

John Chapter 19 Continued

Verses 18-27 record the first three hours on the cross, from nine o'clock in the morning to noon.

John 19:18 "Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst."

Jesus was made to lie on the ground while His arms were stretched out and nailed to the horizontal beam that He carries. The beam was then hoisted up, along with the victim and fastened to the vertical beam. His feet were nailed to the vertical beam to which sometimes was attached a piece of wood that served as a kind of seat that partially supported the weight of the body.

The latter however, was designed to prolong and increase the agony, not relieve it. Having been stripped naked and beaten, Jesus could hang in the hot sun for hours if not days. To breathe, it was necessary to push with the legs and pull with the arms, creating excruciating pain. Terrible muscle spasms wracked the entire body; but since collapse meant asphyxiation, the struggle for life continued.

"Two other with Him" (Matthew 27:38 and Luke 23:33), use the same word for these two as John used for Barabbas, i.e., guerilla fighters.

In the last lesson, we finished with them carrying Him to Golgotha and are now crucifying Him between two common thieves.

Verses 19-22 "wrote a title": The custom in such executions was to place a placard or tablet around the neck of the victim as he made his way to execution. The tablet would then be nailed to the victims' cross see (Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38). Pilate used this opportunity for mocking revenge on the Jews who had so intimidated him into this execution.

John 19:19 "And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Pilate wrote the name on the cross, because Pilate knew in his own heart that Jesus was who He said He was.

John 19:20 "This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin."

Pilate wanted to make sure that whoever read this title could understand. In fact, this hill of Golgotha is just outside of the wall on a busy road leading out of Jerusalem. Scriptures were fulfilled in every detail of this crucifixion.

Here are some Scriptures of prophecy that you should read in the Old Testament about the crucifixion: (Psalms 41:9, Zechariah 11:12, Isaiah 50:6, Psalms 69:4, Isaiah 53:4-5, Isaiah 53:12, Psalms 22:16, Psalms 22:6-8, Psalms 69:21, Psalms 22:8, Psalms 109:4, Zechariah 12-10, Psalms 22:18, Psalms 34:20, and Isaiah 53:9).

John 19:21-22 “Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am the King of the Jews.” “Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.”

These chief priests knew that, even in death, this would make a strong statement to the people and they wanted this sign done away with. As we said before, Pilate would not take it off.

John 19:23 “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.”

This is a fulfillment of Psalm 22:18. Psalm 22 is a messianic Psalm.

By custom, the clothes of the condemned person were the property of the executioners. The division of the garments suggests that the execution squad was made up of 4 soldiers (Acts 12:4).

The tunic was worn next to the skin. The plural “garments” probably refers to other clothes, including an outer garment, belt, sandals, and head covering.

John 19:24 “They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.”

You can find this prophecy (in Psalms 22:18). These soldiers had no idea that they were fulfilling prophecy. This tells me that God can use people who are not even saved to carry out His purposes.

In (Psalms 22:18), David, beset by physical distress and mockery by his opponents, used the symbolism of the common practice in an execution scene in which the executioner divided the victim’s clothes to portray the depth of his trouble. It is notable that David precisely described a form of execution that he had never seen.

The passage was typologically prophetic of Jesus, David’s heir to the messianic throne (see Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34).

John 19:25 “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.”

Although the exact number of women mentioned here is questioned, John probably refers to 4 women rather than three, i.e., two by name and two without naming them. One was Jesus’ mother, Mary, His mother’s sister, probably Salome (Mark 15:40), the mother of James and

John, the son's of Zebedee. Mary the wife of Cleophas, the mother of James the younger and Joses (Matthew 27:56), and Mary Magdalene who Jesus had healed her from demon possession.

Four women attend the Crucifixion, and they remain while the disciples flee, except for John who returns. Several women, including these mentioned here, have accompanied Jesus and His disciples on their journeys, taking care of their daily needs.

These women seem to be near the cross. This same group of women is mentioned (in Matthew 27:56 and in Mark 15:40).

It really doesn't matter if there were 3 or 4. It is just interesting to note that the sister of Mary (the mother of Jesus), was there with her.

John 19:26 “When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!”

This is a reference to John. Jesus, as first born and breadwinner of the family before He started His ministry did not give the responsibility to His brothers because they were not sympathetic to His ministry nor did they believe in Him (7:3-5), and they likely were not present at the time, i.e., their home was in Capernaum (see 2:12).

This is most assuredly John that Jesus tells Mary (His mother), that John is her son.

John 19:27 “Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”

John was more than just a disciple of Jesus. He was a trusted and much loved friend. The greatest honor Jesus could have paid anyone was to have entrusted His mother to him. John accepts this responsibility without hesitation.

Mary then lives with John in his home as his mother. Jesus gave His mother to his closest and dearest friend, John.

The (verses for 28-30), record the last three hours on the cross from noon to three in the afternoon. Here is the fulfillment of (Psalm 69:21). Notice that the only words Jesus spoke indicating pain or discomfort was: “I thirst.” It was not that He did not suffer, but only that He did not complain.

John 19:28 “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.”

This is speaking of (Psalms 69:21). Jesus had taken care of everything to be done. Now as He fulfills that Scripture, He says I thirst.

John 19:29 “Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.”

The drink here is not to be confused with the wine “mixed with gall” offered to Him on the way to the cross (Matthew 27:34), intended to help deaden pain. The purpose of this drink was to prolong life and increase the torture and pain. It was a cheap, sour wine used by soldiers. The use of this word recalls (Psalms 69:21), where the same noun occurs in the LXX. Hyssop is a little plant that is ideal for sprinkling (See Exodus 12:22).

This, as we said before, was to fulfill the Scriptures. This vinegar possibly was here for the soldiers and those crucified to dull their senses.

In the next verse, we will see exactly why this was done here.

John 19:30 “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

The verb here carries the idea of fulfilling one’s task and, in religious contexts, has the idea of fulfilling one’s religious obligations (see 17:4). The entire work of redemption had been brought to completion. The single Greek word here (translated “it is finished”), has been found in the papyri being placed on receipts for taxes meaning “paid in full” (see Col. 3:13-14).

“He gave up the ghost” signaled that Jesus “handed over” His spirit as an act of His will. No one took His life from Him, for He voluntarily and willingly gave it up (see 10:17-18).

What was finished? The work on the cross: six hours of suffering. The Scriptures had now been fulfilled. In (Luke 23:46), we learn that Jesus commanded His Spirit to leave His body and go to the Father.

At this moment, nothing was left on the cross, but the empty shell of a body.

John 19:31 “The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was a high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.”

The preparation was Friday, the day before the Sabbath. It was a high day because it was the Sabbath during the Passover week. The Jews did not mind putting an innocent man to death, even the Son of God, but they were very careful not to break the Sabbath.

The normal Roman practice was to leave crucified men and women on the cross until they died and this could take days, and then leave their rotting bodies hanging there to be devoured by vultures. The Mosaic Law insisted that anyone being impaled, usually after execution, should not remain there overnight (Deut. 21:22-23). Such a person was under God’s curse, and to leave him exposed would be to desecrate the land in their minds.

“Their legs might be broken”: In order to hasten death for certain reasons, soldiers would smash the legs of the victim with an iron mallet. Not only did this action induce shock and additional loss of blood, but it prevented the victim from pushing with his legs to keep breathing and thus the victim died due to asphyxiation.

John 19:32-33 “Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.” “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:”

It was very important that the legs of the Lamb of God not be broken. This Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread was also associated with the Passover celebration. For Jesus to be the Passover Lamb, He must be dead before 6 p.m. He was dead at 3 p.m. He hung on the cross six hours from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

He had to be entombed before 6 p.m. when Sabbath started. It was a very serious offense to work on Sabbath. This death at 3 p.m. gave time for them to go and ask His body and bury it in the cave.

John 19:34 “But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.”

The soldier’s stabbing of Jesus’ side caused significant penetration because of the sudden flow of blood and water. Either the spear pierced Jesus’ heart or the chest cavity was pierced at the bottom. In either event, John mentioned the outflow of “blood and water” to emphasize that Jesus was unquestionably dead.

John 19:35 “And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.”

This has reference to John the apostle who was an eyewitness of these events (verses 26, 13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20 and 1 John 1:1-4).

We read in (1 John 5:6), “This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.”

Read on through (verse 8), to get a more detailed explanation. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. Jesus shed His blood for our sin.

John quoted from either (Exodus 12:46 or Numbers 9:12), both of which specify that no bone of the Passover lamb may be broken. Since the New Testament portrays Jesus as the Passover Lamb that takes away the sins of the world (1:29, 1 Cor. 5:7, 1 Peter 1:19), these verses have special typologically prophetic significance for Him

The quote (in verse 37), comes from (Zech. 12:10), which indicates God Himself was pierced when His representative, the Shepherd, (Zech. 13:7; 11:4, 8, 9, 15-17), was pierced.

The anguish and contrition of the Jews in the Zechariah passage, because of their wounding of God's Shepherd, is typologically prophetic of the time of the coming of the Son of God, Messiah, when at His return, Israel shall mourn for the rejection and killing of their King (Revelation 1:7).

John 19:36 “For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.”

A bone of him shall not be broken is a fulfillment of (Psalm 34:20). It was also a requirement of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12), that no bone be broken. Christ is our Passover according to (1 Cor. 5:7). Compare this with (John 1:29), where John calls Him the Lamb of God.

John 19:37 “And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.”

These prophecies are found (in Zechariah 12:10; Psalms 34:20). The Lamb sacrifice could not have broken bones to be acceptable to God.

John 19:38 “And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.”

Joseph of Arimathaea was a rich man and had a tomb which had not been lain in. Pilate surely was even more convinced of who Jesus was after the earthquake and the three hours of darkness on the land. He was very cooperative with Joseph.

Joseph had to get the body entombed before 6 p.m., when Sabbath started.

This man, Joseph of Arimathaea appears in all 4 gospels, only in connection with Jesus' burial. The synoptic gospels relate that he was a member of the Sanhedrin (Mark 15:43), he was rich (Matthew 27:57), and he was looking for the kingdom of God (Luke 23:51).

John treated the idea of secret disciples negatively (see 12:42-43), but since Joseph publicly risked his reputation and even his life in asking for the body of Jesus, John pictured him in a more positive light.

John 19:39 “And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight.”

Nicodemus did the only anointing of Jesus' body before the burial. Jesus was raised before the women arrived on Sunday with the spices. Nicodemus believed, but was a fearful man. He brought the perfume for the burial.

Jesus was not embalmed. Jews were never embalmed. They were buried immediately. Embalming was an Egyptian custom.

Myrrh was a very fragrant gummy resin, which the Jews turned into a powdered form and mixed with aloes, a powder from the aromatic sandalwood. The Jews did not embalm but did this procedure to stifle the smell of putrefaction.

John 19:40 “Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.”

The spices most likely were laid on the entire length of the strips of linen which were then wound around Jesus’ body. More spices were laid under the body and perhaps packed around it. The sticky resin would help the cloth adhere.

The Romans cremated, the Egyptians embalmed, and the Jews wrapped in linen with perfumes.

John 19:41 “Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid.”

The other Gospels tell us that this was Joseph’s sepulcher (Matthew 27:59-60).

John 19:42 “There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulcher was nigh at hand.”

Only John relates that the tomb was near the place where Jesus was crucified. Since the Sabbath, when all work had to cease, was nearly upon them (6 p.m., sunset), the nearness of the tomb was helpful. John does not mention that Joseph of Arimathaea rolled a stone across the tomb’s mouth or that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where He was laid (Matthew 27:58-61).

The sepulcher was actually at the foot of the hill where Jesus was crucified, so it would be no problem to quickly entomb Jesus' body there.

The Jewish people spent what they could afford to have a big funeral, so this expensive tomb hewn out in the side of the mountain and the expensive perfume makes this a very appropriate entombment for a Jew.

John Chapter 19 Continued Questions

1. Who was crucified with Jesus?
2. What was the title Pilate put on the cross?
3. What languages was it written in?

4. Who read the message on the cross?
5. Name at least five prophecies fulfilled here?
6. Who complained to Pilate about the title?
7. What did they want him to change it to?
8. Did Pilate do what the Jews asked?
9. What happened to Jesus' garments?
10. Why did they not tear the robe?
11. How did they decide who got the robe?
12. Who were the women standing by the cross?
13. Who did Jesus give His mother to?
14. Did the disciple accept this responsibility?
15. When Jesus knew all was fulfilled, what did He say?
16. What was put to Jesus' mouth?
17. When did Jesus say, It is finished?
18. How long did Jesus hang on the cross?
19. In Luke 23:46, what do we learn about Jesus' Spirit?
20. What was left on the cross?
21. Why did the Jews want Pilate to have the prisoners' legs broken?
22. Why did they not break Jesus' legs?
23. What did one of the soldiers do with a spear?
24. Where, in 1 John, do we read about the water and the blood?
25. Where was the Old Testament Scripture that says a bone of Him shall not be broken?
26. Who was the disciple of Jesus who asked for His body?

27. Did Pilate do it?

28. Who brought 100 lbs. of myrrh and aloes to use in the entombment?

29. Who cremates their dead?

30. Who embalms their dead?

31. Who wrapped their dead in linen?

32. Where was Jesus laid?