

# Who Killed Jesus Christ?

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Some say Jews killed Jesus.  
Others think it was the Romans.  
A few think Satan manipulated events to kill Jesus.  
Although there are excellent arguments to support each belief,  
these perceptions can greatly benefit from enhanced spiritual understanding.

The answer to this question will touch your heart, and the truth will enlighten your soul.  
For His punishment and death was one of the most painful means of execution ever devised by man.  
But first, it is important to explain why and how He was killed...in order to understand who killed Jesus.

## Jesus was Obedient unto Death

“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:8

“As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. Therefore, My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.” John 10:15-17

Jesus explained what would happen to Him. Not that the disciples would comprehend the implications of what He said. But rather, by remembering His words in the future, they would understand the meaning of what He said.

Jesus knew what was before Him. He knew of the physical torture He would endure; the price He would pay with His body; and the eternal benefits of following God’s will. This awareness was exemplified as He prepared His heart for what was about to happen. “And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, ‘Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.’ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” Luke 22:41-44

It is important to know Jesus understood His purpose and ministry on earth.

- Fulfill prophetic scripture
- Confront and reveal religious darkness in Israel
- Demonstrate His God-given miraculous power as evidence of His divine assignment
- Mirror the Father
- Speak absolute truth as God directed Him
- Give His body as a living sacrifice for the sins of the world

As you continue to read...it is also important to understand and remember that Jesus had at His beckoning legions of angels to overcome any adversary. Everything He was about to experience He willingly endured...alone. As He was being arrested, Simeon Peter drew his sword and sliced the ear off a servant of the high priest.

“But Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?’” Matthew 26:52-54

Jesus chose to fulfill His purpose and be obedient unto the Father—including His arrest, trial, conviction, and crucified death—and as such, He touched the man’s ear and healed him. (Luke 22:51)

Unfortunately, many of us do not have a clear understanding of the shocking realities of the crucifixion process that was used by the Romans. Therefore, this writing may be difficult for some to read. But it is important for all of us to mentally visualize what our Savior and Lord went through—to enhance our comprehension of His sacrifice and the love God has for us.

## The Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin was the Jewish court system during the time Jesus lived. The Great Sanhedrin (led by Caiaphas the high priest) was the supreme religious body in Israel, wielded significant power, and was the final authority on Jewish law. The court was comprised of 71 persons who were considered wise, had good judgment and experience. The Sanhedrin dealt with religious and ritualistic Temple matters, criminal matters, and in solving conflicts relating to ritual law. There were also smaller religious Sanhedrins in every town.

Sources: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-sanhedrin>; <https://www.britannica.com/topic/sanhedrin#ref75027>

Power—mixed with sinful human nature and satanic influence—resulted in the Great Sanhedrin misguiding Israelites away from God’s truth, and God’s desire for His people. When Jesus Christ began His ministry, His words, His behavior, and His miracles confronted and confounded the religious elite. Because they were living in spiritual darkness, they were unable to see the truth: Jesus Christ was the Messiah.

Their darkened, misguided and preconceived perceptions caused them to believe the Messiah would be a warrior; the Messiah would lead the Israelites in defeating their enemies; the Messiah would bring peace to their nation; and the Messiah would fulfill all their needs. However, Jesus was lowly and unassuming, He associated with sinners and tax collectors, He taught with astonishing insight, performed miracles, was growing in popularity, and directly stood against religious strongholds. But because of their sinful state, hardened hearts and darkened minds, Jesus did not fit into their expectations of the promised Jewish King. They hated Jesus and sought to eliminate Him.

But the one clincher that caused their hatred to boil and influenced the deepest core of their innermost beings—is when they perceived Jesus spoke blasphemies (the act of insulting, showing contempt, or lack of reverence for God)—which was punishable by death (Leviticus 24:13-16).

“Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, ‘Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.’ And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, ‘This Man blasphemes!’ But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, ‘Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins’—then He said to the paralytic, ‘Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.’ And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.” Matthew 9:2-8

“Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, ‘How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one.’ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, ‘Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?’ The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.’” John 10:24-33

## Was Jesus Christ God in the Flesh...Or Did He Commit Blasphemy?

Although the word Trinity does not exist in the Bible, the term has been used throughout history to describe the tri-unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as one single Divine Being. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are one and the same—but yet are three individual Persons. Dr. Walter Martin (who founded the Christian Research Institute and known as “The Bible Answer Man” on radio) said: “No man can fully explain the Trinity, though in every age, scholars have propounded theories and advanced hypotheses to explore this mysterious Biblical teaching. But despite the worthy efforts of these scholars, the Trinity is still largely incomprehensible to the mind of man.”

As such, the “oneness of the Trinity” challenges our human comprehension; requires an understanding of the limitations of our mental capacities; and our faith in that we will fully understand when we are in Heaven.

Jesus said “‘If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.’ Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.’” John 14:7-11

Jesus said “‘If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, ‘I do not know Him,’ I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.’ Then the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’” John 8:54-58

Jesus said “I and My Father are one.” John 10:30

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.” Philippians 2:5-7

“For to which of the angels did He ever say: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You’? And again: ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son’? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’ And of the angels He says: ‘Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.’ But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.’” Hebrews 1:5-9

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” John 1:1-5

“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:10-13

## The Arrest, Trial and Conviction of Jesus—Injustice Personified

Upon the identification of Jesus by a kiss from Judas Iscariot (one of the disciples of Jesus), Jesus was arrested (Mark 14:44-48).

“And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest’s courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, ‘This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’”

And the high priest arose and said to Him, ‘Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?’ But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’

Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’

Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?’

They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death.’ Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, ‘Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?’” Matthew 26:57-68

However, Caiaphas had a couple of problems:

1. He did not have power to execute Jesus, and was dependent upon the Romans for capital punishment.
2. Blasphemy was not a crime under Roman Law.
3. He needed a different Roman crime other than blasphemy to convict Jesus.

Therefore, Caiaphas spun a spiritual and heavenly truth into an earthly lie. Caiaphas said, Jesus thought of himself, or His followers thought, or people said that He was the King of the Jews. This diabolical and convoluted claim positions Jesus as committing sedition (treason, conduct or speech inciting people to rebel against the authority of a state or monarch)—which was considered a capital crime against Rome—and Pilate (the Roman governor) was forced to respond to the charges.

It’s important to note that Jesus never said He was the King of the Jews. It was when He was in front of Pilate—when Pilate asked Him if He was the King of the Jews—Jesus responded by saying “I am.” Jesus never spoke a word of deceit, only truth, and could not deny His deity. Jesus knew the consequences of His response—which provided Pilate with evidence of the charge and he had to move towards punishment.

Although Pilate knew Jesus was not a threat to Rome, and attempted to find a procedural means to release Jesus, the religious leaders used their manipulative power to ensure Jesus would not be forgiven and killed via crucifixion.

## The Process of Crucifixion

Crucifixion was a means of capital punishment (death penalty) used by the Romans for one who had been convicted of a criminal offense. Designed with the intent of causing a slow and gruesome death—it was one of the most diabolical, painful and excruciating forms of punishment that has ever been contrived by man. In addition to executing the guilty, the secondary purpose of the overall crucifixion process was to serve as a warning to dissuade others from committing a similar crime.

Think about the following...other forms of capital punishment are more humane than crucifixion. For example, beheadings, hangings, firing squads, electrical execution, IV injection, and so forth cause death quickly. Whereas, death on the cross normally took several days. Plus, executioners would sometimes leave the body hanging to extend the warning and reinforce consequences of the crime.

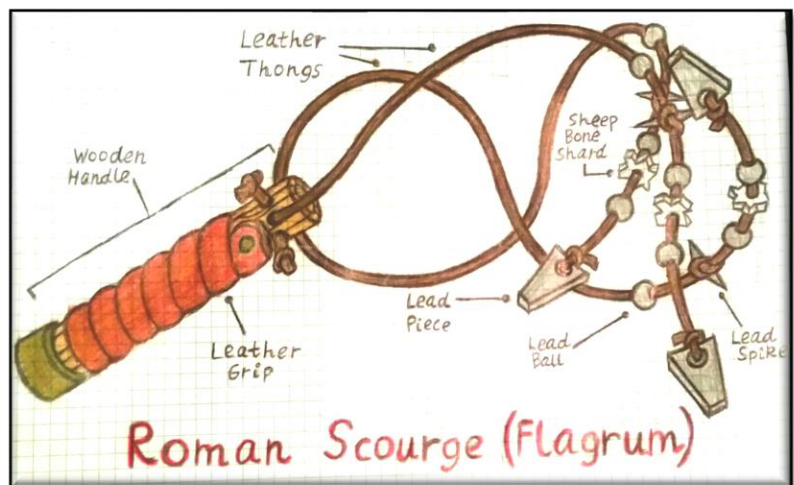
Those who were to be crucified were first punished with scourging.

## Scourging

“So, Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged Him, to be crucified.” Mark 15:15 (also Matthew 27:26, John 19:1)

The body was stripped of all clothing, made to stoop and stretch their arms around an object (pillar, boulder, or other large object), and bound with thongs (Acts 22:25) so that the arms were extended and the back stretched taut. This exposed the back, sides, buttocks and legs as a target for the flagrum.

The flagrum is a short whip made of leather thongs (or ropes) connected to a handle. Small pieces of sharp metal and bone were knotted into the leather thongs at different intervals so that each lash would dig, rip and tear into the flesh at different locations.

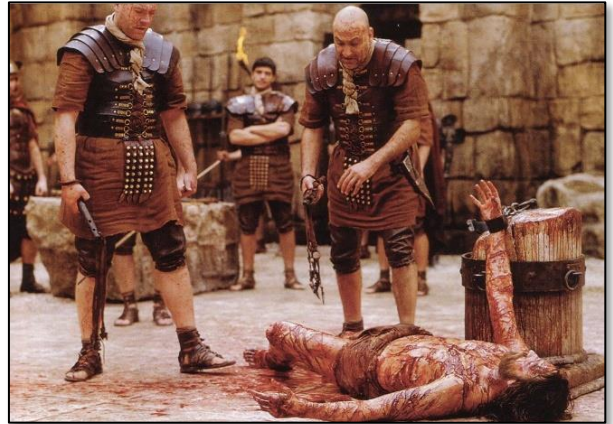


The Bible does not specifically define how many lashes Jesus received. However, Deuteronomy 25:1-3 states if someone deserves to be beaten, then the maximum number of blows is 40. To comply with this mandate, Jews limited the number to 39 (to make sure they did not break the law).

Although Paul was not scourged, he mentioned in 2 Corinthians 11:24 that he was beaten five times and received 39 stripes each time.



Scourging would quickly remove the skin and create deeper lacerations, torn chunks of flesh, exposed muscles and excessive bleeding as each and every lashing was delivered with force...over and over and over. Each time the pain would cause the body to raise, turn and twist—thereby exposing the chest and stomach as the straps wrapped around the back and sides. Scourging would continue until only a living remnant remained.



“When we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by 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 griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.” Isaiah 53:2-7

Upon the conclusion of His scourging—as an example of man in his darkened and clueless fallen state—they attempted to humiliate Jesus.



“And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ And they struck Him with their hands.” John 19:2-3

### **Transition from Scourging to Crucifixion**

Jesus was required to carry His cross upon His shredded and bleeding back through the streets to a hill outside Jerusalem’s walls called Golgotha. However, due to severe blood loss and shock, Jesus was unable to carry the cross to Golgotha, so Simon of Cyrene assisted in this task.

“Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross.” Matthew 27:32

## Crucifixion

There are two likely means the living body of Jesus was nailed to the cross.

1. The cross (vertical beam and cross beam) were already attached and lying on the ground. His hands and feet were nailed into place; and the entire cross with His body attached were raised together. The base of the vertical beam would slide into a hole to keep the cross upright.
2. The vertical beam was secured in the ground. His hands were nailed to the cross beam, and then the cross beam plus His body were raised and attached to the vertical beam. His feet would then be nailed into the vertical beam.

Some believe nails were driven directly through the hands of Jesus, others believe nails were inserted through the two bones directly below the wrist. This difference in opinion is based upon the ability of a nailed hand to support the body's weight (without the nail tearing through the flesh of the hand). The different beliefs are also influenced by whether or not the feet of Jesus were nailed into the sides or front of the vertical beam, or onto a small ledge that would support pushing upward.

The nailing of the feet was important. The full weight of the body upon the nailed hands was required for maximum torment. It is difficult to breath when the body's full weight is placed on the nailed hands and the arms are fully stretched. So, the crucified would push upward with their feet and breath until they could no longer stand the pain in their feet, then they would relax and return the pain to their hands and pressure on their lungs. This process would repeat over and over until death by asphyxiation or by some other means. What's more, their back—which had just been scourged—would rub against the vertical beam as they raised and lowered themselves—causing even more excruciating pain.

Therefore, the nailing of the feet was done in a location where the knees were angled outward and not straight. This gave the crucified an ability to relieve the pain in their hands and pressure upon their lungs so that they could breath. Plus, having an ability to push upward with the feet extended the length of death. However, if a decision was made to expedite death, the Romans would simply break the legs so that they could no longer push upward, and they died by asphyxiation.

### Our Lord's Forgiveness and Final Moments

As He hung on the cross Jesus said *"'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.'* And they divided His garments and cast lots." Luke 23:34

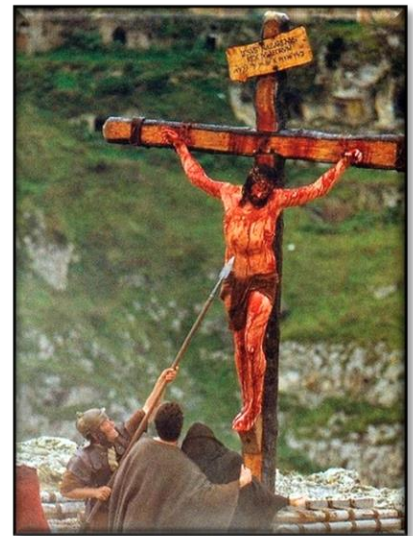
*"Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, 'This Man is calling for Elijah!' Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, 'Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.'* And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit." Matthew 27:45-50

The torn Temple veil symbolized His sacrifice and shed blood was now the atonement of sins for Jew and Gentile.

*"Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So, when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!'"* Matthew 27:51-54



“Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ‘Not one of His bones shall be broken.’ And again, another Scripture says, ‘They shall look on Him whom they pierced.’” John 19:31-37



The Roman’s practice of breaking the legs to expedite death is interesting due to the fact that prophetic scriptures state that none of the bones of Jesus would be broken. God gave Moses and Aaron specific rules for the Passover lamb. The lamb was to be without blemish (Exodus 12:5), and no broken bones (Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12). Jesus Christ was our Passover Lamb—without blemish or spot—and without broken bones. “For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.” 1 Corinthians 5:7

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth’; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” 1 Peter 2:21-25

So, I ask again...

### **Who killed Jesus Christ?**

The answer and truth...

it was not the Jews, nor the Romans, nor Satan.

It was you...and it was me...and it was all who believe...  
Jesus willingly laid down His life as a ransom for our sins.

And by doing so, He gave each of us an opportunity to spiritually  
come alive while we are living in these flawed mortal bodies,  
and to live thereafter for eternity in His presence.

I know not of any other god who has willingly died...  
to pay the price for our sins.

Our Savior, and Lord of lords and King of kings is worthy of praise, worship, glory...and our entire being.

God Bless You  
Harold D. Thomas