

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

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PART 80: THE CRUCIFIXION

ARRIVING TO GOLGOTHA

Jesus arrived to the crucifixion site with two other men scheduled for the same fate. Luke calls them malefactors (criminals), which they were, and it was humiliating for the God-man to be associated with such reprobates. **Luke 23:32**

Matthew, Mark, and John referred to it by its Hebrew name of *Golgotha*. **Matthew 27:33; Mark 15:22; John 19:17**

Luke called it by its Greek name of *Calvary*. **Luke 23:33**

The “place of the skull” was a place of execution. Jesus was put to death outside of Jerusalem because capital punishments were not allowed within the walls.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.” (Numbers 15:35)

This was also the custom of the Romans, and in this instance, the Jews and Romans were in agreement.

The apostle Paul in his letter to the Hebrews makes an interesting point about the animals sacrificed in the temple to atone for sin. Their bodies were transported outside the city afterwards to be burned, whereas Jesus voluntarily sacrificed Himself outside the camp to sanctify humanity with His shed blood.

“For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” (Hebrews 13:11-12)

Matthew stated that Jesus was offered a cup of vinegar mixed with gall. **Matthew 27:34**

Mark declared the God-man was offered wine with myrrh. **Mark 15:23**

It was common for Roman soldiers to drink vinegar made of light wine. It was normal for such a drink to be called vinegar or wine. It was customary for strong drink to be offered to the condemned.

“Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.” (Proverbs 31:6)

The effect of the drink mixed with myrrh was to dull the senses and soften the pain. When Jesus tasted the contents, He immediately rejected it because He was committed to the cup of suffering offered by God the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Matthew 26:39, 42



Jesus came to suffer for the sins of mankind! The God-man was unwilling to blunt the agony inflicted on Him and this is why He refused the aid of a painkiller to endure the full measure of pain on the cross.

CRUCIFIXION PROCESS

The Romans needed Jesus alive for crucifixion, so their intent was not to scourge Him to death. Yet His life was rapidly fading from the cuts across His back, chest, buttocks, arms, and legs. His skin dangled like ribbons, breathing was labored, and loss in blood pressure left Him shaking. Combined with dehydration, Jesus had reached the point that He was more or less a dead man slow-walking to Golgotha.

Once Jesus refused the strong drink, the Roman soldiers quickly stripped Him of all clothing and flung Him to the ground. Such a violent action triggered new waves of pain on His back, buttocks, arms, and legs from the scourging. There was no grass on the execution site, only dirt and gravel, which entered the open wounds of His body when the soldiers pushed Him down and positioned His body into place.

The arms of Jesus were outstretched on the crossbar and spikes 5-7 inches long were driven into His wrists because the palms would not support the weight of His body. The nails cut through nerves, drawing more blood, and creating excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms that throbbed uncontrollably.

Then the crossbar and Jesus were lifted and fitted onto a vertical post. Once the crossbeam was secured, the God-man's legs were pushed slightly up and held in place while His feet were nailed to the front of the post or to a footrest, depending upon what was available, producing further agony as a rough spike penetrated His feet. The slightest movement of the arms and legs created immense pain as the rusty metal rubbed against the severed nerve endings.

Crucifixion did not bring immediate death. In order to breathe, Jesus used His legs to push Himself up, helping His rib cage and lungs to expand. The wounds received from scourging scraped against the rough wood post, creating more pain, while the intake of air into the lungs prolonged the dying process. Blood loss from the backside continued throughout the ordeal.

Being nailed to the cross was designed to completely exhaust the body and make it challenging to breathe. Muscle cramps from dehydration and perspiration added to the unrelenting pain Jesus experienced.

ADDITIONAL INFO

Infection would start to spread throughout the physical body from the scourging. It was not uncommon for insects to land upon and/or burrow into the open wounds. Carrion birds tore at the flesh of the victim. When combined with the climate in Israel, which saw great heat during the day and frosty temperatures at night, it effectively created a prolonged form of misery for the victim whose only relief was death.

It was common for the Romans to leave the condemned on the cross for three to four days. If death required speed, such as three to four hours, the soldiers broke the legs below the knees so the victims could not push themselves up to catch their breath. The result was suffocation.

Jesus was crucified on a cross like a criminal. Such a shocking public death was reserved for slaves and traitors. The whole experience was designed to be excruciating, lingering, and most of all, shameful.

THE CRUCIFIXION

Jesus was crucified between the two accomplices of Barabbas, whose place He had taken. **Luke 23:33; John 19:18**

During these horrible first minutes, Jesus sought forgiveness for the Roman centurion and the other soldiers for their part in this death drama. **Luke 23:34a**

This was a fulfillment of prophecy when Jesus “made intercession for the transgressors.”

*“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and **made intercession for the transgressors.**” (Isaiah 53:12)*

The soldiers wasted no time in dividing up Jesus’ clothes and cast lots for the coat they admired. **Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34b**

It is interesting that the soldiers noticed Jesus’ coat was seamless; in fact, it was woven just like the garments of the priests. This should not come as a surprise since Jesus is our High Priest. **Hebrews 4:14-15**

John reveals there were four soldiers which stayed for the crucifixion and divided the God-man’s clothing amongst themselves. **John 19:23-24**

Another fulfillment of prophecy.

“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” (Psalms 22:18)

There must have been blood on Jesus’ garments since He was bleeding profusely after the scourging, but they were so debased that they did not care. Little did they know of the treasure held in their hands because the blood of Jesus washes away the sins of every person who comes to Christ. **Hebrews 9:11-15**

The soldiers sat down once they finished dividing Jesus’ garments and guarded the cross so that no one prematurely released the God-man. **Matthew 27:36**

THE SIGN

Pontius Pilate was angry with the Jewish leadership and ordered a sign placed over the head of Jesus on the cross which was intended to infuriate the ungodly vermin that had gathered to gloat over the God-man as He hung helplessly.

- ❖ “This is Jesus the King of the Jews” **Matthew 27:37**
- ❖ “The King of the Jews” **Mark 15:26**
- ❖ “This is the King of the Jews” **Luke 23:38**

❖ “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” **John 19:19**

John stated the title was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. **verse 20**

The chief priests indignantly protested to Pilate that the text of the sign should read “I am King of the Jews.” **verse 21**

Pilate famously rejected their protest and stated, “What I have written I have written.” In other words. “Shove it! You got what you wanted, now leave me alone!” **verse 22**

In the meantime, two other groups of Roman soldiers crucified the two thieves on either side of Jesus. **Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27**

Mark noted this was another fulfillment of prophecy that Jesus was “numbered with the transgressors.” **Mark 15:28**

*“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was **numbered with the transgressors**; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” (Isaiah 53:12)*

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?