

Parish Nurse corner

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DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION: WHAT JESUS EXPERIENCED

In 1986 a physician wrote an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association about death by crucifixion, and what Jesus must have experienced before and during His death. Here is a summary:

The scourging/whipping ripped the skin and muscle resulting in bleeding open wounds. Every time the soldiers put a robe on him and took it off, the wounds were reopened. He had much blood loss before he was placed on the cross.

Nails were probably placed through his wrists because a nail through the hand would tear out. A nail so placed would be very painful as it would be near the median nerve in the wrist. Nails placed in the feet would be very painful as it would be placed through the planter nerve.

The position of Jesus' body on the cross made it difficult to breathe. It took much energy and pain to lift himself up so that he could exhale. This resulted in increased carbon dioxide and decreased oxygen. Since his knees were bent and feet nailed to the cross, it caused more pain to use his feet to lift himself up to breathe. (One way used to hasten death was to break the legs of a person on a cross, making it impossible to lift oneself up to breathe.)

The spear went through the sacs around the lungs and heart. The mixture of water and blood reported in the Bible probably indicated that there was clear fluid in his lungs, and that his heart was pierced as well.

Jesus died from:

- Asphyxia
- Circulatory failure
- Dehydration from blood loss

God's richest blessings on your Lenten journey!

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