

# Foundations of Faith

Studies And Resources

For Understanding And Teaching Others  
 How To Have A Relationship With God

# Foundations of Faith

## Introduction

The purpose of the *Foundations of Faith* study series is to provide a useful tool to carry out the Great Commission given by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20. We hope *Foundations of Faith* offers a concise method to reconcile the lost while also laying the foundation to mature and mobilize new disciples for Jesus.

As you begin using *Foundations of Faith*, please spend extra time helping your friend develop a personal relationship with God. Teach and model prayer (read Luke 11:1-4) while showing your friend how to read the Bible on his own. The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are a great place to start as they tell the amazing story of Jesus and his expectations of discipleship.

Please understand that *Foundations of Faith* is not biblically all-inclusive for every specific situation we may encounter. Additionally, the order of the studies is a suggested sequence, but this may vary depending on each individual's situation. This study series is simply a tool to bring together the foundational Scriptures needed for true biblical conversion.

The South Florida Church of Christ extends a special recognition to *First Principles* and SFCC's *Ministry Toolbox* for large contributions to this new study series. Those resources proved to be invaluable in designing *Foundations of Faith*.

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# Love For God: The Essence of Christianity

This study should convince us that God loves us and we must love God.

*Why should we love God?*

- **1 John 4:19** - He loved us first.
- **John 3:16** - He SO loved us - loved us enough to give His very best to us, His Son.
- **Jeremiah 29:11** – He has great plans for us and our lives.
- **John 15:15** – He wants to be our friend – he wants a relationship with us.
- **Exodus 34:6-7**– The incredible qualities of God; he desires to forgive us.

*What does it mean to love God?*

## **Matthew 22:34-40**

- What is God's expectation for loving him?
- How is this different than we usually view love for God?
  - We often view love as only an emotional feeling.
  - Loving God has emotions tied to it but is not based on emotions.

Greatest Command – love the Lord your God

Second greatest command – love your neighbor

Heart – the driving force of your decisions; the seat of your will

Soul – the eternal side of our being

Mind – the intellectual side of our being

Strength – the physical side of our being

*What would it mean to love God with all of the above?*

**1 John 5:3-4** – obey his commands – listen to Him

- Read His Word – make a heartfelt effort to follow His commands
- God makes commands out of his love for us.
  - Example: A parent makes rules out of love and protection for his children. Most parents want their children to enjoy life to the fullest extent.

## **Questions:**

- Do you believe that God has shown His love to you? How?
- How are you showing your love for Him?

# The Word of God

This study establishes the Bible as the inspired Word of God and that it must be the standard for our lives.

## 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- Where does the Bible come from? All Scripture is inspired by God.
- What is the Bible useful for?
- *For additional study see 2 Peter 1:20-21*

## Hebrews 4:12-13

- Why is the Bible living & active? It is relevant to us today.
- The Word cuts (hurts) - compare it to a scalpel. It judges our thoughts & attitudes.
- It is good to be "cut" by the Word because it cuts the "cancer" (sin) out.

## John 8:31-32

- Intellectual belief is not enough - nor can we go by our feelings.
- Everyone must hold on to the teachings of Jesus to be a true disciple of Jesus.
- Where do we find the teachings?

## Matthew 15:1-9

- Why are religious traditions very dangerous?
  - Our loyalty needs to be to the Word NOT traditions that supersede the Word.
  - Easy to go by traditions because we are used to them and assume them to be OK.
  - Worship in vain - means it is as if God does not even see it

## 1 Timothy 4:16

- Watch your life and doctrine closely – they are inseparable.
  - Life – how you live
  - Doctrine – what you believe
- Which is more important – life or doctrine? Which is more important – right or left wing of an airplane?
- Why is it crucial to have life & doctrine working together? To save yourself and others.

## Acts 17:10-12

- Why were the Bereans noble?
  - The Bereans checked what Paul said; God's Word over man's word
  - Noble character is to read daily so you can know what is biblical and what is not.
  - Noble Bible study is the only way you can keep from being misled.

## John 12:48

- Why study the Bible? The Word is the standard on Judgment Day.
- Challenge: Read daily and make the Bible your standard in life.

# Discipleship

This study teaches the expectations Jesus has for anyone who wants to follow him.

*What is a disciple?* A learner or apprentice who follows a master or lord

## Acts 11:25-26

- Which is the more popular term today: disciple or Christian?
  - The word “Christian” appears three times in Bible; “disciple” more than 270 times
  - The two terms are interchangeable; identify same person

*Jesus defines the term disciple throughout his ministry.*

## Matthew 28:18-20

- One of the last commands of Jesus
- What does Jesus want everyone to become? What does Jesus command everyone to make?
  - Go is an action word; go make disciples [Disciples>>>Disciples>>>Disciples, etc.]

## Mark 1:14-18

- What does Jesus call these men to do?
  - Follow Him and be His disciples.
  - To be “fishers of men”
    - A new mission in life
    - Allow Jesus and others to teach us how to be fishers of men
    - Fishing takes persistence, patience, and passion.
- What was the response of these men?
  - Immediate followers
  - Discipleship is a radical new life; left behind careers and family

## Luke 9:23-26

- Who does this Scripture apply to? “If anyone would come after me...” It’s the same commitment for all.
- What does it mean to “deny self”?
  - Jesus loved others more than Himself; selflessness
  - Decisions not based on your sinful desires and emotions
  - *In order to follow Jesus I must deny myself of \_\_\_\_.* What will you have to deny yourself of?
- Carry the cross daily: denying yourself and crucifying your sinful nature DAILY
- Verse 24: What two choices do we have in life?
  - Gain world ... forfeit soul – OR – lose your worldly life for Jesus ... save your soul.

## Luke 14:25-33

- Verse 26: We must love Him much more than anyone, including ourselves.
  - Hate is a strong word
  - Jesus uses hyperbole (exaggeration) to illustrate a crucial discipleship principle.
  - Why do you think Jesus picked these people?
    - They have the most pull on our hearts.
    - He does not want them to damage our relationship with Him.
- Verses 28-30: Count the cost; do not make an emotional decision
- Verses 31-33: We are fighting a war against Jesus we will NOT win.
- Verse 33: We must be willing to give up everything
- Key Point: *JESUS MUST BE THE LORD (KING) OF OUR LIVES!*

## John 13:34-35

- Being a disciple means loving others like Jesus did. How did Jesus show his love for us?
- What affect will “loving like Jesus” have on others?

## 1 John 2:3-6

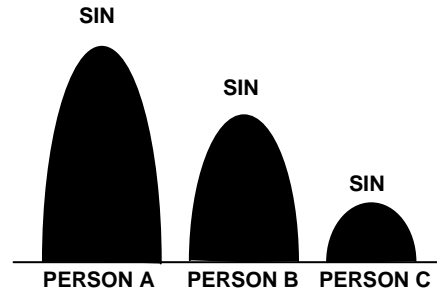
- In order to be a Christian (disciple), what must we do?
  - Christianity is not simply a label or religion, it’s a lifestyle.
- Is Jesus the Lord (the king) of every area of your life? Why or why not?
- Do you consider yourself a disciple? Are you a Christian? Why or why not?

# The Concept of Sin

This study defines sin and shows how sin separates us from God.

## Romans 3:23-24

- Who has sinned? Everyone.
- Definition of sin – “to miss the mark”
- **Illustration:** Who is further away from God?
  - All equal, all lost sinners.
- Verse 24: How does God redeem sinners?
  - His **grace** through Jesus Christ.



## Romans 6:23

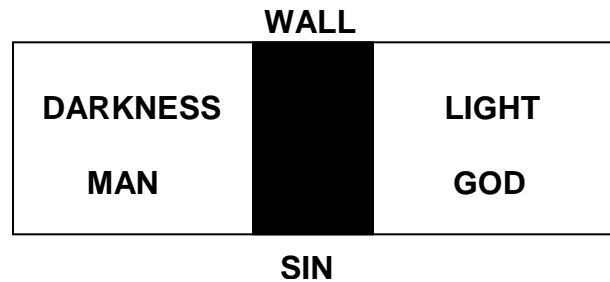
- What is the penalty for sin?
  - The “wages of sin is death” (eternal death; hell)
  - A wage is what we **deserve** for what we have done.
- What is the gift of God?
  - God **graciously** gives eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
  - Jesus must be our Lord in order to receive **grace** on God’s terms.

## 1 Peter 2:9-10

- Verse 9: How are these Christians described?
- Verse 10: How is their past life described? Why do we need mercy from God?
- Key point: All in darkness or light; no twilight zone
  - *For additional study see Col 1:13-14, Eph 5:8-14, Jn 3:19-21, Jn 8:12, & 1 Jn 1:5-7*

## Isaiah 59:1-2

- Verse 1: God is perfectly able to save us & hear us.
- Verse 2: If God is able to save, what’s the problem?
  - Our sin (iniquities) **separates** us from God.
  - **Illustration:** Sin creates a wall between us & God.
- We must understand the bad news to grasp the good news.



*What is it about sin that is so “separating”?*

## Genesis 6:5-6

- How does God feel about sin?
  - God takes it personally; deeply hurts God

## Ephesians 2:1-4

- Wrath: intense anger
- What does it say about wrath?
  - God’s wrath is directed at us because of our sin.

*What are some of the specific sins?*

## Galatians 5:19-21

- Define sins & give examples if there are questions.
  - The Scripture(s) needed depends on the person.
  - *For additional study see 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Mark 7:20-23; Rev. 21:8; 1 Co 6:9-10*

## Questions:

What have you learned about your sin today? In view of your sin, are you in the light or darkness? Why?

\*Suggest individual write a description of their sinful nature & specific sins they have committed. This is to help them see what is causing a separation from God. **He or she should keep this for personal use only.**

# Salvation I: Repentance

This study defines repentance and the relationship between repentance and the forgiveness of sin.

## Ephesians 2:1-9

- Review sin: What does it do to our relationship with God?
  - Verses 1-2: We are dead spiritually; lost & separated from God
  - Verse 3: Objects of God's wrath
- What saves us from eternal death in hell?
  - Verses 4-9: God's grace provides a way for forgiveness.
    - This does NOT mean His grace automatically forgives everyone's sins.
    - In other words, God forgives & provides grace on His terms.

## Acts 2:36-39

- Our sin results in the crucifixion of Jesus.
- Verse 38: What two commands must we obey to receive forgiveness of sins? Repent & be baptized.

*This study will focus on repentance. What is repentance?*

- The Greek word is METANOIA.
  - Mindset change; revolutionized thinking; to be transformed; looking ahead with fresh eyes & a fresh view
  - This mindset change (metanoia) will produce righteous actions or deeds.

## Question: What sins do you need to repent of?

- Initiate confession of specific sins (model this by sharing from your own life)
- If needed to help facilitate discussion:
  - Focus on character sins & anything specific to help clear conscience
  - Lists of sins in Scripture include: Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Ti 3:1-5; Mark 7:20-22
  - Biblical principles of openness with sin: James 5:16; Proverbs 28:13

*\*\*\*It is possible this discussion may conclude the study, due to time constraints.*

*How do we repent of sins?*

## 2 Corinthians 7:8-11

- Godly sorrow or worldly sorrow: Which is the one we must have for repentance?
  - Godly sorrow **LEADS TO REPENTANCE THAT LEADS TO SALVATION.**
- How do we know there is Godly sorrow? True repentance and a mindset change?
  - earnestness: sincerity, honesty, no faking it
  - eagerness to clear yourselves: apologies, righting past wrongs
  - indignation: righteous anger at your own sin
  - alarm: warning of impending danger without change – i.e. fire alarm
  - longing: desire to be close to God, to be reconciled
  - concern: concern about your sin & other's sin
  - readiness to see justice done: ready to repent – no matter the cost

## Acts 26:20 & Acts 3:19

- The same message was preached to many people. What was it? *Repent and prove your sincerity by actions.*
- Acts 3:19 – Why is repentance important? It helps wipe away our sins on God's terms.
- Repentance is refreshing.

## 1 John 1:5-10

- How do we walk in the light with God? We must always remain open regarding our sin.
- Repentance of sin is a lifetime commitment.

Additional Study: Luke 7:36-50 – The Sinful Woman is the model of true repentance.

## Questions:

- How is your definition of repentance different than what it was at the beginning of this study?
- What comes first for true repentance: A changed mindset or changed actions? (actions are the fruits of a mind change)
- Do you feel Godly sorrow about your sin? Who do you owe an apology to or what deeds need to be corrected?
- Are you committed to repenting of your sin the rest of your life?

# Salvation II: Baptism

This study defines baptism and the relationship between baptism and the forgiveness of sin.

## Ephesians 2:1-9

- Review sin: What does it do to our relationship with God?
  - Verses 1-2: We are dead spiritually; lost & separated from God
  - Verse 3: Objects of God's wrath
- What saves us from eternal death in hell?
  - Verses 4-9: God's grace provides a way for forgiveness.
    - This does NOT mean His grace automatically forgives everyone's sins.
    - In other words, God forgives & provides grace on His terms.

## John 3:1-7

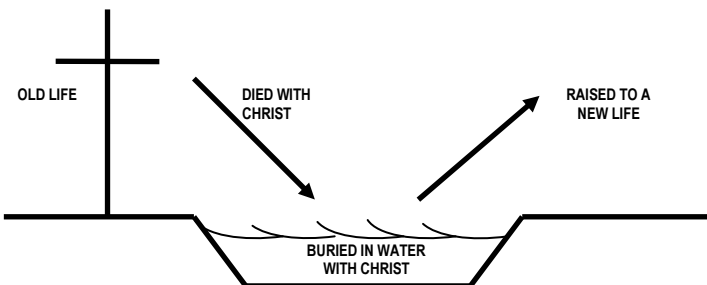
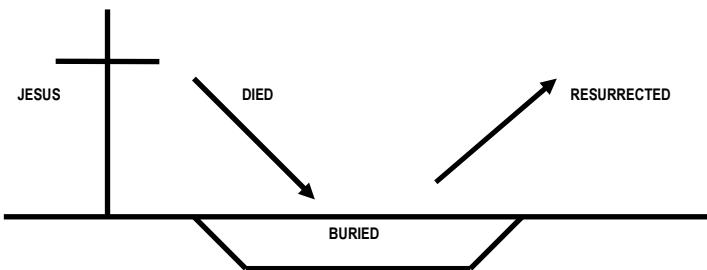
- What must we do to see and enter the kingdom of God? (in kingdom of God = saved)
  - Verse 3: Be born again
    - New creation; new life
  - Verse 5: Be born of water and spirit – baptism
- Babies are born at an exact moment (birthday) – spiritual births are the same

## Acts 2:22-24; 36-41

- Verses 22-24: Our sin nailed Jesus to the cross & God raised him from the dead!
- Verse 38: What two commands must we obey to receive forgiveness of sins?
  - Repent & be baptized (baptism = immersion)
- What else do we receive at baptism?
  - The Holy Spirit (God living in us.)
- Verse 39: Who does this Scripture apply to?
- Verse 41: 3,000 people added to their number that day. How? (repentance & baptism)

## Romans 6:3-6

- Paul reminds the Christians of the true meaning of their baptism.
- **See illustrations below**
- Why is baptism so important to God's plan of salvation?
  - Baptism is participating in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus!
  - This is how we are born again – raised to a new life.



## Galatians 3:26-27

- How do we become sons of God?
  - Faith in Jesus
- What happens when we are baptized into Christ?
  - Clothed with Christ

## Additional Study:

Col 2:10-12; Acts 22:1-16; 8:26-39; 16:22-34; Titus 3:3-8; 1 Pe 3:18-21; Matt 28:18-20

## Questions:

- Is baptism necessary to be saved?
  - Forgiveness & Holy Spirit
  - Only way to participate in the death, burial, & resurrection of Jesus
  - Command of God we are called to obey with faith
- When do you want to get baptized?

# The Cross

The cross demonstrates how much God loves you and the cross demands a response from you.

*Why do you want to become a disciple of Jesus?*

## **Matthew 26:36-46**

- Jesus is sorrowful & troubled. Why?
  - Jesus is human and getting ready to die is very hard for him.
  - Luke 22:44 – Jesus is stressed enough to sweat blood.
- Why did Jesus go back three times to pray?
  - He prayed until he submitted to God's will.
  - Will you do the same thing to get your heart where it needs to be?

## **Matthew 26:47-56**

- Jesus submits to his arrest and goes willingly. Why did Jesus do this???
  - Jesus could have stopped it all, but died for you.
  - He could have called on 72,000 angels to end it. (1 legion = 6,000)

## **Matthew 26:57-68**

- Everyone lies about Jesus.
  - How many lies would you sit through before you retaliated?
  - Why did Jesus remain silent?
    - He knew he had to die for your sins.
- Verse 67: The physical violence and abuse begins.
  - How would it feel to have people spit in your face?

## **Matthew 26:69-75 & 27:1-5**

- How did Peter respond to his sin against Jesus?
  - Wept bitterly
  - He repented and taught others to do the same.
- How did Judas respond to his sin against Jesus?
  - Judas would rather die than watch Jesus on the cross.
  - Instead of repenting, he ran away & quit; physical & spiritual suicide

## **Matthew 27:11-26 & 27:27-31**

- Before the governor, usually the time to beg for mercy.
  - Jesus did not defend himself. Why did he remain silent?
    - He knew he must die for your sins.
- How did Pilate respond to Jesus?
  - He washed his hands and took no responsibility for it.
  - Pilate cared more about what people thought than the cross.
- Doing nothing is rejecting the cross!
- Verse 26: What is a flogging? Severe & deadly whipping (lead balls on the whip)
- Verses 27-31: All the abuse: Why did Jesus not stop it all now?

## **Matthew 27:32-50**

- Why not come down from the cross and prove everyone wrong?
- Verse 45: God shuts off the sun in middle of day; darkness
- Verse 46: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
  - Jesus takes on your sin & feels separation from his Father.

## **Questions:**

What is God's response to your sin?

What is your response to all of this? How does it make you feel?

Why do you want to become a disciple of Jesus?

## **Additional Study:**

2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 5:20-21

Isaiah 53

John 3:16-20

Romans 5:6-11

## **Resources:**

“The Physical Death of Jesus Christ” (p. 20)

*The Passion*

*The Cross* (DPI)

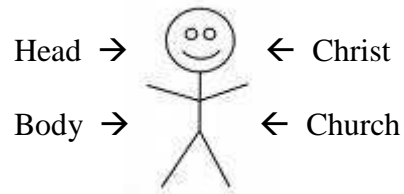
# The Church

This study defines the church and our role(s) within the church.

*What do you think of when you think of church?*

## Colossians 1:15-18

- The church = the body of Christ
- Christ is the head and we are the body.



## Ephesians 2:19-22

- The church is God's household.
- God's family – Christians are brothers and sisters.
- What is the foundation of the church?
  - Jesus is the cornerstone.
    - Cornerstone: the indispensable, unifying part of a building
  - Apostles and prophets – the authority (based on the Bible)

*How do I join the church?*

## 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

- Anyone baptized into Christ is a part of the church
- God's expectation?
  - Every body member must contribute.
  - Be a giver, not a taker.
- What role(s) will you play in the body?

*What does membership in the South Florida Church of Christ mean?*

## Hebrews 10:24-25

- Each member is expected to work within the habits of the local congregation.
  - Our driving force: reconcile → mature → mobilize
  - Verse 24: Active discipling relationship(s)
  - Verse 25: Commitment to church meetings
    - Sunday & midweek services
    - Small group meetings
  - Hebrews 13:17 – Submit to leadership of local congregation

## Mark 12:41-44

- What lesson do we learn here about giving?
  - God's expectation is that we give of our finances sacrificially.
  - 10% of gross salary is a good starting point (Old Testament principle)
  - SFCC collects offerings on a weekly basis.

## Questions:

- How will it change your lifestyle to be committed to this kind of church?
- What do you see getting in the way of this type of involvement?

# Counting the Cost

This study prepares us to make  
Jesus the Lord and Savior of our lives.

## Luke 14:28-30

- What does Jesus tell us to do before becoming a Christian?
  - You must take this decision very seriously.
  - Do not start what you are not committed to finish.
- What happens if you do not finish? Who gets hurt?

## 2 Peter 2:21-22

- What is the warning here?
- What is the hardest thing(s) for you to give up or change?
- Satan wants to win you back (1 Peter 5:8). How do you think he'll try to do that?

## Review

*What is a disciple of Jesus?*

- Mission-minded (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 1:14-20; Luke 19:10)
- Loves God & loves others like Jesus (John 13:34-35)
- Daily self-denial of sin (Luke 9:23-26)
- Jesus is the Lord of everything – relationships, money, time, etc. (Luke 14:25-33)
- Imitates Jesus & is committed to a lifestyle of repentance (1 John 1-2)

*What happens when you repent and get baptized?*

- Forgiveness of sins – you are saved!
- Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

*What do you join when you are baptized?*

- 1 Co 12:12-13 – The body of Christ (the church)
- What part of the body will you be? Are you ready to give financially (Mark 12:41-44)?
- Where should your closest relationships be? The body.
  - John 13:34-35 – Friendships that impact the world.
  - Hebrews 3:12-14 – Friendships that keep you faithful to the end.
  - 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 – Do not be yoked with non-Christians.

*Are you willing to always submit to the Scriptures?*

## John 12:48

- God's Word is the ultimate authority & measure of judgment.
- This covers any issue that may come up in your life.

*Why do you want to become a disciple?*

## 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

- **THE CROSS** is the ultimate motivation & will help you stay faithful.

## Restoration I: Why Did You Leave?

Why did he/she leave and why does he/she want to come back?

**Study Leader Notes:** The goal is to help restore a relationship to God and be restored to the church. For them to be restored to God they must repent and ask God for forgiveness. Being restored to the fellowship of the church and added to its membership is a leadership decision. The two rarely coincide; a repentant individual is reconnected to God most of the time **before** they are restored to the fellowship. Additionally, the term “fall away” was often used in the past, but most of the time this term was incorrectly applied. The core meaning of “fall away” is that one cannot return to the lord, so we prefer the term “left our fellowship”.

### Luke 15:11-24

- The first part of this parable is about a man who abandons God and returns.
- This passage is very useful in helping you to work through why you left and your desire to return.

*Why did you leave God and the church?*

### Luke 15:11-13

- Why did the son leave?
- Why did you leave the church?
  - Take the time to draw out the reason(s); there may be more than one
  - What was/were the sin(s)?

*Why do you want to return to God and the church?*

### Luke 15:14-17

- Why did the son return?
- Why are you returning?
  - Again, pursue all reason(s)

*How have you sinned?*

### Luke 15:18-19

- How have you sinned against others & the church?
  - Have you damaged the faith of others? How?
- How have you sinned against God?

*How does God feel about your return?*

### Luke 15:20-24

- Is God excited about your return?... YES!!!
- What was key to restoring the relationship?... True Repentance

### Questions:

What are you willing to do to restore your relationship with God & the church?

Our next study will be on True Repentance.

## Restoration II: Repentance

This study defines repentance for the wayward Christian.

### Question: What sins do you need to repent of?

- Initiate confession of specific sins (model this by sharing from your own life)
- If needed to help facilitate discussion:
  - Focus on character sins & anything specific to help clear conscience
  - Lists of sins in Scripture include: Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Ti 3:1-5; Mark 7:20-22
  - Biblical principles of openness with sin: James 5:16; Proverbs 28:13

*How do we repent of sins?*

### 2 Corinthians 7:8-11

- Godly sorrow or worldly sorrow: Which is the one we must have for repentance?
  - Godly sorrow *LEADS TO REPENTANCE THAT LEADS TO SALVATION.*
- How do we know there is Godly sorrow? True repentance and a mindset change?
  - earnestness: sincerity, honesty, no faking it
  - eagerness to clear yourselves: apologies, righting past wrongs
  - indignation: righteous anger at your own sin
  - alarm: warning of impending danger without change – i.e. fire alarm
  - longing: desire to be close to God, to be reconciled
  - concern: concern about your sin & other's sin
  - readiness to see justice done: ready to repent – no matter the cost

### Acts 3:19

- Repentance is refreshing, not simply doing what is right
- Repentance is the transforming of your mind to thinking in God's way
- You are excited about doing what is right

### 1 John 1:5-10

- How do we walk in the light with God? We must always remain open regarding our sin.
- Repentance of sin is a lifetime commitment.

### Questions:

- What is true repentance?
- What comes first for true repentance: A changed mindset or changed actions? (actions are the fruits of a mind change)
- Do you have Godly sorrow about your sin?
- **HOMEWORK:** Who do you owe an apology to or what deeds need to be corrected?
- Are you committed to repenting of your sin the rest of your life?

**Additional Study:** Luke 7:36-50 – The Sinful Woman is the model of true repentance.

## Restoration III: Resolution

This study makes sure that the individual has closed open issues and restored relationships.

- **Question: How did your homework go?**
  - **HOMEWORK:** Who do you owe an apology to or what deeds need to be corrected? [If in doubt about a situation about whether or not it is best to contact someone, seek spiritual and if needed professional advice]
  - What specifics have you done?
  - What specifics do you need to do?
    - Relationships that need to be healed?
    - Apologies that need to be made?
    - It is crucial that relationships are mended as can best be done on your part
    - Is there any forgiveness you have not given yet?
- The restoration cannot be complete until this step is completed
  - Review Godly Sorrow in **2 Corinthians 7** as needed
  - If needed to help facilitate discussion:
    - Focus on character sins & anything specific to help clear conscience
    - Lists of sins in Scripture include: Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Ti 3:1-5; Mark 7:20-22
    - Biblical principles of openness with sin: James 5:16; Proverbs 28:13

*Do you feel refreshed?*

### **Acts 3:19**

- Repentance brings refreshment
- If you are not feeling refreshed, what is missing?
  - What are you holding on to?
  - Is there any fear, unresolved questions or confusion that is clouding the issues?
- Is there an addictive sin you will need extra help with (i.e. alcohol, drugs, pornography, overeating, etc.)?
  - Do they need to participate in CR?
  - Do they need to participate in some other group?

*What is going to keep you on this path of change?*

### **Romans 12:2**

- Don't conform to worldly patterns.
- You need be transformed into something spiritual.
- By "Renewing your Mind"... how do you do that?
  - What are you reading in your Bible?
  - What are you thinking about?
  - What are you taking in (movies, internet, books, TV, and other media)?
    - Taking in the bad – produces worldly thinking
    - Taking in the good – produces Godly thinking
- What does this allow you to do?... Determine God's will
- Work on "Renewing your Mind" until we study again.

## Restoration IV: Restoration

This study is done as the last restoration study before they are formally restored. It will show them principles that will keep them close to the Lord.

### Matthew 7:14

- What does this say about the road to eternal life?
- What is it going to take to stay on the narrow road?

*What will you need in order to do battle with Satan and resist sin?*

### Ephesians 6:10-18

- Who are you strong in?
- Who is the battle against?
- Why do you need the full armor of God?
- Verse 14 The belt of truth & The breastplate of righteousness
  - Truth: Gives you confidence
  - Righteousness: Living Righteously protects you from the consequences of sin
- Verse 15 Feet fitted w/ the gospel of peace
  - The Gospel of Peace: Prepares you to respond righteously
- Verse 16 Shield of Faith
  - It protects you from all of the lies of Satan
- Verse 17 Helmet of Salvation & Sword of the Spirit
  - The Helmet of Salvation: Gives you confidence in dangerous situations
  - The Sword of the Spirit: Is your weapon to protect yourself and rescue others from Satan
- Verse 18 Prayer
  - Prayer connects you to God and calls on his power to act

*How will you keep yourself from being snared in sin?*

### James 5:16

- Why do you confess your sins?
  - So that you may be healed (not forgiven, God does that), but our souls are healed when we confide in a fellow Christian
  - So that others may pray for you; the prayers of the righteous are powerful

### 1 John 1:5-10

- How do we walk in the light with God? We must always remain open regarding our sin.
- Repentance of sin is a lifetime commitment.

*How do you stay strong?*

### Ephesians 4:16

- What is the body?... The Church
- How is the body made strong?... Each part doing its work
  - Love one another... Discipleship, being disciplined, and discipling others
  - Being a part of all activities in your ministry

## **Resource: Do I Need Chemical Recovery?**

This study is to help people identify if they need extra help in kicking an addiction.

The questions are designed as an aid to help a person determine if they or someone they know could benefit from attending a Chemical Recovery group. Read through the list and answer either 'Yes' or 'No' to each question. These questions can be applied both to events prior and after becoming a Christian.

1. Have you ever stopped drinking or using another drug and wanted more?
2. Have you ever had something to drink at a social occasion and then stopped somewhere on your way home to have more or had more when you got home?
3. Have you ever driven after you have had more than you should to drink?
4. Do you ever drink alone?
5. Does drinking ever cause you to have a desire to use other drugs?
6. Do you ever drink to deal with your feelings?
7. Do you ever think about drinking or using other drugs when you're not using?
8. Have you ever drunk more than you should, or have you ever used more prescription over the counter medication that you should?
9. Have you ever decided to limit your drinking?
10. Have you ever gone over that limit?
11. Have you ever decided to quit, and then returned to drinking or using?
12. Has your spouse or close friend ever expressed concern about your drinking?
13. Have you ever been dishonest or tempted to be dishonest about how much you have had to drink?
14. Have you ever felt guilty because you had too much to drink or abused prescription or over the counter medication and did not tell anyone?
15. If you could never drink again after tonight would you feel either angry or afraid?

If you can answer 'Yes' to three or more of these questions, you could greatly benefit from attending a chemical recovery group. Please contact your local CR leader or speak with your evangelist.

## Resource: Working Through Your Past

This study will work you through the process of biblically forgiving.  
(This can be copied and given to them.)

### A Biblical Guide to Help You Work Through Your Past By Jeff Chacon

#### Q: What is the world's way of dealing with hurt, pain, injustice and abuse?

- a. anger
- b. hatred
- c. resentment
- d. bitterness
- e. revenge
- f. hold a grudge
- g. pull heart away
- h. run away
- i. ignore it and hope it goes away
- j. justify all these behaviors

The problem is that these “solutions” don't work. They are like putting a Band-Aid on a major wound. Instead of helping us, they only make the problem worse because the heart is allowed to harden over a long period of time.

Jesus is the only one who can heal us of our hurt and pain. He stands ready to heal us (see the account of “the bleeding woman” in Mark 5:25-34 for reference), but we must do it his way.

#### Q: What's God's way of working through our past hurts?

##### 1. You must face the truth

- a. John 8:31-32
  - ◆ Only the truth will set you free.
  - ◆ Many of grew up in dysfunctional families where “touchy subjects” were not openly discussed.
  - ◆ But we must change that pattern and be willing to face the truth, not matter how painful, in order to be healed.
- b. Action
  - ◆ On a piece of paper, write: *What \_\_\_\_\_ did to hurt me:*
  - ◆ Then list those things (the facts, not the feelings yet).
    - Example: My father hit me several times as a child.
    - Example: My brother sexually abused me at least 10 different times from the ages of 10-15.
    - Example: My mother belittled me and abused me verbally, saying things like: “You'll never amount to anything.” Etc.

## 2. You must feel the hurt

- a. **Action:** Next, write down how each fact made you feel.
  - ◆ Example: When my father hit me, I felt angry at him and wanted to hit him back and hurt him at times.
  - ◆ Example: When my brother abused me, I felt confused, dirty and guilty.
  - ◆ Example: When my mother belittled me, I felt discouraged and depressed.
- b. **Action:** Now write down how you responded to each hurt; what you did in response.
  - ◆ Example: I resented my dad privately and silently. We still aren't close.
  - ◆ Example: I hated men because of what my brother did to me.
  - ◆ Example: I have become an over-achiever because of what my mom said to me. I am constantly trying to prove her wrong about me.

## 3. You must free the heart

- a. Recognize that God will judge the perpetrators, so you don't have to.
  - ◆ In Romans 12:19, God says: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay."
  - ◆ God is just, and he will judge all of us appropriately on Judgment Day. Therefore, no one is getting away with anything.
  - ◆ David took comfort in knowing that God would judge his enemies with justice; that he would be vindicated on Judgment Day, and so may we (Psalm 3:7; 7:6-7,14-16; all of 9 & 10; 17:2, 13-14, and others)
- b. Recognize that God will judge you for your attitude and actions toward them as well.
  - ◆ So, take responsibility for your sinful responses and repent of them.
  - ◆ Anger, resentment, bitterness and hatred are all sins, no matter what the cause, and must be repented of.
- c. **Action:** Read Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:8; 2 Timothy 3:3, and 1 Peter 2:1.
- d. **Action:** Write out your sins and a paragraph of apology to God.
- e. **Action:** Forgive the perpetrators for the things listed earlier and for how they made you feel, as you want God to forgive you.
  - ◆ Matthew 6:14-15: If you don't forgive them, God won't forgive you.
  - ◆ Matthew 5:44: Jesus commands us to love our enemies.
  - ◆ Matthew 18:21-35: You can forgive because God has forgiven you so much!
  - ◆ **Note:** In some cases it may not be best to talk to the person, but to simply forgive them in prayer. You may want to seek advice about any situation you're not sure about.
- f. **Action:** Now you're ready to surrender the hurt and pain to God emotionally.
  - ◆ Read 1 Peter 2:18-25 (especially verse 23).
  - ◆ Jesus entrusted himself and his victimizers to God, who judges justly.
- g. **Action:** May want to seal up these papers and put them in a drawer, or throw them away, or burn them as a symbol of your letting go of the past once and for all.
- h. **Action:** List as many good memories and positive qualities about that person as possible. Focus from here on those things.
- i. **Action:** Get grateful for the good things about these people, and establish a new relationship with them if possible.
- j. **Action:** Write a letter or call them if appropriate to share your gratitude for them.
- k. Some good books to read:
  - ◆ *You're Someone Special* by Bruce Narramore
  - ◆ *Family Dysfunctions* by Dale and Anita Ryan
  - ◆ *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts* by Jerry Bridges

#### 4. Conclusion

- a. You can be freed from the baggage of the past. There is hope!
- b. The whole process described in this study can take just a day or two.
  - ◆ Note: It can be done even if the perpetrator is deceased because it depends on you, not them.
- c. Harboring resentment toward someone is only hindering your relationship with God.
- d. Summary of how to work through your past:
  - ◆ Face the truth.
  - ◆ Feel the hurt.
  - ◆ Free the heart.
    - God will judge them; so you don't have to.
    - God will judge you for your sinful response.
    - Forgive them as you want God to forgive you.
    - Surrender the hurt and pain to God emotionally.
    - Get grateful, and establish a new relationship with them if possible.
    - If you need to, there are some good books that will help further.
- e. I wrote the following poem after freeing my heart from the past in 1992...

#### “We Never Played Catch”

We never played catch  
or tried to walk on a wall.  
He didn't come to my games  
when I used to play football.

All I wish was I knew him,  
and that he knew me.  
But now it's too late –  
I'm almost 33.

No, not too late,  
because... there really are three.  
There's three Dads now:  
Dad, God and me!

To Ty, Ky and Ry  
I'm the one they see.  
The past is the present  
and the future's up to me!

Cool! We'll play catch, we'll ride bikes,  
and we'll talk all the time!  
Ya, most of all...,  
we'll spend a lot of time.

And we all have God.  
There is justice you see,  
because everyone can have  
the perfect Daddy.

He's loving and loyal  
and where he really shines  
is he's really good  
at just “spending time”.

I forgive you, Dad,  
as I hope they'll forgive me.  
And I thank you, Father,  
for giving me three.

## **Resource: The Physical Death of Jesus Christ**

This study provides an in-depth look at the physical suffering of Jesus during the crucifixion.

William D. Edwards, MD; Wesley J. Gabel, MDiv; Floyd E. Hosmer, MS, AMI

*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)*

**For additional information see the website on the internet at  
[www.kgnet.com/jesus/](http://www.kgnet.com/jesus/)**

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*THE LIFE and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth have formed the basis for a major world religion (Christianity), have appreciably influenced the course of human history, and, by virtue of a compassionate attitude toward the sick, also have contributed to the development of modern medicine. The eminence of Jesus as a historical figure and the suffering and controversy associated with his death have stimulated us to investigate, in an interdisciplinary manner, the circumstances surrounding his crucifixion. Accordingly, it is our intent to present not a theological treatise but rather a medically and historically accurate account of the physical death of the one called Jesus Christ.*

## **SOURCES**

The source Material concerning Christ's death comprises a body of literature and not a physical body or its skeletal remains. Accordingly, the credibility of any discussion of Jesus' death will be determined primarily by the credibility of one's sources. For this review, the source material includes the writings of ancient Christian and non-Christian authors, the writings of modern authors, and the Shroud of Turin.<sup>1</sup> Using the legal-historical method of scientific investigation,<sup>27</sup> scholars have established the reliability and accuracy of the ancient manuscripts.<sup>26,27,29,31</sup>

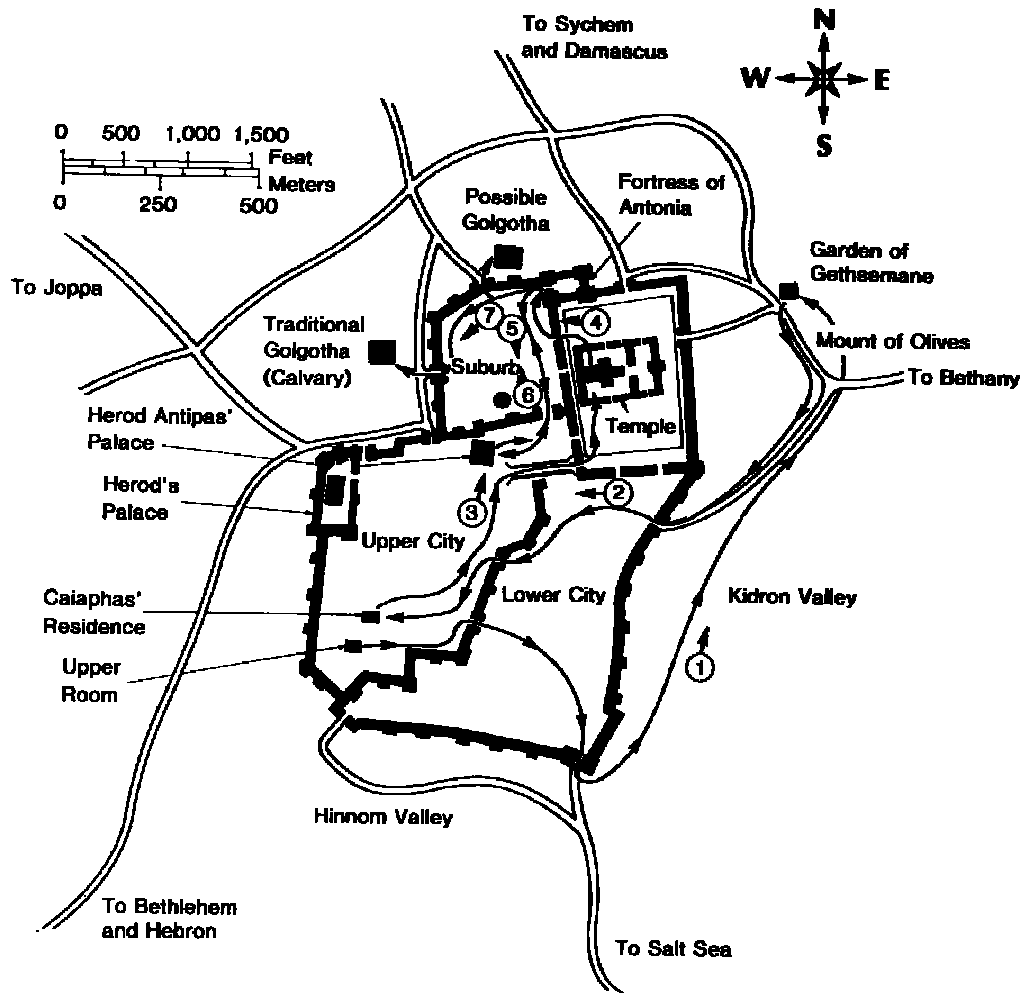
The most extensive and detailed descriptions of the life and death of Jesus are to be found in the New Testament gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.<sup>1</sup> The other 23 books of the New Testament support but do not expand on the details recorded in the gospels. Contemporary Christian, Jewish, and Roman authors provide additional insight concerning the first-century Jewish and Roman legal systems and the details of scourging and crucifixion.<sup>5</sup> Seneca, Livy, Plutarch, and others refer to crucifixion practices in their works.<sup>8,28</sup> Specifically, Jesus (or his crucifixion) is mentioned by the Roman historians Cornelius Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, and Suetonius, by non-Roman historians Thallus and Phlegon, by the satirist Lucian of Samosata, by the Jewish Talmud, and by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, although the authenticity of portions of the latter is problematic.<sup>26</sup>

The Shroud of Turin is considered by many to represent the actual burial cloth of Jesus,<sup>22</sup> and several publications concerning the medical aspects of his death draw conclusions from this assumption.<sup>5, 11</sup> The Shroud of Turin and recent archaeological findings provide valuable information concerning Roman crucifixion practices.<sup>22-24</sup> The interpretations of modern writers, based on a knowledge of science and medicine not available in the first century, may offer additional insight concerning the possible mechanisms of Jesus' death.<sup>2-17</sup>

When taken in concert certain facts -- the extensive and early testimony of both Christian proponents and opponents, and their universal acceptance of Jesus as a true historical figure; the ethic of the gospel writers, and the shortness of the time interval between the events and the extant manuscripts; and the confirmation of the gospel accounts by historians and archaeological findings <sup>26-27</sup> -- ensure a reliable testimony from which a modern medical interpretation of Jesus' death may be made.

# GETHSEMANE

After Jesus and his disciples had observed the Passover meal in an upper room in a home in southwest Jerusalem, they traveled to the Mount of Olives, northeast of the city (Fig 1). (Owing to various adjustments in the calendar, the years of Jesus' birth and death remain controversial.<sup>29</sup> However, it is likely that Jesus was born in either 4 or 6 BC and died in 30 AD.<sup>11, 29</sup> During the Passover observance in 30 AD, the Last Supper would have been observed on Thursday, Jesus left Upper Room and walked with disciples to Mount of Olives and Garden of Gethsemane (1), where he was arrested and taken first to Annas and then to Caiaphas (2). After first trial before political Sanhedrin at Caiaphas' residence, Jesus was tried again before religious Sanhedrin, probably at Temple (3) Next, he was taken to Pontius Pilate (4), who sent him to Herod Antipas (5). Herod returned Jesus to Pilate (6), and Pilate finally handed over Jesus for scourging at Fortress of Antonia and for crucifixion at Golgotha (7). (Modified from Pfeiffer et al.<sup>30</sup>) April 6 [Nisan 13], and Jesus would have been crucified on Friday, April 7 [Nisan 14].<sup>29</sup> At nearby Gethsemane, Jesus, apparently knowing that the time of his death was near, suffered great mental anguish, and, as described by the physician Luke, his sweat became like blood.'



*Fig 1. Map of Jerusalem at time of Christ.*

Although this is a very rare phenomenon, bloody sweat (hematidrosis or hemohidrosis) may occur in highly emotional states or in persons with bleeding disorders.<sup>18-20</sup> As a result of hemorrhage into the sweat glands, the skin becomes fragile and tender. Luke's description supports the diagnosis of hematidrosis rather than eccrine chromidrosis (brown or yellow-green sweat) or stigmatization (blood oozing from the palms or elsewhere).<sup>18-21</sup> Although some authors have suggested that hematidrosis produced hypovolemia, we agree with Bucklin<sup>5</sup> that Jesus' actual blood loss probably was minimal. However, in the cold night air, it may have produced chills.

# TRIALS

## Jewish Trials

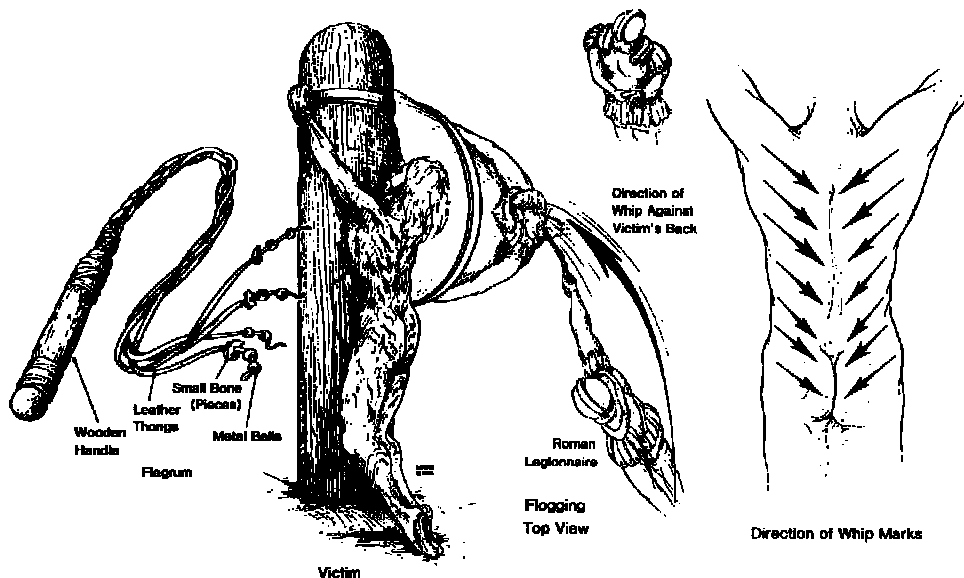
Soon after midnight, Jesus was arrested at Gethsemane by the temple officials and was taken first to Annas and then to Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest for that year (Fig 1). 1 Between 1 AM and daybreak, Jesus was tried before Caiaphas and the political Sanhedrin and was found guilty of blasphemy. 1 The guards then blindfolded Jesus, spat on him, and struck him in the face with their fists. Soon after daybreak, presumably at the temple (Fig 1), Jesus was tried before the religious Sanhedrin (with the Pharisees and the Sadducees) and again was found guilty of blasphemy, a crime punishable by death.1, 5

## Roman Trials

Since permission for an execution had to come from the governing Romans, 1 Jesus was taken early in the morning by the temple officials to the Praetorium of the Fortress of Antonia, the residence and governmental seat of Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judea (Fig 1). However, Jesus was presented to Pilate not as a blasphemer but rather as a self-appointed king who would undermine the Roman authority. 1 Pilate made no charges against Jesus and sent him to Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Judea. 1 Herod likewise made no official charges and then returned Jesus to Pilate (Fig 1). 1 Again, Pilate could find no basis for a legal charge against Jesus, but the people persistently demanded crucifixions Pilate finally granted their demand and handed over Jesus to be flogged (scourged) and crucified. (McDowell 25 has reviewed the prevailing political, religious, and economic climates in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' death, and Bucklin 5 has described the various illegalities of the Jewish and Roman trials.)

## Health of Jesus

The rigors of Jesus' ministry (that is, traveling by foot throughout Palestine) would have precluded any major physical illness or a weak general constitution. Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that Jesus was in good physical condition before his walk to Gethsemane. However, during the 12 hours between 9 PM Thursday and 9 AM Friday, he had suffered great emotional stress (as evidenced by hematidrosis), abandonment by his closest friends (the disciples), and a physical beating (after the first Jewish trial). Also, in the setting of a traumatic and sleepless night, he had been forced to walk more than 2.5 miles (4.0 km) to and from the sites of the various trials (Fig 1). These physical and emotional factors may have rendered Jesus particularly vulnerable to the adverse hemodynamic effects of the scourging.



*Fig 2. Scourging. Left, Short whip (flagrum) with lead balls and sheep bones tied into leather thongs. Center left, Naked victim tied to flogging post. Deep stripelike lacerations were usually associated with considerable blood loss. Center right, View from above, showing position of lictors. Right, Inferomedial direction of wounds.*



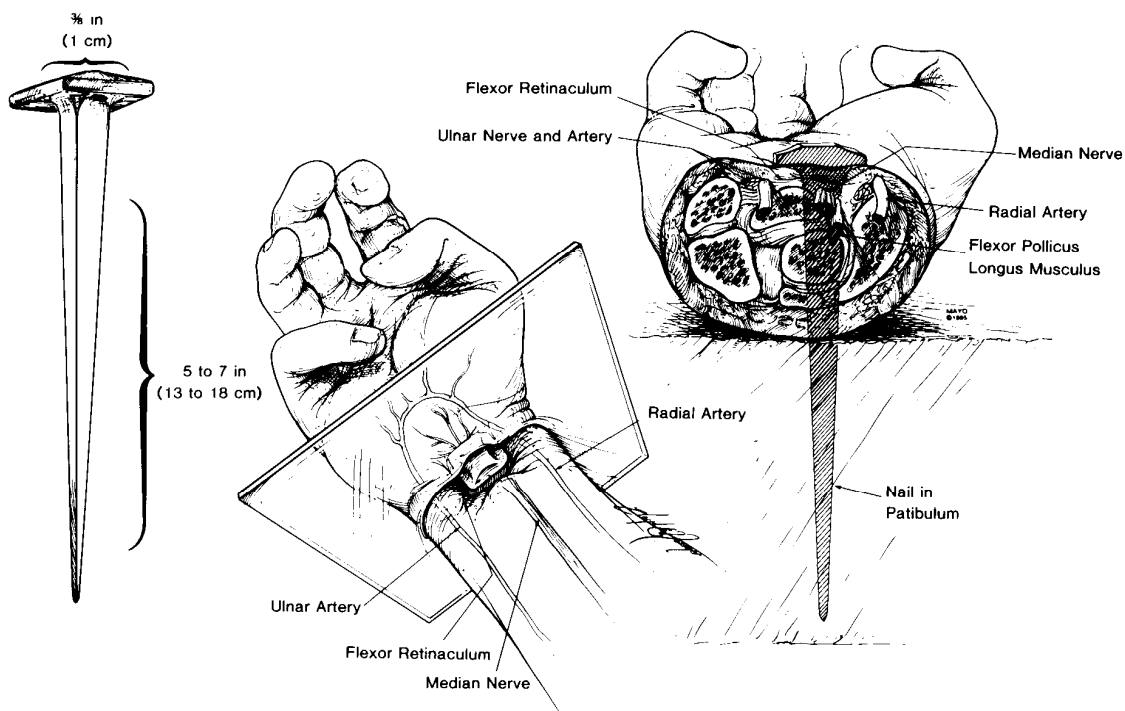
### Variations in Crosses Used for Crucifixion

Latin Designation	Characteristics
Infelix lignum	Tree
Crux simplex,	Upright post crux acuta
Crux composita	Stipes and patibulum
Crux humilis	Low cross
Crux sublimis	Tall cross
Crux commissa	T-shaped (Tau) cross
Crux immissa	V-shaped (Latin) cross
Crux capitata	V-shaped (Latin) cross
Crux decussata	X-shaped cross

## CRUCIFIXION

### Crucifixion Practices

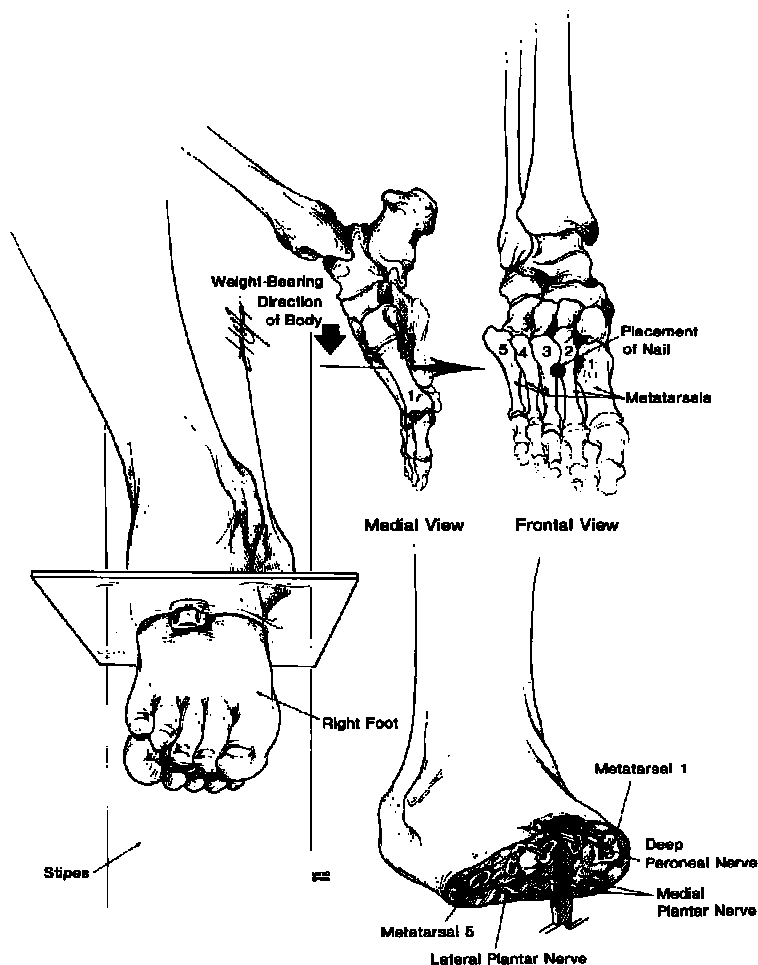
Crucifixion probably first began among the Persians.<sup>34</sup> Alexander the Great introduced the practice to Egypt and Carthage, and the Romans appear to have learned of it from the Carthaginians.<sup>11</sup> Although the Romans did not invent crucifixions they perfected it as a form of torture and capital punishment that was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering.<sup>10, 17</sup> It was one of the most disgraceful and cruel methods of execution and usually was reserved only for slaves, foreigners, revolutionaries, and the vilest of criminals.<sup>3, 25, 28</sup> Roman law usually protected Roman citizens from crucifixion,<sup>5</sup> except perhaps in the ease of desertion by soldiers. In its earliest form in Persia, the victim was either tied to a tree or was tied to or impaled on an upright post, usually to keep the guilty victim's feet from touching holy ground.<sup>8, 11, 30, 34, 38</sup> Only later was a true cross used; it was characterized by an upright post (stipes) and a horizontal crossbar (patibulum), and it had several variations (Table).<sup>11</sup> Although archaeological and historical evidence strongly indicates that the low Tau cross was preferred by the Romans in Palestine at the time of Christ (Fig 3),<sup>2, 7, 11</sup> crucifixion practices often varied in a given geographic region and in accordance with the imagination of the executioners, and the Latin cross and other forms also may have been used.<sup>28</sup>



**Fig 4. Nailing of wrists.** Left, Size of iron nail. Center, Location of nail in wrist, between carpals and radius. Right, Cross section of wrist, at level of plane indicated at left, showing path of nail, with probable transection of median nerve and impalement of flexor pollicis longus, but without injury to major arterial trunks and without fractures of bones.

It was customary for the condemned man to carry his own cross from the flogging post to the site of crucifixion outside the city walls.<sup>8, 11, 30</sup> He was usually naked, unless this was prohibited by local customs.<sup>11</sup> Since the weight of the entire cross was probably well over 300 lb. (136 kg), only the crossbar was carried (Fig 3).<sup>11</sup> The patibulum, weighing 75 to 125 lb. (34 to 57 kg),<sup>11, 30</sup> was placed across the nape of the victim's neck and balanced along both shoulders. Usually, the outstretched arms then were tied to the crossbar.<sup>7, 11</sup> The processional to the site of crucifixion was led by a complete Roman military guard, headed by a centurion.<sup>3, 11</sup> One of the soldiers carried a sign (titulus) on which the condemned man's name and crime were displayed (Fig 3).<sup>3, 11</sup> Later, the titulus would be attached to the top of the cross.<sup>11</sup> The Roman guard would not leave the victim until they were sure of his death. <sup>9, 11</sup> Outside the city walls was permanently located the heavy upright wooden stipes, on which the patibulum would be secured. In the case of the Tau cross, this was accomplished by means of a mortise and tenon joint, with or without reinforcement by ropes. <sup>10, 11, 30</sup> To prolong the crucifixion process, a horizontal wooden block or plank, serving as a crude seat (sedile or sedulum), often was attached midway down the stipes.<sup>3, 11, 16</sup> Only very rarely, and probably later than the time of Christ, was an additional block (suppedaneum) employed for transfixion of the feet.<sup>9, 11</sup>

At the site of execution, by law, the victim was given a bitter drink of wine mixed with myrrh (gall) as a mild analgesic. <sup>7, 17</sup> The criminal was then thrown to the ground on his back, with his arms outstretched along the patibulum.<sup>11</sup> The hands could be nailed or tied to the crossbar, but nailing apparently was preferred by the Romans.<sup>8, 11</sup> The archaeological remains of a crucified body, found in an ossuary near Jerusalem and dating from the time of Christ, indicate that the nails were tapered iron spikes approximately 5 to 7 in (13 to 18 cm) long with a square shaft 3/8 in (1 cm) across. <sup>23, 24, 30</sup> Furthermore, ossuary findings and the Shroud of Turin have documented that the nails commonly were driven through the wrists rather than the palms (Fig 4). <sup>22-24, 30</sup>



*Fig 5. Nailing of feet. Left, Position of feet atop one another and against stipes. Upper right, Location of nail in second intermetatarsal space. Lower right, Cross section of foot, at plane indicated at left, showing path of nail.*

After both arms were fixed to the crossbar, the patibulum and the victim, together, were lifted onto the stipes.<sup>11</sup> On the low cross, four soldiers could accomplish this relatively easily. However, on the tall cross, the soldiers used either wooden forks or ladders.<sup>11</sup> Next, the feet were fixed to the cross, either by nails or ropes. Ossuary findings and the Shroud of Turin suggest that nailing was the preferred Roman practice.<sup>23, 24, 30</sup> Although the feet could be fixed to the sides of the stipes or to a wooden footrest (suppedaneum), they usually were nailed directly to the front of the stipes (Fig 5).<sup>11</sup> To accomplish this, flexion of the knees may have been quite prominent, and the bent legs may have been rotated laterally (Fig 6) <sup>23 -25, 30</sup>

When the nailing was completed, the titulus was attached to the cross, by nails or cords, just above the victim's head.<sup>11</sup> The soldiers and the civilian crowd often taunted and jeered the condemned man, and the soldiers customarily divided up his clothes among themselves <sup>11, 25</sup> The length of survival generally ranged from three or four hours to three or four days and appears to have been inversely related to the severity of the scourging.<sup>8, 11</sup> However, even if the scourging had been relatively mild, the Roman soldiers could hasten death by breaking the legs below the knees (erurifragium or skelokopia).<sup>8, 11</sup>

Not uncommonly, insects would light upon or burrow into the open wounds or the eyes, ears, and nose of the dying and helpless victim, and birds of prey would tear at these sites.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, it was customary to leave the corpse on the cross to be devoured by predatory animals.<sup>8, 11, 12, 28</sup> However, by Roman law, the family of the condemned could take the body for burial, after obtaining permission from the Roman judge.<sup>11</sup>

Since no one was intended to survive crucifixions the body was not released to the family until the soldiers were sure that the victim was dead. By custom, one of the Roman guards would pierce the body with a sword or lance.<sup>8, 11</sup> Traditionally, this had been considered a spear wound to the heart through the right side of the chest -- a fatal wound probably taught to most Roman soldiers.<sup>11</sup> The Shroud of Turin documents this form of injury.<sup>5, 11, 22</sup> Moreover, the standard infantry spear, which was 5 to 6 ft (1.5 to 1.8 m) long, <sup>30</sup> could easily have reached the chest of a man crucified on the customary low cross."

### **Medical Aspects of Crucifixion**

With knowledge of both anatomy and ancient crucifixion practices, one may reconstruct the probable medical aspects of this form of slow execution. Each wound apparently was intended to produce intense agony, and the contributing causes of death were numerous.

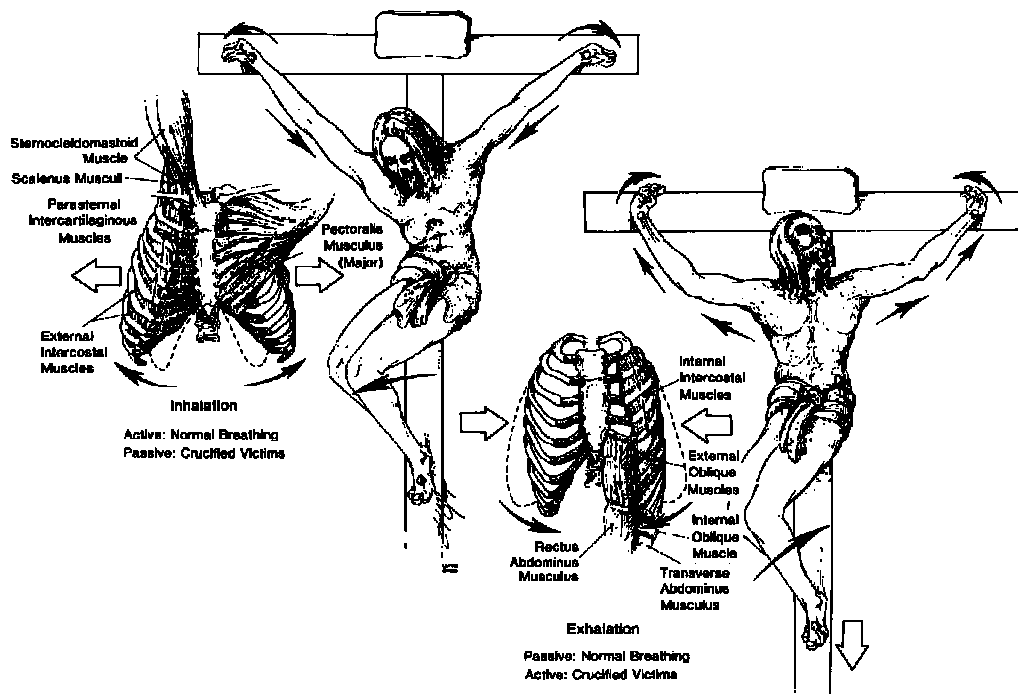
The scourging prior to crucifixion served to weaken the condemned man and, if blood loss was considerable, to produce orthostatic hypotension and even hypovolemic shock.<sup>8, 12</sup> When the victim was thrown to the ground on his back, in preparation for transfixion of the hands, his scourging wounds most likely would become torn open again and contaminated with dirt.<sup>2, 16</sup> Furthermore, with each respiration, the painful scourging wounds would be scraped against the rough wood of the stipes. <sup>7</sup> As a result, blood loss from the back probably would continue throughout the crucifixion ordeal.

With arms outstretched but not taut, the wrists were nailed to the patibulum.<sup>7, 11</sup> It has been shown that the ligaments and bones of the wrist can support the weight of a body hanging from them, but the palms cannot.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, the iron spikes probably were driven between the radius and the carpals or between the two rows of carpal bones, <sup>2, 10, 11, 30</sup> either proximal to or through the strong bandlike flexor retinaculum and the various intercarpal ligaments (Fig 4). Although a nail in either location in the wrist might pass between the bony elements and thereby produce no fractures, the likelihood of painful periosteal injury would seem great. Furthermore, the driven nail would crush or sever the rather large sensorimotor median nerve (Fig 4).<sup>2, 7, 11</sup> The stimulated nerve would produce excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms.<sup>7, 9</sup> Although the severed median nerve would result in paralysis of a portion of the hand, isehemic contractures and impalement of various ligaments by the iron spike might produce a clawlike grasp.

Most commonly, the feet were fixed to the front of the stipes by means of an iron spike driven through the first or second intermetatarsal space, just distal to the tarsometatarsal joint.<sup>2, 5, 8, 11, 30</sup> It is likely that the deep peroneal nerve and branches of the medial and lateral plantar nerves would have been injured by the nails (Fig 5). Although scourging may have resulted in considerable blood loss, crucifixion per se was a relatively bloodless procedure, since no major arteries, other than perhaps the deep plantar arch, pass through the favored anatomic sites of transfixion. <sup>2, 10, 11</sup>

The major pathophysiologic effect of crucifixion, beyond the excruciating pain, was a marked interference with normal respiration, particularly exhalation (Fig 6). The weight of the body, pulling down on the outstretched arms and shoulders, would tend to fix the intercostal muscles in an inhalation state and thereby hinder passive exhalation. <sup>2, 10, 11</sup> Accordingly, exhalation was primarily diaphragmatic, and breathing was shallow. It is likely that this form of respiration would not

suffice and that hypercarbia would soon result. The onset of muscle cramps or tetanic contractions, due to fatigue and hypercarbia, would hinder respiration even further.<sup>11</sup>



**Fig 6. Respirations during crucifixion.** Left, Inhalation. With elbows extended and shoulders abducted, respiratory muscles of inhalation are passively stretched and thorax is expanded. Right, Exhalation. With elbows flexed and shoulders adducted and with weight of body on nailed feet, exhalation is accomplished as active, rather than passive, process. Breaking legs below knees would place burden of exhalation on shoulder and arm muscles alone and soon would result in exhaustion asphyxia.

Adequate exhalation required lifting the body by pushing up on the feet and by flexing the elbows and adducting the shoulders (Fig 6) <sup>2</sup> However, this maneuver would place the entire weight of the body on the tarsals and would produce searing pain.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, flexion of the elbows would cause rotation of the wrists about the iron nails and cause fiery pain along the damaged median nerves.<sup>7</sup> Lifting of the body would also painfully scrape the scourged back against the rough wooden stipes. <sup>2, 7</sup> Muscle cramps and paresthesias of the outstretched and uplifted arms would add to the discomfort. <sup>7</sup> As a result, each respiratory effort would become agonizing and tiring and lead eventually to asphyxia. <sup>2, 3, 7, 10, 11</sup>

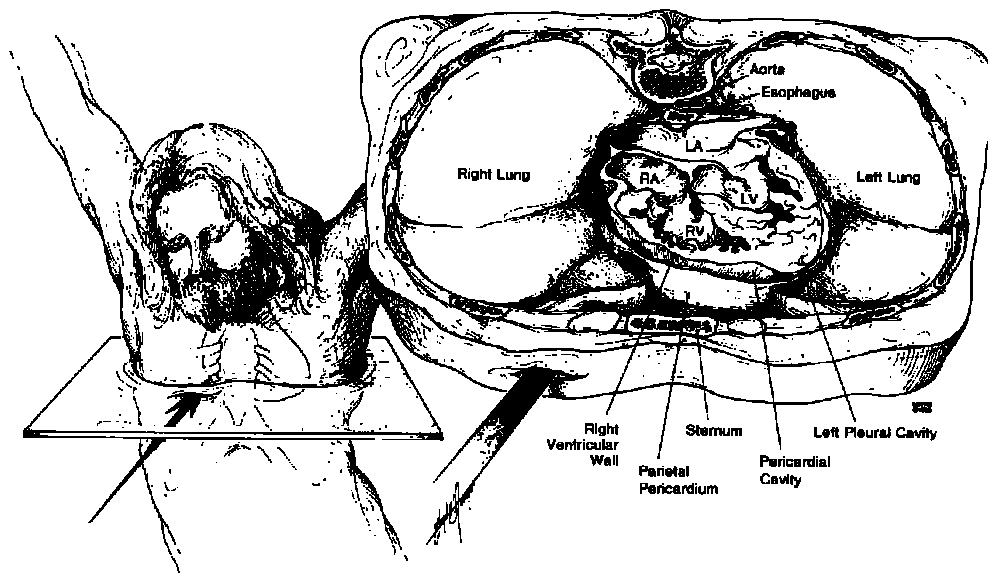
The actual cause of death by crucifixion was multifactorial and varied somewhat with each case, but the two most prominent causes probably were hypovolemic shock and exhaustion asphyxia.<sup>2, 3, 7, 10</sup> Other possible contributing factors included dehydration, <sup>7, 16</sup> stress-induced arrhythmias,<sup>3</sup> and congestive heart failure with the rapid accumulation of pericardial and perhaps pleural effusions. <sup>2, 7, 11</sup> Crucifracture (breaking the legs below the knees), if performed, led to an asphyxic death within minutes.<sup>11</sup> Death by crucifixion was, in every sense of the word, excruciating (Latin, excruciatu, or "out of the cross").

### Crucifixion of Jesus

After the scourging and the mocking, at about 9 AM, the Roman soldiers put Jesus' clothes back on him and then led him and two thieves to be crucified.<sup>1</sup> Jesus apparently was so weakened by the severe flogging that he could not carry the patibulum from the Praetorium to the site of crucifixion one third of a mile (600 to 650 m) away.<sup>1, 3, 5, 7</sup> Simon of Cyrene was summoned to carry Christ's cross, and the processional then made its way to Golgotha (or Calvary), an established crucifixion site.

Here, Jesus' clothes, except for a linen loincloth, again were removed, thereby probably reopening the scourging wounds. He then was offered a drink of wine mixed with myrrh (gall) but, after tasting it, refused the drink.<sup>1</sup> Finally, Jesus and the two thieves were crucified. Although scriptural references are made to nails in the hands,<sup>1</sup> these are not at odds with the archaeological evidence of wrist wounds, since the ancients customarily considered the wrist to be a part of the hand.<sup>7, 11</sup> The titulus (Fig 3) was attached above Jesus' head. It is unclear whether Jesus was crucified on the Tau cross or the Latin cross; archaeological findings favor the former <sup>11</sup> and early tradition the latter.<sup>38</sup> The fact that Jesus later was offered a drink of wine vinegar from a sponge placed on the stalk of the hyssop plant<sup>1</sup> (approximately 20 in, or 50 em, long) strongly supports the belief that Jesus was crucified on the short cross.<sup>6</sup>

The soldiers and the civilian crowd taunted Jesus throughout the crucifixion ordeal, and the soldiers east lots for his clothing. <sup>1</sup> Christ spoke seven times from the cross.' Since speech occurs during exhalation, these short, terse utterances must have been particularly difficult and painful. At about 3 PM that Friday, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, bowed his head, and died.<sup>1</sup> The Roman soldiers and onlookers recognized his moment of death.<sup>1</sup> Since the Jews did not want the bodies to remain on the crosses after sunset, the beginning of the Sabbath, they asked Pontius Pilate to order erueifraiture to hasten the deaths of the three crucified men.<sup>1</sup> The soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves, but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.<sup>1</sup> Rather, one of the soldiers pierced his side, probably with an infantry spear, and produced a sudden flow of blood and water.<sup>1</sup> Later that day, Jesus' body was taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb.<sup>1</sup>



*Fig 7. Spear wound to chest.* Left, Probable path of spear. Right, Cross section of thorax, at level of plane indicated at left, showing structures perforated by spear. LA indicates left atrium; LV, left ventricle; RA, right atrium; RV, right ventricle.

## DEATH OF JESUS

Two aspects of Jesus' death have been the source of great controversy, namely, the nature of the wound in his side <sup>4, 6</sup> and the cause of his death after only several hours on the cross.<sup>13-17</sup> The gospel of John describes the piercing of Jesus' side and emphasizes the sudden flow of blood and water.<sup>1</sup> Some authors have interpreted the flow of water to be ascites <sup>12</sup> or urine, from an abdominal midline perforation of the bladder.<sup>15</sup> However, the Greek word (plvra, or pleura) <sup>32, 35, 36</sup> used by John clearly denoted laterality and often implied the ribs.<sup>6, 32, 36</sup> Therefore, it seems probable that the wound was in the thorax and well away from the abdominal midline.

Although the side of the wound was not designated by John, it traditionally has been depicted on the right side.<sup>4</sup> Supporting this tradition is the fact that a large flow of blood would be more likely with a perforation of the distended and thin-walled right atrium or ventricle than the thick-walled and contracted left ventricle. Although the side of the wound may never be established with certainty, the right seems more probable than the left.

Some of the skepticism in accepting John's description has arisen from the difficulty in explaining, with medical accuracy, the flow of both blood and water. Part of this difficulty has been based on the assumption that the blood appeared first, then the water. However, in the ancient Greek, the order of words generally denoted prominence and not necessarily a time sequence.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, it seems likely that John was emphasizing the prominence of blood rather than its appearance preceding the water.

Therefore, the water probably represented serous pleural and pericardial fluid, 5-7, 11 and would have preceded the flow of blood and been smaller in volume than the blood. Perhaps in the setting of hypovolemia and impending acute heart failure, pleural and pericardial effusions may have developed and would have added to the volume of apparent water.<sup>5, 11</sup> The blood, in contrast, may have originated from the right atrium or the right ventricle (Fig 7) or perhaps from a hemopericardium.<sup>5, 7, 11</sup>

Jesus' death after only three to six hours on the cross surprised even Pontius Pilate.' The fact that Jesus cried out in a loud voice and then bowed his head and died suggests the possibility of a catastrophic terminal event. One popular explanation has been that Jesus died of cardiac rupture. In the setting of the scourging and crucifixions with associated hypovolemia, hyperemia, and perhaps an altered coagulable state, friable non-infective thrombotic vegetations could have formed on the aortic or mitral valve. These then could have dislodged and embolized into the coronary circulation and thereby produced an acute transmural myocardial infarction. Thrombotic valvular vegetations have been reported to develop under analogous acute traumatic conditions.<sup>39</sup> Rupture of the left Ventricular free wall may occur, though uncommonly, in the first few hours following infarction.<sup>40</sup>

However, another explanation may be more likely. Jesus' death may have been hastened simply by his state of exhaustion and by the severity of the Scourging, with its resultant blood loss and preshock state.<sup>7</sup> The fact that he could not carry his patibulum supports this interpretation. The actual cause of Jesus' death, like that of other crucified victims, may have been multifactorial and related primarily to hypovolemic shock, exhaustion asphyxia, and perhaps acute heart failure.<sup>2, 3, 5-7, 10, 11</sup> A fatal cardiac arrhythmia may have accounted for the apparent catastrophic terminal event.

Thus, it remains unsettled whether Jesus died of cardiac rupture or of cardiorespiratory failure. However, the important feature may be not how he died but rather whether he died. Clearly, the weight of historical and medical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead before the wound to his side was inflicted and supports the traditional view that the spear, thrust between his right ribs, probably perforated not only the right lung but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured his death (Fig 7). Accordingly, interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge.

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From the Departments of Pathology (Dr. Edwards) and Medical Graphics (Mr. Hosmer), Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn; and the Homestead United Methodist Church, Rochester, Minn, and the West Bethel United Methodist Church, Bethel, Minn (Pastor Gabel).

Reprint requests to: Department of Pathology, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN 55905 (Dr. Edwards). Reprinted from the JAMA© Journal of the American Medical Association March 21, 1986, Volume 225 Copyright 1986, American Medical Association.