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What the Bible Says About the Crucifixion

“So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.” John 19:1

“Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: “THEY DIVIDED MY GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS.”” Matthew 27:35

“I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look *and* stare at Me.” Psalms 22:14-17

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:5

“He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken.” Psalms 34:20

“But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.” John 19:34

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? *Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?*” Psalm 22:1

“Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.”

John 19:41

The History of Crucifixion

by Heath Rogers

Jesus was put to death by crucifixion. “And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left” (Luke 23:33). This has made the cross is a focal point of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of our faith (1 Cor. 1:18; 2:2; Gal. 6:14; Col. 1:20).

Historians claim that execution by means of crucifixion was used by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Medes, and the Persians. The earliest mode of crucifixion seems to have been what we would identify as being impaled. Instead of being nailed or tied to a post, the body of the victim would be driven upon a sharpened stake and suspended in air. Alexander the Great is said to have crucified 2,000 inhabitants of Tyre in this manner when he captured that city.

The Romans adopted this method of execution and used it throughout their empire. By this time, the victim was no longer impaled. Instead, the Romans perfected the suffering by attaching the victim to a crossbeam that was then attached to the vertical stake. This made the victim’s execution more than a public spectacle. It turned his execution into a prolonged and grotesque torture. Crucifixion was so gruesome that it was reserved for slaves and criminals. It was against the law for a Roman citizen to be crucified. The Roman statesman and orator Cicero called crucifixion “the most miserable and most painful punishment appropriate to slaves alone,” and said, “let the very name of the cross be far away not only from the body of a Roman citizen, but even from his thoughts, his eyes, his ears.”

Roman crucifixion was usually preceded by scourging. The clothing would be removed from the back and chest of the victim and his hands would be bound to a pillar. The Romans commonly used a whip consisting of strands of leather weighted down by pieces of bone or metal. The initial blows from this whip would cause blisters, while the continued blows would burst the skin and tear into the flesh. At times, this scourging was so severe the victim would not survive to see the cross. After the scourging, the victim then bore his own cross (the crossbeam) to the place of execution. There his hands were tied or nailed to the crossbeam, which would then be lifted and attached to a vertical stake. The total height of the cross was not much taller than the victim himself. Sometimes a peg was placed in the stake for the victim to stand upon, or a block was attached for him to sit upon. Other times the feet were nailed to the vertical stake.

The victim hung suspended by the arms. In this posture, breathing was difficult and blood flow was restricted. The victim could inhale but would have to relieve the pressure on his arms to exhale. This was done by pushing himself up with his feet. His pain would be compounded if his feet were nailed into the cross. Every breath he took required him to repeat this painful process. To hasten death, the victim's legs would be broken (John 19:31-34) and he would die from asphyxiation. However, the Romans intended for crucifixion to bring a slow and lingering death. It was not uncommon for the victim to hang on the cross for days until his death. Even after death, the bodies of the victims would remain on the cross where they would rot or be consumed by scavenger animals.

Our Lord's death by crucifixion was the subject of prophecy. In Psalm 22, David describes the agony of the suffering Messiah when he says, "They pierced My hands and My feet" (v. 16, see also Zechariah 12:10). Jesus knew He would be crucified. He spoke of Himself as being lifted up from the earth, thus signifying the way He would die (John 3:14; 12:32-33). He also told the disciples, "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified" (Matt. 26:2).

Instead of avoiding this suffering, Jesus willingly surrendered Himself to His Father's will. "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). Notice what Paul said about Jesus' death. He didn't willingly submit to just any kind of death. Jesus was willing to die the worst possible kind of death – "the death of the cross."

We have the opportunity to remember the death of our Lord every first day of the week. The Lord's Supper is the memorial instituted by the Lord Himself. When we take the unleavened bread we are to remember His suffering: "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. 11:24). When we take the cup we are to remember His death: "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me" (v. 25). As gruesome as our Lord's death was, it is important that we go back to Calvary and remember the terrible price that was paid for our sins.

"Good People in All Churches?"

- by Earl Fly

The statement that "there are good people in all churches" is usually made as a defense of the existence of the many different conflicting denominations. Certainly there are good people in all the churches. There are good people OUT of churches. There are good people who are infidels. But the question is not are they good, but are they saved people?

It is good to be good but it is not good enough. One cannot save himself by just being good. He must obey the gospel of Christ (2 Thess. 1:7-9) to be saved. Cornelius was a good man but he was a lost man! (Acts 10:1-6; 11:14). The good people in human churches are lost people, not because they are not good moral people, but because they have not obeyed the gospel of God. This is why we appeal to good people to leave their human churches and obey the gospel. There is no other hope for these good people.