*Crucified**

Acts 8:26-33 (26) And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.
(27) And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,
(28) Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.
(29) Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.
(30) And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?
(31) And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.
(32) The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:
(33) In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.
From the Hebrew text, that part which he was reading was Isaiah 53:7. The account in Acts varies very little from the Hebrew text. It has been almost universally understood this refers to the Messiah; and Philip explicitly applies it to Him. One cannot but wonder that, of all the predictions of Messiah's sufferings in the Old Testament, the most striking should have been that which the eunuch was reading as Philip joined him, lets join in, turn with me to;
Isaiah 53:3-8 (3) He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
(4) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:

yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
(5) But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
(6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.
(7) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.
(8) He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.
The entire chapter is exceedingly important to Christians. It contains the most full, continuous statement in the Bible of the Redeemer's sufferings and death. And after all the light which is shed on the subject in the New Testament; after all the full and clear statements made by the Redeemer and the apostles; still, if we wish to see a full and continuous statement on the great doctrine of the atonement, we naturally recur to this portion of Isaiah. If we wish our faith to be strengthened, we shall find no part of the Bible better adapted to it than this. No man can study it too profoundly. No one can feel too much anxiety to understand it. Every verse, every phrase, every word should be pondered until it fixes itself deep in the memory, and makes an eternal impression on the heart. If a man understands this portion of the Bible, he will adapt a correct view of the plan of salvation revealed in the gospel of Christ. To wit; to be in Christ, is to receive the doctrine of Christ crucified, and to be baptized as proof of the genuine forgiveness of sin, and the obligation to live according to its precepts. That, as Jesus Christ in His crucifixion died completely, that no spark of the natural or animal life remained in His body, so that those who profess His

salvation should be so completely separated and saved from sin, that they have no more connection with it, nor any more influence from it. Whoso, then, has been baptized into Christ's death has formally surrendered the whole state and life of sin, and is dead to sin, in Christ.
We must go back to first-century Palestine that was under the jurisdiction of Rome. Though Rome permitted the Jews to retain a king in Judea (King Herod), the Jews were subject to Roman law in legal matters. In order to achieve the execution of Jesus, the Jews had to appeal to the Roman authorities for permission (John 18:31). A simple reading of the verses that pertain to Jewish attempts to acquire this permission for the execution are clear in their depiction of Roman reluctance in the matter. Pilate, the governing procurator in Jerusalem, sought literally to quell and diffuse the Jewish efforts to kill Jesus. He called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people and stated plainly to them the just cause to spare Jesus. It is difficult to conceptualize the level of hostility possessed by the Jewish hierarchy, and even by a segment of the Jewish population, toward a man who had done nothing worthy of such hatred. It is incredible to think that they would clamor for the release of a known murderer and insurrectionist Barabbas, rather than allow the release of Jesus. Yes, the Roman authority was complicit in the death of Jesus, but Pilate would have had no interest in pursuing the matter if the Jewish leaders and crowd had not pressed for it. He went to great lengths to perform a symbolic ceremony in order to communicate the fact that he was not responsible for Jesus' death. A fact recorded in;
Matthew 27:17-25 (17) Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?
(18) For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.
(19) When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man:

for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.
(20) But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.
(21) The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.
(22) Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.
(23) And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.
(24) When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.
Having no malice against Jesus, Pilate labored to clear Him, and urged to get Him discharged. It was with disappointment and indignation that Pilate heard the rabble's decision. He could not refuse to release the robber and murderer Barabbas; but he still entertained some hope, of a better feeling in the crowd, which would allow him to acquit Jesus. The message from his wife was a warning. God has many ways of giving checks to sinners, in their sinful pursuits, and it is a great mercy to have such checks from Providence, from faithful friends, and from our own consciences. O do not this abominable thing which the Lord hates!, is what we may hear said to us, when we are entering into temptation. Being overruled by the priests, the people made choice of Barabbas. Multitudes choose the world, rather than God, for their ruler and portion, thus they choose their own delusions. The Jews were so bent upon the death of Christ, that Pilate thought it would be dangerous to refuse. Yet, all was so ordered to make it evident that Christ suffered for no fault of His own, but for the sins of His people. How vain for Pilate to expect to free himself from the guilt of the innocent blood of a

righteous person, whom he was by his office bound to protect! The Jews' curse upon themselves has been awfully answered in the sufferings of their nation. But none could bear the sin of others, except Him that had no sin of His own. And are we not all concerned? Is not Barabbas preferred to Jesus, when sinners reject salvation that they may retain their darling sins, which rob God of His glory, and murder their own souls? The blood of Christ is now upon us for good, through mercy, by the Jews' rejection of it. In the higher sense, neither the Jews nor the Romans crucified Jesus. Oh, they were all complicit, including Judas Iscariot. But so were we. Every accountable human being who has ever lived has committed sin that necessitated the death of Christ. In the process of crucifixion the victim was either tied or nailed to the cross. Romans preferred nails. Roman nails were made of iron and are described as a square tapered nail with a large head. The nails were inserted just above the wrist, between the two bones of the forearm or driven through the wrist, in a space between four carpal bones. Don't let anyone tell you this involves a contradiction, or a mistake in the Bible: the Greek word for 'hand' has a wider range of meaning than the English word, and can include the wrist. There is no mistake or contradiction here. And the feet: Remains found in Jerusalem of a young man crucified in the first century A.D., included a heel bone pierced by a large nail, giving archaeologists, osteologists and anthropologists evidence of crucifixion in antiquity. Based on this evidence suggest, the victim's legs straddled the vertical shaft of the cross, one leg on either side, with the nails penetrating between the heel bones. Death by crucifixion was the result of the manner in which the condemned man hung from the cross and not the traumatic injury caused by the nails. Hanging from the cross resulted in a painful process of asphyxiation, in which the two sets of muscles used for breathing, the intercostal [chest] muscles and the diaphragm, became progressively weakened. In time, the

condemned man expired, due to the inability to continue breathing properly. If the victim relaxed, his lungs were held in the 'breathed out' position. The only way he could breathe in was by pushing up on the nails that held his feet in position. We can only imagine how agonizing that was. The pain and difficulty of speech in the position of crucifixion was such that it is apparent that the Lord meant us to hear and meditate upon the words He uttered from the cross. Perhaps it would have been far easier for Him to have prayed those words to Himself, within His own thoughts; but instead He made the effort to speak them out loud. The passion of the Lord's intercessions on the cross is matchless. That the intensity of the Lord's prayerfulness and seeking of God on the cross should be held up as our pattern: the very height of the ideal is wondrous. It is worth noting that if the Lord's seven recorded utterances are placed in the conventional chronology, the number of words Christ actually spoke can be seen to steadily decrease until the final utterance. Not only does this serve to illustrate the intensity of effort wrung forth from our Lord in His final utterance, but we also sense that He found physically speaking increasingly difficult. The picture of a man carrying his cross towards the place of death, the image of a man hanging upon a cross in his time of dying, these are images of a man who finds it increasingly difficult to carry on, a man who finds the way harder and harder.

It was usual to put shame upon malefactors, by a writing to notify the crime for which they suffered. So they set up one over Christ's head. This they designed for His reproach, but God so overruled it, that even His accusation was to His honour. Life in Christ, in a sense, becomes increasingly difficult, it is increasingly difficult to truly hold on to the spirit of our crucified Lord. And yet as so many of us can testify, the possibility of turning back recedes further and further as the months and years go by. Lord, to whom shall we go?, *becomes more and more underlined in our conscience*

as we contemplate the last hours of Christ. During the three hours which the darkness continued, Jesus was in agony, wrestling with the powers of darkness, and suffering His Father's displeasure against the sin of man, for which He was now making His soul an offering. Never were there three such hours since the day God created man upon the earth, never such a dark and awful scene; it was the turning point of that great affair, man's redemption and salvation. His enemies wickedly ridiculed His complaint. Many of the reproaches cast upon the word of God and the people of God, arise, as here, from gross mistakes. Christ, just before He expired, spake in his full strength, to show that His life was not forced from Him, but was freely delivered into His Father's hands. He had strength to bid defiance to the powers of death: and to show that by the eternal Spirit He offered himself, being the Priest as well as the Sacrifice, He cried with a loud voice. Then He yielded up the ghost. The Son of God upon the cross, did die by the violence of the pain He was put to. His soul was separated from His body, and so His body was left really and truly dead. It was certain that Christ did die, for it was needful that He should die. He had undertaken to make Himself an offering for sin, and He did it when He willingly gave up His life. Therefore Christians willing come together each first day of the week to remember His pain and suffering for their own sin. The breaking of bread is described as eating at 'the table of the Lord' (1 Cor. 10:21). If we don't partake of it, we declare ourselves to have no part in Him. Yet the very fact that we partake of it, is a statement that we have pledged ourselves to separation from this present world; for it is not possible to eat at the Lord's table, and also of this world (1 Cor. 10:21). The Passover, as the prototype for breaking of bread, featured bitter herbs to remind Israel of their bitter experience in Egypt (Ex. 1:14). The breaking of bread should likewise focus our attention on the fact that return to the world is a return to bondage and bitterness, not

freedom. While forgiveness itself is not mediated in any metaphysical sense by the memorial meeting, it is nonetheless a vital part of the life of the forgiven believer. So the one who is washed, to wit; born of water and of the spirit, may partake of the body and blood of the Saviour. In this way a person has an affectionate and loving personal relationship with Christ. The bread broken is a solemn reminder, emblematic of His wounded body for our sake. 'Bread not broken' is not emblematic of His wounded body. Christ brake it; signifying His body being wounded, bruised, and broken, through buffetings, scourging, platting of a crown of thorns, which was put upon his head, and piercing his hands and feet with nails, and His side with a spear; for which reason the right of breaking bread in this ordinance ought literally and strictly to be observed: Christ himself took the bread and brake it, indicating His willingness to lay down His life, to suffer and die in place of His people. The bread broken is scriptural as well as historical. In The Millennial Harbinger, Vol. I, 1830, Alexander Campbell wrote; We have said the loaf must be broken before the saints partake of it. Jesus took a loaf from the paschal table and broke it before he gave it to his disciples. They received a broken loaf, emblematic of his body once whole, but by his own consent, broken for his disciples. *As seen, "breaking bread" is highly significant in terms of the worship of the early church. In view of the language of Acts 20:7, it is apparent that the breaking of bread was and is the very core of the Lord's Day assembly. This memorial celebrates the death and resurrection of Jesus, the very foundation of the belief of the Christian. Observe Paul in;*
I Corinthians 11:23-26 (23) For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:
(24) And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

(25) After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.
(26) For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.
All this occurred after the observance of the usual paschal supper. It could not, therefore, be a part of it, nor could it have been designed to be a festival or feast. The apostle introduces this evidently in order to show them that it could not be, as they seemed to have supposed, an occasion of feasting. It was after the supper, and was therefore to be observed in a distinct manner. Those who partake of it, are to take Him as their Lord and Life, yield themselves up to Him, and live upon Him. Here is an account of the ends of this ordinance. It is to be done in remembrance of Christ, to keep fresh in our minds His dying for us, as well as to remember Christ pleading for us, by virtue of His death, and is at God's right hand. It is not merely in remembrance of Christ, of what he has done and suffered; but to celebrate His grace in our redemption. This do in remembrance of me; now the apostle mentions these words of our Lord, to show that the design of the institution of this ordinance of the supper was not in commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt, but it was in remembrance of Himself, of what He did and suffered on the behalf of His people: particularly the eating of the broken bread was intended to bring to remembrance how the body of Christ was wounded, bruised, and broken for them; how He bore their sins in His own body on the tree, and suffered, and made satisfaction for them. Bread broken represents His wounds, bruises, sufferings, and death. Broken for you, though a bone of him was not broken, but inasmuch as his skin and flesh were torn and broken by blows with rods and fists, by whippings and scourgings, by thorns, nails, and spear; and body and soul were torn asunder, or divided from each other by death; which in Scripture is

sometimes expressed as breaking, turn with me to;
Ecclesiastes 12:6-7 (6) Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.
(7) Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.
The resurrection of Christ was the great proof of His being the Son of God. It was not possible He should be held by death, because He was the Son of God. The sure mercies of David are assurance of everlasting life, of which the resurrection was a sure pledge; and the blessings of redemption in Christ are a certain expectation. David was a great blessing to the age wherein he lived. Yet here is the difference; Christ was to serve all generations. May we look to Him who is declared to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead, that by faith in Him we may walk with God, and serve our generation according to His will; and when death comes, may we fall asleep in Him, with a joyful hope of a blessed resurrection. Fulfillment implies completion, gratification, an end; the conclusion of the whole matter is this;
While on earth, He who hath all power established the ordinance of baptism, to wit, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16). *Faith in Christ is the effect of* He that believeth*, and baptism is the effect of faith; only those who first believe the testimony of God, by faith repent of their sins, confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and are baptized for remission of sins, have the full and explicit testimony of pardon. This is the gospel. It's invitation is open, also prayer requests for other reasons, in either case come while we persuade with song.*

This message approved by
Jack Warford
a minister for Christ

Study Aids; Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary
Pulpit Commentary
Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

The message ‘Crucified’ Revised; 03272020
This message presented to; BaronOk-June2014/
PineMtAr-Jan2016/WestvilleOk-Feb2016/
PleasentViewOk-Feb2016/

Death by Crucifixion: The Archaeological Evidence - Heel bone pierced by an iron nail Givat HaMivtar, Jerusalem

Death by Crucifixion: The Archaeological Evidence
Heel bone pierced by an iron nail
Givat HaMivtar, Jerusalem
Herodian period, 1st century CE
Ossuary of Yehohanan Son of Hagkol
Givat HaMivtar, Jerusalem
Herodian period, 1st century CE
Soft limestone
L: 57 cm; H: 34 cm
IAA 68-679

An ossuary inscribed with the name of the deceased, Yehohanan ben (son of) Hagkol, was found while excavating a burial cave in northern Jerusalem. Examination of the skeletal remains preserved in the ossuary revealed that the right heel had been pierced by a large iron nail, to which fragments of wood were attached. The find clearly shows that Yehohanan had been put to death by crucifixion, the humiliating and excruciating form of execution used by the Romans to punish rebels, thieves and captives. Though many met their fate by crucifixion, this important find represents the sole archeological evidence for the practice discovered to date. At the time of his death, Yehohanan was in his mid-twenties. He was not an important historical figure, and we therefore know nothing about his life or the crime that led to his punishment. The find reveals that his feet must have been nailed to either side of the crucifixion post, and not to its front, as it is traditionally depicted.

After he died, Yehohanan's body was taken down from the cross for burial in the family tomb. However, the nail that affixed his right foot to the post had been bent, and in order to avoid damaging the body, it was necessary to remove part of the post along with it. After a year, Yehonan's bones were gathered and deposited in an ossuary, on which his name was incised.



Roman Crucifixion Methods Reveal the History of Crucifixion
Crucifixion in Antiquity
Biblical Archaeology Society Staff • 07/17/2011

What do we know about the history of crucifixion? In the following article, “New Analysis of the Crucified Man,” Hershel Shanks looks at evidence of Roman crucifixion methods as analyzed from the remains found in Jerusalem of a young man crucified in the first century A.D. The remains included a heel bone pierced by a large nail, giving archaeologists, osteologists and anthropologists evidence of crucifixion in antiquity.

Roman Crucifixion Methods Reveal the History of Crucifixion

Crucifixion in antiquity was a gruesome execution, not really understood until a skeletal discovery in the 1980s that gave new insight into the history of crucifixion. Photo: Courtesy Israel Exploration Journal, Vol. 35, No. 1 (1985)

What do these bones tell us about the history of crucifixion? The excavator of the crucified man, Vassilios Tzaferis, followed the analysis of Nico Haas of Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School in Jerusalem suggesting Roman crucifixion methods: a contorted position: arms nailed to the crossbeam; legs bent, twisted to one side, and held in place by a single nail that passed through a wooden plaque, through both left and right heel bones, and then into the upright of the cross.

However, when Joseph Zias and Eliezer Sekeles reexamined the remains, looking for evidence of Roman crucifixion methods, they found no evidence that nails had penetrated the victim’s arms; moreover, the nail in the foot was not long enough to have penetrated the plaque, both feet, and the cross. And, indeed, what were previously thought to be fragments of two heel bones through which the nail passed were shown to be fragments of only one heel bone and a long bone. On the basis of this evidence, Zias and Sekeles suggest that the man’s legs straddled the cross and that his arms were tied to the crossbeam with ropes, signifying the method of crucifixion in antiquity.

Literary sources giving insight into the history of crucifixion indicate that Roman crucifixion methods had the condemned person carry to the execution site only the crossbar. Wood was scarce and the vertical pole was kept stationary and used repeatedly. Below, in “New Analysis of the Crucified Man,” Hershel Shanks concludes that crucifixion in antiquity involved death by asphyxiation, not death by nail piercing.

In our free eBook Easter: Exploring the Resurrection of Jesus, expert Bible scholars and archaeologists offer in-depth research and reflections on this important event. Discover what they say about the story of the resurrection, the location of Biblical Emmaus, Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb, the ancient Jewish roots of bodily resurrection, and the possible endings of the Gospel of Mark.

Scholars’ Corner: New Analysis of the Crucified Man

By Hershel Shanks

Roman Crucifixion Methods Reveal the History of Crucifixion

Drawing of the contorted crucifixion position proposed by Vassilios Tzaferis, based on the analysis of Nico Haas, which has since been challenged by Joseph Zias and Eliezer Sekeles. For full caption, see drawing from Israel Exploration Journal 35:1. Photo: Courtesy Israel Exploration Journal, Vol. 20, No. 1–2 (1970)

In our January/February 1985 issue, we published an article about the only remains of a crucified man to be recovered from antiquity (“Crucifixion—The Archaeological Evidence,” BAR, January/February 1985). Vassilios Tzaferis, the author of the article and the excavator of the crucified man, based much of his analysis of the victim’s position on the cross and other aspects of the method of crucifixion on the work of a medical team from Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School headed by Nico Haas, who had analyzed the crucified man’s bones. In a recent article in the Israel Exploration Journal, however, Joseph Zias, an anthropologist with the Israel Department of Antiquities, and Eliezer Sekeles of Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School in Jerusalem question many of Haas’s conclusions

concerning the bones of the crucified man.a The questions Zias and Sekeles raise affect many of the conclusions about the man's position during crucifixion.

According to Haas, the nail in the crucified man penetrated both his right and left heel bones, piercing the right heel bone (calcaneum) first, then the left. Haas found a fragment of bone attached to the right heel that he thought was part of the left heel bone (sustentaculum tali). If Haas's analysis is correct, the two heel bones must have been penetrated by the same nail, and the victim's legs must have been in a closed position on the cross.

But according to the new analysis of the bones just published in the Israel Exploration Journal, the bone fragment Haas identified as part of the left heel bone was incorrectly identified. "The shape and structure of this bony fragment is of a long bone; it cannot therefore be the left [heel bone]," say the most recent investigators. Their conclusions are confirmed by x-rays, which reveal the varying density, structure and direction of the bones.

Haas also incorrectly assumed that the nail is seven inches (17–18 cm) long. In fact, the total length of the nail from head to tip is only 4.5 inches (11.5 cm). A wooden plaque less than an inch thick (2 cm) had been punctured by the nail before it passed through the right heel bone. After exiting from the bone, the nail penetrated the cross itself and then bent, probably because it hit a knot. As the new investigators observe, given the length of the nail, "There simply was not enough room for both heel bones and a two centimeter wooden plaque to have been pierced by the nail and affixed to the vertical shaft of the cross. … The nail was sufficient for affixing only one heel bone to the cross."

In short, only the right heel bone was penetrated—laterally, or sidewise—by the nail. Accordingly, the victim's position on the cross must have been different from that portrayed by Haas.

The new investigators also dispute Haas's conclusion that a scratch on the bone of the right forearm (radius) of the victim, just above the wrist, represents the penetration of a nail between the two bones of the forearm. According to Zias and Sekeles, such scratches and indentations are commonly found on ancient skeletal material, including on the right leg bone (fibula) of this man. Such scratches and indentations have nothing to do with crucifixion.

How then was the crucified man attached to the cross?

As the new investigators observe:

"The literary sources for the Roman period contain numerous descriptions of crucifixion but few exact details as to how the condemned were affixed to the cross. Unfortunately, the direct physical evidence here is also limited to one right calcaneum (heel bone) pierced by an 11.5 cm iron nail with traces of wood at both ends."

According to the literary sources, those condemned to crucifixion never carried the complete cross, despite the common belief to the contrary and despite the many modern reenactments of Jesus' walk to Golgotha. Instead, only the crossbar was carried, while the upright was set in a permanent place where it was used for subsequent executions. As the first-century Jewish historian Josephus noted, wood was so scarce in Jerusalem during the first century A.D. that the Romans were forced to travel ten miles from Jerusalem to secure timber for their siege machinery.

According to Zias and Sekeles:

"One can reasonably assume that the scarcity of wood may have been expressed in the economics of crucifixion in that the crossbar as well as the upright would be used repeatedly. Thus, the lack of traumatic injury to the forearm and metacarpals of the hand seems to suggest that the arms of the condemned were tied rather than nailed to the cross. There is ample literary and artistic evidence for the use of ropes rather than nails to secure the condemned to the cross."

According to Zias and Sekeles, the victim's legs straddled the vertical shaft of the cross, one leg on either side, with the nails penetrating the heel bones. The plaque or plate under the head of the nail, they say, was intended to secure the nail and prevent the condemned man from pulling his feet free.

As Haas correctly suggested, the nail probably hit a knot which bent the nail. However, as Zias

and Sekeles reconstruct the removal of the dead man from the cross:

"Once the body was removed from the cross, albeit with some difficulty in removing the right leg, the condemned man's family would now find it impossible to remove the bent nail without completely destroying the heel bone. This reluctance to inflict further damage to the heel led [to his burial with the nail still in his bone, and this in turn led] to the eventual discovery of the crucifixion."

Whether the victim's arms were tied, rather than nailed to the cross is irrelevant to the manner of his dying. As Zias and Sekeles point out:

"Death by crucifixion was the result of the manner in which the condemned man hung from the cross and not the traumatic injury caused by nailing. Hanging from the cross resulted in a painful process of asphyxiation, in which the two sets of muscles used for breathing, the intercostal [chest] muscles and the diaphragm, became progressively weakened. In time, the condemned man expired, due to the inability to continue breathing properly."

"New Analysis of the Crucified Man" by Hershel Shanks first appeared in Biblical Archaeology Review, November/December 1985.

Notes

a. "The Crucified Man from Giv'at ha-Mivtar: A Reappraisal," Israel Exploration Journal Vol. 35, No. 1 (1985), pp. 22–27.

Zias and Sekeles also note a number of other errors in Haas's report:

1. The victim's legs were not broken as a final coup de grâce. The break so identified by Haas was postmortem.
2. The victim did not have a cleft palate. The upper right canine was not missing, despite Haas's report to the contrary.
3. The wood from which the plaque under the nail head was made was olive wood, not acacia or pistacia, as Hans suggested.
4. The wood fragments attached to the end of the nail were too minute to be analyzed. Haas suggested the vertical shaft of the cross was olive wood. This is possible, but unlikely.

Scourging and Crucifixion In Roman Tradition

(William D. Edwards, MD, Department of Pathology, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN; Wesley J. Gabel, MDiv, West Bethel United Methodist Church, Bethel, MN.; Floyd E Hosmer, MS, AMI, Dept of Medical Graphics, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN; Homestead United Methodist Church, Rochester, MN; review of article and excerpts from On The Physical Death of Jesus Christ, JAMA, March 21, 1986 – Vol 255, No. 11). (The medical terms in this article have been edited into layman's terminology by: Carol R. Ritchie; TNCC, MSN, RN, CNOR.)

Scourging Practices

Flogging was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution, and only women and Roman senators or soldiers (except in cases of desertion) were exempt. The usual instrument was a short whip with several single or braided leather thongs of variable lengths, in which small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bones were tied at intervals. For scourging, the man was stripped of his clothing, and his hands were tied to an upright post. The back, buttocks, and legs were flogged either by two soldiers (lictors) or by one who alternated positions. The severity of the scourging depended on the disposition of the lictors and was intended to weaken the victim to a state just short of collapse or death. As the Roman soldiers repeatedly struck the victim's back with full force, the iron balls would cause deep contusions, and the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into the skin and subcutaneous tissues. Then, as the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh. Pain and blood loss generally set the stage for circulatory shock. The extent of blood loss may well have determined how long the victim would survive on the cross. After the scourging, the soldiers often taunted their victim.

Crucifixion Practices

Although the Romans did not invent crucifixion, they perfected it as a form of torture and capital punishment that was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering. 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. Roman law usually protected Roman citizens from crucifixion, except perhaps in the case of desertion by soldiers.

(The cross) was characterized by an upright post and a horizontal crossbar, and it had several variations. 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. He was usually naked, unless this was prohibited by local customs. Since the weight of the entire cross was probably well over 300 lb. (136 kg), only the crossbar was carried. The crossbar, weighing 75 to 125 lb. (34 to 57 kg), 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. The processional to the site of crucifixion was led by a complete Roman military guard, headed by a centurion. One of the soldiers carried a sign on which the condemned man's name and crime were displayed. Later, the sign would be attached to the top of the cross. The Roman guard would not leave the victim until they were sure of his death.

Outside the city walls was permanently located the heavy upright wooden post, on which the crossbar would be secured. To prolong the crucifixion process, a horizontal wooden block or plank, serving as a crude seat, often was attached midway down the post.

At the site of execution, by law, the victim was given a bitter drink of wine mixed with myrrh (gall) as a mild pain reliever. The criminal was then thrown to the ground on his back, with his arms outstretched along the crossbar. The hands could be nailed or tied to the crossbar, but nailing apparently was preferred by the Romans. 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. The nails commonly were driven through the wrists rather than the palms.

After both arms were fixed to the crossbar, the crossbar and the victim, together, were lifted onto the post. Next, the feet were fixed to the cross, either by nails or ropes. Nailing was the preferred Roman practice. Although the feet could be fixed to the sides of the post or to a wooden footrest, they usually were nailed directly to the front of the post. To accomplish

this, flexion of the knees may have been quite prominent, and the bent legs may have been rotated outward.

When the nailing was completed, the sign was attached to the cross, by nails or cords, just above the victim's head. The soldiers and the civilian crowd often taunted and jeered the condemned man, and the soldiers customarily divided up his clothes among themselves. 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. However, even if the scourging had been relatively mild, the Roman soldiers could hasten death by breaking the legs below the knees.

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. Moreover, it was customary to leave the corpse on the cross to be devoured by predatory animals. However, by Roman law, the family of the condemned could take the body for burial, after obtaining permission from the Roman judge.

Since no one was intended to survive crucifixion, 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. 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. Moreover, the standard infantry spear, which was 5 to 6 ft (1.5 to 1.8 m) long could easily have reached the chest of a man crucified on the customary low cross.

Medical Aspects of Crucifixion

With a 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 conditions leading to a severe drop in blood pressure, fainting, and even organ failure. When the victim was thrown to the ground on his back, in preparation for transfixion of his hands, his scourging wounds most likely would become torn open again and contaminated with dirt. Furthermore, with each respiration, the painful scourging wounds would be scraped against the rough wood of the post. As a result, blood loss from the back probably would continue throughout the crucifixion ordeal.

It has been shown that the dense fibrous tissue connecting the bones together, and bones of the wrist, can support the weight of a body hanging from them, but the palms cannot. Accordingly, the iron spikes probably were driven between the radius, the heavier of the two forearm bones, and the carpals, the eight wrist bones. Another probability for placement of the spikes could be between the row of carpal bones nearest the radius, or through the strong fibrous band-like tissue that covers the carpals, which forms a tunnel for the various fibrous bands connecting the eight carpal bones. The nail driven at this location would crush or sever the rather large median nerve. This nerve provides sensation and movement, particularly to the 2nd and 3rd fingers. Damage to the median nerve results in a contracture or a claw-like deformity of the hand. The damaged nerve would also produce excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms.

It is likely that the deep peroneal nerve, extending to the front of the ankle, and branches of the medial and lateral plantar nerves, would have been injured by the nails driven through the feet. 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, a confluence of arteries in the foot, pass through the favored anatomic sites of transfixion.

The crucial effect of crucifixion, beyond the excruciating pain, was a marked interference with normal respiration, particularly exhalation. The weight of the body, pulling down on the outstretched arms and shoulders, would tend to fix the chest muscles used for breathing in an inhalation state and thereby hinder passive exhalation. Accordingly, exhalation would require using the abdominal muscles rather than the chest muscles, and breathing would be shallow.

It is likely that this form of respiration would not suffice and that a high level of carbon dioxide in the bloodstream would soon result. The onset of muscle cramps or tetanic contractions, due to fatigue and the high levels of carbon dioxide in the blood, would hinder respiration even further.

Adequate exhalation required lifting the body by pushing up on the feet and by flexing the elbows and pulling the shoulders inward. However, this maneuver would place the entire weight of the body on the bones in the feet, and would produce searing pain. Furthermore, flexion, or bending of the elbows would cause rotation of the wrists about the iron nails and cause fiery pain along the damaged median nerves. Lifting of the body would also painfully scrape the scourged back against the rough wooden post. Muscle cramps and loss of feeling in both the outstretched and uplifted arms would add to the discomfort. As a result, each respiratory effort would become agonizing and tiring, further reducing the oxygen levels in the blood, and lead eventually to asphyxia.

The actual cause of death by crucifixion was multifactorial and varied somewhat with each case, but the two most prominent causes probably were shock from inadequate perfusion of critical organs due to blood loss and inadequate oxygen levels in the blood due to inability to breathe properly. Other possible contributing factors included dehydration, stress-induced arrhythmias of the heart, and congestive heart failure with the rapid accumulation of fluid around the heart and in lungs. Death by crucifixion was, in every sense of the word, excruciating (Latin, excruciatus, or "out of the cross").

Scourging of Jesus

At the Praetorium, Jesus was severely whipped. (Although the severity of the scourging is not discussed in the four Gospel accounts, it is implied in one of the epistles (1 Peter 2:24). A detailed word study of the ancient Greek text for this verse indicates that the scourging of Jesus was particularly harsh.) It is not known whether the number of lashes was limited to 39, in accordance with Jewish law. The Roman soldiers, amused that this weakened man had claimed to be a king, began to mock him by placing a robe on his shoulders, a crown of thorns on his head, and a wooden staff as a scepter in his right hand. Next, they spat on Jesus and struck him on the head with the wooden staff. Moreover, when the soldiers tore the robe from Jesus' back, they probably reopened the scourging wounds.

The severe scourging, with its intense pain and appreciable blood loss, most probably left Jesus in a preshock state. Moreover, bleeding from the skin particularly from the capillaries around the sweat glands from severe stress had rendered his skin particularly tender. The physical and mental abuse meted out by the Jews and the Romans, as well as the lack of food, water, and sleep, also contributed to his generally weakened state. Therefore, even before the actual crucifixion, Jesus' physical condition was at least serious and possibly critical.

Death of Jesus

Two aspects of Jesus' death have been the source of great controversy, namely, the nature of the wound in his side and the cause of his death after only several hours on the cross.

The gospel of John describes the piercing of Jesus' side and emphasizes the sudden flow of blood and water. Some authors have interpreted the flow of water to be fluid from the lining inside abdomen or urine, from an abdominal midline perforation of the bladder. However, the Greek word used by John (pleura) clearly denoted laterality and often implied the ribs. Therefore, it seems probable that the wound was in the chest 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. Supporting this tradition is the fact that a large flow of blood would be more likely with a perforation of the heart near 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. The water probably represented fluid draining from the tissues lining the lung and heart and would have preceded the flow of blood and been smaller in volume than the blood. Perhaps in the setting of low blood volume and impending acute heart failure, lung and heart tissue drainage

due to cellular imbalances may have developed and would have added to the volume of apparent water. The blood, in contrast, may have originated from the right atrium or the right ventricle or perhaps from a collection of blood from the lining around the heart.

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.

The actual cause of Jesus' death, like that of other crucified victims, may have been multifactorial and related primarily to shock from low blood volume, exhaustion asphyxia, and perhaps acute heart failure. A fatal cardiac arrhythmia may have accounted for the apparent catastrophic terminal event.

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.*

*Editor's Note: From Scripture there is reason to believe that the spear that was thrust into Jesus side was the cause of His death. In the Gospel of John, the parallel account reads: "And so, when Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, 'It is finished.' And bowing His head, He yielded up His spirit. The Jews therefore, so that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, because it was a preparation day (for that Sabbath was a high day), requested of Pilate that their legs might be broken and the bodies be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first one, and the legs of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers had pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water had come out" (John 19:30-34).

The Greek verb enuzen enuzen is an aroist past tense verb of nussw nusso. Therefore, this aroist verb enuzen enuzen clearly indicates that the soldier had pierced Jesus' side with the spear in the immediate past, that is just prior to the time that the other soldier came to break Jesus' legs, but found that He was dead already.

When the missing part of Matthew 27:49 is restored, it is clear that the final cause of Jesus' death was from the spear that the soldier had thrust into His side. This full verse reads: "But the rest said, 'Let Him alone! Let us see if Elijah comes to save Him.' Then another took a spear and thrust it into His side, and out came water and blood."

The latter half of this verse, which includes the words "...Then another took a spear and out came water and blood," has been omitted from the King James Version. However, some ancient manuscripts contain this part of the verse. The latter part of the verse is also found in other manuscripts that are designated by letter (L, T, Z) and by number (33, 49, 892 and 1241). Older translations which contain the complete verse are the Moffatt translation and the Fenton translation. Newer translations generally footnote this portion of Matthew 27:49 rather than including it in the text. The weight of evidence indicates that the latter half of the verse is an authentic part of the Greek text and should be included in translations of the New Testament. The veracity of this portion of Matthew 27:49 is substantiated by the records in John 19:34 and 20:27.

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P.O. Box 1442
Hollister, California 95024-1442
Phone: 1-831-637-1875
Fax: 1-831-637-9616
cbcg.org