



THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: LESSON 20 *"COME AND SEE"*

Once again, I approach this chapter with trembling hands and a heavy heart. This week we will be studying the crucifixion, death, and burial of our Lord Jesus Christ. Although all the Gospel writers are very reserved in their description of the crucifixion, we get the point quite clearly. Perhaps the writers leave out the details so as not to play on the readers' emotions. John uses just one word, "crucifixion," to describe this horrible and torturous death.

Chapter 18 ends with the Jews crying out, asking for the release of a man named Barabbas. This man was a violent revolutionary, a rebel against Rome. Although he had committed murder, he was probably a hero to the Jews. Pilate was willing to release Jesus to the Jews, but they wanted the murderer instead. Here is where we pick the story up, in chapter 19. Again, it's Pilate's move.

I pray that this week you will spend some time meditating on the crucifixion and death of Jesus. Not to be morbid, but to remember the pain and suffering He endured because of the love He has for each one of us. Jesus said in John 15:13, "Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." That's us, ladies.

First Day

1. To begin, please read John 19:1-42 to get the whole story in context. When you're finished, write your initial thoughts of this chapter.

2. We will break this chapter down into four sections. Read each and record the facts, as well as the main point. Give each section a title.

A. Verses 1-16:

B. Verses 17-24:

C. Verses 25-37:

D. Verses 38-42:

3. What old characters do we meet up with again? Any new ones?

4. Do you think Pilate wanted to kill Jesus? Why or why not?

5. What charges were the Jews bringing against Jesus?

That's it for now. Have you ever thought about the fact that as they beat, scourged, mocked, and crucified Jesus, God the Father was watching? Isaiah 53:10-12 tells us that it "pleased the Lord to bruise Him." I don't believe that means it made God "happy" to see what was happening, but He was pleased because He knew what the end result was going to be. Those verses tell us that His death would "justify many by bearing their iniquities." "He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." The love God has for us is truly amazing.

Memory Verse of the Week: "So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His Spirit."
John 19:30

Second Day

Work on your memory verse. These are the last recorded words of Jesus and are they powerful!

1. Read John 19:1-16 again. Why do you think they put a crown of thorns and a purple robe on Jesus?

In Matthew and Mark's account, the scourging took place after the sentence had been passed. In Luke 23:16, Pilate made the suggestion, "I will scourge Him and let Him go." Perhaps our Lord was scourged twice. Scourging, or flogging, was the Roman method of getting the truth or a confession out of someone. According to the Roman law, a man could be flogged until the flesh hung from his back. Michael Card wrote, "Roman flogging was administered not by rods but by the cruel flagrum; a whip of tiny strands with plaited bits of bone, glass, or metal in the ends. Men were sometimes disemboweled by a Roman flogging." Morris added, "This could make pulp of a man's back." Verse 3 tells us the soldiers were striking Jesus with their hands. This phrase literally means "kept giving Him blows with their hands repeatedly."

After Pilate had Jesus scourged, he brought Him before the Jews again. Perhaps Pilate was appealing to their pity, thinking they would feel sorry for Jesus and change their minds. Nope ... doesn't work.

2. How does Pilate present Jesus to the Jews in verse 5? How is this significant?

3. Read verses 6 and 15. Who were the ones yelling to crucify Jesus; the Jewish common people or the religious leaders?

4. Pilate still didn't want to do it, so he suggests the Jews kill Him themselves. How do they respond? How did that make Pilate feel?

Pilate was scared. Some scholars believed that one reason he was afraid was because he didn't understand the term "Son of God" in the same way the Jews meant it. Remember that Pilate was a pagan governor that believed in many gods, as well as the possibility that some people were actually the children of the gods. When he thought Jesus may be a "son of a god," he probably believed that Jesus could possibly possess supernatural powers. Maybe he thought Jesus would take revenge on him.

5. Why do you think Pilate asks Jesus where He was from? Why didn't Jesus answer him?

6. Pilate tries to intimidate Jesus with his power and authority. Jesus does have an answer to that one. Explain His response. (Who's in control, even now?)

Jesus was most likely referring to Caiaphas in verse 11, referring to the one with the greater sin. Caiaphas was the corrupt high priest, a Jew that knew the Scriptures, but wanted Jesus to die (John 11:47-54). He hardened his heart and never gave Jesus a fair trial. Pilate was simply a spiritually dead and blind pagan that was being used to accomplish Caiaphas' purpose. Therefore, the high priest was more accountable and had the greater sin.

Verse 12 tells us that Pilate tried to get Jesus released. We don't know how many times he tried, but, bottom line, he was too weak to do what was right. As they threatened Pilate with political pressure, he finally buckled. He was supposed to keep peace, so if an insurrection occurred, he would be responsible and probably lose his job. This thought was too much for Pilate.

He brought Jesus to a place called "The Pavement." Here was a judgment seat which was the official site of Romans legal pronouncements. This was a portable platform which was in the court of the Antonia, bordering the northwest corner of the Temple complex. According to L.H. Vincent, it covered 2500 square meters and stood on a rocky elevation. He now presents the Jews with their "king."

This was happening on the "Preparation Day" of the Passover. "The Day of Preparation was the day when the Jerusalemite Jews were 'preparing' their lambs for sacrifice. Jesus, the Lamb of God, is sacrificed at precisely the same time as the other lambs. One wonders if the sound of their bleating was heard along with His own shouts from the cross." (Michael Card)

7. The Jews, who hated Rome, suddenly became loyal to Caesar. What did they say, in verse 15? How did this statement reveal their hearts? As Jews, who was supposed to be their only true King?

8. The Jews had lost sight of their faith and their convictions. Often we are tempted to deny God to satisfy our needs or desires. How do we, as Christians, do the same thing today?

The religious leaders' hypocrisy was revealed here in the shadow of the coming cross. God always brings truth into light. In their back-and-forth struggle with Pilate, their true selfish and self-serving motives were revealed. They would rather commit murder to protect their own interests.

9. Allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart. Is there any "hidden" sin that you have been unwilling to deal with? Are your self-serving motives or personal interests clouding or distorting your perspective on any situation?

See you tomorrow, ladies. Spend some time in prayer, asking the Lord to show you any "Pilate" or "religious leaders" that might be present in you.

Third Day

Work on your memory verse.

1. Read John 19:17-24. Also read Matthew 27:29-44, 48; Mark 15:21-33; Luke 23:26-43. Noting the additional details given in the other Gospel accounts, answer the following questions:
 - A. Describe what is known about the man who helped carry Jesus' cross. Why do you think he had to help Jesus?
 - B. What was the response of those watching?
 - C. Two criminals were led to their crosses also. Explain the dialogue between them. What great truth is found in their story?

2. What was the name of the place where Jesus was crucified?

Let's stop for a minute and imagine what is happening. Jesus is being led through the city, for all to see. There are thousands of people there to celebrate the Passover. A Jew had to be crucified outside the city walls; for it was against the law to crucify him within the city boundaries. They were taking Jesus to a place called Golgatha, or the place of the skull. We don't know for sure why it was called this, but most believe it was because the hill was shaped like a skull. It was customary to fasten to the cross a "titulus," or a white board inscribed with the name and offense of the criminal. Barclay writes that the purpose of this is two-fold: "There was a grim reason that as many as possible should see it, and should realize that crime does not pay, and should take warning from such a fate. But there was a merciful reason. The placard was carried before the condemned man, and the long route was chosen, so that if anyone could still bear witness in his favor, he might come forward and do so. In such a case, the procession was halted and the case was retried." It is significant that Pilate wrote the inscription in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. These were the three great languages of the ancient world, and all would be present at the crucifixion. This not only shows that the entire world was responsible for crucifying Jesus, but also that Jesus died for the whole world.

Many believe that Jesus was staggering under the weight of the cross, or even collapsed, so the soldiers forced Simon of Cyrene to carry it for Him. A Roman soldier was allowed to force anyone at anytime to carry a burden for one mile. (See Matthew 5:41) The Gospel of Mark tells us that Jesus was offered some sour wine as a pain killer, which He refused. This is different than the wine offered to Him as He hung on the cross, which was for the purpose of prolonging life to increase the torture and pain.

3. Why do you think Pilate wrote what he did above the cross?

4. What were the soldiers doing? How did this fulfill prophesy?

Four soldiers were assigned to lead the criminal to the place of execution. It was the custom, and their right, to receive the clothes and other belongings of the criminal. Usually the victim would have a turban, sandals, an undergarment, an outer garment, and a girdle. There were four soldiers and five pieces of garments. Again, the soldiers unwittingly fulfilled prophecy as they cast lots and gambled for that fifth, seamless piece (Psalm 22:18). The soldiers were more interested in the spoils than the Savior.

The people passing by and yelling accusations represent the open hostility of the world to Jesus. The gambling soldiers show us the world's indifference to Christ. Barclay said, "This indifference treats the love of God as if it did not matter."

5. How do we see evidence of the world's hostility to Jesus today?

6. Do you see the same type of indifference?

7. Is it possible for us, as Christians, to be "indifferent" to the love of Christ? How? **Is your life characterized by indifference lately? How can you change that?**

8. The soldiers were gambling their lives away. How is being indifferent to Christ still a gamble?

9. Think about Jesus making that long walk, staggering under the pain of the scourging and beating, to Golgatha. Write your thoughts, prayers, or meditations.

I pray that we do not feel indifferent to what Jesus has done for us. I pray that our hearts do not become callous or ungrateful, but remain soft, humble, and thankful as we remember, each day, His love for us.

Fourth Day

What's your memory verse?

As you continue reading, remember that John is most likely an eye witness. I wonder how close he was standing when he heard them talking about casting lots for Jesus' clothes. Can you imagine the impact that this all must have had on John, Jesus' beloved friend and disciple?

1. Begin by reading John 19:25-37. Also read Matthew 27:45-56, Mark 15:33-41, Luke 23:44-49. As usual, John concentrates more on what is happening right there on the scene. What added details are given in the other accounts? Describe what happens as Jesus is hanging on the cross. The sun? The veil?

2. Who is found standing at the foot of the cross? What blessing and privilege does Jesus bestow on John? What does this tell us about Jesus and about His relationship with John?

3. It may have been dangerous to be found in support of Jesus. What does that tell us about those found at the foot of the cross? How is this a lesson for you and I?

4. Imagine being Mary, watching your son go through this. What emotions do you think she was experiencing? Are you watching your children endure painful things? How can Mary's example encourage you today?

The picture of Jesus handing over His mother to John's care absolutely grips my heart. He is in complete agony as He hangs on that cross, the salvation of the world hanging in the balance, and He is thinking of His mom and the loneliness she will feel when He's gone. What a picture of His humanity as He takes care of His duties and responsibilities as a son. He was thinking of her sorrows more than His own. Wow ...

Matthew 27:45 tells us that Jesus hung on the cross for three hours (noon to three) as darkness was over all the land. Wiersbe writes, "He had just emerged from three hours of darkness when He felt the wrath of God and separation from God. When you combine darkness, thirst, and isolation, you have -- hell! There were physical reasons for His thirst (Psalm 22:15), but there were also spiritual reasons (Psalm 42:1-2)."

In verse 28, the phrase, "knowing that all things were accomplished," shows us that Jesus is purposely making sure that every last detail of prophesy is fulfilled before He surrenders His spirit. By saying He was thirsty, He fulfills one last prediction, from Psalm 69:21.

5. Jesus made seven statements while He was on the cross. Read each and briefly explain whom or what was He referring to.

1. Luke 23:34
2. Luke 23:39-43
3. John 19:25-27
4. Matthew 27:45-49
5. John 19:28-29
6. John 19:30
7. Luke 23:46

6. What did Jesus mean by the words, "It is finished!"?

7. What phrase shows us that His death was voluntary? Also read John 10:17-18, Galatians 2:20, Mark 10:45. List any other Scriptures you know that prove this point.

The phrase, "It is finished" speaks volumes. The sacrifice was complete. This phrase is from the Greek word, "tetelestai," and He didn't utter it in weary defeat, but shouted it in triumph! When a priest would examine the animal sacrifice and find it faultless, he would use this word. When an artist completed a picture, this word would apply. When this word was used by a merchant, it meant that the debt was paid in full. Here this was a cry of victory; the battle was won. "Every jot and tittle of the law, every word and deed, all that He had been given to do while on earth -- finished. Then, still sovereignly in charge of the situation, He bowed His head and dismissed His spirit. That triumphant word has been echoing down the centuries. The work is finished. No one can add to a finished work. We can add nothing to the saving work of Christ." (John Phillips) Jesus met the demands of a holy law by paying our debt in full. His blood didn't just cover our sins, but took them away (John 1:29; Hebrews 9:24-28). He was the propitiation, or substitute, for our sin (1 John 2:2).

8. According to the paragraph above, can "good works" get us into Heaven? Why or why not?
9. Have you accepted the finished work on the cross? Do you ever try to add to that work? Do you ever try to work your way into Heaven, or do you plan on relying on the fact that you are a "good person"? Why won't this work?
10. Why didn't the soldiers break Jesus' legs?

Think about this for a moment. The Jews asked Pilate if they could break His legs. This in itself still shows the hate in their hearts for Jesus. John Phillips, in Exploring the Gospels, wrote, "Such a request to Pilate was cruelty itself. True, breaking the legs of a crucified man was a common enough Roman practice. But that Israel's priests and religious leaders should formally request that this be done is a measure of their hate. They did not know that Jesus was already dead. The breaking of the legs of a person hanging on a cross administered a terrible shock of pain to the victim. The whole weight of the body, no longer supported by the legs, dropped down, fixing the thoracic cage so that the lungs could no longer expel the air which was inhaled. Death was hastened by asphyxiation. Thus these men could preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath."

Although the soldiers stopped short of what they were commanded to do, they actually were used by God to fulfill prophesy, which said that the "bones of the Passover lamb were not to be broken (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; and Psalm 34:20)." Zechariah 12:10 and Revelation 1:7 tells us that His side was to be pierced. Many explanations are offered to why the blood and water are so significant, such as water and blood are symbols of the salvation Jesus brings. Bottom line, this makes it clear that Jesus was who

He said He was ... God in the flesh. In verse 35, John tells the reader that the water and blood should encourage them to believe that He is the Christ!

11. How did this section minister to your heart?

Thinking about what Jesus did should humbly bring us to our knees in thanksgiving. It should also make us jump up and down with joy as we remember the promise of Heaven we have because the work is finished. Maybe hit your knees first ... then do the jumping!

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory. What impact has it made on your life?

Today we will be reading about the burial of Jesus. We see a few men step up to the plate and out of the darkness in this section, bringing two gifts: a tomb and burial spices. All the Gospels record this, but John adds his own details: the presence of Nick, the elaborate embalming, the mention of a garden, and the nearness of the tomb to Golgatha.

1. Read John 19:38-42. Also read Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:42-46; and Luke 23:50-55. From all the accounts, describe our man Joseph.

2. Who came with him? What do you remember about him?

This section is both sad and exciting. On one hand, it's a tragedy that these men stayed "secret" disciples because of fear for so long, yet His death brought them both forward. They seemed to forget their fear, boldly and courageously moving forward to request His body, identifying themselves as one of His. The cross had drawn them to Jesus. William Barclay wrote this very eloquent statement: "The magnet of the Cross even then had begun to act; the power of the Cross was even then turning the coward into the hero, and the waverer into the man who had made his irrevocable decision for Christ."

3. How does the example of these men encourage you? How does it challenge you?

4. Has the Lord been calling you to "step up to the plate," so to speak, in some area? Have you been following the Lord from a distance, for fear of what others will think? Has the Lord been prompting you to share the Gospel with someone, but you have been hesitating for some reason? Think about it. What do you need to do?

John was careful to point out that Jesus was embalmed, like Lazarus, in the Jewish way which involved no mutilation of the body. We see that Joseph was going to put Jesus' body in his own tomb, clean and untainted, and Nicodemus brought enough spices to bury a king. They lovingly and tenderly cared for His body. They would be able to finish the job after the Sabbath was over, but for now, this would have to do, because it would soon be sundown and their work would have to be finished (Luke 23:55-24:1). Jesus' body was now put to rest. It's interesting to notice that the only hands that touched Jesus' broken body were hands that loved Him. I believe it is evident that Jesus had become their King of Kings.

5. According to Matthew's account in 27:57-66, what were the religious leaders afraid of? What did Pilate tell them to do?

6. Take some time and read Psalm 22. This is a Psalm written by King David. Can you describe the ways that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies in this Messianic Psalm? Take your time and don't rush through this one. Notice how the people were described, the emotions, etc.

I read something interesting written by Wayne Taylor in He Dwelt Among Us. In regards to the water and blood that came from Jesus' side as He was pierced, he says: "This reveals an interesting phenomenon. Normally, if a man's body is dead and then pierced with a spear in this way, it wouldn't bleed much at all. A clear exception to this would be if a man's heart had ruptured and the blood had flowed out into the pericardium, the water sac that surrounds the heart. If he was pierced in the side as Jesus was, the piercing of the pericardium would bring forth a flow of blood and water. Dr. Samuel Howton, a physiologist at the University of Dublin, believes the only explanation possible to account for the flowing of blood and water from Jesus' side is that He died both of crucifixion, and a ruptured heart. His

heart ruptured out of the agony, stress, and pain He had gone through. This perfectly fits a Messianic prophesy found in Psalm 69:20, "Reproach has broken my heart ..." Evidently, the heart of Jesus was literally broken and burst by carrying the sins and sorrows of you and me. As Isaiah 53:4 says, "He bore our sorrows and carried our griefs." The weight of all that guilt, sin, and agony caused His heart to rupture. As a result, blood and water came out as a sign of our forgiveness and restoration."

I don't know medically if this is correct, but it does give us a tragic picture of the heartache we caused our Savior. I praise God that His blood offers us forgiveness and cleansing from all the ugly guilt of sin.

That's it for today. Next week should be exciting as we read about His resurrection from the dead! Until then, spend some time in prayer. Make sure your heart is right before the Lord. Make sure you've asked Him to cleanse you from your sin today. Make sure you aren't still "breaking His heart."

**"Rock of Ages, cleft for me; let me hide myself in Thee. Let the water and the blood from Thy riven side which flowed; be of sin the double cure, cleanse me from its guilt and power."
(Rock of Ages, by Augustus Toplady, 1776)**

