

# The Bulletin

## Meeks St. Church of Christ

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**October 6, 2019**

### ***“THE HISTORY OF CRUCIFIXION”***

By Heath Rogers

Jesus was put to death by crucifixion. "And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left" (Luke 23:33). This has made the cross a focal point of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of our faith (1 Corinthians 1:18; 2:2; Galatians 6:14; Colossians 1:20).

Historians claim that execution by means of crucifixion was used by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Medes, and the Persians. The earliest mode of crucifixion seems to have been what we would identify as being impaled. Instead of being nailed or tied to a post, the body of the victim would be driven upon a sharpened stake and suspended in air. Alexander the Great is said to have crucified 2,000 inhabitants of Tyre in this manner when he captured that city.



The Romans adopted this method of execution and used it throughout their empire. By this time, the victim was no longer impaled. Instead, the Romans perfected the suffering by attaching the victim to a crossbeam that was then attached to the vertical stake. This made the victim's execution more than a public spectacle. It turned his execution into a prolonged and grotesque torture. Crucifixion was so gruesome that it was reserved for slaves and criminals.

It was against the law for a Roman citizen to be crucified. The Roman statesman and orator Cicero called crucifixion "The most miserable and most painful punishment appropriate to slaves alone," and said, "let the very name of the cross be far away not only from the body of a Roman citizen, but even from his thoughts, his eyes, his ears."

Roman crucifixion was usually preceded by scourging. The clothing would be removed from the back and chest of the victim and his hands would be bound to a pillar. The Romans commonly used a whip consisting of strands of leather weighted down by pieces of bone or metal. The initial blows from this whip would cause blisters, while the continued blows would burst the skin and tear into the flesh. At times, this scourging was so severe the victim would not survive to see the cross.

After the scourging, the victim then bore his own cross (the crossbeam) to the place of execution. There his hands were tied or nailed to the crossbeam, which would then be lifted and attached to a vertical stake. The total height of the cross was not much taller than the victim himself. Sometimes a peg was placed in the stake for the victim to stand upon, or a block was attached for him to sit upon. Other times the feet were nailed to the vertical stake.

The victim hung suspended by the arms. In this posture, breathing was difficult and blood flow was restricted. The victim could inhale but would have to relieve the pressure on his arms to exhale. This was done by pushing himself up with his feet. His pain would be compounded if his feet were nailed into the cross. Every breath he took required him to repeat this painful process.

To hasten death, the victim's legs would be broken (John 19:31-34) and he would die from asphyxiation. However, the Romans intended for crucifixion to bring a slow and lingering death. It was not uncommon for the victim to hang on the cross for days until his death. Even after death, the bodies of the victims would remain on the cross where they would rot or be consumed by scavenger animals.

Our Lord's death by crucifixion was the subject of prophecy. In Psalm 22, David describes the agony of the suffering Messiah when he says, "They pierced My hands and My feet" (v. 16, see also Zechariah 12:10).

Jesus knew He would be crucified. He spoke of Himself as being lifted up from the earth, thus signifying the way He would die (John 3:14; 12:32-33). He also told the disciples, "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified" (Matt. 26:2).

Instead of avoiding this suffering, Jesus willingly surrendered Himself to His Father's will. "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). Notice what Paul said about Jesus' death. He didn't willingly submit to just any kind of death. Jesus was willing to die the worst possible kind of death – "the death of the cross."

We have the opportunity to remember the death of our Lord every first day of the week. The Lord's Supper is the memorial instituted by the Lord Himself. When we take the unleavened bread we are to remember His suffering: "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. 11:24). When we take the cup we are to remember His death: "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me" (v. 25).

As gruesome as our Lord's death was, it is important that we go back to Calvary and remember the terrible price that was paid for our sins.

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## ***"The Vine, The Branches, And Fruit"***

by Doug Roush

In the 15th chapter of the gospel of John, Jesus used the allegory of a grape vine to explain the relationship that exists between Him and those who follow Him, and to express His expectation of those who follow Him.

In verses four and five we read, "*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.*"

It is important to notice that the point of this allegory is that we are expected to "*bear fruit.*" However, just as a branch cannot bear fruit unless it remains attached to the source of its life, so we cannot bear "*the fruit of righteousness and godliness*" unless we remain "*in Christ.*"

In verse seven, Jesus explained that we "*remain in Him*" when, "*His words remain in us.*" When we keep His commandments, we find that we will display His characteristics in our life. In verse eight, Jesus said, "*By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.*"

However, in verse six, Jesus said, "*If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*" We should appreciate the fact that just as an owner of an orchard expects his trees to bear fruit. God expects us to bear the fruit of righteousness and godliness. If we fail to do so, He has the right to destroy us, just as the owner of the orchard has the right to prune dead branches from his trees.

Jesus exemplified this principle once, when He walked over to a fig tree expecting to pick a fig from it. When He saw that the fig tree was not bearing the fruit for which it been created. He commanded that it die; and so it did (Matthew 21:17-19).

You see, each of us are created in the image of God. Our purpose is to reverence God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13). When we do so, we glorify His name and His grace. But when we fail to reverence Him and keep His commandments, we dishonor Him and become candidates for His wrath.

Turning to the fifth chapter of Galatians, we read, "*the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; ....*" Jesus said that if we abide in Him and bear this fruit in our lives, our joy will be made full and God will be glorified.

Therefore, as Galatians 5:24 and 25 continues, "*Let us join ourselves to Christ and remain in Him. Let us put to death our love of sinning and accentuate our spiritual nature.*"

Let us abide in His word; for only then can we bear the fruit of righteousness and glorify His name.

(The Communicator, Fredricktown Church of Christ, April 6, 2003)

**News and Notes:** Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Linda Harris, Hazel Corner, Clay Ford, Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt. Martha Cottrell (Dan's Mom) will have hip surgery October 8th and prayers for Peyton Grooms (just out of the hospital with pneumonia)

North East Church of Christ in Tupelo has a Gospel Meeting starting today (Oct. 6th) details in the foyer.

North Jackson Street Church of Christ is having a Gospel Meeting beginning October 21 thru the 25th with John Isaac Edwards. Monday-Friday 7:00 PM Nightly.

**Those Who Serve:**

**Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:**

**Opening Prayer:** Jerry Kennemur  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #1:** "The Christian And His Sin"

**Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:**

**Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:** Jerry Kennemur  
The Book of Acts (Jason Longstreth)  
*Page 86 Question #12*

**Announcements:** Paul Busby  
**Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:** Russell Briggs

**Song Leader:** Adam Harris  
**Lord's Supper:** Doug George  
**Assisting:** Adam Harris & Dan Cottrell  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #2:** "Why Do We Sin?"  
**Closing Prayer:** Tim Harris Jr.

**Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.**

**October 9th:**

**Auditorium Bible Class:** Russell Briggs  
The Book of Job (Mike Willis)  
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**Invitation:** Paul Busby  
**Song Leader:** Russell Briggs  
**Closing Prayer:** Tim Harris Sr.