



CUSTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

From the Parson's Desk: Easter, 2023

DAY OF RESURRECTION

Halleluiah! Jesus is Risen!! We are saved!!!

"He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed." – Albert Einstein

Would it be too strange if I begin an Easter essay with the words of a scientist? I do not think so since Einstein, for whatever context, also said (and I paraphrase), "God does not play games with the world."

On that particular day after the Jewish Sabbath, it was discovered that the body of Jesus Christ had disappeared. This was a very significant problem for Pilate, and, the High Priest Caiaphas, who is reputed to have said, "without a corpse to prove he's dead, we have a potential Messiah." So, Pilate had to support whatever lies the Jews used to disprove that Jesus Christ was alive --- that Jesus Christ was indeed, "Risen."

The Jews had their eyes closed for many reasons --- but mostly to ensure their hold on power. In that era, the power of the temple included not only their power in their religion but also their power in the secular part of their society, meaning that their power in Jewish society and people was absolute.

On the next level, Pilate had power over all the Jews so he could not stand aloof of the events without jeopardizing his selfish reasons, as well. Of course, Pilate was responsible to the biggest boss in the Roman world --- the Emperor...who was supposed to be coming for a visit at that time. All these profusion and confusion of circumstances contributed to the campaign to discredit the discovery of a woman and a few disciples that Jesus Christ was alive and appearing to so many of them.

The following items are all about the agonies from a death on a cross:¹ A number of theories that attempt to explain the circumstances of the death of Jesus on the cross via medical knowledge of the 19th and 20th centuries have been proposed by a range of people, including physicians, historians and even mystics.

1. Most theories proposed by trained physicians (with specialties ranging from forensic medicine to ophthalmology) conclude that Jesus endured tremendous amounts of pain and suffering on the Cross. In 2006, Dr. John Scotson reviewed over 40 publications on the cause of death of Jesus and theories ranged from cardiac rupture to pulmonary embolism.
2. As early as 1847, drawing on John 19:34, physician William Stroud proposed the *ruptured heart theory* of the cause of Christ's death. The *asphyxia theory* has been the subject of several experiments that simulate crucifixion in healthy volunteers and many physicians agree that crucifixion causes a profound disruption of the victim's ability to breathe. A side effect of exhaustive asphyxia is that the victim will gradually find it more and more challenging to obtain enough breath to speak. This provides a possible explanation for the accounts that the last words of Christ were short utterances.
3. The *cardiovascular collapse theory* is a prevalent modern explanation and suggests that Jesus died of profound shock. According to this theory, the scourging, the beatings, and the fixing to the cross would have left Jesus dehydrated, weak, and critically ill and that the stage was set for a complex interplay of simultaneous physiological insults: dehydration, massive trauma and soft tissue injury (especially from the prior scourging), inadequate respiration, and strenuous physical exertion, leading to cardiovascular collapse. In her 1944 book "Poem of the Man God," Italian writer and mystic Maria Valtorta (who had no medical education) provided a very detailed account of the death of Jesus that supports the cardiovascular

¹ Pulled from the Internet

collapse theory, compounded by partial asphyxiation, and she wrote that the account was dictated to her by Jesus himself in a vision.

4. Writing in the Journal of the American Medical Association, physician William Edwards and his colleagues supported the combined cardiovascular collapse (via hypovolemic shock) and exhaustion asphyxia theories, assuming that the flow of water from the side of Jesus described in the Gospel of John was pericardial fluid. Some Christian Apologists seem to favor this theory and maintain that this medical anomaly would have been a fact that the author of the Gospel of John would have been tempted to leave out, had he not been interested in accurate reporting.
5. In his book *The Crucifixion of Jesus*, physician and forensic pathologist Frederick Zugibe provides a set of theories that attempt to explain the nailing, pains and death of Jesus in great detail. Zugibe carried out a number of experiments over several years to test his theories while he was a medical examiner. These studies included experiments in which volunteers with specific weights were hanging at specific angles and the amount of pull on each hand was measured, in cases where the feet were also secured or not. In these cases the amount of pull and the corresponding pain was found to be significant.
6. Pierre Barbet, a French physician, and the chief surgeon at Saint Joseph's Hospital in Paris, advanced a set of detailed theories on the death of Jesus. He hypothesized that Jesus would have had to relax his muscles to obtain enough air to utter his last words, in the face of exhaustion asphyxia. Barbet hypothesized that a crucified person would have to use his pierced feet to lift his body in order to obtain enough breath to speak.
7. In 2003, historians FP Retief and L Cilliers reviewed the history and pathology of crucifixion as performed by the Romans and suggested that the cause of death was often a combination of factors. They also state that Roman guards were prohibited from leaving the scene until death had occurred. [\[145\]](#)

It was definitely impossible for an ordinary human being to survive the torture of the cross. Jesus could not have survived the cross. He died on that Cross of Golgotha! And Jesus, the Christ, rose from death after three days!

For this special edition of the Parson's Desk allow me to go a little further and quote Einstein again:

"There are two ways to live: you can live as if nothing is a miracle; you can live as if everything is a miracle."

— Albert

Einstein

God loves us and continues to love us still. Therefore, there is no reason for us who are God's children to doubt the truth that the apostles, the disciples, the church fathers including all the women who led/supported them throughout history from the time of Jesus Christ to our own have all been telling, teaching and preaching to us all.

It is our turn to share this wonderful truth to all the world because we are the Children of the Resurrection and the inheritors of its blessings ---

Halleluiah! Jesus is Risen!! We are saved!!!

