

Did Christ Survive The Cross?

Introduction

- I. The question “Did Christ Survive The Cross?” is a shocking question to believers.
 - A. We have gotten use to men questioning the Deity and Authority of Christ.
 1. The denial comes from atheists and many liberals who may or may not be atheists.
 2. There are even many religious people who deny the Deity of Christ and believe Jesus was at most an exceptional human being.
 3. Since there is no such thing as miraculous, every miraculous claim must be rejected.
 - B. We have gotten use to men making false accusations against Jesus.
 - a. He has been accused of all kinds of sins.
 - b. He has been called a fictitious character, a blasphemer, a co-worker of Satan, a homosexual just to name a few things.
 - C. We have the mind set that everyone believes Jesus died on the cross, **but this is far from the actual truth.**
 1. More and more people deny His death and even more deny His vicarious death on the cross.
 2. More and more people maintain that He did not die on the cross.
- II. Christians believe that Jesus died on the cross.
 - A. This was **in accordance with prophecy.** (Psa. 2:7; 22:16,18; Isa. 53:1-12).
 - B. This was a **part of God’s eternal plan.** (Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8).
 - C. This was **according to forewarning of Jesus.** (Jn. 2:19-21; 3:16; Matt. 16:21-23; 20:27,28; Jn.10:18).
 - D. This agrees with the four Gospels and the New Testament as a whole.
 1. The gospel writers vividly describe the last hours and death of Jesus.
 2. The New Testament makes many references to His death and resurrection. (Acts 1:22; 2:22-27, 31; 3:15,26; 4:2,10,33; 5:30; 13:27-37; Rom.1:4; 1 Pet. 1:21).
 3. The death, burial and resurrection of Christ are the very heart [the foundation] of the gospel. (1 Cor. 15:3,4).
 4. Paul preached Christ crucified. (1 Cor. 2:2).

5. He boasted in the cross of Christ. (Gal. 6:14).
 6. **He had been an enemy of Christianity**, but was converted when the risen Lord appeared to Him. (Acts 9:3-18). See also Acts 22,26, 1 Corinthians 15.
 - a. He had been a bitter enemy of Christ, but never doubted His death.
 - b. He rejected the resurrection of Jesus until Jesus appeared to Him.
 7. The Hebrew writer and John state Jesus tasted death for every man. (Heb. 2:9; 1 Jn. 2:1, 2).
- E. Jesus' death also agrees with conclusion of His enemies.
1. Not once, in the entire New Testament, did any of His enemies challenge His death.
 - a. Some challenged His sanity, His authority, His Deity, His humanity.
 - b. There was never a question about His death.
 - c. His enemies accused Him of all kinds of sins, but none challenged His death.
 - d. They are the ones who put Him to death, and had witnessed His vicious death.
 2. No one argued Jesus was alive in Jerusalem or in any other place.
 - a. On the day of Pentecost Peter argued Jesus was crucified and raised from the dead according to prophecy. (Acts 2:22-32).
 - b. No one challenged or denied this bold statement.
 - c.. Christianity would have been stopped dead in its tracks if Jesus was really alive.
 - d. This evidence would have been quickly produced if it had been true or even suspicioned that Jesus was alive.
 3. **Secular writers** of the first and second centuries confirmed His death.
 - a. Tacitus, the ancient Roman historian writing in approximately A.D. 115, documented Christ's physical demise when he wrote concerning the Christians that "their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilatus" (1952, 15.44).
 - b. In addition to Roman sources, early Jewish rabbis whose opinions are recorded in the Talmud acknowledged the death of Jesus. According to the earlier rabbis, Jesus of Nazareth was a transgressor in Israel who practised magic, scorned the words of the wise, led the people astray, and said that he had not come to destroy the law but to add to it. He was hanged on Passover Eve for heresy and misleading the people (Bruce, 1953, p. 102, emp. added).
 - c. Likewise, Jewish historian Josephus wrote in the 1st century:

"There arose about this time Jesus, a wise man.... And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross on his impeachment by the chief men among us, those who had loved him at first did not cease (Antiquities of the Jews, 18.3.3).

III. In view of all of this, it seems ridiculous and blasphemous to even suggest He did not die, and that Jesus, the prophets and apostles, etc. lied about His death.

A. But there are those writing books and making movies, etc. who maintain that Jesus did not really die.

1. **These writers do not always believe exactly alike**, but they all have a low opinion of Christ.
2. They certainly do not believe Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. (Jn. 20:30,31).
3. They do not believe He had all authority in heaven and on earth. (Matt. 28:18).
4. They do not believe He was “the Holy One of God.” (Jn. 6:69).
5. **If they really believe He even lived, they believe He was either a lunatic or a liar.**
6. They emphatically deny that He made atonement for the sins of mankind.
 - a. **Many believe He was only a poor ignorant Galilean.**
 - b. One like this could not atone for the sins of mankind.
7. Some to save face say “Jesus was a good man,” but then turn around and make Him the biggest liar and deceiver who has ever lived.
8. **In one way or another they deny His every claim, and all the claims the inspired writers make about Him.**
9. A world that exists accidentally without a Creator [as they claim] does not need a Savior from sin. To many there is no such things as sin.

B. They deny His death, in part, to reject His resurrection, and to humanize Christ.

1. **You cannot have a resurrection if there was no death.**
2. All liberals must reject the resurrection because according to their human theologies, there is no room for the miraculous.
3. They reject everything miraculous - creation, miracles, the virgin birth, Christ’s Deity, the resurrection, the second coming, etc.

C. They do not believe Jesus was the Son of God or that He died for our salvation or that He was resurrected or that He ascended into heaven.

1. They do not believe He is the way to heaven. (Jn. 14:6).
2. Most do not believe in a resurrection or heaven.
3. Most do not believe in salvation and the after life.

Note on Crucifixion

1. Crucifixion was designed to torture a person to the max, and it was a torturing to death.

2. The victim was either nailed or tied to a crossbar.
3. The feet were supported on a block at the base of the cross.
4. The feet were either tied at the block or a nail might be driven through each ankle.
5. The weight of the hanging body made breathing very difficult and one could breathe only by constantly pushing upwards with the legs and feet to relieve the tension in the chest.
6. After a time because of weariness and weakness made it impossible to keep pushing.
7. Once this happened the person died by asphyxiation.
8. This could take three days or longer.
9. Sometimes the brutal Romans acted in so-called mercy and broke the legs of the victim. It was rarely an act of mercy, but was done to satisfy those who wanted a quick death.
10. This deprived the victim of the strength to maintain the weight of the body, and this would lead to a quick painful death.
11. This explains why the two thieves with Jesus died so quickly. Their legs were broken by the soldiers.
12. The legs of Jesus were not broken because they discovered Jesus “was dead already.” (Jn. 19:31-33).
13. This also explains, in part, why some infidels believe He did not die.
14. They believe the so-called death of Jesus was too quick, and they argue Jesus had fainted or been drugged and only appeared to be dead.

The Sponge Argument

1. Jesus complained on the cross that He was thirsty. (Jn. 19:28).
2. A sponge soaked in vinegar was placed on the end of a long reed and held up to Him. But far from reviving Jesus, the drink from this sponge apparently caused him to lose consciousness according to some.
3. This is a curious reaction and suggests that the sponge was soaked not in vinegar, a substance that would have revived Jesus, but rather in something that would have caused Him to lose consciousness—some sort of drug, for example. And there was just this type of drug available in the Middle East.
4. It was known that a sponge soaked in a mixture of opium and other compounds such as belladonna and hashish served as a good anesthetic.
5. Such sponges would be soaked in the mixture, then dried for storage or transport. When it was necessary to induce unconsciousness—for surgery, for example—the sponge would be soaked in water to activate the drugs and then placed over the nose and mouth of the subject, who would promptly lose consciousness.
6. It is assumed that given the description of the events on the cross and the rapid apparent "death" of Jesus, that it is a plausible suggestion that this use of a drugged sponge was the cause.
7. No matter how carefully a "staged" crucifixion might have been carried out (one intended for Jesus to survive),

- there was no way to anticipate the effect that shock of scourging and crucifixion might have had upon him.
8. Scourging and crucifixion were traumatic experiences, both physically and mentally.
 - a. Many men did not live through a scourging.
 - b. Crucifixion added to the scourging and the spear driven into His side (on top of that) would ensure death.
 - c. To maintain Jesus lived through all of that would be itself a miracle.
 9. It is suggested to be rendered unconscious would reduce the effect of the trauma and thus increase the chance of survival, so the drug would have made it possible for Jesus to survive.
 10. In all of this there is no adequate explanation how Jesus recovered in the tomb, and was able to escape past the Roman guards.

Early Drink When He Was Crucified

MAT 27:34 they gave Him wine to drink mingled **with gall**; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink. The Bible clearly teaches Jesus refused to drink this substance.

MAR 15:23 And they tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh; but He did not take it.

1. The first drink was “mingled with gall (myrrh)” (Matt. 27:34; Mk. 15:23). The word “gall” denotes something that was “bitter.” It could also denote a drink that had been drugged. to reduce pain or produce unconsciousness.
2. Jesus refused to drink it because He had come to fully suffer for the sins of mankind.
3. It necessary to Him to suffer the punishment we deserve. (Isa. 53:4-6).

Late Drink Near His Death

MAT 27:48 And immediately one of them ran, and taking a sponge, he filled it with **sour wine**, and put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink

MAR 15:36 And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down."

JOH 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I am thirsty."

JOH 19:29 A jar **full of sour wine** was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop, and brought it up to His mouth.

JOH 19:30 When Jesus therefore had **received the sour wine**, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

1. Note this “sour wine” or “wine” was not “mixed with myrrh [gall]” (Matt. 27:48; Mk. 15:36; Jn. 19:29).
2. Jesus drank it. He had already suffered for mankind, and was about to die. Redemption had been made.
3. He died shortly after this. (Matt. 27:50; Mk. 15:37; Jn. 19:30).
4. This drink was given to Jesus out of curiosity thinking Jesus perhaps had called Elijah. (Matt. 27:46, 47; Mk. 15:34-36).

Additional Note:

1. There are traditions in Islam that affirm Jesus did not die.
2. The Koran's statement "They did not crucify him" could as well be translated as "They did not cause his death on the

cross."

3. This statement may have come earlier uninspired documents traditions, but its meaning is disputed.
4. It should be observed that the Koran is a very late and uninspired document

I. Theory Briefly Stated

- A. Those who hold to this preposterous theory argue that Jesus merely swooned on the cross (fainted loss consciousness), and later He revived in the tomb of Joseph or in some other place (since many reject the burial place of Christ).
 1. Some claim that Jesus faked His death and had the cooperation of others.
 2. Others claim that Jesus may have been crucified, but it was not something He planned.
 - a. It was an accident. He mis-judged His opponents.
 - b. They became aggressive and impatient and they quickly put Him to death as soon as the opportunity arose.
 3. Either way, planned or unplanned, they contend that Jesus survived the crucifixion experience.
 4. They argue this was possible, and have found a reference or two in ancient history where someone survived it.
 - a. **Josephus**, for example, reports that he came upon three of his former colleagues among a large group of crucified captives.
 - b. He went to Titus asking for mercy, begging that they might be taken down. Titus agreed, and the three men were brought down from the cross.
 - c. Despite medical attention, two of them died, but the third survived.
 5. Since it was possible to survive crucifixion (though they admit it was very rare), it is affirmed that Jesus survived it.
 - a. **The remotely possible is argued to be fact** despite all the evidence to the contrary.
 - b. Their mind set will not allow them to consider the possibility of Jesus being the Son of God, and Jesus being raised from the dead.
- B. There is no evidence for this theory, but elaborate attempts are made to prove that Jesus could have survived the cross and then it is argued He did survive.

II. Theory Stated And Refuted

- A. Those who believe Jesus was actually scourged believe, as the Bible teaches, that Jesus survived the scourging.
 1. Jesus was scourged. (Matt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15; Lk. 18:33; Jn. 19:1).

2. Some died from scourging, and those who survived it would be very weak from loss of blood and other complications associated with scourging.
 - a. It is thought the spear pierced the **pericardium** which contains a small quantity of water about the heart. The word comes from the Greek “peri” [around] and the word “kardia” [heart]. It is a double-walled sac that contains the heart and the roots of the great vessels.
 - b. The pierced person, if alive, would inevitably die and most likely instantaneously or very quickly.
 - c. On this basis some reject the spear account or the blood and water.
 3. Some believe John makes reference to this in 1 John 5:6. The order there is “water and blood,” not blood and water. It most likely refers to His baptism and death - two evidences of His humanity.
- B. Some of those who believe Jesus was actually nailed to the cross believe the crucifixion did not lead to His death.
1. Some argued that **Jesus was merely tied to the cross.**
 - a. It is true that the Romans sometimes tied their victims to a cross, and left them there to die from bleeding, infection, starvation, fever, wild beasts, etc.
 - b. **The Bible plainly teaches Jesus was nailed to the cross.** (Jn. 20:20-28; Acts 2:23; Col. 2:14).

JOH 20:20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

JOH 20:21 Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

JOH 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

JOH 20:23 "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

JOH 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

JOH 20:25 The other disciples therefore were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

JOH 20:26 And after eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be with you."

JOH 20:27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing."

JOH 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

ACT 2:23 this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

COL 2:14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

- c. Of course, most skeptics reject these accounts of Jesus being nailed to the cross because it makes their theory more improbable.
- d. It is a lot easier to accept His survival from the cross if Jesus was tied to the cross.

2. **Some believe one or more nails may have been driven into Jesus,** but this did not kill Jesus.

C. Those who believe a spear was driven into Jesus believe this did not kill Jesus.

1. They emphasize that the Bible does not say it pierced His heart - "with a spear pierced his side." (Jn. 19:34). Greek "pleura" means "side."
2. They insist that the blood that came out of Jesus shows He was still alive.
3. Of course, some deny this part of the crucifixion account [the spear] because it might refute their position that Jesus did not die on the cross.
4. The vast majority who use the Bible to affirm Jesus did not die on the cross cherry pick what they want to espouse their theory and reject evidence that contradicts their theory.
 - a. This cherry picking of facts is based on their mind set to disprove the death and resurrection of Christ.
 - b. This cherry picking of facts causes one to reject most of what is recorded in the gospel accounts.
5. **Note:** The Bible teaches **Jesus was dead before the spear was driven in His side.** (Jn. 19:30, 33,34).

JOH 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

JOH 19:33 but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs;

JOH 19:34 but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

JOH 19:35 And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

6. **John emphasizes he was an eyewitness to all this.** (Jn. 19:35).
7. He also emphasizes that they **did not break the legs of Jesus.**
 - a. Without realizing it they were fulfilling Old Testament prophesy. (Jn. 19:36). See Exod. 12:46; Psa. 34:20).
 - b. Jesus was the Lamb of God (Jn.1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7), and it was not proper to break His bones.
 - c. God may have willed the death of His Son before His bones were broken, and thus this led to the fulfillment of the Old Testament.
6. **These statements were made before the spear was driven into His side.**

MAT 27:50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

LUK 23:46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit." And having said this, He breathed His last

JOH 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

The Spear Argument

1. John's gospel mentions that a spear was thrust into Jesus' side and that blood came out. (Jn. 19:34).
2. Some who accept this have tried to draw these conclusions from this verse.
 - a. First, that the spear was not thrust into the brain or heart and so was not necessarily immediately life-threatening.
 - b. Second, that the flow of blood would seem to indicate that Jesus was still alive and was not killed instantaneously.
3. These conclusions ignore the statement by the Roman soldiers that He "was already dead." (Jn. 19:33).. It makes some or many of His disciples part of a great fraud.
4. No one has ever been able to give a convincing answer as to why the disciples would scheme up this great fraud.

D. Those who maintain Jesus survived all this believe He was likely drugged on the cross and this helped Him survive..

1. Some believe this drugging was **deliberate** perhaps **being an act of mercy**.
2. Others believe Jesus just got lucky and the drugging just happened to save His life by giving the appearance He had died.
 - a. The Bible teaches Jesus refused the drugged wine. (Matt. 27:34; Mk. 15:23).
 - b. He later drank the non-drugged wine. (Jn.19:30).

JOH 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

- c. This was done after He had suffered fully for our sins.
- d. "It is finished" means redemption had been completed for all those who would obey Christ. (Jn. 19:30; Jn. 3:16; Heb. 2:9; 5:9).
 - 1) Jesus had fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament. (Psa. 22:16; Isa. 53:4-6; Zech. 12:10).
 - 2) John mentions the piercing of Christ in Revelation 1:7. He is re-affirming this historical fact.
 - 3) Jesus had become "the propitiation" for the sins of the whole world. (1 Jn. 2:1, 2).

3.. Others believe all of this was planned, and most often deny and reject the parts of the gospels that do not agree with their theories.

E. Those who contend Jesus survived the cross argue that He was not placed in a dirt grave and He was there (Joseph's tomb or some other place) only a short time that enhanced His chances of survival.

1. It is true Jesus was not placed in a dirt grave, but in the tomb of Joseph.
2. It is also true that Jesus was only in the tomb a short time.
 - a. He was buried just before sunset on Friday. (Matt. 27:57-62).

MAT 27:57 And when it was [Friday] evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.

MAT 27:58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given over to him.

MAT 27:59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

MAT 27:60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.

MAT 27:61 And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the grave.

MAT 27:62 Now on the next day, which is the one after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate,

- b. The women found His tomb empty early Sunday morning. (Jn. 20:1).
- c. Assuming He was buried at 6 PM on Friday and arose at 6 AM. on Sunday He was there only 36 hours. The time could be shorter than that. The first day of the week began Saturday night after sunset - approximately 6 PM..
 - 1) The Jews reckoned any part of a day as a day.
 - 2) Jesus was there a short time Friday, all day Saturday, a part of Sunday for a total of 3 days. (Jn. 2:19-21; Matt. 16:21; 26:61, 63).
- d. It was vital Jesus be not in the grave very long since it was prophesied that His corpse would not see corruption. (Psa. 16:10).

PSA 16:10 For Thou wilt not abandon my soul [corpse] to Sheol [grave]; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. Jesus is the “Holy One” of God. (Jn. 6:69).

- 1. “soul” is used here in the sense of “corpse.” See Acts 2:27; 13:34,35; Num. 19:11,13.
- 2. “Nephesh” is here translated “corpse” rather than “soul.”
- 3. The “body” [corpse of Jesus] did not see decay is the point Peter and Paul were making.
- 4. God would not allow His “Holy One” [His beloved Son] to undergo decay.”
- 5. God had already demonstrated immense love by allowing Jesus, His beloved Son, to die and to die such an awful death for sinful mankind. (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 3:1,2).
- 6. **There would be no more suffering and shame for Jesus** - all His suffering and shame were over.
- 7. He would soon be raised from the dead, and ascend to sit at the right hand of God. (Acts 1:9-11; 2:32,33; Heb. 1:3).

3. The short time in the tomb does not mean He survived.

- a. He died on the cross, and the centurion released His corpse to Joseph, with the permission of Pilate, because He was dead.
- b. You can place a dead body anywhere, but it is still dead.
- c. Jesus was dead and nothing could alter that except the power of God through the Holy Spirit. (Rom.

F. Those who believe Jesus survived the cross largely reject the gospel accounts that record His death.

1. The writers make it clear and undeniable that Jesus died on the cross.
2. Keep in mind that the gospels were written years after the crucifixion of Jesus.
3. They still record the death of Jesus because there was no question, by friend or by foe, Jesus had died.
4. They were preaching His resurrection from the grave.
5. If Jesus had survived the cross, they would know it and would not have been risking their lives to preach Christ crucified.
6. They would not be persecuted and treated like filth for a lie. (1 Cor. 4:9-13; 15:31-33).

1CO 4:9 For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

1CO 4:10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor.

1CO 4:11 To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless;

1CO 4:12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;

1CO 4:13 when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.

1CO 15:31 I protest, brethren, by the boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

1CO 15:32 If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

1CO 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

- a. The "bad company," in context, were those denying the resurrection of Christ.
- b. They did not deny Jesus had died (no one could do that), but that He was raised from the dead.
- c. Denial of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ made Christianity a foolish religion. (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

1CO 15:12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

1CO 15:13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;

1CO 15:14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.

1CO 15:15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.

1CO 15:16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;

1CO 15:17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

1CO 15:18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

1CO 15:19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

d. Those who maintain Jesus survived the cross are seeking in another way to make Christianity a false and foolish religion.

G. Those who believe Jesus survived the cross refuse to accept the findings of the Roman soldiers who were experts in killing people.

1. They broke the legs of the two criminals who were crucified with Christ. (Jn. 19:31, 32).

JOH 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

JOH 19:32 The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him;

2. But when they came to Jesus they found **He was already dead**, and did not break His legs. (Jn. 19:33).

3. One of the soldiers drove a spear into His side. (Jn. 19:33,34).

JOH 19:33 but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs;

JOH 19:34 but **one of the soldiers pierced His side** with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

- “spear” is from the Greek “logche” [long’ khay] meaning “a lance or spear.”
- The “spear” is a weapon common to all nations of antiquity. That of the Egyptians was of wood, from five to six feet long, with the head of bronze or iron, usually with a double edge like that of the Greeks.
- The “spear” driven into the side of Jesus was likely very similar to this.
- It was a vicious and terrible act that Jesus prayed would be forgiven along with all the other horrible things done that day. (Lk. 23:34).
- The “spear” fulfilled prophesy, but it did not kill Jesus who was already dead. (Jn. 19:37; Zech. 12:10).

4. It is not known why they drove a spear into His side, but they did.

5. It may have been to **make sure He was dead**, or it could be **merely an act of meanness**.

6. Many a person has been mutilated after death by their enemies.

7. His enemies wanted His **quick death** since the next day was the Sabbath. (Lk. 23:54; Jn.19:31).

LUK 23:54 And it was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

JOH 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

H. Those who believe Jesus survived the cross refuse to accept the statement of Joseph of Arimathea and the centurion.

1. Joseph came to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

MAR 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and **went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.**

- a. What great courage Joseph displayed!
- b. The crucifixion of Christ brought out the worse in some men and the best in others such as Joseph and John and many of the women who followed Him.
- b. He had no assurance that He would not be punished or killed suffered by the Sanhedrin or by Pilate.
- c. All the apostles had fled with the exception of John who remained at the cross. (Matt. 26:54-56; Jn. 19:26-27).

“All The Disciples Left Him And Fled”	Jesus Speaks To His Mother And John
<p>MAT 26:54 "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen this way?"</p> <p>MAT 26:55 At that time Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me.</p> <p>MAT 26:56 "But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left Him and fled.</p>	<p>JOH 19:26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"</p> <p>JOH 19:27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own household.</p>

- d. They fled because they were afraid to be associated with Jesus.
 - e. They likely feared they too would be arrested, and either tortured or put to death or both.
2. Pilate was shocked [surprised] Jesus had died so quickly, and he ascertained from the centurion that Jesus was dead.
 - a. Most took much longer to die. Jesus had been on the cross less than a day.
 - 1) **There is no explanation given in the New Testament why Jesus died so soon.**
 - 2) It may relate back to the severe scourging He had received plus being nailed to the cross, but it is possible that the two thieves had received about the same treatment. We cannot be sure that Jesus was not more severely beaten.
 - 3) It may have simply been the will of God who planned to raise Jesus without seeing corruption on the 1st day of the week. It could relate to Isaiah. (Isa. 53:4-6). He had made atonement, and this made His suffering even more severe.
 - 4) Jesus had to die that day to fulfill the statements Jesus had made that He would be raised on the third day. (Matt. 16:21).

- b. The centurion assured Pilate that Jesus was dead, and with this assurance Pilate then released the corpse of Jesus. (Mk. 15:44,45).

MAR 15:44 And Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. Gr. “thaumazo” means “wonder, marvel, surprise.”

MAR 15:45 And ascertaining this [the death of Jesus] from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

3. Pilate wanted an end to the Jesus problem.

- a. Pilate wanted to be sure Jesus was dead.
 - b. Pilate was a coward and did not want to chance a riot or any other kind of disturbance or insurrection.
 - c. **It was his job to keep peace.**
4. Keep in mind that Pilate was getting his information from professional killers.
- a. These men had the assignment of making sure the three men crucified died quickly.
 - b. They would not put their lives at risk by taking any chance Jesus was alive.
 - c. The centurion recognized after the death of Jesus that He was the Son of God and a righteous man. (Matt. 27:54; Mk. 15:39; Lk. 23:47).

The Body Argument

1. Mark tells us that Joseph of Arimathea visited Pilate and asked for the body [soma] of Jesus. (Mk. 15:43).
2. The word for “body” is the Greek “soma.”
3. It is argued that “soma” means in the Greek “a living body.”
4. Some say Pilate used the word “ptoma”: for body meaning the corpse of Jesus. (Mk. 15:43-45).
5. It is argued that this word “ptoma” means “a fallen, a corpse or carcass.” (Mk. 15:45).
6. It is suggested that Pilate believes Joseph is asking for the corpse of Jesus, but Joseph really asked for the living body of Jesus.
7. Some think Mark put this into book to show that the body of Jesus was living, but the original word used by Joseph was likely “ptoma.”
 - a. He had used “ptoma” earlier for the corpse of John the Baptist. (Mk. 6:29), but it is noteworthy that Matthew used the word “soma.” (Matt. 14:12).
 - b. Mark used the word “soma” to refer to the corpse of Jesus. (Mk. 15:43).
8. It is suggested that the fact of Jesus’ survival was so well known that Mark knew it was useless to hide it.

9. It is argued that Jesus's survival is here revealed by Mark.

Note about "soma"

1) the body both of men or animals, a dead body or corpse

2) the bodies of planets and of stars (heavenly bodies)

3) is used of a (large or small) number of men closely united into one society, or family as it were; a social, ethical, mystical body a) so in the NT of the church

4) that which casts a shadow as distinguished from the shadow itself.

"ptoma" is used to mean "dead body, corpse, carcass." (Matt. 24:28; Mk. 15:45).

MAT 24:28 "Wherever the corpse [ptoma] is, there the vultures will gather.

MAR 15:45 And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body [ptoma] to Joseph.

MAR 6:29 And when his disciples heard about this, they came and took away his body [ptoma-corpse] and laid it in a tomb

10. The word "soma" does not exclusively refer to "a living body."

11. It too can mean "a dead body, a corpse." (Matt. 14:12; 27:58,59; Mk. 6:29; Lk. 17:37; 23:52; Jn. 19:38).

a. John the Baptist

MAT 14:12 And his disciples came and took away the body [soma-corpse] and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus.

b. Christ

MAT 27:58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body [soma - corpse] of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given over to him.

MAT 27:59 And Joseph took the body [soma-corpse] and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

LUK 23:52 this man went to Pilate and asked for the body [soma-corpse] of Jesus.

JOH 19:38 And after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body [soma-corpse] of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore, and took away His body [soma-corpse].

c. Other

LUK 17:37 And answering they said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body [soma-corpse] is, there also will the vultures be gathered."

- Mark is affirming the death of Jesus in his gospel, not some elaborate fraud.

- Some Greek manuscripts have “soma” and some “ptoma” as the word Pilate used..
- “Soma” can have the meaning of “dead body, corpse” and “ptoma” means “corpse, carcass, dead body.”
- There is no real difference in these words as used by Mark.
- Mark is affirming the death of Jesus in his gospel - not some elaborate fraud. (Mk. 15:37, 43,44,45, 46; 16:6,9,11).

I. Those who believe Jesus survived the cross believe the **hasty burial of Christ may have been a cover up** and the disciples knew He was not really dead.

1. Mark and Luke report that Jesus was placed in a new tomb nearby the place of crucifixion. (Mk. 15:46; Lk. 23:53).

MAR 15:46 And Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

LUK 23:53 And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain.

- a. Matthew adds that the tomb was owned by a wealthy man named Joseph of Arimathea. (Matt. 27:60).
- b. John tells us that there was a garden around this tomb that seem to imply the grounds were privately owned. (Jn. 19:41, 42).

JOH 19:41 Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid.

JOH 19:42 Therefore on account of the Jewish day of preparation, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

- 1) Some think Joseph owned these garden grounds, but this is speculation.
 - 2) Even if Joseph did own the garden grounds, it changes nothing.
 - 3) Jesus was dead, but He has Jesus placed in his new tomb.
 - 4) He did not want Christ to rot in some dump.
 - 5) Though he was discouraged and despondent over the death of Jesus, he still loved Him.
- c. John also stresses that Jesus was taken down quickly from the cross and put in Joseph’s new tomb that was “in the place where He was crucified.” (Jn. 19:41).
 - d. We also learn that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus visited the tomb during the night and brought with them a very large amount of spices and myrrh and aloes. (Jn. 19:39). These could be intended as perfume.
 - e. The Bible also tells us that Mary Magdalene and Mary “the mother of James” also brought spices and ointments with them when they came to the tomb after the Sabbath day ended. (Mk. 16:1; Lk. 23:56).

- 1) The Bible teaches they believed Jesus was dead.
 - 2) These things were intended to honor Jesus, but Jesus had already been raised when they arrived at the tomb.
2. Some accept Jesus was placed in Joseph's tomb, but believe that Jesus somehow recuperated on His own and lived a long time afterwards.
3. **Some believe the myrrh and aloes saved His life.**
- a. They argue that they could have been for perfume, but that both of these substances have a medicinal use. Myrrh has been used as an aid to stop bleeding.
 - b. They argue that the things mentioned in the gospels were not normally used for embalming.
 - c. They argue these things were used to stop the bleeding and to save the life of Jesus.
 - d. This is the reverse of what the Bible teaches.
- J. Those who believe Jesus survived the cross **dismiss the fact that the tomb was guarded**, and usually maintain Jesus escaped the tomb on His own, or argue that Joseph or the disciples help Jesus escaped.
1. They cannot explain how the weak, wounded Jesus could do that.
 2. Some would deny or ignore the fact guards were at the tomb, and contend Jesus rolled away the heavy stone and got past the guards.
 3. They certainly do not believe what the gospel writers report about the angels and any part they had in the resurrection.
- K. Those who believe Jesus survived the cross ignore the fact the Jewish leaders believed Jesus was dead and later believed that He arose from the dead.
1. The Jewish leaders never questioned that Jesus was dead.
 2. They had set out to kill Jesus, and had done that through the Roman soldiers.
 3. They knew that Jesus had been raised, and paid the guards to report that the body of Jesus had been stolen.

MAT 28:11 Now while they were on their way, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened.

MAT 28:12 And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together, **they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers,**

MAT 28:13 and said, "**You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.'**"

MAT 28:14 "And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble."

MAT 28:15 **And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.**

- L. Those who believe Jesus survived the cross believe **the disciples did not really see the Risen Lord.**
1. **The disciples claimed they were witnesses.** (Acts 2:32; 3:15).

2. The Bible lists many who witnessed the resurrection of Christ.

a. Jesus appeared to “the twelve.” (Jn. 19:19-28).

b. He also appeared to many others.

1) See gospels - Mary Magdalene, other women, two disciples on the road to Emmaeus, etc.

2) See 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 for some of the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection.

1CO 15:5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

1CO 15:6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

1CO 15:7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

1CO 15:8 and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

M.. Those who believe Jesus survived the cross believe the apostles and all the others who saw Him after His resurrection were really liars.

1. They are affirming that they made up this lie.

2. They are arguing that they were willing to suffer hardship, ridicule, and death for what they knew to be a lie.

3. Men will lie to gain advantage [power, fame, money], but what advantage did this alleged lie give the apostles.

N. Those who believe Jesus survived the cross think the garden being near the place of crucifixion was part of the plot.

1. They state it is also curious that Jesus just happens to have been crucified next to a garden and a tomb, the latter at least owned by Joseph of Arimathea.

2. It is argued that all this is rather convenient to say the least.

3. It is argued, by some, that the crucifixion was a private staged event.

a. Perhaps to keep witnesses ignorant to what was occurring?

b. Luke informs us that the crowds watching were standing at a distance. (Lk. 23:49)

c. It is argued they were deliberately kept at a distance?

d. The argue in fact, the description of the events of Golgotha suggests that the site of the crucifixion was actually in the Kidron valley, where there are many rock-cut tombs to this day and where is also located the Garden of Gethsemane, which may well have been the private garden involved and one with which Jesus was familiar.

Additional Thoughts

1. As we have seen, some argue that Jesus did not really die but survived the cross.

- a. Some contend He married and had children.
 - b. Some argue that Jesus ended up in India and began a ministry there.
 - c. Some believe He lived to be nearly 100.
2. Some argue that Jesus was not even crucified, but it was really Simon of Cyrene who died for Him. (Matt. 27:32; Mk. 15:21; Lk. 23:26).

MAT 27:32 And as they were coming out, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon, whom they pressed into service to bear His cross.

MAR 15:21 And they pressed into service a passer-by coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear His cross.

LUK 23:26 And when they led Him away, they laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.

- a. They are not sure how the switch was made, but they believe it was done despite the lack of proof.
 - 1) **They cannot explain John account of the Risen Lord.** (Jn. 20:19-28).
 - 2) They must reject John's account and Luke's account of Jesus appearing to His disciples. (Lk.24:36-40).
 - 3) **This infers the Jewish leaders were so ignorant that they did not know even who they crucified.**
- b. Those who hold this position, that a switch was made, believe someone was crucified and died on the cross, but not Jesus.
 - 1) Those taking this position do not believe Jesus was crucified at all.
 - 2) They are convinced Jesus was not crucified and lived to be an old man.
- c. If this be true (that Christ did not die), we are lost in our sins.
- d. We have no Savior and no first-fruits of a future resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:20-23; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5).

1CO 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, **the first fruits** of those who are asleep.

1CO 15:21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

1CO 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.

1CO 15:23 But each in his own order: **Christ the first fruits**, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

COL 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, **the first-born from the dead**; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

REV 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, **the first-born of the dead**, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood,

Meaning of Fruit-Fruits

1. The meaning is not that Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead.
 - a. There were resurrections in the Old Testament.
 - b. Jesus has raised several people from the dead - Lazarus, Jarius' daughter, the widow's son, etc.
2. He was the first to be raised from the dead never to die again.
3. Others who were raised died again and were not a guarantee of anything in regard to our future.
4. Jesus is the pledge of our resurrection from the dead. (1 Cor. 15:20-23).
5. Because He lives, we too shall live and be raised on "that last day." (Jn. 6:39, 44).
 - d. It means the gospels and all the New Testament is untrustworthy and must be rejected.
 - 1) If they lied about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, what else did they lie about?
 - 2) They must be rejected as ignorant men who were duped or lied or both.
 - e. It means Jesus was an imposter who has duped millions and led them to be persecuted and put to death. He is really a monster - not a Savior.
 - f. Advocates of this theory would like for us to live the way Paul taught we should live if there is no resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:32).

Note:

1. Irenaeus, in the late second century, in a complaint about the beliefs of an Egyptian Gnostic, Basilides, explains that this heretic taught that Jesus had been substituted during the journey to Golgotha and that this substitute, Simon of Cyrene, had died in Jesus' stead.
2. Where did Basilides get this information? This is not known. It is certain it did not come from the Bible. Ancients, like moderns, had all kinds of ways to discredit Jesus.
3. Some dismiss the whole thing and challenged that Jesus was real and that He really died.
4. Some believe Jesus was only a spirit being, and deny the humanity of Christ. (1 Jn. 2:18; 4:1; 2 Jn. 1:7).

Conclusion.

- I. It is clear the Bible teaches **Jesus died** [not fainted] on the cross for our sins.
- II. He suffered immensely that we might be forgiven. (Isa. 53:4-6; 1 Cor. 15:3).
 - A. We could never earn our salvation. (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8, 9).
 - B. **Jesus paid the debt we could not pay.**

- III. Those who reject the vicarious death of Christ and refuse to trust in Him will be lost forever. (Jn. 8:24; 3:16, 36; 14:6; Acts 4:12).
- A. Those who reject His vicarious death on the cross are making void any opportunity for them to be saved.
- B. Without the blood of Christ there is no forgiveness. (Heb.9:22; 1 Jn.1:7).
- C. We have “no hope” without Christ. (1 Thess. 4:13).

IV. We must come to “the lifted up” Christ who gave His life for our sins.

JOH 3:14 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;

JOH 3:15 that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.

JOH 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

JOH 12:32 "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

JOH 12:33 But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.

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