



WHY WAS JESUS CRUCIFIED?

There is a component to the ancient form of execution, known as crucifixion, that I think has been overlooked by many students of the Bible. This component is not my idea; I have presented it here (under [Why Crucifixion?](#)) from a paper written by Bible scholar, Arthur C. Custance. I've included a link to his website. I've also utilized various other sites as research which I've credited throughout this article.

Before we get to that particular aspect of crucifixion, let's explore what we know about its most well-known "victim", Jesus Christ.

There are many more Bible verses on each point that I could have referenced. If you're interested in doing your own search, the [Blue Letter Bible](#) pages that I've highlighted as links will allow you to do so. Click the back arrow to return to this article.

A "Word" about Jesus

Let's review the facts commonly known about Jesus and expound on them:

1. Like God the Father, Jesus has always existed and is the Creator of the universe. This involves the mystery of the Trinity—that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are three separate persons of the same essence. [John Chapter 1](#); [Colossians 1:15-17](#).
2. The Plan of Redemption was known from the beginning (the knowledge that man would fall and that Jesus would voluntarily pay the price for man's sin). [Genesis 3:15](#); [John 17:24](#); [I Peter 1:20](#).
3. Born of a virgin, he was both human and divine. [Luke 1:35](#); [Matthew 1:23](#).
4. He never sinned, although tempted in all points as we are. [I Peter 2:22](#); [II Corinthians 5:21](#); [Hebrews 4:15](#).
5. His earthly ministry lasted for about three years (calculated from the historic gospels).
6. His preaching consisted mainly of loving one another, repentance, and "the gospel".
* [Mark 1:14-15](#); [John 15:12](#).
7. He performed miracles, such as healing and raising the dead. [Matthew 4:24](#); [John 11:43-44](#).
8. He did not hesitate to rebuke those who needed rebuking, notably hypocrites, dishonest moneychangers in the Temple, and false religious leaders. His criticism of

the Sadducees and Pharisees led to their determination to kill him. [Matthew 23:27-28](#); [Luke 22:2](#); [John 11:53](#); [Acts 7:52](#).

9. He was arrested and condemned on false charges, tortured, and crucified. [John 19:1-42](#); [Matthew 27:1](#).
10. He rose from the dead on the third day. [Matthew 28:6](#); [Mark 16:6](#); [Luke 24:6](#); [John 20:29](#).
11. He ascended to the right hand of God where he continues to function as High Priest and Intercessor for man. [Romans 8:34](#); [Hebrews 7:25](#).
12. He will return to take the church, believers in him, to be with him and to abolish evil (including Satan and his followers) for all time. This will occur after a series of prophesied events recorded in the Old and New Testaments. [John 14:2](#); [Hebrews 9:28](#). See the book of [Daniel](#) for Old Testament references.

The following points are less commonly known and are beneficial toward debating with non-believers:

- Jesus frequently predicted his death; it did not come as a surprise. [Philippians 2:6-8](#); [Mark 10:45](#); [Matthew 16:21](#); [Matthew 20:28](#); [Matthew 26:26-29](#).
- He submitted voluntarily to his arrest; he could have stopped everything that was happening at any time. He had already avoided being killed or arrested on several occasions because it was not yet time. [Matthew 26:36-46](#); [John 10:17-18](#); [Matthew 26:53](#).
 - His death cancelled, redeemed, paid in full, our sin debt. [John 1:29](#); [Acts 2:38](#); [Revelation 5:9](#).

All that he voluntarily accepted (torture, suffering, death) was in obedience to God's will. This was the "cup of wrath" that God required as a penalty for man's sin and for man's redemption. Jesus had a sense of dread and horror about it just before it happened, but he continued to go through with the "Plan" to which he had committed himself. See the Gethsemane prayer: Mark 14:34-36. Also see Hebrews 5:7-8, which states: "And God heard his prayers because of his deep reverence for God. Even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered." (NLT).

The Need for a Sacrifice

From the moment that Adam rebelled against God and sinned **, mankind has faced eternal separation from God—in other words, a one-way ticket to hell. Justice must be served, and a penalty must be paid.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23.

The following points are summarized from a Blue Letter Bible article entitled: ["An Identification of Christ."](#)

- Not only must someone **voluntarily** pay the penalty for sin, he must be **qualified** to pay. He cannot be guilty of the same crimes as the "sinner".
- The substitute (person paying the penalty) must be of an **infinite** nature, because sinning is not only past and present, it is future.
- The price is human **blood** for human souls (reason shown below).
- The sacrifice must be both **physical** and **spiritual**.

- The substitute must therefore be both **divine** and **human**.
- Only **Jesus Christ** fits the “bill”.

All the different kinds of sacrifices and the symbolism behind each one is beyond the scope of this article. ([See Appendix A](#)). Suffice it to say that, no matter how strange to us seem the laws and rules regarding Old Testament sacrifices, there is significance and meaning behind each one. It is important, also, to note that God is not a blood-thirsty God who takes pleasure in seeing the shedding of blood. Sacrifice is actually a provision for man to show his sorrow and repentance, his faith, and his desire to reconcile himself to God. Thankfully, such sacrifices are no longer necessary since Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice, of which the others were a foreshadowing.

“You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.” Psalm 51:16-17 (NIV).

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” 1 John 4:10 (NIV).

“(Jesus said) ...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:28 (NIV). Jesus often referred to himself as the Son of Man.

Sacrifices and offerings restored broken relationships between God and man, and between men and women...and brought healing. (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*).

They can also be thought of as “fines”, “since the money of the day consisted of livestock, fines were paid in that currency.” (Glenn M. Miller).

“Sacrifices always cost something, and always required confession (by the act of coming forward), and faith (that God had to be taken seriously). Every sacrifice reminded Israel that she had been

redeemed by God and was still in an interpersonal and corporate covenant with her Redeemer.” (Glenn M. Miller, *Christian Think Tank*).

What is sin? The Bible’s definition is “falling short of the glory of God”, or in other words: “falling short of perfection”. That would include everything from a little white lie, to sexual perversion, to a heinous murder. I don’t think any of us in our right minds would say we are perfect. Since the nature of God is just, righteous, and holy, it only stands to reason that sin must be dealt with in some way. Man cannot save himself, either by good works or by any other means. If he could, Jesus’ death on the cross would have been unnecessary! How many, and what kind of good works would be “good enough” to satisfy God’s demand for perfection?

There’s Power in the Blood

Why is blood of such importance throughout the Bible?

“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” Hebrews 9:22 (NIV).

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” Leviticus 17:11.

People can live without limbs and certain organs, but we can’t live without blood. It is life itself. If the

Suppose Jesus had shown up before God with a handful, or even basketsful, of silver and gold and said, “Here is the payment for man’s sin”! See [1 Peter 1:18-19](#).

wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), then it should be easy to understand why blood is required to give life again. This is the meaning of atonement.

On a deeper level, there is much more to blood than just red and white cells. What gives it its animating and life-sustaining power? Who created all those amazing properties of blood, including DNA? Could it be there's a part of God in our blood? How else do you explain life?

We've seen how animal sacrifices temporarily satisfied the requirement for a blood atonement before Jesus' death on the cross. Let's take a look at how his body and blood fulfilled the final requirement for a blood sacrifice.

The Jewish Tabernacle was a copy of a "reality" that already existed in Heaven ([Hebrews 9:24](#)). According to Mosaic law the blood of an animal sacrifice had to be presented to the High Priest of the Tabernacle (and later the Temple). The High Priest could not be touched until this was accomplished. (see below). Using this symbolism and applying these rules to Jesus, his blood had to be presented to God in the heavenly tabernacle.

"The visual evidence of substitutionary death had to be brought before the bar of justice in testimony of the penalty paid...this is the basis of all satisfaction in legal matters...Here was the ground for our forgiveness...Clearly, he presented his blood as proof of his sacrifice exactly as the High Priest under the old covenant had presented the blood of the (animal) sacrificial victim." (Custance). See [Hebrews 9:11-12](#) and [10:19-22](#) .

When did Jesus "perform this part of his office?"

According to Biblical accounts, on the morning of the resurrection Mary Magdalene and some other women went to Jesus' tomb in order to anoint his body, since there had been no time to do so on the day of his death. When they got there, the stone had been rolled away from the tomb and it was empty. The women hurried to tell the other

disciples, (who did not believe them at first), then Peter and John ran to the tomb and saw that it was empty, except for Jesus' burial shroud and the "napkin" which had covered his head (*see Fringe File: The Shroud of Turin*).

Peter and John returned to their place of hiding, and Mary Magdalene was left alone. She was weeping and sobbing because she didn't know what had happened to the body of her beloved teacher. (*There were also angels involved in this encounter. The four gospel writers gave their resurrection accounts with differing details according to the way they individually saw and recalled these events.*)

Someone, who she assumed to be the gardener, asked her why she was weeping. She replied, and he said the name, "Mary". It was only then that she recognized his voice and realized he was Jesus. However, he did not permit her at that time to embrace or touch him, for he said, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father..." (John 20:17).

It is Mr. Custance's belief that it was at this time that Jesus made a first ascension and presented his blood to the Holy of Holies. "The ascension that he spoke of to Mary can hardly have been a reference to that final ascension which marked the end of his visual presence with the disciples during the forty succeeding days, because he assures her that he will yet return to be with the disciples once he has ascended to his Father and completed the last stage of his mission as Savior."

Also according to Custance, there was a time gap between the time he spoke to Mary and [Matthew 28:9](#), when he permits the disciples to touch him. [Or perhaps there was no "human" time gap since Jesus' mission took place in the eternal realm. Why did he not ascend immediately after his resurrection, and instead waited to show himself to one of his most devoted disciples? "He delayed

long enough to put on record this one encounter”] (Custance).

Custance further theorizes that the body Mary saw at first was his ravaged and mutilated body covered with blood (although he probably wore some type of robe or cloak), and that the second time he appeared it was in his glorified body which still bore the nail prints but which he permitted his disciples to touch. (“...he appeared in another form...”) [Mark 16:12](#). However, it was not a spirit but a real body. [Luke 24:39](#). His ability to appear and disappear could have been, rather than walking through doors and walls, the ability to enter and exit through a “portal” to another dimension (the heavenly realm).

Why Crucifixion? *(from the Custance “Doorway Papers”)*

First, let’s establish the other forms of execution that could have been used for Jesus.

In their law, the New Testament Jews utilized four forms of capital punishment: strangling, stoning, beheading, and burning. It’s unclear whether burning was ever actually used as a punishment, or if it was a way of desecrating a body after the person had been killed by one of the other means.

The Jews apparently also believed in “hanging a body on a tree” *** once the person was already dead, in order to make the statement that this person was cursed by God. This may have been what the Jews wanted to do with Jesus: kill him by their own method, then “hang” his dead body in order to make him “accursed of God” and totally discredit him.

Because they were under Roman rule, the Jews could not issue a sentence of death without the permission of Roman officials—in this instance, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate was unwilling to execute Jesus because he found him “not guilty”. ([John 19:6](#)).

The Jews were determined for Pilate to crucify him, and after arguing with them for some time, he finally told them to go and crucify Jesus themselves. This they did not wish to do, probably for several reasons: it was not one of their methods of execution; it was exceedingly bloody and would have complicated things immensely because of their rules about blood; by law, they would be compelled to remove the body from the cross by the end of the day, and Jesus might not be dead by then. (They could, as noted, nail the body to a tree or cross once Jesus was dead, in order to show Jesus to be “accursed of God”. (See [Deuteronomy 21:23](#)).

As we know, Pilate finally gave in to their demands, although not by direct order but by “washing his hands” of the matter. The Jews were then assured that Jesus would hang on the cross until he was dead, per the Roman method of execution. (After Jesus’ death, it was his supporters that hastened to remove and bury his body before sunset of that day.)

Second point, crucifixion was the only form of execution allowing time enough for Jesus to become “sin” and suffer the consequential penalty of having his spirit separated from God, and for God’s wrath to fall fully upon him. He was crucified about nine a.m., and from 12 until 3 p.m. the sky grew completely dark. This is believed by most scholars to be the three hours that Jesus’ spirit was condemned. However, those three hours are in man’s time, not God’s, so in some sense that time is of an eternal nature.

Third point, it was an exceptionally bloody death, and we have seen how the shedding of blood is required for sacrificial atonement.

Conclusion

We’ve seen how Jesus fulfilled all the requirements to pay our sin debt, and exactly how he did so by

the way of the cross. “The signal of God’s acceptance of the sacrifice was that God raised him from the dead.” (Custance).

In Jesus’ case, to add insult to injury, the laws the Jews broke the night of his arrest and trial(s) include: a capital case could not be tried at night, sentence could not be passed on the same day as the trial, sentence could not be passed on a Holy Day (such as Passover), there should be witnesses who would speak for the accused, no legal grounds for the charge of blasphemy were presented, the accused could not be scourged before execution. (Pilate was responsible for Jesus’ scourging because of the Jews’ demand for crucifixion.)

“The religious and the civil trial(s) proved both the innocence of the accused and the guilt of the accusers...Their motive was not the desire to do God’s will but to destroy a man whose whole life was a challenge to their shabby pretenses. They could not abide the light of his absolute sinlessness.” (Custance).

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Revelation 5:12.

Good news!

The good news is—God loves you, and we don’t have to know or understand all this to become a believer in Jesus Christ! **All that is necessary is a simple prayer:** Jesus, I realize I am a sinner and I want to be saved. I’m sorry for my sins and I want to change. I believe that you are the Son of God and that you have paid the price for my sins. Please forgive me, come into my life, and save me. I want you to be the Lord of my life and teach me your ways! Make me the man or woman you would have me to be.

For help and more information, you may want to visit [How to Become a Christian](#).

NOTATIONS

* **THE GOSPEL IN ONE VERSE:** “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

** The Bible’s account of the sin which Adam and Eve committed in the Garden of Eden is either literal, or metaphorical. Most Bible scholars over the centuries are of the opinion that there was a literal serpent, a literal tree, and a literal fruit. This very well may be the case, and the sin committed here, though it seems small, is still the result of having a rebellious nature, as any other “larger” sin might involve. If metaphorical, the serpent certainly represents Satan (as it does throughout the Bible), who could have appeared to Eve in any form he wished. The symbols represented by the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and its fruit are not readily apparent, although the Tree of Life would logically be representative of Jesus Christ.

[I’m currently reading a book on this subject, and the author believes the sin committed in Eden was far more deep, dark, and diabolical than that of eating a piece of forbidden fruit. It was, according to the book, something profane and blasphemous, and (as in the literal interpretation) led immediately to their spiritual death, the curse on mankind, and God’s driving them out of the Garden. It was something that contributed to the depraved, sinful nature of man. The author has Scripture references that back up his theory, which actually is not new but was believed to be true by many of the ancient scholars. I’m still studying the book so I’m not ready to form an opinion, but this may be the subject of a future Fringe File article! Even if certain facts can be derived from other Scripture references, the Bible does not directly confirm the author’s conclusions; however, he does offer compelling information; he is a Bible-believing Christian; and he has a creditable reputation as an author. I’ll disclose more after I’ve further studied the book. If the account is literal, I would never seek to minimize the seriousness of the sin Adam and Eve

committed. God inspired Moses to write it the way he did, and obviously God did not intend for us to know the full details of what really happened. The Bible gives us only the bare bones of the events of the Fall; we can little imagine the horror of it, and the great guilt, sorrow, and regret that must have been experienced by Adam and Eve. Mercifully, at the same time they were given hope, in this verse which is understood to be a reference to a Savior who would overcome Satan: "And I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He (Jesus) shall crush you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel." Genesis 3:15 (NASB).]

**** Hanging on a tree did not involve hanging by the neck, but rather meant tying the arms and legs of the person to a post or tree. This was similar to some forms of crucifixion.*

Links:

[The Code of Blood](#). by Chuck Missler. Technical proof that "the life is in the blood".

[Definition/Description of Crucifixion](#). From Encyclopedia Britannica (online).

[Is Hell a Real Place?](#) by Chuck Missler. It seems remiss not to mention what it is that Jesus saved us from.

Websites: (Good websites but doesn't mean I agree completely with all content.)

[Doorway Papers](#) by Arthur C. Custance. "Triumph Over Death", a section as utilized in this article. Full of fascinating information that I plan to use in future articles.

[A Christian Think Tank](#). Website of Christian writer/researcher/speaker Glenn M. Miller (which also includes a section on "Of Interest to Followers of Other Religions").

[Lambert Dolphin Library](#). Website of Christian physicist/writer/researcher Lambert Dolphin. Tons of interesting topics.

Books:

[The Case for Christ](#). And other books by investigative journalist, Lee Strobel. I have not read them all but have read this one and a few others.

[Mere Christianity](#). By C.S. Lewis. The classic volume which "explores the common ground upon which all of those of Christian faith stand together".

[Woman of Sin](#) My novel, which includes the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

SINS vs. SIN: The Goat and the Scapegoat

A specific sacrifice relating to the subject matter of this article is the annual Day of Atonement. The description at the end is taken from [Smith's Bible Dictionary](#). In one of his papers, Mr. Custance particularly emphasizes this as being a "type" of Jesus' sacrifice, in that one of the goats represented sins in general, and the other represented sin as being the root cause, or disease, of man's sin problem. He quotes a source as stating (my paraphrase):

SINS are committed offenses. They must be forgiven because we are morally accountable for them. SIN, the disease, cannot be forgiven but must be covered. Before Christ's death and resurrection, this was handled, or covered, by the animal sacrifices.

Perfect and without blemish, Jesus paid the ultimate price for SINS and SIN. He was the goat and the scapegoat. He died physically and spiritually. His **bodily** resurrection was necessary in order for him to present himself (his blood) to God.

According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, the Day of Atonement was:

I. The great day of national humiliation, and the only one commanded in the Mosaic law. The mode of its observance is described in Leviticus 16, and the conduct of the people is emphatically enjoined in Leviticus 23:26-32.

II. Time - It was kept on the tenth day of Tisri, that is, from the evening of the ninth to the evening of the tenth of that month, five days before the Feast of Tabernacles. Tisri corresponds to our September-October, so that the 10th of Tisri would be about the first of October.

III. How observed - It was kept by the people as a high solemn Sabbath. On this occasion only the High Priest was permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies. Having bathed his person and dressed himself entirely in the holy white linen garments, he brought forward a young bullock for a sin offering, purchased at his own cost, on account of himself and his family, and **two young goats** for a sin offering, with a ram for a burnt offering, which were paid for out of the public treasury, on account of the people. He then presented the two goats before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle and cast lots upon them. On one lot "For Jehovah " was inscribed, and on the other "For Azazel." A phrase of unusual difficulty. The best modern scholars agree that it designates the personal being to whom the goat was sent, probably Satan. This goat was called the **scapegoat**. After various sacrifices and ceremonies, the goat upon which the lot "For Jehovah " had fallen was slain and the high priest sprinkled its blood before the mercy-seat in the same manner as he had done that of the bullock. Going out from the Holy of Holies he purified the holy place, sprinkling some of the blood of both the victims on the altar of incense. At this time no one besides the high priest was suffered to be present in the holy place. The purification of the Holy of Holies and of the holy place being thus completed, the High Priest laid his hands upon the head of the goat on which the lot "For Azazel " had fallen and confessed over it all the sins of the people. The

goat was then led, by a man chosen for the purpose, into the wilderness, into "a land not inhabited," and was there let loose. The High Priest after this returned into the holy place, bathed himself again, put on his usual garments of office, and offered the two rams as burnt offerings, one for himself and one for the people.

IV. Significance - In considering the meaning of the particular rites of the day, three points appear to be of a very distinctive character.

(1.) The white garments of the high priest.

(2.) His entrance into the holy of holies.

(3.) The scapegoat.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 9:7-25) teaches us to apply the first two particulars. The High Priest himself, with his person cleansed and dressed in white garments, was the best outward type which a living man could present in his own person of that pure and holy One who was to purify his people and to cleanse them from their sins. But respecting the meaning of the scapegoat we have no such light to guide us, and the subject is one of great doubt and difficulty. It has been generally considered that it was dismissed to signify the carrying away of the sins of the people, as it were, out of the sight of Jehovah. **If we keep in view that the two goats are spoken of as parts of one and the same sin offering, we shall not have much difficulty in seeing that they form together but one symbolical expression; the slain goat setting forth the act of sacrifice, in giving up its own life for others "to Jehovah;" and the goat which carried off its load of sin "for complete removal" signifying the cleansing influence of faith in that sacrifice.** (Emphasis in bold is mine).

APPENDIX B:

A few worthy quotes (there could be so many more!)

“(This was) the prelude to his real suffering, which involved being cut off from the Father’s love and presence and consigned to carry our sins out of the universe, to hell as it were, like the scapegoat sacrifice of Israel of which he, Christ, is the antitype.” (Lambert Dolphin: [Six Hours of Eternity](#)).

“There is much more to the death of Jesus on the cross than the visible suffering, terrible pain...and the incredible ignominy of such a horrible death for One who was not only innocent but also the very Son of God.” (Lambert Dolphin).

“In the presence of perfection, man is not filled with admiration but with hate.” (Arthur C. Custance).

“But at noon, something dramatic happens. The sky goes dark...this continues for three hours...He cries ‘It is finished!’ (the Greek phrase actually has a technical meaning of PAID IN FULL; it was so used when people were released from debtor’s prison and their unpaid bill was stamped ‘paid in full’)...The theology tells us that during those hours Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world...God the Father, who had loved/enjoyed/delighted/fellowshipped with the Son at the most intimate of levels (they actually shared the same essence; the Trinity doctrine) for all eternity, suddenly turned his back on his Son, and...poured out his awesome wrath on (Jesus), instead of on us. So one component was the abandoning of his Son (to save the world), and the other was the very active outpouring of judicial punishment upon him to generate the ‘paid in full’ comment.” (Glenn M. Miller as quoted in Lambert’s online article *Six Hours of Eternity*.)

“The requirements of holiness are uncompromising.” ([Chuck Missler: The Most Important Book-Leviticus](#).)

“The Christian faith is not merely a series of articles; it has an essential organic unity that is destroyed and made entirely irrational and logically

indefensible...if any part of the whole is surrendered.” (Arthur C. Custance).

APPENDIX C:

Old Testament prophetic verses about Jesus’ crucifixion:

[Isaiah 50:6](#). Physical abuse during first trial.

[Isaiah 53](#) The Suffering Savior chapter.

[Psalm 22](#) The first verse of this Psalm is the one that Jesus begins to quote from the cross: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Verse 12 is sometimes interpreted to be a reference to demons which Jesus could see or sense while on the cross. Og, the king of Bashan in the Old Testament, was a part of the Nephilim. (*See Bible Study: Why Did God Destroy the Earth with a Flood?*).