

# The Old Paths

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## “The Crucifixion Of Christ”

Jarrod Jacobs

**T**he Bible speaks very matter-of-factly about the crucifixion of Christ. We know that this event was a matter of prophecy in the Old Testament (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22; Isa. 53; Dan. 9:26). We also know that Christ alluded to this event on numerous occasions, declaring that this was the way He would die (Matt. 16:21, 17:23, 20:19; Mk. 9:31, 10:34; Lk. 9:22, 18:31-33, 24:7). Yet, when the time came, the Holy Spirit inspired the writers to simply say: “*They crucified him*” (Matt. 27:35; Mk. 15:25; Lk. 23:33; Jn. 19:18).

What a simple statement for an event so powerful, so full of meaning, so earth-shattering, so loving, so real, and so sacrificial! No action before or since has compared with the actions taken that day when Christ willingly went to the cross and sacrificed Himself for mankind (Jn. 10:17-18; Matt. 20:28; Jn. 15:13).

Yet, what does it mean to be crucified? Many in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are not aware of what this is. Some recognize it as an archaic manner of execution. Is this all it was? Such a statement as, “*They crucified him*” ought to strike a chord in our minds that takes us back to that time in the 1<sup>st</sup> century when Jesus was crucified.

What happened when “*they crucified him*”? Please read the following statement. May it help

us appreciate what it is that Christ endured 2000 years ago.

“The cross was not a gilded and ornamental structure, but one of rude material, hastily and roughly put together.

Death on the cross was the most cruel, most awful, most shameful, and most disgraceful punishment and death which barbarian brutality could invent. It was common among the Persians, Carthaginians, Greeks, and Romans. It is said that the Romans probably copied this hideous form of punishment from the Phoenicians. Romans did not crucify their own citizens, but inflicted it upon slaves and the conquered. The Egyptians simply bound victims to the cross, leaving them there to die of exhaustion and starvation; but Jesus was nailed to the cross.

The victim was laid on his back on the cross, his arms and legs stretched out, and long nails were driven through his hands (*Later studies suggest the nails were driven through the wrists as the wristbones can hold the upper-body weight of a man; from the fingertips to the forearm was considered the “hand” in the 1<sup>st</sup> century mind. - JJ*) and feet, then the cross was raised up and set in its place; or it was first erected and then the victim was nailed to it. His body was not altogether supported by his arms; for a peg passed through the cross between his legs, which in part supported the body. It has been said that burning was preferable to the cross.

Farrar graphically describes this suffering and torture: ‘For indeed, a death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly — dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, traumatic fever, tetanus, publicity of shame, long continuance or torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of untended wounds — all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which would give to the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. The unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish; the wounds, inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrened; the arteries, especially of the head, became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood;’ and ‘each variety of misery went on, gradually increasing,’ until death relieved the sufferer.”

(*Elam’s Notes On Bible School Lessons 1925*, p. 79-80).

This short description certainly brings matters into focus, doesn’t it? Often, we focus upon the spiritual side of matters when studying the crucifixion, and this is right to do. We ought to focus upon this because it is through this suffering that we have salvation. (Isa. 53:5; Matt. 26:28; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:7)

Yet, let us never forget the physical side of things — the pain and suffering and all Christ endured as that sacrifice. The blood of Christ (Acts 20:28) flowed that day for our salvation. His sacrifice and suffering was a fulfillment of prophecy, and because of this event, we can be saved from sin! (Rev. 1:5; Lk. 19:10; I Tim. 1:15)

Though men might wish to downplay sin, and suggest sin is nothing. Never forget that God required the sacrifice of the cross as necessary for the salvation of a sinful world! It is my sin that nailed Christ to the cross! It is my wrongdoing that made this all necessary! When Jesus went to the cross, He was thinking of all of humanity, His creation! Yes, sin nailed Christ to the cross, but love kept Him there!

Let the description of the cross by brother Elam sink deep into our minds, and let us never forget that this is what was meant in the simple statement, "They crucified Him."

# "I Am Debtor"

Jarrold Jacobs

**W**hen the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, he said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise" (Rom. 1:14). What did that mean? How could he have been a "debtor" to them when he had not seen them, yet (Rom. 1:13, 15:22)? Put simply, saying he was a "debtor" meant that Paul felt he was under an obligation to preach the gospel to the Romans (Vine's p. 279). In the same sense that he told the Corinthians, "woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (I Cor. 9:16), so also he felt that urgency toward the Romans, and planned on preaching there soon. As we study the Bible, we also learn that we are "debtors" to some today. To whom are we "debtors"?

## Debtors To Christ

Romans 8:12-13 says that we are debtors to Christ to put to death the deeds of the body, and

not live after the flesh. The Holy Spirit shows that when we do this, we will be alive spiritually. This letter to the Romans leaves no doubt that if we wish to be joint-heirs with Christ (v. 17), then we become debtors to "put to death the deeds of the body," and live for Christ. If we wish to please God, we must put off "our old man" of sin by being baptized for the remission of our sins (Rom. 6:3-6, 16-18; Col. 2:11-12, 3:9; Mk. 16:16).

## Debtors To The Whole Law

When the apostle Paul was fighting the false doctrine of the Judaizers in Galatia, he wrote and told them, "I testify again to every man that accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace" (Gal. 5:3-4). This is a lesson many of our friends in the denominational world need to learn. When people try to justify their actions by Old Testament teachings, they become obligated, or "debtors" (KJV) to do all the Law. This is also a lesson those of us in the church need to learn. The Old Testament teaches us by revealing examples worthy of imitation, as well as revealing examples of folks whose actions we ought not imitate (Rom. 15:4). However, if we cling to the Old Testament as

the word by which we authorize our actions today, Paul said without hesitation that we will fall from grace. We will fall from grace because we have left the law of Christ and have become indebted to the Law of Moses.

## Debtors To God

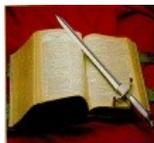
Finally, we are debtors to God! Think about it, God sent Jesus to earth to die (Rom. 5:8; Jn. 3:16). While we can never repay His great sacrifice, we are under an obligation to God to live our lives in His service (Lk. 17:10; II Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 12:1-2). Friend, give your life to God instead of wasting your life with Satan (Mk. 16:16; Jas. 4:7-8)! You owe it to Him!

### "IT IS BETTER TO..."

Larry Ray Hafley, Cookeville, TN

- ◆ ... hear bad news that is true than good news that is false.
- ◆ ... be a slave in the Savior than to be a master in Satan.
- ◆ ... imprisoned for truth than to be free in error.
- ◆ ... be silent and satisfied than to speak and be sorry.

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