

THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS CHRIST

As human beings, we have a difficult time relating to the pain and suffering of others unless we have been through a similar experience. It is not because we are coldhearted but rather that our hearts and minds want to avoid grief and pain; instead, we seek after love and joy. One reason Jesus Christ had to become flesh and submit to temptation, suffering, and death was so He could truly understand the afflictions of human beings. It is those experiences that make Him a loving and merciful High Priest, Judge, and Advocate for us before God the Father.

And even though we have not experienced the complete sufferings of Jesus Christ, God has given us a Spirit that opens our hearts to understand that tremendous sacrifice. Knowing what Jesus Christ suffered is important because we have “**fellowship of His sufferings**” (Philippians 3: 10). By contemplating what He endured, we come to know Him in a very personal way that deepens as the years go by and we look to the God that sustained Jesus Christ during His worst torments for comfort from our own pain and sorrow.

Jesus Was Betrayed

MATTHEW 17:22 Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them [*His disciples*], “**The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men,**

To be betrayed is the most terrible offense that can be done to someone because the very act of it means that the love you had for that person was never reciprocated. The worst part is that the person despised your love. There is no greater cause of grief in any relationship or any act more devastating.

Jesus Was Secretly Arrested at Night, Having Committed No Crime

MATTHEW 26:50, 55 But Jesus said to him, “Friend, why have you come?” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. ... 55 In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, “**Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me?** I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me.

JOHN 15:25 “But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, “**They hated Me [Jesus Christ] without a cause.**”

Jesus Christ experienced shame and unjust persecution. He was arrested by the Sanhedrin, likely at the direction of the high priest. These all hated Jesus. As such, His arrest was nothing like today; the words for “laid hands on” conceal a very forceful and physical act. Literally, it means “throw oneself upon to punish”. Mark 4: 37 says, “the waves beat into the boat” where *beat* is the same Greek word as *laid* in Matthew 26: 50. These waves were caused by a megastorm, which brought waves crashing into the ship. The secret arrest of an innocent Jesus was only the beginning of His beatings.

Jesus Was Deserted by Everyone

MATTHEW 26:56 ... **Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.**

Not only was Jesus arrested but His disciples abandoned Him in the worst hour of His life. He was completely at the mercy of His captors who brutally arrested Him in the middle of the night. While the disciples stood and watched from a distance, He was taken to the private home of the Caiaphas, the high priest. *Forsook* is translated or can mean desert wrongfully, disregard, neglect, abandon, leave destitute, leave behind, send away. Jesus was totally abandoned by His closest friends.

Jesus Was Falsely Accused

MATTHEW 26:59-61 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 61 and said, “This *fellow* said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’ “

Imagine being taken secretly before a judge and falsely accused of crimes, all the while knowing that your captors were eventually going to murder you. As Jesus stood silently before the most powerful men in all of Judea, He saw the murderous hatred in their eyes which drove them to use whatever means to fulfill their bloodlust. His trial was nothing more than a Kangaroo Court.

Jesus Was Spat Upon and Beaten

MATTHEW 26:67-68 67 Then **they [the high priest and Sanhedrin] spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands,** 68 saying, “Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?”

These few words minimize the real beating that took place. Isaiah 52:14 says, “**Just as many were astonished at you, so His [Jesus Christ’s] visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.**” Jesus was not hit or beaten a couple of times; He was pummeled again and again and again. Isaiah 50:6 adds that they literally pulled the hair of His beard out. He also did not turn aside when they spit in His face. The fist-pounding, clubbing, and hair pulling went on and on because that is what was required to disfigure His face so that even the people of that time, who had witnessed many other beatings, **were astonished and stunned.** His tormentors were filled with the satanic bloodlust of hatred. Remember, too, who did this: the high priest and council of elders or Sanhedrin, those who were the supposed priests of *God!*

Jesus Was Rejected

MATTHEW 27:21-22 The governor answered and said to them, “**Which of the two do you want me to release to you?**” **They [the high priest, Sanhedrin, and multitude of Jews] 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!”**

The high priest and Sanhedrin, out of their hatred for Jesus, gathered a multitude (literally, *rabble*) of the city together and persuaded them to support their evil plot. These people were necessary to ensure that Pilate would heed their demands out of fear of causing a riot. Again, Jesus watched silently knowing of their deceit and that even the lowest citizens of Judea rejected Him as He was about to give His life for theirs.

Jesus Was Scourged

MATTHEW 27:26 Then he released Barabbas to them; and when **he had scourged Jesus**, he delivered *Him* to be crucified.

Again, the Bible doesn't provide the details necessary to fully grasp what they did to Jesus. Roman law even forbade the scourging of Roman citizens because it was so brutal. A description of a scourging in the *Ecclesiastical History [Eusebius], book 4, chapter 15, paragraph 4* reads:

"For they say that the bystanders were struck with amazement when they saw them [the martyrs] lacerated with scourges even to the innermost veins and arteries, so that the hidden inward parts of the body, both their bowels and their members, were exposed to view."

Roman scourging was brutal beyond words.

Jesus Was Mocked and Despised

MATTHEW 27:29-30 When **they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed 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.

Such an act would be humiliating enough if it weren't for the abuse that also occurred. The wreath of thorns was not just placed upon Jesus' head as if putting a crown on a king. Again, the translation hides the cruelty behind this act by using the word *put* where the Greek meaning is to impose in a hostile sense. In other words, the wreath was shoved onto His head, driving the thorns through the flesh and down against His skull. This was further aggravated by hitting Him on the head with the rod intensifying the already terrible pain. Moreover, the *rod* (*reed* in the KJV) was literally an instrument of torture. In Revelation 11:1 (KJV), "Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod ..." where *rod* can mean a *cudgel*. Jesus was not hit with a reed or simple switch but a cudgel stick that is strong and stout enough to be used as a weapon.

Remember, preceding all of this was the brutality of His arrest, the beating of the priests, and the flesh-tearing *flagellum* or scourging; and, still, it wasn't over. It says in Psalm 69:20 that it broke Jesus' heart to hear those hateful words:

PSALM 69:20 **Reproach [disgrace] has broken my heart**, And I am full of heaviness; **I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; And for comforters, but I found none.**

Jesus Was Crucified on the Cross

MATTHEW 27:35 Then **they crucified [impaled] Him [Jesus Christ]** ...

Once again, the narrative simplifies a most terrible and cruel act. Nails were driven through His wrists (some claim it was His hands but most sources suggest the weight of His body would cause the nails to rip through the flesh), just below the wrist bone, through the major nerve running to the hand. His feet were also nailed against the cross, either through the feet or ankles. His hands and feet were about the only parts of His body that had not yet been injured and it would have been unimaginably excruciating. Crucifixion is a brutally painful way to die. It was perfected by the Romans to exact the greatest amount of pain and agony from the victims while prolonging death for many hours or even days. (For a more details of the agony of crucifixion, you can read about it on the Internet.)

Jesus Was Reviled and Mocked

MATTHEW 27:39-43 And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads 40 and saying, “You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” 41 Likewise **the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders**, said, 42 “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. **If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross**, and we will believe Him. 43 “**He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him**; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ “

Notice that, once again, the high priest and Sanhedrin led the mocking of Jesus and even arrogantly pronounced that God had rejected Him. As the Son of the Most High God, they not only blasphemed Jesus but His Father as well. Amazingly, while under such agony that few have experienced, He did not revile back (1 Peter 2:23).

Incredibly, Jesus continues to be persecuted and suffer to this day. It is not the agony of a physical body but a spiritual pain:

ACTS 9:4 Then he [*Saul before his conversion*] fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?**”

1 CORINTHIANS 12:26-27 And **if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it**; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it*. 27 Now **you are the body of Christ**, and members individually.

When God's people are persecuted or suffer, Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Body, feels the pain especially when it is inflicted by fellow brethren. Which is worse? His sacrifice or the pain we inflict on each other? God only knows.

Most of all, understand this: all the betrayals, lies, persecutions, injustices, shame, false accusations, beatings, tortures, and agonies came upon Jesus in the space of about eighteen hours. Any one of these will produce unimaginable pain and anguish. Jesus Christ felt and endured pain inflicted by men in a merciless world and still avoided committing sin! Is it any wonder that He sweated blood while praying to God? It was then, at the time of Jesus' greatest physical affliction, that God laid the sins of the world, past, present, and future, upon an innocent Christ. Jesus never committed a single sin, so imagine the torture of the transgressions of billions of people coming upon Him all at once. Some have suggested that Jesus Christ didn't suffer any more than others have in the history of the world. Truly, if we have ANY insight and compassion whatsoever into that singular Passover, there is no question that Jesus Christ endured what no man ever has or ever will. Worst of all, He suffered unjustly and innocently and all for one reason: His love for the world:

ACTS 2:36-37 36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, **whom you crucified**, both Lord and Christ.” 37 Now when they heard *this*, **they were cut [pierced] to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?”

Now, what are YOU going to do?

PROPHECIES OF JESUS' CRUCIFIXION:

- 1) Genesis 3: 15
- 2) Psalm 22: 1, 6-21, 31 ["That He has done *this*" is literally, "it is finished"—John 19: 30]
- 3) Psalm 31: 4-5
- 4) Psalm 34: 20
- 5) Psalm 35: 11
- 6) Psalm 38: 10-11
- 7) Psalm 41: 7, 9
- 8) Psalm 69: 6-9, 19-21
- 9) Psalm 109: 25
- 10) Isaiah 50: 6
- 11) Isaiah 52: 14
- 12) Isaiah 53
- 13) Zechariah 11: 12-13
- 14) Zechariah 12: 10
- 15) Zechariah 13: 6-7.

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

Steven Greene

<https://sabbathreflections.org>
sabbathreflections@gmail.com