

JOHN

Lesson 18 w/Answers

John 19:1-42

This lesson examine John's account of the crucifixion and the death of Jesus on the cross. While it is a difficult thing for any of us who are followers of Christ to study, there is much we can learn from this chapter, as John continues to document the evidence that Jesus is the true Messiah. The good news is that in the next lesson, we will be exploring Jesus' Resurrection and surrounding events!

Read through John Chapter 19 and consider the following:

1. In the opening verses of John 19, we see something revealed about Pilate that seems unusual at first glance. Specifically, this relates to the description that he became fearful at the claims made by the Chief Priests and their officials. What do you believe is the reason that he was fearful? (John 19:1-12)
 - a. ANSWER: Pilate's role as Governor was to keep the peace and to keep Rome and the Caesar supporting him in that role. The Jews were warning him that if he did not crucify a person that claims to be a king, Pilate could be characterized as being disloyal to Caesar; and the Jews would report this back to Caesar. Herod Antipas would have gladly have taken on this mission, I'm sure.
2. Which language, of the four present at that time in Jerusalem (Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Aramaic), was not used when Pilate commissioned a sign and had it nailed over Jesus stating he was "King of the Jews?" How would everyone have been able to read to the sign if a language was missing? Was it Pilate's intent to make a sign that was strictly for the Gentiles? (John 19:9-22)
 - a. ANSWER 1: The language missing from Pilate's sign was Hebrew. In some translations, the scripture may list Hebrew as one of the languages included. (There may be a footnote that identifies the Hebrew language reference as actually referring to "Jewish Aramaic.") While Hebrew and Aramaic are similar, there are non-trivial differences. You may wish to research this further. You might then wonder why Hebrew was not included, since Pilate had sarcastically created this sign partly for the Jews and identified Jesus as their king?
 - b. ANSWER 2: As mentioned in ANSWER 1 above, the common language of the day was Aramaic, so all of the Jews would have spoken it and would have been able to clearly understand Pilate's sign. In covering the three commonly known languages of the day, Pilate was ensuring that everyone knew who was being crucified, not just the Gentiles. It also meant that the guards and other prisoners with Jesus at his crucifixion would also have been able to read it.
3. Since the sign was written in languages that the Roman guards could understand, did any of them ever believe the sign was true, or was it just Pilate's way of poking his finger in the eye of the Jewish leadership? (Matthew 27:54)
 - a. ANSWER: Clearly all of the guards could read the sign, including the captain of the guard, who did in fact realize that Jesus was who he said he was; regardless of Pilate's original intent.
4. Considering all of the evidence that John documents in his gospel, what is the prophetic evidence that we find in John 19:23-24 and Psalm 22:18 that indicates that Jesus is the Messiah? (Read John 19:23-24 and Psalm 22:18)
 - a. ANSWER: Once again, John is pointing us to prophetic scripture about the Messiah. Here, he reminds us that what they did to Jesus was just as had been prophesied in Psalm 22: "They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."
5. In John 19:25-30, John provides us further insight into the last moments of Jesus' life, just before he died on the cross. Read this passage, and Psalm 69:21 and Exodus 12:21-22 as well; then list the steps that Jesus went through leading up to his final words, "It is finished." Which prophecies were fulfilled during these moments?
 - a. ANSWER 1: As the moment of his death approaches, Jesus attends to caring for his mother. His friend and disciple, John, is standing at the foot of the cross with the four women who have followed and supported Jesus; and are now all there for him at the end of his earthly ministry. John will care of Mary, Jesus's mother, for the rest of her life. Tradition has it that John and Mary eventually move to Ephesus, where Timothy will pastor the church there. We have very little information about Mary's life after Jesus' death; however, we know that John lived a long life, well into his nineties, so it is virtually certain that he would have been able to honor Jesus' request (i.e., caring for Mary for the rest of her life).
 - b. ANSWER 2: Following his making arrangements for his mother's care, Jesus once again fulfills prophecy as the final moments draw near. Stating that he is thirsty, he is given vinegar wine. He is given that with a branch of hyssop that is dipped in the vinegar and touched to his lips. Very much the way hyssop was dipped in the lamb's blood at the night of the first Passover; and it fulfills the prophecy spoken of in Psalm 69:21.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Jesus then declares, "It is finished," and gives up his spirit. Note that in the statement "It is finished," "it" is referring to the redemptive work of Jesus, the Lamb of God. That statement can also be translated to mean "paid in full." Jesus did not mean that he was finished, but that his redemptive work was finished. With those words, he voluntarily gave up, or dismissed, his spirit and died on the cross.

6. Further in Chapter 19, John walks us through what happened to Jesus' body immediately following his death, including his burial. Refer to John 19:31-42. Why was it important that the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus' side, and why also was it significant that these same guards, who were regularly assigned the job of crucifying people, did not break Jesus' legs as was customary to bring on death during a crucifixion? (See Exodus 12:43-46, Numbers 9:12, and Psalm 34:20.)
- ANSWER 1: The fact that men trained in crucifixion pierced Jesus' side to see the blood and water drain out of him tells us Jesus was human and he died a human death. While many try to assign some evangelical meaning to the blood and water, it simply means he was human; and the contents spilled out, so he was definitely dead.
 - ANSWER 2: The Romans only broke the legs of criminals who were being crucified, in order to hurry the dying process. They could tell that Jesus was dead already, and so they did not need to bother with breaking his legs. This also fulfilled the prophecy documented in Exodus 12:43-46, Numbers 9:12, and Psalm 34:20.
 - ANSWER 3: We can see, therefore, that in spite of what others will try to say later, trained Roman soldiers (who knew how to kill a criminal on the cross) declared Jesus dead. He literally did die a physical death; and the soldiers, who were trained, skilled, executioners, attested to that fact.
7. In John 19:31-32, why is it significant that this was a special Sabbath, i.e., a "high day," and therefore the bodies could not remain on the cross? The typical crucifixion of criminals would allow their dead and decaying bodies to remain on the cross until the body was almost completely decayed. The stench and the scene itself would have been almost impossible to think of—which is what the Romans wanted, since it added to the horror of crucifixion. What precipitated the rush to get the bodies down? See Deuteronomy 21:22-23 and Galatians 3:13.
- ANSWER 1: Because the annual Passover feast was just hours away, the Jews did not want to defile the land, or break any rules leading up to Passover, or they would also be defiled. It was imperative that Jesus' body be taken down and put into a tomb or grave, and it was urgent. Specifically, it was already after three in the afternoon; and in just a few hours Passover would begin.
 - ANSWER 2: For the Jewish leaders, the fact that they had killed an innocent man and now had blood on their hands was clearly not something they were concerned about. They only wished to remain ceremonially clean and not defile the land.
8. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus stepped forward after Pilate gave permission for Joseph to bury Jesus. They quickly prepared the body by wrapping it in linen and taking it to a tomb in a garden nearby. Who were these Jewish men that came forward, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus; and what prophecy do many believe was fulfilled by Joseph's actions? See Matthew 27:57-60, Mark 15:43, Luke 23:50-51, Isaiah 53:9, John 7:50-51, and John 3:1-21.
- ANSWER 1: We can note from these verses that both men were members of the Sanhedrin; and Nicodemus was also a Pharisee. Both were also wealthy.
 - ANSWER 2: Furthermore, both were secret believers until the time of Jesus' death, at which time they took a very public stand by coming forward to bury Jesus.
 - ANSWER 3: Since Joseph of Arimathea was wealthy and owned the tomb, many believe that the prophecy in Isaiah 53:9 was fulfilled.

Rushing to bury Jesus, the two men leave themselves much work yet to be done as they hurry home for the Passover Feast. It will be three days—until Sunday—before three of the ladies at the Cross will walk to the tomb to finish the task of burying their beloved Savior. What a great surprise awaits them! We will examine this in the next lesson!

Have a great week, and thanks for studying with us.

In Christ,

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