



Daily Verse and Comment

Isaiah 52:14

(14) Just as there were many who were appalled at him — his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness—

New International Version

[Jesus](#) had to die a death that was excruciatingly painful. Why? To depict the horrible pain that [sin](#) causes. It would not have served God's purpose if He had died a painless death. The picture would have been incomplete.

Any criminal of that time would have despaired to learn he was to be crucified. Crucifixion was not only an execution, but also a method of torture. The Romans usually gave the victim an excruciating scourging first. Jesus was no exception. Before He ever touched His cross, He was scourged, beaten, and insulted.

Over the years we have heard quite a bit about the Roman lictor, the soldier charged with dispensing this dreaded punishment. He used a whip, often with imbedded pieces of metal, bone, or other sharp objects. Romans did not limit their lictors to the Israelite practice of "forty stripes save one," nor to striking just the victim's back. He would let the whip strike and wrap around every inch of the person's body until he was within an inch of death.

The prophet Isaiah prophesies how Jesus appeared after the scourging: "Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage [*appearance*, margin] was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" ([Isaiah 52:14](#)). He goes on to say that He was "wounded [*pierced through*, margin] for our transgressions, He was bruised [*crushed*] for our iniquities" (53:5). Is it no wonder that the apostle Paul writes in [Philippians 2:8](#), "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*."

Imagine yourself in Christ's situation, with the skin flayed off so that you could count your bones. Add to that the searing pain of huge nails being pounded into your hands and ankles as soldiers pinned you to the stake. Now add the emotional pain of being denied and forsaken by all your friends. Thank [God](#) for the many *women* who stood by Jesus at that moment of horror—Mary His mother, Mary Magdalene, and others ([Matthew 27:55-56](#)). On top of everything else, He had to endure the taunts and ridicules of those for whom He was dying.

Then Jesus experienced yet another horror for the first time: being forsaken by God in heaven. God dumped all the obnoxious sins of [the world](#) on Jesus and had to turn His back on Him who became sin for us ([Isaiah 53:6](#), 10-12; [1 Peter 2:24](#)). How hauntingly mournful it must have sounded to hear Jesus cry out, "'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?'" ([Matthew 27:46-47](#)). At this point, Jesus learned what it felt like to be cut off from God because of sin.

The pain grew so great that when Jesus said He thirsted, the Roman soldiers at the foot of His cross offered Him a brew of "vinegar" or sour wine mixed with myrrh as a sedative ([John 19:28-29](#); [Mark 15:23](#)). Jesus refused it, knowing He had to suffer pain as part of the picture of what sin does in our lives: *It causes a lot of gruesome pain!*

After a while on the stake, the condemned person found it difficult to breathe. He could help himself a little by bracing his body upward with his legs and knees, but once he could no longer do this, he slowly died by asphyxiation. To hasten death, the Roman executioners would sometimes break the victim's legs with a club—which they did to the two robbers ([John 19:31-32](#)). When they came to Jesus, they found Him already dead and so did not break any of His bones (verse 33; [Psalm 34:20](#)).

Jesus did not die of a broken heart, as some Protestants believe. He bled to death from dozens of wounds from the scourging and from the spikes driven through his limbs. A gaping spear wound in His side produced a flow of blood and water. He truly poured out his blood like water to cover our sins ([Psalm 22:14](#); [Ephesians 1:7](#); [1 John 1:7](#)).

Jesus gasped, "It is finished" ([John 19:30](#)), and finally to the Father, who gave Him to us because He loved us so much, our Savior prayed, "Into your hands I commend My spirit" ([Luke 23:46](#)). So Jesus died with a quiet confidence that He had finished the work His Father had sent Him to do.

— Staff

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