***Jesus Christ's Bleeding before the Crucifixion Itself
RO30-01***

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In our study of Romans 3:24-26, we have observed the fact that salvation of sinners depends on the payment for that person's sins which satisfies the justice of God; that is, the problem of human sin requires a divine viewpoint solution. Any solution that men come up with is not acceptable with God. Men have many solutions, but God has only one (that which satisfies His own character and His own essence) which is acceptable to Him.

That payment for the sins of the world was the physical and the spiritual deaths of the sinless Son of God, the God-man Jesus Christ, as He bore the sins of the world on the cross. It was not as He walked the streets of Palestine. It was as He was upon the cross, and specifically, there as the Lamb of God bearing the sins of the world.

This means that the sins of mankind were, therefore, placed on Jesus Christ, who had no sense of His own. He had old sin nature; He had no personal sins; and, He was not under the guilt of the imputation of Adam. He was completely free. So, this means that He died for the sins of others, and He died, therefore, as a substitute, which is exactly the picture that the Bible presents as an innocent lamb whose life is given for another. This means that Jesus Christ paid the wages of sin, which is death.

Now, on the basis of the payment of the sin of Jesus Christ, God forgives the sinner his sins, and He credits that believer with absolute righteousness; that is, He close to his account the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The payment of Jesus Christ for sin, we have indicated, included the shedding of His literal blood. Without this little blood being shed, the basis for justification would not have been established, and God would not have been propitiated. It took the actual shedding of the literal blood of Jesus Christ.

**The Blood of Christ**

So, the term "the blood of Christ" when we read it in the Bible does not simply mean His death, so that you could say, "Well, that means just His spiritual death. It doesn't mean His physical death."

The literal blood of Jesus did not have any magical powers, as we indicated. The value of the literal blood lies in the fact of who Jesus Christ was – the fact that He was sinless. Therefore, He was spiritually alive, and, therefore, He could die for others. He had something that He could use in payment for sin.

We don't know all that's involved in the value of the literal blood in the eyes of God. But be that as it may, I don't think there can be any question that the Bible makes it very clear that it took the literal shedding of the blood of Christ, and His literal, physical death, as well as His spiritual death to pay for the sins of the world.

**Jesus Christ Sweated Blood**

We have indicated that Jesus Christ actually bled profusely in the course of His crucifixion. This began with the blood which was mixed with the perspiration in the garden of Gethsemane. Thus, that was the first actual, literal bleeding in the process of the atonement.

**Facial Wounds**

Then secondly, we indicated that there was continued bleeding from the facial wounds which were inflicted by the Jewish Sanhedrin, to such an extent that His face was so mutilated (so cut; so bruised; and, so swollen) that Isaiah tells us He didn't even look like a human being anymore when you first looked at Him.

Some of you have since observed to me that you have actually seen people who were in that condition, and you have actually seen people that you knew (family members, on one occasion), who had suffered facial beatings such that, when you saw them, you didn't recognize them.

**Jewish Leaders**

This beating took place at the illegal night trial of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin took Jesus, and the procedure was to first capture Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. They took Him upon clear identification of the kiss of Judas. Now, that was critical because the people that came were something like 200 Legionnaires (Roman soldiers), as well as the temple guard, the guard of the Sanhedrin, as well as numerous Jewish leaders themselves. Many of these people didn't know Jesus specifically. They just knew an order had come down to the headquarters to go out and pick up this Nazarene, Jesus, the teacher, and bring Him in. So, Judas walked up, in a very horrendous way, and kissed Jesus, and, therefore, identified that this was the one they were to take.

So, they took Him and rushed Him off to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest. Annas apparently had some kind of basic interrogation while the full Sanhedrin, which consisted of 71 leaders, was being gathered from all over the city. It's not likely that all of them were there, but they got enough of a quorum.

By Jewish law, this was a horrendous violation of justice. Jewish law strictly forbade night trials. But they proceeded to gather the Sanhedrin, and then Caiaphas, the high priest, took over. And it was at that trial (at that examination) where Caiaphas was driven up the wall, you remember, by the fact that they brought witnesses in. They had to go through the legalities and the formalities, but the witnesses were all contradicting one another.

So, finally, Caiaphas pulled an old lawyer stunt. I don't know if you've ever had this happen. I've had this happen to me in depositions where you've driven them up the wall, and he's frustrated, and he can't get anywhere. You may have seen this on "Perry Mason." And I've practiced this several times myself. They suddenly turn on you, and they drive a question to you, and they drive it right home, and you get scared and say, "Yes, I'll say anything.

Well, that's what Caiaphas. Caiaphas suddenly turned on Jesus in very dramatic moment, and a lot of histrionics, and he said, "Are you saying that You're the Son of God? Tell us. Jesus said, "I am the Christ, the Son of the living God." So, Caiaphas, by a clever move, bypassed all the witnesses that the Jewish law required them to have; grabbed His tunic; and, He ripped it down halfway to His chest to indicate horror in the presence of blasphemy, and then made the statement, "What do we need witnesses for?" He literally said, "We've heard it. Here it is. It is His own words." And at that point, they then turned on Jesus.

I want to remind you that I'm telling you is that these were the religious leaders. These were the Jewish leaders. These were the chief priests; the scribes; and, the elders. These weren't just the members of the congregation who got out of hand. These were the people to whom they looked for spiritual leadership. These men rushed down there because they sat in a kind of a half-moon shape, up on an elevated pedestal, with the accused standing down there before them. And that's where they rushed upon Jesus and brutalized Him facially. That's where they struck Him with their fists. That's where they slapped Him with their hands until he was no longer recognizable.

So, the Sanhedrin leaders themselves were responsible for this second bloodletting from the body of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. When they themselves got tired of it, their guards took over and continued, the Bible says, the same practice of beating Jesus upon the face.

Mind you that these Jewish leaders were acting as the noble opponents of blasphemy – the noble defenders of the dignity and deity of God. They were doing indeed what Jesus said in John 16:2 that we as His followers may expect – that the time will come when people who kill us will believe that they are doing God a service. There are plenty of people in the world, in some of the religions of the world, who feel that they have done God a great service when they take the lives of Christians.

So, the second bloodletting was here at the hands of the religious leaders themselves.

**The Whippings**

However, next comes one of the most severe bloodlettings of Jesus Christ. And our point all along here is to stress the fact that Jesus did bleed. It is true that His throat wasn't cut as was done with the animals, but the fact of the matter is that He actually did literally bleed, and bled profusely. So, let's look at one of the worst beatings, and that is the bleeding from the whippings. The Romans usually preceded crucifixion by whipping the condemned person. The point was to intensify pain. This scourging was sometimes so severe that it actually killed the victim, and they never even got Him to crucifixion. And in the case of Jesus, Pilate had ordered this scourging. And it was part of a deliberate attempt on Pilate's part to appease the anger of the Jews against Jesus, and to try to dissuade them from their determination to kill Him. Pilate's reasoning was, "If I can brutalize Jesus, the Jews will just have their vengeance (their hatred) satisfied, and they'll say, "Ah, forget it. Let Him go."

After they were through with the night trial, then at daybreak, they had to go through the formality of an official action, and that was to have the passing by the Sanhedrin of the death penalty.

Again, Jewish law said that you try a person only during daylight. You cannot have night trials. And then Jewish law says, "You can't pass a death penalty until the next day. All of these were safeguards to try to keep emotions from running away with things, and for them to do something on the spur of the moment.

Well, now, the Jewish leaders had Jesus in their custody, and they were bound and determined to rush things through. So, they created a second illegality of having the penalty of death passed upon Him on the same day. This trial was illegal to begin with, whether it was daytime or nighttime, because there had been no indictment lodged against Jesus, because there could be no indictment until witnesses had established an indictment.

So, this whole thing is very painful for Jewish historians. It is very painful for Jewish rabbis today, because the whole thing reflects so ill upon their forefathers in the way they handled this trial of the Lord Jesus.

Well, they did pass the death penalty, and then they rushed Him off to Pilate. Well first, Pilate said, "What did he do? And the Jews said, "Well, if you weren't a criminal, we wouldn't have brought Him to you," because they didn't really want to have to be faced with bringing something that Romans Law would say, "Well, that's a capital crime. We'll execute Him." So, they tried to get around it that way.

Then they said, "Well, he's been teaching things which have disturbed our nation. It has subverted the people." So, Pilate assumed that this was an argument over some religious doctrine or some law, and Pilate said, "Well, you take Him, and you punish Him. You have my permission. Deal with Him as you wish." But that didn't give them what they wanted. The Jewish leaders wanted Him killed. Therefore, they said, "We don't have the authority to execute."

So, then Pilate had that first examination. He said that Jesus taught people that they shouldn't pay tribute to Caesar, and Jesus made Himself the King of the Jews. So, Pilate said, "Are you a king?" And he had all that discussion about what truth is, and so on. And Jesus explained to Him the nature of His kingdom, and Pilate found that obviously Jesus was not preparing to depose the emperor back in Rome.

So, Pilate came out and said, "I don't find anything evil in this man, and I can't condemn Him to death." Well, they screamed bloody murder over that. They said something else to Him at that point – that Jesus had been doing this perverting from Galilee on down through the provinces of Palestine. When Pilate heard that, he realized that Jesus was under the jurisdiction of Herod, who happened to be in Jerusalem for the Passover.

**Herod**

So, that's why he sent Him to Herod – for Herod to examine Him. Well, Herod examined Him. Herod was eager because Herod had heard about the miracles. He wanted to see Jesus perform a miracle. But when he finished, and His soldiers had mocked Jesus and made fun of Him, Herod had to send Him back and say to Pilate, "I can't find anything. I can't help you. I don't see that He's done anything worthy of death."

**Barabbas**

So, Jesus went back to Pilate now for a third trial. Again, the Jewish leaders (and they had so enraged the people now) would not be satisfied with anything but that He should be crucified, because Pilate thought, "Well, it's my custom to set someone free here at the Passover feast. It was the governor who picked who was going to be set free. So, Pilate picked the absolute worst criminal they had in custody – Barabbas, who was a murderer. He was a thief. And worst of all, he was guilty of insurrection. If there's one thing the law and order empire of Rome would not tolerate, it is somebody who is trying to undermine the government by illegal means. That's what Barabbas have been guilty of. So, he was high on the list for execution.

He was such a vile creature, and known to the populace, that obviously Pilate thought to Himself, "I'll give them an offer to choose who to set free: Barabbas; or, Jesus." And Pilate thought that the contrast would be so great that they would say, "Well, don't turn Barabbas loose on us again. Just let Jesus go. But the Jewish leaders would have none of this. They moved among the people, and instigated the cry for Barabbas: "Give us Barabbas," and to crucify Jesus.

So, at this point, Pilate decided to try to instigate the brutalizing of Jesus in order to be able to set Him free by raising pity for Him in the eyes of the people, and possibly even the Jewish leaders.

So, the order was given for Jesus to be whipped so that, as John 19:1 indicates, Pilate hoped thereby that he could set Jesus free: "Then Pilate, therefore, took Jesus and scourged Him." The point being that: he ordered the scourging; it was done by his deliberate orders; and, and it was for this purpose of trying to free Him.

**The Jews Crucified Christ**

Who was responsible for this? What is Pilate trying to do? What Pilate is trying to do is to satisfy the hatred of the Jewish leaders. It may have been of interest to you to have noted that President Carter apparently taught a Sunday school class recently at Washington's First Baptist Church. And the lesson was on Jesus casting out the money changers in the temple – the second time that he did that, just before the crucifixion. And in teaching the lesson, he said something to this effect, quoting here from the article in "Dallas News" of May 21st, 1977.

The lesson dealt with Jesus driving the moneylenders from the temple in Jerusalem shortly before His crucifixion: "'That was a turning point in Christ's life,' Carter was reported saying. 'He had directly challenged, in a fatal way, the existing church, and there was no possible way for the Jewish leaders to avoid the challenge. So, they decided to kill Jesus."

Well, a pastor got hold of this report, and he was obviously a pastor of an ecumenical mindset. And it disturbed him that the president had pointed out that the death of Jesus was the result of the deliberate decision of the Jewish leaders to do so. Of course, there was no church. The president refers to the existing church. He meant the existing religious establishment. There was no church at that time. But it is true that Jesus confronted the religious establishment, and they knew they were threatened. So, they indeed decided to kill Him.

We're going to go over later (perhaps in the next session) the number of times that the life of Jesus Christ was threatened, because I have something else I want to establish with you in reference to that. But it was not new for Jesus to have his life threatened. That had happened all along, during His ministry, and particularly near the end. So, indeed, the leaders, more and more, were threatening Him.

Well, this required President Carter to write a letter because the idea was that he was saying that the Jewish people were responsible for the death of Jesus Christ, and that they as a group are responsible. Well, of course, that's foolishness. The Jews are suffering consequences from what their forefathers did, but they themselves are not responsible any more than you're responsible for what your forefathers did, good or bad.

So, the president wrote this letter and said, "The Christian religion, according to my understanding, holds that Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Jew, gave His life to redeem the sins of humanity. The gospels declare that His death was foreordained, and without that death, and the resurrection which followed it, Christians would not be saved in Christ. Yet, the crucifixion required human instruments. Among these were: Judas, who was a Christian disciple; Caiaphas, who was a Jewish priest appointed by the Roman authorities; and, Pilate a gentile who actually condemned Jesus to death. In accordance with the gospel, I know that Jesus forgave the human instruments of His death. But I'm also aware that the Jewish people were, for many centuries, falsely charged with collective responsibility for the death of Jesus, and were persecuted terribly for that unjust accusation, which has been exploited as a basis and rationalization for anti-Semitism." The president said he was personally gratified to find a consensus among Christian churches, rejecting the charge that the Jewish people as a whole were then, or are now, responsible for the death of Christ."

While that is true to that extent, there is nevertheless something that subtly misses people an time the subject is brought about as to who was basically responsible for instigating the death of Jesus Christ. And the facts of the matter are that the Jewish leaders were basically responsible for instigating the death of Jesus Christ. And there is no use in trying to get around that. But obviously, it makes the ecumenical mentality very uncomfortable to have this very clear difference drawn in Scripture that the Jewish authorities were responsible for instigating the death of Jesus Christ.

I want to show you this, because you're going to run into it. I just want to show you what the Word of God says. The president was not quite clear on the issue. He was simply trying to avoid a political problem, but he was not quite clearly dealing with what the Scripture actually says on that matter. Here's the historical fact. If you turn to Matthew 27:22, you have what we have already indicated – the Jews crying out for the death of Jesus Christ. This is not only, at this point, the Sanhedrin (the leadership). This is also the people as a whole: "Pilate said unto them, 'What shall I do then with Jesus, who is called Christ?' They all said unto him, 'Let Him be crucified.'"

This is a very definite declaration. The mob is there. The leadership has instigated the mob. What shall I do with Jesus? They have rejected the offer of releasing Him, and they have selected Barabbas. They say, "Crucify Him."

Notice verse 23, where Pilate objects to this. He demands on what basis he should do this: "And the governor said, 'Why? What evil has he done?'" What's their response? The Jews gathered there in the judgment area, but they cried out the more saying, "Let Him be crucified."

Notice verse 24: Pilate officially seeks to absolve himself from the execution of an innocent man: "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitudes, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this righteous person. See to it.'" He's saying, "I'm innocent of the death of this just man (this righteous man – this innocent person). You see to it, because you are insisting upon it." Who is he talking to? Well, he's talking to the Sanhedrin. He's talking to the religious leaders. He's talking to the people. He's talking to the Jewish people standing there at that point in time who are insisting that an innocent man be executed – a man whom the Roman governor, following the legal procedures; the legal limitations; and, the legal safeguards against executing an innocent person. They're rejecting what the governor has determined because they are bound and determined to do one thing: they want Jesus did.

They care not out what the governor's examinations have found. They care not what Herod's examinations have found. They care not the fact that they have heard no evidence even from their own leaders. So, they turn around and insist that he be executed. I think the Bible makes it very clear that the Jews, as a people and as leadership, demanded and were responsible for the death of Christ, because Pilate was pushed to this. If it had been up to Pilate, he would have said, "I'm letting Him go. Forget it." He was pushed to this by the Jews.

As if that were not bad enough, Pilate said, "I'm innocent of His blood, and I want to make it clear to you that it's not upon my shoulders." Well, you notice that the president should have pointed this out to the pastor who wrote him: Verse 25 says, "Then answered all the people, and said, 'His blood be on us, and on our children.'" That meant: "The death of this man is the responsibility of we who stand before you here this day, Pilate, and down through the years, everybody that's born from the Jewish race, may the death of Christ rest upon us all as a nation from now and henceforth."

That is a horrendous statement. And they got exactly what they asked for. While the Jews have been mistreated, and while anti-Semitism is anti-biblical, and we all know the promise that was given to Abraham – that those who bless the Jew will be blessed, and those who curse the Jew and mistreat him will be cursed and mistreated by God. Only a fool would mistreat a Jew. We know that. Nevertheless, they took upon themselves the judgment of God when they said this. The Jews have suffered through the centuries, not simply because of some hatred toward them because they were Jewish, but because they called down upon themselves the suffering and the judgments and punishments of God – not only on themselves, but on their children; their children's children; and, down the line. So, the posterity of the Jews, and the nation as a whole, and its future were put on the line and included in this responsibility.

**His Disciples are Rejuvenated**

The curious thing about is that their leaders must have been idiots. They were obviously not men of integrity. That was very clear. They were not honest men. They were completely dishonest. And they were forcing the governor to brutalize the body of Jesus Christ, and forcing him to ultimately agree to His execution. After it was all over, and the resurrection had taken place, the disciples had found indeed that it was true, and they had the momentary disappointment to see Jesus so executed, and the kingdom so wiped out right before their eyes, that they had hoped for. But suddenly, they come alive. When they found Him alive, they realized that their original decisions were still true, that: He was the Christ; He was the Son of God; He was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament; He was the King of the Jews; and, the kingdom was on its way, they came alive. It electrified them into action. So, they began testifying in Jerusalem.

Well, once more, the Word of God began to take root in the hearts of people, and the Sanhedrin was again enraged. So, they bring in the disciples. We notice this statement in Acts 5:28. They brought them in a second time after having previously brought them in, and having previously beaten them, and told them, "Now shut your mouth, and don't you dare go around this city talking about Jesus anymore. That's it." They promptly went out and proceeded to ignore the Sanhedrin, and to proclaim the new life which was to be found in the resurrected Christ.

So, they hauled them again, and they said (Acts 5:28): "Saying, did not we strictly command you that you should not teach in His name? And, behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Here they are accusing the disciples of bringing the responsibility for the death of Jesus Christ on them. Well, they're not so cocky now. They were grinning and sneering and terrifically logical at the cross. What did they say? "You're the Christ? Come on down off the cross, and we'll believe you. You helped others; help up yourself." Logic prevailed at the crucifixion. You couldn't fault it for a bit. And they were very confident.

Pilate was saying, "He's innocent. I don't want to kill Him." And they insisted. So Pilate feared a political problem – he could have a riot on his hands. And that was bad news back in Rome – a governor who could not control his people and his province. So, he finally gives in, and he says, "I'm innocent of it." They say, "Forget it. We'll be responsible. And not only us – our children will be responsible for this." Now they're not so cocky. Now they're saying, "You're trying to bring the responsibility for this man's death upon us."

**Peter's Rebuttal**

Peter steps up in verse 29 and says a very wonderful thing: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, 'We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you slew and hanged on a tree." That was the Jewish expression for cross. I'm going to show you in a little bit what that meant.

Peter comes right back and says, "We're not listening to you. And the reason we're not listening to you is because our God, whom you claim to represent, has raised up Jesus of Nazareth, whom you put upon a cross." There's no doubt in Peter's mind, whatever doubts there may be in the minds of ecumenical leaders and political leaders. There is no doubt in Peter's mind as to who was responsible for the death of Jesus Christ. And they were. And Peter goes on with that very dramatic, victorious statement: "God has exalted Him with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things. And so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to them that obey Him." Peter's rebuttal is very, very definitive.

What was the reaction of the Sanhedrin to this? They are objecting to being accused of murdering Jesus Christ, and being responsible for that move on the part of the Roman government.

Acts 5:33: "When they heard that (that is, the spiritual leadership – the Sanhedrin), they were cut to the heart, and they took counsel to slay them." Isn't that something? The first thought they had, after they heard Peter say that, accusing them of having hanged Jesus on the tree, was: "We'll fix it up by killing the 11. We'll kill them. That will close your mouth." And immediately, they made plans to execute these people. And soon, one-by-one, the disciples died, and they all died by execution (martyrdom) except John. He survived to practically 100 years of age, and died in bed as an old man.

So, this is the background, just to help you have a thorough picture of what Pilate was up against, and why he ordered this beating. He wanted a brutal job done on Jesus because this is what he was facing in the opposition of the religious leaders, and of the mob action that they had instigated. And he could not afford this politically.

**The Technique of Whipping**

So, here's the technique of whipping. The technique of whipping, as used by the Romans, was as follows. The man who did the whipping was called a lictor. And they had an instrument with a handle from which were a series of leather thongs. At the end of the leather thong, and sometimes up along the line of the thong, there were embedded pieces of sharp bone and pieces of sharp metal. And sometimes at the very end they would put lead balls. This was then used to whip the individual, and the person who was to be was whipped from the back, all the way down on the legs. They put Him in such a position that the lictor could strike Him from His neck on down to His legs. So, the pain and the wounding of the body was something horrendous.

Usually they actually had a lictor on each side, so that they alternately took blows. So the body was covered not only on the back, but also the sides of the body received blows because of the position of the lictors. The result of this, of course, was that the skin was first bruised. Then it was cut, causing the capillaries and the veins of the skin to bleed. Then, finally, because of these sharp objects which were in the leather thongs, the skin was not only cut, but the muscles were ripped. They were actually torn, and arteries were broken, and the blood really began to spurt.

Here's what happened at the actual whipping of Jesus Christ. We have this recorded in Matthew 27:26 and Mark 15:15 – that He was beaten. And He was whipped in the Romans style, which was, first of all, that they stripped Him naked completely. Then they tied His hands either in an overhead ring or they leaned Him over a post, and tied His arms out to two rings on the floor. Both methods were used. We don't know which ones are used with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do know that, centuries before, this had been predicted by Isaiah, and it was no secret to Jesus, as we shall see later, what was coming. And He was ready to accept this. Isaiah 50:6-7 read, "I gave My back to the smiters, and my checks to them that pluck off the hair." Isaiah tells us a little more of what the Sanhedrin did. Apparently, Jesus wore something in the way of a beard or a mustache. That was the custom to some degree in that day, and they apparently were tearing out the very hair of His face in this way: "I did not hide My face from shame and spitting, for the Lord God will help Me. Therefore, I shall not be confounded. Therefore, I have set My face like flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." "I have set My face like flint" meant that Jesus took a hard and firm position. He looked at His tormentors with a straight, erect posture. And He took what they were giving to Him. He was hard as flint in the face of this abuse.

In this position, the lictors went to work on Him, and the result of the lashing was that the back of Jesus Christ was cut to ribbons, so that the flesh was one mass of torn tissue. We may compare this again with the prediction of Isaiah, which describes this very thing in the famed passage in Isaiah 53:3-5: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him. He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our grace and carried our sorrows. Yet, we did esteem Him stricken; smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. But chastisement for our peace was upon Him. And with His stripes we are healed." So, Isaiah predicted one of the very things that they were going to do to the Messiah in the process of the payment for sin.

**Blood Loss**

Obviously, I don't have to sell you on the fact that a lot of blood was flowing here in considerably profuse quantity, and Jesus Christ lost a lot of blood. He now began to approach the borderline of shock with the amount of blood that had been lost. It began with the capillaries of the sweat glands; it continued with the abuse on the face; and, now, in considerable degree, from the wounds on His body.

**The Crown of Thorns**

The fourth considerable loss of blood was from the crown of thorns. The charge that had been leveled against Jesus was, of course, that he was a King. So, the Roman soldiers, after they had finished beating Jesus with the lash, they then proceeded (the gospel writers tell us) to make fun of Him (to mock Him). Let's read it in John 19:1-3: "Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him scourged, and the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe and said, 'Hail, King of the Jews.' And they smote Him with their hands."

Here again, you notice that they're back to the physical beating of Jesus Christ, and this (in all likelihood) in the face. But it also included the head.

Matthew 27:27: "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall (that is, the Praetorium – the palace of the governor), and gathered until him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped Him and put on a scarlet robe. And when they platted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand, and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews.' And they spat upon Him. And then they took the reed and smote Him on the head." They probably took the very stick that they had given Him (the reed) as a kingly scepter. They took that out of His hand: "And as they came by, they struck Him over the head."

What this Scripture is saying is that the Romans detachment of soldiers (the cohort) was about 600 men, and with auxiliary troops, that would be expanded to about 1,000 soldiers. And those who were available, who were not on duty, were all called into the courtyard area of the Praetorium in order to watch the beating of Jesus and to watch this mockery, and to take part in it. So, what we are seeing here is that one-by-one, they went by Jesus. Not only was He now bleeding profusely from the thorns which had been stuck into His head (and the scalp is a place that bleeds considerably when its wounded), but He was also now receiving the opening of wounds previously inflicted upon Him, and the wounds upon the head were being expanded by the fact that they were striking Him with the reed, and driving the thorns still deeper, and opening the wounds. So, there was obviously a great deal of bleeding at this point.

Let's take a look at Mark 15:16to fill out the picture: "And the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole band. And they clothed Him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and saluted Him, 'Hail, King of the Jews.' And they smote Him on the head with the reed, and they did spit upon Him, and bowing their knees, worshiped Him: The result was that they took Jesus; stripped Him naked again; put this rough scarlet purple robe upon Him, and put a reed in His hand in order to make fun of Him as the king He claimed to be. Then they gave Him a crown of these thorns; drove it into His head; and, here was the fourth considerable loss of blood.

Then they passed by, contemptuously hailing Him, bowing their knees and ridicule, repeatedly striking Him, and opening the wounds. To that, they added the spitting. That wasn't just one person spitting. Several hundred military people gathered now in this courtyard, and they went by, one after another, spitting upon Him until Jesus Christ literally was drenched with the spittle of these people. That aggravated the wounds that had already been opened on Him.

All of this was done to Him in a terrifically weakened condition already, and now even more drained of blood, and approaching closer to the point of shock and death. All this was done to the second Person of the Trinity – the God-man who suffered maximum humiliation and personal indignities.

Pilate had a purpose in all this. This was not done just because some soldiers decided, "Hey, let's really have some fun." This was done by the direct orders of Pilate. Pilate said, "Whip Him, and do it good. And they did it good." And for all we know, Pilate may have sat there and watched the proceedings out in the courtyard.

When they were through, they took Jesus: dressed in this robe; with the crown on His head; with the reed in His hand; and, with nothing on but this robe (completely nude). Pilate took Him out now to the Jews, thinking that when they see this (and he's going to call Him a) man, they're going to be so revolted and so disgusted by this wretched sight, that they're going to say, "Forget Him. Just let Him go."

In John 19:5, we have the record: "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said unto them, 'Behold, the Man.'" Now, Isaiah has already told us that He didn't even look like a man when you looked Him in the face. You can probably see the blood seeping through the robe; dripping all over His face; covered with the spit of people upon Him; standing there with bruises on His face; and, swollen out of shape, and Pilate says, "A Man," hoping to raise their pity.

However, the result was that they responded again with a mob rage to crucify Him. Again, Pilate said, "Why? What has He done?" They said, "He has broken our Law. He has claimed to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard that, he was frightened, because previously His wife had come up and said, "I want to talk to you. I had a dream. In this dream, I have been warned that you should have nothing to do with this Man. He is a just Man. Now, you steer clear of Him."

Now, she was not a godly woman. She was laying something to dreams. She was just a pagan. But dreams were significant to them. And whatever she had, she went to Pilate and warned Him. When he heard them say that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, the Bible tells us that this alarmed him. So, he took Jesus back into the Praetorium, and he said, "Where are you from? And then they had that dramatic discussion about Jesus being the King. And Jesus doesn't respond. So, Pilate says, "You're not going to respond to me? Do you realize that I have the authority to crucify you, and I have authority to set you free, and you don't talk to me?" As always through this, the Lord did not answer contemptuous treatment and stupidity, but he did answer significant, legitimate things that should be answered. And He said, "You don't have any authority. All you have is the authority that's been given to you," which was Jesus explaining the doctrine of civil authority and the divine institution number four. He said, "You're procurator of this province, Pilate, because God in heaven has so ordained it. And the authority you have over Me is because God has given it to you. But I'll tell you that your sin is not as great as the sin of those who have delivered Me to you to exercise the authority that you have."

Well, that finished it. Pilate went out and he said, "There is nothing wrong with this man, and I'm not going to execute Him on the basis of what you're saying." So, he decided to try one more time. He brings Jesus out again, and this time, in John 19:14, he brings them out, and this time, he says, "Behold your King," thinking that the populace would burst out in laughter, because obviously Jesus looked like a joke now, if you were going to view Him as a King. He didn't look much like a Caesar. And now, with what they had done to Him, it was just a ludicrous sight. And Pilate was counting that they were all going to burst out in laughter, and that that would relieve the tension, and he would be able to release Him.

Well, the result was that the mob reacted again, saying, "Crucify Him." At this point, Pilate says, "OK, I'm washing my hands of it. He is innocent. His blood is not on my hands." That's when they shouted, "The responsibility be on us, and on every child born into a Jewish family henceforth. May God's judgment rest upon us for this.” And God in heaven said "OK. And so be it." And so it has been.

So, then they dressed Jesus in His own clothes, and Matthew 27:31 tells us that they then led Him off to the crucifixion site, which was on the Hill of Calvary. This was a place called "the place of the skull," because, from a certain position when you looked at it, it actually looked like a skull. And it was outside of the city walls (outside of the city as it existed at that time), which was, of course, in keeping with the Old Testament sacrificial systems that the carcasses and the remains were disposed in the burning outside the city, and thus the complete suffering of the Savior was to be outside the city.

So, they led Him to Calvary, and then proceeded to one of the most brutal phases of the bloodletting, which was that of crucifixion. We're going to stop here now, because this gets us into another major area where we're going to go back to the Assyrians, who one day sat down and said, "People can be killed in many ways. But if we can think of a good way to kill people so that it strikes terror to the hair roots of a human being, we'll have something that no other nation around us has." And the Assyrians came up with the most terrifying, and the most nightmarish system of execution that the human mind has ever devised. It ultimately evolved into the technique of crucifixion, which was imposed upon Jesus Christ. But as if that wasn't bad enough, you'll have nightmares when we describe to you how it really began, and what was really involved, and why the Jews referred to it as being hanged on a tree.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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