

John Chapter 19

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Introduction:

- John is writing maybe 40 years after the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke were in circulation and does not give as many details for that reason.
- **Paul Butler** writes:

The account of John is very evidently the account of an eyewitness, for it records even the words Jesus spoke to His mother. John alone records that it was Pilate who wrote the inscription “King of the Jews” and placed it upon His cross. Only John records that His legs were not broken but that the soldiers pierced His side with a spear and water and blood came gushing forth.
- Pilate could not find Jesus guilty under Roman law (last chapter), but he did not want to offend the accusers, either.

JESUS DELIVERED TO BE CRUCIFIED

(19:1.) Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip.

- Pilate demonstrated his judicial weakness. Consider verse 4 below.
- The tool used for **flogging** may have been a whip made with leather thongs, loaded with bits of metal. Some prisoners died from the **flogging**. This was a Roman flagrum, not the more humane Jewish tool.
- **James Smith** says the flogging served three purposes:
 - It was used to punish the prisoner.
 - It was used to extract a confession.
 - It was used to weaken the prisoner so death would come sooner when crucified.

(2.) The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put a purple robe on Him.

- The **purple robe** was a mocking symbol of royalty because Jesus said He was a king. The **thorns** pierced His brow.



(3.) "Hail! King of the Jews!" they mocked, as they slapped Him across the face.

- The mockery and the pain worsen.

(4.) Pilate went outside again and said to the people, "I am going to bring Him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find Him not guilty."

- **Pilate** had Jesus beaten (verse 1), at the same time finding **Him not guilty.** Such a weakling.

(5.) Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, "Look, here is the man!"

- **Jesus** came out of **Pilate's** quarters to face the Jews because they would not contaminate themselves by going into a Gentile's quarters.
- **Here is the man!** Indeed, behold His:
 - Perfect life. Not one sin.
 - His powerful deeds. Healing, casting out demons, even raising the dead.
 - His tender words to outcasts.
 - His dedication to die for everyone. Such love.

(6.) When they saw Him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him," Pilate said. "I find Him not guilty."

- The officials demand that Jesus be **crucified.** They were not satisfied with mockery and a flogging.

- This is the **third time** that the ranking judge in Judea has said that Jesus was not **guilty**. See 18:38; 19:4 and here.

(7.) The Jewish leaders replied, "By our law He ought to die because He called Himself the Son of God."

- There was no confusion about the cause of the animosity. Their real motive had nothing to do with the Roman government. They demanded that Jesus be crucified because He claimed to be **the Son of God**.

(8.) When Pilate heard this, He was more frightened than ever.

- **Pilate was frightened** because the accusers were nearly out of control. The "Son of God" charge increased **Pilate's fright**.

(9.) He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked Him, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave no answer.

- Pilate checked to learn if Jesus is from another world. The Roman Government had embraced nearly every known god and some of them supposedly became men. Was **Jesus** one of them?
- That **Jesus** would not respond accords with Isaiah 53:7—
He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet He never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, He did not open His mouth. (Isaiah 53:7 NLT)
- **Jesus** may have remained silent because what point is there in talking? Pilate has declared three times that He was not guilty.

(10.) "Why don't You talk to me?" Pilate demanded. "Don't You realize that I have the power to release You or crucify You?"

- The silence of Jesus caused **Pilate** to parade his **power**. **Pilate** said he had the **power to release** Jesus, but he was afraid to do it.

(11.) Then Jesus said, "You would have no power over Me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed Me over to you has the greater sin."

- Pilate may have thought Caesar was the source of **power** from above, but the true source of **power** is from God.
- **The greater sin** was that of Caiaphas who had Jesus **delivered** to Pilate.

(12.) Then Pilate tried to release Him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, "If you release this man, you are no 'friend of Caesar.' Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar."

- The accusers became very civic-minded, guarding **Caesar's** interests. The Jewish leaders struck at the foundation of **Pilate's** employment. **Pilate** feared being reported to Rome.

(13.) When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha.).

- **The judgment seat** was in an area the pious leaders could go without contaminating themselves. This would be the formal outcome of this trial.

(14.) It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, "Look, here is your king!"

- The main **Passover** event was on the Sabbath (Saturday), and John used the word that way in his gospel. **The day of Preparation** was Friday. John makes it clear exactly what time it was.
- The *Antiquities of Josephus*:
... they be not obliged to go before any judge on the sabbath day, nor **on the day of the preparation** to it, after the ninth hour.

The day of Preparation was the day before the Sabbath—Friday.

(15.) "Away with Him," they yelled. "Away with Him! Crucify Him!" "What? Crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the leading priests shouted back.

- **Pilate** made another feeble effort to have Jesus released, but the emotional force was against it.

THE CRUCIFIXION

(16.) Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus away. (17.) Carrying the cross by Himself, He went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha.).

- At first, the weakened **Jesus** carried His own cross but later, Simon of Cyrene was told to carry it.

As they led Jesus away, a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, happened to be coming in from the countryside. The soldiers seized him and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. (Luke 23:26 NLT)

- A few people believe that John wrote in **Aramaic** (Hebrew and Aramaic are similar in appearance), but this sentence shows that he did not write in Hebrew because of the word being explained in verse 17.

(18.) There they nailed Him to the cross. Two others were crucified with Him, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

- John makes it clear that **Jesus** was at the center of three crosses. This matches with Isaiah:

I will give Him the honors of a victorious soldier, because He exposed Himself to death. He was counted among the rebels. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels. (Isaiah 53:12 NLT)

- Psalm 22 finds fulfillment here:

My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet. (Psalms 22:16 NLT)

(19.) And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

- **Pilate** intended to have the last word in this unjust death, so he had a sign made stating the accusation against Jesus. And the sign was right. Some have even suggested that God was behind the making of the sign.

(20.) The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so that many people could read it.

- This crucifixion was **near the city** and the sign was written for all to see:
 - **Hebrew** (technically Aramaic) was spoken at Jerusalem.
 - **Latin** was the official language of the Roman Empire. It was the language of the Roman law.
 - **Greek** was the language of commerce and the market place. There is a hint of the universal nature of the gospel message.

(21.) Then the leading priests objected and said to Pilate, "Change it from 'The King of the Jews' to 'He said, I am King of the Jews.'"

- The Jewish leaders wanted the sign changed but **Pilate** would have none of it as we see next.

(22.) Pilate replied, "No, what I have written, I have written."

- **Pilate** had a little courage. He would not change the sign. But he still did not intervene to spare an innocent man.

(23.) When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided His clothes among the four of them. They also took His robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

- John says that it was a seamless garment while Josephus notes that the Old Testament High Priest wore a seamless garment. *Antiquities 3, chapter 7, verse 4*. Jesus was our High Priest as already noted in John 17.
- One of the perks for the Roman **soldiers** who did this work was to have the prisoner's clothes. This would include any headgear, sandals, and belt. But the outer garment was valuable and rather than divide it, they cast lots for it.

(24.) So they said, "Rather than tearing it apart, let's throw dice for it." This fulfilled the Scripture that says, "They divided My garments among themselves and threw dice for My clothing." So that is what they did.

- The soldiers would have no idea about Jewish **Scriptures** or how they were fulfilling them. Psalm 22:18 is about the coming Messiah.

(25.) Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and His mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas.), and Mary Magdalene.

- The women who had traveled with the disciples and financed their work were present. John was there also.

(26.) When Jesus saw His mother standing there beside the disciple He loved, He said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son."

- **Jesus** had an earthly responsibility to His mother Mary. He transferred this to John, **the disciple He loved**. Later, the brothers of **Jesus** became believers, but the responsibility stayed with John as long as Mary lived. This is further evidence that Joseph had died and **Jesus** was the head of the family.

(27.) And He said to this disciple, "Here is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into His home.

- It is widely believed that John moved Mary to Ephesus when he moved there. This writer has been there and talked with the locals. The picture is the *House of Mary* near Ephesus.



THE DEATH OF JESUS

(28.) Jesus knew that His mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture He said, "I am thirsty."

- The work of **Jesus** was **finished**. He did what He came to do: He died in our place.
- **Jesus** spoke of His need for liquid. This **fulfilled** a Psalm.
But instead, they give me poison for food; they offer me sour wine for my thirst. (Psalms 69:21 NLT)

(29.) A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to His lips.

- **Sour wine** may have been like vinegar. Some other major English translations say "vinegar."
- Evidently the cross was high enough that the bearer of the **wine** needed an extension to reach up.

(30.) When Jesus had tasted it, He said, "It is finished!" Then He bowed His head and released His spirit.

- **Jesus'** purpose in coming to earth had been fulfilled. Satan had been conquered. The penalty for all sin had been paid.
- **Jesus** made the decision to **release His spirit**. His life was not taken from Him by the Jews or the Romans.

JESUS' SIDE IS PIERCED

(31.) It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was the Passover). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down.

- The pious **Jewish leaders** wanted to keep the law precisely, so they wanted to hasten the death of the three and get them off of the cross lest God be offended!

(32.) So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus.

- Why did **the soldiers break the legs** of the two men on the outside before the One who was in the center? Probably because the One in the center was at a higher level so the **soldiers** made that climb last.

(33.) But when they came to Jesus, they saw that He was already dead, so they didn't break His legs.

- The soldiers **didn't break the legs** of **Jesus** to hasten death because He had already given up His spirit.

(34.) One of the soldiers, however, pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out.

- To be sure that He was dead, a **soldier pierced His side** and **blood and water** came out.

(35.) (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also can believe.)

- The apostle John, the writer, was present and saw this with his own eyes. This is an added reason to **believe**.

(36.) These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, "Not one of His bones will be broken," (37.) and "They will look on the One they pierced."

- These Roman soldiers had no idea how they fulfilled the purposes of God.
- Exodus 12:46 gives instructions on preparing the lamb for the Passover meal and includes the words **"do not break any of its bones."** So, clearly Jesus was the fulfillment of the Passover lamb. In John 1:29, John the Baptist is quoted as saying, **"Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"**

Also Zechariah:

"Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the family of David and on the people of Jerusalem. They will look on Me whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as for an only son. They will grieve bitterly for Him as for a firstborn son who has died. (Zechariah 12:10 NLT)

- For a complete medical analysis of the death of Jesus, see the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, March 21, 1986. It is Volume 255, No. 11. It is widely available on the Internet. (The editor was fired from his job for running the story.)

JESUS IS BURIED

(38.) Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders.), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away.

- **Joseph** was a **disciple secretly**, but God still had a use for him and his nearby tomb. **Pilate** gave him permission to remove the **body of Jesus**. Probably **Joseph** had servants that did the actual lifting.
- It was Friday afternoon and the Sabbath would begin at 6 pm. Haste was required to process **the body**.

(39.) With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes.

- Another member of the Sanhedrin brought a wealth of spices. He was a believer by this time.

(40.) Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth.

- **The spices** were interleaved with the linen burial cloths and the **body of Jesus** was buried temporarily until the Sabbath was past.
- Customs missing:
 - The body would not be carried to the upper chamber of a house for mourning and final good-byes.
 - There would be no hired mourners, no funeral procession.
 - No hired flutists and no rending of garments.

(41.) The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before.

- So Joseph had purchased and prepared a **tomb** in the same area as where the **crucifixion** took place. Little did he know that it was only a loan.
- In his mind, Joseph was making a personal sacrifice. Being a **new tomb**, there can be no question about who came forth on Sunday.

(42.) And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

- If they had a plan on what to do once the **Passover** was finished, they had not coordinated with the ladies.