

The Passion of Jesus

Slide 1: The Passion – Physical suffering of Jesus Christ

Slide 2: **Matthew 27:26** - “Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.” NKJV

Slide 3: Gospel writers did not have to give details of a crucifixion because 1st century Christians were familiar with the practices of scourging and crucifixion.

First century executions were not like modern ones which are designed to be quick and painless to preserve dignity. They were agonizing tortures that completely humiliated the victim.

What Jesus experienced had happened to thousands of others; and it was all done in public, as a warning to other would-be offenders.

Slide 4: The Romans crucified about 30,000 people during their occupation of Palestine. These executions were so frightful that writers refrained from describing them and artists rarely pictured them.

Slide 5: Scourging/Flogging

Slide 6: Scourging/flogging was a brutal and inhumane legal preliminary in every Roman execution. It produced great welts, deep stripes, and a swollen body. Eyes and teeth were often knocked out.

Slide 7: Victims of scourging were stripped to the waist, and then bound to a post with their hands above their head. Scourging was designed to punish, not kill.

Though some did die from it, hardened, experienced Roman soldiers generally knew when to stop.

Slide 8: The Jews had an ancient law prohibiting more than 40 lashes, but it is doubtful whether the Romans would have followed it. When it was determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner was near death, the beating would be stopped. It is difficult for us to grasp the intensity of a Roman scourging. If we witnessed one, we would probably pass out!

Slide 9: The scourging was done with a whip made of a number of leather thongs weighted with pieces or balls of lead, bones, glass, or sharp metal!

This heavy whip would have been brought down with full force again and again across Jesus’ shoulders, back and legs until the flesh was all torn open.

Slide 10: Roman Whips

Slide 13: The small balls of lead first produced large, deep bruises which are eventually broken open by continual blows.

Slide 14: Finally the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue.

Slide 17: The 4th century historian Eusebius wrote that some victims were scourged so severely that their internal organs were exposed: *“At one time they were torn by scourges down to deep seated veins and arteries, so that the hidden contents of the recesses of their bodies, their entrails and organs, were exposed to sight.”*

Slide 18: After His scourging, Jesus is untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with His own blood.

Slide 19: Isaiah 52:14 - “Many people were shocked when they saw Him. His appearance was so damaged He did not look like a man; His form was so changed they could barely tell He was human.” NCV

Slide 20: Matthew 27:27-31: “Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.” NKJV

Slide 21: The Roman soldiers then threw a robe across His shoulders and placed a reed in His hand for a scepter (a hollow stem that looked like bamboo). Then they made a crown of thorns which no doubt caused a great deal of bleeding.

Slide 22: **Scarlet robe**

Slide 23: **Crown of thorns**

Slide 24: **Struck with reed**

Slide 25: After mocking and abusing Him some more, the soldiers tore the purple robe off of His back. This robe had probably already started sticking to his back, so when they tore it off, His back probably started bleeding again.

Slide 26: John 19:16 – “Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away.” NKJV

Slide 27: Partly as a warning to other potential offenders, the victims were made to carry their cross, usually the crossbeam, which weighed around 125 pounds, along the public roads to the execution ground.

Slide 28: The cross is usually pictured in the classical or Latin form which had the crossbeam attached 2/3 feet below the top. The common form would have been the Tau cross, shaped like the Greek letter Tau (T).

At Golgotha permanent stakes were probably set up. The crossbeam was lowered into a groove at the top of the stake.

Slide 29: **The Shape of the Cross**

Slide 30: The journey from the fortress Antonia (where Pilate lived) to Golgotha (the “Via Dolorosa” or the “Way of Suffering”), was about 650 yards. The weight of the cross and considerable blood loss weakened Jesus until He couldn’t continue. So a man named Simon of Cyrene (North Africa) was picked to carry it the rest of the way.

Slide 33: Mark 15:21 - “Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross.” NKJV

Slide 35: **Matthew 27:33-35:** “And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. 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.”* NKJV

Slide 37: The Crucifixion of Jesus

Slide 38: Crucifixion was the **cruellest** punishment known to the ancient world, first used by the Persians and brought back to Egypt and Carthage by Alexander the Great.

The Romans modified the Persian/Phoenician/Carthaginian impaling techniques and created crucifixion as a form of **torture** and **capital punishment** for those of lower social status (non-Roman citizens).

Death by crucifixion was a **prolonged, slow** and **agonizing** death with **maximum** pain and suffering.

Slide 39: Crucifixion not only involved intense physical pain, but it was the ultimate form of **shame** and **humiliation** as it stripped people of their **dignity**.

The Romans knew how to get full **propaganda** value out of the act of executing criminals, so crucifixions almost always took place in very public places – beside well-traveled roads into and out of cities, as a **warning** to the people.

The word **“excruciating”** is derived from the Latin phrase “ex crucis,” or “**from the cross**” to describe **“terrible pain.”**

Slide 40: **John 19:19-20:** “Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: **JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.** Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.” NKJV

Slide 42: **Matthew 27:37** - “And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**” NKJV

Slide 44: **John 19:17-18:** “And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.” NKJV

Slide 46: The **wrists** of victims were **nailed** with heavy, square, wrought-iron nails, or tied to the crossbeam and the body was lifted upright. The **feet** were nailed or tied to the cross a few inches up to 3 or 4 feet above the ground. No **vital organ** was damaged. Major blood vessels were **avoided** to prevent bleeding to death quickly.

Slide 47: Many painters and most of the sculptors today show the nails through the palms. However, Roman historical accounts and experimental work have shown that the nails were driven **between** the small bones of the wrists and not through the palms as commonly depicted.

Nails driven through the palms will **strip out** between the fingers when they support the weight of a human body without the bone structure of the wrists to support it.

Anatomists, both modern and ancient, have always considered the **wrists** as part of the **hand**.

Slide 48: Nails in the wrists

Slide 49: Nails in the palms

Slide 50: Nails in the feet

Slide 51: Nails in the feet

Note: In 1968 the skeleton of a young man who had died by crucifixion in the first century A.D. was found on Mt Scopus in Jerusalem. Nails pierced each wrist, but only one was used for both heel bones. The position of the victim is uncertain, but scholars suggest a jackknife configuration, with both legs forced together and bent to one side or possibly with knees apart.

Slide 52: The damage to the nerves by the nails would produce excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms and legs. There would also be a slow, but constant, loss of blood. All this was designed to weaken the one on the cross.

Slide 54: International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: *“The wounds swelled about the rough nails, and the torn and lacerated tendons and nerves caused excruciating agony. The arteries of the head and stomach were surcharged with blood and a terrific throbbing headache ensued. The victim of crucifixion literally died a thousand deaths. The suffering was so frightful that even among the raging passions of war, pity was sometimes excited.”*

Slide 55: Matthew 27:38-44: “Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.” NKJV

Slide 56: If you truly are the Son of God, then save yourself!

Slide 57: Father, forgive them!

Slide 58: Death by crucifixion was a painful and humiliating process that often took several days. History records a husband/wife crucified together lived nine days in 286 AD. Death usually came as the result of shock, secondary infection, exposure, exhaustion, fatigue, cramped muscles, hunger, thirst, fever, and suffocation.

Slide 59: Insects and birds would sometimes attack the open wounds of the person. Since they were no more than three or four feet from the ground, they were also subject to abuse from people on the ground. Death came as a welcome relief to victims of crucifixion. How long the person lived mainly depended on the severity of the scourging.

Slide 60: The major debilitating effect of crucifixion was that it was almost impossible for the person to breathe. They could breathe in but not out. To exhale, the person had to push up on the feet and flex the elbows and pull in the shoulders.

Slide 61: When a person is hanging by their arms, the pectoral muscles are unable to act. They would have to fight to rise up in order to get even one breath.

As the arms fatigued, great waves of cramps would sweep the muscles, producing searing pain, muscle cramps and wrenching spasms. Each effort to breathe became more agonizing and tiring.

Slide 62: Breathing on the cross

Slide 63: As carbon dioxide would build up in the lungs and blood stream, the cramps would partially subside. This enabled the victim to push up to exhale. The victim's exhaustion would eventually lead to asphyxia – death from a lack of oxygen.

Slide 64: There was no comfortable position on the cross; the pain was immense, headaches, thirst, spasms of muscles and nerves – a **“million constant shocks”** to the body.

Slide 65: The Life of Christ: Frederick Farrar

“A death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death have to offer...horrible and ghastly. Dizziness, cramps, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, traumatic fever, shame, publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of intended wounds. All intensified just up unto the point they can be endured at all. All stopping just short of the point that would give the sufferer relief of unconsciousness.”

Slide 66: **Luke 23:32-33:** “There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 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.” NKJV

Slide 67: **Luke 23:39** - “Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” NKJV

Slide 68: Save us if you can!

Slide 69: **Luke 23:40-42:** “But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” NKJV

Slide 70: Remember me!

Slide 71: Today you will be with Me in Paradise!

Slide 72: **Luke 23:43** - “And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.” NKJV

Slide 73: **Luke 23:46** - “And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, *‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.*” Having said this, He breathed His last.” NKJV

Slide 74: Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.

Slide 75: **John 19:31-33:** “Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.” NKJV

Slide 76: People were usually crucified with their legs bent at the knee, with the feet either nailed or tied to a block of wood. This allowed the victim to push down with the legs in order to take air into the diaphragm. **“Breaking the legs”** with a large mallet prevented the victim from breathing, bringing death in a matter of minutes.

Note: The Jewish authorities asked Pilate to break the legs of the three crucified men to hasten their deaths, so that their bodies could be removed and not remain on the crosses during the Passover Sabbath.

Slide 77: Jesus' legs would have been broken also, but the soldiers saw that He was already dead. To make doubly sure He was dead, the legionnaire drove his lance through the pericardium and into the heart. Out came blood and water!

Slide 78: [John 19:34](#) - "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out." NKJV

Slide 79: Spear through the pericardium

Slide 80: Some medical authorities have said that in the case of heart rupture, the blood collects in the pericardium, the lining around the wall of the heart, and divides into a sort of bloody clot and watery serum (Dr. William Stroud, "*The Physical Cause of the Death of Christ*").

The pericardium contains a serous matter resembling water which prevents the surface of the heart from becoming dry by its continual motion. (Albert Barnes)

Slide 81: If this is a fact, then the immediate cause of Jesus' death was heart rupture. Under intense pain, and the pressure of His wildly raging blood, His heart burst open. It may be that Jesus literally died of a broken heart over the sin of the world.

Slide 82: There are only five ways a person can be wounded. Jesus absorbed all five.

- ❖ **Contused wound** – bruises from fists and blunt instruments ([Matthew 26:67](#); [Mark 14:65](#); [Luke 22:63](#)).
- ❖ **Lacerated wound** – cuts came with scourging.
- ❖ **Penetrating wound** – this came from a sharp pointed instrument (crown of thorns).
- ❖ **Perforated wound** – nails through wrists and feet.
- ❖ **Incised wound** – spear ([John 19:34](#)).

Slide 83: [Luke 23:50-56](#): "Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment." NKJV

Slide 86: [Matthew 28:5-6](#): "But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." NKJV

Slide 87: [John 20:30-31](#): "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." NKJV

- **Conclusion**

Slide 88: On a human level, the Bible says there were a number of people involved in sentencing Jesus to die on the cross (Judas – greed; priests – envy; Pilate – fear and cowardice). However, our sins, disobedience and rebellion sent Jesus to the cross as well.

Slide 89: Judas had betrayed Him with a kiss; Peter had denied Him three times; all the disciples had left Him and fled. And in the darkest hour of the history of the world, God the Father struck His own Son with our punishment.

Slide 90: **Isaiah 53:4** - “Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!” NLT

Slide 91: We are no less guilty than Judas, the high priest, or Pilate:

Romans 4:25 – “He was handed over to die because of our sins, and He was raised to life to make us right with God.” NLT

Slide 92: The Romans put Jesus on that cross, the Jews put Jesus on that cross, you put Jesus on that cross, I put Jesus on that cross.

Who crucified Jesus – we did! Judas’ greed was ours; priests envy was ours; Pilates fear and cowardice was ours.

Slide 93: “*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*”

Slide 94: “*Jesus didn’t die on the cross because He wanted to, He died on the cross because He wanted you!*”

Romans 5:8 – “But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.” NLT

Slide 95: **Matthew 27:54** - “...Truly this was the Son of God!” NKJV