

Luke 23—Part 2

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Introduction:

Jesus had suffered *emotionally* before He suffered *physically*.

- He suffered great emotional stress in the Garden of Gethsemane, as indicated when His sweat became like great drops of blood.
- Jesus suffered the emotional stress of abandonment by His disciples.
- Jesus suffered a severe beating at the home of the high priest.
- Jesus suffered a sleepless night.
- Jesus suffered, being forced to walk more than two and a half miles.
- All of these factors made Jesus especially vulnerable to the effects of scourging.
- Before Jesus carried the cross, He was whipped— scourged— as Pilate had earlier promised (I will therefore chastise Him.)

Now we come to the intense physical pain events:

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JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED

(33.) When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed Him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on His right and one on His left.

- Much research has been done to identify where Jesus met death. One view is that the place of **The Skull** can still be identified outside of old Jerusalem near the present-day bus barns. The Latin word for *skull* is *calvāria* and our English word *calvary* came from the Latin. The word *Calvary* has been better accepted in English than the word *Skull*. The *place* of death cannot be established positively today, but we must be concerned about the *purpose* of Jesus' death.
- Jesus died between the class of people He chose to keep company with because some of them would listen to what He said. His enemies meant it as a guilt-by- association maneuver, but it led to one more person being saved.

I will give Him the honors of a victorious soldier, because He exposed Himself to death. He was counted among the rebels. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels. (Isaiah 53:12 NLT)

(34.) Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for His clothes by throwing dice.

- Instead of praying for vengeance, Jesus prayed for the **forgiveness** of those who were taking His life. Jesus said **they did not know what that were doing** and that is echoed in Acts 3:17 where Peter said the same thing to the Sanhedrin when he and John were arrested.

"Friends, I realize that what you and your leaders did to Jesus was done in ignorance." (Acts 3:17 NLT)

- While their **forgiveness** was not automatic, yet the Destruction of Jerusalem was delayed forty years so those responsible for

His death could hear the gospel and come to repentance. Some may have as seen here:

But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of believers now totaled about 5,000 men, not counting women and children.

(Acts 4:4 NLT)

So God's message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too. (Acts 6:7 NLT)

- The **clothing** of Jesus would have included His headgear, sandals, belt and outer garments. These were perks for the Roman **soldiers**. They **gambled** for His seamless tunic, fulfilling Psalm 22.

They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice for my clothing. (Psalms 22:18 NLT)

(35.) The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. "He saved others," they said, "let Him save Himself if He is really God's Messiah, the Chosen One."

- The rulers **scoffed** in their victory. They said that He can't even save himself. If Jesus is the Messiah and **Chosen** by **God**, He doesn't have any power. They did not speak to Jesus directly, but played to the **crowd**.

(36.) The soldiers mocked Him, too, by offering Him a drink of sour wine. (37) They called out to Him, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!"

- The Roman **soldiers** picked up the theme. While they offered Him **sour wine**, they also mocked Him for not **saving himself** if he was a **king**.
- **J. W. McGarvey:**

They taunt him with saving others, yet being unable to save himself, which is the great truth of the atonement

which the Lord was then making. They promised to believe if he will come down from the cross, yet his being lifted upon the cross was the very act which would convince them.

- **William Barkley** offers a comment about the **sour wine**: "There was a company of pious women in Jerusalem who made it their practice always to go to crucifixions and to give the victim a drink of drugged wine which would deaden the terrible pain. That drink was offered to Jesus and he refused it. (Matthew 27:34.) He was determined to face death at its worst, with a clear mind and senses unclouded."

(38.) A sign was fastened above Him with these words: "This is the King of the Jews."

- The **sign** was in three languages, so the gospel accounts have slightly different wording. The **inscription** being **above Him** rules out the **T** form of the cross.
- The label was correct. Jesus was truly **the King of the Jews**. God (Jesus is God. John 20:28) had been their rightful king since the days of Egypt.

"Do everything they say to you," the LORD replied, "for it is me they are rejecting, not you. They don't want Me to be their king any longer. Ever since I brought them from Egypt they have continually abandoned Me and followed other gods. And now they are giving you the same treatment. (1 Samuel 8:7-8 NLT)

WORDS FROM THE TWO CRIMINALS

(39.) One of the criminals hanging beside Him scoffed, "So You're the Messiah, are You? Prove it by saving Yourself—and us, too, while You're at it!" (40) But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you have been

sentenced to die? (41) We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong."

- One of the **criminals** joined the **scoffing** of the crowds and the Roman soldiers (vs. 40).

The one criminal's rebuke came from his fellow- criminal. He said that this was no time to be insulting a man of God. His own judgment was a few hours away. "**We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong.**" This thief joined Pilate and Herod in saying that Jesus was *not guilty*.

(42.) Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom." (43) And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with Me in paradise."

- The man believed that Jesus was who He claimed to be and that He had a **kingdom**.
- This man was saved. Jesus was going to **paradise** and so was this man who believed when few others did.



- This criminal had not kept the Law of Moses. He was a thief. Yet the The Lord accepted Him because of his faith.
- Of the three crosses:

- One was a cross of REDEMPTION.
- One was a cross of REJECTION.
- One was a cross of RECEPTION.
- Baptism? Immersion in the name of Jesus had not been preached to the people yet. It pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and He was not yet dead or buried or raised. The inclusion of baptism was coming in less than two months. Acts 2:38.

THERE WAS THREE HOURS OF DARKNESS

(44.) By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. (45) The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle.

- There were two pieces of physical evidence that Luke wants Theophilus to know:
 - The land was **dark** during the brightest part of the day. **The light from the sun was gone.**
 - The **curtain** in the Jerusalem **Temple** was **was torn down the middle**. The Father was watching.
- Just try to imagine the startled priests on duty in the **temple** area. **Paul Butler** comments: “ The veil was apparently torn in two (from top to bottom, Mt. 27:51; Mk. 15:38) at the ninth hour when Jesus “breathed his last” (Mt. 27:50; Mk. 15:37; Lk. 23:46). This incident was very evidently a miracle. It was not caused by the earthquake because Matthew says that happened after the veil was rent (Mt. 27:51-53). Edersheim says this veil was 60 ft. long (that is six stories), 30 ft. wide, and the thickness of the palm of a man’s hand (about 4-5 inches). It was a composite of 72 equal squares of material and took scores of priests to manipulate. Hebrews 9:1-28 is clearly a reference to this historic event as symbolizing the spiritual reality that was accomplished at the death of Christ. This miracle, witnessed no

doubt by many priests, may be part of the reason many priests became followers of Christ later (see Acts 6:7).

(46.) Then Jesus shouted, "Father, I entrust My spirit into Your hands!" And with those words He breathed His last.

- In 1986, the prestigious *Journal of the American Medical Society* carried an analysis of the death of Jesus. Here is the summary:

Jesus of Nazareth underwent Jewish and Roman trials, was flogged, and was sentenced to death by crucifixion. The scourging produced deep stripelike lacerations and appreciable blood loss, and it probably set the stage for hypovolemic shock as evidenced by the fact that Jesus was too weakened to carry the crossbar (patibulum) to Golgotha. At the site of crucifixion his wrists were nailed to the patibulum, and after the patibulum was lifted onto the upright post, (stipes) his feet were nailed to the stipes.

The major pathophysiologic effect of crucifixion was an interference with normal respirations. Accordingly, death resulted primarily from hypovolemic shock and exhaustion asphyxia. Jesus' death was ensured by the thrust of a soldier's spear into his side. Modern medical interpretation of the historical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead when taken down from the cross.

(JAMA 1986; 255:1455-1463. The 11-page article is available on the Internet. My own copy came from the office of one of the writers. It generated lots of opposition because the Muslim scholar's view is that Jesus did not die, the view of some Jewish people is that this is an effort in anti-semitism and there are even more views.)

- Now Luke brings another observer in for evidence:

(47.) When the Roman officer overseeing the execution saw what had happened, he worshiped God and said, "Surely this man was innocent. "

- **The Roman officer overseeing the execution** was a worshiper of **God**, at least to some extent. He was a Roman centurion. Luke was writing this book to an official in the Roman government.
- Evidence the **Roman officer** would have observed:
 - A man who died without bitterness towards his enemies.
 - An untimely darkness over the land for three hours (22:44).
 - A man who died with undying faith in **God** the Father.
 - Though not mentioned in Luke, he would have experienced the earthquakes that shook the land. Matthew 27:51-52.
 - He may have known of the temple curtain tearing on its own.
- This evidence led the **Roman officer** on the job to **worship God**.

(48.) And when all the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw what had happened, they went home in deep sorrow. (49) But Jesus' friends, including the women who had followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching.

- The attitude of **the crowd** became remorseful. The evidence showed they had taken the wrong side.
- There were people who believed Jesus who stood at a distance, perhaps for personal safety. The **Galilean women** who had been financing the ministry of Jesus and His twelve were there. Luke 8:2-3.

THE BURIAL IN JOSEPH'S TOMB

(50.) Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph. He was a member of the Jewish high council, (51.) but he had

not agreed with the decision and actions of the other religious leaders. He was from the town of Arimathea in Judea, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come. (52) He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

- Not even every **member** of the Council opposed Jesus. We are introduced to **Joseph** from **Arimathea** who **was waiting for the kingdom of God**. Luke characterizes him as **a good and righteous man**.
- **Joseph** ran a personal risk by **asking Pilate for the body of Jesus**. He was revealing that he was a disciple of Jesus by this request.

(53.) Then he took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in a long sheet of linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb that had been carved out of rock.

- Naturally, he had help with the task, or even assigned the actual work to others.
- **Linen cloth** would have been expensive. The **body** of Jesus was prepared partially for burial in the Jewish way. Did Joseph realize that he was only *loaning* his tomb to Jesus? He would only be staying there a couple of nights.
- **Tombs** had been used and reused for centuries. Joseph was a man of wealth and had developed this **tomb** for himself and it was **new**.

He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone. But He was buried like a criminal; He was put in a rich man's grave. (Isaiah 53:9 NLT)

(54.) This was done late on Friday afternoon, the day of preparation, as the Sabbath was about to begin. (55) As His body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where His body was placed.

- Luke is clear that it is late **Friday** afternoon. **The Sabbath** began at sundown. **The women from Galilee** came as observers so they could make a more thorough preparation of the body after the **Sabbath**. The little window of time between 3 PM and sunset was not enough time to accomplish their plans.

(56.) Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint His body. But by the time they were finished the Sabbath had begun, so they rested as required by the law.

The women returned from wherever they were staying and **prepared spices and ointments**. Their normal homes were in Galilee. Then **they rested** beginning Friday evening at sundown and lasting until Saturday evening at sundown. They kept the Law of Moses and did not work on the **Sabbath**.