

What is the Via Dolorosa?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Via-Dolorosa.html>

The Via Dolorosa, literally “the sorrowful way,” is the traditional route in Jerusalem which our Lord traveled on the day of His crucifixion from the judgment seat of Pilate, also called the Praetorium (Matthew 27:2-26), to the place of His crucifixion on Mount Calvary. After his judgment by Pontius Pilate, the Lord Jesus was beaten, mocked and spit upon by the Roman soldiers (Matthew 27:26-31). Then he was forced to carry His own cross through the streets of Jerusalem to Golgotha, where He was crucified (Matthew 27:32-50). The Via Dolorosa is now marked with fourteen “stations of the cross” commemorating fourteen incidents that took place along the way. At least five of these incidents are not recorded in the Bible, springing instead from Roman Catholic tradition. Of the ones that are mentioned in Scripture, the actual place of the events along the way, such as the scourging (John 19:1-3) and the carrying of the cross by Simon of Cyrene (Matthew 27:32), are not known.

The Bible does not specifically mention the Via Dolorosa. All we know from Scripture is that Jesus carried His cross from the Praetorium to the site on Mount Calvary where He was crucified. The locations of these two sites are not known for certain, but wherever they were, the route between them was truly a sorrowful way. The scourging and physical pain the Lord Jesus suffered was minor in comparison to the pain caused by the real burden He was bearing—the burden of the sins of all believers. He bore our sins to the cross where He paid the penalty for them all.

As Easter approaches and Christians contemplate this holiest of seasons, we are reminded what a precious gift our salvation is and the price paid for it by the Lord Jesus. “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment

that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). As we think about the pain and humiliation He suffered for us, paying a price that we could never pay ourselves, we can’t help but praise and thank Him and commit ourselves to a life of obedience to Him.