

LESSON 12

THE LAMB OF GOD

(JOHN 18-19)

John the Baptist once pointed to Jesus Christ and said, "Behold the _____ of God which taketh away the _____ of the world" (John 1:29; see 1:36). The LAMB was a sacrificial animal (compare Genesis 22:6-8; Exodus 12:3-7). The innocent lamb that was sacrificed on the Jewish altar was meant to be a picture of the PERFECT SACRIFICE OF CHRIST (Hebrews 10:4-14). Jesus Christ is **GOD'S SACRIFICIAL LAMB**--the innocent One who suffered and died for the sin of the world. The God of love was willing to sacrifice His own beloved Son for us:

"He that spared _____ His own Son, but
_____ Him up for us all"
(Romans 8:32).

"For God so loved the world that He _____
His only begotten Son" (John 3:16).

As we study John chapters 18-19 we are brought right to the foot of Calvary's Cross. Here the Son of man was "lifted up" to die (John 3:14-15; 12:32-33). Here we can gaze upon the Lamb of God and see Him die as the sinner's Substitute.

Outline of John Chapters 18-19

- 1A. The Arrest of Christ (John 18:1-14)
- 2A. The Denial of Christ (John 18:15-18, 25-27)
- 3A. The Trial of Christ (John 18:19-24, 28-40)
- 4A. The Rejection of Christ (John 19:1-15)
- 5A. The Crucifixion of Christ (John 19:16-37)
- 6A. The Burial of Christ (John 19:38-42)

The Arrest of Christ

In John 18:1 we learn that after Jesus prayed (see John 17) He led His disciples to a certain garden (known as the garden of Gethsemane). What did Jesus do while He was at this garden, and what did He want His disciples to do (see Matthew 26:36,39,41,42,44)? _____ Did Judas, the traitor, know where he could find Jesus (John 18:2)? _____

In John 18:3 we have a description of the group that came to arrest Jesus. The word "band" is a military term which refers to a Roman "cohort" which at full strength consisted of one-tenth of a legion. A **legion** at full strength would be composed of 6,000 soldiers. Thus a "band" or "cohort" would equal 1/10 of 6,000 which equals **600 soldiers**. Since Jerusalem was packed with people during this Passover season, the Romans had numerous soldiers on hand to stop any possible uprising or revolt. The Jewish leaders were thus able to procure the services of a Roman cohort to arrest Christ. Whether there were actually the full number of 600 Roman soldiers present in the garden we cannot be sure, but certainly there was a vast number. Matthew says that

Judas had with him a G _____ M _____ (Matthew 26:47). It was certainly more than enough to handle a small group of disciples.

The Jewish leaders had their officers as well (John 18:3). These "officers from the chief priests and Pharisees" could be described as "**temple police**" (compare Luke 22:52). Did this group come armed or unarmed (John 18:3)? _____ The combined power of the Jews and Romans was brought together against one unarmed Man and His eleven disciples! The children of darkness carried their lanterns and torches (John 18:3) so that they might seize the L _____ of the _____ (John 8:12). What kind of weapons did they have (Mark 14:43)? _____ ("Staves" means "clubs.")

Was Jesus surprised by what was happening (John 18:4)? _____ Soon something would happen that would really surprise those who had come to arrest Jesus. Read John 18:4-6 carefully. Jesus identified Himself with the words "I AM" (the word "he" is in italics which means that it is not in the original Greek text). Jesus was saying, "I'M THE ONE! I AM!" Jesus identified Himself as the Great **I AM** (compare Exodus 3:14; John 4:26; 6:20; 8:24,28,58). What happened to this great host of people when Jesus identified Himself in this way (John 18:6)? _____ Did Judas fall down with them (John 18:5-6)? _____ Everyone could now see which side Judas was on! He was on the side of the Lord's ENEMIES and he was on the ground with them. It must have been an amazing sight to see hundreds of trained Roman soldiers and a multitude of Jews **ON THE GROUND**, and eleven disciples and one unarmed Jesus being the only ones on their feet! All of this took place simply because Jesus said *two words*: "**I AM!**"

As this great multitude was getting back on their feet, it was as if Jesus were saying, "Men, I'm going to give you permission to arrest Me, but before I do, I just wanted to remind you who is really in control!" The Son of God was in complete command of the situation.

The Ear of Malchus

According to John 18:10-11, Peter rushed to the Lord's rescue, and with great zeal and poor aim, he sliced off the right ear of a man named Malchus! According to Luke the physician, what did Jesus do about this situation (Luke 22:51)? _____ Those who arrested Jesus witnessed two miracles:

- 1) Jesus speaking two words and everyone falling down (John 18:6)!
- 2) Jesus supernaturally healing the ear of Malchus (Luke 22:51)

The army that arrested Jesus had no excuse. They could never say, "We had no reason to believe He was the Son of God!"

Did Jesus really need Peter's help (Matthew 26:53)? _____ (Remember, a **legion** at full strength consisted of 6,000 soldiers; twelve legions of angels would equal 72,000 angels!). About 53 days later, Peter once again took a sword and used it against the enemies of Christ, and this time he was successful! This time his sword did much more than slice off an ear, it pierced deeply into the hearts of thousands of people. We read about this in Acts 2:14,36,37,38,41. In Acts 2:37 the word "pricked" means "pierced, stabbed." They were "cut to the heart." The sword that Peter used is described in Hebrews 4:12. Does God want us to use this same sword (Ephesians 6:11,17)? _____

Did the Jews and the Roman soldiers take Jesus and arrest Him (John 18:12)? _____ But did they really take Him? We need to remember what Jesus taught in John 10:11,17,18. They took Jesus only because Jesus let them. Jesus willingly and voluntarily gave His life, and thus they were able to take Him. Otherwise it would have been impossible for them to take Him (compare John 7:30; 8:20; etc.). What was it that made the Lord

give Himself up (Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:2,25)?

_____ It was not MEN who made the Saviour go to the cross. It was LOVE that made Him go! Christ was so willing to save sinful men! How willing are you to be saved? [Compare the tragic words of John 5:40.]

When Peter was with Jesus he very boldly and very bravely cut off the ear of Malchus. Very soon, however, this bold and brave Peter would become a coward. The Peter who once said that he would follow the Lord even if it meant death (John 13:37) was about to deny his Lord three times (John 13:38)!

The Denial of Christ

The "other disciple" mentioned in John 18:15-16 was probably John, the disciple who wrote the Gospel of John which we are studying. After Jesus was arrested, all of the disciples fled (Matthew 26:56), but Peter and John came back. John had some kind of connections with the high priest (John 18:15), and therefore he and Peter were allowed to enter the palace grounds (John 18:16).

Peter thought that he was strong (John 13:37) but he was about to learn how very weak he really was. Peter's first denial is found in John 18:17. The woman's question should be translated like this: "You are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" She expected a negative answer. Did Peter tell the truth? _____ Not only did Peter LIE, but he DENIED!

Peter denied his Lord. This is what he was saying by his answer: "I do not have any connection with Jesus Christ." At this point in his life was Peter proud to be known as a disciple of Jesus or was he ashamed to be known as a disciple of Jesus (John 18:17)? _____ Are you proud of the Saviour or ashamed of the Saviour? Do you want people to know that you are a believer in Jesus Christ? If someone should say to you, "Are you a Bible believing Christian?" how would you answer? Peter should have said something like this: "YES I AM! I AM PROUD TO BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS. HE IS MY LORD AND I AM HIS DISCIPLE."

The second denial is found in John 18:25. They said to Peter, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" [They expected a negative answer.] Did Peter lie and deny? _____

The third and final denial is described in John 18:26. The man who asked this final question was a relative of Malchus (compare John 18:10). This man had also been in the garden at the time of the arrest and had seen Peter cut off his relative's ear. He was almost sure it was Peter. Almost but not quite sure. His question could be translated in this way: "I saw you in the garden, didn't I?" [He expected an affirmative answer.] How did Peter answer this question? Peter should have said, "Yes, I must tell the truth. I am the man you saw in the garden with Jesus. I am the man who cut off your relative's ear." Is this what Peter said (John 18:27)? _____ Did the prediction of Jesus found in John 13:38 come true? _____

Read Matthew 10:32-33. Which verse describes what Peter did? _____ Which verse describes what God wants us to do? _____ Just as a label on a can is there to confess its contents, so every believer ought to confess his Lord and Saviour clearly, without being ashamed (Romans 10:9-11). We should be able to say what Paul once said: "I am _____ ashamed of the _____ (good news) of Christ" (Romans 1:16). Peter was ashamed of his Lord. Was Peter later sorry for what he had done (Luke 22:59-62)? _____ Peter fell into sin and he fell hard, but Peter also recovered! About 53 days later Peter boldly and courageously **confessed Christ** before thousands of Jews (see Acts 2:14, 22-24,29,36,41). He was not ashamed of Jesus ever again and He was even willing to **die** for His Lord, and this is exactly what happened (compare John 21:17-19). There is a big difference between Peter and Judas. Both of these men failed the Lord--Judas by betraying Him and Peter by denying Him. Peter repented and recovered; Judas never did.

The Trial of Christ

The Scripture tells us that immediately after the arrest of Christ, Jesus was led first to _____ (John 18:13), for a preliminary examination. Who was this important person?

Annas was perhaps the most powerful and influential man in Jerusalem. He served as the High Priest from 7-15 A.D. Even after he was *deposed* (removed from office) in 15 A.D. he still retained the title (see Luke 3:2; John 18:19,22; and Acts 4:6, where he is called the "High Priest" even though he was not the actual High Priest). Annas was the Father in law of _____ (John 18:13; this is the man we learned about in John 11:49-52). Annas had great influence over the priestly party. In fact, five of his sons as well as Caiaphas his son-in-law and his grandson Matthias each served as the High Priest. At the time of the trial of Jesus Annas was a man of great age and experience and wealth. Though not holding the actual office or title, he was considered the High Priest in the eyes of the people, and on any matter of great import, he was always the man to consult. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn that Jesus was led to Annas F _____ (John 18:13).

What two things did Annas ask Jesus about (John 18:19)?

1. His D _____
2. His D _____ (teaching)

By his questioning, Annas was insinuating that Jesus was gathering around Himself a band of followers (**His disciples**) with the possible intention of political insurrection and revolt against Rome. He wanted Jesus to say something (**His doctrine**) which would make Him appear as One who was seeking to overthrow Roman rule. He knew the Romans would gladly exterminate anyone guilty of or even accused of sedition or treason. In short, he wanted Jesus to say something by which He would incriminate Himself.

Notice our Lord's masterful response in John 18:20-21. It was as if He were saying, "I decline to be a witness against myself, and I demand that you produce honest witnesses as the law requires." Following this fair request, Jesus received unfair treatment from the hand of a Jewish officer who "struck Jesus with the _____ of his _____" (John 18:22). His hand was not clenched in a fist, but it was his open hand that made contact--either a blow with the palm of the hand (cuff) or a strong slap with the hand and fingers. This was the first of many such blows to the face that Jesus would receive in the coming hours. Do you think the officer was able to answer the Lord's question in John 18:23? _____ Jesus was willing to take terrible physical abuse as He made His way to the cross to die for mankind. He was so willing to save you. How willing are you to be saved?

After His visit with Annas, where was Jesus taken next (John 18:24)? _____ This man was the actual High Priest (John 11:49; 18:13). As to their character and hatred for Jesus, Caiaphas and Annas were very similar. To learn about Christ's trial before Caiaphas we must go to the other gospels (for example, see Mark 14:53-65).

Jesus Before Pilate

The Jews bound Jesus and led Him away to the Roman Governor whose name was Pilate (John 18:28-29). The Jews wanted Christ to be put to death but they were unable to do this. In John 18:31 we learn that only Rome had the authority to put a person to death. If the Jews had killed Christ their way they probably would have stoned Him (compare John 8:59 and 10:31). The Roman method of putting criminals to death was by crucifixion. Thus Jesus knew exactly what He was talking about when He spoke about being "lifted up to die" (John 12:32-33 and see John 18:32).

In John 18:28 we learn something very interesting about these Jews who wanted to murder Christ. It says, "they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be _____" (John 18:28). These men were involved in the worst crime ever known to the human race, and yet they were worried about being defiled in a pagan's palace (Pilate's palace)! This would be like a bank robber who carefully wipes his feet on the door mat so that he won't dirty up the bank's nice rug, and then he comes in the bank and shoots the teller at the window and runs away with a million dollars! These Jews were all worried about swallowing a little bug in their juice, but they thought nothing about swallowing a huge camel (compare Matthew 23:23-24). They failed to realize that they were already defiled to the limit! What they should have done is fall before the feet of their bound Prisoner and cry out for mercy and pardon. Such is the tragedy of **religion** as men try to cover up a defiled heart instead of facing up to a holy God.

Pilate asked Jesus a simple question: "Art thou the _____ of the Jews?" (John 18:33). They were asking, "**Are You the King?**" Jesus gave a clear answer to this question. In John 18:36 Jesus said "MY _____" three times! If a person has a kingdom then he must be a K_____. In John 18:37 did Jesus deny that He was a King or did He admit that He was a King?

_____ Jesus also explained that His subjects were not militants who were intending to fight against the Jews or against Rome (John 18:36). Such a King was no threat to Pilate or to the Romans, and thus Pilate announced his verdict of "**NOT GUILTY**"--"I find in Him no _____ at all" (John 18:38). The Jews, however, would not be satisfied until they could see Christ on the cross. They wanted the guilty Barabbas released and the innocent Christ crucified (John 18:40). Barabbas was a "R_____" (John 18:40), and in modern terms we might speak of him as a "terrorist" and a member of the "Jewish Liberation Army." One of his terrorist acts resulted in **murder** (Mark 15:7 and Acts 3:14).

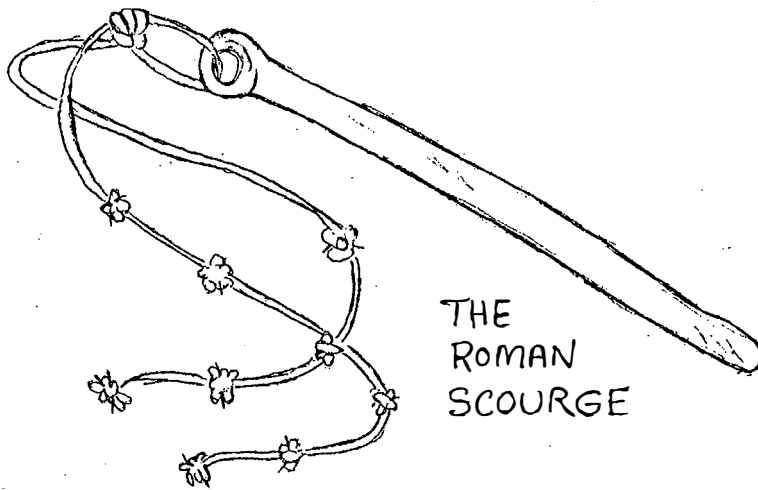
There was one other question which Pilate asked Jesus. It is found in John 18:38--"WHAT IS _____?" Pilate asked the right question and Pilate asked the right Person! Did Pilate stay around to hear the answer that Christ would have given him (John 18:38)? _____ What answer do you think Jesus could have given Pilate if Pilate had stayed around (see John 14:6 and John 17:17)?

_____.

The Final Rejection of Christ

Pilate knew Jesus was innocent and he wanted to release Jesus. His final plan was to punish Christ so badly that the Jews would have pity on Him and be willing to have Him released. He was hoping that the Jews would say, "He's been punished enough. You can release Him now." Therefore, Pilate "took Jesus and _____ him" (John 19:1). Scourging is a very cruel form of whipping. Nothing was more terrible than the Roman scourge, except for the Roman cross. Consider the following:

"Such scourging was hideous torture. The Roman scourge consisted of a short wooden handle to which several thongs were attached, the ends equipped with pieces of lead or brass and with sharply pointed bits of bone. The stripes were laid especially (not always exclusively) on the victim's back, bared and bent. The body was at times torn and lacerated to such an extent that deep-seated veins and arteries--sometimes even entrails and inner organs--were exposed. Such flogging, from which Roman citizens were exempt, often resulted in death." (William Hendriksen, *John*, p. 414)



THE
ROMAN
SCOURGE

Scourging was not the only cruel treatment that Jesus received (see John 19:2-3). By this time His face was battered and beaten (compare Isaiah 52:14 and 53:2). Most pictures of Christ on the cross do not show His face as it really was. Have you ever seen the face of a boxer at the end of a match after his face has been badly battered? Before we begin to feel sorry for Jesus, we should remember that it is these soldiers whom we should really feel sorry for. There will come another day when these men will once again bow before the KING, the very One they mocked and abused (see Philippians 2:9-11). At that day it will not be for fun. It will be for real!

After all this was done Pilate brought forth Christ to exhibit Him to the crowd and he said, "Behold _____" (John 19:5). When the Jews saw the battered and beaten Jesus, did they have pity on Him? Did they think that He had been punished enough (John 19:6)? _____ They would only be satisfied to see **Him on the cross**. They wanted BLOOD!

What crime had Christ done? His great crime according to the Jews was that "He made Himself the _____" (John 19:7). **He claimed to be God's Son**, and the Jews considered this **blasphemy!** They knew that when a person claimed to be the Son of God he was making himself "**equal _____**" (John 5:18). If Christ had been a mere man, then His claims would indeed have been blasphemy and He would have been worthy of death (see Leviticus 24:16). Jesus, however, was everything that He claimed to be. He was the Son of God and the King of Israel!

Pilate became even more _____ (John 19:8) as he began to realize that Jesus was no ordinary Man. When Pilate told Jesus how much power and authority he had (John 19:10), Jesus reminded him that he would have _____ power or authority at all if God had not given it to him (John 19:11). Pilate would never have been Governor apart from God's permission (see Romans 13:1). God is the One who sets up rulers and removes them (Daniel 2:21; 4:17,25,32). Pilate's sin was great. He was pressured by the Jewish leaders and by the shouting crowd to do what he knew was wrong. According to Jesus, the sin of the Jewish leaders was even **G _____** than the sin of Pilate (John 19:11). Did Pilate try to get Jesus released (John 19:12)? _____ He tried again and again but he did not succeed.

Finally Pilate gave the Jews one more opportunity. He brought Jesus forth and said to the Jews, "BEHOLD _____" (John 19:14). The terrible rejection of Jesus Christ by the Jews is seen in the three things which they said (John 19:15):

(continued on the next page)

1. " _____ WITH HIM, _____ WITH HIM!" They wanted to get rid of Him once and for all!

2. "C _____ HIM!" They wanted Him to suffer the kind of death that was reserved for the worst criminals (compare Philippians 2:8).

3. "WE HAVE NO _____ BUT _____." The Jews hated Caesar and they hated to be under Roman rule, but they hated Christ even more. The cry of sinful men has always been this: "**We do not want God to rule over us. We do not want God to tell us what to do. We want to do whatever we want to do.**" Man has tried to be his own king and has ended up a SLAVE. Only those who let God be King are truly FREE (John 8:31-36).

Did these Jews fulfill the words of John 1:11? _____

The Crucifixion

Pilate finally gave in to the Jews and gave them what they wanted (John 19:16). The place of the crucifixion was called **Golgotha** which means "the place of a _____" (John 19:17). The word **Calvary** also means **skull** and refers to the same place (see Luke 23:33). How many criminals were crucified with Christ on this day (John 19:18)? _____

When criminals were crucified, the charge or accusation was often written over their heads. For example, if a man intentionally killed someone, they might write, "THIS IS A MURDERER!" What accusation was written over the head of Jesus (John 19:19)? _____

_____ In how many languages was this written (John 19:20)? _____ [Note: The local language of Palestine was **Hebrew** or Aramaic; the common language of the whole Roman empire was **Greek** and the official or legal language was **Latin** because the Romans were the ruling power]. What was the great crime that Jesus was guilty of? **He was the King of the Jews!** Did the Jews want this sign to say what it did (John 19:21)? _____ Did Pilate change it for them (John 19:22)? _____ This was one way Pilate could get back at the Jews. Pilate had suffered a major defeat (in not being able to get Jesus released) but now he is able to win a minor victory. We can also hear the voice of God speaking through this sign. It was not just that Jesus **claimed** to be the King, **HE WAS THE KING!**

The Roman soldiers then did something that God said they would do long before it ever happened (see John 19:23-24). About 1000 years earlier David wrote the words found in Psalm 22:18. These Roman soldiers were ignorant of this prophecy and yet they perfectly fulfilled it! God knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). Can you find any other verses in Psalm 22 that remind you of **crucifixion**? _____

_____ Remember, this Psalm was written hundreds of years before there was such a thing as **Roman crucifixion!**

The Cry of Victory

Jesus was on the cross for about six hours. At the end of this time He asked for a drink by saying, "I _____" (John 19:28-29). Again the Scripture was fulfilled (see Psalm 69:21). It is also possible that Jesus wanted this drink to moisten His dry mouth so that He would be able to say something LOUD and CLEAR that everyone would understand. [Note: The Lord had just said something in a loud voice but it was misunderstood. See Matthew 27:46-47. But what He was about to say was so important that He did not want anyone to misunderstand it.] Right after He received this drink He cried out and said, "IT IS _____" (John 19:30). We learn by reading Matthew 27:50 that Jesus said these words with a _____ voice. "*It is finished! It is accomplished! It is done! I have finished the work which the Father gave Me to do!*" (compare John 17:4) As the hymn writer has put it:

PAID IN FULL! In the never-ending procession of bills and installments, we often wonder which will be depleted first — the payments or our checking account. Those words — "Paid In Full" — declare that this time we've come out on top!

PAID IN FULL. Not only does it indicate that the payer had enough to cover the debt, it also assures us that the payee is finally satisfied. He can't demand more later. He received exactly what was due.

Centuries ago "Paid In Full" was expressed as "It Is Finished." Officials wrote that phrase across tax receipts to declare that the obligation had been completely fulfilled.

And it was those same words uttered almost two thousand years ago that proclaimed that a debt payment of infinite significance had been transacted. "Jesus said, 'It is finished!' With that, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit" (John 19:30).

With "It Is Finished," Jesus Christ ended the agony of bearing the punishment for the debt of the world — your sins and mine — on a Roman execution cross. "[Jesus Christ] bore our sins in His body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24).

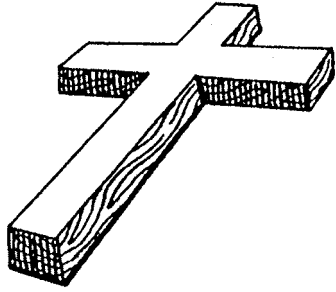
Our debt to God was so great that we could never pay it off. "Who can say, 'I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin?' (Proverbs 20:9)." So, "God made [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

God is satisfied that Christ's payment covered the debt you have with Him. Now all He asks is that you acknowledge the debt and accept the payment. The Bible calls that "believing in Christ" for salvation (Acts 16:30-31).

God's promise for all who believe is that not only will He declare their debt PAID IN FULL, but He will also credit their account with Christ's sinless righteousness and give them eternal life! "Whoever believes in the Son [Jesus Christ] has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him" (John 3:36).

IS IT FINISHED ... for you? It was God's love that sent His Son to die for you. And because of His love He pleads for you to accept His Son's sacrifice. Will you, right now? You can have the wonderful assurance that, between you and God, your debt is PAID IN FULL.

***HALLELUJAH TIS DONE!
I BELIEVE ON THE SON,
I'M SAVED BY THE BLOOD
OF THE CRUCIFIED ONE!***



IT IS FINISHED!

We have a Saviour who has done all, paid all, accomplished all and performed all that is necessary for our salvation. His mission was accomplished (compare Luke 19:10; John 3:17; 1 Timothy 1:15)! The Lord Jesus said, "**IT IS FINISHED!**" The person who is saved answers with another cry, "**IT IS ENOUGH!** It is enough that Jesus died and that He died for me!" The book of Hebrews explains the importance of the finished work of Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 1:3; 9:24-28 and 10:10-14 and notice the word "once"). Has your heart said "AMEN!" to the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross for you?

The Death of Christ

Crucifixion is a terrible form of death. Death by the electric chair or firing squad or guillotine is relatively fast and painless. The sufferings of the cross seem endless. It is interesting that the Gospel writers give us very few details about the crucifixion of Christ. We might have expected them to describe all the gory and grim details of what Christ had to endure during those hours of torture on the cross. They did not do this. For example, John's description is very brief. He simply said, ". . . they _____ Him" (John 19:18).

God the Holy Spirit (the Divine Author of Scripture) had a reason for not over-emphasizing the physical sufferings of Christ. The physical sufferings were not what made the death of Christ so terrible. There have been other men who have been scourged more severely than Christ was and there have been men who have hung on a Roman cross much longer than Christ did. Some of the Christian martyrs had to undergo terrible forms of death which would have made crucifixion seem mild by comparison (see *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*). Jesus suffered more than any man has ever suffered, but not because of what the Roman soldiers did to Him.

If we see only the physical aspect of the crucifixion, then we have really missed the whole point. Prior to the cross, what was it that Christ dreaded the most (Mark 14:36 and John 18:11)?

- a. The nails that would pierce His hands and feet
- b. The spear that would pierce His side
- c. The agony of being suspended on a cross for about six hours
- d. The awful thirst and danger of suffocation
- e. The cup which *the Father* would give Him to drink

According to Christ's own words in Matthew 27:46, what was the most terrible part of the crucifixion experience (Matthew 27:46)?

- a. Being nailed to the cross by the Romans
- b. Being mocked and reviled by the unbelieving Jews
- c. Being tortured by the weight of His own body coming down upon the nails
- d. Being forsaken and abandoned by Almighty God

Jesus Christ SUFFERED FOR _____ (1 Peter 3:18). The real sufferings of the cross did not come upon Christ because of what the Roman soldiers did to him, but because of what God did to Him **because of your sins and mine!** Read Isaiah chapter 53 and write down some of the things that God did to the Lord Jesus:

Verse 4: _____

Verse 6: _____

Verse 10: _____

God's wrath and judgment came down upon the Saviour as He died in our place. We are the ones that God should have punished. Our perfect Substitute paid the awful penalty of sin instead of us. This is the real meaning of the death of Christ: CHRIST DIED FOR _____ (1 Corinthians 15:3).

Was Jesus Really Dead?

There are some people who do not believe that Jesus really died on the cross. Some say that He just passed out and seemed to be dead (fooled everybody), but later He regained consciousness and people thought that He had risen from the dead (fooled everybody again). Did Jesus really die or did people just think that Jesus died? The answer is found in John chapter 19.

The day after the crucifixion was a special holy day and the Jews did not want anyone to stay on the cross during that day (John 19:31). It usually takes about two or three days for a man to die on a Roman cross. Some victims have been known to survive on a cross for more than a week! Death by crucifixion was certainly not a fast and painless method.

"Breaking the legs" (John 19:31-32) was a procedure used to hasten death. Without the legs to give support, the body would sink down, the tension in the chest muscles would be too great and rapid suffocation would occur. Apart from this procedure, the two criminals that died with Christ may have lived another day or two. One of these criminals had an appointment to meet Christ in paradise **TODAY** (see Luke 23:43) and by breaking his legs the Roman soldiers helped to hasten him on to this place where he would never suffer again. The fate of the other criminal was not so fortunate because he was never saved. He went into an eternity of suffering, forever separated from the Christ who had been so willing to save him.

When the soldiers came to the center cross they discovered that Jesus was _____, and therefore they did not break His legs (John 19:33). Was Pilate surprised to learn that Jesus was dead after being on the cross for only about six hours (Mark 15:44)? _____ If there is any doubt about whether Jesus was really dead, John 19:34 settles the matter once for all! What did one of the soldiers do? _____ Of course, Jesus was already dead when this happened (verse 33), but what this soldier did helped to settle the matter. If Jesus had merely been "UNCONSCIOUS" and if the soldiers had thought Him to be dead but were mistaken, then it is certain that the spear would have killed him. No one can survive a spear wound such as the one Christ received. Those who say that Jesus never really died are simply blind to the facts. [*Note:* Compare 1 Samuel 17:49-51. Goliath was already dead when David cut his head off, but David did this so that all would see that the great Goliath was truly dead. If anyone had doubts about whether Goliath was really dead, his detached head quickly removed the doubts!].

The man who wrote the Gospel of John was right there at the scene of the crucifixion and he saw all of these things take place (John 19:25-27 and 19:35). John witnessed all of these things and he said, "And he that _____ it bare record (witness), and his record (witness) is _____" (John 19:35). John was not making up a story. As an eyewitness, he was writing down what really happened. And John wrote these things down "that ye might _____" (John 19:35).

The burial of Christ (John 19:38-42) also proves that Jesus was really dead. People do not usually bury those who are alive. The names of two men are given who played an important part in giving Jesus a decent burial (John 19:38,39). We first met Nicodemus in John chapter 3. Most crucified victims were not even given a decent burial. Their bodies were sometimes thrown in a dump outside the city of Jerusalem (called GEHENNA). Pilate, however, gave Joseph permission to bury Jesus in a tomb.

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The finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross is man's only hope. Think of a man who must jump out of an airplane. Let's assume that the parachute which he has is a good one and works well. This parachute is all that the man needs. With it he will live and without it he will perish. The parachute is the man's only hope. The man cannot do anything himself that will save him. He can flap his arms as hard as he can, but without the parachute he will still fall to the ground and be destroyed. He must simply believe that the parachute will save him, pull the string and let the parachute do all the work.

In the same way Jesus Christ is all that a lost sinner needs. With Christ he will live and without Christ he will perish (John 3:16). Christ is the sinner's only hope. The sinner cannot do anything himself that will save him (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8-9). He must simply believe that Jesus Christ died to save Him, ask Christ to be His Saviour and let Jesus do all the work of saving his soul.

HAVE YOU DONE THIS?

ARE YOU RESTING ON THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS CHRIST?

Statement of the Account of	
(your name) _____	
with God Almighty	
Payment due for your sin:	
Death (Ezekiel 18:4)	
Method of payment:	
Option 1: <input type="checkbox"/> "Whoever believes in [Christ] is not condemned..."	
or	
Option 2: <input type="checkbox"/> "Whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (John 3:18).	
I trust in Christ's death as payment for my sins and His resurrection as assurance of my eternal life. With Christ as my Savior, my debt is PAID IN FULL.	
_____ Signed	_____ Date

INTO THE WOODS MY SAVIOR WENT

