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Rome used crucifixion—death on a cross—as a mean of execution for non-Roman citizens. This image depicts an individual who was crucified. Illustration by Justus Lipsius (1547-1606). It is included in *De Cruce Libri Tres*, published in Antwerp during 1629 (at page 19). Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

During the time of this trial, the Romans routinely executed criminals by crucifixion. Because Jewish law allowed neither the killing nor the burying of people within a city, executions in Jerusalem took place outside the city gates.

Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian who was born about four years after the events of "Good Friday," writes (in his *Jewish Antiquities*, 18.63-64) that Jesus (whom Josephus also refers to as *Christos*) was condemned to die on a cross:

At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man ... For he was a doer of startling deeds, a teacher of the people who receive the truth with pleasure. And he gained a following both among many Jews and among many of Greek origin.

And when Pilate, because of an accusation made by the leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians, named after him, has not died out.

Before making His way to the hill where He would die, Jesus was severely beaten. This, too, was the Roman way before a death sentence was carried out.

Assigned the job of carrying the cross beam on which he would die, Jesus began the journey from Pilate's residence to the "place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha)". It was the place where He, and two others, would be crucified.

The narrow street he may have traveled, today called the "Via Dolorosa" (the way of sorrow), still exists. As Jesus moved along, the cross became so heavy that He fell from its weight.

The Roman soldiers ordered Simon of Cyrene, a man from current-day Libya, to carry the cross the rest of the way.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-CROSS-Easter-Story>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-CROSS-Easter-Story>

Media Stream

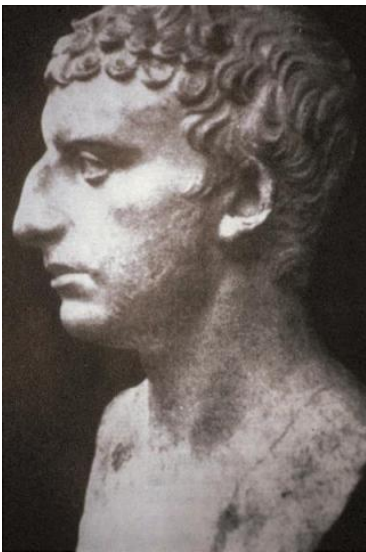


Executions in Jerusalem - Outside the City Gates

Drawing from a 1704 Dutch edition of Josephus' works, illustrated by Jan and Kaspar Luyken.

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Flavius Josephus - First-Century Historian

Image from an 1888 copy of *The Jewish War*, by Flavius Josephus. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Trial of Jesus - Carrying the Cross

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Journey to the Execution Site

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Simon of Cyrene

Image online, courtesy Catholic Tradition.

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