

# *The Elgin Hills*

## *Examiner*

*"...examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so"  
(Acts 17:11)*



Vol. 3

June-July, 2008

Nos. 6-7

81 Elgin Hills Dr., Rogersville, AL 35652

## ***What Do We Learn From “The Sufferings of Christ”?***

Peter summarized all that Jesus endured surrounding His death and events that preceded as “the sufferings of Christ” (I Pet. 1:11). We generally think about the unimaginable pain He underwent while on the cross and well we should because such was almost beyond endurance. However, Jesus also endured much before He was nailed to the cross. This would include but not be limited to at least the following:

1. **The agony in the garden: sweat became as it were great drops of blood (Lk. 22:44).**
2. **They bound Him (Matt. 27:2).**
3. **They slapped Him (John 18:22).**
4. **They struck Him and reviled Him (Luke 22:63-65).**
5. **They mocked Him and beat Him (Luke 22:64).**
6. **He was up all night undergoing insults, etc.**
7. **They stuck a crown of thorns on His head (Matt. 27:29).**
8. **They spat on Him (the Son of God!) (Matt. 27:30).**
9. **They smote Him on the head with a reed (Matt. 27:30).**
10. **They ridiculed Him by bowing down in “worship” (Mark 15:19).**
11. **They scourged Him (Jno. 19:1) and then they took the scarlet robe off Him (Matt. 27:28).**

12. **They nailed Him to the cross—imagine driving nails into your hands and feet (Jno. 20:25).**
13. **Suffered from thirst on the cross (Jno. 19:28).**

Occasionally some ask that if the death of Jesus was necessary to satisfy God’s justice in allowing sinners to go free, while at the same time punishing sin so as to maintain God’s righteousness, *why did Jesus have to suffer such a dreadful death?* Why could He not have been simply executed without the attached pain and agony that preceded it?

The answer in part may be in Isaiah 53. “Surely he hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken of God, and afflicted. But he was *wounded* for *our transgressions*, he was *bruised* for *our iniquities*; the *chastisement* of *our peace* was upon him; and *with his stripes we are healed*. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and *Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*” (vss. 4-6). In other words, Jesus took for us the punishment we deserve because of our sins.

**But one may ask why sin deserves such terrible punishment? *For one reason, it is because God’s character is infinitely good and righteous.*** Sin is a transgression of

God's law (I Jno. 3:4). **God's law reveals the goodness and righteousness of His character.** Therefore as God's creatures, to violate God's law (*sin*) is to rebel against the very nature and character of our Creator. This makes the truth that God can not dwell where sin is understandable. Further, because sin is rebellion against Him, it deserves punishment. Again though, why the unusual and agonizing pain of execution by crucifixion? Why not have Him beheaded or stoned to death?

In our country's justice system, *penalties for crimes vary depending on the severity of the crime.* When true justice is served the *penalty for a crime will be commensurate to the crime committed.* That is why one convicted of murder in the first degree—premeditated murder, receives a more severe punishment than one convicted of murder in the second degree – non premeditated killing resulting from an assault in which death is a possibility.

What do we learn from this? Since Jesus was **“wounded for our transgressions,... bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed,... and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all,”** God intended to teach us a lesson as to how dreadful, terrible and horrible sin really is to Him and how it ought to be to us!! *The nature of the suffering and death of Christ describes the atrocious nature of sin.*

Another verse in the same chapter bears on this idea: “By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living **for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due?** (vs. 8). The “stroke” Jesus received was what we were “due.” Again,

“Yet it pleased Jehovah to **bruise him;** he hath **put him to grief;** when **thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin...**” (vs. 10).

Question: Since the penalty for sin demanded such intense suffering and agonizing death on the part of a completely innocent person--Jesus, *how ought we to look at any sin anyone commits, including committing a sin ourselves?* A joke? Something to laugh at? Not that serious? Who cares? No one will find out? Not that big a deal? -- Hardly!!

Our attitude should be the same as the psalmist: “Through thy precepts I get understanding: Therefore I hate every false way.” And “Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; And I hate every false way” (119:104,128). This applies to unauthorized worship and works in which many churches engage themselves.

The question, “What do we learn from ‘the sufferings of Christ?’” is also extremely personal. Think about this the next time you are tempted to wear something immodest, use some vulgar or gutter expression, drink, smoke, covet someone or something, look upon someone to lust after him/her, lose your temper, forsake the assembling of the church, or any other sin. Think about its cost, its punishment, and hate it! Its cost to God and Christ should make us loathe, despise, and detest it with all that is within us. -- Phillip Owens

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[**Note:** Gilbert Alexander lives in Athens, AL, has preached the majority of his life, taught school, singing schools, and writes a weekly column in the local newspaper. He is a genuine Christian, talented, the epitome of gentleman, and all would do well to read carefully these good words from his pen. We are happy to use two of his recent articles following. – p.o.]

## Misperceptions of True New Testament Christianity

Christians are taught to live discreetly in purity and holiness so as not to give adversaries occasion to speak reproachfully against the cause of Christ (1 Timothy 5: 14; Titus 2:5,8; 1 Peter 2:11,12; 1 Timothy 6:1). Yet, ***too often, the ill-will that the world of unbelief holds against Christianity is based upon wrongdoing by nominal Christians defended at times by religious organizations and people in high places.*** The great *King David* gave great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme when he sinned in the matter of Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:14). The *Apostle Peter* was blameworthy for behaving hypocritically and influencing others to hold racial prejudice (Galatians 2:11-16). It is easy for us to become careless or hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13). For this reason we are exhorted over and over to be holy, pure, above reproach, a good example always, proclaiming the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

***Much of the world today equates Christianity with Roman Catholicism.*** People consider Christianity as the *source of religious persecution*, of the *Crusades*, of religious *corruption* and *perversion* shielded by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. How sad it is to see the Christ, His word, and His church evil-spoken-of and even ridiculed because of the behavior of disobedient people who call themselves followers of Christ! What a hindrance to true evangelism and the growth of the true kingdom of God it is, that the true church of the Lord is unknown to so many who think of themselves as full of knowledge of God and religion.

***True Christians*** are described in the New Testament as the *sheep of the true Shepherd* (John 10:7-18), *holy and harmless* – harmless as doves (Philippians 2:15; Matthew 10:16), the *salt of the earth* (Matthew 5:13), *doing good and loving even their enemies* (Galatians 6:10; Matthew 5:44,45), *seeking God and eternal life above all things* (Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 6:33). Are there such people on the earth? Assuredly there are, and Jesus exhorts them to let their light shine, to be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, living as sanctified people should. May their number be multiplied! --  
*Gilbert Alexander*

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## How Growth of true New Testament Christianity is Good and Bad

***Growth of true New Testament Christianity is good, even vital, because it means that souls are being saved from eternal condemnation, and lives of promise and hope are being embraced.*** What makes one a Christian makes him free from guilt and condemnation for his past sins (Romans 6:17,18), makes him a child of God with the promise of an eternal inheritance (Galatians 3:26,27; 1 Peter 1:3-5), and makes him a member of the church of Christ, in which he works and worships and receives strength from his fellows (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:15,16).

***Growth of true New Testament Christianity is bad for some businesses.*** It is bad for *alcoholic beverage sales*, for it reduces the number of customers (1 Peter 4:3-5). It is bad for *lawyers* because it reduces the number of divorces, criminal acts, and lawsuits for all kinds of damages due to

various excesses, abuses, and lack of self-control (Matthew 5:25; 1 Corinthians 6:1-11; Ephesians 4:17-32). It is bad for *job opportunities in law enforcement* because there are fewer crimes of theft, murder, violence, violation of others' rights, criminal mischief, indecency and lewdness and public or domestic drunkenness (Romans 13).

***Growth of true New Testament Christianity is good for any society in general.*** It produces *honesty in the workplace* and wherever Christians are (Ephesians 4:28), *greater productivity* (1 Timothy 6:1,2; Philemon 10-19), and *less loss of manpower due to excesses and evildoing* (Titus 2:9,10). It makes a *free nation more secure and more free by reducing crime and making communities safer places in which to live* (Romans 13:1-10). A careful observer of society once wrote, "When the state is most corrupt, then the laws are most multiplied" - Tacitus. The purest freedom that humanity can enjoy is in being servants of Christ. The *burden of court dockets grows lighter proportionately to the growth of true Christianity.* *Open and friendly discussion of Bible truth* is encouraged more by the growth of true Christianity. How far better this world is when righteousness is the subject of conversation rather than things that are base, corrupt, and appealing to the appetites of sinful men!  
-- Gilbert Alexander

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**10:00 a.m. Worship**  
**4:00 p.m. Worship**  
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