

ENDORSEMENTS

The death of Jesus for our sins is the heart of the Christian faith. What does a physician have to say about that death? That's the subject of this important new book, examining the medical evidence from the Biblical texts. Particularly intriguing are the details of the death of Jesus as found in the *Old Testament*, written hundreds of years before the actual event.

—Jerry Newcombe, D.Min.
TV Producer, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
Co-author of numerous books with D. James Kennedy, Ph.D.,
including *Christ's Passion: The Power and the Promise*

In this complete treatment of the crucifixion and the suffering associated with this kind of punishment, Dr. Marinella reminds us of “man’s inhumanity to man” and God’s great love for us to accept this form of death to provide such a great salvation.

—Jonathan M. Saxe, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Professor of Surgery
Director of Trauma Research, Wright State University
Candidate Master of Arts in Religious Studies,
Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia

It takes a physician to pronounce a man dead. It takes a student to research how and why a man dies. Mark is both! As a physician of medicine and a student of the Bible, Mark has not only discovered that a man died, he has also learned why He died. The man—Jesus! The reason—we need a Savior!

—David K. Smith, D.D.
Christian & Missionary Alliance Board
Senior Pastor, Fairhaven Church, Dayton, Ohio

Dr. Marinella’s bedside manner displays his depth of scientific understanding, but also his compassion. His study of the Cross will deepen your faith.

—Dennis M. Sullivan, M.D., M.A. (Ethics)
Professor of Biology, Director, Center for Bioethics,
Cedarville University, Cedarville, Ohio

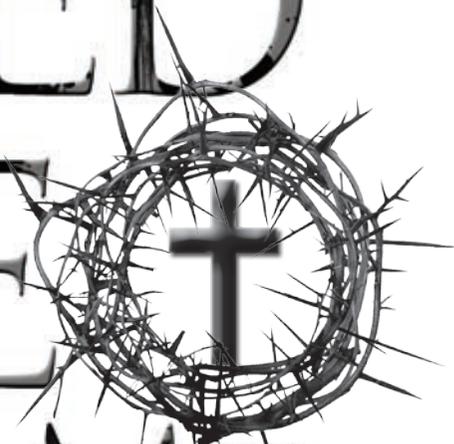


DIED
HE 
FOR ME

A PHYSICIAN'S VIEW
OF THE CRUCIFIXION
OF JESUS CHRIST



DIED HE FOR ME



A PHYSICIAN'S VIEW
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OF JESUS CHRIST

Mark A. Marinella, M.D., F.A.C.P.

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[Initial caps have been added to pronouns referring to the Lord.]

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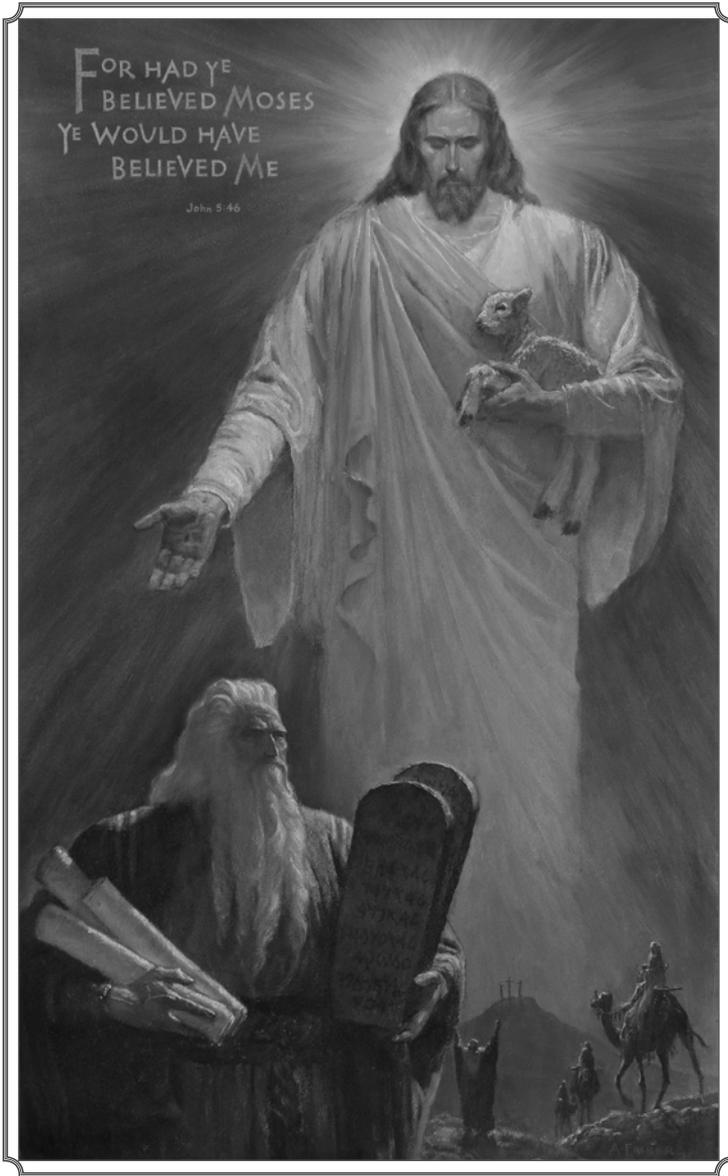


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PREFACE

THE CRUX OF CHRISTIANITY

*He Himself bore our sins in
His body on the tree,
so that we might die to sins and
live for righteousness;
by His wounds you have been healed.*

(1 Peter 2:24)

THE *crux* of Christianity is salvation through faith that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, that He died on the cross, that He rose again to life in bodily form, and now sits at God the Father's right hand. None of us deserves eternal bliss, but in His overwhelming love for mankind, God came to earth in human flesh as the God-man, Jesus Christ, and gave His life freely, securing our salvation through faith.

Christians celebrate Christ's resurrection each spring, the pinnacle of our Christian calendar we call "Easter." Without Christ's necessary, yet voluntary, gruesome death during Passover week, none of us would have the hope and promise of salvation.

I have often found fellow believers uncomfortable when it comes to discussing Jesus' sacrifice, especially the graphic details of the flogging or the crucifixion. However, we as frail human beings need to comprehend and appreciate Jesus' voluntary sacrifice and suffering made for all generations. The goal of this book is not to affix blame as to who killed Jesus. Indeed,

DIED HE FOR ME  Mark A. Marinella, M.D.

I am just as responsible as anyone involved during the trials and execution, since it is also my sin that nailed Him to the cross. In fact, contemplating my own sin and its effects have made me painfully more aware of the value of the tremendous sacrifice Jesus made to restore me to His grace. Brennan Manning sums up Christ's mind-boggling sacrifice for our sin:

The unconditional love of Jesus Christ nailed to the wood does not flinch before the worst sinner's perversity and inhumanity (*A Glimpse of Jesus*, 2003, 91).

As a Christian physician, I have not only marveled at the spiritual ramifications of Christ's death, but also at the physical and physiological aspects. For instance, Pilate's flogging of Jesus probably left Him in critical condition due to massive blood loss, tissue injury, and great distress. Based on the physical response to the severe beatings, lack of food and sleep, and great spiritual anguish, I believe Jesus' body was in shock and already nearing death as He was nailed to the cross. To present this, I have compiled a succinct overview of Jesus' death from a physical and medical perspective that, I hope, both lay and medical people can appreciate and understand.

My desire is that when we contemplate the crucifixion so often casually taken for granted, we will not forget the physical suffering and sacrifice Christ underwent in a purely voluntary manner, simply because of His love for each one of us. We need to digest and understand that "Jesus was a naked, humiliated, exposed God on the cross who allowed us to get close to Him" (Manning, 137), and that He would have died for each of us, even if we were the only person to ever live.

Mark A. Marinella, M.D., F.A.C.P.
Dayton, Ohio, November 2008

This book is dedicated
to my daughters,
Elise and Lauren—

God has truly blessed me
beyond measure.

FOREWORD

IN *Died He for Me: A Physician's View of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ*, Mark Marinella, M.D. eloquently guides readers through the physiologic process that was occurring in Jesus' body over His final few hours, while also providing a historical background on crucifixion as a method of execution. This book is also written for non-physicians, providing medical and scientific knowledge in an understandable and insightful manner.

Dr. Marinella examines Old Testament prophecy as it relates to the crucifixion, informing the reader of subtle points that are actually important. For example, Deuteronomy 21:22-23 states,

If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Christ was removed from the cross and buried before sundown:

Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down (John 19:31).

However, as Christ was already dead, Pilate did not have His legs broken, fulfilling prophecy in the Exodus 12:46 instruction for handling the Passover lamb: "...do not break any of the bones."

The in-depth evaluation of the crucifixion of Christ is humbling and will likely lead believers and unbelievers to have even more respect and admiration for the God who provided this salvation.

DIED HE FOR ME  Mark A. Marinella, M.D.

Dr. Marinella's experience as a physician enables him to review the Bible and comment from a modern standpoint on the medical conditions that Christ was likely to have experienced in His final hours on earth before He miraculously rose from the dead on the third day.

Christ died as atonement for sins. Medical knowledge of human physiology was very limited in the time of Christ. *Died He for Me* will help readers understand what Christ likely went through physically and spiritually to sacrifice His life for our sins so that Christians can spend eternity with our LORD. Obviously, at the time of Christ routine laboratory studies or *radiographic imaging* could not be performed, so Dr. Marinella's ideas are based on expert opinion and cannot be backed up by medical evidence. However, the conclusions drawn by him are plausible and are excellent explanations of what physiologic processes were likely occurring in Christ during His final hours.

As a believer, I am humbled at the price that was paid and trust you will be too. If you are a non-Christian or unbeliever, you will have the opportunity to understand an aspect of the depth of love that Christ displayed on the cross.

All human religious icons have died, but only One rose to life again. And Dr. Marinella's book helps us to realize what Jesus suffered in His willing and voluntary experience of the total destruction of His physical body during His torture, and that there is no doubt He did truly die, and yet that He subsequently rose to life again from the dead. Through this in-depth "sharing in His sufferings," we come to ever more appreciate this awesome display of love and power by our LORD.

To God be the glory!

Steven D. Burdette, M.D.

Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine
Wright State University School of Medicine, Dayton, Ohio

THE PUBLISHER'S WORD

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

(Mark 15:34, Psalm 22:1a)

As horrific as the physical torture and murder of the King of kings and Lord of lords was, the abandonment and forsakenness (spiritual separation) of the Son from the Father as our Savior bore and atoned all of the sins of the world was the crowning moment of this pinnacle event that has separated time in *His Story* (history). As the author states at the conclusion of chapter 6, “Jesus felt upon His shoulders the weight of all the sin of fallen mankind and the wrath of His Holy Father...”

When the Rev. Christopher Hoops and I first discussed the potential of publishing Dr. Mark Marinella’s book, our initial thought was that it is more important to emphasize the Doctrine of Redemption rather than primarily the physical aspects of the Savior’s passion week of torture and death. But it is impossible to separate one from the other. The incarnate Jesus (fully man and fully God) purposed more than 2000 years ago to fulfill His role on earth and voluntarily submit to suffer, die, and take upon Himself the sins of the entire world.

According to Dr. D. James Kennedy and Dr. Jerry Newcombe,

In the Gospels, one-third of Matthew, Mark, and Luke deal with Christ’s sufferings and death. One-half of John’s Gospel deals with the last week of Jesus’ life. The Apostles’ Creed, which affirms facts about Christ’s life, takes a tremendous leap from the birth of Christ to His suffering and death. It passes over His entire ministry. The Creed says nothing about Jesus’ great teachings, about His marvelous example, or about the incredible miracles He performed. The focus of all these works communicates the tremendous importance of Christ’s suffering and pain.*

* Kennedy, D. James, Ph.D. and Jerry Newcombe, D.Min., *New Every Morning* (March 21). Portland, OR: Multnomah Books, 1996.

Faninus, a learned layman who was martyred in 1550 in Italy for his faith, said this on his execution day:

Christ sustained all manner of pangs and conflicts, with hell and death, on our accounts; and thus by His sufferings, freed those who really believe in Him from the fear of them. (www.exclassics.com/foxe/foxe161.htm)

Because of God's holiness, humankind's sin, God's justice, and God's love, Jesus voluntarily endured the cross to save those (take the punishment deserved by humans) who would believe in Him (Matthew 26:39):

Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will."

The cup contained all the sin of the world. Christ took it in obedience, this bitter cup of God's abandonment and wrath against sin. He is perfect and holy, voluntarily laying down His own life, taking *our*-deserved punishment, in both a physical and spiritual death (separation from God, the Father), this for all the sins of mankind, past, present, and future, for those who believed and will believe in the atonement of Christ, and are imputed Christ's righteousness. Our Savior victoriously conquered death as He rose from the grave.

This was the Passion of Jesus Christ. The word *passion* comes from a Latin word meaning "to submit to suffering." Jesus was mocked and ridiculed, spat upon, beaten with fists and whips, His back ripped to ribbons, His brow bruised and bloody from the crown of thorns pressed into His flesh, nailed to a cross and condemned to a most brutal and agonizing death, physically and spiritually. All for us.

I love Thee, because Thou has first loved me,
and purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree.
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;
if ever I loved Thee, My Jesus 'tis now.

—William R. Featherstone

THE PUBLISHER'S WORD

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the Law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so He condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4)

To believe in Christ means to accept Him as Lord and Master of our lives. Napoleon in his latter days at St. Helena is alleged to have said,

Across a chasm of eighteen hundred years, Christ makes a demand which is above all others difficult to satisfy. He asks for that which a philosopher may often seek at the hands of his friends, or a father of his children, or a bride of her spouse. He asks for the human heart, for His very own, exclusively His. Wonderful! In defiance of time and space, the soul of man with all its powers becomes an annexation to the Empire of Christ.*

After the Resurrection from the grave by Christ on the third day after His burial in a sealed tomb, for forty days our Lord made post-resurrection appearances to hundreds of people on earth before His ascension to heaven to the right hand of the Father and where He makes constant intercession for His people (those who love Him). Please look up these Scripture passages, in which Jesus assured His followers that He was alive in a glorified body (and could be touched and felt, eat food [fish], and still revealed the scars from His ordeal on the cross). And He is alive today and forevermore.

A week later His disciples were in the house again, and Thomas with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus

* Kennedy, D. James, Ph.D. and Jerry Newcombe, D.Min., *New Every Morning* (August 17). Portland, OR: Multnomah Books, 1996.



came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:26-29)

THE POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF JESUS*

Easter (Resurrection) Day:

Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9), Other women (Matthew 28:9), Peter (1 Corinthians 15:5), Jerusalem; Two disciples (Luke 24:15-31), Emmaus; Ten apostles, Thomas absent (John 20:19), Jerusalem.

Sunday following the Resurrection:

Eleven disciples, Thomas present (John 20:26-29), Jerusalem.

Time unknown:

Seven disciples fishing (John 21:1-24),
 Jesus' charge to Peter (John 21:15-17), Sea of Galilee;
 Eleven disciples (Matthew 28:16-17),
 Five hundred brethren (1 Corinthians 15:6),
 James (1 Corinthians 15:7), Two disciples (Mark 16:12),
 Eleven disciples (Acts 1:2-9), places unknown.

Ascension Day:

Eleven disciples (Matthew 28:16-20), mountain in Galilee;
 (Mark 16:14-20); (Luke 24:50-52), Bethany.

Later Appearance (time unknown):

Saul/Paul (Acts 9:1-6, 1 Corinthians 15:8), road to Damascus.

And here is the last commission of Jesus to His eleven disciples (Galilee mountainside) and for all of His followers, the true Church, the Bride of Christ forevermore:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make

* In part from the Thompson Chain Reference® Bible, Kirkbride Bible Company. The Gospel records of these appearances are somewhat obscure. Scholars differ in their opinions as to their exact number and order.

THE PUBLISHER'S WORD

disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

(Matthew 28:18-20)

This is our duty, our commission from our Master. We are also to remember Him and honor Him by regularly taking of the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, together with other believers in the faith.

“...do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”
For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

(1 Corinthians 11:24b, 26)

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the [new] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in My Father's kingdom.”

(Matthew 26:26-29)

He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son.”

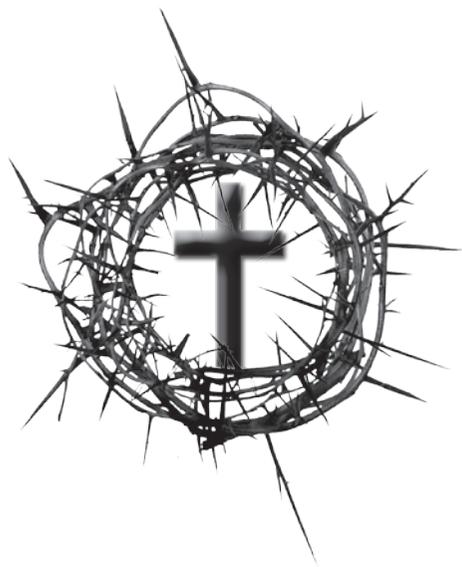
(Revelation 21:6-7)



We are pleased to be publishing Dr. Mark Marinella's inspiring book.

— Gerald Christian Nordskog
Thanksgiving 2008





INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

*I want to know Christ
and the power of His resurrection
and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings,
becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow
to attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

(Philippians 3:10-11)

THIS study detailing a medical interpretation of the physical aspects of the crucifixion has also been framed in the understanding of Christ's incarnation, spiritual suffering, and humiliation. The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ provides the focal point for studying the life of Christ—and the life of the King of kings is marked by a paradoxical humiliation.

Philippians 2 provides the context for understanding the sum of His life, death, and resurrection.

Your attitude [mind] should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at



the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
(Philippians 2:5-11)

Christ did not take advantage of His Godhood. Not only did He set aside His heavenly powers and come to earth in human form, He was also fully God and fully man while on earth. Consider the heavenly power that was available to Christ through each facet of the trial and crucifixion. He had choice and the power to stop them at any time or just slip away, as in Luke 4:30.

He came as a baby under humiliating circumstances. Christ experienced growing up and learning: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). He lived thirty-three years in perfect righteousness, and that obedience and fulfillment of the law, as well as His death and sacrifice, were needed for our forgiveness and salvation.

See Isaiah 53 (quoted in full on page 10). Jesus is the epitome of the humble, suffering servant and a perfect example for His followers. Christ’s humility started with becoming human, being obedient, being willing to die, and culminated in death on a cross, the most humiliating torture ever conceived. In addition to the extended physical pain, a crucifixion was also a public spectacle marked by mocking, insults, jeering, and nakedness. The Apostle Paul emphasized Christ’s humiliation, not His physical suffering, and points out that the same humility that compelled Christ to the cross should inform Christians how they should conduct themselves toward others.

Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price to provide eternal salvation to those who believe in Him—He gave His life as atonement for sins. Christ, being God incarnate, could have chosen other

INTRODUCTION

means to provide our salvation and chosen another process to give His life as a sacrifice. Jesus Christ was tortured beyond belief, suffered an agonizing death, and was buried, fulfilling the Scriptures. At the height of His suffering, “He did not open His mouth” (Isaiah 53:7b) to complain or condemn, but to pray for those who were torturing Him, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34a).

Although this book examines in detail from a twenty-first-century medical-science perspective the torture and trauma done to Jesus and the multifaceted physiological processes involved in the total destruction of His physical human body, proving He was actually dead and not just unconscious when placed in the tomb, in the final analysis, no one can claim to prove a physical cause of death. These details were part of the predetermined plan for sinners to be reconciled to the Holy God. And now God calls all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30) and put their trust in Christ’s atoning work on the cross.

John stated (3:19), “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.” The providential cause and timing of Jesus’ death are revealed in the Word and spiritually discerned: that although man cannot save himself,

God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

The sins of mankind have been atoned for by Christ’s death and those who trust in Christ alone will have everlasting life.

— EDITOR

ISAIAH 53

¹Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him. ³He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces He was despised and, we esteemed Him not.

⁴Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. ⁵But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. ⁶We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth. ⁸By oppression and judgment He was taken away. And who can speak of His descendants? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He was stricken. ⁹He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death, though He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.

¹⁰Yet it was the LORD's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, and though the LORD makes His life a guilt offering, He will see His offspring and prolong His days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in His hand. ¹¹After the suffering of His soul, He will see the light of life and be satisfied; by His knowledge My righteous servant will justify many, and He will bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will give Him a portion among the great, and He will divide the spoils with the strong, because He poured out His life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors. *[Initial caps added to pronouns referring to the LORD.]*



1

WHAT THE OLD TESTAMENT SAYS

1 WHAT THE OLD TESTAMENT SAYS

*Then Moses summoned all the elders
of Israel and said to them,
“Go at once and select the animals
for your families and
slaughter the Passover lamb.”*

(Exodus 12:21)

THE prediction of Christ’s death appears numerous times in the Old Testament, and the New Testament necessarily stands in the context of the Old. Together the testaments provide an amazing discourse of history and prophecy with regard to Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection, giving historical credence to the story of what the followers of Jesus Christ call the Gospel.

GENESIS

Genesis holds so much history and promise that it is impossible in a short work like this to cover all of the deep theological and prophetic issues relating to the New Testament. However, some of the more pertinent and obvious references to Christ’s coming sacrifice are worth noting. The earliest reference to Christ in the Bible comes in Genesis 3:15, God’s curse upon the serpent after deceiving Adam and Eve: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel.” The offspring of the woman includes humanity and, ultimately, Jesus’ followers. As such, Satan and his followers would try to

cripple mankind by crucifying Christ (“strike His heel”), but ultimately Christ would deliver the final, fatal blow to evil by His resurrection (“He will crush your head”). This means that in order for Him to emerge victorious over Satan, Christ must offer Himself in sacrifice—to suffer the reality of death on a cross. The cross would prove to be horrid and painful but, as we shall see in later chapters, necessary.

Perhaps the greatest foreshadowing in Scripture of Christ’s sacrificial death is found in Genesis chapter 22, the story of Abraham and Isaac. God promised Abraham and Sarah a son in their old age. That son was Isaac, whom God asked Abraham to sacrifice with the knife and fire on Mount Moriah. Abraham was obedient and led Isaac, who carried the wood for the fire on his own back, on the long journey to the mountain: “Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac” (Genesis 22:6). This verse parallels Christ’s carrying of the “wood” cross upon His shoulders to His own sacrifice, but there was no animal sacrifice to save Him as there ultimately was for Isaac. Abraham in his obedient spirit was about to slay his son when God provided a sacrificial ram in the thicket that served as a substitute for Isaac (Genesis 22:13). Abraham prophesied in verse 8, “God Himself will provide the lamb...” This provision clearly promised that God would provide our sacrificial lamb, Jesus Christ, as in John 1:29:

The Lamb of God,
Who takes away the sin of the world.

EXODUS

Exodus foreshadows Christ’s sacrificial death in the experience of the Passover, which the Jews have celebrated ever since to commemorate their release from Egyptian captivity. In addition,

1 WHAT THE OLD TESTAMENT SAYS

Exodus 6:6 may suggest the type of death the Messiah would later suffer for mankind's redemption: "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm..." Christ literally stretched out His arms upon the cross and nails were driven into His wrists—all for our salvation and redemption. Although this verse refers to God figuratively stretching out His arm to lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, it may also suggest the horrific death that Jesus would suffer thousands of years later.

Filled with symbolism, Passover is observed annually and much of the celebration centers upon a meal, as with Christ's Last Supper, the last Passover He shared with the disciples. An amazing aspect of the first Passover was God's command for each family to sacrifice an unblemished lamb (representing the sinless Jesus) and smearing the blood of the lamb on the doorframe of the family's home. The presence of the blood on the doorframe led to the death angel "passing over" the dwelling, with all inhabitants escaping the destructive plague of death that affected every Egyptian household (Exodus 12). In similar fashion, Christ's shedding of His blood on the wood frame of the cross provides escape from eternal death for those who trust in His saving grace. The blood of the lamb (in Exodus) and the Lamb (in the Gospels) seeped into the wood and stained it, leaving a visible reminder of the need for a blood sacrifice for atonement of sin.

With regard to the Passover lamb, Exodus 12:46 states: "do not break any of the bones." Moses reiterated the command to the Jews about their annual Passover lamb in Numbers 9:12: "They must not...break any of its bones." These verses foreshadow that Christ died without His bones being broken, fulfilling these verses in Exodus and Numbers and, as we shall see, also a passage in Psalm 34.

LEVITICUS

Throughout Leviticus, the priestly duties regarding the slaughter and sacrifice of animals to atone for the Israelites' sin are described in painstaking detail. Of greatest significance is the annual Atonement, a day of great fasting when the high priest entered the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle with the blood of the sacrifice to reconcile the people with God by atoning for their sins. The priest, going behind the curtain, sought God's forgiveness for the people:

He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain... He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. In this way he will make atonement... because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been (Leviticus 16:15-16).

Blood is a vital component of redemption under the old as well as the new covenant. Leviticus 17:11 states:

For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves...; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.
[And]... without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22b).

As the Hebrew writer points out to us, this foreshadowed Christ's substitutionary death once and for all when He was crucified millennia later:

Nor did He enter heaven to offer Himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own (Hebrews 9:25).

When Christ died, "The curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom" (Mark 15:38). Consequently, God is no

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longer “veiled” behind the curtain, and we can now enter into His direct presence through the atoning death and sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. Paul summarizes this concept in 2 Corinthians 3:16: “But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.” We do not need a priest to repetitively enter the previously forbidden Most Holy Place where God dwelled. Instead, Christ opened the door for our direct access to God,

once for all...to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26b).

NUMBERS

Many may find the book of Numbers a daunting challenge to read, since this book is filled with the census tables of the Israelites and dense historical dissertation. However, it reveals some important prophecy. Numbers 21 describes an incident when God sent deadly venomous snakes to bite the Israelites for complaining bitterly against Him and Moses. Many people died, which pushed them, as in previous predicaments, to confession. Moses interceded for the Israelites, petitioning God to remove the snakes and save the people from the deadly venom. God in His abundant mercy and grace responded by instructing Moses how to provide a way to escape death if they had faith and believed:

So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.” So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived (Numbers 21:7-9).

This portion of Scripture unquestionably prophesies the crucifixion, or “lifting up” of the Son of Man bearing our sin on

a wooden cross or pole. During the famous discussion with Nicodemus, Jesus said,

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life (John 3:14-15).

Likewise, John quoting Jesus' own words, said,

"But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." He said this to show the kind of death He was going to die (John 12:32-33).

Clearly, if we believe with sincere faith that Christ was "lifted up" and subsequently died and rose again for our sins, we like the Israelites may be saved from death if we "look up" at Christ bearing our sin on the pole.

DEUTERONOMY

Perhaps the most vivid allusion to crucifixion made during Mosaic times is found in Deuteronomy 21:22-23:

If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse.

During the Exodus and preceding their settling into the promised land, God gave Moses decrees and commands for the Israelites to follow in order to maintain an orderly, God-centered society. Criminals who were executed were often hung on a tree after death to deter others from committing the same offense. However, the dead body was not to be left hanging on the tree overnight, much in the same way that bodies that were crucified on the eve of a Sabbath needed to be removed before

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sunset. Jesus was cursed by man and God to absorb all past, present, and future sin and hung on a wooden cross for all to see. Paul points out this curse in Galatians 3:13:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”

THE PSALMS

Some of the most dramatic highlights of Scripture relevant to Christ’s crucifixion are found in the Psalms, especially those that predict His physical torment and death. The Psalms and passages in the writings of the Prophets have some of the most obvious and dramatic prophecies regarding Jesus’ physical suffering, which would not occur for several hundred years.

There are several Messianic Psalms that portray Christ as the coming Messiah out of the line of David. This work discusses only a sample of those psalms which prophesy and predict the crucifixion and physical torture of Jesus of Nazareth. Psalm 16 shows King David’s confidence in God in the midst of any trouble, and he had many. David knew that God would deliver him through any adversity; he attests to this in verse 8: “Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.” He knew that after death he would see God according to his faith that resulted in his salvation: “my body will also rest secure” (verse 9). However, Psalm 16 takes on a prophetic tone in verse 10: “because You will not abandon Me to the grave, nor will You let your Holy One see decay.” Clearly, King David did not mean this verse to apply to himself since he was a mortal man whose body would decompose after death. This prophetically points to the bodily resurrection of Jesus without decay. In Acts 2, the Apostle Peter quoted this psalm to the assembled crowd. Peter goes on to say in Acts 2:30-31:

But he [David] was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that He would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was not abandoned to the grave, nor did His body see decay.

Psalm 22 may be the most well-known of the Messianic Psalms that foreshadow Christ's suffering and death. Charles Spurgeon called this "...beyond all others 'The Psalm of the Cross'".³⁸ Some scholars suggest that Jesus may have recited the whole psalm while He hung on the cross, but the best-known quote by Jesus from this psalm is found in verse one:

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

This is one of Jesus' seven recorded utterances from the cross, and yet possibly the most revealing of His temporary separation from His Father who turned His back upon His own Son—because how can a holy God look upon sin. David is clearly remembered as a godly king, but in several of the psalms, especially Psalm 22, we see David as a prophet, like Isaiah or Jeremiah.

Although Psalm 22 applies to David's earthly afflictions, the examples prophesying Christ's death are clearly seen as well. For instance, verses 7 and 8 state:

All who see Me mock Me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: "He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue Him. Let Him [the LORD] deliver Him, since He delights in Him."

These words are very similar to the way the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders mocked Him as the Gospel of Matthew records in 27:39-41:

Those who passed by hurled insults at Him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the

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temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”

Mark’s version is very similar (15:31b):

“He saved others,” they said, “but He can’t save Himself”

In Psalm 22:14 David says:

I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within Me.

Jesus was exhausted, “poured out like water” from sleep deprivation, intense stress, sweating in the hot Middle East sun, and the injuries from His flogging. He literally poured out volumes of water in the form of sweat and through the lungs in the form of water vapor. His bones literally were out of joint due to the tremendous forces applied to the skeleton when hanging on a cross. “My heart has turned to wax” is figurative pertaining to His exhaustion and physical collapse. However, in Christ’s critical medical condition, His heart literally was likely beginning to fail and becoming *hypokinetic*, or dilated, and beating weakly. This is not unlike the change in form that occurs as wax is heated and starts to melt. Psalm 22 goes on:

My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue sticks to the roof of My mouth (v. 15).

These graphic details describe a man in a physically weakened condition who has lost significant amounts of bodily fluids and become dehydrated. By the time Jesus was on the cross, He had already been without food or drink, had lost hydration through sweating in the arid climate, and had likely lost large amounts of blood from the wounds inflicted at His scourging.

David further states (in verse 16b):

...they have pierced My hands and My feet.

This refers to the piercing of Christ's hands and feet with long spikes as He was nailed to the cross. The pain of this act is unthinkable. Jesus was likely crucified in a loincloth (or naked to increase the shame), having been disrobed of His outer tunic and other garments for the flogging of His bare back. About such, Psalm 22:18 reads:

They divide My garments among them and cast lots
for My clothing.

This prophecy was fulfilled by the Roman soldiers, as recorded in Luke 23:34:

And they divided up His clothes by casting lots.

Psalm 31, another psalm of David recording his distress amidst his afflictions, manifests several inferences to the Passion of Christ. For instance, verse 5 states: "Into Your hands I commit My spirit," which were Christ's last words from the cross as recorded in Luke 23:46: "Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Verses 9-12 describe a man under considerable stress and physical pain who was abandoned by his friends:

Be merciful to Me, O Lord, for I am in distress; My eyes
grow weak with sorrow, My soul and My body with grief.

My life is consumed by anguish and My years by
groaning; My strength fails because of My affliction,
and My bones grow weak.

Because of all My enemies, I am the utter contempt
of My neighbors; I am a dread to My friends—those
who see Me on the street flee from Me. I am forgotten
by them as though I were dead; I have become like
broken pottery.

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We would be wise to remember that Christ, as this psalm suggests, was abandoned by His disciples in His final hour just as Jesus predicted in Mark 14:27: “You will all fall away.” Jesus went on to quote Zechariah 13:7: “Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.”

Psalm 34:20, which states, “He protects all His bones, not one of them will be broken,” finds New Testament fulfillment in John 19:36: “These things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: ‘Not one of His bones will be broken.’” As will be discussed later, most crucified victims lingered on the cross for 24 to 96 hours before they died. However, Jesus succumbed faster than most crucified victims so that the Roman soldiers did not need to hasten His death by *crucifracture*.¹³ Indeed, our sacrificial Lamb, like the lamb or goat in the book of Exodus, had no bones broken in order to fulfill the Scriptures and God’s divine plan.

Psalm 41:9 refers historically to David being betrayed by his own relative or close friend, but prophetically points to Judas Iscariot betraying Jesus:

Even My close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared
My bread, has lifted up his heel against Me.

Jesus quoted Psalm 41:9 while He was washing the disciples’ feet:

I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have
chosen. But this is to fulfill the Scripture: “He who
shares My bread has lifted up His heel against Me”
(John 13:18).

Psalm 69:21 states: “They put gall in My food and gave Me vinegar for my thirst.” Christ was offered drink on two occasions: before being nailed to the cross and immediately before His death. See Mark 15:23. Also, Matthew 27:34 states:

There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall;
but after tasting it, He refused to drink it.

Wine or wine mixed with *myrrh* or the bitter substance, gall, was sometimes offered to the crucifixion victim in order to dull the senses and ease pain, much like a sedative or narcotic may be given before a medical procedure today.⁴⁰

However, as these verses state, Jesus declined the drink (Matthew 27:34, Mark 15:23); He chose not to avoid fully experiencing the physical pain and anguish that awaited Him on the cross.

Psalm 69:21 also seems to be prophetic of the last moments of Christ's life on the cross, when He was near death and experienced severe thirst due to dehydration and a very dry mouth. During times of dehydration, the brain releases a hormone called *vasopressin* that stimulates thirst. Indeed, as most of us have experienced, thirst can be a very uncomfortable sensation. However, the thirst Christ experienced goes well beyond what we can imagine.

Mark 15:36 states:

One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink.

And Luke 23:36 tells us:

The soldiers also came up and mocked Him. They offered Him wine vinegar.

John gives the most detail about Christ's thirst:

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips (John 19:28-29).

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THE PROPHETS

Isaiah 53, the “suffering servant” chapter, offers perhaps the most graphic and well-known Old Testament prophecy considering Christ’s Passion. Isaiah prophesied the coming judgment on the Southern kingdom of Judah during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. In this context, chapter 53 predicts that the nation of Israel will reject a future servant, who indeed was the coming Messiah. Isaiah describes this coming servant as ordinary and plain in appearance, which led many to overlook Him as having any importance: “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him” (verse 2). In verse 3, this man is described as,

despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering...He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

Some of the most powerful and vivid verses in Scripture pertaining to the crucifixion are found in Isaiah 53. Verse 5 states:

But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

Christ was pierced with nails when He was crucified and after He died His chest was pierced by the tip of a Roman spear. This was performed to ensure His death:

Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down... But when they came to Jesus and found that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water (John 19:31b, 33-34).

Although, at the time, Jesus had already breathed His last:

Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit (John 19:30).

The flow of blood and water has medical significance that will be discussed later.

Peter obviously was familiar with Isaiah 53:5 when he wrote his epistle hundreds of years later. These mortal wounds “heal” us or offer us salvation:

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed (1 Peter 2:24).

Isaiah 53:7 goes on to say:

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.

This is borne out in Matthew 26:63 during Jesus’ trial before the Sanhedrin: “But Jesus remained silent.” Peter later looked back as he wrote his epistle, echoing again the prophet Isaiah:

When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats (1 Peter 2:23).

Isaiah 53:8 states:

For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He was stricken.

Being cut off from the land of the living refers to death, in Jesus’ case, death by crucifixion. This horrendous death Christ suffered, however, was predetermined by God from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), knowing man would sin and need redemption:

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Yet it was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer (Isaiah 53:10).

On the night Jesus was in Gethsemane:

He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39).

As can be seen, Isaiah 53 is a powerful section of Scripture that predicts the suffering Christ, who was not born until several hundred years later.

Zechariah 3:8-9 completes the Old Testament references to Christ's Passion:

Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring My servant, the Branch. See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it, says the LORD Almighty, and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.

These verses refer to "the Branch," the Messiah. The removal of the sin of the land in a single day may refer to the crucifixion and death of Jesus.

In addition, Zechariah 12:10 states,

They will look on Me, the One they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for Him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

Again, as in Isaiah 53:5, we see the word "pierce" referring here to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. "Pierce" connotes an active, vehement infliction upon someone with a sharp object.