever and create for himself a new people.' Then the rulers of the synagogue and the priests and the Levites admonished all Israel: 'Cursed is the man who shall worship the work of man's hand, and cursed is the man who shall worship created things alongside the creator.' And the people answered: 'Amen, amen.'

8. And all the people praised the Lord God and sang: 'Blessed be the Lord who has given rest to the people of Israel according to all his promises. Not one word remains unfulfilled of all the good which he promised to his servant Moses. May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers. May he not forsake us. May he not let the will die in us, to turn our heart to him, and walk in all his ways, and keep him commandments and laws which he gave to our fathers. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth on that day. And there shall be one God and his name shall be one, our Lord and king. He shall save us. There is none like thee, O Lord. Great art thou, O Lord, and great is thy name. Heal us, O Lord, in

thy power, and we shall be healed. Save us, Lord, and we shall be saved. For we are thy portion and inheritance. The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake, for the Lord has begun to make us his people.' After this hymn of praise they all departed, every man to his house, glorifying God. For his is the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

CHRIST'S DESCENT INTO HELL

I (XVII).

Joseph said: 'Why then do you marvel at the resurrection of Jesus? It is not this that is marvelous, but rather that he was not raised alone, but raised up many other dead men who appeared to many in Jerusalem. And if you do not know the others, yet Symeon, who took Jesus in his arms, and his two sons, whom he raised up, you do know. For we buried them a little while ago. And now their sepulchres are to be seen opened and empty, but they themselves are alive and dwelling in Arimathea.' They therefore sent men, and they found their tombs opened and empty. Joseph said: 'Let us go to Arimathea and find them.'

2. Then arose the chief priests Annas and Caiaphas, and Joseph and Nicodemus and Gamaliel and others with them, and went to Arimathea and found the men of whom Joseph spoke. So they offered prayer, and greeted one another. Then they went with them to Jerusalem, and they brought them into the synagogue, and secured the doors, and the chief priests placed the Old Testament of the Jews in the midst and said to them: 'We wish to you to swear by the God of Israel and by Adonai and so speak the truth, how you arose and who raised you from the dead.'

3. When the men who had risen heard that, they signed their faces with the sign of the cross, and said to the chief priests: 'Give us paper and ink and pen.' So they brought these things. And they sat down and wrote as follows:

II (XVIII). 'O Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life of the world, give us grace that we may tell of thy resurrection and of thy miracles

which thou didst perform in Hades. We, then, were in Hades with all who have died since the beginning of the world. And at the hour of midnight there rose upon the darkness there something like the light of the sun and shone, and light fell upon us all, and we saw one another. And immediately our father Abraham, along with the patriarchs and the prophets, was filled with joy, and they said to one another: This shining comes from a great light. The Prophet Isaiah, who was present there, said: This shining comes from the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This I prophesied when I was still living: The land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim, the people that sit in darkness saw a great light (9:1,2).

2. Then there came into the midst another, an anchorite from the wilderness. The patriarchs asked him: Who are you? He replied: I am John, the last of the prophets, who made straight the ways of the Son of God, and preached repentance to the people for the forgiveness of sins. And the Son of God came to me, and when I saw him afar off, I said to the people: Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29). And with my hand I baptized him in the river Jordan, and I saw the Holy Spirit like a dove coming upon him, and heard also the voice of God the Father speaking thus: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Mt. 3:16). And for this reason he sent me to you, to preach that the only begotten Son of God comes here, in order that whoever believes in him should be saved, and whoever does not believe in him should be condemned. Therefore I say to you all: When you see him, all of you worship him. For now only have you opportunity for repentance because you worshiped idols in the vain world above and sinned. At another time it is impossible.

III (XIX).

Now when John was thus teaching those who were in Hades, the first-created, the first father Adam heard, and said to his son Seth: My son, I wish you to tell the forefathers of the race of men and the prophets where I sent you when I fell into mortal sickness. And Seth said: Prophets and patriarchs, listen. My father Adam, the first-created, when he fell into mortal sickness, sent me to the very gate of paradise to pray to God that he might lead me by an angel to the tree of mercy, that I might take oil and anoint my father, and he arise from his sickness. This also I did. And

after my prayer an angel of the Lord came and asked me: What do you desire, Seth? Do you desire, because of the sickness of your father, the oil that raises up the sick, or the tree from which flows such oil? This cannot be found now. Therefore go and tell your father that after the completion of 5,500 years from the creation of the world, the only-begotten Son of God shall become man and shall descend below the earth. And he shall anoint him with that oil. And he shall arise and wash him and his descendants with water and the Holy Spirit. And then he shall be healed of every disease. But this is impossible now. When the patriarchs and prophets heard this, they rejoiced greatly.

IV (XX). And while they were all so joyful, Satan the heir of darkness came and said to Hades: O insatiable devourer of all, listen to my words. There is one of the race of the Jews, Jesus by name, who calls himself the Son of God. But he is (only) a man, and at our instigation the Jews crucified him. And now that he is dead, be prepared that we may secure him here. For I know that he is (only) a man, and I heard him saying: My soul is very sorrowful, even to death (Mt. 26:38). He did me much mischief in the world above while he lived among mortal men. For wherever he found my servants, he cast them out, and all those whom I had made to be maimed or blind or lame or leprous or the like, he healed with only a word, and many whom I had made ready to be buried he also with only a word made alive again.

2. Hades said: Is he so powerful that he does such things with only a word? And if he is of such power, are you able to withstand him? It seems to me that no one will be able to withstand such as he is. But whereas you say that you heard how he feared death, he said this to mock and laugh at you, being determined to seize you with a strong hand. And woe, woe to you for all eternity. Satan answered: O all-devouring and insatiable Hades, did you fear so greatly when you heard about our common enemy? I did not fear him, but worked upon the Jews, and they crucified him and gave him gall and vinegar to drink. Therefore prepare yourself to get him firmly into your power when he comes.

3. Hades answered: O heir of darkness, son of perdition, devil, you have just told me that many whom you made ready to be buried he made alive

again with only a word. If then he freed others from the grace, how and with what power will he be overcome by us? I a short time ago swallowed up a certain dead man called Lazarus, and soon afterwards one of the living snatched him up forcibly from my entrails with only a word. And I think it is the one of whom you speak. If, therefore, we receive him here, I fear lest we run the risk of losing the others also. For, behold, I see that all those whom I have swallowed up from the beginning of the world are disquieted. I have pain in the stomach. Lazarus who was snatched from me before seems to me no good sign. For not like a dead man, but like an eagle he flew away from me, so quickly did the earth cast him out. Therefore I adjure you by your gifts and mine, do not bring him here. For I believe that he comes here to raise all the dead. And I tell you this: By the darkness which surrounds us, if you bring him here, none of the dead will be left for me.

V (XXI).

While Satan and Hades were speaking thus to one another, a loud voice like thunder sounded: Lift up your gates, O rulers, and be lifted up, O everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in (Ps. 23:7 LXX). ! ! (I really get excited over this oneXXXXXX.jp) When Hades heard this, he said to Satan: Go out, if you can, and withstand him. So Satan went out. Then Hades said to his demons: Make fast well and strongly the gates of brass and the bars of iron, and hold my locks, and stand upright and watch every point. For if he comes in, woe will seize us.

2. When the forefathers heard that, they all began to mock him, saying: O all-devouring and insatiable one, open, that the King of glory may come in. The Prophet David said: Do you not know, blind one, that when I lived in the world, I prophesied that word: Lift up your gates, O rulers? (Ps. 23:7). Isaiah said: I foresaw this by the Holy Spirit and wrote: The dead shall arise, and those who are in the tombs shall be raised up, and those who are under the earth shall rejoice (26:19). O death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory? (I Cor. 15:55, taken as referring to Isa. 25:8).

3. Again the voice sounded: Lift up the gates. When Hades heard the voice the second time, he answered as if he did not know it and said: Who is this King of glory? The angels of the Lord said: The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle (Ps. 23:8 LXX). And immediately at this answer the gates of brass were broken in pieces and the bars of iron were crushed and all the dead who were bound were loosed from their chains, and we with them. And the King of glory entered in like a man, and all the dark places of Hades were illumined.

VI (XXII).

Hades at once cried out: We are defeated, woe to us. But who are you, who have such authority and power? And who are you, who without sin have come here, you who appear small and can do great things, who are humble and exalted, slave and master, soldier and king, and have authority over the dead and the living? You were nailed to the cross, and laid in the sepulcher, and now you have become free and have destroyed all our power. Are you Jesus, of whom the chief ruler Satan said to us that through the cross and death you would inherit the whole world?

2. Then the King of glory seized the chief ruler Satan by the head and handed him over to the angels, saying: Bind with iron fetters his hands and his feet and his neck and his mouth. Then he gave him to Hades and said: Take him and hold him fast until my second coming.

VII (XXIII).

And Hades took Satan and said to him: O Beelzebub, heir of fire and torment, enemy of the saints, through what necessity did you contrive that the King of glory should be crucified, so that he should come here and strip us naked? Turn and see that not one dead man is left in me, but that all which you gained through the tree of knowledge you have lost through the tree of the cross. All your joy is changed into sorrow. You wished to kill the King of glory, but have killed yourself. For since I have received you to hold you fast, you shall learn by experience what evils I shall inflict upon you. O arch-devil, the beginning of death, the root of sin, the summit of all evil, what evil did you find in Jesus that you went about to destroy him? How did you dare to commit such great wickedness? How

were you bent on bringing down such a man into this darkness, through whom you have been deprived of all who have died since the beginning?

VIII (XXIV).

While Hades was thus speaking with Satan, the King of glory stretched out his right hand, and took hold of our forefather Adam and raised him up. Then he turned also to the rest and said: Come with me, all you who have suffered death through the tree which this man touched. For behold, I raise you all up again through the tree of the cross. With that he put them all out. And our forefather Adam was seen to be full of joy, and said: I give thanks to thy majesty, O Lord, because thou hast brought me up from the lowest (depth of) Hades. Likewise also all the prophets and the saints said: We give thee thanks, O Christ, Saviour of the world, because thou hast brought up our life from destruction.

2. When they had said this, the Saviour blessed Adam with the sign of the cross on his forehead. And he did this also to the patriarchs and prophets and martyrs and forefathers, and he took them and leaped up out of Hades. And as he went the holy fathers sang praises, following him and saying: Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord. Alleluia (Ps. 118:26). To him be the glory of all the saints.

IX (XXV).

Thus he went into paradise holding our forefather Adam by the hand, and he handed him over and all the righteous to Michael the archangel. And as they were entering the gate of paradise, two old men met them. The holy fathers asked them: Who are you, who have not seen death nor gone down into Hades, but dwell in paradise with your bodies and souls? One of them answered: I am Enoch, who pleased God and was removed here by him. And this is Elijah the Tishbite. We shall live until the end of the world. But then we shall be sent by God to withstand Antichrist and to be killed by him. And after three days we shall rise again and be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord.

X (XXVI).

While they were saying this there came another, a humble man, carrying a cross on his shoulder. The holy fathers asked him: Who are you, who have the appearance of a robber, and what is the cross you carry on your shoulder? He answered: I was, as you say, a robber and a thief in the world, and therefore the Jews took me and delivered me to the death of the cross together with our Lord Jesus Christ. When, therefore, he hung on the cross, I saw the wonders which happened and believed in him. And I appealed to him and said: Lord, when you reign as king, do not forget me. And immediately he said to me: Truly, truly, today, I say to you, you shall be with me in paradise (Lk.23:43). So I came into paradise carrying my cross, and found Michael the archangel, and said to him: Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified, has sent me here. Lead me, therefore, to the gate of Eden. And when the flaming sword saw the sign of the cross, it opened to me and I went in. Then the archangel said to me: Wait a short while. For Adam also, the forefather of the race of men, comes with the righteous, that they also may enter in. And now that I have seen you, I have come to meet you. When the saints heard this, they all cried with a loud voice: Great is our Lord, and great is his power.

XI (XXVII).

All this we saw and heard, we two brothers who also were sent by Michael the archangel and were appointed to preach the resurrection of the Lord, but first to go to the Jordan and be baptized. There also we went and were baptized with other dead who had risen again. Then we went to Jerusalem also and celebrated the Passover of the resurrection. But now we depart, since we cannot remain here. And the love of God the Father and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Cor. 13:14).' When they had written this and had sealed the books, they gave half to the chief priests and half to Joseph and Nicodemus. And they immediately vanished. To the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



Dr. Wesley A. Swift

Dr. Wesley A. Swift, the son of a Methodist minister, was called to preach in his teens. He was a dynamic, inspired speaker who taught uncompromising Biblical truths ignored by modernist ministers. His anointed preaching brought forth a high spiritual dimension of understanding to the Kingdom Identity message, giving “life” and “power” to the Sacred Word. Even the antichrists acknowledge that, “Wesley Swift is considered the single most significant figure in the early years of the Christian Identity movement in the United States.”

Dr. Swift founded the Church of Jesus Christ – Christian in the 1940’s, a ministry that spread the Kingdom Identity message nation-wide to YHVH’s Children, the White spirit-race known Scripturally as “sons of God”. By teaching these truths to true Israel, this warrior-priest put fear in the hearts of the enemies of Christ.



Following Dr. Swift’s death in 1970, his widow Lorraine Swift faithfully carried on the Church of Jesus Christ – Christian. We are highly honoured to be able to continue Dr. Swift’s work, by placing those works that we have in print here on our web site ...preserving and earnestly contending for “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”...for any and all to read.

We, at the Covenant Church of Yahweh hope that you will study, enjoy, and appreciate Dr. Wesley Swift’s works.

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