



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Salvation Secured (John 19:1-24)

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JESUS SENTENCED TO BE CRUCIFIED

John 19:1-5—Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck him in the face. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

There are two possible interpretations for the flogging of Jesus. Many commentators understand that Jesus was whipped and beaten one time during the succession of hearings before Pilate and Herod. Here, in John, we have evidence that Jesus endured two different whippings. The one mentioned here is before Jesus is sentenced to death and the accounts in *Mark 15:15* and *Matthew 27:26* appear to take place after he is sentenced to be crucified. Also the original language uses a word here suggesting a lighter punishment than the word used in Mark and Matthew. The two accounts of a scourging do not minimize His punishment, rather, if correct it is an additional indignity suffered by the Savior for us.

John 19:6-7—As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

The Jewish leaders were not satisfied with a mere flogging, but instead they wanted Jesus dead. It is true that under their law a man could die for what they considered blasphemy, but there is more to their concern than blasphemy, and that charge was a cover for the real issue—the threat to their power and position.

Remember the ironic statement of Caiphas:

"You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish" (*John 11:50*)

John 19:8-9—When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer.

Pilate already knew Jesus was from Galilee. His question underscored the fact that Jesus was obviously not of this world, and Pilate was unsettled by this fact.

"Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said.

Jesus had already answered the question in *18:36-37* telling Pilate He was a king from a different world. Also, Jesus completes the prophecy of *Isaiah 53:7*.

John 10:10-11—"Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

Notice the fear. The Jewish authorities and Pilate were both afraid of the challenge of Jesus to their status. Jesus is the one who is not afraid of the outcome. He is not a pawn in the hands of these men. He is laying down His life voluntarily. He could have called for a legion of angels at any moment to rescue Him from the hands of spite filled men. But, He is on a mission to rescue men from their deepest fears and darkest sins.

The other issue is authority. *Matthew 28:18* tells us Jesus has all authority in Heaven and on Earth. Pilate believes he is in charge and so it seems on the surface, but there is a larger reality. God is in charge and He always does His will.

The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father (*John 10:17-18*).

John 19:12-16a—From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the

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chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

Pilate wanted to set Jesus free. He was not decisional while interacting with the Jews or Jesus. He was caught up in circumstances and afraid to take charge. The Jews demonstrated contempt for God by declaring the only king to rule them is Caesar. Pilate's final act is more one of appeasement than true judgment. He is seated in the place of ceremonial judgment, but even this mocks his weakness and confusion.

The real issue is the sacrifice that is being prepared by the Father for His Son. On earth the ceremonial laws of the Temple ritual are being completed as lambs will be sacrificed in the middle of the day. Jesus would be the complete fulfillment of the ceremonial law that forms the backdrop for the cosmic events not understood by the human participants.

All of redemption history is pressing down on this moment and this place as the culmination of God's purposes rest heavily on the soul of Jesus.

THE CRUCIFIXION

John 19:16b-18—So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). Here they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

"Carrying his own cross." This is true that it is His cross, but the cross is also our cross. He took the sentence we deserve. *Isaiah 53:5-6* reminds us that none of this was a surprise to God.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

John 19:19-22—Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the

Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

Imagine being one of the throng and reading the notice on the cross. It continues to be the challenge to people everywhere—is Jesus who He claimed to be? It evokes the exchange between Jesus and Saul on the road to Damascus.

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. (*Acts 9:3-5*)

John 19:23-24—When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did.

Scripture gives us significant details about the events of Jesus' arrest, trials, and sentencing, but surprising little regarding the methods employed by the soldiers. Instead we see the soldiers' hearts exposed by their actions. They were more interested in an item of clothing than the eternal drama happening before their eyes. This is a reprimand to us as well. We can busy ourselves with the trinkets of life and forget the Author of Life and Salvation. Hear the words of Jesus:

"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (*Matthew 6:31-33*).

John zeroes in on four aspects of the cross that emphasize the magnificence of Christ's person: the specific fulfillments of prophecy, the superscription written by Pilate, the selfless love of Jesus, and His supernatural knowledge and sovereign control of events.¹

1. John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary, John 12-21*, (Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, 2008), p. 347