

# *Resurrection Life of Jesus Church*

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

RLJ-1981

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### PART 78: THE SCOURGING OF JESUS

#### THE FLAGRUM

Once Pilate gave the order for Jesus to be crucified, He was taken away by soldiers for scourging. **Matthew 27:26; Mark 15:15; John 19:1**

The Gospel writers do not describe this event, in part because they were not present, but also because everyone was familiar with the significance of such an event. It was a preliminary to crucifixion, intending to weaken the victim to a state just short of collapse, significantly shortening the amount of time spent on the cross.

The Roman scourge (also known as a flagrum or flagellum) was a short whip consisting of three or more leather thongs connected to a handle. Each thong was knotted at the end with iron – sometimes it was barbed – and embedded with indented metal and sturdy bone shards (sheep knuckle bone) at various intervals.

In the hands of a skilled soldier, the flagrum was a brutal form of punishment as the metal ends slammed into the victim and the indented metal and bone shards lacerated the skin. The thongs tore into the underlying skeletal muscles which left the victim quivering with ribbons of bleeding flesh. Pain and blood loss produced shock and the extent of the bleeding determined how long the victim would survive the ensuing crucifixion.

#### ROMAN STRIPES

The severity of the scourging depended upon the mood of the soldiers. Mosaic law stipulated a maximum of forty lashes and this is why the Jews always stopped at thirty-nine stripes in case of a miscount. **Deuteronomy 25:3**

Scourging among the Romans however was a more severe form of punishment with no legal limit on the number of lashes the victim received. There is no record that they stopped at forty lashes with Jesus. The soldiers were not concerned so much with quantity as the quality of the stripes inflicted on the victim – whatever number that happened to be!

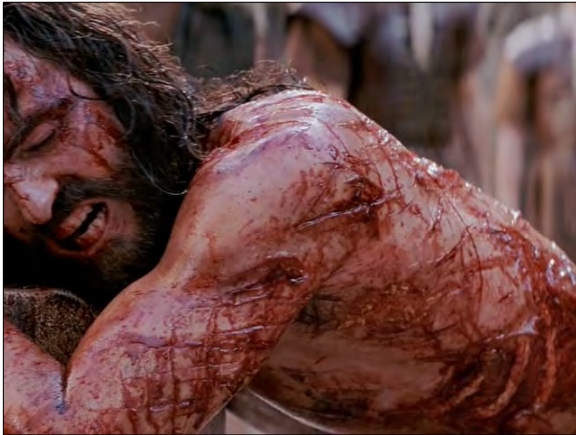
#### THE SCOURGING

The soldiers stripped Jesus naked and His hands were tied to a vertical post or between two posts. His back, chest, buttocks, arms, and legs were scourged by two soldiers standing on either side, alternating hits, beating Jesus continuously and mercilessly.

The soldiers enjoyed repeatedly striking the back and chest of the man who claimed to be a king. The weighted ends of the flagrum struck the God-man's skin forcefully enough to produce a dull thud. That impact bruised internal organs while simultaneously tenderizing His muscles. The indented metal and bone chunks on the thongs struck the skin, tearing into the underlying skeletal muscles, leaving behind ribbons of quivering, bleeding flesh. Then they moved down to His buttocks and legs with the same results.



When the soldiers finally halted the beating, it does not take much imagination to realize that Jesus was a bloody mess. His breathing was labored and much of His skin dangled like ribbons from His body. There was a severe, unrelenting pain from every area touched by the flagrum. Combined with lack of food, water, and sleep, as well as physical and mental abuse, Jesus was in a seriously weakened state.



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## THE SUFFERING

God outlined what the future Messiah would accomplish after Adam and Eve rebelled and ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The human race was infected with sin and sickness was part of the curse. **Genesis 3:15**

More than 700 years earlier, the prophet Isaiah spoke about the severity of the abuse which would be inflicted on the Messiah:

- ❖ He correctly pointed out that Jesus would be scourged, have His facial hair ripped out, and be spit upon in the most shameful manner. **Isaiah 50:6**
- ❖ Jesus would look so grisly after the scourging as to be unrecognizable. **Isaiah 52:14**

## HEALING FOR US

Isaiah stated that Jesus was going to redeem mankind from sin with His body. The curse of sin introduced sickness to humanity and the God-man would make payment with His body. **Isaiah 53:1-6**

The apostle Peter pointed out the innocence of Jesus and His behavior towards those who mistreated and hurt Him. Every sickness was placed on the God-man during the scourging to bring healing for our bodies. **1 Peter 2:21-24**

This is why it is possible to be healed by the name of Jesus. **Mark 16:18**

## ETERNITY PAST

The scourging of Jesus was ordained before the creation when God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit devised the redemption of humanity. **1 Peter 1:19-20**

That is why Jesus is described as being slain prior to the foundation of the world.

**Revelation 13:8**

## MORE ABUSE

The Romans needed Jesus alive to be crucified, so their intent was not to scourge Him to death; yet He was closer to passing away from multiple contusions, lacerations, exposed muscles, and severe blood loss. It was in this state that the soldiers returned to the Praetorium and gathered their military unit – 400 to 600 men – to continue the abuse. **Matthew 27:27; Mark 15:16**

Some kind of covering had been placed upon the God-man before He was marched back to the Praetorium. Matthew notes that it was substituted with a kingly robe. How do you think it felt to have the cloth soak up the blood and then have it roughly removed?

**Matthew 27:28**

The soldiers found some kind of thorn bush nearby and decided to weave a crown of sorts for the “king of the Jews” in their midst. The crown was a symbol of royalty and they turned it into something painful and degrading. One can imagine this boisterous crowd of men laughing as they scornfully placed the thorny crown on His head and pressed it into place.

Then they grabbed a reed for a scepter and placed it in the right hand of Jesus. The outfit was complete as the God-man had a robe, crown, and scepter. Then they began to bow to Jesus and taunt Him. They eventually began to spit on the God-man and strike Him in the face with their hands and the reed. **Matthew 27:29-30; Mark 15:17-19; John 19:2-3**

When the fun was over, the soldiers removed the robe and dressed Jesus in His own clothes and painfully led Him to Pilate a final time. **Matthew 27:31; Mark 15:20**



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The prophetic words of Jesus continued to be fulfilled.

*“...the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.” (Matthew 20:18-19)*

***Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!***

***Do you have an ear to hear with?***