

The Gospel of John

Chapter 19:17-30

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- **Review and Introduction**

We have concluded our study of Jesus' trial before Pilate and now move on to the centerpiece of human history. It is impossible to consider all of the ramifications of our Lord's death, burial and resurrection. There is certainly more to it than has even yet been revealed in the Scriptures. What we do know is that He came into the world for this very purpose. It was our sin and His immeasurable love that brought Him here.

Exposition of John 19:17-30

17 And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha,¹⁸ where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.

- As was required in all sin sacrifices, (Lev16:27) Jesus is led outside the city where His blood will be shed. As clear here, the sacrificial system was a picture foretelling the final sacrifice to come. All of the other sacrifices were insufficient in actually removing sin. But the death of our Lord succeeded in completely removing the sin of those to whom His righteousness is imputed and to whom He does not impute sin.
- In addition, the OT law also declares that he who hangs on a tree is accursed. (Deut 21:22-23) These two seemingly minor implications of the execution of Christ are actually foundational and are included so that we might have full assurance that this atonement was effectual. Because Jesus became a curse, He redeemed us from the curse of the Law (Gal 3:10-14). Also, He became sin so that in Him the elect might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:21)
- The fact that Christ is executed with criminals makes Him included with them but does not make Him like them. John does not record the confessions of the criminals and the conversations with Christ but he records enough to know that Jesus was clearly the fulfillment of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53:12

19 Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.²⁰ Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.²¹ Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews." ' "²² Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

- It is fascinating to consider the irony of our Lord. His clear providence is seen in Pilate's accurate declaration of the office of Christ. Just as Caiaphas in his sin actually brings about the righteous purposes of God, so too here we see that Pilate's attempt to avenge himself indirectly on the Jews (who had extorted from him an unjust sentence on an innocent man) and by declaring Jesus as the King of the Jews places blame on the entire nation.
- Clearly, Pilate was not celebrating Christ but by the secret guiding of his pen, the Lord ensures that His Son is not branded with the commission of any crime. This same guidance also ensured that the words were written in three languages so that the entire world would be able to know who the Son of God was.

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic.

Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece.²⁴ They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

"They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots."

Therefore the soldiers did these things.

- As was customary, the executioners were allowed to divide the garments of those being executed. The four of them divided Jesus' under garments but His tunic would be difficult to divide as well as useless to all of them, so they opted to cast lots for the entire garment. Again, this action fulfills Psalm 22:19 (which is the same Psalm Jesus quotes on the cross in the other gospels) as we see the hand of God orchestrating all of the minute details through the actions of sinners.
- Much time has been spent on placing significance in the fact that the tunic was woven of one piece. Clearly John included the detail under the inspiration of God but our conjecture about its import is wild speculation. Some have determined that the tunic was a picture of the Church others have thought it to be a picture of His perfect righteousness.

25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶ When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

- John records the presence of four women at the foot of the cross; Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary's sister (possible Salome (not to be confused with the daughter of Herodias who asked for John the Baptist's head), mother of John), and two other women named Mary. Here we see in the midst of His suffering Jesus attends to the care of His mother by commending John to treat her as though she were his own mother. John does so and history records that he later took Mary with him to Ephesus where both were ultimately buried.

28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!"²⁹ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. NKJV

- Again satisfying the prophetic words of David, Jesus is given a drink in fulfillment of Psalm 69:22. It is not certain whether the drink was simply to quench a thirst or whether it was an astringent used to assist death in overcoming the victim.
- Even though His death and resurrection had not yet occurred, everything the Father required of the Son had been fulfilled precisely as the Father instructed. It is tremendously significant to consider that Jesus' words declare that His work is finished and that He accomplished all that the Father intended for Him. When we declare the Gospel to the world, we must keep in mind that we are proclaiming the completed work of Christ. We declare a message of work already completed.