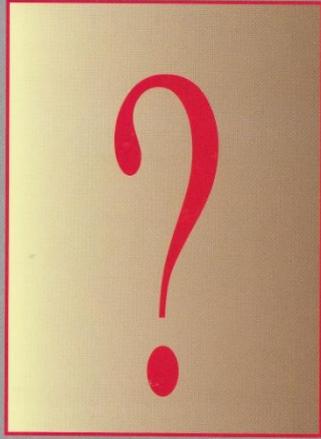


## Death on the Cross



Ten arguments from the Holy Bible



### The Author

Hadrat Maulana Abul 'Ata Jalandhri, the author of this booklet, was born on 14th April, 1904 at Kariha, India. He worked as a dedicated missionary from 1927 to 1977 in Palestine, India and Pakistan. He was conferred the title "Khalid-e-Ahmadiyyat" by Hadrat Musleh Ma'ud during Jalsa Salana Rabwah in 1956. He was a distinguished member of the team that accompanied Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III to the National Assembly of Pakistan in 1974. His glorious life and activities came to an end on 30th May 1977. He was buried in Bahishti Maqbarah, Rabwah.

# Response to 'Death on the cross?'

## Prologue

This is a response to Hadrat Maulana Abdul 'Ata Jalandhri's booklet '*Death on the Cross? - Ten arguments from the Holy Bible*', 7th Edition 2011. The points made are virtually identical with those found in J.D. Shams' book '*Where did Jesus die?*', 8<sup>th</sup> Edition 1989. That book was first published in 1945 by the Ahmadiyya Community in the United Kingdom. A detailed response to it can be downloaded for free here:

[christianityexplained.net/explainedto/muslims/response.to.where.did.jesus.die.pdf](http://christianityexplained.net/explainedto/muslims/response.to.where.did.jesus.die.pdf)

Numerous arguments found in both writings have been successfully answered by various followers of Jesus<sup>1</sup> according to the Bible. Where this is the case, the sources will be given below. Where necessary, further comments are made.

The main point of the book under consideration is that Jesus allegedly did not die on the cross. He only swooned and was healed within forty days by a miraculous ointment. He then travelled to the East on a mission to the ten lost tribes of the children of Israel, believed by Ahmad to be the peoples of Afghanistan and Kashmir. He died a natural death at the age of 120 and was buried in Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. Before a response to these allegations is given, it will be helpful to note a few general points:

### Considering the Big Picture

1. According to the earliest records, Jesus Christ himself said that he would die and rise again:

*'When I saw him (Jesus), I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades."'* (Revelation 1:17-18, see also 22:13 & 16)<sup>2</sup>

*'Then he (Jesus) opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: **The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**"'* (Luke 24:45-47)

2. When faced with such clear evidence, Muslims normally say that the Bible has been changed where it does not agree with the Quran. Interestingly, this argument was used the first time by Ibn-Khazem who died in 1064 in Cordoba. Only then, about five centuries after the advent of Islam, translations of the Bible were more widely available in Arabic. Muslims realized they had a huge problem, summarized in Surah 2, Al-Baqarah, 107: 'Whatever message We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than that or the like thereof.'

What could possibly be better than to have instant and absolute certain forgiveness of sins through repentance and faith in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and his

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<sup>1</sup> This term is used to emphasise their desire to practice what Jesus Christ taught, distinguishing them from 'Christians'. Many of the latter are nominal and have committed many inexcusable mistakes due to their lack of faith in Christ and his word.

<sup>2</sup> All Bible references are taken from *The New International Version* (2011) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

subsequent resurrection from the dead? He was the final perfect sacrifice, as has been promised in the previous Scriptures and is alluded to in the Quran:

In Surah 17, Al-Isra, verses 1-7, the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem is mentioned. It was built in obedience to God's command. Sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins were a vital ritual performed in the temple - the very heart of its existence!

God's way of totally securing forgiveness from him in the Torah is further established on the main website of the Ahmadiyya community in an article by Arshad Khan that first appeared in 'The Review of Religions', October 1992.<sup>3</sup>

Both Muslims and Christians agree that the blood of animals cannot take away sin. All three of God's books, the Torah, Zabur and the Injeel, indicate that the sacrifices in the past point to a perfect sacrifice that was to come, Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> The first covenant mentioned in the book of Exodus, chapter 24, is known in the Bible as the 'Old Testament.' It was inaugurated with blood of animals. Likewise, the second covenant is known in the Bible as the 'New Testament.' However, it was inaugurated with the blood of Jesus Christ, the final sacrifice. All those who repent from their sinful ways and put their trust in Jesus have instant forgiveness of their sins. This is absolutely certain, as forgiveness was in the days of Moses.

As mentioned already, since the Quran says that Jesus did not die on the cross, the only solution was to say the Bible got corrupted where it does not agree with the Quran. However, there is evidence in the Quran that neither the written Torah nor the Injeel was changed:

In Surah 19, Maryam, verse 12, Yahya, known as John the Baptist, who lived at the time of Hazrat Isa was told 'to take hold of the Book, (the Torah).' Surah 3, Ali'Imran, verse 49, tells us that Jesus was also taught in the Torah. Hence, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, at the time of Jesus and John, the Torah must have been unchanged, otherwise they would have been taught a corrupted book. (See also Surah 3, Ali'Imran, verse 94.)

Surah 5, Al Ma'idah, verses 67-69, call upon Jews and Christians in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the time of the prophet of Islam, to observe their books and commends some of them as being, 'moderate'. The Arabic word can also be translated as 'being on the right course'. If parts of their Scriptures had been corrupted that would not be possible. That verse can not include the Quran. Had they believed in it, they would have ceased to be Christians and Jews. Quranic verses speaking about changes in the Torah refer to oral misquoting only, not to changes in the written word.

In Surah 29, Al Ankabut, verse 47, Muslims are commanded to say to the People of the Book, the Jews and the Christians, 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and that which has been revealed to you; and our God and your God is One; and to him we submit.'

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.alislam.org/library/links/00000129.html> (All links have been correct at the time of publishing, 6/2014.)

<sup>4</sup> Leviticus 23:19-27: 'atonement' from root: 'to cover', Psalm 22, Mark 10:45, Hebrews 9:13-14, 10:1-4

Surah 7, Al Araf, verse 171, refers to the Bible, saying: 'And as to those who hold fast by the Book, and observe Prayer, surely We suffer not the reward of such righteous People to perish.'

Anyone who compares a 6<sup>th</sup> century copy of the Scriptures with today's copies will find out that there has been no substantial change in them. When the Quran speaks positively about the Tawrat and the Injeel in the present tense, it is doing so in the light of the form they were in at that time. Scripture and history<sup>5</sup> make it clear that those terms were also used referring to what is today known as the whole Old and New Testament, contained in the Holy Bible. In the light of all this evidence the question needs to be asked: 'Why do Ahmadiyyas choose only certain verses from the Scriptures to build their case, while yet ignoring many others that speak clearly about the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and his subsequent resurrection?'

3. According to the PhD study of Dr Gary Haberman<sup>6</sup>, the following historical<sup>7</sup> facts are believed by over 90% of Christian and non-Christian scholars: 1. Jesus Christ died by crucifixion 2. The disciples truly believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. 3. Enemies of Jesus (Paul and James in Mark 6) truly believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. The job of historians is to take evidence and facts from history and provide an account, a theory, a hypothesis that best explains those facts. The resurrection of Jesus explains these facts best while the swoon theory scores the worst. Early proponents of it included rationalist theologians in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Nothing is known about that theory for certain before that rather late date.<sup>8</sup>
4. Eyewitnesses, who could tell the difference between a person who was dead and one that was alive, verified Jesus' death. (See John 19:34/Mark 15:44-45)
5. Latest scholarship generally agrees that all the Gospels and other books of the New Testament were written between 48 and 97 AD.<sup>9</sup> They clearly talk in many places about the corner stone of the Biblical message, the death of Jesus on the cross. If Jesus allegedly died at the age of 120, that would have given him over 70 years to correct what his disciples had written, if it was not true. Had he not done so, he would have lied. It is impossible for a prophet to commit such a heinous sin.
6. If, contrary to the Bible and secular history<sup>10</sup>, Jesus Christ did not die on the cross, he and his disciples would have deceived the whole world! This is beyond belief for two main reasons:
  - The Bible repeatedly teaches the importance of being truthful.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.christianityexplained.net/explainedto/muslims/26.html>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.garyhabermas.com/articles/southeastern\\_theological\\_review/minimal-facts-methodology\\_08-02-2012.htm](http://www.garyhabermas.com/articles/southeastern_theological_review/minimal-facts-methodology_08-02-2012.htm) See also <http://vimeo.com/39314964>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FR8K7LURsg> (about 32 min into the recording)

<sup>8</sup> The first five books of the New Testament are classified as historical records from the first Century AD (see point 5). Besides, there is also reliable non Biblical evidence as listed in footnote 11.

<sup>9</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swoon\\_hypothesis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swoon_hypothesis)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.freebeginning.com/new\\_testament\\_dates/](http://www.freebeginning.com/new_testament_dates/) This link refutes point 3 on page xiv.

- Most of his 12 disciples died a martyr's death<sup>11</sup> for believing in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Who would be prepared to die for a lie? Liars make poor martyrs.

These six general points provide overwhelming evidence supporting the Biblical, historical and traditional account of Jesus Christ's death on the cross and his subsequent resurrection. Why does the Ahmadiyya community as the only Muslim group still propagate the swoon theory? The answer is most likely given by the son of the founder, Bashir-ud-din:

'It is impossible for us to think that Jesus the Messiah is alive in Heaven while Muhammad, our Holy Prophet, lies buried in the earth. We cannot think so. ... If it is true that Jesus is alive in Heaven, we cannot feel more dead. We cannot tolerate the thought that our Master is dead and buried, while Jesus is alive and in Heaven. We feel humiliated before Christians.'<sup>12</sup>

Having set the stage by putting the details that follow into a proper perspective, let us now turn to them in reply to the book *'Death on the Cross? - Ten arguments from the Holy Bible'*

## **I. The Sign of Jonah**

Most of the opposition Jesus got during his public ministry came from the religious people of his day. Once they challenged him to give proof for his claims to be the promised Messiah, the Savior. In response Jesus said that only the sign of the prophet Jonah would be given to them. The clear meaning of the Biblical passage where that encounter is recorded has been much misunderstood by leading Muslims. As will be shown, they tried to interpret it from their perspective, isolating the paragraph from its wider context.

*'Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you." He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here."'* (Matthew 12:38-41)

When Jesus refers to his death on the cross and his resurrection as the sign of Jonah he wants to declare the following truth: In the same way as Jonah rose again from what normally is leading to a sure death, (being swallowed by a huge fish for three days) Jesus too will raise again after three days from what usually no one can escape, from death! Jesus likens what will happen to him with the story of Jonah mainly in regard to the time factor, the three days.

As a matter of fact not everything in an incident that is used as a sign to compare with another situation must be taken literally. The truth that Jonah stayed alive in the belly of the fish cannot be used as a proof that Jesus too must have survived the cross alive. This way of arguing would lead us into big problems because then we would also have to try to apply the other details of Jonah's story to what happened to Jesus. This is impossible because

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/2009/04/what-happened-to-the-twelve-apostles-how-their-deaths-evidence-easter/>

<sup>12</sup> Bashir-ud-din, Invitation to Ahmadiyyat, p. 15.

Jonah disobeyed God, Jesus did not, Jonah was swallowed by a huge fish, Jesus was not, etc. This same way of using a comparison to communicate one major truth only is found in other parts of the Bible: 'For as lightening that comes from the east and is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.' (Matthew 24:27)

The context (verses 23-25) shows that the only point Jesus makes in this verse is that his return will be visible everywhere. To read into his statement more than this would be a dangerous speculation.

If there is still doubt in the reader's mind about the one truth in the comparison to the sign of Jonah, he must look at the wider context. Besides many verses that clearly mention Jesus' death and resurrection, verses 18-22 of John, chapter 2 help to further clarify the matter:

*'Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scriptures and the words that Jesus had spoken.'*

Here again Jesus is asked for a miraculous sign and he repeatedly states that they would find it in his resurrection from the dead after three days! But this time he makes it clear that they would destroy this temple, meaning they would kill his body! It is not uncommon for Jesus to express the same truth (as in the sign of Jonah) but in different ways, with a slightly different emphasis (here stressing his death as well). For more examples of this method of teaching, please read Matthew 13:24-30 and compare it with verses 47-50, or 13:44-46.

Furthermore, those who use the sign of Jonah to say that Jesus did not die on the cross will have to realize that their interpretation contradicts all the verses in the Torah, the Gospel<sup>13</sup> and accounts of secular history (Josephus in 'Antiquitates' Vol. 18, III:3) where the death of Jesus the Messiah is clearly mentioned. Many religious people were rebuked by Jesus to belong to 'a wicked and adulterous generation' (Matthew 12:39). He knew that they had already made up their minds regarding who he was. The Lord died and rose again indeed! They refused to believe, no matter how convincing the arguments were. To others Jesus said, 'You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.' (John 8:32) To which category will you be counted?

## **II. Pontius Pilate's wife sees a dream - III. The Roman Governor's sympathetic attitude - IV. Pontius Pilate's attempts to save Christ - V. Duration of Crucifixion**

Maulana Abdul 'Ata Jalandhri continues with his biased selection of Bible texts to say that Pilate tried in vain to listen to his wife's dream, warning him not to crucify Jesus. Therefore, he secretly did everything possible to prevent Jesus from dying. In answering this allegation the wider context of the passage will again be given:

*'Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied. When he was accused by the chief priests*

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<sup>13</sup> e.g.: Isaiah 53:5,8-11; Matthew 27:32-28:8; Acts 2:22-24; Romans 5:6-8; John 19:26, 30,35, even Jesus Himself speaks about his death and resurrection in Mark 8:31-32.

and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

*'Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.*

*'While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him." But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered. "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"*

*'When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!"*

*'Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.'* (Matthew 27:11-26)

The whole text makes it clear that Pilate knew **before** his wife's dream of Jesus' innocence. He personally did listen to her plea, *'Don't have anything to do with that innocent man.'* and washed his hands in front of the crowd with water to show his disagreement. However, that is as far as his influence went.

The following reasons also need to be considered:

- Jesus spent six hours on the cross according to Mark 15:25-34.
- One of the human reasons why Jesus died relatively quickly is found in that he was flogged in the Roman way first. In order to satisfy the crowds, history tells us that they used a whip with several strips of leather into which pieces of bone or metal were embedded. The Jews limited the number of times criminals could be flogged to a maximum of 40, stopping at 39 lashes in case of a miscount. No such limitation was recognized by the Romans. Their victims of floggings often did not survive.<sup>14</sup>
- Jesus gave up his Spirit in his own controlled time since he is master over life and death.
- Since nothing is impossible to God, it is presumptuous to tell him what cannot happen on the cross.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.bible-history.com/past/flagrum.html>

On the left side of the table are more objections listed that are easily shown to be false on the right side:

The centurion showed sympathy to Jesus	Only after his death (Luke 23:46-47)
Jesus' legs were not broken to hasten death	Because Jesus was dead (John 19:33-36)
Joseph was permitted to bury Jesus too easily	Permission was given after certain death <sup>15</sup>
They treated Jesus in a new tomb, owned by Joseph, to revive him.	Jewish burial customs were followed. Then they left to observe Sabbath (John 19:40ff)

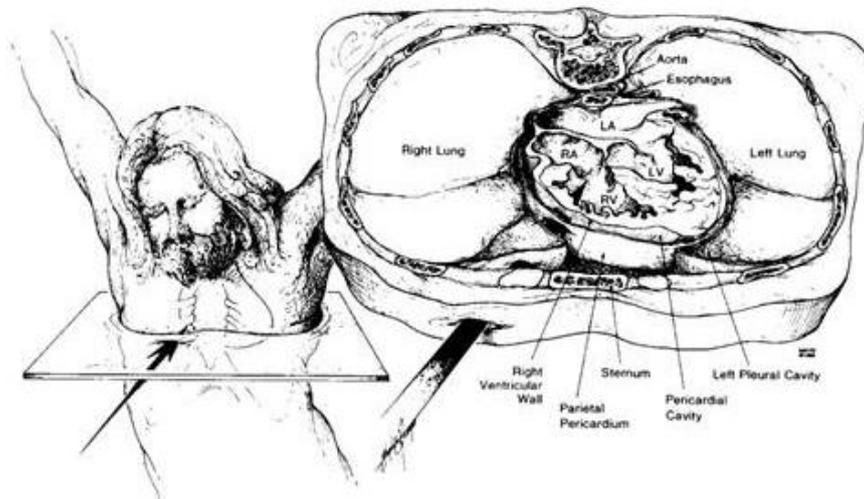
## VI. Blood and Water

Following is the account of four medical doctors regarding the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

**1. A trauma surgeon** – this short video is about the subject from the perspective of a trauma surgeon:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EXLv0j3QdM>

**2. The death of Jesus – William D. Edwards MD.**



Two aspects of Jesus' death have been the source of great controversy, namely, the nature of the wound in his side<sup>4, 6</sup> and the cause of his death after only several hours on the cross.<sup>13-17</sup> The Gospel of John describes the piercing of Jesus' side and emphasizes the sudden flow of blood and water.<sup>1</sup> Some authors have interpreted the flow of water to be ascites<sup>12</sup> or urine, from an abdominal midline perforation of the bladder<sup>15</sup> However, the Greek word *plvra*, or *pleura*<sup>32, 35, 36</sup> used by John clearly denoted laterality and often implied the ribs<sup>6, 32, 36</sup> Therefore, it seems probable that the wound was in the thorax and well away from the abdominal midline.

<sup>15</sup> Ulpian 48, 24, 1; Hug, *De cadav. punit.* in the *Freiburger Leitschrift* 5, p. 174.

Although the side of the wound was not designated by John, it traditionally has been depicted on the right side<sup>4</sup> Supporting this tradition is the fact that a large flow of blood would be more likely with a perforation of the distended and thin-walled right atrium or ventricle than the thick-walled and contracted left ventricle. Although the side of the wound may never be established with certainty, the right seems more probable than the left.

Some of the scepticism in accepting John's description has arisen from the difficulty in explaining, with medical accuracy, the flow of both blood and water. Part of this difficulty has been based on the assumption that the blood appeared first, then the water. However, in the ancient Greek, the order of words generally denoted prominence and not necessarily a time sequence.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, it seems likely that John was emphasizing the prominence of blood rather than its appearance preceding the water.

Therefore, the water probably represented serous pleural and pericardial fluid<sup>5-7, 11</sup> and would have preceded the flow of blood and been smaller in volume than the blood. Perhaps in the setting of hypovolemia and impending acute heart failure, pleural and pericardial effusions may have developed and would have added to the volume of apparent water.<sup>5, 11</sup> The blood, in contrast, may have originated from the right atrium or the right ventricle (see illustration) or perhaps from a hemopericardium.<sup>5, 7, 11</sup>

Jesus' death after only three to six hours on the cross surprised even Pontius Pilate. The fact that Jesus cried out in a loud voice and then bowed his head and died suggests the possibility of a catastrophic terminal event. One popular explanation has been that Jesus died of cardiac rupture. In the setting of the scourging and crucifixions with associated hypovolemia, hyperemia, and perhaps an altered coagulable state, friable non-infective thrombotic vegetations could have formed on the aortic or mitral valve. These then could have dislodged and embolized into the coronary circulation and thereby produced an acute transmural myocardial infarction. Thrombotic valvular vegetations have been reported to develop under analogous acute traumatic conditions.<sup>39</sup> Rupture of the left ventricular free wall may occur, though uncommonly, in the first few hours following infarction.<sup>40</sup>

However, another explanation may be more likely. Jesus' death may have been hastened simply by his state of exhaustion and by the severity of the scourging, with its resultant blood loss and pre-shock state.<sup>7</sup> The fact that he could not carry his patibulum supports this interpretation. The actual cause of Jesus' death, like that of other crucified victims, may have been multifactorial and related primarily to hypovolemic shock, exhaustion asphyxia, and perhaps acute heart failure.<sup>2, 3, 5-7, 10, 11</sup> A fatal cardiac arrhythmia may have accounted for the apparent catastrophic terminal event.

Thus, it remains unsettled whether Jesus died of cardiac rupture or of cardiorespiratory failure. However, the important feature may be not *how* he died but rather *whether* he died. Clearly, the weight of historical and medical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead before the wound to his side was inflicted and supports the traditional view that the spear, thrust between his right ribs, probably perforated not only the right lung but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured his death (see illustration). Accordingly, interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge.

For detailed references in this section, see: <http://www.frugalsites.net/jesus/death.htm>

**3. Dr.Keith Maxwell, a medical doctor in Asheville, N.C.** commented on John 19:33-37:

But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, and they did not break his legs. One of the soldiers stuck his spear into Jesus' side, and blood and water came out. We know this is true, because it was told by someone who saw it happen. Now you can have faith too. All this happened so that the Scriptures would come true, which say, "No bone of his body will be broken" and, "They will see the one in whose side they stuck a spear."

The spear wound to the Lord's side was not the cause of his death either. When the centurion saw that Jesus was dead already, he thrust a spear into Jesus' side. The Bible says in Zachariah that they may look upon him who they've pierced. The spear thrust was biblical prophecy fulfilled. That was one of the reasons why Jesus was already dead; God had a plan that we were to look upon the one they had pierced - Zachariah had to be fulfilled.

Roman centurions were trained killers. They were taught how to deliver death blows that would take a man's life in a matter of seconds. I've taken care of many gunshot victims to the chest. A person can take a .22 through the left side of the heart and likely come in sitting up talking to you. However, if you're stabbed or shot on the right side of the heart, where the inferior and superior vena cava are emptying into the right side of the heart, you're unconscious and pretty close to dead in about twenty to thirty seconds.

This blow to Jesus was no doubt delivered from the right side through the right lung into the heart and on into the spine. It would have penetrated somewhere between the seventh and eighth intercostal space probably on the right. But the Bible says that blood and water came out of Jesus' side after the spear was thrust in. Now if you take a unit of blood, drain it out of a human being's body, put it in a quart jar and set it on top of a desk, in about thirty minutes the red blood cells begin to settle out and the plasma rises to the top. The plasma separates from the red blood cells. When the soldier thrust the spear into the Lord's side, Jesus had already been dead for thirty or forty-five minutes. Maybe you've never thought about that. The spear wound did not take the life of the Lord Jesus; he was dead already when they thrust the spear into his side.

So let me conjecture a little about what I think. I think there's a very good description of the crucifixion in the Bible and there's very good medical evidence that can be pulled out of that description that tells us that the Lord did not die in the manner that most crucifixion victims die. When the Roman centurion went to him to break his legs, he was dead already. They couldn't break his legs because the Bible said in Psalms, 'Not a bone of his body shall be broken.' Why then would the soldier thrust a spear into his side? Because Zachariah told us hundreds of years before that we'd look upon him that we'd pierced. And what came out? Blood and water - I think there's enough medical evidence there that the Lord was dead at least a half an hour.

So what took the Lord's life? No man did. No man, no Roman centurion, no cross took Jesus' life. He was able to do something I've never seen another human being do - he laid down his life. When it was finished and with a loud voice, he gave up the ghost. Jesus gave his life.

'The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life - only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.' (NIV) John 10:17,18

I'm deeply blessed ... Our Lord conquers death and gives life ..Amen?!

Source: <http://www.southasianconnection.com/articles/184/1/Jesus-Suffering-and-Crucifixion-From-a-Medical-Point-of-View/Page1.html>

**4. Dr. C. Truman Davis, vice president of the American Association of Ophthalmology, writes:**

The legs of the two thieves were broken, but when the soldiers came to Jesus they saw that this was unnecessary. Apparently to make doubly sure of death, the legionnaire drove his lance through the fifth interspace between the ribs, upward through the pericardium and into the heart. The 34<sup>th</sup> Verse of the 19<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Gospel according to St. John reports: 'And immediately there came out blood and water.' That is, there was an escape of water fluid from the sac surrounding the heart, giving postmortem evidence that Our Lord died not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure (a broken heart) due to shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the pericardium.

Source: <http://nourishingobscurity.wordpress.com/2007/04/01/crucifixion-from-a-medical-point-of-view/>

Lastly, blood takes up to 15 minutes to coagulate. Jesus died shortly before the soldier pierced him with a spear.

## **VII. No Eye witnesses**

Below is an account of an eyewitness.

*'Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."' (John 19:31-37)*

## **VIII. Jesus' mission to the lost sheep of Israel**

*'These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel ... When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.'" (Matthew 10:5-6, 23)*

*'After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go... "Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me." The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." ' (Luke 10:1,16-20)*

The context shows that the phrase *'the lost sheep of Israel'*, can only be taken metaphorically, because at this stage Jesus sends his disciples to the towns of Israel, not to other nations. They also return to him fairly soon afterwards to give a report. Had they gone to other countries that would not have been possible so quickly.

The words of Jesus, *'I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd'* (John 10:16), refer to the Gentiles. Even though he was initially sent to the Jews and telling his disciples to avoid going to the Samaritans, later he sent them into a village in Samaria in Luke 9:52. Jesus himself preached to a Samaritan woman and later to her whole village in John 4:1-42. Both, Gentiles and Jews, will worship God in unity. Paul spoke about this to former Gentiles:

*'Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.'* (Ephesians 2:11–22).

<sup>57</sup> *And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home." (Matthew 13:57)*

The context shows clearly that Jesus refers to his home village and family only. He did get honor elsewhere in Israel:

*'Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor.'* (John 12:1-2)

Furthermore, the life of Jesus has to be looked at as a whole. At his second coming he will get the proper honor he deserves from everyone:

*'Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.'* (John 5:22-23)

*'At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.'* (Matthew 18:1-6,10-14)

The lost sheep is a picture of everyone all over the world, not just Persia, Afghanistan and India, who does not know Jesus. He has not forgotten them. His followers are called to look for them and bring them back through the preaching of the Gospel.

The Ahmadiyya position is that 10 out of twelve tribes were lost after the Israelites had to go to exile. While it is true that their numbers were depleted the Jews of both, Old and New Testament times never considered them to be totally lost as the following verses show:

*'Then the exiles who had returned from captivity sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven male lambs and, as a sin offering, twelve male goats. All this was a burnt offering to the LORD.'* (Ezra 8:35)

*'For the dedication of this house of God they offered a hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred male lambs and, as a sin offering for all Israel, twelve male goats, one for each of the tribes of Israel.'* (Ezra 6:17)

*'There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher.'* (Luke 2:36)

*'And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today. This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. King Agrippa, it is because of this hope that these Jews are accusing me. Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?'* (Acts 26:6–8)

*'James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all*

*without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.'* (James 1:1-7)

## **IX. Jesus' victory over his enemies**

The Bible (Leviticus 11:45) and the Quran (Surah 59, Al Hashr, verse 23) tell us that God is holy. That means he is separated from anything that is unclean, bad, and hypocritical; in other words from anything that is sin. Both, the Bible (Isaiah 59:1-2) and the Quran (Surah 2, Al Baqarah, verses 35-36) tell us that sin separates man from God. Therefore, sin is not just a minor mistake, but absolutely intolerable in the sight of God! Another reason why sin has to be treated seriously, is because God is just (Deuteronomy 32:4, Surah 95, Al Tin, verse 8). He punishes every wrongdoer and awards the one who does right. However, God will not judge according to our good or bad works alone (Romans 3:23-24, Surah 35, Fatir, verse 45). He loves us so much (John 3:16) that in his mercy he chooses to forgive our sins. But if he would forgive our sins without punishment, then in his mercy he would become unjust!

That is why God revealed Himself in Jesus and died on the cross for our sins. In Jesus, God met the requirements of his justice and of his love! Jesus died on the cross on our behalf, for our sin. In Deuteronomy 21:23 anyone who hangs on a tree is described as being sinful and under God's curse. Galatians 3:13 explains that Jesus, himself without sin, became a curse for us because he took our sin on himself. After paying the penalty for sin through his death, Jesus rose again. Consequently the death and resurrection of Jesus are of the utmost importance for Christians! The following illustration will help to better understand this profound matter:

There was once a king who possessed a huge kingdom over which he also ruled as a just judge. He wrote down laws which had to be kept by everyone so that order and justice would be maintained. One day his very own son, whom he loved so dearly, committed a terrible crime. The law made it very clear that a perpetrator, such as his child had become, would have to face a fine of £100,000,000,000. The king's son was not able to pay that large amount of money. However, the just judge could not change the law simply because the sinner was his own son, otherwise he would not have been impartial anymore. He decided that his child too was guilty, but when he pronounced the judgment, out of love, he offered to pay the fine on behalf of his son. In that way he could meet the demands of his justice but also of his love for the disobedient child. The son sorrowfully repented of his crime and humbly accepted his father's offer. This incident changed him so completely that he decided to love and serve his father forever. By doing this he could certainly never pay back the £100,000,000,000. No, he changed his way of life to express his great thankfulness towards his just and loving father.

The king in the illustration symbolizes God, the kingdom is the world. The laws are the Holy Scriptures, the king's son is all mankind and the terrible crime committed by him is sin. The sum of £100,000,000,000 stands for the punishment of sin, which is an invincible separation from the Holy God. The king who took his son's place and paid the fine on behalf of him illustrates what God has done for all mankind in Jesus. He paid the punishment for sin by dying on our behalf at the cross. Finally, the complete change that took place in the life of the son is a picture of the new life of a Christian. By faith, through a prayer of forgiveness he

accepts what Jesus Christ had done for him. He believes that Jesus took upon him the punishment for men's sin. Only out of thankfulness he starts to love and serve God, not because he thinks he could ever earn a place in heaven by doing good. Whatever the newly born Christian now does will be motivated by love for the One who saved him from a terrible punishment.

Some Muslims might object to the illustration above by saying that God's attributes of justice and mercy cannot be understood. They are completely different from our human concept. It is true that God's attributes are different from ours, but only in regard to their perfection rather than their definition. If the meaning of God's characteristics were so completely different from our understanding then his 99 names, which allegedly describe them, would be unnecessary! Besides that, God Himself used illustrations in the Quran: In Surah 13, Ar-Ra'd, verses 16-17 we read that 'Thus doth Allah set forth parables.' (See also Surah 16, Al Nahl, verses 75-76)

A Muslim enquirer asked: 'The Bible states that God sacrificed his Son, but yet we also read that Jesus was resurrected back to life and is sitting on the right hand of God. When you sacrifice something, you do not take it back three days later. Is this not a contradiction?'

The reason why Jesus the perfect sacrifice was raised to live again on the third day is found in the word 'perfect.' Animal sacrifices were imperfect, they just pointed to the perfect one. That is the reason why they had to be offered again and again. That is also the reason why they were not raised to life again. However, Christ being the perfect, sinless sacrifice only had to die once. Since he paid the punishment for sin, namely death by his own death, the latter no longer became a reality! That is precisely why God raised Jesus to live again. This profound truth is expressed in 1 Corinthians 15:54-57:

*'When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'*

Jesus defeats the death that came as a result of sin! Consequently, he as the first fruit has been raised to life. Those who believe in his perfect sacrifice will follow his example once they die physically:

*'But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.'* (Verses 20-22)

*'Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.'* (Romans 4:25)

Wow! What a message! That Christ was raised to life again after he died sacrificially for us is not a contradiction. Since death for him was no more, there is nothing that could be a contradiction to his being raised to life!

The destiny for us who are living in the time of the New Testament is dependent on our relationship to Jesus. The New Testament makes it clear that salvation is by faith through Christ alone:

*'That in the time to come he might make clear the full wealth of his grace in his mercy to us in Christ Jesus: Because by grace you have salvation through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is given by God: Not by works, so that no man may take glory to himself. For by his act we were given existence in Christ Jesus to do those good works which God before made ready for us so that we might do them.'* (Ephesians 2:7-10)

*'Being conscious that a man does not get righteousness by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we had faith in Christ Jesus, so that we might get righteousness [right standing before God] by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law will no flesh get righteousness.'* (Galatians 2:16)

Salvation by faith in Jesus is believing with the intellect that the Bible is right about our sinful condition, right about who Jesus is and right about what he did on the cross for us.

Passages that speak about judgment according to works have to be read in the light of what true faith means. This is confirmed when their immediate context is considered. (e.g. John 5:28-29, compare with verses 23-24, Matthew 16:27 with verses 21-26, 25:31-46 with 23:37-39, James 2:14-26). As the German reformer Martin Luther used to say 'the faith that saves is never alone.' True faith in Christ shows itself in four ways:

1. Out of thankfulness, followers of Jesus do what he tells them: To love God and man. This is the essence and test of true obedience. They desire to follow the moral law set out in the Old Testament and summarized in what is known as 'The 10 Commandments' (Exodus 20:1-17).
2. Genuine faith in Jesus produces a desire to become more like him, to do what is right and just.
3. Saving faith creates the awareness that this new obedience can only come through faith in Christ. It does not come from focusing on the law, the desperate attempt to meet its demands. Instead, it comes from continually fixing one's eyes on Jesus and his work, by remaining connected to him through being in his presence with one's thoughts.
4. Lastly, Biblical faith generates a constant abiding in and reliance on Jesus by faith. In this way only the Holy Spirit of God supplies the power for a changed life and lasting fruit. (Romans 8:13, John 15:5)

## **X. His prayer was heard**

Hadrat Maulana Abdul 'Ata Jalandhri argued that Jesus' prayer for deliverance from the Cross in the Garden of Gethsemane was answered. He built his case on a few passages, such as:

*'"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me (Jesus); yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.'* (Luke 22:42)

Jesus was about to enter into the most horrific experience which finds no precedent in the whole of human history! It is summed up in the words,

*'God made him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.'* (1 Corinthians 5:21)

The reader may pause for a moment and try to take in the deeply profound meaning of that verse. Jesus, the one who was without sin took all past and future rebellion and filth against God upon him to receive the punishment on our behalf, death! Much worse than the physical pain of the crucifixion is the emotional and the spiritual agony, expressed in its totality by separation from him who is the very source of life! In such a dramatic event time ceases to exist. Death becomes synonymous with eternity for someone who enjoyed an unceasing relationship at the deepest level with the Almighty God. The sweat of Jesus was like drops of blood falling to the ground. This points to a possible hermatidrosis, the actual mingling of blood and sweat as in cases of extreme anguish, strain or sensitivity.<sup>16</sup>

An angel came to strengthen him. All these surrounding circumstances point to a scenario of almost unbearable distress for which language is devoid of words. This is the real significance of the cup from which Jesus asked to be delivered by the Father, stressing that not his will but God's shall be done. In comparison the actual, physical death was the 'least' important part of it.

Jesus' fully human plea shows that he indeed became a man like us. That he is without sin, in opposite to us, is made clear by the way he brings the request before his Father. It is embedded by the words, '...not my will but yours be done'. These kinds of wishes are not in themselves sinful as long as they are brought in subjection to God. Furthermore, Jesus prayed this request in his human nature in which he experienced fear as well. We read in Philippians 2:5-11:

*(Jesus)...'Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'*

In addition, as Satan got permission to tempt Jesus at the beginning of his public ministry,<sup>17</sup> there is a possibility that he was allowed to blind Jesus partly so that he could not see his aim clearly for some time.

Jesus' prayer was answered. God's will that he should die for our sins did happen! The following two passages from the Psalms are applied to Jesus while he was at the cross according to John 19:23 and 36:

*'For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.'* (Psalm 22:24)

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<sup>16</sup> See N.I.V. Study Bible, Zondervan Publishers, USA, 1985, footnote.

<sup>17</sup> Matthew 4:1-11

*'The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.'* (Psalm 34:19-20)

God answered this prayer by raising Jesus from the dead. (Matthew 28:6)

The heart of the Gospel teaches that Jesus who was sinless took upon himself our sin so that we could be forgiven through repentance and faith in him. That is why he died an 'accursed' death, not because of his own sins as the Jews mistakenly believed.

*'During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.'* (Hebrews 5:7)

These words are interpreted to mean that Jesus was actually saved from the physical death on the cross as an answer to his prayer.

Kenneth S. Wuest, a well known New Testament Greek scholar writes on Hebrews 5:7: 'There are two words in Greek which mean 'from', 'apo' which means 'from the edge of,' and 'ek' which means 'out from within.' The second is used here. The Messiah prayed to be saved out from within death. Had the inspired writer used 'apo', he would have reported our Lord as praying to be saved from dying a physical death. At no time in his life did he pray that prayer.'<sup>18</sup> The prayer was indeed answered! Jesus was saved out from within death through the resurrection! Hebrews 5:7 refers in particular to the prayers Jesus made while hanging on the cross. For example, his words, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mark 15:34) are the beginning of a petition found in Psalm 22 which ends in thanksgiving for answered prayers!

We conclude this section by letting Jesus confirm the answer to the question himself, whether or not the cup of suffering and death on the cross was taken away from him:

*'Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?' 'We can,' they answered. Jesus said to them, 'You will indeed drink from my cup...'* (Matthew 20:22-23)

James was later to die as a martyr (see Acts 12:2). John suffered a lot for Jesus, was banished to Patmos (Revelation 1:9) and died a natural death. Neither of them died for the sins of the world. That is why they were only drinking from Jesus' cup not his whole one.

Your comments and questions to Oskar1@live.co.uk are welcome and may be reflected in future updates of this article. For more information please visit: [ChristianityExplained.net](http://ChristianityExplained.net)

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<sup>18</sup> Wuest's Word Studies, Eerdmans Publishing Company, Michigan, 1992, page 101