

Good Friday 2025

HOW AND WHY CHRIST DIED: Selected Scriptures

I. HOW CHRIST DIED (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John).

I) Jesus, after eating the Passover and instituting the Lord's Supper with His apostles, they sang a hymn, then walked to the Mount of Olives. There Jesus prayed.

- "And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (**Luke 22:44**).
- "And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will" (**Matthew 26:39**).
- **In the midst of this agony, His friends abandoned Him.** Instead of praying, they slept. When He was arrested, Peter tried to fight back with his sword rather than encouraging His teacher to do His Father's will. The others ran, one even ran away without his clothes rather than stay and die with Christ. After Jesus was arrested, Peter, who had just previously promised he would die with and for Jesus, denied three times that he even knew him.
 - **As it is written**, "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered" (**Zechariah 13:7**).
 - **Q.** Have you ever been abandoned by a friend? How about all of your friends? How about all of your friends at once?

Remember the resolve and manliness of Christ so that you believers may better love Him and glory in His sufferings!

- **Men can withstand terrible things if they have a band of brothers standing beside them or suffering alongside them.** Yet Christ is a man among boys, because He withstood the cross even after being abandoned by all. Even his "sheep were scattered."
- **Christ marched into the bowels of hell, as it were, carrying the mountainous weight of sin on His back, with no brothers but only mockers at His side.**

II) After praying, a band of soldiers led by one of His closest friends came to arrest Him. Willingly Jesus went with them.

- For thirty pieces of silver Judas betrayed His teacher and he did it with a kiss.

- “Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.’ And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, ‘Rabbi!’ And he kissed him.” (**Mark 14:44-45**)
 - **Q.** How you ever been sold out by one of your best friends?
 - **John 18:6** “When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.” **He went willingly*

III) Jesus was illegally arrested at night, bound, taken before the High Priest of Israel and two different rulers, Pilate and Herod; He was lied about, falsely tried, accused of crimes He did not commit; and He did not defend Himself!

- **Q. Why? A.** Because He did not desire to be acquitted for His good; He desired to be condemned for your good!
- “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.” (**Isaiah 53:7**)

IV) Christ our Lord was then beaten, mocked, and spit upon.

- **Blindfolded, He heard from the lips of the guards “Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?” (Luke 22:64) as He received from their fists numerous blows.**
- **Lips and fists that Jesus Himself created hurled insults and strokes at His body and soul.**
- **Matthew 26:67 says, “Then they spit in his face.”**
- **Spit flew from their mouths onto His bruised cheeks and swollen eyes.**
 - **As Charles Spurgeon powerful preached years ago, “If you prefer your sins to Him then it must be said of you also, “Then did they spit in His face.” And if you prefer your righteousness to His and look to yourself and do not trust in Him to save you from your sin, it must be said of you also, ‘Then did they spit in His face.’”**

V) Jesus was rejected by His people, who chose Barabbas to be set free instead of him.

- **Mark 14:11-14** “11 the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them [the murderer] Barabbas instead [of Jesus]. 12 And Pilate again said to them, “Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” 13 And they cried out again, ‘Crucify him.’ 14 And Pilate said to them, ‘Why? What evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Crucify him.’

- **The mouths which proclaimed just a few days ago, “Crown Him!” now shout “Crucify Him!”**

VI) Jesus then was scourged.

- **Scourging was such a horrific punishment that they did not do it to women.** They would take a whip made out of leather straps with heavy balls of metal and hooks made of bone tied to the end. The metal balls would tenderize and the hooks would mutilate. 39 lashes was the standard.
- **As it is written,** “His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind.” (**Isaiah 52:14**)
- **Such a terrible mutilation was scourging, yet the sufferings of Christ were so great that Mark writes, almost in passing,** “So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.” (**Mark 15:15**)
- **The Lord Jesus created cattle for man to exercise dominion over for His own glory; they used them to make leather straps to rip apart His flesh.**
- **Q.** Could you bear to watch what happened to the Lord in His scourging?

VII) After the scourging, a purple robe was placed on His back and a crown of thorns shoved on his head, as an entire battalion of Roman soldiers mocked Him and repeatedly struck Him on the head with wooden rods.

- “And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. And they began to salute him, ‘Hail, King of the Jews! And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.’ (**Mark 15:17-20**)
- **Q.** What robe do you place on His back—one of mockery or one of faith? What do you crown Him with—one of thorns or one of majesty?

VIII) Jesus then was forced to carry His own cross upwards of half a mile until, it seems, He collapsed under the weight. They then compelled Simon of Cyrene to carry it the rest of the way.

- “So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha” (**John 19:16-17**).
- “And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was

coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus" (**Luke 23:26**).

- **In the same mountains where Abraham obeyed so long ago, the true and better Isaac—Jesus Christ—carried wood on His back up to the place of His sacrifice. Yet unlike Isaac He was not spared with a substitute ram; rather He Himself became the substitute Lamb!**

IX) Arriving just outside the city, at Golgotha they crucified Him.

- Having fastened the crossbeam to the vertical, they laid the Lord down on the wood and stretched out His hands and legs. **Massive nails, more akin to railroad spikes, were then driven through the most sensitive nerve endings in his body, nailing him to the cross.**
 - **OCTAVIUS WINSLOW:** "So completely was Jesus bent upon saving sinners by the sacrifice of Himself, He created the tree upon which He was to die, and nurtured from infancy the men who were to nail Him to the accursed wood."
- **Crucifixion, to this day, remains one of the most physically painful ways you can kill someone.** The Persians pioneered the barbaric practice and the Romans perfected it. The point was to cause the most pain for the longest period of time. I have heard of some ancient accounts speaking of men hanging there nine days.
 - **As it is written in the 22nd Psalm,** "dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—"
- **Q.** Can you think on **Isaiah 49:16** without mourning for your sin yet rejoicing for Christ's salvation? The Lord says to His people, "Behold, I have engraven you on the palms of my hands." (**Isaiah 49:16**).

X) The cross was then lifted up and slammed into a hole in the ground, jarring his body that was gruesomely nailed to the tree.

- **Here Christ Jesus became a curse for all who will trust Him by faith, so that we would get the blessing.** "[He became] a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree." (**Galatians 3:13**)
 - **Q.** Have you turned from your sin and embraced this crucified Christ in faith and surrender? He is the only One that can remove the curse of your sin because He is the only One that became a curse for fallen man!

XI) Jesus then hung there for about 6 hours in excruciating pain, suffocating.

- **Seat. Nailed the member of the man.**

- **As our blessed Lord and Christ said Himself**, "Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." (**John 12:31-32**)

XII) Again Jesus was mocked, even while He hung on that accursed tree.

- "And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" (**Luke 23:35**). Still He opened not His mouth in defense. His aim was not to save Himself but to save you, brothers and sisters. When reviled; He blessed.

XIII) Jesus spoke at least seven times from the cross.

- **(1st) Jesus, said** "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!"
- **(2nd) Christ said**, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise" (**Luke 23:43**).
 - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will. Not perish but have eternal life." (**John 3:16**)
- **(3rd) Jesus said**, "Woman, behold your son...son behold your mother." (**John 19:26-27**)
 - "Honor your father and your mother" **says the Fifth Commandment (Exodus 20:12)**, and Christ did so even as He was made a curse for Mary and John's sins.
- **(4th)** "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (**Matthew 27:46**) just as it was written of Him in **Psalms 22:1**.
- **(5th) Christ said**, "I thirst." (**John 19:28**)
 - **It is written in Psalm 69:21** "for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink."
 - **John 19:28-30** "28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." 29 A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said..." which brings us to the sixth, wherein Jesus said...
- **(6th) Jesus said**, "It is finished." (**John 19:30**).
- **(7th)** "Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into

your hands I commit my spirit!" (as it was written of Him in **Psalm 33:5**) And having said this he breathed his last" (**Luke 23:46**).

XIV) Finally, an executioner drove a spear through His side, likely piercing his heart, to ensure His death.

- **John 19:33-35** "33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. 35 He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe."

II. WHY CHRIST DIED (Selected Scriptures).

I) Christ did not just die, He died to pay a bride price (Eph. 5:25).

Ephesians 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

- Jacob paid for Rachel with fourteen years of labor;
- David paid for Michal with 200 Philistine foreskins;
- Hosea paid for Gomer with 15 shekels of silver and some barley;

But Christ paid for the church with His own blood.

The reality is that we are worse than Gomer & Christ better than Hosea.

And Christ did something Hosea never could!

Christ's not only paid for His bride, He cleansed her.

- **Ephesians 5:26-27** [Christ gave Himself up for the church] "26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."

QUESTION. Why did Christ pay such a bride price for spiritual harlots such as us?

ANSWER. Love (Eph. 5:25).

- **J.I. PACKER:** *"There is nothing whatever in the objects of His love to call it forth; nothing in us to attract or prompt it. The love of God is free, spontaneous, uncaused. It is not a love that waits to be deserved, or that depends on our being or becoming attractive. God loves us just because He has chosen to love us, and for no other reason."* — **J.I. Packer, Knowing God, 1973, InterVarsity Press, p. 120**

Christ did not pay our bride price with His own blood because we were lovely, but to clean us up and make us lovely. He died "that he might

present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

II) Christ did not just die, He died to pay a ransom (Mk. 10:45).

Mark 10:45

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

- We had enslaved ourselves to sin with insurmountable debt we could never pay back to God; Jesus took the bill and paid it all.

- **Revelation 5:9-10**

"9 Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth."

III) Christ did not just die, He died to accomplish redemption (Gal. 3:13). **Ransom is the payment, Redemption is what the Ransom procures*

Galatians 3:13

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree."

IV) Christ did not just die, He died as a propitiation (Rom. 3:25).

Romans 3:25 "God put forward [Christ] as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith."

V) Christ did not just die, He died for double imputation (2 Cor. 5:21).

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

You who belong to Christ by faith, hear me clearly and rejoice:

God imputed our sins to Christ on the cross and He imputed Christ's righteousness to us when we believed, so that we would be forgiven by

Christ's substitutionary death and counted righteous by His resurrected life.

Christ was made sin with our sinfulness so that His people would be made righteous with His righteousness.

VI) Christ did not just die, He died to defeat all of His and our enemies (Col. 2:13-15).

Colossians 2:13-15 "13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 [Christ] disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him (or it, i.e. the cross)."

– Christ died to defeat all his and our enemies.

For those who belong to Christ,

Satan sits bound;

Sin lies bleeding;

Suffering works for good;

Death sleeps in the grave,

the Nations are being conquered;

Both the resurrection and the New Earth are coming.

The Father has adopted,

The Spirit has sealed,

The Son has made you a fellow heir.

CONCLUSION.

– THOMAS BROOKS:

"Ah, what a sea of blood, of wrath, of sin, of sorrow and misery—did the Lord Jesus wade through for your eternal good! Christ did not plead, "This cross is too heavy for Me to bear; this wrath is too great for Me to lie under; this cup of suffering, which has in it all the ingredients of divine wrath, is too bitter for Me to sip of—how much more to drink the very dregs of it!" No! Christ does not plead the difficulty of the service—but resolutely and bravely wades through all! "I gave My back to those who beat Me, and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard. I did not hide My face from scorn and spitting." *Isaiah 50:6*.

Christ bears . . .

His Father's wrath,

the punishment of your sins,

the malice of Satan,
the rage of the world,
and sweetly and triumphantly passes through all.

Christ has freed you from . . .

all your enemies,
the curse of the law,
the damnatory power of sin,
the wrath of God,
the sting of death,
the torments of hell."

— **Thomas Brooks**, a sermon titled "The Crown and Glory of Christianity, or Holiness, the Only Way to Happiness." *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*. Edited by Alexander Balloch Grosart. Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1867, vol. 5, pg. 441.

**"Death and the curse were in our cup: O Christ, 'twas full for Thee;
But Thou hast drained the last dark drop, 'Tis empty now for me.
That bitter cup, love drank it up; Now blessing's draught for me."**

PURITAN QUOTES ON THE DEATH OF CHRIST

- **JOHN OWEN (1616–1683)**: "The death of Christ is the foundation of all the acceptableness with God, which those who believe in him do enjoy... for by the blood of his cross he hath made peace, and thereby obtained eternal redemption for us." — **John Owen**, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1959. Pg. 123.
- **JOHN OWEN (1616–1683)**: "By his death on the cross, Christ did not only procure our salvation, but he actually satisfied the justice of God, removing the curse that was upon us, and purchasing for us an everlasting inheritance." — **John Owen**, *A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit*, The Works of John Owen, Vol. 3, Banner of Truth Trust, 1965. Pg. 167.
- **THOMAS WATSON (1620–1686)**: "Christ's blood is the key that unlocks heaven; it is the laver wherein our souls are washed from the filth of sin, and by it we are made whiter than snow." — **Thomas Watson**, *A Body of Divinity*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1958. Pg. 178.
- **THOMAS WATSON (1620–1686)**: "The cross of Christ is the golden

hinge upon which our salvation turns; without His death, there is no remission, no reconciliation, no hope of glory." — **Thomas Watson, *The Great Gain of Godliness*, Banner of Truth Trust, 2006. Pg. 89.**

- **RICHARD SIBBES (1577–1635):** "Christ on the cross was the greatest spectacle of love and justice meeting together; there God's wrath was satisfied, and His mercy magnified, that sinners might be saved." — **Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed*, The Works of Richard Sibbes, Vol. 1, Banner of Truth Trust, 1973. Pg. 78.**
- **RICHARD SIBBES (1577–1635):** "The death of Christ is the foundation of all our comforts; by His cross He hath broken the yoke of sin, and opened a way to the Father, that we may come boldly to the throne of grace." — **Richard Sibbes, *Christ's Sufferings for Man's Sin*, The Works of Richard Sibbes, Vol. 1, Banner of Truth Trust, 1973. Pg. 214.**
- **WILLIAM PERKINS (1558–1602):** "Christ's crucifixion was the payment of our debt to God's justice; His blood was the price of our redemption, satisfying the law's demands and purchasing our liberty." — **William Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, The Works of William Perkins, Vol. 1, Reformation Heritage Books, 2015. Pg. 156.**
- **WILLIAM PERKINS (1558–1602):** "The death of Christ upon the cross was not only a sacrifice for sin, but the very means whereby God's wrath was appeased, and His elect reconciled unto Him." — **William Perkins, *A Commentary on Galatians*, The Works of William Perkins, Vol. 2, Reformation Heritage Books, 2017. Pg. 321.**
- **THOMAS GOODWIN (1600–1680):** "On the cross, Christ bore the full weight of God's displeasure against sin, that we might be clothed with His righteousness and stand accepted before the Father." — **Thomas Goodwin, *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith*, The Works of Thomas Goodwin, Vol. 8, Banner of Truth Trust, 1985. Pg. 412.**
- **THOMAS GOODWIN (1600–1680):** "The satisfaction of Christ's death is the ground of our peace; He endured the curse we deserved, and by His blood, He hath made an end of sin for all who believe." — **Thomas Goodwin, *Christ Set Forth*, The Works of Thomas Goodwin, Vol. 4, Banner of Truth Trust, 1985. Pg. 67.**
- **JOHN FLAVEL (1627–1691):** "The cross of Christ is the fountain of all our mercies; His death is the death of our death, and the life of our life, for by it we are redeemed from the curse." — **John Flavel, *The Fountain of Life*, The Works of John Flavel, Vol. 1, Banner of Truth Trust, 1968. Pg. 89.**
- **JOHN FLAVEL (1627–1691):** "Christ's crucifixion was the great transaction of our redemption; there He paid the utmost farthing of our debt, and there He purchased our eternal inheritance." — **John Flavel, *The Method of Grace*, The Works of John Flavel, Vol. 2, Banner of Truth Trust, 1968. Pg. 234.**

- **SAMUEL RUTHERFORD (1600–1661):** "The blood of Christ's cross is the ransom of captives; it is the price that bought the church, and the seal of the covenant that secures our salvation." — **Samuel Rutherford, *Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself*, The Works of Samuel Rutherford, Still Waters Revival Books, 1998. Pg. 145.**
- **SAMUEL RUTHERFORD (1600–1661):** "On the cross, Christ drank the cup of God's wrath to the dregs, that we might drink the cup of salvation, and be filled with His love forever." — **Samuel Rutherford, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1984. Pg. 321.**
- **STEPHEN CHARNOCK (1628–1680):** "The death of Christ was the greatest act of divine justice and mercy; His blood satisfied the law's demands, and opened the way for sinners to be reconciled to God." — **Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God*, The Works of Stephen Charnock, Vol. 1, Banner of Truth Trust, 2010. Pg. 567.**
- **STEPHEN CHARNOCK (1628–1680):** "Christ's cross is the center of our salvation; there He bore our sins in His own body, and by His wounds we are healed, made whole for God's glory." — **Stephen Charnock, *Discourses on Christ Crucified*, The Works of Stephen Charnock, Vol. 4, Banner of Truth Trust, 2010. Pg. 312.**
- **RICHARD BAXTER (1615–1691):** "The crucifixion of Christ is the ground of all our hope; His blood is the payment for our sins, and the pledge of God's love to a lost world." — **Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1974. Pg. 156.**
- **RICHARD BAXTER (1615–1691):** "Christ's death on the cross was the full satisfaction for our transgressions; by it, He hath removed the enmity between God and man, and brought us nigh unto Him." — **Richard Baxter, *A Call to the Unconverted*, The Practical Works of Richard Baxter, Vol. 2, Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990. Pg. 423.**
- **JEREMIAH BURROUGHS (1600–1646):** "The cross of Christ is the pillar of our salvation; there He endured the wrath we deserved, and by His death, He hath purchased life eternal for His people." — **Jeremiah Burroughs, *The Excellency of Christ*, The Works of Jeremiah Burroughs, Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2001. Pg. 189.**
- **JEREMIAH BURROUGHS (1600–1646):** "Christ's blood shed on the cross is the only sacrifice that avails for sinners; it is the propitiation for our sins, and the means of our reconciliation with God." — **Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Reconciliation*, The Works of Jeremiah Burroughs, Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2001. Pg. 276.**
- **WILLIAM GURNALL (1616–1679):** "The death of Christ upon the cross is the foundation of all our peace; His blood hath quenched the fire of God's wrath, and opened the door of mercy to us." — **William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1964. Pg. 234.**

- **WILLIAM GURNALL (1616–1679):** "Christ's crucifixion was the great act of redemption; there He paid the price of our sins, and by His stripes, we are healed and brought to God." — **William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1964. Pg. 567.**
- **THOMAS MANTON (1620–1677):** "The cross of Christ is the ground of all our redemption; His death satisfied divine justice, and His blood cleanses us from all sin, making us accepted in the Beloved." — **Thomas Manton, *Sermons on John 17*, The Works of Thomas Manton, Vol. 11, Banner of Truth Trust, 1993. Pg. 345.**
- **THOMAS MANTON (1620–1677):** "Christ's death on the cross was the full payment for our guilt; by it, He hath borne our sorrows, and purchased for us an everlasting righteousness." — **Thomas Manton, *A Practical Exposition of the Lord's Prayer*, The Works of Thomas Manton, Vol. 1, Banner of Truth Trust, 1993. Pg. 189.**
- **JOHN BUNYAN (1628–1688):** "The cross of Christ is the tree of life to all believers; His blood shed there is the balm that heals our souls, and the price that ransoms us from death." — **John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1977. Pg. 156.**
- **JOHN BUNYAN (1628–1688):** "Christ's death on the cross was the satisfaction of God's justice for our sins; by it, He hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all who believe in Him." — **John Bunyan, *The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded*, The Works of John Bunyan, Vol. 1, Banner of Truth Trust, 1991. Pg. 321.**

HOW AND WHY CHRIST DIED

The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ stands as the pivotal event in the history of redemption, a moment wherein the Son of God, in His infinite love and obedience, endured unimaginable suffering to secure salvation for His people. The narrative of His death, as recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, reveals not only the physical and emotional agonies He bore but also the profound spiritual significance of His sacrifice. This treatise seeks to expound upon the manner of Christ's death and the divine purposes it accomplished, drawing from the sermon notes provided and grounding the discussion in the testimony of Sacred Scripture.

I. The Manner of Christ's Death

1. The Agony in Gethsemane

The Passion begins in the garden of Gethsemane, where, after partaking of the

Passover and instituting the Lord's Supper with His apostles, Jesus retired to pray. The weight of the impending cross pressed upon Him with such intensity that He experienced agony unparalleled. As recorded in Luke 22:44, "And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." This phenomenon, known as hematidrosis, reveals the extremity of His distress, as His physical body reacted to the overwhelming burden of bearing the sins of the world.

In this moment of supreme trial, His disciples, whom He called friends, failed Him. Rather than joining Him in prayer, they succumbed to sleep, leaving Him to face His anguish alone. When the hour of His arrest arrived, Peter, impetuous in his zeal, drew a sword to resist, yet this act of violence stood contrary to the divine will (John 18:10-11). The other disciples fled in fear, one abandoning even his garment to escape (Mark 14:51-52). Peter, who had boldly declared his willingness to die with Jesus, denied Him thrice before the rooster crowed (Luke 22:54-62). Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 13:7, "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."

Consider the solitude of Christ in this hour. Men, in their trials, often find strength in the camaraderie of brothers who stand beside them. Yet Jesus, the God-man, stood alone, forsaken by all. He marched toward the cross, bearing the weight of humanity's sin, with no companions but mockers and betrayers. His resolve and manliness shine forth as a beacon to believers, calling us to love Him more deeply and to glory in His sufferings.

2. The Betrayal and Arrest

Following His prayer, a band of soldiers, led by Judas Iscariot, one of His closest disciples, arrived to arrest Him. Judas, for the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver, betrayed his Master with a kiss, a sign of affection twisted into an act of treachery (Mark 14:44-45). The kiss, a gesture of intimacy, became the signal for Jesus' seizure, revealing the depth of human depravity. Yet Jesus went willingly, declaring, "I am he," with such authority that His captors drew back and fell to the ground (John 18:6). His submission was not born of weakness but of divine purpose, as He freely laid down His life (John 10:18).

3. The Unjust Trials

Jesus was arrested illegally under the cover of night, bound, and brought before the High Priest, Pontius Pilate, and Herod. False witnesses accused Him of crimes He did not commit, and the trials were marked by injustice and deceit. Yet, in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth." Why did He remain silent? Not for His own acquittal, but for the salvation of sinners. He desired not to escape condemnation but to bear it for our good, that we might be justified through His sacrifice.

4. The Mockery and Beatings

Having been condemned, Jesus endured brutal mockery and physical abuse. Blindfolded, He was struck repeatedly by guards who taunted, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" (Luke 22:64). Matthew 26:67 records, "Then they spit in his face," an act of profound contempt directed at the Creator Himself. The lips and fists that Jesus had formed in His divine power now hurled insults and blows against Him. Charles Spurgeon aptly warned that those who prefer their sins or self-righteousness over Christ's salvation symbolically join in this act, spitting in His face by rejecting His grace.

5. The Rejection by His People

The Jewish leaders stirred the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas, a murderer, over Jesus, the sinless Son of God (Mark 15:11-14). Just days earlier, the people had hailed Him as King, crying, "Crown Him!" Now, their voices united in a chilling chorus: "Crucify Him!" This rejection fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53:3, "He was despised and rejected by men." The fickleness of human hearts stands in stark contrast to the steadfast love of Christ, who endured such betrayal for the sake of His enemies.

6. The Scourging

Pilate, seeking to appease the crowd, ordered Jesus to be scourged (Mark 15:15). Scourging was a horrific punishment, reserved for the worst offenders and never inflicted upon women due to its brutality. A whip, laced with metal balls and bone hooks, was used to tenderize and mutilate the flesh. The standard punishment was thirty-nine lashes, each tearing into the victim's body. Isaiah 52:14 describes the result: "His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind." The leather straps, made from the hides of cattle Jesus Himself had created, were turned against Him, rending His flesh in a grotesque mockery of His lordship over creation.

7. The Mock Coronation

After the scourging, Roman soldiers clothed Jesus in a purple robe and pressed a crown of thorns onto His head. An entire battalion mocked Him, striking His head with reeds and spitting upon Him while feigning homage with cries of "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Mark 15:17-20). The thorns pierced His scalp, and the blows exacerbated His wounds. This mockery invites reflection: what robe do we place upon Christ? One of derision, or one of faith? Do we crown Him with thorns of rejection, or with the majesty of worship?

8. The Journey to Golgotha

Weakened by His ordeal, Jesus was forced to carry His crossbeam, weighing

upwards of one hundred pounds, for nearly half a mile. His strength faltered, and the soldiers compelled Simon of Cyrene to bear the cross the remaining distance (Luke 23:26). This journey evokes the image of Isaac, who carried wood up Mount Moriah for his own sacrifice (Genesis 22). Yet, unlike Isaac, who was spared by a ram, Jesus became the sacrificial Lamb, offering Himself for the sins of the world (John 1:29).

9. The Crucifixion

At Golgotha, the "Place of the Skull," Jesus was crucified. His body was laid upon the cross, and massive nails, akin to railroad spikes, were driven through His wrists and feet, piercing the most sensitive nerve endings. The cross was then hoisted and dropped into a hole, jarring His tortured frame. Crucifixion, perfected by the Romans, was designed to maximize pain and prolong suffering. Victims could linger for days, their bodies wracked by asphyxiation and exhaustion. Psalm 22:16 prophetically describes this moment: "They have pierced my hands and feet." Octavius Winslow observes that Jesus, in His divine power, created the tree on which He died and nurtured the men who nailed Him to it, underscoring the voluntary nature of His sacrifice.

10. The Curse of the Cross

Hanging upon the cross, Jesus became a curse for His people, as foretold in Galatians 3:13: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.'" In this act, He bore the wrath of God against sin, securing the blessing of salvation for those who trust in Him. Isaiah 49:16 offers a tender promise: "Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands," a reference to the nail-scarred hands of Christ, which eternally testify to His love for His people.

11. The Six Hours of Agony

For approximately six hours, Jesus endured excruciating pain, His body suffocating as He struggled to breathe. A small seat, or sedile, was sometimes provided to prolong the victim's suffering, and His limbs were nailed to the wood, intensifying His torment. Yet, in this moment, Jesus declared the cosmic significance of His death: "Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:31-32).

12. The Continued Mockery

Even as He hung in agony, the rulers and passersby mocked Him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" (Luke 23:35). Yet Jesus remained silent, His purpose not to save Himself but to save sinners. When reviled, He blessed, embodying the perfection of divine love (1 Peter 2:23).

13. The Seven Sayings from the Cross

From the cross, Jesus spoke seven times, each utterance revealing His heart and mission:

- **"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"** (Luke 23:34). In the midst of His suffering, Jesus interceded for His executioners, displaying boundless mercy.
- **"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise"** (Luke 23:43). To the repentant thief, Jesus promised eternal life, fulfilling John 3:16.
- **"Woman, behold your son...son, behold your mother"** (John 19:26-27). Even in death, Jesus honored His mother, entrusting her care to John, in obedience to the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12).
- **"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"** ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?") (Matthew 27:46). Quoting Psalm 22:1, Jesus expressed the weight of divine abandonment as He bore the sins of the world.
- **"I thirst"** (John 19:28). Fulfilling Psalm 69:21, Jesus received sour wine, a final act of humiliation.
- **"It is finished"** (John 19:30). With this triumphant cry, Jesus declared the completion of His atoning work.
- **"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit"** (Luke 23:46). Quoting Psalm 31:5, Jesus entrusted Himself to the Father and breathed His last.

14. The Final Confirmation of Death

To ensure His death, a soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear, likely penetrating His heart. Blood and water flowed forth, a sign of His true death and a testimony to the reality of His sacrifice (John 19:33-35). This act fulfilled prophecy and bore witness to the truth, that believers might trust in Him.

II. The Purpose of Christ's Death

The death of Jesus Christ was not a mere tragedy or martyrdom; it was a purposeful, redemptive act, accomplishing the salvation of sinners and the glory of God. The Scriptures reveal several dimensions of this purpose, each underscoring the magnitude of His love and the efficacy of His sacrifice.

1. To Pay a Bride Price

Ephesians 5:25 declares, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." Christ's death was the ultimate act of love, a bride price paid to secure His church. In the Old Testament, Jacob labored fourteen years for Rachel, David offered two hundred Philistine foreskins for Michal, and Hosea paid silver and barley for Gomer. Yet Christ surpassed all, purchasing His bride with His own blood. Unlike Gomer, who was redeemed despite her

unfaithfulness, the church was not only bought but cleansed, that she might be presented "in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:26-27). Why did Christ pay such a price for spiritual harlots? As J.I. Packer observes, His love is "free, spontaneous, uncaused," prompted not by our worth but by His sovereign choice (Knowing God, 1973, p. 120).

2. To Pay a Ransom

Mark 10:45 states, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Humanity, enslaved to sin and owing an insurmountable debt to God, could never repay its obligation. Jesus took this debt upon Himself, paying it in full with His life. Revelation 5:9-10 celebrates this truth: "By your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God."

3. To Accomplish Redemption

The ransom payment secured redemption, as Galatians 3:13 affirms: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us." Redemption is the liberation procured by the ransom, delivering believers from the curse of sin and the law's condemnation. Christ's death purchased freedom, restoring sinners to fellowship with God.

4. To Serve as a Propitiation

Romans 3:25 declares that God put forward Christ "as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith." Propitiation signifies the turning away of God's wrath through the satisfaction of His justice. Christ's death appeased the righteous anger of God against sin, enabling sinners to be reconciled to Him.

5. To Effect Double Imputation

Second Corinthians 5:21 reveals the doctrine of double imputation: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." On the cross, God imputed the sins of His people to Christ, who bore their penalty. In turn, He imputes Christ's righteousness to believers, granting them forgiveness and a right standing before God. This exchange is the heart of the gospel, ensuring that sinners are both pardoned and declared righteous.

6. To Defeat All Enemies

Colossians 2:13-15 proclaims Christ's victory over all enemies through the cross: "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him." By His death, Christ defeated Satan, sin, suffering, death, and the powers of darkness. For those who belong to Him, Satan is bound,

sin is vanquished, suffering serves God's purposes, death is conquered, and the nations are being subdued. The resurrection and the new creation are assured, and believers are adopted by the Father, sealed by the Spirit, and made co-heirs with the Son.

Conclusion

The passion of Jesus Christ is a tapestry of suffering and triumph, woven with the threads of divine love and justice. As Thomas Brooks eloquently stated, Christ waded through a "sea of blood, of wrath, of sin, of sorrow and misery" for our eternal good (The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks, vol. 5, p. 441). He bore the Father's wrath, the punishment of our sins, the malice of Satan, and the rage of the world, triumphing over all to free His people from their enemies, the curse of the law, the power of sin, the wrath of God, the sting of death, and the torments of hell.

Let believers reflect on the resolve and manliness of Christ, who stood alone amidst abandonment and mockery. Let us consider the price He paid—not because we were lovely, but to make us lovely. May we turn from sin and embrace this crucified Christ by faith, trusting in Him who became a curse to remove our curse. And may we crown Him not with thorns but with the majesty of our worship, clothing Him not with mockery but with the robe of our devotion. For He alone is worthy, the Lamb who was slain, who by His blood has ransomed a people for God and made them a kingdom and priests to reign with Him forever. Amen.