



Crucifixion and Burial

COMPLETE DISCUSSION OF JESUS' FINAL NIGHT. IN THE HANDS OF THE ROMANS. MOCKING AND ABUSE. DEATH ON GOLGOTHA. WHY THE CROSS?

Mark 15; Matthew 27; Luke 23; John 19 (read from "The Final Hours of the Savior's Life," 14-24 online).

Harry Anderson, "The Crucifixion"

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsBiaBTEADI>

“O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown” (hymn no. 197)

1. O Savior, thou who wearest
A crown of piercing thorn,
The pain thou meekly bearest,
Weigh'd down by grief and scorn.
The soldiers mock and flail thee;
For drink they give thee gall;
Upon the cross they nail thee
To die, O King of all.

2. No creature is so lowly,
No sinner so depraved,
But feels thy presence holy
And thru thy love is saved.
Tho craven friends betray thee,
They feel thy love's embrace;
The very foes who slay thee
Have access to thy grace.

3. Thy sacrifice transcended
The mortal law's demand;
Thy mercy is extended
To ev'ry time and land.
No more can Satan harm us,
Tho long the fight may be,
Nor fear of death alarm us;
We live, O Lord, thru thee.

4. What praises can we offer
To thank thee, Lord most high?
In our place thou didst suffer;
In our place thou didst die,
By heaven's plan appointed,
To ransom us, our King.
O Jesus, the anointed,
To thee our love we bring!

The Arrest and Trial Narratives

The perils of harmonization: even though the four gospels follow a basic progression, perhaps found in the primitive passion narrative, there are significant variations

- **Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus** (Mark 14:43–52; par Matt 26:47–56, Luke 22:47–53; cf. John 18:2–3)
- **Jesus Before the Jewish Authorities** (Mark 14:53–65; par Matt 26:57–68, Luke 22:54–71; cf. John 18–28)
- **Jesus in the Hands of the Romans** (Mark 15:1–21; par Matt 27:1–32, Luke 23:1–32; cf. John 18:29–19:17a)
- Be careful about the issue of **culpability**—that is, who was responsible for the arrest, conviction, and execution of Jesus
 - First, Jesus **needed to die** to complete the atoning act of redemption and to put him in a position to overcome death through the atoning act of resurrection
 - Second, the passion narratives signal **parallel acts of abuse, cruelty, and judgment** on the parts of both Jews and Romans
 - **Jews** = Israel, the people of God
 - **Romans** = Gentiles, all other people
 - Third, because we are all sinners and are all mortals, **we are all responsible**

In the Hands of the Romans



Jesus in the Hands of the Romans

(Mark 15:1–21; Matthew 27:1–32; Luke 23:1–32; John 18:29–19:17a)

- **Before Pilate** (Mark 15: 2–5; Matt 27:2–14; Luke 23:1–12; John 18:28–38a)
- **Suicide of Judas Iscariot** (only Matt 27:3–10)
- **Jesus Before Herod** (only Luke 23:6–12)
- **Pilate and the Mob** (Mark 15:6–11; Matt 27:15–23; Luke 23:13–23; John 18:38b–19:12)
 - *What is truth?*
 - The charge: **treason**
 - Jesus or Barabbas?
- **Pilate Hands Jesus over to Be Crucified** (Mark 15:12–15; Matt 27:24–26; Luke 23:24–26; John 19:13–16)



Antonio Ciseri, "Ecce Homo!"

The Charge and the Trial



Titian, "The Crown of Thorns"

- **The Accusation of the Jewish Authorities (Luke 23:2; John 18:29–32)**
 - The Jewish leaders moved from the religious charge of **blasphemy** (claiming to be **the Son of God**) to a **political charge** (claiming to be **a king**)
- **Usually non-citizens would be tried by local courts**
 - A Roman trial was called for if the case involved a Roman citizen, if two subjects came from different jurisdictions, or if provincial or imperial security was threatened
- Could the Sanhedrin and other Jewish courts inflict capital punishment? Still an open question . . .
 - John 18:31 *seems* to suggest that it was not “lawful” for “the Jews” to put anyone to death (Roman Law? Jewish Law about Passover?)
 - **The Jews could and did execute people in the Roman period for religious infractions**
- If the Jewish authorities could have stoned Jesus **for blasphemy**, what was the advantage of having the Roman convict him on a **political charge** (claiming to be a king and hence inciting rebellion) and having him crucified?
 - **Crucifixion was the equivalent of “hanging him on a tree” (Deuteronomy 21:23), and would thus demonstrate that Jesus was cursed according to the Mosaic law**
 - Paul wrote that Christ “was made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” (Galatians 3:13)

The Soldiers Mock and Scourge Jesus

(Mark 15:16–20a; Matt 27:27–31)

- The **threat of scourging in Luke** and **earlier whipping of Jesus in John** may have been attempts to palliate the mob but still allow Jesus to be released
- **Mark and Matthew**, however, record **terrible scourging that was part of the capital punishment** Pilate had just declared
 - Meant to traumatize and weaken the body in order to make crucifixion kill more quickly
 - The preliminary mocking—dressing him a purple robe, pressing the crown of thorns upon his brow, and giving him a “scepter” to carry—was meant to ridicule the charge that he was, in fact, a king

“. . . is the placement of the scourging by Matthew and Mark after the final judgment correct, did John move it for dramatic purposes, or were there really two? Was it a flogging preliminary to execution, or was it a whipping meant to serve as a chastisement, excite pity, or reach a compromise punishment?

“In the end, however, the type and timing of the scourging are not in and of themselves important. ***Instead, the fulfillment of prophecies regarding this suffering make this incident a fundamental part of the Atonement accomplished by Jesus Christ.*** While Jesus had himself predicted the scourging and humiliation that He would suffer, some of the most powerful recorded prophecies of the abuse and mockery are found in the Book of Mormon in such passages as 1 Nephi 19:9, 2 Nephi 6:9, and Mosiah 3:9.

“The focus there is not with when and how the scourging, hitting, and spitting took place, but why. Christ was willing to suffer these things ‘because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men.’” (Huntsman, 316–317, emphasis added)

Conclusion

“While those details remain unknown, **what remains important is that judgment took place**, and it is both significant and ironic that the two ‘trials’ of Jesus took place before the two peoples who were most dedicated to and obsessed by law. *Just as the two trials reflect the two realities of Christ’s identity—as both Son of God and King—so the Jews and the Romans represent all Gentiles and all of Israel* (Acts 4:27).

“Examining the trial should not be for us an issue of assigning culpability—to Judas, the chief priests, or Pilate—for the betrayal and condemnation were necessary parts of the Atonement. As Wright has recently written, all of us have a share in what each of them did in that they reflect the bad in all of us. Likewise, Bammel has observed that **‘Everyone becomes guilty (Luke 24:7) so that everyone might have a share in the fruits of Christ’s death.’**” (Huntsman, 317)

Crucifixion



On the Way to Calvary

Mark 15:20b-21; Matt 27:31b-32; Luke 23:26-32; John 19:16b-17a

- **Simon of Cyrene bears the Cross (Mark 15:21; par Matt 27:32, Luke 23:26)**
 - *father of Alexander and Rufus* in Mark
 - These may have been people familiar to Mark's Rome congregation
- **Jesus Bears His Own Cross (John 19:17a)**
 - *Typical of the Johannine Jesus*
- **The Lamenting Daughters of Jerusalem (Luke 23:27-31)**
 - Follows with a prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem
- **Two Criminals Led Out with Christ (Luke 23:32)**
 - In Luke they are simply “malefactors” (*kakourgoi* or “evildoers”)
 - In Matt and Mark they are later identified specifically as “bandits” or “insurrectionists” (*lēstas*), suggesting political revolutionaries in contrast to Christ, whose kingdom is not of this world

At Calvary

Mark 15:22–28; Matt 27:33–38; Luke 23:33–34, 38; John 19:17b–24

- **Golgotha, “The Place of the Skull,” or Calvary** (Mark 15:22; par Matt 27:33, Luke 23:33a; cf. John 19:17b)
- **Jesus Refuses Wine and Myrrh – cf. Prov.31:6** (Mark 15:23; par Matt 27:34)
- **Jesus’ Clothing divided** – cf. Ps. 22:18 (Mark 15:24; par Matt 27:35b–36, Luke 23: 23:34b; cf. John 19:23–24; *see next slide*)
 - Jesus’ tunic/undergarment not rent (John 19:23b–24)
- **Jesus Crucified** – **Mark’s Third Hour, 9:00 a.m.** (Mark 15:25; par Matt 27:35a, Luke 23:33b); **John’s Sixth Hour, 12:00 noon** (John 19:18a)
 - *Mark’s use of hours – third, sixth, ninth – may represent liturgical prayer times in the early church*
 - Matt and Luke follow somewhat, but *John does not, perhaps imagining a correlation with the slaughtering of the paschal lambs at noon*

Dividing Jesus' Clothing



- All four gospels note that prior to nailing Jesus to the cross, the soldiers who were crucifying him **divided his outer garments (*ta himatia*) into four parts** and distributed them among themselves but that they cast dice for his inner tunic (*ton chitōna*, KJV “coat”)
 - **fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 22:18 (Matthew 27:35b–36; Mark 15:24; Luke 23: 23:34b; John 19:23–24)**
- Only John, however, notes that **his coat “was without seam, woven from the top throughout”**
 - Commentators have observed that this may suggest that **it may have represented the priestly garment, *reinforcing the image of Jesus not only as the lamb being offered but as the high priest who made sacrifice for his people***
 - “But **Christ being come an high priest of good things to come**, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but **by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us**” (Hebrews 9:11–14; see also 9:23–28)

At Calvary (cont).

Mark 15:22–28; Matt 27:33–38; Luke 23:33–34, 38; John 19:17b–24



Carl Bloch, “The Crucifixion”

- **Jesus Prays for Forgiveness for Those Crucifying Him (Luke 23:34a)**
 - *Typical of Luke’s “benevolent theology”*
- **The Superscription “King of the Jews”** [trilingual in Luke] (Mark 15:26; par Matt 27:37, Luke 23:38; cf. John 19:19–20)
 - Chief Priests Fail to Have Pilate Change the Title (John 19:21–22)
- **Crucified Between Two Bandits** (Mark 15:27–28; par Matt 27:38, Luke 23:33 [malefactors]; cf. John 19:18b [two “others”])
 - *Lētsai* here can mean “bandits, thieves” —or— “insurrectionists, insurgents, revolutionaries,” possibly alluding to the political charge against Jesus

Activities at the Cross

Mark 15:29–32; Matt 27:39–44; Luke 23:35–43; John 19:25–27

- **First Mockery** – **those passing** by tell Jesus to “save yourself” (Mark 15:29–30; par Matt 27:39–40, Luke 23:35)
- **Second Mockery** – **chief priests and scribes**, “he saved others, come down and we will believe (Mark 15:31–32; par Matt 27:41–43)
 - Soldiers mock Jesus, “If you are the King of the Jews,” and offer him sour wine (Luke 23:36–37)
- **Third Mockery** – **Bandit(s)** deride him the same way (Matt 27:44; par Luke 23:39)
 - “Salvation” of the Believing Bandit (Luke 23:40–43): paradise = JST “world of spirits”
- **Women at the Foot of the Cross (John 19:25)**
 - How many? Probably four: two named (**Mary the wife of Cleophas** and **Mary Magdalene**) and two unnamed (**mother of Jesus** and **her sister [Salome, mother of James and John]**)
- **Jesus’ Mother Commended to the Beloved Disciple (John 19:26–27)**
 - These were kept anonymous for literary and perhaps theological reason
 - *If the disciples becomes Mary’s son then he is in Jesus’ family – we can all be the disciples at the foot of the cross!*



- **Darkness from the Sixth to the Ninth Hour, approximately 12:00 noon – 3:00 p.m.** (Mark 15:33; par Matt 27:45, Luke 23:44–45a)
 - “Then the heavens grew black. Darkness covered the land for the space of three hours, as it did among the Nephites. There was a mighty storm, as though the very God of Nature was in agony. And truly he was, for while he was hanging on the cross for another three hours, from noon to 3:00 p.m., ***all the infinite agonies and merciless pains of Gethsemane recurred.***” (McConkie, May 1985)
- Jesus’ Cry, **“My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”** (Mark 15:34–35; par Matt 27:46–47)
 - Aramaic: *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachtani* (Eloi confused with Elijah)
 - “I am a father, inadequate to be sure, but I cannot comprehend the burden it must have been for God in His heaven to witness the deep suffering and Crucifixion of His Beloved Son in such a manner. His every impulse and instinct *must* have been to stop it, to send angels to intervene—but He did not intervene.” (Holland, *Ensign*, May 1999, 14)
 - The terrible **spiritual death** of Gethsemane, the necessary separation of a perfect God from the one bearing the sins of the world, returned

Last Moments

Mark 15:33–37; Matt 27:45–50; Luke 23:44–46; John 19:28–30



“I Thirst”



- Shortly before he expired, Jesus announced that he was thirsty, leading a soldier to offer him cheap wine (KJV “vinegar”) on a sponge (Matthew 27:48–49; Mark 15:36; John 19:28–30a)
- While Matthew and Mark record that this sponge was placed on a reed (*kalamō*), **John portrays it as being put on a hyssop branch (*hyssōpō*)**
 - A short shrub, the hyssop’s branches would probably not have been long enough to reach the lips of a man suspended on a cross, even if the cross was relatively short, and its stalk would have been too flimsy to bear the sponge
 - Nevertheless, *the hyssop was the plant mandated by the law of Moses not only for certain purification rituals but also for spreading the blood on the doorposts at the first Passover (Exodus 12:22)*

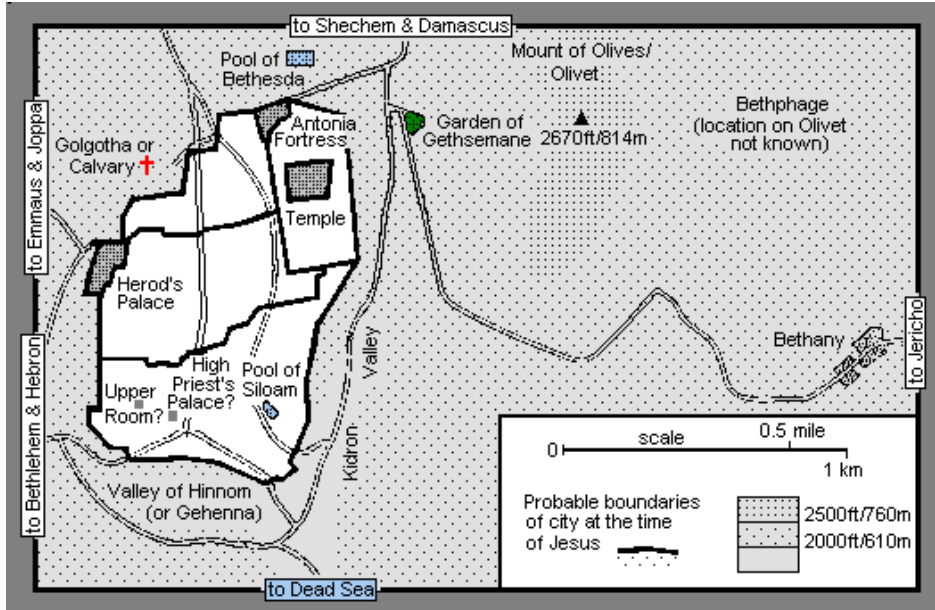
The Last Words of Jesus

- “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)
- “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43)
- “Woman, behold thy son!” . . . Behold thy mother!” (John 19:26–27)
- “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34; Matthew 27:46)
- “I thirst.” (John 19:28)
- “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke 23:46)
- **“It is finished.”** (John 19:30)



Liz Lemon Swindle, “It Is Finished”

The Death of the Lamb of God



- **Death at the Ninth Hour** (Mark 15:33; Matt 27:45; Luke 23:44-45a)
 - *One of the times given for the slaughter of the paschal lambs in the temple!* (see Josephus, Wars of the Jews 6.9.3, §422-27)
- **Jesus Cries Out and Dies** (Mark 15:37; Matt 27:50; Luke 23:46)
 - Luke records that Jesus first commended his spirit to his Father

- **Jesus Announced “It is finished,” and gives up his spirit** (John 19:30b)
 - *Johannine Jesus “lays down his life,” no one takes it from him*
- The rocky outcropping of Golgotha is an extension of the same geographic feature as the Temple Mount
 - **The sacrifice was to be killed “on the side of the altar northward”** (see Lev. 1:11)

Signs and Reactions to Christ's Death

Mark 15:38–41; Matt 27:51–56; Luke 23:45b, 47–49; John 19:31–37



- **Rending of the Temple Veil** – cf. Hebrews 9:11–12, 24–26 (Mark 15:38; Matt 27:51; Luke 23:45b)
 - The veil had separated all but the high priest from the presence of God (and he entered only once a year on the Day of Atonement)
 - Now all, through Christ, have access to God
- **Tombs Open and Dead Saints Arise *after His Resurrection*** (Matt 27:52–53)
- **The Centurion's Testimony** (Mark 15:39; Matt 27:54; Luke 23:47)
- **The People Mourn and Return** (Luke 23:48)
- **The Witness of the Women Standing Afar Off** (Mark 15:40–41; Matt 27: 55–56; Luke 23:49)
 - They are *witnesses of his actual death, later of his burial and resurrection* (they can attest that it was actually him who died and was raised to life)

Why the Cross?



Symbolism of the Cross

- Obviously one of the most terrible ways of execution in the ancient world
 - Part of descending below all things
- **“Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree”** (Deut. 21:23; Gal 3:13)
 - Way of Jewish leadership to prove Jesus was not “the son of the Blessed?”
- **Repeated prophecy that Jesus “must be lifted up”** (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32; see also 3 Nephi 27:14–15)
 - Like the brazen serpent in the wilderness, the sacrifice of Jesus must be where all can see it!
 - OT sacrificial imagery: **guilt was placed on the head of the sacrificial victim (Gethsemane), then the victim was sacrificed (Calvary)**



Upper left: Sebastien Bourdon, “Moses and the Brazen Serpent”; Lower left: Harry Anderson, “The Crucifixion”

“This is the Gospel . . .”

“Behold I have given unto you **my gospel**, and *this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.* And **my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me**, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, **according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.**” (2 Nephi 27:13–15)

Harry Anderson, “The Second Coming of Christ”



President Hinckley on the Cross



“ . . . well might many ask, as my minister friend in Arizona asked, if you profess a belief in Jesus Christ, why do you not use the symbol of his death, the cross of Calvary? To which I must first reply, that *no member of this Church must ever forget the terrible price paid by our Redeemer who gave his life that all men might live*—the agony of Gethsemane, the bitter mockery of his trial, the vicious crown of thorns tearing at his flesh, the blood cry of the mob before Pilate, the lonely burden of his heavy walk along the way to Calvary, the terrifying pain as great nails pierced his hands and feet, the fevered torture of his body as he hung that tragic day . . . This was the cross, the instrument of his torture, the terrible device designed to destroy the Man of Peace, the evil recompense for his miraculous work of healing the sick, of causing the blind to see, of raising the dead. **This was the cross on which he hung and died on Golgotha’s lonely summit. We cannot forget that. We must never forget it, for here our Savior, our Redeemer, the Son of God, gave himself a vicarious sacrifice for each of us.**”
(Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Symbol of Christ,” *Ensign*, May 1975, 92)



Francisco de Zurbarán, "Agnus Dei"

“A bone of him shall not be broken . . .”

- When the Jewish leadership asked the Roman authorities to break the legs of those being crucified so that their bodies would not desecrate the Sabbath—and in John, the Passover itself—the soldiers first broke the legs of the two insurgents or revolutionaries (*lēstai*, KJV “thieves”) who had been crucified with him
- When they came to Jesus, however, and found that he was already dead, **they did not break Jesus’ legs “that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken”** (John 19:31–33, 36)
 - While this was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 34:21, ***not breaking any bones was a particular requirement of the paschal lamb, one that was as significant as the prerequisite that it, like Jesus, be “without blemish”*** (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12).



Ron Richmond, "Triplus No. 3"

Blood and Water

- “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and **forthwith came there out blood and water**” (John 19:33-34, emphasis added)
 - **Blood on the cross = blood of paschal lambs on doorframes!**

- The flowing of water from Jesus side is reminiscent of the streams of water that Jesus proclaimed would flow from his belly (John 7:37-39)
 - **the blood atoning for sins** while the water purifies or cleanses the sinner
 - Elsewhere in John **water represents life, and not just mortal life but everlasting life** (see John 4:14 and 7:37-38)
- Due to his mortal inheritance from his mother, Mary, represented by the flowing blood, Jesus was able to **lay down his life as a sacrifice for sin**
- Because of his **divine, immortal inheritance** from God his Father, represented by **the stream of water**, he was **able to take his life up again and become a source of eternal life**

From Tree of Cursing to Tree of Life

- Again, “**Cursed is he who is everyone that is hanged upon the tree**” (Deut. 21:23; Gal 3:13)
- But the flowing water on the cross makes a **Tree of Death** a **Tree of Life!**
 - Medieval tradition of **the Verdant Cross!**



Hendrick Goltzius, Christ on the Tree of Life 1610



The Burial



The Burial of Jesus

Mark 15:42–47; Matt 27:57–66; Luke 23:50–56; John 19:38–42



- **Joseph of Arimathea Requests Jesus' Body** (Mark 15:42–45; Matt 27:57–58; Luke 23:50–52; John 19:38)
 - Joseph's righteousness and messianic expectation attested in Luke
 - Joseph a secret disciple in John
- **Nicodemus Brings a Kingly Amount of Burial Spices *in Daylight*** (John 19:39–40; cf. 3:2a, 14)
- **Placing the Body in the New Tomb** (Mark 15:46a; Matt 27:58–60a; Luke 23:53–54; John 19:41–42)
- Sealing the Tomb (Mark 15:46b; Matt 27:60b)
- **The Women Witness Where the Body Was Laid** (Mark 15:47; Matt 27:61; Luke 23:55–56)
- The Pharisees Request and Obtain a Guard from Pilate (Matt 27:62–66)

Carl Bloch, Burial of Jesus

Crucifixion and Burial



There are two possible sites identified where the events of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus occurred. The traditional site (the culmination of the Via Dolorosa) is **the Church of the Holy Sepulchre** (popular with Catholic/Orthodox Christians. An alternative site (popular with Protestants and Latter-day Saints) is known as **Gordon's Calvary and the Garden Tomb**.

The Sites Today . . .

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Just outside the walls of Jerusalem, in this place or somewhere nearby, was the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea where the body of the Lord was interred.”

*Above: **The traditional site of Golgotha and the tomb** (originally they were outside the city walls); *right: the apparent skull-like face of **Gordon’s Calvary and the nearby Garden Tomb** (the latter preserves more of what the original site may have been like, but the tomb itself dates to a much earlier period)**

