



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. John

Chapter 19

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Introduction

- As we have mentioned in Chapter 18 that Chapters 18 and 19 tell the deeply moving story of the Passion and self-sacrificial death of the Savior
- As is his custom, John does not often repeat the events covered in the other Gospels except to add new details
- He locates the events of Jesus' Passion and death in five settings
- Three were in Chapter 18 and two in this Chapter
- Golgotha, the hill of the crucifixion, 19:17-37
- The burial of Jesus in the garden tomb, 19:38-42



Introduction

Chapter Outline

- The Soldiers Mock Jesus 19:1-4
- Pilate's Decision 19:5-16
- The King on a Cross 19:17-24
- Behold Your Mother 19:25-27
- It Is Finished 19:28-30
- Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37
- Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb 19:38-42



The Soldiers Mock Jesus 19:1-4

- Because the attempt to release Jesus in honor of the Feast had failed, finding that the Jews would not agree to it, and being very desirous, if possible, to save Jesus' life, Pilate now thought of this method hoping the scourging alone would satisfy the Jews so crucifixion itself would not be necessary, Luke 23:14-16
- Perhaps Pilate had other purposes in mind for this
- It was also the beginning preparation for crucifixion, Mark 15:15 Matthew 27:26; Luke 23:25
- He may also have hoped that scourging Jesus might bring a confession from Him so Pilate would feel justified in killing Him



The Soldiers Mock Jesus 19:1-4

- Pilate knew He is innocent and yet did not judge justly
- He condemned Him to be scourged like a criminal
- As Isaiah writes, *“I gave my back to those who struck Me, and my cheeks to those who plucked out the beard: I did not hide My face from shame and spitting”* Isaiah 50:6
- The Psalmist says, *“The plowers plowed on my back; they made their furrows long”* Psalm 129:3
- The Lord Himself had said, they will *“deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify”* Matthew 20:19; Mark 10:34; Luke 18:33

The Soldiers Mock Jesus 19:1-4



- Pilate then allowed the wounded and bruised man to be yet further and cruelly insulted by the Roman soldiers
- Commentators remind us how cruel Roman soldiers often were
- These were the kind of men who could enjoy watching gladiators attempting to kill one another or wild animals attacking prisoners in the Roman amphitheaters
- Such cruelty was common among the kind of men who now began to mock and ridicule the Son of God



The Soldiers Mock Jesus 19:1-4

- Jesus' own clothes were removed, and He was given various symbols of royalty as a king
- He was given a purple or scarlet robe, a color commonly worn by royalty
- He was given a crown, but they made one of thorns so it would hurt instead of being an honor
- The other evangelists also mention a reed put into His right hand



The Soldiers Mock Jesus 19:1-4

- Then they mockingly bowed to Him and called Him “King of the Jews”
- They spit on Him, and took the reed and hit Him over the head
- This of course would cause the thorns to dig into His scalp at the same time that it belittled His claim to authority
- Despite this tragic twist of the Romans, the truth is that only Jesus of Nazareth is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords!
- John’s account adds some details not found in the others
- Even after the scourging, Pilate attempted to reason with the Jews or to avoid the responsibility for killing Him



The Soldiers Mock Jesus 19:1-4

- He brought Jesus before the people wearing the robe and crown of thorns
- They could see for themselves the suffering He had endured
- Pilate affirmed again that he found no reason for Jesus to be killed, 18:38
- Surely he hoped this would convince them Jesus had suffered enough, so they would agree to let Him go
- In declaring Jesus to be innocent, Pilate necessarily implied his own duty to release Him without punishment



The Soldiers Mock Jesus 19:1-4

- Pilate showed a strange reluctance to condemn Jesus
- Some Biblical scholars find this reluctance surprising when considering what contemporary historians wrote about Pilate
- The Jewish historian and theologian Philo of Alexandria described Pilate as a man of inflexible disposition, and very merciless as well as very stubborn
- Why then did he scourge Him and give Him to the soldiers to abuse Him?
- Why did he bring Him out to His prosecutors and did not release Him immediately as justice decrees?



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- The Evangelist repeats the details of John 19:2; they are details of a picture deeply imprinted on his memory
- By saying, “*Behold the Man*” Pilate may have wished to assert to the Jews that if they thought Christ wanted to be king and oppose Caesar, this was false
- For now that they saw Him so weak and helpless, having no followers who might oppose authority, they should not fear Him
- Perhaps Pilate's reluctance was generated by an unwillingness to cooperate with the Jewish authorities



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- Or perhaps it was because Pilate had spoken with his wife who told him of a dream she had about this innocent man
- Or perhaps it was because the cold heart of a Roman soldier had been moved in the presence of God
- After hearing Pilate repeating that he did not find fault at all in Jesus, and after seeing Jesus' body torn with scourging, His head and forehead pierced with thorns, and His face swollen with beating, the people could have asked for His release
- But the chief priests and officers quickly cried out saying, "*Crucify Him, crucify Him.*"



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- Their envy and malice were so extreme that they did not accept Pilate's judgment
- They were not sorry for the Lord's pain
- They, instead, considered Him deserving death even if He was Innocent
- For in their opinion their safety and the peace of the city necessitated His crucifixion
- He was in a heartbreaking condition, His mock dress, and had on Him all the marks of cruel usage, enough to have moved an heart of stone: and yet they were the principal men of the priesthood



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- Instead of being affected with this sight, and wrought upon by it, to have agreed to His release, as Pilate hoped, they cried out, saying, *Crucify Him*
- This was done in a very noisy and clamorous way; and the repetition of their request shows their malignity, intensity, and impatience
- And remarkable it is, that they should call for, and desire that kind of death the Scriptures had pointed out, that the Messiah should die, and which was predicted by Christ Himself



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- *Pilate said to them, Certainly not granting to them permission to take the law into their hands, irrespective of the Praetorian court and against his will*
- *But in angry sarcasm, and with an unconcealed threat he tells them, You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.”, That is, if you dare*
- *Go, do your deed of blood by your own hands, take all the responsibility; for I find no fault in Him*
- *Pilate thus mock their powerlessness, and repeats his verdict of release, John 18:31*



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- At this moment the so-called trial might have ended, so far as Pilate was concerned, with an immediate release
- It would seem as though the governor had decided, and there could be no more discussion
- “Observe how the judge presented his defense in many ways to acquit the Lord of the accusations against Him. But nothing of all this shamed them. They insisted on fulfilling their aim. The statement, “You take Him and crucify Him” is an expression of one who wants to be innocent of committing a crime, and wants to force the Jews to do something illegal. For, they brought the Lord to him to decide on crucifying Him. But what happened was the opposite, for, the judge declared the innocence of the Lord and did not indict Him.” **St. John Chrysostom**



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- They feel the mockery of Pilate's tone of voice and appeal to their own law, which, in accordance with the general Roman policy, was in force in all issues which did not directly affect the Government
- They change the accusation then from one of opposing Caesar and the Roman authorities John 19:12, of which Pilate claimed to be judge, to one of blasphemy against God, of which they only could be judges
- So they charged Him with an offence which Pilate had no right to discuss



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- And assert that Jesus is by that law guilty of a capital offence, for which He ought to die, Matthew 26:63-66 and Luke 22:70
- They broke the law and thought they honored it
- Perhaps they hoped Pilate would honor their law in this
- In any case, their statement constitutes an admission that they had been misleading Pilate about their real concerns up to this point
- *he was the more afraid*, As the verses which follow show, he was more afraid because he was unsure who Jesus really was



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- He must have heard of some of the current impressions as to His life and words
- He had himself heard Him claim a kingdom which is not of this world
- His wife's dream, Matthew 27:19 which he had interpreted it as a message from the gods
- And now the Jews speak of Him as one who claimed to be the Son of God
- Romans were very superstitious about gods in the form of men
- Pilate was even more distressed by this accusation against Jesus



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- He therefore took Jesus again away with him into the hall to ask Him privately
- *Where are You from?* Most Biblical scholars indicate that the Greek text suggests Pilate is instead asking "What is the secret of your origin? Who are you really?"
- Pilate knew that Jesus was a Galilean before sending Him to Herod Luke 23:6
- Jesus had answered Pilate's previous questions, but concerning this question, *Jesus gave him no answer*
- This silence of our Lord has seemed hard to understand, there were many and very different suggested explanations



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- The answer had, indeed, already been given to Pilate before John 18:37, but he had treated it with the impatience which showed he could not receive it now
- Not of the truth, he could not hear the voice of the Son of God, and therefore that voice did not speak
- Also the question was irrelevant
- Pilate knew Jesus was innocent and therefore should have released Him
- What would Jesus' place or circumstances of origin have to do with it? He was either guilty of a crime or He was not



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- Pilate was angry with Jesus, resenting His silence, and looking upon it as a contempt of him
- He wondered that Jesus stood in no fear of him, who was the Roman governor
- He who had the power of life and death
- *I have power to crucify You, and power to release You*, Proudly boasting of his authority to do one or the other
- The sudden change of the man from fear, to vain and proud boasting, is to be observed



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- He was afraid of the divine power of Christ, lest He should have any divinity in Him
- And now he boasts and brags of his own power and threatens with his authority to punish with death, even the death of the cross
- Pilate exaggerated in showing his power because he thought that he was in control of the situation
- He did not realize that he had no right to crucify an innocent person, and release another person who should be crucified according to the Roman law



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- In addition, Pilate forgot that God Almighty is there and nothing happens without His permission
- Pilate assumes supreme authority of life and death, He virtually says, "I am the judge; you are the accused criminal. I am your master, and the master of the Jews; you are absolutely in my power"
- The silence of our Lord Jesus was not because He refused to answer the question, but because Pilate could not understand the truth
- Jesus' power came "*from above*"; the word in the Greek is *anothen*



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- It is the same word Jesus used in speaking of re-birth with Nicodemus in chapter 3
- Jesus told Pilate that no one could have power over Him unless it was willed from heaven
- Any power over Jesus must come from God
- He would not possess it if God had not appointed him for the fulfillment of His destiny concerning Jesus
- Speaking on this theme, in Acts 4:27-28 St. Peter pointed to Pontius Pilate as a tool of God in the unfolding events of the divine plan



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- He here does not act in independent self-determination, but as the divinely-ordained organ of the procedure which is pending against Him
- This was a rebuke of a proud man in office, who was forgetful of the great Source of his authority, and who supposed that by his own talents or fortune he had risen to his present place
- Pilate had been guilty of sin already in scourging Christ, and suffering the Roman soldiers to abuse Him
- And would be guilty of a greater in delivering Him up to be crucified, who he knew was innocent



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- But the sin of Judas in delivering Him into the hands of the chief priests and elders, and of the chief priest and elders and people of the Jews, in delivering Him to Pilate to crucify Him, were greater
- For by His works, miracles, and ministry, as well as by their own prophecies, they might, or must have known, that He was the Messiah, and Son of God
- It is to be observed, that as there is a difference in sin, and that all sins are not equal



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- Some scholars suggest that in speaking of His betrayal Jesus used the present tense, which indicates that Jesus was not speaking specifically about Judas but about the Jewish authorities who were presently in the act of bringing about His death
- The singular "the one who," literally "*he who*" is probably a reference to the High Priest Caiaphas who served as the leader and the chief representative of the Jewish authorities



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- Pilate exited the Praetorium, the hall, a third time to return to the courtyard
- Jesus' words had a profound impact on the Roman administrator, and he was determined to release the man he had already pronounced innocent
- He may have been influenced by Jesus' reference to power higher than Pilate's or by Jesus' acknowledgment that Pilate did not bear the greatest responsibility for Jesus' mistreatment
- The Greek word expressing Pilate's desire to release Jesus can be translated as *"was anxious,"* or *"was eager,"* or *"was striving"*



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- But the Jews proved they were the instigators of the opposition to Jesus by continuing to press for His conviction
- They claimed that anyone who made himself a king would be speaking against Caesar; and if Pilate released Jesus, he would not be standing with Caesar
- Pilate will not be counted as a "friend of Caesar" if he released a man who under Roman law was guilty of claiming Caesar's titles of King and Son of God
- This was no empty threat and Pilate knew it



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- He could not afford to have it reported to the Emperor that he had release a man who was accused of claiming the title of King of the Jews, an act of treason against the Empire
- They knew, indeed, that it was a claim to be “king” in a sense widely different from any which would have affected the empire of Caesar
- Pilate's mind seems to be made up at once
- Upon hearing their saying, his fear of Caesar became greater than his fear of Christ; his anxiety for himself predominated over his desire for justice



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- He found he had gone too far
- He had sat but little all this time, he was continually going in and out to examine Jesus, and converse with the Jews
- But he now takes his place, and sits down as a judge
- The verdict was about to be announced because the governor sat down in the official judgment seat
- *Gabbatha*, That is, a high place; for it was their manner to have their judgment seats higher than other parts of the room where they were



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- *the Preparation Day of the Passover*, Most scholars agree that the word "preparation" is simply the "Friday" before the Sabbath 'the eve of the Sabbath'
- *about the sixth hour*, All three of the Synoptic Gospels are in agreement on the timing of Jesus' Passion and crucifixion which is the sixth hour
- Is John in error, are the Synoptic Gospels in error, or is there a way that all four Gospels can agree?
- Most scholars agree that St. John used Roman time



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- Which means that John's account agrees perfectly with the Synoptic Gospels and there is more than enough time for Jesus to walk the "Way of Sorrows" and to reach Golgotha by 9 AM, which is the time of crucifixion according to Mark 15:25
- As the Jews turned their accusation against Pilate, he angrily ridiculed them saying to them, *Behold your King!*
- Having now made up his mind to yield to them, he takes a sort of quiet revenge on them by this irony, which he knew would offend them



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- This was his last attempt to save the Lord Christ from crucifixion
- If he was going to condemn an innocent man, he wanted some concessions from them in return or at least an opportunity to ridicule them for their injustice
- They called out to crucify Jesus
- Pilate asked if he should crucify their king
- They then claimed to have no king but Caesar
- The implication was that they had no allegiance to any ruler but Caesar



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- But the Jews' statement was pure hypocrisy
- They hated Caesar
- In their hearts and in private they likely denied any allegiance to him whatever
- Above all, they surely knew that God was their king, 1 Samuel 8
- But they played the hypocrite, put on the false front, and pretended to care about Caesar – anything to get the Romans to kill Jesus for them!



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- They are driven by Pilate's hurtful remarks, and by their hatred of Jesus, to a denial of their own highest hopes
- They who gloried in the Theocracy, and hoped for a temporal Messianic reign, which should free them from Roman bondage; they who boasted that they "were never in bondage to any man", John 8:33; they who were "chief priests" of the Jews, confess that Cæsar is their only king
- The words were doubtless meant, as those in John 19:12, to drive Pilate to comply with their wishes, under the dread of an accusation at Rome



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- St. John Chrysostom wrote that in this rejection of the Messiah the people who stubbornly refused to come into the New Covenant by choosing Rome over Christ pronounced their own judgment: *“They themselves submitted to the punishment; therefore, the Lord handed them over. Thus, because they unanimously rejected God's government, the Lord let them be brought down through their own condemnation: for, rejecting the dominion of Christ, they brought upon themselves that of Caesar.”*



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- In 66 AD the Jews revolted against Rome
- In retaliation, four Roman legions ravaged Judea, burned down the city of Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple in 70 AD
- Many of the Jewish survivors were sold into slavery, disbursing them across the Roman Empire
- As he did not fear God but feared men, Pilate signed the condemnation to crucifixion and delivered Jesus to those who should crucify Him
- He who testified several times that Christ was innocent, finally dictated His punishment as a criminal



Pilate's Decision 19:5-16

- In none of the Gospels does it appear that Pilate pronounced sentence on Jesus; he perhaps purposely avoided doing so
- But in delivering Him over to the priests he does not allow them to act for themselves: 'he delivered Him to them that He might be crucified' by Roman soldiers; not that they might crucify Him themselves
- Pilate washed his hands, Matthew 27:24 to announce that he was innocent of that judgment
- However, washing his hands will not make him innocent before God



The King on a Cross 19:17-24

- Apparently Pilate had made His final effort to save Jesus
- He decided to proceed with the crucifixion
- As is his custom John does not repeat much of the information found in the Synoptic Gospels concerning Jesus' Crucifixion and death
- He does not include that:
- Jesus was redressed in His own clothes, Matthew 27:31; Mark 15:20
- There were women who mourned for Him along the walk of sorrows, Luke 23:27



The King on a Cross 19:17-24

- Simon of Cyrene helped carry His cross, Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26
- Jesus final warning to the crowd, Luke 23:28-30
- The repentance of the good thief, Luke 23:39-43
- And all the other details
- Some scholars have speculated that St. John's omission of the encounter with Simon of Cyrene stems from the Gnostic heresy that was widespread in the later part of the 1st century AD, which taught that Simon of Cyrene was crucified in Jesus' place



The King on a Cross 19:17-24

- However, this omission and the absence of the other events of the crucifixion are completely in character with the inspired writer of the fourth Gospel's intention of not repeating other major events that are covered in the 3 other Gospels
- They brought Him to the place of execution outside the city, to a place called Golgotha
- Origen the Scholar referred to a tradition that said that this was the place where Adam was buried



The King on a Cross 19:17-24

- There, where death defeated the first Adam and changed him into dust, Christ, the Second Adam died to vanquish death and give life back to Adam and his descendants
- At the time of Jesus' crucifixion, Golgotha was located outside the walls of the holy city of Jerusalem
- It was forbidden to contaminate the sacredness of the holy city by the presence of the dead
- Therefore no one could be buried or executed inside the walls of Jerusalem



The King on a Cross 19:17-24

- With Jesus were crucified *and two others* in Matthew 27:38, called “robbers,” probably of the same class as Barabbas
- Jesus was crucified between them; possibly, to identify Him with the worst criminals
- As a scholar says, “The whole of humanity was represented there: the sinless Savior, the saved penitent, the condemned impenitent
- Yet, they did not realize that by doing this the prophecy was fulfilled that He was numbered with the transgressors



The King on a Cross 19:17-24

- St. John alone tells us that Pilate wrote the title himself
- He calls the writing on the cross *a title*
- Matthew calls it *the accusation* while Mark and Luke describe it as an inscription
- The title that was placed over the cross was the common Roman name for an inscription of the kind, which was meant to give information of the crime for which the sentence of crucifixion had been given



The King on a Cross 19:17-24

- This was written in the three common languages of the people who would see Him: Hebrew, Latin, and Greek
- The significance of the three language declaration is that it is the proclamation of His Kingship symbolically written in the common tongue (Aramaic), the international language (Greek), and the language of the world super-power (Roman)
- Jesus is the universal King of Kings
- It was placed where all who passed by could see
- We are told that the place was near the city, so many saw it
- The reaction of the Jews implies that Pilate put the sign, not to belittle Jesus as much as to belittle the Jews



The King on a Cross 19:17-24

- They were the ones who were bothered by it
- Pilate may have been expressing his displeasure at being forced to executing a man he had wished to release by insisting on wording that would be sure to make the chief priests and Pharisees very angry
- It is ironic, of course, that despite the protests of Jesus' enemies that the claim on the plaque was indeed true and was proclaimed by a pagan Roman Gentile
- In any case, the Jews were humiliated by it and asked Pilate to remove it but he refused



The King on a Cross 19:17-24

- They crucified Him and divided His garments
- This was customary for the soldiers to do with the clothing of the one who was crucified
- They divided His clothes among them, but He had a tunic that was woven in one piece
- So rather than tear it, they cast lots for it
- This fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 22:18, *They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots*
- The other Gospels mention the soldiers rolling dice to divide Jesus' garments, but only St. John makes a distinction between the outer clothes and the seamless tunic that was not to be divided



The King on a Cross 19:17-24

- Origen the Scholar observes that this tunic is symbolic of the perfect doctrine of Christ that must be preserved without a tear or division in parts
- St. Cyril the Great says it symbolizes the birth of Christ of a virgin, for she remained a virgin after His birth
- But St. Cyprian, who groaned because of the schism in the Church considers that the tunic without seam refers to the truly united Church that is never torn or mended
- St. Augustine wrote in a letter to the Donatists, “Why do you want to divide the Lord’s garments. Why do you not keep the tunic of love in the world whole, woven from the top. That tunic that even His oppressors did not tear?”



Behold Your Mother 19:25-27

- While all the disciples, except John, had run away, the women (His mother, her sister, and Mary Magdalene) remained with Him by the cross
- The women were not afraid of the cruelty of the wicked or the horror of the spectacle
- Indeed, they could do nothing, but they showed their loyalty to the end
- Mary of Magdalene is named in all four gospels
- *by the cross of Jesus His mother*, The mother of Jesus, Mary; which showed her affection to Christ, and her constancy in abiding by Him to the last



Behold Your Mother 19:25-27

- Now Simeon's prophecy, Luke 2:35 was fulfilled to see her son in such agonies and sorrow
- Jesus now sees His mother standing by the cross
- By His death she will be left without son as well as without husband; and in the tenderness of His love He commits her to the care of him whom He Himself had loved beyond others, because beyond others he could receive His love
- *Woman*, This is a remarkable expression, and has been much misunderstood

Behold Your Mother 19:25-27



- It conveys no idea of disrespect, nor of unconcern, as has been commonly supposed
- Man! and woman! were titles of as much respect among the Hebrews as sir! and madam! are among us
- But why does not Jesus call her mother?
- Probably because he wished to spare her feelings; he would not mention a name, the very sound of which must have pressed her heart with additional sorrow
- It was rather not to increase her pain as a mother hearing her Son speaking in His last moments before His death

Behold Your Mother 19:25-27



- He may have also desired to assert to her that He was not of this world
- He therefore spoke to her, not in terms of mere blood relationship, but as she being a representative of the Church that He loved exceedingly
- “That disciple gained a hundred times more than he gave when he received the mother of Him who grants everything.” St. Augustine



It Is Finished 19:28-30

- *After this, Jesus,* After other events recorded by the other evangelists, such as the three hours supernatural darkness; the cry *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*, the quotation of Psalm 22; nor the misinterpretation of the multitudes; and after committing His mother to the care of St. John
- Jesus, knowing that all things — All the grievous and terrible sufferings He had to endure; were now upon the point of being accomplished
- The moment for the fulfillment of the last of them; for there was one other small particular, and the time has come for that too, so He said *I thirst* the last agony



It Is Finished 19:28-30

- Only John mentions Jesus making this statement, *I thirst* which was literally true of Him, He had a physical body with a physical need to drink
- Jesus came to earth as a human with all the human characteristics
- And may be also understood spiritually of His great thirst and eager desire after the salvation of His people
- John heard in this word the comprehensive cry which gathered up all the yearnings and agonies of His soul, which fulfilled its hard work, which expressed the significance of His suffering



It Is Finished 19:28-30

- He has fulfilled the promise of the restoration of the children of God prophesized in Sacred Scripture beginning with Genesis 3:15
- David said, Psalm 69:21, to signify his enemies multiplying afflictions upon him, *They also gave me gall for my food; and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink*
- Part of these words were literally fulfilled in Christ, who was the Son of David
- *vessel full of sour wine was sitting there*, Some commentators say that the vessel was in readiness for the purpose of quenching the thirst of those crucified (who had always to suffer much)



It Is Finished 19:28-30

- Others say that the ‘vinegar’ was probably the sour wine, cheap kind of wine, in a large jar set by the soldiers for their own use while on guard
- Criminals sometimes lived for many hours, even a day or two, on the cross
- St. John’s precise knowledge appears once more: the other three do not mention the vessel, but he had stood close to it
- *put it on hyssop*, With sponge and stalk of hyssop, which were to serve for handing it up
- Only St. John includes the information that it was a hyssop stick that was used to give Jesus the wine



It Is Finished 19:28-30

- *It is finished*, The work which God had given Him to do
- This word is the expression by Jesus Himself of what St. John had expressed by saying, *Jesus knowing that all things were now finished, that the Scriptures should be fulfilled*
- It was not the gasp of a worn-out life, but the deliberate utterance of a clear consciousness that His work was finished, and all God's purpose accomplished, John 17:4, that all had now been done that could be done to make God known to men, and to identify Him with men

Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37



- The Jews wanted Pilate to break the legs of those who had been crucified to hasten their deaths
- This was the day of preparation for the high or holy day; notice how John has clarified the term "Day of Preparation" to mean the day before the Sabbath (Saturday)
- Bodies could not remain on the cross that day
- The law commanded not to leave a dead body hanging, Deuteronomy 21:22-23
- But if the men died on the high day, they would have to be taken down, and those who touched their bodies would be unclean

Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37



- *their legs might be broken*, It appears also to have been used as a separate punishment
- It is not otherwise clear that its purpose was, or that its effect would be, to cause death
- Some writers observe that the Jews did not ask Pilate that the heads of the crucified might be cut off so that they die quickly without much pain
- They rather asked their legs might be broken so that they suffer even more

Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37



- Thus, even in asking for mercy (to take away the bodies from the cross) they were very cruel
- They cared to keep the Sabbath, but had no regard for justice or righteousness
- Repeated hypocrisy
- The Jews did not mind murdering an innocent man, but they dared not touch the murdered man's body and become so unclean that they could not observe a holy day!

Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37



- Pilate granted the Jews what they wanted
- The soldiers came and broke the legs of the thieves who had been crucified with Jesus
- But when they came to Jesus, they did not break His legs because He had already died
- He may have permitted Himself to die before them so that everybody might comprehend that He died of His own will
- He gave up His spirit into the hands of the Father at the time He chose

Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37



- He surrendered to death of His own will, not as an obligation, but through His victory in love
- Here is the clear testimony of the soldiers that Jesus was dead
- This, along with other evidence, proves that He had not just fainted (as some claim) and later revived in the tomb
- These men were expert at their jobs
- They would know the difference between fainting and death
- The fact they did not break Jesus' legs is their testimony that Jesus was really dead

Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37



- The incident of piercing the side of Christ is recorded in this Gospel only
- *pierced His side*, To make quite sure that He was dead
- The Greek word that is used for pierced is not the same as that used in John 19:37; this means either to 'prick' or to 'stab,' that to 'pierce deeply'
- The early Church Fathers, such as the saints Augustine, Ambrose and John Chrysostom, consider this (blood and water that came from Christ's side) the first indication of the sacraments

Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37



- Which are both of Christ's appointing, and spring from Him, and refer to His sufferings and death
- Water is a symbol of baptism and blood is the Eucharist
- We thus drink directly from the wound in the side of our Lord Jesus
- Tertullian, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, and St. Jerome believe that water and blood here are symbols of baptism and martyrdom
- Others think that water stands for the Old Testament and blood is for the New Testament because in it the promise was fulfilled and the people of both Covenants enjoyed salvation



Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37

- St. Augustine eloquently wrote about the significant of this moment in salvation history: *Here was opened wide the door of life, from which the sacraments of the Church have flowed out, without which there is no entering in unto life which is true life. [...] Here the second Adam with bowed head slept upon the cross, that thence a wife might be formed of him, flowing from his side while he slept. O death, by which the dead come back to life! Is there anything purer than this blood, any wound more healing!*

Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37



- There is a debate concerning which side, the left or right, of the Lord Christ was pierced
- The Holy Spirit does not inform us through the Gospels but just says that Christ's side was pierced with a spear in fulfillment of the prophecy
- *he who has seen*, John is accustomed to speak of himself in the third person and he must have been pretty near the cross to have been able to distinguish between the blood and the water, as they issued from the side of our Lord
- John makes it clear that he personally witnessed this

Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37



- All the skeptics of all time may object, but they were not there
- One who was there records this evidence, which he personally witnessed, so we may know that Jesus really was dead
- *His testimony is true*, Such was the known character of this writer, such his sacred regard for truth, that he could appeal to that with full assurance that all would put confidence in him
- But why such a solemn appeal, unless there was something miraculous in this matter?

Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37



- It might appear to him necessary:
- Because the other evangelists had not noticed it
- Because two important prophecies were fulfilled by this very circumstance, both of which designated more particularly the person of the Messiah

Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37



- The Scripture is fulfilled in accordance to the promise given to all the righteous as a reference to what would be realized concerning Jesus
- Psalm 34:20 says, *He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken*
- By the Spirit, David writes *All my bones shall say, 'Lord, who is like You?'* Psalm 35:10
- The Jews were forbidden to break any bone of the Passover lamb, Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12

Jesus' Side Is Pierced 19:31-37



- Our Christ is our Passover who was sacrificed for us, 1 Corinthians 5:7
- He is the Lamb of God, John 1:29 and therefore His bones were not broke
- Also that He would be pierced fulfills Zechariah 12:10, *“then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son.”*
- John makes this clear so we understand, not just that Jesus really did die, but that many details of His death expressly fulfilled Old Testament prophecy

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

19:38-42



- Only John provides insight into Joseph of Arimathaea's fear in proclaiming himself a follower of Jesus
- Luke 23:51 provides the information that Joseph had not consented to the sentence of the Sanhedrin against Jesus
- He was a good and righteous man who looked for the kingdom of God, Luke 23:50-51
- After Jesus' death Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus, John 3:1,4,9, 7:50, both members of the Sanhedrin, bravely came forward to ask Pilate for the Master's body

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

19:38-42



- *Joseph of Arimathea*, (like Simon and Anna) waited for the kingdom of God, and had become a disciple of Christ
- Thus Jesus by being lifted up is already drawing men unto Him, these Jewish noble first confess Him in the hour of His deepest degradation
- St. Mark records that Pilate was astonished when he heard that Jesus had died so soon, and he even questioned the centurion in charge of the execution, Mark 15:44
- Nicodemus, a wealthy man, provided an extremely expensive mixture of *a hundred pounds* of herbs and spices which is considered very big amount

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

19:38-42



- However, there is nothing incredible in the amount
- It is a rich man's proof of devotion, and possibly of remorse for a timidity in the past which now seemed irreversible: his courage had come too late
- Thus, Isaiah foretold this seven hundred years beforehand when he said, "*And he made his grave...with the rich in his death*",
Isaiah 53:9

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

19:38-42



- The wrapping up the body of Christ in a fine linen cloth, was a token of His purity and innocence
- What is the significance of having Joseph and Nicodemus burying the Lord and not His disciples?
- One of them is good and just (Luke 23:50) and the other has no hypocrisy
- If the apostles had buried Him, the Jews would have said, those certainly never buried Him
- But a just man wrapped Christ's body in costly linen (Matthew 27:59; Luke 23:53) and an honest man anointed Him with spices

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

19:38-42



- Therefore, what happened did not lack purpose
- Only the Gospel according to St. John notes that the tomb where Jesus' body was placed was in a garden
- The garden is identified as being very near the site of execution which agrees with the location of the sites of Calvary and the tomb, both within the Church of the Holy Sepulcher
- The Church fathers have written movingly of the mystical connection between the Son of God's burial in a garden after having victoriously redeemed mankind from that first sin which was committed in a garden

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

19:38-42



- Now Christ was laid in such a tomb, where no man had been laid, that it might appear certainly that it was he, and not another, that was risen from the dead
- The Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John all observe that this was a new tomb, never used before Jesus burial
- St Augustine observed: *“Just as in the womb of the Virgin Mary none was conceived before him, none after him, so in this tomb none before him, none after was buried “*
- There they immediately buried Christ, because the time strictly called the preparation (for the whole day was so called) was at hand



Discussion

- What commitment did the Jews make that finally led Pilate to crucify Jesus? Think: In what way was this statement hypocritical?
- Despite how Pilate is identifying Jesus, what choice does he make regarding Jesus and why does he choose this option? What was more important to Pilate than the true identity of Christ? Have you ever made a similar choice?
- Why did the Jewish religious leaders not want the sign posted on the cross to say, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews”?



Discussion

- What is the significance of being crucified with two other men?
- What was Jesus' meaning behind his final words, "It is Finished!"? What is happening between John, Jesus, and Mary the mother of Jesus.
- Some people claim Jesus never really died but just fainted on the cross then awoke in the tomb. How is that claim disproved by the account of piercing His side?



Discussion

- Make a list of the evil things that were done to Jesus as recorded in John 19.
- How many times are prophecies of Jesus being fulfilled in chapter 19. Why is this important?
- After Jesus dies, who takes care of the Lord's physical body? Who would have been the logical ones to have done this task? And what is the significance of that?