

HOLY WEEK 2023 ABBREVIATED ISSUE

EMPTY TOMB PROJECT

THE MAGAZINE

*The Resurrection is
a Fact of History*

*Jesus' Holy Week:
From Calvary to the Empty Tomb*

What Did Jesus' Suffering Look Like?

By Thomas Griffin

Scholars have reported that crucifixion is likely the most painful torture method that humanity has ever inflicted on its fellow human beings. The Gospels actually give little details concerning what it looked like because the process was so well-known to ancient people and so gruesome for readers to contemplate. We, however, are not as privy to the details.

Understanding what actually happened to Jesus on Good Friday will only allow us to gain further access into the reckless love he has for each and everyone of us. If you are like me, you might view a cross daily or even multiple times a day. But what does it really mean to state that Jesus died for me on the cross? What really happened on Good Friday?

After Jesus gives us the gift of his Real Presence in the Eucharist at the Last Supper, he and his disciples went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46). This is where Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss and Jesus is placed under arrest by the Jewish leaders. The next 36 hours or so would entail no sleep or rest for Jesus and would be filled with constant psychological and physical torture.

Once Christ is convicted of the capital offense of sedition (attempting to overthrow the government because he said he was a king) by Pilate he would have been handed over to Roman soldiers to be scourged. Again, the Gospels do not give details of this because this word needed no explanation.

Prisoners would have been stripped completely naked and chained by their wrists to a post or wall. Two very strong, heavy soldiers would alternate blows as they whipped him with a device that could be called a "cat of nine tails." This was a whip with nine straps that had objects tied to the end of each strap. At the end of each strap would have been a piece of glass, rock, bone, or metal object. The intention of the soldier was to hit the prisoner so hard that one of these sharp objects would dig into the flesh of the man. Then the soldier would pull back the whip, literally ripping out tendons and muscles from his face down to his feet.

Recent medical analysis reports that the incisions Jesus would have endured during the scourging would have needed roughly two thousand stitches to repair. For this reason, many sources report that prisoners would often die during the scourging and not even make it to the cross.

Following the scourging we are told that the soldiers placed a crown of thorns on his head (Mark 15:17). Thorns in Israel are 1 ½ to 2 inches long. A soldier would take a wooden reed to jam this crown into the scalp of Jesus penetrating the outer perimeter of his skull.

Now a cross beam weighing between 150-300 pounds is placed on his shoulders and he has to carry it a half-mile to his place of death. Along the way he is continually mocked and whipped. Soldiers would have then held Jesus down as they nailed six to nine inch nails through his hands and feet. Then the cross would have been lifted about ten feet high in the air for all to see and mock. Ultimately, Jesus dies after hanging on the cross for nearly three hours. He would have died of asphyxiation or suffocation as he could no longer lift his beaten body up to breathe air into his lungs.

This is what Good Friday actually looked like. This was the suffering of Jesus. This is why Holy Week is the greatest and most true story ever told. The pain he endured was for you and for me. So we could live life to the fullest and live with him forever. Let us keep his suffering in mind each time we are present at Mass and each time we neglect to pray or love our neighbor. He endured that for you. So, what does your suffering look like? Bring it to him, see his bloodied face of love and watch him conquer all evil and suffering by breaking out of his empty tomb.

Thomas Griffin is the founder and editor-in-chief of Empty Tomb Project: The Magazine. He is the chairperson of the Religion Department at a Catholic High School on Long Island where he lives with his wife and two sons.

Proving the Resurrection

By Thomas Griffin

There is no doubt that Jesus was a real person who lived 2,000 years ago in the Middle East. In fact, there are multiple primary sources that highlight that Jesus was a real, historical person.

For example, Josephus (36-100 CE) was a Jewish historian who lived and died as a Jew but who wrote about the life and actions of Christ. Most notably, he stated that Jesus was a miracle worker and great teacher who was executed by the Romans. However, he also noted that Jesus' closest followers claimed that he rose from the dead on the third day. Josephus said that the body of Jesus was never found and that Christians continued to increase their numbers by the day.

After Jesus was tortured and killed on a cross by the Roman Empire, hundreds of people confessed and attested to seeing Jesus risen from the dead. The people who saw the risen Jesus after he was killed were convinced that they should spend the rest of their lives telling everyone about Jesus. Countless numbers of these eyewitnesses even went to their deaths refusing to deny the fact that Jesus rose from the dead.

The details concerning Jesus' burial are essential for showing the truth of his resurrection. First, according to Matthew 27:57-66 Jesus is placed in a new tomb that has never been used before for burial. Scholars estimate that the rock in front of the entrance to Jesus' tomb would have weighed roughly three thousand pounds and been eight to ten feet tall. In front of the rock would have been the ancient equivalent of police tape. A metal chain attached to a piece of clay which had Caesar's face on it. Since Jesus was convicted of a capital crime, messing around with his grave would be deemed a capital offense. If you broke this barrier, you would also be crucified.

We also know that a Roman Guard is placed there because the Jewish hierarchy is afraid that Jesus' followers would steal his body. A Roman guard consisted of four highly trained Roman soldiers (modern equivalent would be Navy Seals). If the disciples stole the body, they would have agreed to commit a capital offense, they would have had to disarm four Navy Seals, move a three thousand pound, ten foot rock and then take Jesus' body and discard it in a way that no one (over two thousand years) could find. Not only did they succeed in the cover up, but then they committed to traveling the world to convince people that Jesus was, in fact, risen from the dead.

Not only do they convince people of the lie and never get caught for their actions of taking Jesus' body. All of them (except for John) are willing to die for the lie. They were not just killed, however. These first followers were burned alive, boiled alive, filleted alive, and crucified upside down.

Why die in such a brutal way for a lie? How is it possible that no one ever slipped up and told the truth rather than be tortured? How come no one has ever found Jesus' body? Isn't it more reasonable to believe that Jesus actually rose from the dead, appeared to his closest friends, and so inspired them that they were willing to do anything to talk about his life (even give their own lives)?

The resurrection is a fact of history. The evidence is overwhelming in its support. All history is dependent on eyewitness testimony. In the case of the resurrection, the testimony of the eyewitnesses continues to empower Christians today to know and believe that death was defeated and that Jesus is truly alive.

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TAKEAWAYS:

1. Jesus' Pain Was Unimaginable.
2. He Suffered For You.
3. We Have Proof for the Resurrection.
4. Death is Not the End.

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RISEN

What is ETP Magazine?

Empty Tomb Project, Inc. is a non-profit organization that aims to bring all of its viewers into direct contact with Jesus as a real living person. Our magazine is meant to be captivating to the eye and relatable in its content. We have printed over 3,500 copies and have over 3,500 magazines downloaded online since July 2022, and we are currently present in 20 churches across Long Island.

We rely on donors and advertisers for our operation. If you would like to advertise with us or make a tax deductible donation please contact us at EmptyTombProject@gmail.com.

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