



Introduction

Mel Gibson's movie *"The Passion of the Christ,"* was a brutal portrayal of the day Jesus was betrayed, tried and crucified. It is a disturbing movie.

Many believe that the life of Jesus Christ is more Hollywood than history. And many believe that His death was a hoax.

What is the truth about Jesus' death? Today we will explore the second question in our series *"Did Jesus Die on the cross?"*

Jesus' trial, torture and His crucifixion.

Matthew 27:11-56 (niv)

This real life drama is a heart-breaking scene, but it is the foundation of the Christian faith. Jesus' cross is the heart and core of Christianity.

1. Jesus' wasn't supposed to die – (FALSE)

One false belief is that Jesus wasn't meant to die – as a result, His death had no meaning.

For example, the Unification Church – also known as *"the Moonies"* – claims that Jesus' mission was not dying; rather, His mission was to get married and establish a righteous family.

In his *"Divine Principle"*, the Reverend Moon teaches that Jesus' death on the cross was not an essential part of God's plan for redeeming sinful man. The Rev. Moon says, *"we must realize that Jesus did not come to die on the cross"* (pg 178).

Jesus, according to Moon, was a failure, and Christ's death was without effect. He says, *"the cross has been unable to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth by removing our original sin."* (Rev. Moon, Divine Principle, p. 178).

Moon also believes that the death of Christ was a victory for Satan, saying *"Satan thus attained what he had intended through the 4,000-year course of history by crucifying Jesus, with the exercise of his maximum power"* (Rev. Moon, Divine Principle, p. 435).

The Bible plainly states that Jesus Christ came to this earth for the specific purpose of dying for the sins of the world.

Jesus said, *"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Matthew 20:28)

Jesus died so that we may have life!

2. Jesus didn't die on the cross – (FALSE)

Another false claim regarding the death of Jesus is known as the *"Swoon theory."*

The swoon theory is the theory that Jesus was crucified and came very close to death – but He didn't die; He just swooned (*lose consciousness or to passed out*).

If we understand what Jesus had to endure before the cross ... we wonder how Jesus could even survive long enough to be crucified?

Let's consider what Jesus endured...

Jesus was severally beaten with rods and scourged with a whip that had several leather strips embedded with pieces of metal or bone at the end of each strip. Each lash was administered and pulled across the back ripping the flesh open.

Often the back muscles were so badly shredded that the skeletal structure was exposed. People often died from this punishment alone.

The torture of Jesus' crucifixion was extreme. His arms are pulled apart and nails driven through the wrist into a cross beam which is raised in place. This often caused the shoulders to dislocate.

The nails in the wrists sever the median nerve resulting in an intense burning pain as well as paralysis in the hand. To breathe, Jesus had to press up on the nails in His feet, whilst scraping His raw and torn back on the rough wood.

The body gradually drains of blood causing the heart to beat faster and faster. Dehydration is occurring. The breathing becomes more laboured and intense adding to the agony.

The blood loss results in extreme thirst as the body craves water to restore the lost blood. Jesus cries out, "*I thirst*" (**John 19:28**)

The heart beats so hard trying to compensate for the loss of oxygen (*due to the lack of blood*) in the body that it eventually ruptures. At this point the chest cavity fills with fluid.

After Jesus died, a soldier thrust a spear into Jesus' side and out came blood and water, signifying that the heart had stopped beating and the blood was settling in the chest cavity.

Jesus was dead! No doubt about it!

For Jesus' burial, His body was wrapped in linen.

Matthew 27:59 (niv) *Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth.*

3. Jesus' wasn't crucified – (FALSE)

One more false theory is that it wasn't actually Jesus who was crucified.

This is known as the "**Substitution Theory.**"

Some orthodox Muslims have proposed, "*...God made someone else look like Jesus and that this person was crucified instead*" (**McDowell, Islam, p. 107**).

The Koran (Quran) Sura 4.157 contains the following statement:

They denied the truth and uttered a monstrous falsehood against Mary. They declared, "We have put to death the Messiah Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of Allah." They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did. Those who disagreed about him were in doubt concerning his death, for what they knew about it was sheer conjecture; they were not sure they had slain him. Allah lifted him up to his presence.

(See: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/HolKora.html>. Or http://www.theologywebsite.com/internet/Religions/Islam/Koran_and_Texts/)

Not only does this flatly contradict the Bible, but also it leaves open some big questions that need to be explained. **For example..**

Hundreds of people knew Jesus. Wouldn't someone have noticed that the wrong man was being crucified? Jesus' mother stood at the foot of the cross (**John 19:25**). Obviously, she would have recognized her own son! If the wrong man was crucified, wouldn't he have been yelling, "*I'm not Jesus!*"?

Lastly, if Jesus wasn't crucified, then what happened to Him after 30 AD?
There is no explanation for any of these questions.

The truth about the death of Jesus is that ***"dying was His reason for living."*** He was born into a death sentence!

4. Jesus died for each of us! – (TRUE)

It is interesting to see the different reactions people had to Jesus and His crucifixion.
But the person's reaction most fascinating was Pilate's.

Matthew 27:24 ^(niv) *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!"*

Pilate's reaction is the most common one among people today.

Most people do what Pilate did – they admire Jesus, but they wash their hands clean of Jesus' blood.

We all have a choice. Jesus requires a response from us.

We can do what Pilate did. Show that we admire Jesus, but ultimately wash our hands clean of Him.

Or we can admit that our sins nailed Jesus to the cross.

But also repent and rejoice that Jesus forgave us of your sins.

Colossians 2:13-14 ^(nlt) *"You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins. He cancelled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross."*

Dying was Jesus' reason for living. He died for us so that we might be forgiven.