

Day 1

-  Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

-  These last two lessons will require some reading. The lessons contain, of course, the passages from the Gospel of Mark. You will also find the corresponding (parallel) passages from the other three Gospels. In total, you the Bible student will have an excellent resource that brings the Gospel passages together for this time in our Savior's life.
-  Additionally, this lesson includes passages that help to explain the Jewish sacrificial system and the importance and symbolism of the sacrificial lamb at Passover.
-  Psalm-22, while written centuries before the human Jesus walked the earth, provides gut-wrenching detail as it foretells the horror of the crucifixion.

-  The importance of the following Hebrews 10 passage is critical to us who trust in the redeeming grace of our Lord Christ Jesus. Basically, the Hebrews passage states that Christ Jesus fulfilled all criteria as the perfect, sinless sacrifice for one final time for all who believe. His life, crucifixion, death, and resurrection ended the sacrificial system that God had instituted to provide a way for the Jew to atone for sin and to get right with God. God cannot tolerate sin. The Jewish sacrificial system demanded that the consequence for sin was a life. An animal's life substituted for the sinner's and it had to die – be sacrificed – for the sins of the Jew. Yes, it was bloody. Yes, many animals were killed. Yes, it was brutal. However, God cannot tolerate sin. The sacrificial system reveals the gravity of sin that weighs-down upon each of our souls and separates us from our Lord.

Christ Jesus' sacrifice

Hebrews 10:1-14 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming -- not the realities themselves. For this reason, it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. ² If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. ³ But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, ⁴ because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵ Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; ⁶ with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased.

⁷ Then I said, 'Here I am -- it is written about me in the scroll -- I have come to do your will, O God.' "

⁸ First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made).

⁹ Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

¹¹ Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again, and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

¹² But when this priest [Christ Jesus] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³ Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, ¹⁴ because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Passover

Exodus 12:1, 5-14, 21-24 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ...

⁵ "The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

⁶ Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. ⁷ Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

⁸ That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.

⁹ Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire-head, legs, and inner parts. ¹⁰ Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.

¹¹ This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover. ¹² "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn-both men and animals-and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.

¹³ The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. ¹⁴ "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD -a lasting ordinance...

²¹ Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. ²² Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning.

²³ When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down. ²⁴ "Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants.

Exodus 12:43, 46: The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "These are the regulations for the Passover... ⁴⁶ "It must be eaten inside one house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones..."

Numbers 9:12 They must not leave any of it till morning or break any of its bones. When they celebrate the Passover, they must follow all the regulations.

Psalms 34:20 He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.

The Crucifixion

²¹ A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross.

Luke 23:26-31 As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. ²⁸ Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' ³⁰ Then "they will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!'" [Hosea 10:8] ³¹ For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Q1. From the Mark passage what do you think Alexander and Rufus thought when they saw their father ordered by the Roman guards (replete with swords, spears, and shields) to carry a cross?

 Some commentators believe that this Rufus is the same person Paul referred to in his letter to the Romans in chapter-16.

Romans 16:13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

Q2. What was the cross made of?

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 [God's law to Moses and the Jews] "If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, ²³ you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse..."

Day 2

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²² They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). ²³ Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.

Q3. Jesus was probably extremely thirsty after losing so much blood. Why didn't Jesus take this drink?

 It was a custom of the Jews to give those who were condemned to death by crucifixion "wine mingled with myrrh" to produce insensibility. This drugged wine was probably partaken of by the two malefactors, but when the Roman soldiers pressed it upon Jesus "he received it not". It was also called "gall". (M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Third Edition, published by Thomas Nelson, 1897. Public Domain.)

²⁴ And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

Q4. Who were the people casting lots for His clothing?

Psalm 22:17-18 I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. ¹⁸ They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

John 19:23-24 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴ "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So, this is what the soldiers did.

²⁵ It was the third hour when they crucified him. ²⁶ The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

John 19:19-22 Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁰ Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. ²¹ The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." ²² Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

²⁷ They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left, ²⁸ and the scripture was fulfilled which says, "He was counted with the lawless ones" (Isaiah 53:12)

Q5. Isaiah 53 was written about 680 B.C. Does it make a difference to us today when we read passages such as Isaiah 53:12, which seem to describe Jesus' crucifixion?

²⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads, and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰ come down from the cross and save yourself!" ³¹ In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! ³² Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

Q6. We often think that Jesus had been on trial. The vast majority of the Sanhedrin, Pontius Pilate, and many of the people had a part in Jesus' crucifixion. Yet, "Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power (John 13:3)." Who do you think was really on trial? Who was the judge? What was the verdict?

Luke 23:32-34, 39-43 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals -- one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" ... ³⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³ Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Q7. From the Luke passage, Jesus told one of the criminals that he would be with Jesus in paradise. What did the criminal say that would cause him to receive such a wonderful promise?

Q8. Did the other criminal enter paradise, too? Why or why not?

Q9. Have you asked Jesus into your life?

Day 3

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The Death of Jesus

³³ At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" -- which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" [Psalm 22:1]

Psalm 22:1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?

Q10. Did God the Father forsake (abandon) His Son? Why?

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Q11. Which do you think was more difficult for Jesus the pain of the actual crucifixion or the separation from God due to the past, present, and future sin of Believers that He took upon Himself?

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Q12. Could Jesus be considered a Passover Lamb? (See the Exodus-12 passage on page 1)

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³⁵ When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

³⁶ One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick [see John 19:29 on the following page], and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

³⁷ With a loud cry [see John 19:30], Jesus breathed his last.

Q13. Did Jesus fulfill Biblical prophecy through His death?

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 “John simply says that Jesus bowed His head in peace and deliberately gave up His Spirit. His life was not taken from Him. He had complete power over it (John 10:18). Now His work is finished and all Scripture prophesies concerning His life on earth and sacrifice for sin has been fulfilled. Now and not before, He yields up Himself to death in obedience to His Father’s command and in love to Him. He yielded it up in full faith, knowing that God ‘will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay’ (Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:27). Therefore, Jesus gave over His Spirit into His Father’s keeping to await the resurrection of His body.” [© Bible Study Fellowship, Study of John, Lesson 29]

³⁸ The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Q14. What was the curtain made of?

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 “Jewish historians record that the temple curtain was 60 feet long and 20 feet high, as thick as a man’s hand, and so heavy that it took 300 priests to manipulate it. The tearing of a curtain of such texture from the top to the bottom could only be the work of God Himself. It is almost certain that this took place at the time of the evening sacrifice. The priest whose turn it was would be in the Holy Place to place the evening offering on the altar of incense, which stood in the center front of that beautiful heavy curtain separating the two compartments [rooms]. Imagine his shock to see the curtain suddenly torn before him, hanging in two parts from its fastenings above.” [© Bible Study Fellowship, Study of John, Lesson 30]

³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry, and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

Q15. Do you think that the centurion and his men had witnessed death before?

Q16. Do you think they may have been considered the leading experts on death at the time?

Q17. What extraordinary things did the centurion witness that caused to say, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”?

Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

⁴⁰ Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses and Salome. ⁴¹ In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

John 19:28-37 Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant [Exodus 12:22], and lifted it to Jesus' lips. ³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

³¹ Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.

³² The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.

³⁵ The man [John] who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶ These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," [Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20] ³⁷ and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." [Zechariah 12:10]

Matthew 27:50-56 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. ⁵² The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³ They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

⁵⁵ Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. ⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

Psalms 22:1-31 [A Psalm of David] My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? ² O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent.

³ Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel. ⁴ In you our fathers put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. ⁵ They cried to you and were saved; in you they trusted and were not disappointed.

⁶ But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. ⁷ All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: ⁸ "He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."

⁹ Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast. ¹⁰ From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother's womb you have been my God.

¹¹ Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. ¹² Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me ["the allusion is to the fierce and cruel men that persecuted Jesus and sought his life" per "Notes on the Bible" by Albert Barnes, 1834]. ¹³ Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. ¹⁶ Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me; they have pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷ I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. ¹⁸ They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

¹⁹ But you, O Lord, be not far off; O my Strength, come quickly to help me. ²⁰ Deliver my life from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs. ²¹ Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

²² I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you. ²³ You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!

²⁴ For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. ²⁵ From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you will I fulfill my vows. ²⁶ The poor will eat and be satisfied; they who seek the Lord will praise him - may your hearts live forever! ²⁷ All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, ²⁸ for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations. ²⁹ All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him - those who cannot keep themselves alive.

³⁰ Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. ³¹ They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn - for he has done it.

Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

The Burial of Jesus

⁴² It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, ⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

Q18. What “Council” was Joseph of Arimathea a prominent member?

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Q19. What is meant by Joseph “was himself waiting for the kingdom of God”?

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Q20. Was Joseph of Arimathea a Believer in Christ Jesus?

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Q21. What did Joseph risk by going “boldly to Pilate”?

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John 19:38 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews.

⁴⁴ Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died.

Q22. Does it appear that Pilate is still uneasy in his sentence of Jesus?

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 “According to Roman procedure, it was customary to leave the victim on his cross even if it took two days. When the criminals died, the Romans did not bury them but simply threw the bodies on the ground for the vultures to find. However, Jewish law was otherwise. God commanded that the bodies of criminals executed by hanging upon a tree should never be left all night but taken down at sunset... Therefore, the Jews requested Pilate to break the legs of all three bodies, thus causing immediate death in order that they could immediately buried before sunset.” (Bible Study Fellowship, The Study of John, Lesson 30, Page 3)

⁴⁵ When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶ So, Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

Q23. Was Joseph acting alone?

John 19:39 He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night.

Q24. Do you think that Joseph was a wealthy man?

Q25. Was this tomb a natural cave or carved?

Q26. Do you think that all people – of all walks of life – had the luxury of being buried in a tomb?

Q27. What was the significance of the stone barring the entrance to the tomb?

Day 6

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⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.

Luke 23:50-56 Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, ⁵¹ who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. ⁵² Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. ⁵³ Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. ⁵⁴ It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. ⁵⁵ The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. ⁵⁶ Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

John 19:38-42 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴⁰ Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹ At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴² Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Matthew 27:62-66 The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³ "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' ⁶⁴ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵ "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

Q28. Where were Jesus’ disciples during these days between the Garden of Gethsemane, the Crucifixion, and His resurrection?

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Q29. Do you think that Jesus’ disciples would have considered stealing Jesus’ body? (Today, followers of a “cult” would have, in all likelihood, established a 24-hour per day vigil!)

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Q30. Do you find it strange that the Jewish leadership remembered Jesus’ prophecy?

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Q31. How do you know that God was faithful to His obedient son?

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Q32. Can we rely on God’s faithfulness in our lives?

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1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

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