

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little.

Isaiah 28:10

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First Love Ministries, Inc.

PRAYER STUDY #207

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

CHAPTER 19

1. Jesus crowned with thorns.
2. Pilate makes final effort to free Jesus.
3. Jesus is crucified.
4. Events following His death
5. Jesus is buried.

Part One-Verses One through Three

1. Then Pilate, therefore, took Jesus and scourged Him.
2. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe.
3. And said, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote Him with their hands.

Pilate had Jesus scourged in the Roman manner which was more severe than the Jewish way. He did this because he hoped this severe punishment would satisfy the Jews so that they would allow him to release Jesus. According to Finis Dake, *“A scourge was a Roman implement for severe bodily punishment. It consisted of a handle with about a dozen leather cords with jagged pieces of bone or metal at each end to make the blow more painful and effective. The victim was tied to a post and the blows were applied to the bare back and loins and sometimes to the face and bowels. The flesh was cut in several places by each blow. So hideous was the punishment that the victim often fainted and some died under it. It was designed to get confessions and secrets from victims, but what could they get from an innocent sinless one (Acts 22:24-25)? Flogging was permitted by the law up to 40 stripes. Jews reduced this to 39 stripes.”*

Part Two-Verses Four through Fifteen

4. Pilate therefore went forth again and saith unto them, Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him.
5. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

6. When the chief priests therefore and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye Him and crucify Him for I find no fault in Him.
7. The Jews answered him, We have a law and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.
8. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid,
9. And went again into the judgment hall and saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.
10. Then saith Pilate unto Him, Speakest Thou not unto me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee and have power to release Thee?
11. Jesus answered, **Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.**
12. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this Man go, thou art not Caesar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speakest against Caesar.
13. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.
14. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour, and he said unto the Jews, Behold your King!
15. But they cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

Pilate was known for his cold-hearted, insensitive and cruel style of leadership. He was hated by the Jews because of this. He had never had any trouble putting to death anyone labeled a "criminal." But there was an unusual dynamic going on here between Jesus and Pilate. Apparently Pilate saw something in Jesus that he had never seen in an ordinary criminal. Perhaps it was the look in Jesus' eyes. Perhaps it was what Jesus did and did not say. Perhaps it was his wife's dream about Jesus and her begging Pilate not to crucify Him, which is told in Matthew 27:19. Some believe even that she was a secret follower of Jesus. At any rate Pilate tried to find a loophole to free Jesus. He even sent him to Herod when he found that Jesus was from Galilee. Herod sent him back when Jesus refused to "perform" miracles for Herod. The Jews demanded crucifixion, but could not crucify Jesus because of their own laws so they kept insisting that Pilate deal with Jesus. Matthew tells us

that Pilate “marveled greatly” at Jesus. He had never met a man like this One, and he did not want to murder Him.

The Jews, according to Rick Renner, had three options:

1. The first option was to see Jesus judged by the Romans courts, thus ruining His reputation and guaranteeing His crucifixion. This would vindicate the religious leaders with the people, and in order to push this option, they knowingly lied about Jesus to Pilate. They told him that Jesus had perverted the whole nation, had commanded people not to pay taxes to Rome, and had claimed to be King. If any of these charges, which were all unsubstantiated and not provable, had been proven true, Pilate was bound by law to crucify Jesus. Pilate realized that they were false charges.
2. If option one failed, they would try option two. The second option was to get Pilate booted from power by claiming that he knowingly let a man free who had claimed to be a rival king to the Roman emperor. They would then murder Jesus in their own way.
3. If both two and three failed, they would go to option three. The third option was to take Jesus back into their own court in the Sanhedrin if Pilate would not crucify Him. There they would seek and be given the religious authority to stone Jesus to death for claiming to be the Son of God.

Pilate was dumbfounded at Jesus’ silence because Roman law permitted prisoners three chances to open their mouths and defend themselves. If a prisoner refuse to answer, he would automatically be judged guilty.

The thing that finally got to Pilate was the fear that the Jews would report to Caesar that he had released a man who claimed to be king. That one claim would terminate Pilate as governor and might cause his own loyalty to be questioned.

In the other Gospels, Pilate washed his hands of the matter. By washing his hands, he is saying to the crowd that he believed Jesus was totally innocent. He could indeed find no fault in Him.

This last verse in Part Two just shows how hypocritical and to what lengths the Jews would go to accuse Jesus. They literally hated Him. In reality they did not consider Caesar their king but only God was their king. The irony of it all is that they crucified the very God, the only real King, that they said that they served.

Part Three-Verses Sixteen through Thirty

16. Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led Him away.
17. And he bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of the skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha,
18. Where they crucified Him and two others with Him, on either side one and Jesus in the midst.
19. And Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.
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.
21. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews, but that He said, I am King of the Jews.
22. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.
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.
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.
25. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.
26. When Jesus therefore saw His mother and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, he saith unto His mother, **Woman, behold thy son!**
27. Then saith He to the disciple, **Behold thy mother!** And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.
28. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, **I thirst.**
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.
30. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, **It is finished,** and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.

The cross was the most terrible death imaginable both in terms of pain and suffering and in terms of humiliation and disrespect of the human body. According to Barclay, using the cross as an instrument of death began with the Persians (Iranians). These people believe that the earth

was sacred and should not be defiled by a criminal's body so they crucified the criminal and left the body on the cross for the vultures and wild dogs to eat. Romans themselves by law could not be crucified. (Remember that Paul was a Roman citizen and was not crucified. Instead, his head was cut off.)

The procedure for crucifixion was always the same. Four Roman soldiers were put in charge. When the verdict was read, they instantly went to work, for the crucifixion was to be done then and there. First, the criminal was scourged. This left him weak, but he still was made to carry his cross. If he fell down, he was beaten until he got up and moved on. As he carried the cross, a soldier would go before him carrying a sign listing what the crime was.

The four soldiers forced the criminal to go down as many streets in the city as possible. This was for two reasons. First, they wanted to humiliate the criminal as much as possible. Secondly, they wanted to make sure that, if anyone had any evidence that would exonerate the accused, they could come forward. If someone did, they would stop the procedure and have a retrial.

In Jerusalem the place of execution was called the *Place of the Skull* or in Hebrew *Golgotha*. In Latin *Place of the Skull* is *Calvary*. Since it was unlawful for anyone to be crucified in the city limits, the criminal had to be taken outside the city gates. It is likely that the place received the name *Place of the Skull* because it was on a hill shaped like a skull, and indeed, if you go to the Garden Tomb in Israel today, the distant hill looks like a skull.

Pilate's stubborn resistance in honoring the Jewish request to change the sign he had made and had put on the cross indicates that he was trying to get back at the Jews for what they had forced him, in a way, to do.

This is what Rick Renner says about the Cross: *When I read about the crucifixion of Jesus, it makes me repent for the callousness with which the world looks upon the cross today. In our society, the cross has become a fashion item, decorated with gems, rhinestones, gold, and silver. Beautiful crosses of jewelry adorn women's ears and dangle at the bottom of gold chains and necklaces. The symbol of the cross is even tattooed on people's flesh! The reason this is so disturbing to me is that in beautifying the cross to make it pleasant to look upon, people have forgotten that it wasn't beautiful or lavishly decorated at all. In fact, the cross of Jesus Christ was shocking and appalling. Jesus' totally naked body was flaunted in humiliation before a watching world. His flesh was*

ripped to shreds; His body was bruised from head to toe; He had to heave His body upward for every breath. He breathed and His nervous system sent constant signals of excruciating pain to His brain. Blood drenched Jesus' face and streamed from His hands, His feet, and from the countless cuts and gaping wounds the scourging had left upon His body. In reality the cross of Jesus Christ was a disgusting, repulsive, nauseating, stomach-turning sight, so entirely different from the attractive crosses people wear today as a part of their jewelry or attire.

According to Roman custom, the soldiers who carried out the crucifixion had a right to the victim's clothes. Jewish law required that the person being crucified be stripped naked. These soldiers were perhaps the most innocent of the crucifixion participants. They were just carrying out orders for what they thought was a common criminal and by casting lots, they were fulfilling Biblical prophecy in Psalm 22:18. However, there is no excuse for the excessive cruelty that they showed.

The four women at the cross were Mary, the mother of Jesus; Salome, the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the mother of James and John (Salome had been rebuked by Jesus for asking that her sons be given the chief places in His kingdom); Mary Magdalene out of whom Jesus had casted 7 demons; and Mary the wife of Cleopas.

Note that Jesus commits His mother to John, not to his own brothers and her own sons, who apparently were not yet believers (John 7:5) and that hyssop was the same grassy reed used by the Jews to transfer the blood of the lamb at Passover commemorating when the Israelites transferred the blood of the lamb on the doorpost when the Death Angel passed over.

Jesus was crucified at 9 o'clock in the morning. He died at 3 in the afternoon. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record that, on the day Jesus was crucified, the sky turned very dark from noon until 3 PM. The Greek words that describe this time are very specific and indicate that literally the *whole* world became suddenly and simultaneously darkened. Since it was Passover, which occurred at a time of a full moon, this could not have been a solar eclipse, as some have proposed to explain away the significance of this event.

The sixth hour or noon was when the high priest Caiaphas in his full priestly garments would have began the procession in which he enter the Temple to slaughter a pure, spotless Passover lamb. The ninth hour or 3 PM is the exact moment when the high priest would be entering the Holy of Holies to offer the blood of the Passover lamb to cover the sins of the nation. It was at this moment that Jesus cried out in John 19:30, "It is

finished!” Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us that Jesus died with a great shout. John is the only one who tells what the shout was. It seems from all the Gospels taken together that Jesus was actually crying out in victory as He died

At the same moment that He died the veil of the temple, according to Matthew, was ripped from top to bottom. This was the veil that separated the Holy of holies from the people and was sixty feet high, thirty feet wide, and an entire handbreadth in thickness. From that point, it was no longer necessary for the high priest to make animal sacrifices because the blood of Jesus “hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Ephesians 2:14). According to historical evidence and the writings of the early Christian leader Origen, there were also great earthquakes at the time of Jesus’ death.

Part Four-Verses Thirty-one through Thirty-seven

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.

32.Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first and of the other which was crucified with Him.

33.But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs.

34.But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side and forthwith came there out blood and water.

35.And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

36.For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken.

37.And again another scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced.

One good thing could be said about the Jews. They held the human body in great honor because it had been created in the image of God. Even those who were executed had their bodies treated with respect after death. The Jewish law said that it was not permitted for a Jew’s body to hang on a cross after sunset or to be left to rot or for birds to devour. A way to finish off criminals on a cross was to break their legs because it was with the legs that

they pushed up on the platforms of the cross so that they could breath. Since Jesus had already died, he did not have to have his legs broken. The soldier who pierced his side knew that he was fully dead because both water and blood flowed, indicating that his lungs had filled up with fluid and his heart had been pierced. The water and blood are symbolic of water baptism and of the blood drank at the Lord's Supper which cleanses us from all sin.

Part Five-Verses Thirty-eight through Forty-two

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 the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore and took the body of Jesus.

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

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.

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.

42. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day, for the sepulcher was nigh at hand.

If it were known that Joseph was the one who took the body of Jesus and buried it, he could be in great danger and also in disfavor with the Jews and his fellow Jewish leaders. Therefore, going to Pilate was a very brave thing that he did. The fact that this tomb was hewn out of rock indicates that Joseph was very wealthy. Also, Nicodemus must have been very prominent and wealthy. Myrrh is a sweet-smelling gum resin used primarily to embalm dead bodies. Aloes is a sweet-smelling fragrance. It was used ceremonially to cleanse, to purify, and to counteract the terrible smell of a corpse as it decomposed. It was very expensive and rare.