

Let's delve into the reflection on the phrase "*suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried*" from various perspectives:

There are several references to Jesus' crucifixion outside the Bible. These sources provide some corroboration of the event from a historical perspective.

**Tacitus (c. 56 – 120 AD):** Cornelius Tacitus, a Roman historian, mentions the execution of Jesus in his work *Annals* (Book 15, Chapter 44), written around 116 AD. He refers to Jesus' execution during the reign of Emperor Tiberius by Pontius Pilate:

*"Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus."*

**Josephus (c. 37 – 100 AD):** Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian, mentions Jesus in his work *Antiquities of the Jews* (Book 18, Chapter 3). Although there is some debate about the authenticity of the passage (known as the Testimonium Flavianum), most scholars agree that at least part of it is genuine:

*"At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. His conduct was good and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die."*

**Lucian of Samosata (c. 125 – 180 AD):** Lucian, a Greek satirist, makes a passing reference to the crucifixion of Jesus in his work *The Death of Peregrine*:

*"The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account."*

**Mara Bar-Serapion (Post 73 AD):** In a letter to his son, a Syrian philosopher named Mara Bar-Serapion refers to the execution of "the wise king" of the Jews, which is generally taken to refer to Jesus:

*"What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their wise king? It was just after that that their kingdom was abolished."*

**Pliny the Younger (c. 61 – 113 AD):** While not directly mentioning the crucifixion, Pliny, a Roman governor, in his letters to Emperor Trajan, describes early Christian worship and their reverence for Christ, who was executed:

*"They were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god..."*

## **Biblical Evidence:**

### Old Testament Prophecies of the Crucifixion

1. Isaiah 53:3-7: This passage, often referred to as the Suffering Servant, describes a figure who is despised, rejected, and bears the iniquities of others, being led like a lamb to the slaughter.
2. Isaiah 53:5: "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."

3. Psalm 22:1: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" – These are the words Jesus quotes on the cross.
4. Psalm 22:16-18: "Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." – This passage is seen as a prophetic depiction of the crucifixion.
5. Zechariah 12:10: "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."

### **New Testament Accounts of Jesus' Crucifixion**

1. Matthew 27:32-56: This passage describes the crucifixion in detail, including Simon of Cyrene carrying the cross, Jesus' crucifixion at Golgotha, the mocking by soldiers, the darkness over the land, Jesus' last words, and His death.
2. Mark 15:21-41: Similar to Matthew, this account includes Simon of Cyrene, the crucifixion, the inscription "The King of the Jews," the mocking, and Jesus' death.
3. Luke 23:26-49: This passage provides details about Jesus' journey to Golgotha, the crucifixion, the conversation with the two criminals crucified alongside Him, the darkness, Jesus' final words, and His death.
4. John 19:16-37: John offers a unique perspective, including Jesus carrying His own cross, the inscription in three languages, the division of His garments, His care for His mother, His last words, and His death.

Other New Testament References:

5. Acts 2:23: Peter, in his sermon at Pentecost, refers to Jesus being crucified by the hands of lawless men.
6. 1 Corinthians 1:23: Paul mentions preaching Christ crucified.
7. Galatians 3:1: Paul refers to Jesus' crucifixion being publicly portrayed.
8. Philippians 2:8: Paul speaks of Jesus humbling Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
9. 1 Peter 2:24: Peter refers to Jesus bearing our sins in His body on the cross.

### **Church Fathers**

- **St. Cyril of Jerusalem**

**Quote:** "*Jesus really suffered for all men, and we are not ashamed to confess it*" (Catechetical Lectures, XIII.19).

St. Cyril emphasizes the historical reality and universality of Jesus' suffering. By acknowledging that Jesus truly suffered, Cyril affirms the physical and emotional reality of Christ's Passion. This suffering was not an illusion or mere appearance but a genuine experience undertaken for the salvation of all humanity. This confession is central to Christian faith, as it acknowledges the depth of Jesus' sacrifice and his identification with human suffering.

- **St. John Chrysostom**

**Quote:** "*The cross has taken away the sin of the world, made the earth heaven, brought men back to heaven, and made the enemies angels, and destroyed the power of the devil*" (Homily 4 on 1 Corinthians).

St. John Chrysostom highlights the transformative power of the crucifixion. The cross, a symbol of shame and suffering, becomes a tool of salvation and victory. Through Jesus' suffering and death, sin is eradicated, and humanity is reconciled with God. This transformation extends even to the enemies of God, turning them into His messengers (angels) and dismantling the devil's hold over the world.

**Saints: St. John of the Cross**

**Quote:** "*In the evening of life, we will be judged on love alone*" (Sayings of Light and Love, 59). St. John of the Cross views Christ's suffering as the ultimate expression of divine love. For him, the measure of our lives is how much we love, mirroring the love Jesus showed by enduring suffering and death. This sacrificial love is the benchmark for Christian living and judgment. By reflecting on Christ's Passion, believers are called to a deeper love that mirrors Jesus' self-giving.

**Catechism (CCC 599-630)**

**Content:** The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that Jesus' Passion and death were integral to God's redemptive plan. These events were prophesied in Scripture and fulfilled in Jesus' obedient sacrifice. His suffering was both a result of human sin and a divine initiative to save humanity.

The Catechism teaches that Jesus' suffering was not accidental but predestined. It emphasizes that Jesus willingly accepted his suffering and death, demonstrating profound obedience and love for humanity. This act of redemption through suffering showcases God's justice and mercy, inviting believers to trust in God's salvific plan.