

The Day Christ Died

There will never be a day like the day they crucified my Lord. The world has seen many days when bodies were left hanging between heaven and earth exposed to the torturous rays of a blazing sun on the outside and the fiery pains burning through every nerve and muscle on the inside. The world has also seen many days when the heavens were darkened and the earth trembled and mountains came rumbling down as people screamed in desperation and terror. But no day can be compared with the day they crucified my Lord.

Today, I want us to **see** what Jesus saw, **hear** what Jesus heard, **think** what Jesus thought, and **feel** what Jesus felt on the day Christ died. You can read the full account in the last 3 or 4 chapters of the 4 gospels.

Jesus knew in advance all that He would face.

He was aware of the physical pain of the crucifixion that He would endure. He had seen how the Roman soldiers executed people on a cross. He said in **Matthew 26:2**, "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified." It is harder if you know ahead of time what you will suffer. For example, people with a terminal illness experience the dread of knowing what lies before them. Also, how many of you have stepped on a nail? You can recall the pain that you felt. But how many of you would deliberately force your foot down on a nail until it pierced all the way through your foot?

Jesus also suffered emotional pain.

Jesus knew that Judas would turn traitor and betray Him. **Matthew 26:20-25** says ²⁰ When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. ²¹ Now as they were eating, He said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.' ²² And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, 'Lord, is it I?' ²³ He answered and said, 'He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. ²⁴ The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.' ²⁵ Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, 'Rabbi, is it I?' He said to him, 'You have said it.' How would you feel if one of your friends betrayed you?

Jesus knew that Peter would deny Him. **Matthew 26:31-35** tells us ³¹ Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered. ³² But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.' ³³ Peter answered and said to Him, 'Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.' ³⁴ Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' ³⁵ Peter said to Him, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!' And so said all the disciples."

Jesus prayed to escape the suffering. **Matthew 26:37-46** records his emotional agony in the garden of Gethsemane, ³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' ³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.' ⁴⁰ Then He came to the disciples and **found them sleeping**, and said to Peter, 'What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? ⁴¹ Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' ⁴² Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.' ⁴³ And He came and **found them asleep again**, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵ Then He came to His disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.'

Luke the physician describes Jesus' emotional suffering in Luke 22:44 as a medical experience called hematomidrosis. "And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." This happens when the tiny blood capillaries dilate so broadly that they contact the sweat glands and burst. It is caused by extreme physical and mental stress when emotional pain is piled upon heartache and agony upon anguish. That is what our Savior went through for you and me. Jesus was then betrayed by Judas and arrested.

The disciples all ran away and left Him alone. Matthew 26:56 says "Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled." How would you feel if all your best friends deserted you in your greatest need of support?

Jesus endured the humiliation of three trials that we would call a kangaroo court or vigilante injustice.

He appeared before Caiaphas, the high priest, the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate, Herod, and back to Pilate.

Christ's Jewish trial was unjust.

It was illegal for at least three reasons.

First, it was held in the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest, by those who plotted His death. **Matthew 26:57** says "And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled."

Second, this trial was held immediately and at night.

Third, it was held without proper witnesses according to **Matthew 26:59-60**. ⁵⁹ Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, ⁶⁰ but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward." Without any evidence they convicted Him of blasphemy and guilty of death. **Matthew 26:65-66** says ⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! ⁶⁶ What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death.'

They blindfolded Him, spit in His face, slapped, mocked, and beat Him. Luke 22:63-65 describes it this way. ⁶³ Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. ⁶⁴ And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, 'Prophesy! Who is the one who struck You?' ⁶⁵ And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him."

During these events this night, Peter was denying Jesus three times. Matthew 26:69-75 tells us ⁶⁹ Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, 'You also were with Jesus of Galilee.' ⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all, saying, 'I do not know what you are saying.' ⁷¹ And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, 'This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.' ⁷² But again he denied with an oath, 'I do not know the Man!' ⁷³ And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, 'Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you.' ⁷⁴ Then he began to curse and swear, saying, 'I do not know the Man!' Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So he went out and wept bitterly." What if you were going through this and your best friend denied you, cursed, and said that he never knew you? How would that make you feel?

Jesus was then sent to the Roman Governor Pilate for another trial.

The Jews had no authority to execute a criminal and they wanted Jesus put to death.

Jesus was accused and Pilate finds Him innocent. Luke 23:2-4 says ² And they began to accuse Him, saying, 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.' ³ Then Pilate asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' He answered him and said, 'It is as you say.' ⁴ So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, 'I find no fault in this Man.'

The custom during the days of the Passover Feast was for the Romans to release a prisoner. Matthew 27:16-18 says ¹⁶ And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷ Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' ¹⁸ For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy."

The mob wanted to crucify Jesus. Matthew 27:21-23 says ²¹ The governor answered and said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release to you?' They said, 'Barabbas!' ²² Pilate said to them, 'What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said to him, 'Let Him be crucified!' ²³ Then the governor said, 'Why, what evil has He done?' But they cried out all the more, saying, 'Let Him be crucified!'

Pilate had the power to set Jesus free but he washed his hands of the matter. **Matthew 27:24** says "When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.'"

Jesus was beaten severely by the Roman scourging. **Matthew 27:26** says "Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified." The Jews had a beating called intermediate death. It was 40 stripes save 1 (39 stripes), 13 on one shoulder, 13 on the other shoulder, and 13 across the loins. The Roman scourging was even more vicious and deadly. The soldiers took Jesus into the Common Hall where there were thick stone pillars with 2 large iron rings embedded in the sides. Jesus was tied to the rings. His back was bent and bared. His shoulders were already red and swollen with black and blue ridges from his previous beating. A big, strong Roman soldier called the lictor was especially trained in the brutal use of the flagellum for scourging. It was a whip with a short wooden handle and several leather straps attached. At the end of each strap were tied sharp pieces of bone or barbed iron which tore into the flesh. There was no mercy and no limit to the number of stripes administered or the parts of the body to be whipped. Jesus was struck over and over again until he was just short of death and the centurion gave the command to stop..

Jesus was then mocked. **Matthew 27:27-31** records ²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. ²⁸ And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. ²⁹ When they had **twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed (for a scepter) in His right hand.** And they **bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'** ³⁰ Then they **spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head.** ³¹ 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."

Isaiah 52:14 prophesied that "Just as many were astonished at you, so His appearance was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." What this is saying was that Jesus was so brutally beaten and reduced to a pulverized piece of flesh that He didn't even look human anymore.

Isaiah 53:5 adds that "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."

Jesus suffered the Roman crucifixion.

This Roman execution was the worst and most severe, torturous death because the intense burning pain lasted for hours. Jesus was a strong man physically. We can be proud of Him. He was beaten almost to death, lost a lot of blood, and fatigued from lack of sleep the night before. In spite of that, He was still able to walk over a half mile to the northeast edge of Jerusalem and up the hill of Calvary called Golgotha, the Place of a Skull. He even carried His own cross much of the way.

His hands and both feet were nailed to the cross with square cut 5 to 7 inch iron nails. The cross was raised and dropped into the hole in the ground. His arms were in a V position. Muscle cramps knotted His forearms and upper arms. He had to pull himself up with His arms and push up with His feet in order to breath. His chest muscles were frozen in momentary paralysis. He was able to draw air into His lungs but was powerless to exhale without pulling His body up. His wounds became swollen. The nerves in His body experienced unbearable agony. Terrific throbbing pounded inside His head. He was dying a thousand deaths. Take a last look at His suffering face. Purple lips were drawn back against His teeth. Eyes were sunken and red with pain and tears. Sweat was mingled with blood on His wounded head and body. The nail holes in His hands and feet grew wider and wider. The blood kept dripping from His head and body.

Listen to the words of Jesus on the cross and you will **see** what He saw, **hear** what he heard, **think** what He thought, and **feel** what He felt for those long 6 hours. People say things when they die. Three condemned men were on three crosses. But something was different about this man called Jesus.

Luke 23:34, "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.'"

Luke 23:43, "And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'"

John 19:26-27, "²⁶ When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home."

Matthew 27:46, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'"

Why did God turn His back on His Son? Only one reason that I know of that separates God from man. That separation is caused by sin. Not the sin of Jesus. He was perfect and sinless. Your sins and my sins came between God and Jesus. He died as a sacrifice for our sins. You and I caused Jesus His greatest pain. For a brief time and the only time, Jesus was totally alone even without His Father.

John 19:28, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!'"

John 19:30, "He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit."

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."

He was buried in a borrowed tomb. Luke 23:50-53, ⁵⁰ Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. ⁵¹ 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. ⁵² This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³ 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."

Jesus lay there Friday afternoon, Saturday, and God raised Him up from death early on the third morning which was the first day of the week, Sunday, thereafter called the Lord's Day by Christians. He walked and lived among people for 40 days after His resurrection. He was seen by as many as 500 people at one time.

His last command was to tell others about the good news of His death, burial, and resurrection so they could be saved from their sins.

Mark 16:15-16 records his last words before He ascended back to heaven. ¹⁵ And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

Think about these three questions.

1. Who killed Jesus?

- Not only the Jews who cried out, "Crucify Him."
- Not only Pilate who condemned Him.
- Not only the soldiers who nailed Him to the cross.
- You and I killed Jesus! We are just as guilty as the Jews, Pilate, and the soldiers. Our sins nailed Jesus to the cross. He died so that you and I can be saved from our sins and go to heaven and be with Him when we die.

2. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Yes, I was there and you were there. We were all there the day Christ died because He died for your sins and my sins.

3. What will you do with Jesus?

I pray that you will fully commit your life to serving Him as you see, hear, think, and feel what Jesus experienced the day that He died for you. What do you see as you look upon the cross? I hope that you see the open arms of Jesus inviting you to come to Him and live for Him. Jesus said in **John 14:15**, "If you love Me, keep My commandments."