

From Gethsemane to Golgotha {concluded}

by Bill Crews

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cowardly weakness and fear he gave in. *"Then released he unto them Barabbas; but Jesus he scourged (a scourge was a whip consisting of a sturdy handle, several strands of strong leather, and pieces of metal or bone affixed to the strands; such a beating could easily cause death) and delivered to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium, and gathered unto him the whole band And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And they platted a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews. And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the robe, and put on him his garments, and led him away to crucify him"* (Matt. 27:26-31).

At Golgotha, the place of the crucifixion: *"Golgotha,"* which means "the place of the skull," was outside the city of Jerusalem, probably on the north side. All four writers state, simply, that *"He was crucified"* (Matt. 27:35; Mk. 15:24; Lk. 23:33; In. 19:18), without giving the details involved in such an execution. First century readers knew all too well. The body was suspended on a heavy, rough wooden structure by four large spike-like nails driven through hands and feet (probably at the wrists and ankles, which were considered part of the hands and feet). The pain was horribly excruciating and affected the entire body in a variety of cruel ways; it usually lasted for a few days before death came. A victim of crucifixion also found breathing almost impossible without pushing down on the impaled feet for short gulps of air; soon the victim would cry out for something to quench a horrible thirst. *"And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God. And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach"* (Matt. 27:39-44). The breaking of the legs would hasten death because the victim could no longer breath, and would suffocate. Jesus, having suffered so much, died before the soldiers came to do that. How does any of our sufferings compare to all of these things? What a Savior we have!

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