

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST
PART 3-CHRIST'S PASSION
ACTS 1:3; MATTHEW 27:33-36 (text: vs 36)

Introduction

Here in Dr. Luke's second book entitled "*The Acts of The Apostles*", we find the only use of the term "*passion*". It is used by Luke to describe the events leading up to and including the death of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Acts 1:3 tells us that Jesus showed himself alive after "*His passion.*"

When Luke mentioned Christ's "*passion*", what did he mean? "*Passion*" comes from a word which means "*to experience a sensation or impression (usually painful).*" In other words *passion* means "*suffering.*"

Matthew 16:21—"From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and **suffer** many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

Luke 24:46—"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to **suffer**, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48And ye are witnesses of these things."

The **suffering and death** of Christ, along with His Resurrection, is the focal point of all history. No events or time in history was or ever will be more important than those surrounding the **death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ**. The reason for that is because at the Cross, redemption and forgiveness was made available for all mankind!

As we approach Resurrection Sunday (Easter) this year, I want us to focus upon the time that preceded His Resurrection! In other words, I want us to examine Christ's Passion!

I. THE PRELUDE TO THE CROSS. (i.e. The events leading up to the Cross)

A. Jesus ate the Passover Supper, we know it as the last Supper with His Disciples. (Matthew 26:20-30)

Luke 22:15—"And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I **suffer**:"

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B. At the Last Supper, Jesus predicted His betrayal by Judas Iscariot.

C. Afterward, they went out to the Mount of Olives. There Jesus told the eleven Disciples that remained that they would be "*offended*" because of Him that night.
Peter denied that he would be offended, but the Lord predicted his threefold denial.

D. Then Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray and the Scripture says that He began to be "*exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.*" (Matthew 26:38)
There he prayed "*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" (Matthew 26:39)

He had told His disciples to wait and watch with Him, but He came back to find them asleep. He reproved them and then told them to watch and pray.

He went again and prayed "*O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.*"

He then returned again to find His disciples asleep again.

He went again and prayed the same prayer again. As He finished, He was aware of the imminent appearance of Judas and those who were with him.

E. Jesus then was betrayed by Judas into the hands of the chief priests and elders with a kiss.

F. After Jesus was arrested, He was brought before the Jewish council and the High Priest where He was illegally tried, spit upon, beaten, and condemned to death.

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- G. He was then brought before Pilate and falsely accused of “perverting the nation...forbidding to give tribute to Caesar” (Luke 23:1-5).**
- H. Although Jesus was found innocent of all the charges, He was scourged and then sentenced to be crucified.**

Our text speaks of the original eye-witnesses of Christ's Passion —“And sitting down they watched him there.” They sat mesmerized by atrocities afflicted upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 1. The Spitting (26:67).** I can't think of anything more humiliating.
- 2. The Smiting (26:67).**
Isaiah 50:6—“I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”
- 3. The Scourging (27:26).**
The following is from an article from The Journal of the American Medical Association (March 21, 1986, Volume 256) entitled “*On The Physical Death of Jesus Christ:*”

“The usual instrument was a short whip (with several single or braided leather thongs of variable lengths, in which small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bones were tied at intervals. For scourging, the man was stripped of his clothing, and his hands were tied to an upright post. The back, buttocks, and legs were flogged either by two soldiers or by one who alternated positions.”

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As the Roman soldiers repeatedly struck the victim's back with full force, the iron balls would cause deep contusions, and the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into the skin and tissues. Then, as the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh. Pain and blood loss generally set the stage for circulatory shock.”

Normally 39 lashes were given according to Jewish law (see 2 Cor. 11:24).

But be reminded that the Jews were not the ones inflicting these lashes.

- 4. The Scorning (27:28-30).**
The crown of thorns.

THE PRELUDE TO THE CROSS.

II. THE PATHWAY OF THE CROSS. (27:31-34)

The condemned man was usually made to carry the crossbar of his own cross from the whipping post to the site of crucifixion outside the city walls.

The weight of the crossbar was anywhere from 75 to 125 lbs.

The distance to Calvary from Pilate's Judgment hall was about 1/3 to a half a mile down a crowded narrow street of stone.

At the site of the execution, by law, the victim was given a bitter drink of wine mixed with myrrh (gall) as a mild analgesic. Jesus after having only tasted it, then refused it.

III. THE PAIN OF THE CROSS. (27:35)

A. The Physical Pain.

No one ever suffered the cruel brutality that Jesus endured.

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What I'm about to share with you comes from the article I previously mentioned which is entitled *Medical Aspects of Crucifixion*—quoting from *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (March 21, 1986, Volume 256)

“With a knowledge of both anatomy and ancient crucifixion practices, one may reconstruct the probable medical aspects of this form of slow execution. Each wound apparently was intended to produce intense agony, and the contributing causes of death were numerous.

The scourging prior to crucifixion served to weaken the condemned man and, if blood loss was considerable, to produce severely low blood pressure and even hypovolemic shock. When the victim was thrown to the ground on his back, in preparation for transfixion of his hands, his scourging wounds most likely would become torn open again and contaminated with dirt.

Furthermore, with each respiration, the painful scourging wounds would be scraped against the rough wood of the cross.

With arms outstretched but not taut, the wrists were nailed to the cross beam.

It has been shown that the ligaments and bones of the wrist can support the weight of a body hanging from them. Accordingly, the iron spikes probably were driven between the radius and the carpals or between the two rows of carpal bones... Although a nail in either location in the wrist might pass between the bony elements and thereby produce no fractures, the likelihood of painful. . . injury would seem great. Furthermore, the driven nail would crush or sever the rather large sensorimotor median nerve. The stimulated nerve would produce excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms.

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Most commonly, the feet were fixed to the front of the cross by means of an iron spike driven through the first or second intermetatarsal space. It is likely that the deep peroneal nerve and branches of the medial and lateral plantar nerves would have been injured by the nails.

The major pathophysiologic effect of crucifixion, beyond the excruciating pain, was a marked interference with normal respiration, particularly exhalation. The weight of the body, pulling down on the outstretched arms and shoulders, would tend to fix the intercostal muscles in an inhalation state and thereby hinder passive exhalation. Accordingly, exhalation was primarily diaphragmatic, and breathing was shallow.

Adequate exhalation required lifting the body by pushing up on the feet and by flexing the elbows and adducting the shoulders. However, this maneuver would place the entire weight of the body on the tarsals and would produce searing pain. Furthermore, flexion of the elbows would cause rotation of the wrists about the iron nails and cause fiery pain along the damaged median nerves. Lifting of the body would also painfully scrape the scourged back against the rough wooden cross. Muscle cramps and paresthesias of the outstretched and uplifted arms would add to the discomfort. As a result, each respiratory effort would become agonizing and tiring and lead eventually to asphyxia.

Not uncommonly, insects would light upon or burrow into the open wounds or the eyes, ears, and nose of the dying and helpless victim, and birds of prey would tear at these sites.”

NOTE—Jesus never pled for mercy—“Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves” (Luke 23:28)

There were no hysterical sobs or screams of anguish.

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He cried not for vengeance, but rather the words—“*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*” (Luke 23:34)

The length of survival generally ranged from three or four hours to three or four days and appears to have been inversely related to the severity of the scourging. However, the Roman soldiers could hasten death by breaking the legs below the knees (which would lead to death by suffocation within minutes). Death by crucifixion was, in every sense of the word, excruciating. (It is where the very word comes from!)

Since no one was intended to survive crucifixion, the body was not released to the family until the soldiers were sure that the victim was dead. By custom, one of the Roman guards would pierce the body with a sword or lance. Traditionally, this had been considered a spear wound to the heart through the right side of the chest (under the fifth rib) -- a fatal wound probably taught to most Roman soldiers.

B. **The Spiritual Pain. (27:45-46)**

When the perfect, sinless, Son of God became sin for us, there was a period of time where the Son was forsaken and separated from the Father.

I don't think that we can possibly understand the magnitude of the pain that this brought on our Saviour.

THE PRELUDE TO THE CROSS; THE PATHWAY OF THE CROSS; THE PAIN OF THE CROSS...

IV. **THE PERSON ON THE CROSS.**

He was and is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One. (27:22).

He was and is the King of kings and Lord of lords.(27:37).

He was and is the very Son of God (27:40, 54). The Creator! God in the flesh!

He was and is the only Saviour of the world.

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A. **He Is The Substitutionary One! (27:15-23 - Barabbas)**
He Died in MY PLACE!

B. **He Is The Sinless One! (27:24-25; John 19:4-6)**
2 Corinthians 5:21—“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

C. **He Is The Sacrificial One! (John 10:17-18)**
Jesus did NOT die from the physical atrocities afflicted on Him! No one took Jesus Christ's life from Him. He could not be killed by man. Death is the result of sin and Jesus was sinless. He literally had to “*give up the ghost*” in order to die.

D. **He Is The Saving One! (Luke 23:42-43)**
Matthew 1:21—“...thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.”

Luke 19:10—“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

V. **THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE CROSS (27:35).**

A. **Psalm 22:1, 6-8, 14-18.**

Note verse 14—“*...all my bones are out of joint...*” After Christ was nailed to the cross, the cross would be hoisted upright by ropes and then dropped into a hole about 3 feet deep with a sickening thud. The jolt from the weight of the body literally dislocated the shoulder bones.

Psalm 34:20 prophesied that none of Christ's bones would be broken. This was fulfilled in **John 19:33-37**.

B. **Isaiah 52:14; 53:1-12 (The Suffering Servant).**

VI. THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS.

A. **Jesus Did Not Die A Martyr's Death.**

1 Peter 1:18-21—“18Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.”

Revelation 13:8—“. . .the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

B. **He Came To Give His Life A Ransom For Many.**

Matthew 20:28—“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

1 Timothy 2:6—“Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

He tasted death for every man—*Hebrews 2:9—“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”*

C. **Christianity Is About God Sacrificing His Son To Restore A Relationship That Was Broken.**

Colossians 1:20—“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself...”

1. Jesus, God's Son, sacrificed His life to pay for the sins of mankind and taking the punishment for the sin upon Himself.

2. Because He gave His life on the cross, any one who believes in Him can and will have a restoration of a personal relationship with God.

3. *1 Corinthians 1:18—“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”*

VII. THE POSTSCRIPT FOLLOWING THE CROSS.

The Romans crucified thousands of Jews during their occupation of Palestine, but only One rose from the dead!

2 Corinthians 5:15—“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”

Conclusion:

“Sitting down they watched him there...”

What did those who gathered around the cross see transpire at Calvary on that crucifixion day almost 2000 years ago?

They witnessed the greatest expression of love this world has ever known.