

The weaned child, no longer fretting for the breast and satisfied with its mother's affection, is a figure of Israel's contentment with God's care.¹

23. It was the practice of the Jews to instill confidence in the child's soul in the first three years of life. This confidence was developed on principles of faith-rest which means that true confidence finds its source in the grace, faithfulness, and lovingkindness of divine provision.

24. David's birth is now compared with that of Messiah's in:

Psalm 22:10 - **I [Messiah] was caused to be dependent upon You [God the Father] out from the womb [מֵרֶחֶם (merechem): selection at physical birth]**.

25. The Messiah is prophesied to be filled with the Holy Spirit at physical birth and in His true humanity to be dependent upon the Spirit from there through His work on the cross and subsequent physical death:

Isaiah 11:1 - **And there shall come forth a shoot [First Advent: the true humanity of Christ] out from the stump [Messianic bloodline] of Jesse [Father of David]**. **And a Branch [a Messianic title] shall grow out of his roots [the Davidic line] and bear fruit [salvation]**.

v. 2 - **And the Spirit of God [the Holy Spirit] shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom [application of doctrine], and understanding [perception of doctrine], the spirit of counsel [the prototype Divine Dynasphere], and virtue [personal love for God and unconditional love for mankind], the spirit of knowledge [insight and discernment] and respect directed toward God [the Father]**.

26. The principle that Messiah would have to bear our sins absent fellowship with the Father makes Him totally dependent on the sustaining ministry of the Holy Spirit:

Psalm 22:11 - **Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help**.

¹ Burton Scott Easton, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 4:3076. See 1 Kings 11:20; 1 Samuel 2:14, and Psalm 131:2.

27. Isaiah 11:1-2 reveals that the Holy Spirit indwelt the Lord at His physical birth and Psalm 22:11 compared with Hebrews 9:14 indicate that the Spirit's sustaining ministry continued while He was being judged for our sins on the cross.
28. The enormity of the opposition against the Lord is compared to being charged by the bulls of Bashan \bā'-shan\:
- Psalm 22:12** - Many bulls have surrounded Me; strong bulls of Bashan [בָּשָׁן (bāshan): fertile land] have encircled Me.
- Psalm 22:13** - They tear Me to pieces with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.
29. The “bulls of Bashan” is a metaphor for a wide variety of ravenous enemies. A description of these bulls and their location at Bashan is provided by this excerpt:
- 12–13 The strength and ferocity of the enemies compares to that of the “bulls of Bashan” (v. 12) and to “roaring lions” (v. 13). The bulls of Bashan were proverbial for their size because they were well fed on the lush vegetation of the Bashan. Bashan is the region known today as the Golan Heights, located north of the Yarmuk \yār-mūk\ [River], east of the Sea of Galilee, and to the south of the Hermon Range. Its elevation is about two thousand feet above sea level, and it receives an average rain of over twenty-four inches per year. Its productiveness in meat, wheat, and oats, largely due to its regular precipitation, led to Bashan's becoming symbolic of human pride. The enemies in their self-reliance are compared to the bulls raised on the Bashan plateau. Similarly, the psalmist is unnerved by the enemies who “open their mouths wide against him” (v. 13 NIV). The strength, pride, and deadly intent of the enemies, likened to that of bulls, is matched by their cruelty, abuse of power and hatred of godliness, which is likened to that of lions.²
30. David speaks of his enemies, the Amalekites, who had sacked the city of Ziklag with fire and captured its entire population (1 Samuel 30:1-2). The Amalekites were sure to seek retribution for David's attack on them when he killed everyone, women and children included, in 1 Samuel 27:8-9.

² William A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 5:205.

31. Prophetically the passage speaks of our Lord Who, when on the cross was surrounded by His enemies, the worst of which were our sins being imputed to Him and their judgment.
32. David's prophecy uses the tearing of flesh by the horns of Bashan's mighty bulls to illustrate the metaphorical tearing of flesh when Christ bore our sins in His own body on the cross, a prophecy confirmed as fulfilled by Peter in:
1 Peter 2:24 - He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross ...
33. Our sins being judged in Christ are further illustrated in Psalm 22:13 as ravening lions whose teeth tear into the flesh. It was this experience that motivated the Lord's shout in Matthew 27:46, "ἦ λὶ ἦ λὶ λεμὰ σαβαχθά νι (*Ēlī, Ēlī, lemá sabachtháni?*): "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"
34. The next few verses provide a series of prophecies that describe the physical impact of crucifixion upon the body of Christ.
Psalm 22:14 - I am poured out like water and all My bones are pulling apart. My heart is like wax; it is melted within Me.
v. 15 - My strength is dried up like a broken vessel, and My tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth; You have laid Me in the dust of death.
35. These two verses describe the physical agony endured by the Lord while He was concentrating on paying for our sins. The physical effects of crucifixion are grotesque and the medical analysis of them, although unnerving, provide insight into the fulfillment of these prophecies found in the Gospels.

36. An article analyzing the crucifixion from a medical perspective was written in March 1965 by C. Truman Davis, M.D., at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine). Excerpts from his paper provide details that help us understand the trauma experienced by the Lord on the cross:

Golgotha

The heavy *patibulum* [the crossbeam] of the cross was tied across His shoulders. The procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves, and the execution detail of Roman soldiers headed by a centurion, began its slow journey along the route which we know today as the *Via Dolorosa* \vīa' dōl' a-rō' sa\ .

In spite of Jesus' efforts to walk erect, the weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by copious loss of blood, was too much. He stumbled and fell. The rough wood of the beam gouged into the lacerated skin and muscles of the shoulders. He tried to rise, but human muscles had been pushed beyond their endurance. The centurion, anxious to proceed with the crucifixion, selected a stalwart North African onlooker, Simon of Cyrene \cī-rē'-ne\, to carry the cross. Jesus followed, still bleeding and sweating the cold, clammy sweat of shock. The 650-yard journey from the Fortress Antonia to Golgotha was finally completed. The prisoner was again stripped of His clothing except for a loincloth which was allowed the Jews.

The crucifixion began. Jesus was offered wine mixed with myrrh, a mild analgesic, pain-relieving mixture. He refused the drink. Simon was ordered to place the *patibulum* on the ground, and Jesus was quickly thrown backward, with His shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire felt for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drove a heavy, square wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moved to the other side and repeated the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The *patibulum* was then lifted into place at the top of the *stipes* [the vertical post], and the *titulus* [an inscription] reading "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" was nailed into place.

The left foot was pressed backward against the right foot. With both feet extended, toes down, a nail was driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The victim was now crucified.

On the Cross

As Jesus slowly sagged down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shot along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain.

The nails in the wrists were putting pressure on the median nerve, large nerve trunks which traverse the mid-wrist and hand. As He pushed himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He placed His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there was searing agony as the nail tore through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of His feet.

At this point, another phenomenon occurred. As the arms fatigued, great waves of cramps swept over the muscles, knotting them in deep relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps came the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by the arm, the pectoral muscles, the large muscles of the chest, were paralyzed and the intercostal muscles, the small muscles between the ribs, were unable to act.

Air could be drawn into the lungs, but could not be exhaled. Jesus fought to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, the carbon dioxide level increased in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subsided.

The Last Words

Spasmodically, He was able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen. It was undoubtedly during these periods that He uttered the seven short sentences that are recorded.

The first - looking down at the Roman soldiers throwing dice for His seamless garment: "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do."

The second - to the penitent thief: "Today, you shall be with Me in Paradise."

The third - looking down at Mary His mother, He said, "Woman, behold your son." Then turning to the terrified, grief-stricken adolescent John, the beloved apostle, He said, "Behold your mother."

The fourth cry is from the beginning of Psalm 22: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

He suffered hours of limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, and searing pain as tissue was torn from His lacerated back from His movement up and down against the rough timbers of the cross. Then another agony began: a deep crushing pain in the chest as the pericardium, the sac surrounding the heart, slowly filled with serum and began to compress the heart.

The prophecy in Psalm 22:14 was being fulfilled: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint, my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels."

The end was rapidly approaching. The loss of tissue fluids had reached a critical level; the compressed heart was struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood to the tissues, and the tortured lungs were making a frantic effort to inhale small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues sent their flood of stimuli to the brain. Jesus gasped His fifth cry: "I thirst." Again we read in the prophetic psalm: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd; my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death" (Psalm 22:15 KJV).

A sponge soaked in *posca* [ὄξος, ὄξος], the cheap, sour wine that was the staple drink of the Roman legionnaires, was lifted to Jesus' lips. His body was now in *extremis* [L: "at the end"], and He could feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. This realization brought forth His sixth word, ... "It is finished." His mission of atonement had been completed. Finally, He could allow His body to die. With one last surge of strength, He once again pressed His torn feet against the nail, straightened His legs, took a deeper breath, and uttered His seventh and last cry: "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit."

Death

The common method of ending a crucifixion was by *crurifracture*, the breaking of the bones of the leg [L: *crura fracta*: Death was sometimes hastened by breaking the legs of the victims (*ISBE*, 2:762)]. This prevented the victim from pushing himself upward; the tension could not be relieved from the muscles of the chest, and rapid suffocation occurred. The legs of the two thieves were broken, but when the soldiers approached Jesus, they saw that this was unnecessary.

Apparently, to make doubly sure of death, the legionnaire drove his lance between the ribs, upward through the pericardium and into the heart. John 19:34 states, "And immediately there came out blood and water." Thus there was an escape of watery fluid from the sac surrounding the heart and the blood of the interior of the heart. This is rather conclusive post-mortem evidence that Jesus died, not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure due to shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the pericardium.³

³ C. Truman Davis, "The Medical Account of Christ's Last Days and the Cross," *Arizona Medicine*, vol. 22, no. 3, March 1965.