



There has been many films which has presented the life of Jesus Christ and the crucifixion, some better than others I believe that the Passion is one of the most authentic & Biblically accurate (Although Mel Gibson has used poetic licence in some places)

Today Easter is fluffy bunnies and chocolate eggs and the main reason for Easter is lost to the general public, and I think that we may need something as shocking as this movie to make us realise exactly what Jesus suffered.

Tonight I want to focus in on the medical aspects of the last 12 hours before Jesus died on the cross, not just because of the movie but also my own personal investigation into what happened knowing that over 2000 years the statements like "he was flogged" has lost its original impact from those who knew what it was to live under Roman rule.

This study is not based on the movie but takes the extensive details included in the 4 gospels and verified with additional insight by both Jewish and Roman historians & uses research from established Physicians who have themselves investigated the crucifixion.

But why you may ask should we focus on the negative of the cross and not the resurrection, it is my opinion that before we can celebrate the resurrection we need to understand the cross

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

What did Jesus endure? What shame did he suffer?

Summary: Upper Room, Gethsemane, Betrayal, Arrest, Jewish Trials, Roman Trials, Flogging, Beating, Crucifixion

This all happened between the hours of 10pm on Wednesday – 3pm on Thursday approx 17 hours with 3am to 3pm being the main area of focus of the movie and the study tonight

Upper Room

Wednesday
00:00

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends

Matthew 26:26-29 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of The new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."



Upper Room

Met with disciples to partake of the Passover, the Jewish feast remembering Israel's escape from Egypt

John 13:4 - Washed disciples feet hours before he would be arrested, flogged & crucified, including Peter who would deny him and Judas who would betray him.

John 15:13 (screen)

Matthew 26:26-29 (screen)

The words on the screen said by Jesus would only take on the relevance and importance they have now due to the next 12 hours

Matt 26:30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives (Gethsemane)

Gethsemane

Thursday
02:00

Luke 22:41-44 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.



Gethsemane

They arrive in Gethsemane

Luke 22:39 Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. **40**When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

Jesus then prayed for His disciples, while they could not even keep awake and were caught by Jesus sleeping!

Luke 22:41-44 (screen)

Many people say the blood like sweat is only illustrative and did not actually happen but Luke (the author of the 3rd Gospel) was a doctor and therefore he more than the other gospels provided great detail regarding people's illnesses/conditions.

There are know cases of this happening it is called Hematohydrosis – Capillary blood vessels that feed the sweat glands rupture causing bleeding like sweat on the body. This is caused by a great emotional or physical stress.

It is interesting to note that Gethsemane means "Oil Press", and many commentators have stated that at this point the spirit of God was being crushed (but not broken). The spirit represented by oil in the Bible

The Agony of prayer v43, is based on a word used for engaging in combat

But verse 42 "not my will but yours be done" shows us that he knew and accepted everything that would take place in the next 12 hours

Jewish Trials

Thursday
03:00 - 06:00

John 18:19-24 The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said." And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Do You answer the high priest like that?" Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?" Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Mark 14:65 Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.



Betrayal/ Abandonment

He was betrayed by a kiss by one of his disciples, Judas (a close friend for 3 years) and abandoned by His closest friends (except Peter & John)

The officers came at night to arrest him, even although he was in the temple daily teaching. They were scared that people would revolt against the High Priests (remember it was only a few days ago he entered Jerusalem on a donkey with the people proclaiming him as King)

Trials

Many commentators provide the legal aspects of the trials and explain why they were illegal (held at night, no defence counsel etc, but our focus is in the medical aspects)

Deprived from Sleep – from midnight to around 6am Jesus was tried in various courts and would have been subject to interrogation several times. They brought witnesses who could not even agree with each other.

At the High Priest's house we see the severity of one of the interrogations in John 18:19-24 (screen)

Also Mark 14:65 (screen)

There was no need for them to do this except to torture Him, it was not part of Jewish or Roman law

Spat – To be spit on is vile, it is degrading, it is more psychological abuse rather than physical abuse. It was part of the shame that he suffered

Blindfolded and beaten – He could not react to the blows, as He did not know where they were coming from.

Slapped – Again more physical and psychological abuse

Roman Trials

Thursday
06:00-09:00

Luke 32:6-11 Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.



The trials then moved from the Jewish court to the Roman courts, as the Jews could not sentence anyone to death, and Jesus was put before Pilate and Herod then Pilate again

Luke 32:1 Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." 3 Then Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

He answered him and said, "It is as you say." 4 So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in this Man." 5 But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place."

The High Priests knew that Blasphemy (calling himself God) would not stand up in the Roman court so they invented lies "perverting the nation, forbidden to pay taxes, suggesting that he was trying to set up his own kingdom and kick out the Romans

Nothing could be further from the truth, as he encouraged people to live peaceably, to pay their taxes and that his kingdom was not of this world

Luke 32:6-11

Herod wanted to see Jesus, not out of a genuine interest but as entertainment, "perform a miracle for me", therefore Jesus did not even respond to his taunts.

He was then sent back to Pilate

Flogging

Thursday
08:00

Mark 15:15 So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged Him, to be crucified.



Flogging

Mark 15:15 (Screen)

Jewish law set a limit of 40, as they felt that that was the maximum that anyone could take and then changed it to 39 just in case there was a miscount or as a sign of mercy - There was no similar Roman law

According to Roman historians, the victim would be tied to a pole, with his hands tied high on the pole or over a stump or rock, extending his arms and therefore making the skin on the back tight.

A whip (flagrum) was used regularly. It would be what we would recognise as a cat of 9 tails made of leather but in addition it would contain either metal or animal bone fragments at the end which would dig into the skin and rip it as they pulled the whip off of the victim. As they whipped the person the fragments would cut into the skin and subcutaneous tissue and as the flogging would continue the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles.

Many people would not even survive the flogging due to the pain and loss of blood

The Romans were experts at punishment and would have not spared any effort in flogging a Jew.

One commentator said that Jesus' back would have been like a raw hamburger, and this was definitely the image Mel Gibson painted in the movie, although I think that he over emphasised the flogging.

Crown of Thorns

Thursday
08:00

Mark 15:16-20 Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His head, and began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.



Crown of Thorns

In addition to the flogging we read in Mark 15:16-20 (Screen)

This was not just one or 2 soldiers but the whole garrison

This was a joke to them that someone would declare himself to be King of the Jews.

Purple – Probably one of the old robes of one of the soldiers or the one given by Herod

Sceptre – In Matthews account the reed, was given to him as a sceptre, then was used as a rod to beat Him

Crown of Thorns – Probably not the neat round crown you see in the paintings or movies, but a mess of thorns covering the whole head with thorns 1" long

The crown would have added to his pain and would have dug in even more each time they struck his head, this compounded by the Hematohydrosis which occurred in the Garden which would have left his skin very tender

They also spat on Him and mocked Him.

Genesis 3:17-18 - Thorns first sign of fall of man in Genesis

Isaiah 1:18 – Sin described as the colour scarlet

After this beating and the other beating, no wonder we read in Isaiah

Is 52:14 So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men.

No wonder after he had risen that neither Mary nor the disciples on the road to Damascus recognised Jesus, he was disfigured to a point that they did not recognise them.

After the physical and mental abuse, they tore off the robe, which by this time would be sticking to His back and it would have reopened the wounds from the flogging.

Pilate hands Jesus over

Thursday
08:00

John 19:5-7 Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!" Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."



John 19:5-7 (Screen)

People have discussed whether the movie is anti-Semitic, and point to scenes like these. However it is clear from reading the Bible that it was God's plan for Jesus to die for the sins of the world and used many people, Judas, the Jews, Pilate to accomplish His plan.

I would encourage Christians not to turn against Jews but to instead show them the love & compassion of Jesus

In fact Jesus himself said on the cross, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do"

The way to Calvary

Thursday
09:00

John 19:26 Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus.



First Jesus would have to walk through the city of Jerusalem, which is commonly called the Via Dolorosa “Way of Suffering” – Now a tourist route (get your postcard of the Via Dolorosa here!!)

The crossbar (patibulum) not the whole cross as represented in the movie, would have been carried, but this in itself would have weighed between 75-100lbs.

Jesus had already endured several beatings and a flogging it was now around 9am in the morning and he would be suffering through pain, dehydration, loss of blood, sleeplessness. It was amazing that He even could carry it at all!

We read in the Gospels that Jesus stumbled (collapsed) due to exhaustion. The weight and the rough wood would have caused further pain to His bleeding back. Simon was picked and carried the crossbar the rest of the way.

The Nails

Thursday
10:00

Mark 15:23-24 Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it. And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take.



Mark 15:23 tell us that he was offered wine mixed with myrrh – This was an mild anaesthetic/analgesic used to numb the pain.

Jesus refused this not wanting to numb his senses from the pain he was about to suffer

The crossbar would be placed on the ground & the victim laid on it. They would use 7" long nails 3/8 wide, which were driven through the wrist between the 2 main bones, not the hand as shown in the movie (at the time of writing the gospels the wrist was considered part of the hand). The hand could not take the weight of the body and the nail would rip through the flesh.

As they hammered in the nails, they would often hit the median nerve causing extreme pain through the arms and paralysing the hands. The first wrist would be nailed through then the second with the arms stretched out allowing for some lateral movement.

Darkness

Thursday
12:00-15:00

Matt 27:45-46 Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"



The crossbar would then be raised onto the stipes (main upright beam)

On the stipes, historical evidence shows us that there was often, but not always a small seat, which served as a support for the victim (but really extended the agony).

The victim's feet were then nailed to the stipes. To allow for this, the knees had to be bent and rotated laterally. This would leave the victim in a very uncomfortable position.

Shallow, painful, loss of blood, lack of oxygen – leading to massive cramps, restricting even more the movement

Although there are 7 saying on the cross, I only want to mention 3 of them tonight, However please notice that all the saying were very short, due to the shallowness of breathing

Matthew 27:46 (Screen)

This is the first time that Jesus does not address God as Father, it was at this point when the punishment for the sins of the world was poured out on Jesus and the Father broke the communion with him for the first & last time.

This happened during the 3 hours of darkness, which happened from noon to 3pm, which was I believe used by God to hide what Jesus had to suffer for the sins of us all.

“It is Finished”

Thursday
15:00

John 19:28-30 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.



John 19:28-30 -Second last saying – I thirst

This time Jesus requested and accepted a drink, not laced with myrrh but vinegar wine on a hyssop plant.

Feast of Passover – Hyssop was used to sprinkle the Passover lambs blood over the lintel of the door

Vinegar wine – This was the product of fermented grape juice which was mixed with yeast – Yeast representing Sin in the Bible – Symbolic possibly of the true Passover Lamb taking the sin of the world.

Last Saying - 30 He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Debate over how Jesus died

1) Shallowness of breath causing small areas of lung to collapse, decreasing the Oxygen while increasing the CO₂. Causing a fluid build up in the lungs exaggerating the shallowness of breath. Finally causing suffocation

2) Heart distress due to everything that went on, causing myocardial infarction (Heart Attack)

3) This heart attack could also be possible due to fluid building up around the heart called a pericardial effusion

Mark records that even Pilate was surprised that Jesus had died so quickly. – normally 2-3 days

John 10 - 17 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

Spear - No matter the physical cause of the death of Jesus. The soldiers who were used to crucifying people and making sure they were dead, noted that he was already dead did not break His legs, if there was any doubt they would have broken his legs anyway but instead to fulfil OT prophecy thrust a spear into his side and outpoured blood and water.

Why did Jesus have to Die?

Isaiah 50:6 I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting

Isaiah 52:14 Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men;

Psalm 22:14-17 I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me



Prophecied in O.T - Isaiah 50:6, Isaiah 52:14, Psalm 22:14-17 (screen)

Verified in non-Christian Literature

Josephus AD93 – Mentioned James the brother of Jesus, & Jesus himself

Tacitus AD115 – Mentions Nero persecuting Christians and refers to the Christ who they follow

Pliny AD 79

Thallus AD52 – History of eastern Mediterranean world, mentions a cosmic event, a great eclipse of the sun so that it became night, this was the 4th year of the 202nd Olympiad (ie 33AD) from noon & also great earthquakes on the same day

Tamud – Jewish writings.

Why did Jesus have to Die?

1 John 2:2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

Hebrews 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.



We have taken a blunt look at the death of Jesus, but the question has to be asked “Why?”

Because of Sin!

1 John 2:2 – It was required due to the sins of the world

Isaiah 53:10 - It was God’s plan

Hebrews 12:2 - It was Jesus’ willing choice

Jesus was sinless he did not need to die, but chose that path to

- 1) Achieve his own resurrection – it was the price paid for our sins
- 2) To show his love for us
- 3) To cancel the demands of the law against us
- 4) To provide for us the basis for our justification from our sin (just as if I did not do it)
- 5) To obtain for us all things that are good for us
- 6) To bring us to God
- 7) To give us eternal life

Why did Jesus have to Die?

John 14:1-6 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. "And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.



If you have never before understood not just what Jesus suffered but why he suffered then let me give you a few verse spoken by Jesus to the disciples a few hours earlier

John 14:1-6 -Jesus demonstrated that he was a willing sacrifice for our sins, and all we need to do is recognise that through him we can receive forgiveness for our sins.

If you have been challenged by the message and have recognise your sin and need for forgiveness then in a moment I want to lead you in a short prayer to accept Jesus as the way, the truth and life, and be set free, knowing that no matter what you have done he is willing to forgive you and you can begin your relationship with Jesus Christ

But before I do this, to allow you time to consider your choice, I would like to address the Christians in this room, how should we react to the message of the Passion?

Galatians 2:20 - Are we living for ourselves or are we living a crucified life, Jesus even said that we must take up our cross and follow him, have we died to our self or do are we holding onto a wrong habit, relationship, though life? God wants us to have the best and the only way to do this is to die to self, and allow Christ to live in us and work through us.

Prayer for someone wanting to accept Jesus - O God, I am a sinner. I am sorry for my sin. I am willing to turn from my sin. I receive Jesus as my Saviour and I confess Him as my Lord. From now on I want to follow Him as a Disciple. In Jesus' name Amen

Prayer for a Christian wanting to rededicate themselves to Jesus - O God, I recognise that I am living a selfish life and have not allowed my self to die. I ask for forgiveness and turn to you again and ask for you to live and reign in me. In Jesus Name Amen.

If you have prayed that prayer, please let us know by contact us on web@calvarystirling.org and request our New Believer Correspondence Course.