

How Did Jesus Endure the Agony of the Cross?

When *The Passion of the Christ* was released 21 years ago, Hollywood critics mocked it because it offered a realistic depiction of Jesus' torture and death. I know people who couldn't watch the movie because it offered such an accurate portrayal of a brutal Roman execution.

Actor Jim Caviezel, who played Jesus in that film, was only pretending to feel pain when he was flogged and nailed to a cross. But the unimaginable agony Jesus endured at Calvary was real.

Nobody performed an autopsy on Jesus' mangled body after He was taken down from the cross. But doctors who have studied the Bible's description of His death say the pain would have been beyond excruciating. In fact, the word "excruciating" means "out of the cross."

After His arrest, Jesus was flogged so mercilessly that His skin was stripped off His back, exposing muscle and bone. After being slapped, punched, crowned with thorns and beaten with reeds, He was covered with a red robe and led to Golgotha. There, soldiers drove nails (more like seven-inch spikes) into His wrists—most likely hitting the median nerve, causing more blinding pain. They nailed another long metal spike into His feet.

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At that point, Jesus would have suffered dislocation of His shoulders, cramps and spasms, dehydration from severe blood loss, fluid in His lungs and eventual lung collapse and heart failure. Yet, according to Matthew 27:34, Jesus refused to take a pain-killing solution. He endured the pain for us.

How did Jesus handle this pain? Many scholars say He recited Psalm 22 throughout His ordeal. These words, which are quoted more often in the New Testament than any other Old Testament passage, describe in detail the death of the Messiah. In the Gospels, we read that Jesus quoted this psalm while He hung on the cross.

He had most likely memorized Psalm 22 since He was a boy in the synagogue in Nazareth. I encourage you to meditate on this psalm this week as we remember the crucifixion.

Matthew 27:46 says Jesus quoted Psalm 22:1 from the cross: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Any Jew who heard this would have known He was quoting David's psalm. It's possible that He muttered the whole psalm under His breath.

Verse 6 says: "But I am a worm and not a man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people." Imagine Jesus reciting these words as a crowd of angry mockers insulted Him as they gathered near the cross.

Verse 14 says: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted inside my body." Some victims of Roman crucifixion took as long as nine days to die, but Jesus' death came in a matter of hours—probably because He had been flogged so cruelly before He was nailed to the rough wood. As He recited Psalm 22, He knew that David's prophetic words were about Him.

Verse 15a says: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws." Victims of crucifixion typically developed serious dehydration because of a lack of blood and oxygen. Jesus felt the thirst that David wrote about.

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Verse 16b-18 says: "They pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." Jesus' tormentors stripped Him of His clothes, and He bore our shame. John's Gospel tells us that soldiers gambled for his tunic.

Psalm 22 doesn't just predict the pain Jesus experienced. It ends in victory. Verse 22 says:

"I will tell of Your Name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You." Even as Jesus hung in pitiful agony, there was a great expectation of triumph. He praised the Father as He thought of His coming Resurrection.

The last verse of Psalm 22 says: "They will come and will declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has performed it." The original Hebrew in the last phrase ("He has performed it") can be translated, "It is finished." This is exactly what Jesus declared in John 19:30 as He breathed His last! He finished reciting the Psalm before He gave up His spirit.

David's prophetic psalm helped prepare Jesus for His agonizing death. He knew He was the promised Messiah. He knew His destiny was to pour out His blood to atone for the sins of the world. He was willing to endure the pain because of the great joy set before Him.

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John Bevere: Will the Church Face God's Wrath?

We've all heard it before: "I feel like I'm stepping into a new season." But how do you really know when God is shifting things in your life?

Pastor Vlad Savchuk of HungryGen Ministries recently shared a powerful message on this very topic, reminding believers that life isn't static—it moves in seasons. "The Bible does talk about life being broken into seasons," Savchuk said. "Sometimes there are seasons of struggle, then there's seasons of victory. Sometimes there are seasons of lack and there are seasons where we see God's provision."

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So how can you tell if you're stepping into something new? Pastor Vlad outlines 10 biblical signs that reveal a divine shift is happening:

1. A Shift in Desires and Priorities

"When God transitions you into a new season, your passions, priorities and interests often change," Savchuk said. He referenced Philippians 2:13, adding, "It is God who works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure."

2. Doors Closing and New Ones Opening

Savchuk encouraged believers to watch for changing opportunities: "Old opportunities fade, and new doors that align with God's will for your life begin to open." He quoted Revelation 3:8: "See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it."

3. Unusual Opposition

“A new season often attracts increased spiritual warfare,” he warned. Quoting 1 Corinthians 16:9, Savchuk said, “A great and effective door has been opened to me... and there are many adversaries.”

4. Discomfort or Restlessness

Savchuk shared, “You have dwelt long enough at this mountain. Turn and take your journey.” (Deut. 1:6-7). When God is stirring you, the old season becomes uncomfortable.

5. Relationships Begin to Shift

“Some people exit because that relationship has kind of ran its course,” he explained. Referencing Ruth, Savchuk noted how her decision to follow Naomi marked her new season: “Where you go, I will go... your God, my God.”



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6. New Responsibilities Are Given

“You got to understand, your faithfulness in small things will bring about God’s reward. And you know what that reward is? More responsibility,” said Savchuk. He highlighted Luke 16:10: “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much.”

7. A Renewed Hunger for God

“A fresh season is marked by a deeper craving for God’s presence and His Word,” Savchuk said. “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God.” (Ps. 42:1)

8. God's Peace Despite Uncertainty@

Savchuk encouraged believers not to fear unclear circumstances: "The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:7) "God's peace becomes your guard, becomes your protection," he added.

9. A Change in Financial Supply

"You have to understand, a season changes God's supply," he said. "God is still the source... but the way God supplies changes." Whether a job ends or a new idea emerges, Savchuk pointed to Philippians 4:19: "God will supply all of your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

10. A Call to Step Out in Faith

"A new season requires courage to move forward without full clarity," he said. Quoting Hebrews 11:8, Savchuk reminded, "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go... not knowing where he was going."

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As a final encouragement, Pastor Vlad added, "Your seasons may change, but make sure your commitment to God is the same." He explained that while seasonal transitions may come with stress, "God is not going to remove the stress, but He will increase your strength to meet the demands placed on you in that season."

And when your scenery changes? "Dress accordingly," Savchuk advised. "It's kind of foolish to go barefoot in the snow, and it's also not wise to walk around with a fur coat in the hot, scorching summer."

God's presence doesn't change—but how we walk with Him in each season might. Be sensitive to His leading and step forward in faith.

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Shocking Revelations from Holy Week: The Arrival, the Fiery Anger and the Miraculous Fig Tree!

What if you could witness the most pivotal week in human history as it unfolded?

What if you stood in the dusty streets of Jerusalem, heard the roar of the crowd shouting “Hosanna” and later the chilling cries of “Crucify Him”? What if you could watch from a distance as the Son of God entered His final days—teaching, confronting, weeping and ultimately laying down His life for the sins of the world?

In this six-part series, we walk through the events of Holy Week, day by day, with fresh eyes and reverent awe. Based solely on the biblical record, each post offers a front-row seat to the passion, power, and purpose of Jesus' final week before the resurrection.

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Day 1: Hosanna in the Highest

As the week leading to Passover began, Jerusalem swelled with thousands of pilgrims from all over Israel and beyond. The city buzzed with expectation and spiritual energy. Amid the crowd, word began to spread rapidly—Jesus of Nazareth was approaching. This was the teacher and miracle-worker many had come to believe was the Messiah. Yet His arrival defied common messianic expectations. Instead of a warhorse and a military procession, Jesus rode into the city on a young donkey, a deliberate fulfillment of Zechariah's ancient prophecy: "Behold, your King comes to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey" (Zech. 9:9).

As He entered Jerusalem, people threw their cloaks on the road and waved palm branches—symbols of victory and deliverance. Their voices filled the air with cries of "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!" (John 12:13). These words, drawn from Psalm 118, were more than praise—they were a messianic declaration.

While the crowd celebrated, Jesus wept over the city. Luke records that as He approached, He said, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes" (Luke 19:42). Though the people recognized Him as a king, they did not fully understand the nature of His kingdom. Jesus came not to overthrow Rome, but to conquer sin and death. The triumphal entry marked the beginning of a week that would change the course of human history.

Day 2: Den of Thieves

The following day, Jesus returned to Jerusalem and made His

way into the temple courts. What He found there was deeply disturbing. Instead of a place of reverent prayer and sacred worship, the temple had become a center of commerce. Merchants sold animals for sacrifice at inflated prices. Money changers exchanged currency for profit. The outer courts—the only place Gentiles could come to pray—had been overtaken by greed.

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With righteous indignation, Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. Coins scattered across the stone floor. Chaos erupted. Yet Jesus' voice rang clear above the clamor: "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves'" (Matt. 21:13).

His actions were not just about cleaning up corruption—they were a prophetic judgment on the entire religious system that had become hollow and hypocritical. The chief priests and scribes, already threatened by His influence, became more determined than ever to silence Him.

Day 3: Curse of the Fig Tree

On the morning of the third day, Jesus and His disciples once again journeyed from Bethany toward Jerusalem. Along the way, Jesus approached a fig tree. From a distance, it appeared healthy and full of leaves—an indication that it might bear fruit, even if the season had not fully arrived. But upon closer inspection, it was barren. In response, Jesus said, "Let no one ever eat fruit from you again" (Mark 11:14). The disciples listened but didn't yet grasp the significance.

When they passed by the tree the following morning, it had withered from the roots. Astonished, Peter exclaimed, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree You cursed has withered away" (Mark 11:21).

Jesus used the moment to teach them about faith, saying, “If you have faith and do not doubt...whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive” (Matt. 21:21–22).

The fig tree symbolized more than agriculture—it was a living parable. Outwardly, the nation appeared religious, but inwardly it bore no fruit. The curse on the fig tree was a sobering image of judgment for spiritual hypocrisy.

Through the fig tree and His confrontations in Jerusalem, Jesus exposed the emptiness of ritual without righteousness. He was preparing His disciples—and the world—for the new covenant that was about to be established through His own death and Resurrection.

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Prepared by Charisma Media Staff.

Letting God Lead: Prayer Is the Anchor of a Spirit-Led Life

If God gives you a vision, what should you do with it?

In a recent time of prayer, Mike Thompson heard the Lord speak clearly in his spirit: “Run with the vision.” It was not a suggestion, but a divine command. As Thompson meditated on these words, the Holy Spirit led him to Habakkuk 2:2-3: “Write the vision and make it plain... that he may run who reads it.” Although the vision may tarry, Thompson emphasizes, “Wait for

it—it will surely come.”

This vision is not based on imagination or fleshly ambition, but on supernatural revelation—visions, dreams and a stirring of the heart, along with Scriptures that leap off the page. These are communications from heaven, full of purpose and direction. The Holy Spirit is actively guiding believers into their spiritual inheritance—into new, promised land territory.

So, what should Christians do when God presents them with a vision?

1. Trust the Holy Spirit

The foundation of running with the vision God has placed in your heart is trust. Trusting the Holy Spirit means relying on His guidance, even when the path ahead seems unclear. The Holy Spirit is not only a comforter but also the divine helper who empowers believers to walk out their purpose. He will never lead you astray, and His guidance is always aligned with God’s will.

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Trusting Him means surrendering your own understanding and recognizing that His wisdom far surpasses our own. As the Spirit leads, He will equip you with everything needed to fulfill your divine vision, including strength, wisdom and courage.

2. Make the Vision Your Assignment

When God reveals a vision to you, it’s not just a dream or a nice idea—it is a heavenly assignment. That vision comes with divine purpose, and it’s up to you to take ownership of it. Don’t treat it as something distant or abstract; instead, make it your mission in life. Think of it as a magnetic north guiding all your decisions, actions and prayers.

If God has given you a vision, His anointing is upon it. He is already working behind the scenes to bring it to fruition, and now it's your job to align your life with that calling. When you make the vision your assignment, you will see God's power at work as He transforms your life and circumstances to fulfill His plan.

3. Pray Over It Daily

Prayer is the vital communication link between you and God. When you pray over the vision God has given you, you invite His will to be done and seek His supernatural intervention. Praying daily keeps the vision alive in your heart, and it allows the Holy Spirit to reveal deeper layers of understanding and guidance. Using your heavenly prayer language—praying in tongues—can unlock mysteries and divine strategies to manifest the vision.

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Prayer positions your heart to receive revelation and provides the spiritual fuel needed to keep pushing forward, even when challenges arise. Prayer helps you stay in alignment with God's plan and reminds you of the promises attached to the vision.

4. Act in Faith and Authority

Faith without works is dead, as James 2:26 teaches us. When you receive a vision from God, you must act on it. Don't wait for perfect conditions or for everything to line up just right—take steps in faith, trusting that the Holy Spirit will guide you as you move forward. This is where authority comes into play. God has given you authority through Jesus Christ to declare and decree His will on earth as it is in heaven.

The more you step out in faith, the clearer the path will become. Each step of obedience activates the manifestation of the vision. Whether it's in your ministry, relationships, career, or personal growth, every action in faith brings you closer to fulfilling God's vision for your life.

5. Be Patient and Keep Pressing In

Patience is crucial when running with the vision God has given you. Habakkuk 2:3 tells us that "the vision is yet for an appointed time; though it tarries, wait for it." Sometimes, the manifestation of the vision takes time, and that can be challenging. But patience is not passive waiting—it's active endurance, staying focused on the vision even when progress seems slow. Keep pressing in, praying and acting in faith, even if the results don't come immediately.

Trust that God's timing is perfect and that He is orchestrating every detail of the process. Remember, the vision will come to pass in due season, and when it does, it will be a testimony of God's faithfulness.

This is a season for breakthrough, expansion, and supernatural fulfillment. The Lord is calling us to go to new heights with Him. The question is: Will you follow?

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Pastor Todd Mullins Reveals

How Christians Can Turn Doubt Into Deeper Faith

In a powerful message on LIFE Today, Christ Fellowship's Todd Mullins shares how seasons of doubt can become divine invitations to deeper faith.

Quoting the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, Cahn reminded the congregation, "I have earnestly desired to celebrate this Passover with you." He noted that Jesus was not only observing the Seder but also fulfilling it.

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The celebration began with the ancient Hebrew blessing: "Blessed are You, Lord God, King of the Universe, who has preserved us alive, sustained us and brought us to this day."

Holding up the matzoh, the unleavened bread used during the meal, Cahn pointed out, "This is unleavened bread. This is the bread of affliction. It has no leaven. That's without sin. It's pierced. It's striped. It's broken. This is Messiah, the Bread of Life."

Cahn's explanation also touches on the deeper meaning behind each element of the Passover meal, which is rich with symbolism that points to Christ. The unleavened bread, for instance, is not just an ancient custom—it represents Jesus' sinless body, broken for the forgiveness of humanity's sins.

He continued to draw parallels between the symbols of the Seder and the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus.

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Holding up the bitter herbs, Cahn declared, "This is the bitterness. This is what it was before we knew God. Without God it's bitter. That's the bitterness of bondage, of slavery, of sin, of Egypt, of Pharaoh, of Satan. Messiah is the Bread that takes it away."

This historical act of salvation carries much greater significance in the Christian faith when viewed through the lens of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Jesus, during His Last Supper with His disciples, included the symbols of the Passover, revealing Himself as the ultimate fulfillment of that ancient act of redemption. The bread, representing the body of Christ, and the wine, representing His blood, are not just ritualistic elements; they are markers of the new covenant and the freedom He offers to all who believe.

When it came time for the dipping of the bread—referenced in the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper—Cahn explained its significance.

"That's the sign when He dipped the matzoh and gave it to Judas. That's when He said, 'Nobody takes my life. I give it up freely.'"

The traditional reading of the Haggadah was also part of the evening: "This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors in Egypt partook. Let all who are hungry come and eat."

As the service progressed, Cahn invited participants to personally encounter the Messiah's fulfillment of the Passover. "You were a slave, you were in bondage, but He brought you from sorrow to joy, from mourning to rejoicing," he says.

Just as the Israelites' freedom was made possible through the blood of the lamb, so too is eternal freedom offered to all through Christ's sacrificial death. As believers partake in the spiritual inheritance of Passover, they are reminded of the profound cost of their freedom and the everlasting joy of

being redeemed by the Lamb.

“Passover literally means the Lamb,” Cahn emphasizes. “The Lamb is central. In Hebrew, the word for Passover—Pesach—is the Lamb.”

The service culminated with the breaking of the afikoman, a hidden piece of matzah that is traditionally wrapped, buried and brought back at the end of the meal. “He was wrapped, buried and came back,” Cahn says. “That’s the Gospel.”

The blood of the Lamb, both in Egypt and on the cross, is the thread that binds every believer to the promise of redemption. Passover reveals God’s unwavering faithfulness to deliver His people, not just from physical bondage, but from the deepest spiritual chains. In the death and Resurrection of Jesus, we see the fulfillment of God’s eternal plan, the victory over sin and death.

As we reflect on the significance of Passover, may we be reminded that through the blood of the Lamb, we are not only set free from our past but invited into a new life of hope, purpose and joy.

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John Bevere Uncovers the Disciples' Greatest Failure—And It Didn't Start With Judas

Jesus was seated with His 12 apostles, giving thanks and serving Communion, when He made a startling statement: “Behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!” (Luke 22:21–22). What an announcement! We would say today that Jesus had “dropped a bomb” with those words.

Although Jesus knew from the beginning that He would be betrayed, it was the first His disciples had heard of it. Can you imagine the horrible feeling in the room as He said that one of them who had been with Him from the start, a close associate, was going to betray Him?

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In response, “they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing” (v. 23). They were overwhelmed with shock that one of them would be capable of such a horrifying thing. But their motive for this investigation was not pure. We know this by how their conversation ended. Their reason for the inquest was selfish and full of pride. Look at the very next verse of Scripture:

Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them

should be considered the greatest (Luke 22:24).

Picture this: Jesus told them He was about to be turned over to the chief priests to be condemned to death and delivered to the Romans to be mocked, scourged and killed. The one who would do this was sitting with Him at the table.

The disciples questioned who it was, and it ended up in an argument about which of them would be the greatest. It was dishonorable—almost like children arguing over an inheritance. There was no concern for Jesus, but a jockeying for power and position. What unimaginable selfishness!

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If I had been in Jesus' position, I might have asked if they had heard what I had said or if they even cared. We see from this incident an example of how the Master walked in love and patience. Most of us, if in Jesus's place, would have said, "Every one of you, get out! I am in My greatest hour of need, and you're thinking of yourselves!" What an opportunity to become offended!

We can almost guess who initiated the dispute among the disciples: Simon Peter, since he had the most dominating personality of the group and was usually the one who spoke up first.

He was probably quick to remind the others how he had been the only one to walk on water. Or perhaps he refreshed them about how he had had the first revelation of who Jesus really was. Then he may have shared again his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

Peter was fairly confident that he was the greatest of the 12. But this confidence was not rooted in love. Rather it was anchored in pride.

Jesus looked at all of them and told them they were acting as mere men, not sons of the kingdom: “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves” (Luke 22:25–27).

To read more from John Bevere’s The Bait of Satan, visit [this link](#).

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Reaching the Non-Religious Americans

Researchers are finding that people may be becoming more receptive to Faith in God.

For starters, they have found that the long decline in religious faith has stopped, with the number of religious Americans hovering around 70%. Now, recent research by Ryan Burge and Troy Jones reveals that there is hope of reaching the other 30%.

It turns out that only 10% of the non-religious, about 3% of Americans, are openly hostile to religion. These people are militant atheist evangelists, trying to convert others. Even this group may be reachable with a message of love and peace, because they have higher anxiety and more mental health

concerns. Let them see it in your life and they may want it for themselves.

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Another group, about 7% of Americans, claim to be perfectly happy avoiding the spiritual side of life. Most don't pray and don't say they believe in an afterlife. Like some of us were, they will be perfectly happy continuing to be sinners until it does not work. It may take a life crisis to open their eyes, and if a Christian has invested in a relationship, they may then be open to the Gospel.

The remaining people claiming to be non-religious, about 20% of Americans, are leaning toward Spirituality, but have not found a home. Half of them pray daily, and a third of them attend church at least once a year.

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Tellingly, two thirds of them want to be connected to God but are opposed to organized religion. To reach these people, Christians need to help overcome their fear of church through love, and be ready to give an answer for their faith with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

Burge and Jones suggest that revival can reach the non-religious if we know them better. We believe that the key to reaching the hard-core Atheists, the complacent Atheists, and the spiritually homeless is the friendship and love expressed by individual Christians. Be genuine and don't overlook the power of your own testimony (Rev. 12:11).

As we approach Easter many of the unaffiliated non-religious may be making their annual, perhaps obligatory, visit to church. Take one to lunch and befriend them. You will be glad you did.

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Ron Allen is a Christian businessman who is active in ministries spreading a message of reconciliation to God, to men and between believers. He is the founder of American Wake Up Call.