

# THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

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Editor ~ Wade Stanley

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## From Gethsemene to Golgotha

John Morris

It was late. According to one researcher, probably well after 11 pm. Earlier that night, Jesus and the eleven had exited the city, travelled east/northeast over the Kidron Valley, and entered a garden near (or on) the western slope of the Mount of Olives. “Gethsemene” meant “oil press.” Probably the “garden” was an olive orchard, maintained for the production of olive oil. Jesus and His apostles often gathered there (**John 18:2**).

Judas arrived with a “detachment” of troops—a cohort, likely, normally consisting of 600 Roman legionnaires. With them, the Sanhedrin had also sent the temple guard and their captains (**Luke 22:52, John 18:3**). Altogether, it constituted “a great multitude”—hundreds of “young men,” armed with sword and clubs, out to arrest the Son of God (**Matthew 26:47, Mark 14:51**). Perhaps because of the hour (so late that the Passover’s full moon had nearly set behind the mountain), they arrived by lantern and torchlight.

Jesus stepped forward.

*“Whom are you seeking?” He asked.*

*“Jesus of Nazareth,” came the reply.*

*“I am He.”*

And then hundreds of military men drew back and fell to the ground (**John 18:6**). The power of the Son of God (fear of which had probably kept the Jewish leaders from attempting an arrest sooner) was exerted. Jesus was the One in control. There would be no arrest except by the consent of the Arrested.

More dialogue.

Then the soldiers made their move. Peter, in an act of remarkable (even if rash and misguided) courage, drew his sword and attacked. One against hundreds. A fisherman against warriors. “Put your sword into the sheath,” Jesus told him. “Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given

Me?” (**John 18:11**). After three prayers in the garden, Jesus had come to know that this was the Father’s will. Peter needed to know that as well.

They led Jesus back into the city. For the next nine hours (or so), He would be dragged through six separate hearings—three Jewish and three Roman.

They led Him first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the current high priest. Annas had been high priest, himself, only fifteen years prior, but had been deposed by Pilate’s predecessor—ironically, for imposing and executing capital sentences. He questioned Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. A Sadducee, Annas denied a future resurrection. Yet here before him stood the One who would bring that

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resurrection about!

From Annas, they led Jesus to Caiaphas and the council (**Mark 14:53, 55**). By now, it was *very* late. During this hearing, the rooster would crow the second time, an occurrence corresponding to the “third watch” (**Mark 14:30, 13:35**)—approximately 3 am. Probably only to keep up appearances and/or to appease the few truth-loving members of the council (e.g. Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea), witnesses were brought forward. But none of their charges could be sustained. Desperate to achieve his goal, Caiaphas unlawfully attempted to procure the necessary grounds for conviction, himself. He administered the “Oath of the Testimony.” “I put You under oath by the living God,” he declared. “Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” (**Matthew 26:63**). Jesus answered, “I am” (**Mark 14:62**). Finally,

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Caiaphas had what he wanted! “*What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy!*” (**Mark 14:63-64**). It remained only to wait until morning to finalize matters.

A trial for life was only to be held during daylight hours. “*Immediately in the morning,*” then, “*as soon as it was day,*” Caiaphas and the council convened to “convict” the Savior (**Mark 15:1, Luke 22:26**). As He had in the night, Jesus again made the good confession (**Luke 22:70, 1 Timothy 6:13**). And with that, they bound Him and led Him to Pilate.

Three Jewish hearings were past. Behold, three Roman hearings remained.

No time was lost. They arrived at Pilate’s Jerusalem residence while it was still “*early morning*” (**John 18:28**). These “holy” men would not enter Pilate’s Gentile residence, so he was forced to go outside to speak with them. He listened to their accusations, then went back inside, calling Jesus to appear before him (**John 18:33**). Pilate learned of Jesus’ claim to kingship over a kingdom not of this world, but heard nothing subversive (**John 18:36-38**). Returning outside, he said to the Jewish leaders and the crowd that had gathered, “*I find no fault in this Man*” (**Luke 23:4**). But the council members would have none of it. They responded with only fiercer efforts to impugn Jesus (**Luke 23:5**). Pilate then learned that Jesus was from Galilee. Here might be an out! Galilee was Herod’s jurisdiction, and Herod was in town. Pilate sent Jesus to Herod (**Luke 23:5-7**).

Herod Antipas had wanted to see Jesus for a long time. He hoped to see a miracle. But his hopes were dashed. Jesus would not perform. He would not even answer. Antipas questioned Him at some length, but received only silence—no doubt, because Jesus was living out His own teaching: “*Do not give what is holy to the dogs*” (**Matthew 7:6**). The Jewish leaders who had followed Jesus from Pilate’s residence attempted to compensate for His silence, hurling accusations against Him (**Luke 23:10**). But Antipas could see that Jesus was innocent (**Luke 23:14-15**). Still, He regarded Him only with contempt. He and his men mocked Jesus, dressing Him up *as if He really were* the King of the Jews. When they’d finally had their fill of fun, Antipas sent Jesus back to Pilate (**Luke 23:8-11**).

And so Pilate had to make a decision, after all. And whatever decision he made, it was going to cost him something. He

knew Jesus was innocent. All the information that had come to him, including his wife’s ominous warning (**Matthew 27:19**), had collaborated to drive that reality home. And though he knew Jesus was from Galilee, he had also begun to wonder if that might not be the whole story. After Jesus’ return from Antipas, the Jews outside Pilate’s residence had said that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. At that, Pilate had grown more afraid (**John 19:8**). He went back inside and asked Jesus, “*Where are you from?*” (**John 19:9**). *Where are you from, really?*, in other words. *Earth or heaven?* Pilate was going to have to make a decision. And the stakes were increasing. What to do?

The Bible, of course, tells us what Pilate did. And it goes on to tell us what Jesus did. And the one question that remains is: What will we do?

~ 420 NW 1251st Rd., Holden, MO 64040  
BibleAnswers@zoho.com

## Aquila and Priscilla

Richard Garbi

In **Acts 17**, Jews from Thessalonica learn of Paul’s work in Berea and travel there seeking to disrupt the spread of the gospel (**Acts 17:13**). As a result, Paul parted ways with Silas and Timothy, his travel companions, and accompanied some of the brethren from Berea to Athens. **Verse 15** through the end of the chapter finds Paul alone in Athens awaiting Silas and Timothy. Paul does not appear to wait long at Athens, but rather journeys to Corinth, still without Silas and Timothy. In **Acts 18**, Paul encounters a Jewish couple named Aquila and Priscilla. These two appear to be part of Paul’s company for some time.

Outside of their appearance in **Acts 18**, Aquila and Priscilla are featured in only three other passages in the New Testament (see **Romans 16:3, 1 Corinthians 16:19, and 2 Timothy 4:19**). Yet, from this brief appearance we can learn much.

When Paul found this faithful couple, they had been forced out of Rome by Claudius as a result of his edict that evicted all Jews from Rome (**Acts 18:2**). Paul makes a connection with them from their shared trade, tent making (**Acts 18:3**). This connection lasts many years. When the time comes for Paul to depart from Corinth, Priscilla and Aquila accompany Paul to

Ephesus, where they part ways.

It is evident from the subsequent passage that Priscilla and Aquila did not squander their time with the apostle and were themselves well grounded in scripture. Following Paul's departure, a man "*mighty in Scriptures*" named Apollos made his way to Ephesus (**Acts 18:24**). This man was himself instructed by Priscilla and Aquila (**Acts 18:24-28**).

We do not have a direct account of their doings after they part company with Paul, but we do know that they returned to Rome for a time. In **Romans 16:3-5**, we find the church at Rome meeting in the house of Priscilla and Aquila. At some point following this, they returned to Asia minor where Paul sends greetings by way of Timothy (**2 Timothy 4:19**).

That the Holy Spirit incorporated Priscilla's and Aquila's role in the formation of the early church should lead us to ponder what their inclusion in scripture can teach us. At least one lesson we can take is that people of all backgrounds and capabilities can be of valuable service to the Lord. The contrast between the humble tent makers and Apollos is instructive. We do not have a record of Aquila, let alone Priscilla, holding forth before the synagogues as both Apollos and Paul did. But this does not diminish their pivotal role in the development of the early church. Their quiet instruction of Apollos was undoubtedly a single example of their service to the Lord. In fact, Paul calls them his "...*fellow workers in Christ Jesus*" (**Romans 16:3**). The Lord's church does not need every member to publicly contend with unbelievers. Although it is easy to respect those who do such, we must never hold their contributions above those who instruct best across a kitchen table.

In **1 Corinthians 12:12-31** Paul contends strongly that we ought not to think about the church, and the roles we all play therein, with a worldly perspective.

*But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. (19) And if they were all one member, where would the body be? (20) But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. (21) And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." (22) No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. (23) And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, (24) but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part*

*which lacks it, (25) that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. (26) And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it (1 Corinthians 12:18-26).*

Which members do we tend to hold in more esteem? Is it not those who have been given the gifts to publicly exhort and instruct? Isn't this what it appeared the Corinthian brethren were doing by holding up Paul and Apollos and Peter? "*Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ*" (**1 Corinthians 1:12**). Paul is clear — this is not how we ought to think and behave.

Paul concludes his instruction on how we ought to think about each other and the roles we play in the church with a series of questions.

*Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? (30) Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? (31) But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:29-30).*

Since not everyone has the gifts to be a teacher, an evangelist, or an elder, Paul tells us of one thing we can all have that is greater than all of these. We can love each other. Our love for one another will cover a "*multitude of sins*" (**1 Peter 4:8**), it will lead us to care for one another, and create a fellowship unlike anything else on this earth. Brethren, let us strive to love one another.

~ 1105 SW 14th Street Terrace, Blue Springs, MO 64015-4929  
richard.garbi@gmail.com

## Glory to God!

The church in Nixa, MO rejoiced when **Samantha Johnson** placed membership on January 9 and rejoiced again on January 12 when **Barbara Hutchinson** placed membership with the congregation.

The church in Kirksville, MO rejoiced with the angels when **Mindy Garrett** was baptized for the remission of sins on January 9.



*Please check your expiration date!*

## *Blessed Are the Dead*

Wanda Talkington, 88, of Brighton, IL, passed away January 15. Sister Wanda was born March 13, 1933, to **William Earl "Carl" and Waunita O. (Swinney) Baker**. On June 1, 1951, she married **Everett "Duane" Talkington** who preceded her in death. Wanda was a faithful member of the **Prince Road Church of Christ, Alton, IL**. Surviving are sons, **Dennis Talkington, Sam (Lori) Talkington, Andrew (Lisa) Talkington**; daughter, **Susan (Jim) Johnson**; seven grandchildren, **"T.J." Talkington, Christine Rayborn, Eric Johnson, Leah Waters, Dana Slauson, "A.J." Talkington, Kyle Talkington**; and 15 great grandchildren.

**Sue C. Reddy**, 64, of Algonquin, IL, passed away February 8. Born January 31, 1958, in Dayton, Ohio, Sister Sue was loved by all she met. She had strength, grace, a strong faith and was described by all as beautiful inside and out and a shining light. Sue helped others and brought great joy to many lives. An artist, sports fan, loved driving fast and being around people... and Starbucks. She dedicated her life to God and was a faithful member of the church in **Itasca, IL**. Beloved wife of **Vikram Reddy**, loving mother to **Andre Bowling** and **Shaun Reddy**. Dear mother in law of **Erin** and cherished grandmother of **Maelee Anderson, Julianna Reddy**, and the late **Jayden Bowling**.

**Donita Joy Cummings**, 52 of Vandalia, IA, passed away on February 15. The daughter of **Delbert (D.D.) and Donna (Beyers) Russell**, Joy was born on October 3, 1969 in Missouri. Joy graduated from Brookfield High School in 1987 and went on to attend cosmetology school in Kirksville. On June 2, 1990, she was united in marriage to **Michael Boyd Cummings** in Brookfield. Joy was a member of the **Vandalia Church of Christ** and enjoyed sewing and quilting. Those left to honor her memory include her husband, **Michael**; parents, **Delbert and Donna Russell**; her three children, **Morgan Cummings, Drew (Miriam) Cummings** and **Casady Cummings** and her brothers, **Rick Russell, Darrell (Christina) Russell** and **Jason (Stephany) Russell**.

## *Special Meetings*

Please make plans to join the church in **Kirksville, MO** for a special study. **John Morris** will be speaking on the "Visions of Daniel" at the **Kirksville Church of Christ, 110 Pfeiffer Avenue, Kirksville, MO 63501**. The study will be taking place on Saturday, March 19 from 2:30pm to 5pm and Sunday, March 20 from 10am to 12:15pm.

### **2022 Meetings**

March 19-20.....Section Church of Christ (Osage City, KS)  
June 11-12.....Vandalia, IA  
July 4-8.....Midwest Bible Campout, Eminence, MO  
July 24-29.....Excelsior Springs, MO  
September 3-4.....Pleasant Hill, IA  
Sept 30-Oct 2.....North MO Fall Campout, Unionville, MO

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