

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE ARREST, TRIAL, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS, JOHN 18 - 21:25

INTRODUCTION

THE SENTENCING OF JESUS, JOHN 19:1-16

A. The abuse of Jesus(1-3)

1. He was flogged (1), *Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him.*

a. Related verses

- 1) Matthew 20:19, *and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.*
- 2) Matthew 27:26, *Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.*
- 3) Mark 15:15, *So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.*
- 4) Luke 23:16, *I will therefore punish and release him.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Pilate incorrectly hoped that, if he flogged (Gr. emastigosen) Jesus, the Jews would be satisfied (cf. vv. 4–6; Luke 23:16). Perhaps Pilate thought that this action would increase popular support for Jesus against the chief priests, and then Pilate could release Him ... There were three forms of flogging that the Romans administered. The lightest of these, the fustigatio, was a light whipping that only mischief-makers experienced. The second, the flagellatio, was a severe flogging that criminals who were guilty of more serious crimes received. The third, the verberatio, was the most brutal. The worst criminals, including those sentenced to crucifixion, underwent this last type of scourging. Evidently Jesus received the first or second of these floggings at this time, namely, before His sentencing by Pilate. He received the third type after His sentencing (v. 16; cf. Matt. 27:26; Mark 15:15).*
- 2) Richard Lenski, *From him [John] we learn that Jesus was not scourged in order to be crucified but in order to escape crucifixion.*
- 3) Edwin Blum, *Pilate's action, according to Luke (23:16), was another attempt at compromise. He hoped the crowd would be satisfied with a little blood. Roman flogging was done with a leather whip with bits of metal at the ends. Such flogging often killed a person.*
- 4) Warren Wiersbe, *Never at a loss for an idea, Pilate tried a new approach—sympathy. The crowd had cried "Crucify Him!" (Mark 15:14) but perhaps they would be placated if Jesus were scourged. What man could behold a scourged prisoner and still want the victim crucified?*
- 5) Kenneth Gangel, *It seems apparent that Pilate never intended crucifixion and expected to beat Jesus and release him. Carson argues convincingly that this was likely a fustigatio, the least severe flogging on the Roman menu: "The chronology of Luke and John is correct. But this means that Jesus received a second scourging, the wretched verberatio, after the sentence of crucifixion was passed. This would hasten the death, and the nearness of the special Sabbath of that week provided the officials with some pressure to ensure that the agony of crucifixion, which could go on for days, would not be permitted to run on too long (Jn. 19:31–33).*
- 6) Leon Morris, *... in the present case Pilate ordered this scourging not as a signal for crucifixion, but in order to avoid the necessity of sentencing Jesus to be crucified. We arrive at this conclusion upon the following grounds: 1. The passage 19:12 clearly shows that even after the scourging Pilate was still trying desperately to release Jesus. 2. Another passage, 19:5, seems to indicate that the governor was trying to arouse pity for the prisoner. See on that verse ... Pilate was consistently trying to evade the issue. He desired to get Jesus off his hands. He was trying hard, very hard, to find a way by which he could, on the one hand, avoid ordering Jesus to be crucified, and yet, on the other hand, escape the revenge of Annas, Caiaphas, and company.*

- 7) George Beasley-Murray, *It is generally believed that the suffering of this severe scourging was the reason why Jesus was unable to carry his cross all the way to his execution ...*
 - 8) John Hart, *In hopes of gaining the crowd's sympathy and Jesus' release, Pilate ordered that Jesus be scourged, unknowingly fulfilling messianic prophecy (cf. Is 50:6; 53:5).*
 - 9) Edward Klink, *Unlike the thirty-nine maximum lashes prescribed by Jewish law (Deut 25:3), the Romans did not limit the number of lashes, thus leaving the victim helpless to the cruelty of the supervising soldiers.*
 - 10) Charles Swindoll, *Pilate's scheme didn't solve his problem; it merely tightened the political vise closing around him. They had called his bluff and now he would be the one turning a dangerous criminal loose to harass Rome further. Desperate to find a solution and unwilling to release Barabbas, Pilate hoped to satisfy the mob's bloodlust by sentencing Jesus to "the halfway death."*
2. The soldiers mocked Jesus as King of the Jews (2-3), ***And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands.***
- a. Related verses: see Matthew 27:27-30 and Mark 15:16-19
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, ... *the reddish purple cloak—perhaps a Roman trooper's coat—that the soldiers placed over Jesus' shoulders was an obvious attempt to mock His claim of being a king (cf. Matt. 27:28; Mark 15:17). Vassal kings wore purple in Jesus' day. The soldiers also struck Jesus in the face with the palms of their hands (cf. 18:22), contradicting their pretended verbal respect with violent brutality.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *The flogging, the mocking crown of thorns and purple robe, the ridiculing in hailing Him King of the Jews, and the physical blows on His face—these were all part of Jesus' deep humiliation as He was identified with human sin as the Servant of the Lord (cf. Isa. 50:6; 52:14–53:6). (Matthew and Mark added that the soldiers spit on Jesus [Matt. 27:30; Mark 15:19].) The thorns on His head are mindful of the curse of thorns caused by human sin (Gen. 3:18).*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *Pilate had called Him "King of the Jews" (John 18:39), so the soldiers decided that the "king" should have a crown and a robe. The Jews had mocked His claim to being a Prophet (Matt. 26:67–68), and now the Gentiles mocked His claim to being a King. The verb tenses in the Greek text in John 19:3 indicate that the soldiers repeatedly came to Him, mocked Him, and beat Him with their hands. The forces of hell were having a heyday in Pilate's hall.*
 - 4) Leon Morris, *The mockery will have been aimed at the Jews generally rather than at Jesus specifically. He simply formed a convenient means whereby the soldiers showed their contempt for the nation at large ... The soldiers doubtless conceived of themselves as witty fellows, able to devise an ironical situation. But the real irony lay in the fact that the one whom they so mocked is indeed "King of kings, and Lord of lords" ... Matthew and Mark also tell us that the soldiers knelt before their prisoner and spat on him.*
 - 5) William Hendriksen, *Many commentators, in agreement with the opinion of the crusaders, mention as the plant from which the torture crown was plaited the Spina Christi or Palinrus Shrub, whose branches have ugly spikes and whose leaves resemble the ivy which was used in crowning emperors and generals ... With fiendish cruelty the soldiers pressed down this crown upon his head, causing rivulets of blood to run down his face, neck, and body (still aching sorely from the scourging). They wanted to torture him. They also wanted to mock him. The crown of thorns satisfied both ambitions. They aggravated the bitter insult and the ignominious suffering by another bit of contemptuous mimicry: they threw around Jesus what was probably a discarded and faded soldier's mantle, of a hue resembling the royal purple.*
 - 6) George Beasley-Murray, *The crown that the soldiers made, though primarily intended as a caricature and not as an instrument of torture, will have been unspeakably painful. Its form will have been an imitation of the radiate crown of the divine rulers, such as had figured on coins in the east for centuries prior to the episode in the Gospels ... was most royal of all: "He was, as it were, divus Iesus radiatus" (Hart, 74), i.e., "the radiant god Jesus." So the soldiers bowed the knee to him, as they would before a Hellenistic ruler of that time. They cried, "Hail, King of the Jews!" in imitation of the greeting accorded to the Roman emperor, "Ave, Caesar!" But instead of the kiss of homage they spat at him and slapped his face (according to Mark and Matthew they also hit him on the head with the rod in his hand, Mark 15:15 par.).*

- 7) Edward Klink, *Almost certainly proud of their theatrical wit, the soldiers make Jesus a plaything, treating him as if he were a clown-king. But these anonymous soldiers were unaware that one day they would perform this very act, kneeling before him and confessing with their tongues that he is Lord (Phil 2:10–11).*
- 8) Charles Swindoll, *Because the procedure could potentially send a victim into shock in less than five minutes, the soldiers turned the event into a spectacle, taking delight in humiliating him. Three or four lashes would be followed by taunting. Then, as he recovered, more lashes. This continued until the victim could bear no more without dying.*

B. Pilate took Jesus before the crowd (4-7)

1. He proclaimed Jesus' innocence (4-5), ***Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him." 5 So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!"***

a. Related verses

- 1) John 18:38, *Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him.*
- 2) John 19:6, *When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him."*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus received the abuse that John just described inside the Praetorium: Pilate's headquarters. Now Pilate brought Him out so the Jews could see their King in His humiliation. First, he announced that he had found Jesus not guilty ... Undoubtedly roars of laughter were mingled with gasps of horror as the Jews looked at the Man who had done them nothing but good. Pilate called to the Jewish leaders to "Behold, the Man" (Lat. Ecce homo) whom they feared so much, but who was now a beaten and pathetic figure. The governor meant: Look at this poor fellow whom you regard as a rival king! John urged his readers to behold Him whom God had predicted would die voluntarily as a sacrifice for humankind's sins as the Lamb of God (cf. 1:29, 36).*
- 2) A. T. Robertson, *This exclamatory introduction of Jesus in mock coronation robes to the mob was clearly intended to excite pity and to show how absurd the charge of the Sanhedrin was that such a pitiable figure should be guilty of treason. Pilate failed utterly in this effort and did not dream that he was calling attention to the greatest figure of history, the Man of the ages.*
- 3) Edwin Blum, *Pilate's words, Here is the Man! (KJV, "Behold the Man!" Latin, Ecce homo) have become famous. It is strange that several of Pilate's statements have become immortal. Jesus by that time must have appeared as a pathetic figure, bloody and wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.*
- 4) Warren Wiersbe, *Here was one of their own, a Jewish prophet, suffering unjustly at the hands of the Romans, and the Jews did not repent or even show any touch of pity! If sinners who actually saw Christ in His suffering did not repent, what hope is there for people twenty centuries later who only read about His agonies? ... The cross involves much more than an exhibition of innocent suffering. On that cross, the Son of God paid the price for the sins of the world and thereby declared the love of God and defended the holiness and justice of God. We are not saved by feeling pity for Jesus. We are saved by repenting of our sins and trusting Jesus, the sinless Substitute.*
- 5) Kenneth Gangel, *After the humiliation of the prisoner, the law required a formal presentation, and Pilate did the honors. The text seems quite clear that Pilate found no legal basis for arresting and holding Jesus, much less physically punishing him. Perhaps he thought the bloody sight of a beaten countryman would move the Jews to pity. But as he uttered the words Here is the man! (ecce homo), the mob became even more violent in their clamoring for crucifixion.*
- 6) Leon Morris, *As Jesus came out, the governor introduced him with the words, "Here is the man!" ... Pilate may be using the words in a somewhat contemptuous manner. The expression need mean no more than "Here is the accused," but it is likely that John saw more in it than that. For John Jesus is THE man, and in this dramatic scene the supreme governing authority gives expression to this truth.*

- 7) William Hendriksen, *He exposes to their view a pathetic spectacle: Jesus, covered with gashing wounds, blood streaking down his face, neck, back; the horrible “crown” still upon his head; the purple robe still around him. Then Pilate exclaims, “Look! The man!” Has he not suffered enough? Is it really necessary to inflict more punishment upon him? And does he look like a dangerous rebel?*
 - 8) George Beasley-Murray, *Dressed in his wretched clothes that made him look more like a clown than a king, bleeding profusely, in pain and with bruised face through the additional beatings, Jesus must have looked a shocking sight, enough to horrify any who knew him. Yet, as with his description of the mockery of the soldiers, the Evangelist will have wished his readers to recognize that the pathetic figure on whom the Jews are bidden to gaze is the Man sent from God, who, in that state of humiliation and woe, was in the process of bringing the kingdom of heaven for all humankind, including those thirsting for his blood and those who were shedding it.*
 - 9) John Hart, *Pilate’s proclamation Behold, the Man! mocked Jesus as a pathetic representation of mankind. But in recording this statement, John hoped that all readers would look carefully at (behold) the One who has taken on human flesh (1:9, 14) and has represented mankind in His sacrificial death.*
 - 10) Grant Osborne, *... he brings him out in the pathetic robe and crown of thorns, with the blood from the thorns and the flogging flowing down his face and body (19:5). Isaiah 53:2–3 is certainly fulfilled in this, with Jesus having “no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.” When Pilate says, “Here is the man,” he does so not out of contempt for Jesus but to say he is no threat and should be released. With his beaten face and body and his oozing cuts, he would have been a sorry sight yet at the same time in reality “The Man,” the incarnate Shekinah and glorious Son of Man.*
2. The Jewish leaders cried out that Jesus be crucified (6a), ***When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!”***
 - a. Thomas Constable, *If Pilate thought that the sight of Jesus—bruised and bleeding—would satisfy Israel’s rulers, he was wrong. The sight of His blood stirred their appetites for even greater revenge. They cried out repeatedly for the ultimate punishment: Crucifixion!*
 - b. Warren Wiersbe, *Well-meaning preachers have often said that the crowd that on Palm Sunday shouted ‘Hosannah!’ turned right around and shouted ‘Crucify Him!’ on Good Friday. However, it was two different crowds. The Palm Sunday crowd came primarily from Galilee where Jesus was very popular. The crowd at Pilate’s hall was from Judea and Jerusalem where the religious leaders were very much in control.*
 - c. Leon Morris, *If Pilate had meant to appeal to the pity of the Jews or their natural aspirations or anything else that might prove favorable to Jesus, he was disappointed. The only effect of bringing Jesus out was to cause the chief priests and their retainers to call for crucifixion. This is the first use of the term “crucify” in the narrative, and it is perhaps significant that it is not “the Jews” or “the crowd” who raise the cry, but the chief priests and their retainers.*
 3. Pilate told the Jews to crucify Jesus (6b), *Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.”*
 - a. Related verse, John 18:31, *Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.” The Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.”*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Pilate’s reply reflected his disgust with the Jewish leaders. It was really an expression of frustration and exasperation with them. They had brought Jesus to him for a decision, he had given it, and now they refused to accept it. Pilate knew that the Jews could not crucify Jesus without his permission.*
 - 2) Kenneth Gangel, *The Jews had no authority to crucify, so Pilate seemed to mock them when he told them to take the crucifixion process into their own hands.*
 - 3) Leon Morris, *The emphatic pronouns are, however, against this; the words seem rather to be the sudden wild statement of a man goaded into speaking unreasonably. He may mean: “If you are not going to take any notice of me, then crucify him yourselves—if you can.”*

- 4) William Hendriksen, *Of course, Pilate knows very well that without his order they cannot crucify Jesus! In a veiled manner he is reminding them of their political impotence. He hates these Jews, who have caused him so much trouble. And at the same time he fears them. Otherwise he would have released the prisoner long ago. Moreover, they know that he is afraid of them!*
 - 5) George Beasley-Murray, *This unexpected reaction infuriated Pilate: he shouted back, "Take him yourselves and crucify him! For I (whatever you think!) find no ground for your charges against him." Naturally this is no authorization for the Jewish leaders to crucify Jesus (he knew that they could not do it anyway); it indicates both his anger and disgust at their unrelenting attitude toward Jesus and himself, and his own refusal to do what they asked, since he knows that Jesus is not guilty of their charges.*
4. The Jewish leaders said Jesus must die (7), ***The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God."***
- a. Related verses
 - 1) Leviticus 24:16, *Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.*
 - 2) John 5:18, *This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*
 - 3) John 10:36, *do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?*
 - 4) Matthew 26:63, *But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."*
 - 5) Luke 22:70, *So they all said, "Are you the Son of God, then?" And he said to them, "You say that I am."*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *The Jewish leaders' objections to Jesus were both political and religious. Until now they had been stressing the political implications of Jesus' claims to Pilate. Sensing that they were not going to receive the desired sentence against Jesus with this approach, they shifted their emphasis to the religious claims that Jesus had made ... John noted a growing conviction among the Jews that Jesus was blaspheming (cf. 5:18; 8:58–59; 10:33, 36). Their rejection of Jesus was a fully conscious and deliberate denial of the evidence that He was deity, not simply a political Messiah.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *Pilate at first refused to be the executioner, but then the leaders brought forth their real reason: He claimed to be the Son of God. According to the Law the charge of blasphemy (Lev. 24:16) called for death, if it could be proven. About the same time Pilate's wife sent him strange words: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent Man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of Him" (Matt. 27:19).*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *The religious leaders were not at a loss for a powerful reply: "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (John 19:7). This statement is not found in the other Gospels (but see Matt. 26:63–64); however, it fits right into John's purpose in writing his Gospel (John 20:31).*
 - 4) Leon Morris, *Now the Jews come to the real issue. Pilate had used emphatic pronouns in telling them what to do and they respond with one of their own. "We have a law," they say, and imply "whatever be the case with you Romans!" "Law" clearly refers to the law of blasphemy (Lev. 24:16). By this law, they say, Jesus ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God (cf. 5:18; 8:53; 10:33 for this accusation). It was his religious claims that antagonized them.*

- 5) William Hendriksen, *The issue was becoming very clear at last. But why at last? Why had they not advanced this accusation immediately, that is, at the very beginning of the trial before the governor? Probably, because they had felt that such a purely religious charge might make very little impression upon a pagan. But now, when every other method has failed, and Pilate is once more saying, "I find no guilt in him," they present the one and only charge which was official. Perhaps at this juncture they spoke so boastfully about their law ("We have a law") because Pilate had reminded them of the fact that they were a subjugated people ... It is as if in reply they now wish to say, "But has not the Roman government left us a considerable measure of freedom to regulate our own affairs? Do we not enjoy Home Rule? And is it not your duty, Pilate, to respect our laws anent such matters? We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."*
- 6) George Beasley-Murray, *The messianic pretension was serious enough, but the claim to be Son of God, with its accompanying roles of Redeemer and Revealer, was intolerable. It remains the great stumbling block to Israel to this day.*
- 7) John Hart, *... the Jewish leaders (v. 7) insisted on Jesus' death because He violated their law against blasphemy (Lv 24:16) by making Himself out to be the Son of God in equality with God (cf. 5:18), and Pilate crucified Jesus because he wanted to get out from under the pressure of the Jewish leaders and to save his own position. Yet it was Pilate's responsibility to ensure justice in this case, and his opinion that he found no guilt in Him (v. 6) obligated him to release Jesus ...*
- 8) Grant Osborne, *... a false use of the title "Yahweh" was the heart of blasphemy, because it was the primary title for God, and none, not even the archangel Michael could sit with Yahweh as an equal. So Jesus' use of the supreme divine name and his claim to be "the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One" (Mark 14:62) are at the heart of the guilty verdict.*
- 9) F. F. Bruce, *The claim to be king of the Jews was a capital offense against Roman law; the claim to be Son of God was a capital offense against Jewish law. But if the governor would not grant a capital conviction in respect of the former offense, he might be persuaded to permit the execution of the capital sentence required by Jewish law in respect of the latter offense—a sentence which could not be carried out without his license (cf. 18:31).*

C. Pilate confronted Jesus (8-11)

1. Pilate became more afraid(8), **When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid.**

- a. Related verse, Matthew 27:19, *Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream."*
- b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *It seems obvious, however, that the predicament in which he found himself would have given him reason to fear: He had compromised his position as Rome's representative by considering freeing a convicted insurrectionist named Barabbas. He had displeased the Jewish rulers by failing to hand down a guilty verdict, and he had alienated many of the Jewish people by abusing and ridiculing one of their popular heroes ... Pilate may now have begun to fear that Jesus would take some type of revenge on him for the unjust treatment that he had given Him (cf. Matt. 27:19). Jesus' uncommon poise probably unnerved Pilate further.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *Pilate's response was one of fear. As a pagan he had heard stories of humanlike gods who visited men and judged them. Perhaps the solemn majesty of Jesus with His claims of truth began to convict his conscience.*
 - 3) Merrill Tenney, *If Jesus really was a supernatural being, Pilate did not wish to be responsible for mistreating him. Divine judgment would certainly be the inevitable consequence.*
 - 4) Warren Wiersbe, *The Romans and Greeks had numerous myths about the gods coming to earth as men (note Acts 14:8-13), so it is likely that Pilate responded to the phrase "Son of God" with these stories in mind. Already the governor had been impressed by the words and demeanor of our Lord; he had never met a prisoner like Him before. Was He indeed a god come to earth? Did He have supernatural powers? No wonder Pilate was starting to be afraid!*
 - 5) Kenneth Gangel, *... what did Pilate fear? Quite possibly this quiet prophet who, for reasons unknown to the governor, had evoked such emotional response from the mobs outside the palace. He also feared the mobs lest they break the sacred Pax Romana. Ultimately, however, all Roman governors feared Caesar, and the Jews knew that very well.*

- 6) Leon Morris, *Pilate was evidently superstitious. He can scarcely be called a religious man, but the news that his prisoner had made divine claims scared the governor (his fear cannot be fear of the Jews; it must be fear connected with Jesus in some way). He had possibly been affected by a message from his wife about a dream she had (Matt. 27:19). And every Roman knew of stories of the gods or their offspring appearing in human guise. "Divine men" were part of the first-century understanding of life.*
 - 7) William Hendriksen, *Pilate was more afraid than ever. This new fear was caused not so much by the dogged determination of the Jews to have things their own way as by the item of information which he had received just now. What! This mysterious prisoner a son of the gods?*
 - 8) George Beasley-Murray, *On hearing that Jesus "made himself the Son of God" Pilate "became the more afraid." Why more? Although fear on Pilate's part has not been mentioned earlier, it is evident that he became increasingly unnerved by the trial, in a manner unusual for him. The impression made by Jesus upon him in face of the accusations of his enemies, which he knew were groundless, and his bearing after the flogging and the cries of the crowd for his death filled him with increasing awe. Then to hear that this man, the like of whom he had never encountered, claimed to be the Son of God caused him to be seized with sudden fear.*
 - 9) Edward Klink, *This may be Pilate's first response in regard to Jesus that was religiously (or at least superstitiously) motivated, denoted by the questions he is about to present to Jesus. It is possible that a polytheistic Roman was more open to claims of divine sonship than a monotheist, which facilitates further the irony of the Gospel, for a Roman outsider proves more ready to believe something divine about the Son of God than his own people (see 1:11).*
 - 10) Charles Swindoll, *At this point, Pilate began to panic. Before, he had written off Jesus as a harmless lunatic. His earlier question, "Are You the King of the Jews?" (18:33), was patronizing, prompting Jesus' question in return, "Are you asking this on your own initiative?" (my rendering).*
 - 11) Grant Osborne, *The context tells us the fear is connected to the "Son of God" title ("when he heard this"), and he would think Jesus was what Romans called a "divine man," perhaps a messenger from the gods or a person with "divine" powers. His wife has just warned him about Jesus (Matt 27:19) from a dream she had (a message from the gods?), and so Roman superstitions come into play. He is more right than he could know, for it is the one true God who is sending him the message.*
2. Pilate questioned Jesus Who did not respond (9), ***He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.***
- a. Related verses
 - 1) John 7:27, *But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from."*
 - 2) Matthew 26:63, *But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus' silence undoubtedly increased Pilate's uneasiness. Jesus had earlier refused to answer questions from Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod (Matt. 26:63; 27:14; Mark 14:61; 15:5; Luke 23:9; cf. Isa. 53:7). He probably did not respond here because Pilate had already shown that he had no real interest in the truth (cf. 8:25). He only wanted to do what was personally expedient ... Pilate had shown little patience with Jesus' explanation about His other-worldly kingdom. He would hardly have been more receptive now to what Jesus might say about His other-worldly origin. The decision Pilate faced was clear-cut. Should he release this innocent Man or not? The question of Jesus' origin was irrelevant.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *Jesus' refusal to answer Pilate's question, Where do You come from? fulfilled the words of prophecy in Isaiah 53:7.*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *Why did Jesus not answer Pilate's question? Because He had already answered it (John 18:36–37). It is a basic spiritual principle that God does not reveal new truth to us if we fail to act on the truth we already know. Furthermore, Pilate had already made it clear that he was not personally interested in spiritual truth. All he was concerned about was maintaining peace in Jerusalem as he tried to expedite the trial of Jesus of Nazareth. Pilate did not deserve an answer!*

- 4) Leon Morris, *He had answered Pilate readily enough before. Possibly he felt that then Pilate had been discharging his function as judge, whereas now he was exceeding it. The question to be decided was Jesus' guilt or innocence, and his origin was irrelevant. But, in view of Jesus' free conversation both before and after this, his silence on this one question stands out. It may be that the answer must be such that Pilate would not have understood it. He certainly would never have believed it! It was not a simple question. Or again, it may be that the answer had in effect already been given (18:37). It still stood. Jesus' silence at one point or another of his trial is mentioned in all four Gospels (Matt. 26:63; 27:14; Mark 14:60–61; 15:5; Luke 23:9).*
 - 5) William Hendriksen, "Where are you from?" he asks anxiously. He received no answer, and he deserved none. Surely, a man who was so utterly corrupt that he had ordered Jesus to be scourged almost to death, even though he knew (and declared again and again) that this prisoner was innocent, was not worthy of a reply. Besides, if Pilate had paid more attention to the words of Jesus spoken previously (18:36, 37), he could have discovered the answer to his question!
 - 6) George Beasley-Murray, "Where are you from?" ... They express Pilate's anxiety to know whether Jesus was of earth or from heaven, whether he was a man or a god. But to his astonishment Jesus gives him no answer ... The reason for Jesus' silence is doubtless due to Pilate's reactions to Jesus' revelation in the first interrogation; after Pilate's skeptical response to Jesus' statement that he had come into the world to bear witness to the truth, how should Pilate now comprehend Jesus' origin? And if his present motive for asking was fear for his skin, what hope was there of his serious attention to the revelation of Jesus' relationship to God? Only faith can grasp the mystery of Jesus (cf. Rev 19:12).
 - 7) Edward Klink, *The silence of Jesus is almost certainly a rebuke of Pilate. He is neither worthy to judge such matters (they are above his paygrade), nor is he able to handle such truth. Jesus has already revealed to Pilate, even if only by contrast, the nature of his work, his mission, and his kingship (see 18:36–37). But Pilate cannot (or will not) understand the fullness of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the depths of his person and work.*
 - 8) William Barclay, *We have sometimes the experience, when talking to other people, of finding that argument and discussion are no longer possible, because we and they have no common ground. It is almost as if we spoke another language. That happens when people do in fact speak another mental and spiritual language. It is a terrible day when Jesus is silent to anyone. There can be nothing more terrible than for a person's mind to be so shut by pride and self-will that there is nothing Jesus can say to that person that will make any difference.*
3. Pilate ordered Jesus to speak to him (10), ***So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?"***
- a. Thomas Constable, *Pilate did not appreciate Jesus' silence and the superior attitude that it implied. Consequently Pilate threatened Him by reminding Him of his authority (Gr. exousia) to take or spare Jesus' life. This was Pilate's seventh and last question of Jesus, which he probably asked in a spirit of sarcasm and resentment combined.*
 - b. Edwin Blum, *Disturbed by Jesus' silence, he asked, Don't You realize I have power ...? True, Pilate had some power, but he was a pawn. Yet he was responsible for his decisions (cf. Acts 4:27–28; 1 Cor. 2:8). In reality, God is the only One who has ultimate and full power.*
 - c. Leon Morris, *Pilate does not like this. He is very conscious of his dignity and position of power. It is incredible that Jesus will not speak to him of all people. So he reminds his prisoner that he has power either to release him or to crucify him. The question is illuminating. In the last resort it was Pilate alone who could say "Crucify" or "Release," and this frank recognition of it makes nonsense of all the shifts to which he resorted in the attempt to avoid making a decision. Ultimately he could not avoid responsibility, and these words show that deep down he realized this.*
 - d. William Hendriksen, *It must be borne in mind that he is trembling all over (see on 19:8, 9). Hence, in order to conceal his fear he begins to boast! Indignantly he fumes, "To me ... you do not speak?" How dare you? Don't you realize who I am? And don't you understand that "I have the authority (see on 1:12; 10:18) to release you and I have the authority to crucify you?" Pilate speaks of releasing before he mentions crucifying, probably because releasing Jesus was uppermost in his mind, that is, if it could be done without injury to Pilate; otherwise not, of course!*

- e. George Beasley-Murray, *Pilate's fear turns to annoyance. He was not used to people declining to answer his questions, least of all a prisoner whose life was in his hands. He was conscious of possessing authority from the most powerful man on earth and representing the most powerful nation on earth. He therefore reminds Jesus that he has authority to release him and authority to destroy him.*
4. Jesus proclaimed that Pilate's authority came from God (11), **Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin."**
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) Romans 13:1, *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.*
 - 2) John 9:41, *Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus reminded the bullying governor that there was a higher authority than his. Pilate only had authority because God had given it to him (cf. Rom. 13:1). Probably the higher authority over Pilate that came to Pilate's mind was Caesar, because he immediately sought to set Jesus free and thereby avoid trouble with the emperor over a breach of justice (v. 12) ... Who did Jesus have in mind when He spoke of the one who had handed Him over to Pilate? Some interpreters believe that Jesus meant Caiaphas. This seems most probable, since it was Caiaphas who had sent Jesus bound to Pilate (18:28) ... Both Pilate and Caiaphas were guilty of treating Jesus horribly. However, Caiaphas was guilty of a greater sin, since Caiaphas had received greater power from God than Pilate had. God had given Caiaphas the authority to lead God's people as Israel's high priest. Pilate had only received authority (Gr. exousia) to govern politically. Specifically Jesus seems to have been referring to Pilate's power to judge Him. Thus the reason for the greater sin of Caiaphas was his abuse of the greater privilege and power that God had given him.*
 - 2) Warren Wiersbe, *John 19:11 records our Lord's last words to Pilate, words that reveal His faith in the Father and His surrender to His will (see 1 Peter 2:23; 4:19). All authority comes from God (Rom. 13:1ff). Jesus was able to surrender to Rome and the Jews because He was first of all yielded to God. Pilate was boasting about his authority (John 19:10), but Jesus reminded him that his so-called authority was only delegated to him from God. One day God would call him to account for the way he had used his privileges and responsibilities ... To whom was Jesus referring when He said "he that delivered Me up unto thee"? Certainly not God, because God does not and cannot sin. Jesus was referring to Caiaphas, the corrupt high priest who had long before determined that Jesus must die (John 11:47–54). Caiaphas knew the Scriptures and had been given every opportunity to examine the evidence. He had willfully closed his eyes and hardened his heart. He had seen to it that Jesus was not given a fair trial. It was his associates who were inciting the mob to cry, "Let Him be crucified!" Pilate was a spiritually blind pagan, but Caiaphas was a Jew who had a knowledge of Scripture. Therefore, it was Caiaphas, not Pilate, who had the greater sin.*
 - 3) Leon Morris, *These are Jesus' final words to Pilate, and, indeed, the only words he is recorded to have said after the scourging. First, he corrects a misapprehension. Pilate has no inherent authority over Jesus, but only that granted him "from above" (cf. 3:27). This will mean "from heaven," not "delegated from your superiors in Rome." Jesus is asserting that God is over all and that an earthly governor can act only as God permits him (cf. Rom. 13:1) ... Judas was no more than a tool. This does not mean that Pilate is excused. After all, "greater sin" implies "lesser sin," and that was the governor's. He did not bear all the responsibility he thought he did. But he was a responsible man, and therefore guilty for his actions in this case.*
 - 4) William Hendriksen, ... *Pilate, though thoroughly corrupt, did not fully realize what he was doing. But Caiaphas acted with knowledge and grim determination (see on 11:49, 50). Therefore the sin of Caiaphas was greater than the sin of Pilate. There are gradations in sin (Luke 12:47, 58). Unto whom much is given, from him much will be required!*

- 5) F. F. Bruce, *Since all authority is held by delegation from God, Caiaphas was as responsible to God for the way in which he exercised his authority as Pilate was in respect of his. But there was this difference: Pilate was acting in accordance with the terms of his divinely appointed authority in investigating a charge which was brought before him, whereas Caiaphas—who for reasons of political expediency handed Jesus over to him on a charge of sedition, for which he hoped a capital conviction would be forthcoming—was abusing the authority which attended his sacral office as high priest. For this reason Caiaphas’s sin was greater—meaning perhaps not “greater than Pilate’s” but “greater than it would have been if he had not received from God the privileges and responsibilities of the high-priesthood.”*

D. The Jews were granted Jesus’ crucifixion(12-16)

1. The Jews warned Judas of the consequences of releasing Jesus (12), ***From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.”***

- a. Related verse, Acts 3:13, *The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.*
- b. Comments
- 1) Thomas Constable, ... *the Jewish leaders reminded Pilate that anyone who set free someone who claimed to be a king would not receive Tiberius Caesar’s approval. They placed Pilate on the horns of a dilemma. It seemed that whatever decision he made he could get into trouble with Caesar. The solution to Pilate’s problem, of course, was to do what was right, but Pilate was too much a man of the world to settle for that. He wanted to assure his own future with his boss. He cared less about his relationship with God ... The title “friend of Caesar” (Lat. amicus Caesaris) was originally a badge of honor that was frequently given to provincial governors. It meant that the honoree was a loyal supporter of the emperor. Later this title became an official designation of an intimate friend of the emperor. At the time of Jesus’ trial it was probably at least a semi-technical term that denoted the second thing ... The Jewish leaders presented themselves as loyal subjects of Caesar, which was far from the truth. However, ironically, they were slaves of Rome and of sin (cf. 8:33–34). They appeared to be a greater threat to Pilate and to Rome than Jesus was.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *Pilate, probably under conviction, wanted to free Jesus but the Jews now tried a new attack. To let Jesus go free, they argued, would be disloyalty to Caesar ... Tiberius was on the throne and he was sick, suspicious, and often violent. Pilate had plenty to cover up and he did not want an unfavorable report to go to his boss. If he had to choose between showing his loyalty to Rome or siding with a despised and strange Jew, there was no question in his mind.*
 - 3) Kenneth Gangel, *Suddenly we learn this governor did have a sense of justice and conscience, but they were no match for screaming mobs. The deciding factor here had nothing to do with the law or religion—it was purely political. The phrase that changed Pilate’s mind was not connected in anyway to any of the charges against Jesus: If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. This was no small threat on the part of the Jewish mobs.*
 - 4) Merrill Tenney, *The cry was a veiled threat: if Pilate exonerated Jesus, the high priest would report to Rome that Pilate had refused to bring a rival pretender to justice and was perhaps plotting to establish a new political alliance of his own. Tiberias, the reigning emperor, was notoriously bitter and suspicious of rivals. If such a report were sent to him, he would instantly end Pilate’s political career and probably his life, too.*
 - 5) Leon Morris, ... *the mention of Casear in this way is meant to remind the governor that, if he released Jesus, they could bring a damaging accusation against him at Rome. They could report that he had failed to deal firmly with a man guilty of treason. A man with a good record need not, of course, take notice of such a palpably false accusation. But Pilate’s record was not one to be subjected to a close scrutiny, and Tiberius’s suspicious nature was very well known.*
 - 6) William Hendricksen, *He knew that these Jews were liars, and that they had no love whatever for the Roman government or its emperor. He was thoroughly convinced of the fact that deep down in their hearts they themselves were most unloyal. Yet, here they were, apparently deeply disturbed about the political loyalty of One who had never so much as spoken a single word against the Roman government.*

- 7) Edward Klink, *By forcing Pilate to choose Caesar over Jesus, the Jews have ironically forced themselves into the same corner and have chosen Caesar the Roman over a fellow Jew, Jesus. The Jewish authorities have now secured the upper hand in the political gerrymandering between Jerusalem and Rome, but at a very great cost. They have become one with Rome.*
 - 8) Charles Swindoll, *By this time, Pilate was frantically searching for a way to release Jesus without losing the favor of the Jewish aristocracy and jeopardizing his advancement in the kingdom of Tiberius. Finally, he brought Jesus out to them and tried to shame the crowd into backing down. But the mob wielded the ultimate threat; they planned to inform Tiberius that Pilate had supported another man's claim to sovereignty over Israel ... Pilate had to choose. Tiberius or Jesus? The kingdoms of earth or the kingdom of heaven? Power or truth? The pressure of the world proved too great for Pilate. As is true of most politicians, public popularity trumped personal integrity.*
2. Judas presented Jesus to the Jews as their king (13-14), ***So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"***
- a. Related verses
 - 1) Matthew 27:19, *Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream."*
 - 2) Matthew 27:62, *The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) *... he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement*
 - a) Edwin Blum, *The dilemma had to be resolved so Pilate made the official decision.*
 - b) William Hendriksen, *The moment for which the entire history of redemption had been waiting has now arrived. Pilate has made up his mind to deliver Jesus over to be crucified ... This time Pilate sits down with the purpose of passing sentence.*
 - c) George Beasley-Murray, *Unlike the presentation of Jesus in 19:4–6, this [presentation] was not intended to ridicule Jesus. Since that occasion, Pilate had been moved by Jesus and defeated in his attempt to rescue him. Now he makes the moment of his decision the moment of decision for the Jews. They have a final and crucial opportunity of declaring their mind on Jesus and recanting, if they will, on their unjust and bitter accusations of him.*
 - d) Thomas Constable, *It was evidently the "friend of Caesar" threat that inclined Pilate to decide to execute Jesus. Again self-interest, rather than commitment to justice, influenced his decision (cf. v. 1). Pilate brought Jesus out again where the Jews could see Him, and he took his seat for Jesus' formal sentencing ... The judgment seat (Gr. bema, cf. Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10) was the place where a powerful ruler pronounced his official verdicts in Roman culture. Pilate had his chair of judgment placed on a piece of courtyard called "The Pavement" (Gr. lithostrotos) ... The irony of the scene again stands out: Here was a corrupt Roman official sitting in judgment on the Person into whose hands God the Father has committed all judgment (cf. 5:22).*
 - e) Edward Klink, *If Pilate placed Jesus on the judgment seat, then he was certainly making a mockery of the Jews, as he would do again when Jesus was placed upon the cross (see 19:19–22). But if Pilate himself was sitting on the judgment seat, then the joke was on him, for the place where he sat was given to him by a much higher authority, the very man he was (supposedly) about to judge ... The place of "the sitting" is "the judgment seat" ... the "judicial bench" for the ruling magistrate. The term in the NT is also used to refer to the judgment seat of God or Christ (Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10), which helps explain the narrator's intentional play regarding the one who "sat" upon it.*

2) *Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour*

- a) Thomas Constable, *The day of preparation for the Passover, therefore, evidently refers to the Friday of the eight-day feast. This harmonizes with the other chronological references to the Passion Week.*
- b) Edwin Blum, *The dilemma had to be resolved so Pilate made the official decision ... This was the day of preparation for the Passover Week (i.e., Friday). That day was the Passover proper, the day on which Christ died. But it was also the preparation for the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, which followed immediately after the Day of Passover, and which was sometimes called the Passover Week (cf. Luke 2:41; 22:1, 7; Acts 12:3–4 ...).*
- c) Warren Wiersbe, *The “preparation” refers to the preparation for the Sabbath (see John 19:31) which would begin at sundown that day (Friday). Being the Passover Sabbath, it was an especially holy day. The religious leaders were more concerned about their traditions than they were knowing the truth and obeying the will of God. On a high and holy day, they crucified their own Messiah, Jesus the Son of God! It is likely that John used Roman time, so that “the sixth hour” would have been 6 A.M. Mark tells us that Jesus was crucified “the third hour,” which, in Jewish reckoning, would have been 9 A.M. Since John wrote “about the sixth hour,” we need not try to figure out why it took three hours to get Jesus from Pilate’s hall to Calvary ... The “preparation” refers to the preparation for the Sabbath (see John 19:31) which would begin at sundown that day (Friday). Being the Passover Sabbath, it was an especially holy day. The religious leaders were more concerned about their traditions than they were knowing the truth and obeying the will of God. On a high and holy day, they crucified their own Messiah, Jesus the Son of God!*
- d) Leon Morris, *John gives us both the Greek and the Aramaic names of the place where the judgment seat was set. This is not required by the sense, and it looks like a personal reminiscence ... People in antiquity did not have clocks or watches, and the reckoning of time was always approximate. The “third hour” may denote nothing more than a time about the middle of the morning, while “about the sixth hour” can well signify getting on toward noon. Late morning would suit both expressions unless there were some reason for thinking that either was being given with more than usual accuracy ...*
- e) George Beasley-Murray, *The Evangelist’s thought is plain: Passover is the great celebration of Israel’s deliverance from slavery by God’s almighty power; then it was that he showed himself as King, and they became his people. In this celebration the Jews gathered before Pilate are about to play a decisive part in the fulfillment of the Passover, a second Exodus, wherein God would achieve an emancipation for all nations, not for Israel alone, giving them life in the promised land of his eternal kingdom. The crucial hour of destiny for Jew and Gentile has arrived.*
- f) John Hart, *John noted that it was now about the sixth hour (noon). At the time the Lamb of God (cf. 1:29) was about to be sacrificed, Jewish tradition suggests the priests began to slaughter the Passover lambs in the temple. During the time of Jesus’ ministry, Jewish people calculated Nissan 14, the date of the Passover (Lv 23:5), in two different ways. Jesus, His disciples, and the Pharisees followed the Galileans method in which the day was from sunrise to sunrise ... In the year of Jesus’ crucifixion, Nissan 14 began for them on Thursday morning, and they celebrated the Passover meal early Thursday evening. The Sadducees calculated the day from sunset to sunset. Nissan 14 began at Thursday’s sunset, and the Passover lamb was sacrificed Friday afternoon. Their Passover meal was eaten before the sunset that evening. The Synoptics are written with the first method in view; John was written from the viewpoint of the second method. This explains why Jesus celebrated the Passover on Thursday evening (Jn 13:1–2), but He was crucified Friday while the Passover lamb was being slain in the temple in anticipation of the Passover meal.*
- g) Charles Swindoll, *John notes the time as noon on the day of preparation of the Passover; that is, the fourteenth day of Nisan. John’s reference to time and day always has theological or symbolic meaning. At noon on the day of preparation, priests in the temple began slaughtering the Passover lambs in keeping with Exodus 12:6. Because they had so many worshipers to serve—as many as one hundred thousand pilgrims—the priests worked through the afternoon until sundown. John wanted to stress that Jesus had been sentenced at noon and would be hanging on the cross as the Passover lambs were being sacrificed in the temple.*

- h) Edward Klink, ... *Jesus was about to be crucified at the very time the great feast was beginning to be prepared all across Jerusalem, with thousands of lambs being slaughtered and hearts being prepared for the climactic moment of the Passover ... The allusion to the slaughtering of the lambs is intended to declare that Jesus is the true Passover Lamb first announced by the Baptist (1:29, cf. 1:36). The motif of Jesus as “the Lamb of God” is one of the primary theological statements the Gospel is making, through which all of Jesus’s authority as Judge (5:22–27) and King (vv. 2–5; cf. 12:1–19) must be understood. Jesus has continually been depicted by the Gospel of John as the fulfillment of the Jewish feasts (see comments on 10:22; 15:1) and here is depicted as the fulfillment of the Passover.*

3) *He said to the Jews, “Behold your King!”*

- a) Edward Klink, *By mounting the elevated platform, Pilate has already made his judgment, but with this last title Pilate may be speaking more straightforwardly than often assumed. The reader is aware, however, that no matter what Pilate intended to say by his words, the title given to Jesus was perfect in every way.*
- b) Leon Morris, *For Pilate there was no question of kingship; his bedraggled prisoner was the antithesis of all that kingship meant for him. Jesus was not a king in any sense in which he understood the word. He was simply using the terms of the accusation in a last-ditch effort to get the Jews to drop proceedings. But for John the kingship was real. He wants us to see Jesus as King in the very act in which he went to death for the salvation of sinners.*
- c) William Hendriksen, *And he said to the Jews, Look! Your king! This exclamation must have been uttered with stinging ridicule. It was born of sullen resentment. Such is your king, O Jews, shackled, weak, defenceless, bloody, sentenced to a horrible death, at your own request! Pilate “rubs it in.” How he hates these people!*
- d) George Beasley-Murray, *Pilate’s statement to the Jews, however, was unexpected. They were awaiting the announcement of a decision, i.e., the death sentence of Jesus. Instead of announcing the crime for which Jesus is now to be put to death (e.g., “This man made himself king”), Pilate calls to the crowd, “Look, your king!” He makes the moment of condemnation of Jesus one of proclamation of his kingship, and that in a formal yet dramatic way. Unlike the presentation of Jesus in 19:4–6, this was not intended to ridicule Jesus. Since that occasion, Pilate had been moved by Jesus and defeated in his attempt to rescue him. Now he makes the moment of his decision the moment of decision for the Jews. They have a final and crucial opportunity of declaring their mind on Jesus and recanting, if they will, on their unjust and bitter accusations of him.*
- e) Grant Osborne, *Pilate has to give in to the Jewish demands and surrender Jesus to his fate, but he decides to taunt them one last time and so proclaims, “Here is your king,” a beaten, bloodied wreck of a person, undoubtedly saying to himself, “This pitiful person is just what you deserve,” not realizing he couldn’t be more right. He was not just their king but the King of the Ages, the one who will reign over heaven for eternity.*

3. The Jews rejected Jesus as their king (15), ***They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.”***

- a. Related verse, Luke 23:18, *But they all cried out together, “Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas”*
- b. Comments
 - 1) A. T. Robertson, *The chief priests ... were Sadducees, who had no Messianic hope like that of the Pharisees. So to carry their point against Jesus they renounce the principle of the theocracy that God was their King (I Sam. 12:12).*
 - 2) William Hendriksen, *See Rom. 11:25. While avowing their unswerving loyalty to the emperor, they at the same time hinted at the governor’s possible disloyalty. It was as if they said, “We have no king but the emperor. What about you, Pilate? Where is your loyalty?” That this was in their mind can hardly be doubted (see on 19:12).*

- 3) Thomas Constable, *The Jewish mob, led by their leaders, shouted their rejection of their King. They went even further than that and demanded His crucifixion. They also hypocritically professed their allegiance to Caesar as their only king (Gr. basilea). This was going way beyond merely rejecting Jesus. They were now repudiating Israel's messianic hope, including the messianic kingdom, and they were rejecting Yahweh's sovereignty over their nation (cf. Judg. 8:23; 1 Sam. 8:7). The chief priests probably went to this extreme in order to persuade Pilate to grant their request—and in order to crucify Jesus (cf. Matt. 27:25).*
 - 4) Edwin Blum, *Pilate did not believe Jesus was their King, but to spite the Jews he called Jesus the King of the Jews. John saw this as significant, for Jesus would die for His people as the King of His people, as the Messiah. Pilate could not resist goading the Jews: Shall I crucify your King? As if Rome would not crucify a Jewish king! The Jewish rejoinder, We have no king but Caesar, was full of irony. The rebellious Jews claimed loyalty to Rome while disclaiming their Messiah (cf. Ps. 2:1–3).*
 - 5) Warren Wiersbe, *The crowd had the last word: “We have no king but Caesar!” “We will not have this man to reign over us!” (Luke 19:14) Well-meaning preachers have often said that the crowd that on Palm Sunday shouted “Hosannah!” turned right around and shouted “Crucify Him!” on Good Friday. However, it was two different crowds. The Palm Sunday crowd came primarily from Galilee where Jesus was very popular. The crowd at Pilate's hall was from Judea and Jerusalem where the religious leaders were very much in control. If the Galilean disciples had had their way, they would have revolted and delivered Jesus!*
 - 6) Grant Osborne, *The response of the crowd (19:15) is a tumultuous uproar: “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” As the trial has gone on, their animosity and volume has kept getting worse. By this time they virtually tear the roofs of the houses with their noise. He asks a final time, his contempt quite obvious, “Shall I crucify your king?” This leads them to utter their own blasphemous claim: “We have no king but Caesar.” At the very least, they should have recognized God as their king (Judg 8:23; 1 Sam 8:7; 10:19). Still, to choose Caesar over Jesus the Son of God is true blasphemy.*
 - 7) Leon Morris, *On this occasion they spoke in terms of cynical expediency. But they expressed the real truth. Their lives showed that they gave no homage to God. The truth was that they had no king but Caesar. And it is the chief priests, the religious leaders, who utter the words.*
 - 8) George Beasley-Murray, *For it is not Jesus alone whom they reject; any claimant to the messianic office is excluded on the basis of the slogan, “No king but Caesar.” Their repudiation of Jesus in the name of a pretended loyalty to the emperor entailed their repudiation of the promise of the kingdom of God, with which the gift of the Messiah is inseparably bound in Jewish faith, and Israel's vocation to be its heir, its instrument, and its proclaimer to the nations.*
 - 9) Edward Klink, *... no longer were they living a lie filled with Sabbaths, feasts, and sacrifices, things they mocked by their pretensions. For the first time they were speaking the truth about themselves and their true loyalties. God was not king to them, and here they finally gave testimony to that about themselves. In a real sense, they were as much “friends of Caesar” as Pilate (v. 12). And these self-condemning words become their last, for the Jews do not appear again in the Gospel.*
4. Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified (16), ***So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus,***
- a. Related verses
 - 1) Matthew 27:26, *Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.*
 - 2) Mark 15:15, *So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.*
 - 3) Luke 23:25, *He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Pilate's action of handing Jesus over constituted his sentence against Jesus. By the words "to them" John evidently meant that Pilate handed Jesus over to the Roman soldiers in order to satisfy the demands of the Jews. He omitted any reference to the most brutal and sometimes lethal form of scourging (the verberatio), which the Roman soldiers now gave Jesus as the preliminary punishment before His crucifixion (cf. Matt. 27:27–30; Mark 15:15–19).*
- 2) Leon Morris, *There was nothing more that Pilate could do. He recognized defeat and handed Jesus over to execution. He could now release him only at the cost of facing an accusation of having failed in his duty to Caesar. He had troubles enough without inviting a report to Caesar for taking action in favor of a powerless Galilean peasant. So Pilate handed him over.*
- 3) Warren Wiersbe, *From the human standpoint, the trial of Jesus was the greatest crime and tragedy in history. From the divine viewpoint, it was the fulfillment of prophecy and the accomplishment of the will of God. The fact that God had planned all of this did not absolve the participants of their responsibility. In fact, at Pentecost, Peter put both ideas together in one statement! (Acts 2:23)*
- 4) John Hart, *Pilate succumbed to the Jewish leaders' demand (v. 16) and the crucifixion began. Pilate's action was completely irresponsible. It was his job as governor to ensure that justice prevailed, but he abdicated his duty and allowed the Roman soldiers under his authority to crucify Jesus (see v. 23) to appease the Jewish leaders.*
- 5) Charles Swindoll, *The trials of Jesus Christ—all of them unfair and prejudiced—were now history. Centuries have reduced the bodies of Jesus' enemies to nothing. Only God knows about their souls. Nevertheless, the choice they faced remains ours today. Jesus calls all people to serve His kingdom rather than the kingdoms of the world. Truth or power? God's way or the way of the world? Faith or works? Grace or pride? Pilate tried in vain to seek a middle way, a scheme in which he could serve both or neither without having to choose, but there is none. And so we must choose.*
- 6) Edward Klink, *This verdict had always involved the whole of humanity, from the first Adam to the second Adam. This is the context out of which the crucifixion of Jesus must be understood.*

INTRODUCTORY COMMENT CONCERNING JESUS' CRUCIFIXION

- Thomas Constable, *The unique material in John's account of Jesus' crucifixion includes the controversy about the superscription over Jesus' cross (vv. 19–22) and several references to the fulfillment of prophecy (vv. 24, 28–29; cf. vv. 36–37). John was also the only Gospel writer to record Jesus' care for His mother (vv. 25–27), His sixth cry before His death (v. 30), and the piercing of His side (v. 34) ... John omitted the detail that Simon carried Jesus' cross (Matt. 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26), which might have detracted from John's presentation of Jesus as the divine Savior. He also made no reference to Jesus' sufferings on the way to Calvary that Luke, who had a special interest in Jesus' humanity, stressed (Luke 23:27–32).*
- George Beasley-Murray, *The controlling motif in his account is that which dominated his narration of the arrest and trial of Jesus, namely, the kingship of Jesus. The anticipations in the Gospel of Jesus being "lifted up" are here fulfilled, so that the crucifixion is seen as the enthronement of Jesus ... The strong consciousness of the early Christians that the will of God for the world's salvation was being achieved through Jesus on the cross will doubtless have powerfully affected them in their view of the cross. This especially applied to our Evangelist, who more than any other in his time seized on the crucifixion of Jesus as his "lifting up" to highest heaven, his hour of glory and truest exaltation, one with his enthronement in resurrection at the right hand of God.*
- William Barclay, *There was no more terrible death than death by crucifixion. Even the Romans themselves regarded it with a shudder of horror. Cicero declared that it was 'the most cruel and horrifying death'. Tacitus said that it was a 'despicable death'. It was originally a Persian method of execution. It may have been used because, to the Persians, the earth was sacred, and they wished to avoid defiling it with the body of an evildoer. So they nailed him to a cross and left him to die there, looking to the vultures and the carrion crows to complete the work. The Carthaginians took over crucifixion from the Persians; and the Romans learned it from the Carthaginians.*
- Grant Osborne, *While John follows the basic contours of the others, he adds some important new material: the universal witness of the inscription, the details and significance of the dividing of the garments, the scriptural fulfillment citations, giving his mother to John, the final cry, and the piercing of his side. The result is a unique, well-crafted, and stylized portrait with theological motifs paramount: the sovereign control of Jesus, the cross as his throne, his anointing as royal Messiah, and the cross as a lifting up into glory.*

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS, JOHN 19:17-37

A. Jesus' crucifixion (17-22)

1. He carried His cross to Golgotha (17-18), *and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.*

a. Related verses

- 1) Matthew 27:33, *And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull),*
- 2) Mark 15:22, *And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull).*
- 3) Luke 14:27, *Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.*

b. Comments

- 1) William Hendriksen, Verse 17 contains all that John has to say about what happened on The Sorrowful Way. For a much more complete account see Luke 23:26–32 ... *Much has been written about the form of the cross. Did it resemble the letter X (the St. Andrew's cross), the letter T (the St. Anthony's cross), or the dagger (the Latin cross)? In the light of the fact that the title (see on verse 19) was written above Christ's head (Matt. 27:37; Luke 23:38) it is well-nigh certain that artists are correct when they adopt the last of these three possibilities, the so-called dagger-type or Latin cross.*
- 2) Thomas Constable, *The soldiers led Jesus from Pilate to Golgotha. Normally an execution squad consisted of four legionnaires plus a centurion (cf. v. 23). John did not comment on Jesus' painful journey to the cross, probably because he wanted to stress His deity. He did mention the fact that Jesus bore His own cross, however, probably for the same reason (cf. Gen. 22:6; Heb. 13:11–13) ... Criminals condemned to crucifixion, such as Jesus, normally carried either their entire cross or only the crossbeam (Lat. patibulum). This was common procedure in crucifixions, as John's original readers undoubtedly knew. Jesus evidently carried the crossbeam ... All the Gospel writers identified the place of Jesus' crucifixion as "the Place of a Skull." All but Luke gave its Aramaic title, namely, golgota ("skull") the transliteration of which is Golgotha. "Calvary" is the transliteration of the Latin calvaria meaning "place of a skull." Why the place bore this name remains a mystery, though it may have been a common place for executions. The place probably received its name from its appearance.*
- 3) Edwin Blum, *Carrying His own cross, Jesus went out. These words fulfill two Old Testament symbols or types. Isaac carried his own wood for the sacrifice (Gen. 22:1–6) and the sin offering used to be taken outside the camp or city (cf. Heb. 13:11–13). So Jesus was made sin (2 Cor. 5:21).*
- 4) Warren Wiersbe, *It was customary for the criminal to carry his cross, or at least the crossbeam, from the hall of judgment to the place of execution. Jesus began the mile-long walk carrying His cross, but He was relieved by Simon of Cyrene whom the Roman soldiers "drafted" to do the job. We do not know why Jesus was relieved of this burden; the Scriptures are silent. Was He too weak from the scourgings to carry the load? Was His weakness holding back the procession at a time when the Jews were anxious to get it over with so they could celebrate their Passover Sabbath? One thing is sure: the bearing of the cross was a mark of guilt; and Jesus was not guilty (see Mark 15:20–21 and Rom. 16:13).*
- 5) Kenneth Gangel, *Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, John had little to say about the pain and agony of Roman crucifixion. He focused on other accompanying information more in line with his purpose. John's passion account vested in his eyewitness understanding that the one who hung on the cross was the Messiah of Israel, the Prophet of God predicted in the Old Testament ... In line with the theme of fulfilled prophecy, John emphasized what some other Gospel writers omitted—the division of clothes, the casting of lots for the garment, the offering of wine, the breaking of the legs of the thieves, and the piercing of Jesus' side with a Roman spear. And he told us repeatedly that these events specifically fulfilled Scripture.*
- 6) Leon Morris, *John tells us the name of the place where the crucifixion took place in both Greek and Aramaic. The name means "a skull," but why a place was given this name is not known. It is another example of John's knowledge of the topography of Jerusalem before its destruction, but we do not share his knowledge.*
- 7) John Hart, *Today, the pristine garden called Gordon's Calvary (also known as the "Garden Tomb") outside the old city of Jerusalem is often identified as the location of Jesus' crucifixion and tomb. But there is considerable historical and archeological evidence for locating Calvary at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and virtually none for the Garden Tomb.*

- 8) William Barclay, *It must have been outside the city walls, for it was not lawful to crucify a man within the boundaries of the city; but we cannot be sure of the exact place.*
 - 9) F. F. Bruce, *If the praetorium of the trial narrative is to be identified with the Antonia fortress, then the present Via Dolorosa probably marks the route to the cross with substantial accuracy, although it runs several feet above the first-century level. Until a few years ago it was uncertain whether the traditional site of Golgotha, covered by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, was outside the line of the second north wall or not. That it actually was outside was indicated by excavations conducted in 1963 and later in the Muristan area, to the south of the site.*
2. Jesus was crucified between two others (18), ***There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.***
- a. Related verses
 - 1) Matthew 27:38, *Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.*
 - 2) Mark 15:27, *And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left.*
 - 3) Luke 23:33, *And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Merrill Tenney, *Crucifixion was probably the most diabolical form of death ever invented.*
 - 2) D. A. Carson, *It was so brutal that no Roman citizen could be crucified [sic] without the sanction of the Emperor. Stripped naked and beaten to pulpy weakness ... the victim could hang in the hot sun for hours, even days. To breathe, it was necessary to push with the legs and pull with the arms to keep the chest cavity open and functioning. Terrible muscle spasm [sic] wracked the entire body; but since collapse meant asphyxiation, the strain went on and on. This is also why the sedecula [a piece of wood that served as a small seat in some cases] ... prolonged life and agony: it partially supported the body's weight, and therefore encouraged the victim to fight on.*
 - 3) Thomas Constable, *All the Gospel writers mentioned the two other men who were crucified with Jesus (Matt. 27:38, 44; Mark 15:27, 32; Luke 23:32–33, 39–43). They were evidently robbers (Gr. lestai) and terrorists, as was Barabbas (cf. 18:40). John may have mentioned them in order to remind his readers of the fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7 and 12. Their mention also prepares the reader to understand John's recording of the breaking of their legs but not Jesus' legs (vv. 32–33).*
 - 4) Edwin Blum, *The two others who were crucified with Jesus are mentioned to make understandable the following sequel in which their legs were broken but not those of Jesus (cf. John 19:32–33). Luke added that the two were "criminals" (Luke 23:32–33), and Matthew called them "robbers" (Matt. 27:44).*
 - 5) F. F. Bruce, *John gives no details of the two men who were crucified along with Jesus. Mark and Matthew call them "bandits" (Greek lestai), using the same word as John uses of Barabbas (18:40); they were probably freedom fighters of his company.*
 - 6) Leon Morris, *John, like the other Evangelists, tells us that there were two others crucified with Jesus, and that Jesus was in the middle. This may have been meant as a final indignity; Jesus was among criminals as he died, and in no sense separate. But John probably records the fact in order to bring out the truth that Jesus was one with sinners in his death.*
 - 7) William Hendriksen, *It has been said that only the damned in hell know what Jesus suffered when he died on the cross. In a sense this is true, for they too, suffer eternal death. One should add, however, that they have never been in heaven. The Son of God, on the other hand, descended from the regions of infinite delight in the closest possible fellowship with his Father (1:1; 17:5) to the abysmal depths of hell. On the cross he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).*
 - 8) John Hart, *... two other men (v. 18), both criminals (Lk 23:33), were crucified on either side of Jesus. One of them came to faith (Lk 23:39–43).*
 - 9) Edward Klink, *The normal Roman practice was to leave the body on the cross until it rotted, but Jewish law demanded that the body of a hanging man had to be buried on the day of execution to prevent the land from being defiled (Deut 21:23). The execution served as a crude form of public entertainment, with the crowds often ridiculing and mocking the victims.*

3. Pilate wrote an inscription on the cross (19-20), *Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." 20 Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek.*
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) Matthew 27:37, *And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."*
 - 2) Mark 15:26, *And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews."*
 - 3) Luke 23:38, *There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."*
 - 4) Hebrews 13:12, *So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *John evidently included the controversy about the inscription on Jesus' cross because it underlines not only the Jews' deliberate and conscious repudiation of Jesus but also His true identity ... Normally the judge of a person sentenced to crucifixion would order that a placard (Lat. titulus) that bore an inscription identifying his crime would accompany him to the place of his execution. This would inform onlookers who the criminal was, and why he was suffering such a terrible fate, as they passed him. The soldiers would then attach the sign to the criminal's cross for the same purpose ... Pilate continued to insult the Jewish hierarchy, for forcing his hand, by identifying Jesus as he did. However, his trilingual notice was God's sovereign way of declaring to the whole world who His Son really was: the Jewish king who would one day rule the world ... By identifying Jesus as the Jews' king and then crucifying Him, Pilate was boasting about Rome's superiority over the Jews, and he was showing off his authority.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *The game between Pilate and the priests continued with the writing of the notice (Gr., titlon; Latin, titulus) which was usually attached to a criminal's cross. It read, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Since the sign was written in three languages—Aramaic, Latin, and Greek—and the Crucifixion was in a public place, all who could read saw a clear proclamation.*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *The chief priests protested the title, but Pilate refused to change it. It was his final thrust against the Jewish religious establishment. He knew that the priests and elders envied Jesus and wanted to destroy Him (Matt. 27:18). A shrewd politician like Pilate well understood the workings of the Jewish religious establishment. He knew that his placard would insult and embarrass them, and that is exactly what he wanted ... The fact that this title was written in Hebrew (Aramaic), Greek, and Latin is significant. For one thing, it shows that our Lord was crucified in a place where many peoples and nations met, a cosmopolitan place. Hebrew is the language of religion, Greek of philosophy, and Latin of law; and all three combined to crucify the Son of God. But what He did on the cross, He did for the whole world! In this Gospel, John emphasizes the worldwide dimensions of the work of Christ. Without realizing it, Pilate wrote a "Gospel tract" when he prepared this title; for one of the thieves discovered that Jesus was King, and he asked entrance into His kingdom.*
 - 4) Leon Morris, *The "notice" was a placard listing the crimes of the condemned, and attached to the cross. Over Jesus he wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," thus maintaining the position he took up in verses 14–15, and securing a certain grim revenge on those who had hounded him into consenting to Jesus' execution. John stresses the kingship motif right to the end. For him the royalty of Jesus is the significant thing. He does not let us forget it. Incidentally, the fact that the inscription was in three languages will sufficiently account for the fact that divergent accounts are given of its content in the four Gospels.*
 - 5) George Beasley-Murray, *Here the irony of John reaches its apex: the two men who were most responsible for the death of Jesus became the unwitting prophets of the death of Jesus: the one declaring it as the means of redemption for Israel and the nations (11:49–50) the other proclaiming it the occasion of his exaltation to be King of Israel and Lord of all.*
 - 6) F. F. Bruce, *... John sees a deeper meaning in the "title" on the cross than either Pilate or the chief priests could appreciate. "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." The Crucified One is the true king, the kingliest king of all. Because it is he who is stretched on the cross, he turns an obscene instrument of torture into a throne of glory and "reigns from the tree."*

4. The Jewish chief priests wanted Pilate's inscription revised (21-22), *So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" 22 Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."*
 - a. Thomas Constable, *The chief priest's modification of the title would have robbed Pilate of this last chance to humiliate the Jews. He had already conceded once to their request, but he refused to give them the satisfaction of robbing him of this revenge. Ironically, what Pilate let stand was the exact truth. He had unconsciously become God's herald of His redemptive purpose.*
 - b. Edwin Blum, *Doubtless he felt he had done enough dirty work for the leaders of the nation, and he enjoyed his little joke against them. His haughty answer, What I have written, I have written, completes a series of amazing utterances by Pilate (cf. 18:38; 19:5, 14-15; Matt. 27:22). Irony was also shown by John, who recognized that Pilate wrote those words but that God wanted His Son to die with this proclamation on His cross. The words in another sense are a fitting judgment on the life of Pilate. He had played his part and had his moment of truth. He, a Gentile, would be judged accordingly by the King of the Jews!*
 - c. Leon Morris, *With an air of finality he refused to alter what he had written. John will want us to see that there is a kingship that Jesus exercises, and that nothing can change this. Whether Pilate sensed anything of this or whether his title is a further mockery of Jesus or of Jesus' accusers John does not say. Perhaps the last-mentioned is most probable.*
 - d. William Hendriksen, *It was God himself who in his wonderful providence had directed the hand of Pilate. This does not in any way make God responsible for Pilate's motives in writing the superscription. Nor does it mean that God interpreted the title as the governor interpreted it. But the words, as such, were, nevertheless, true. They were true in this sense that the king of the Jews is crucified in order that he may be the king of a spiritual kingdom (see on 18:36, 37) which recognizes no national or racial distinctions, a kingdom in which the Aramaic-speaking Jew, the Roman, and the Greek—yes, the elect from every "tribe, tongue, people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9)—are the citizens. See on 1:29; 3:16, 17; 4:42; 6:33, 51; 8:12; 9:5; 10:16; 11:52; 12:32 ... Still filled with wrath because of the major defeat which he had suffered, he will at least achieve a minor victory. Curt and crisp is his answer "What I have written I have written." It remains! And it seems as if we hear the voice of God confirming this terse statement. He too is saying, "What I have written I have written."*
 - e. Edward Klink, *The otherworldliness of his kingship was itself being declared as he hung on the cross, the place of his exaltation ... The response of Pilate to the Jews is majestic in its own right, silencing all further discussion and allowing the trilingual title of Jesus on the cross to stand ... This entire section of the Gospel (18:1-19:42) has detailed how in every moment Jesus was in control, dictating the terms to both Jerusalem and Rome. The authoritative declaration of Pilate to the Jews cements this fact, so that even from the cross Jesus was exacting his rule over all creation.*
 - f. William Barclay, *The Jewish leaders repeatedly asked him to remove it; and Pilate refused. 'What I have written,' he said, 'I have written.' Here is Pilate the inflexible, the man who will not yield an inch. So very short a time before, this same man had been weakly vacillating as to whether to crucify Jesus or to let him go; and in the end had allowed himself to be bullied and blackmailed into giving the Jews their will. Adamant about the inscription, he had been weak about the crucifixion.*
 - g. Charles Swindoll, *The temple officials had earlier clarified their allegiance—"We have no king but Caesar" (19:15)—so they demanded the titulus be altered. Pilate, however, had reached the end of his tether. He had set truth and justice aside to retain their political favor and to avoid the wrath of Tiberius ... Clearly, Pilate had been impacted by his encounter with Jesus and, apparently, saw some credence in His claims. If he experienced any conversion, however, history is silent about it. Instead, we have reasonably credible evidence Pilate clashed with Jews again and was recalled to Rome, where he was banished to Gaul and died by his own hand.*
 - h. Grant Osborne, *... Pilate turns the notice of the crime into a virtually worldwide proclamation of Jesus' kingship. He joins Caiaphas as an inadvertent prophet, unknowingly telling all and sundry who this man is and why he is dying. God often uses strange things to accomplish his purposes, and here he uses Pilate's racial prejudice and religious contempt to turn him into a prophet. Pilate was laughing at the Jewish leaders, but the world was beginning to notice the reality of Jesus as royal Messiah.*

B. The distribution of Jesus' clothing (23-24)

1. The soldiers divided His clothing into four parts (23), *When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom,*

a. Related verses

- 1) Matthew 27:35, *And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots.*
- 2) Mark 15:24, *And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take.*
- 3) Luke 23:34, *And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.*

b. Comments

- 1) Edwin Blum, *The soldier's activity in stripping Jesus and dividing His clothes was part of the customary cruelty of those times. Clothes were handmade and therefore expensive in comparison with clothes today. The executioners received the pieces as their due.*
- 2) Thomas Constable, *Normally the executioners of a criminal received his clothes after the criminal had died. John spoke of the soldiers dividing Jesus' garments (plural). The Greek word translated garments is himatia. Usually when this word occurs in the singular it refers to the outer robe that most Jews wore. Here, because he used the plural, John evidently had in mind all of Jesus' outer garments, including His robe, sandals, belt, and head covering. This would have resulted in each of the four soldiers receiving one piece of clothing. The tunic (Gr. chiton) that remained was a garment worn next to the skin, but it was not what we would think of as underwear. It was more like a long tee-shirt. Since Jesus' tunic had been woven in one piece, the soldiers decided to cast lots to determine who would get it.*
- 3) Leon Morris, *In accordance with this custom the soldiers who crucified Jesus divided his clothing into four, one part for each soldier. It is this that enables us to see that there were four soldiers in the execution squad. The "undergarment," instead of being made out of separate pieces of cloth sewn together, was woven in one piece, without a seam. It was thus of some value.*
- 4) William Hendriksen, *These garments were of unequal value; hence the soldiers (as is clear from the Synoptics) cast lots (throwing dice, perhaps). It has been suggested that these four pieces were: head gear, sandals, belt, and outer garment ... But there was also a fifth garment, namely, the seamless tunic, "woven all the way from top to bottom." This was the garment worn next to the skin. Had there been only four garments, there would have been no problem, for there were four soldiers; hence, one for each. But what to do with the fifth? That was the problem.*
- 5) Edward Klink, *Roman crucifixions were performed with the victim naked, which heaped greater public shame on the criminal. The specificity given to the garment by the narrator suggests that this aspect of the crucifixion is important ... if vv. 19–22 are declaring Jesus to be the true King, then these verses (vv. 23–24) are declaring Jesus to be the true Priest—the Priest of the Most High God (cf. Heb 7). It is fitting that the tunic is no longer being worn by Jesus, for "it is Jesus, and no longer an earthly Jewish high priest, who takes away the sins of the world. God's people are about to be reconstituted around the person of Jesus, and the role and functions once reserved for the high priest—intercession, sacrifice, reconciliation, cleansing, and forgiveness from sin—are now fulfilled and superseded by Jesus himself."*
- 6) William Barclay, *Jesus' tunic is described as being without seam, woven in one piece from top to bottom. That is the precise description of the linen tunic which the high priest wore. Let us remember that the function of the priest was to be the liaison between God and his people ... No one ever did that as Jesus did. He is the perfect high priest through whom men and women come to God ... When John tells us of the seamless tunic of Jesus, it is not just a description of the kind of clothes that Jesus wore; it is something which tells us that Jesus is the perfect priest, opening the perfect way for all people to the presence of God.*
- 7) George Beasley-Murray, *... the account of the seamless tunic could hardly have developed on the basis of the psalm. It was treasured by the Evangelist as another example of the events of the passion of Jesus fulfilling the purpose of God made known in the scriptures.*

2. They cast lots for his tunic as was foretold in Scripture (24), *so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, “They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”*
 - a. Related verse, Psalm 22:18, *they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *John alone among the evangelists noted that this procedure was another fulfillment of prophecy (Ps. 22:18). The poetic parallelism in this prophecy found literal fulfillment in this event. People continued to carry out God’s foreordained plan of salvation though unknowingly. This is another tribute to God’s sovereignty. Even as Jesus’ humiliation reached its depths, as enemies took even His clothes from Him, the Father controlled His destiny.*
 - 2) Arthur Pink, *... the sinful first Adam was clothed by God; the sinless last Adam was unclothed by wicked men.*
 - 3) Edwin Blum, *John saw the significance in the fulfillment of Psalm 22:18, in which the poetic parallelism in that verse was fulfilled in two separate acts: (a) They divided My garments and (b) they cast lots for My clothing. That Jesus died naked was part of the shame which He bore for our sins. At the same time He is the last Adam who provides clothes of righteousness for sinners.*
 - 4) Kenneth Gangel, *With his emphasis on biblical fulfillment, John intended us to see even this common division of an executed man’s clothing as a detail of interest to God. It was of such interest to God that he had foretold it in the Old Testament Scriptures. In the words of Tasker, “It is as the great High Priest offering the perfect sacrifice that Jesus is dying; and it is stated in the Jewish law that the robe of the priest’s ephod shall be of woven work and so constructed that it be not rent (Ex. 28:31–32)” (Tasker, p. 210).*
 - 5) Leon Morris, *They cast lots to determine who should be the fortunate fellow. John sees in this a literal fulfillment of Scripture (Ps. 22:18). He stresses that this is the reason for the soldiers’ action. Once again we see that his master thought that God was over all that was done, so directing things that his will was accomplished, not that of puny men.*
 - 6) William Hendriksen, *To tear this garment and give each soldier a piece would have served no useful purpose. One could do very little with a torn-off piece. So they decide not to do this. Instead they decide that the inner garment, all of one piece (not sewed together but woven all the way from top to bottom), must also be put into the lottery even though this may mean that thus one man will receive more in value than the others ... what the soldiers did when they disrobed Jesus and then divided his garments among themselves, casting lots, should cause us to pause with horror. Such a pause is suggested by the words: These things, indeed, the soldiers did. They did that which was shameful. Yet, by means of that shameful deed God’s eternal plan (hence, also prophecy) was fulfilled. Hence, we pause in abhorrence ... and adoration!*
 - 7) George Beasley-Murray, *The majority of the OT passages quoted in relation to the crucifixion of Jesus come from the Psalms, most of which are “royal lament psalms” used “to portray Jesus as the King who was maltreated, pursued, or deserted by his contemporaries ... By using Psalm 22 the narrator presents Christ “not as a desperate King seeking protection from his enemies, and rescue by a seemingly absent God, but as a righteous King vindicated by God against those who falsely accuse and pursue him.” Even as Christ is nailed to the cross, the soldiers below him, gambling on the garments previously belonging to him, do nothing outside the will and control of God. They are doing, quite simply, what God said long ago they would do.*
 - 8) Charles Swindoll, *John includes this detail to demonstrate the remarkable fulfillment of prophecy given almost a thousand years previously. David envisioned the crucifixion of the Messiah centuries before the method had been invented (Ps. 22:18).*
 - 9) Grant Osborne, *Jesus is fulfilling another aspect of the Davidic Messiah, that of the righteous sufferer abandoned by all but held up by God. This begins a major emphasis in the crucifixion scene, with four fulfillment passages (19:24, 28, 36, 37). John wants to show that all that happened to Jesus was following the divine plan. In fact, John describes the unfolding details as in keeping with Psalm 22: the division of garments (v. 23a) followed by the gambling over the tunic (vv. 23b–24a). All earthly ties are released—clothes, family, and life itself.*

C. Jesus entrusted His mother to the care of a disciple (25-27)

1. Mary, her sister and Mary Magdalene (25), **but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.**

a. Related verses

- 1) Matthew 27:55-56, *There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, 56 among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.*
- 2) Mark 15:40-41, *There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41 When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.*
- 3) Luke 23:49, *And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.*

b. Comments

- 1) John mentions four women standing near the cross: Jesus' mother, her sister, Salome, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.
- 2) Edwin Blum, *In stark contrast with the cruelty and indifference of the soldiers, a group of four women watched with love and grief. The anguish of Jesus' mother fulfilled a prophecy of Simeon: "A sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:35).*
- 3) Thomas Constable, *The four women who were standing by the cross contrast with the four soldiers ... While the soldiers behaved callously and profited immediately from Jesus' death, the women waited faithfully and patiently for God's will to unfold. It was apparently common for friends and relatives, as well as enemies, to stand at a short distance ("nearby," v. 26) around the crosses of crucified criminals ... It is interesting that John did not refer to his own mother, either, by name (Salome), or as the mother of Zebedee's sons. John never named himself, or his brother James, or any other member of his family. He evidently wanted to play down his mother's identity, as well as his own, since he did not directly mention them ... John was Jesus' cousin on his mother's side. As such, he was a logical person to assume responsibility for Mary's welfare. Judging from their apparent absence at His cross, Jesus' physical half-brothers may not have become believers until after His resurrection.*
- 4) Warren Wiersbe, *A group of women, along with the Apostle John, stood near the cross. (Later, they would move farther away and join other friends of Jesus [Matt. 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-41].) John specifies four women: Mary, the mother of Jesus; His mother's sister, Salome, the mother of James and John; Mary, the wife of Clopas (Cleophas); and Mary Magdalene. It took courage to stand there in the midst of such hatred and ridicule, but their being there must have encouraged our Lord.*
- 5) William Hendriksen, *Taking these four in the order named, and assuming the harmony given to be correct, the New Testament references to them are as follows: (1) The mother of Jesus. Her name was Mary. She was the wife of Joseph. Other references to her are found in the following passages: Matt. 1:16, 18, 20; 2:11; 13:55; Mark 6:3; Luke 1:27, 30, 34, 38, 39, 41, 46, 56; 2:5, 16, 19, 34; John 2:1, 3, 5, 12; 6:42; 19:25, 26, 27; Acts 1:14. See also Vol. I, pp. 113-121, 238. (2) Salome. See Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40; 16:1; John 19:25. (3) Mary, the wife of Clopas. See Matt. 27:56, 61; 28:1; Mark 15:40, 47; 16:1; Luke 24:10; John 19:25. (4) Mary Magdalene. See Matt. 27:56, 61; 28:1; Mark 15:40, 47; 16:1, 9; Luke 8:2; 24:10; John 19:25; 20:1, 2, 11-18 ... It would seem that of the entire circle of eleven men only one was at the cross. That one was the apostle John. But there were several women. All honor to them, to their courage, and to their love..*
- 6) Edward Klink, *The first woman mentioned his "his mother" whose only other appearance was at the wedding in Cana ... The second woman mentioned is "his mother's sister ... this unnamed woman is simply designated as the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and therefore is Jesus's aunt on his mother's side ... The third woman mentioned is "Mary the wife of Clopas" ... But who is Clopas? According to Christian tradition he was the brother of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus ... Thus, "Mary the wife of Clopas" was Jesus's mother's husband's brother's wife ... The fourth woman mentioned is "Mary Magdalene" ... Although she is the only woman at the cross not related to Jesus, she is the best known woman disciple of Jesus in the early church, appearing in every grouping in every Gospel.*
- 7) Grant Osborne, *The Romans kept family and friends back but still allowed them to be in hearing range and let the crucified make in a sense a last will and testament to them.*

2. Jesus spoke to His mother (26), **When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!”**
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) John 13:23, *One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus’ side,*
 - 2) John 2:4, *When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.”*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus addressed His mother by saying, “Woman” (Gr. gynai, cf. 2:4). This was an affectionate and respectful way of speaking to her. Perhaps Jesus was alluding to Genesis 3:15: “I make enemies Of you and the woman, And of your offspring and her Descendant; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel” ...Even as He hung dying an excruciatingly painful death, Jesus compassionately made provision for His mother.*
 - 2) Edwin Blum, *Seeing her sorrow Jesus honored His mother by consigning her into the care of John, the beloved disciple. His brothers and sisters being in Galilee, were not in a position to care for or comfort her.*
 - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *Jesus assured her of His love, and He gave His choicest disciple, who rested on His bosom, to be her adopted son and to care for her.*
 - 4) Kenneth Gangel, *Most scholars understand this passage as a commitment of Mary, Jesus’ mother, to John, since Joseph was probably already dead by this point and Jesus knew that none of his half-brothers had yet made a commitment to his mission. Perhaps at that point Mary might have remembered Simeon’s prophecy: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too” (Luke 2:34–35).*
 - 5) Leon Morris, *Jesus then said to Mary, “Dear woman, here is your son.” This is surely a way of saying that the beloved disciple would take his place in being her protector and provider, now that his earthly course was finished. It is perhaps a little strange that Jesus commends Mary to the beloved disciple rather than to his brothers. But they did not believe in him (7:5) and Mary did. The crucifixion and resurrection, however, seem to have worked a change in them, for shortly after the ascension we find them associated with the apostles and with Mary (Acts 1:14).*
 - 6) William Hendriksen, *Mary must begin to look upon Jesus as her Lord. Yes, even then she will suffer, but this suffering will be of a different nature. She will then know that though indescribably terrible, his agony is, nevertheless, glorious because of its purpose. She will then begin to concentrate on its redemptive meaning. Hence, not mother but woman. Mary’s merely emotional suffering—as any mother would suffer for her son who was being crucified—must be replaced by something higher and nobler, that is, by adoration!*
 - 7) Grant Osborne, *A lovely scene is forged, demonstrating the incredible love of Jesus for his own, even as he is dying an excruciating death. Jesus tells Mary she has a new son to take care of her, and we have a new model for the church as a family.*
 - 8) William Barclay, *There is something infinitely moving in the fact that Jesus in the agony of the cross, when the salvation of the world hung in the balance, thought of the loneliness of his mother in the days ahead. He never forgot the duties that lay to his hand. He was Mary’s eldest son, and even in the moment of his cosmic battle he did not forget the simple things that lay near home. To the end of the day, even on the cross, Jesus was thinking more of the sorrows of others than of his own.*
3. Jesus gave a command to His beloved disciple (27), **Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.**
 - a. William Hendriksen, *By saying, “Woman, look! Your son!” Jesus is committing Mary to the care of John, who, as has been shown (see on 19:25), may well have been her own nephew, the son of her sister Salome. It seems that John had a lodging in Jerusalem (so did Peter; see on 20:2), though his real home was in Galilee.*
 - b. Leon Morris, *His words to Mary are complemented by similar words to the disciple. These he would remember as a sacred charge. There is a typical Johannine note of time, “From that hour” (NIV, “time”). That he took her into his own home implies, of course, more than that he provided her with a roof. From that time he took responsibility for her.*

- c. Thomas Constable, *The language that Jesus used was legal and quite similar to the terms used commonly in adoption proceedings. His action indicates that He was the person responsible for His mother, implying that Joseph was no longer alive and that He was her oldest son. Most Bible scholars assume that Joseph had died by now. Jesus' act also placed Mary under John's authority, which is a position that some Roman Catholics have found very uncomfortable in view of their doctrine of Mary's supremacy.*
- d. Warren Wiersbe, *We do know that he cared for her and that she was among the believers in the Upper Room as they awaited Pentecost (Acts 1:14). Even while He was performing the great work of redemption, Jesus was faithful to His responsibilities as a son. What an honor it was for John to take his Lord's place in Mary's life!*

D. The death of Jesus (28-30)

- * Introductory comment, *Thomas Constable, John did not mention the darkness that came over the land, which the other evangelists did mention (cf. Matt. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44–45). This is noteworthy in view of John's interest in the light and darkness motif that recurs in this Gospel. Perhaps he did not want to detract attention from the person of Jesus. He also omitted Jesus' heart-rending lament that the Father had withdrawn from Him (cf. Matt. 27:46–47; Mark 15:34–35). This is understandable, since throughout this Gospel John stressed the Son's essential unity with the Father. The Father's temporary judgment on the Son did not ultimately nullify their essential unity.*
- 1. Jesus thirsted according to Scripture (28), ***After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst."***
 - a. William Hendriksen, ... *Jesus knew that his work for others had now been completely accomplished. Throughout his earthly sojourn and especially on the cross he had suffered the wrath of God against sin so as to deliver his people from it and to merit for them everlasting salvation. The task had been brought to completion.*
 - b. Thomas Constable, *As the moment of His death drew nearer, Jesus said that He was thirsty. This authenticated His true humanity, which the Gnostics and Docetists of John's day denied. A man in Jesus' physical condition would at this point be suffering the tortures of dehydration.*
 - c. Edwin Blum, *The wording in John 19:28 indicated that Jesus was fully conscious and was aware of fulfilling the details of prophecies (Pss. 42:1–2; 63:1).*
 - d. Warren Wiersbe, *He was enduring real physical suffering, for He had a real human body. He had just emerged from three hours of darkness when He felt the wrath of God and separation from God (Matt. 27:45–49). When you combine darkness, thirst, and isolation, you have—hell!*
 - e. Leon Morris, *"Later" signifies a short interval; John passes over other things and moves to the consummation. Jesus knew that the end was at hand. Once again John sees him as in complete command. It is not certain whether we should take "so that the Scripture would be fulfilled" with the preceding ("... all was now completed so that the Scripture should be fulfilled") or with the following ("so that the Scripture should be fulfilled Jesus said, 'I thirst'"). In the latter case the Scripture will perhaps be Psalm 69:21. Either is possible, or, in the Johannine manner, there may be a reference to both.*
 - f. John Hart, *He was physically thirsty (Pss 22:15; 69:21). Profuse bleeding, like profuse perspiration, dehydrates the body and causes intense thirst.*
 - g. William Barclay, *If he was ever to redeem humanity, he must become human. He had to become what we are in order to make us what he is. That is why John stresses the fact that Jesus felt thirst; he wished to show that he was really human and really underwent the agony of the cross. John goes out of his way to stress the real humanity and the real suffering of Jesus.*
 - h. Grant Osborne, *According to Mark 15:25, 33, he was on the cross about six hours, from the third hour (nine in the morning) to the ninth hour (three in the afternoon). He was naturally thirsty ... When he says, "I am thirsty," he may be alluding to Psalm 22:15 ("my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth") but more likely Psalm 69:21, "they offer me sour wine for my thirst," a psalm already cited in 2:17; 15:25; and again in 19:29–30 below.*

2. He was offered sour wine by the soldiers (29), *A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.*
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) Matthew 27:48, *And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink.*
 - 2) Mark 15:36, *And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down."*
 - 3) Luke 23:36, *The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *It may have been customary to offer sour wine (Gr. oxos) to the victims of crucifixion, since John mentioned a jar full of it as standing there near the cross. Another possibility is that the soldiers had brought this wine to the crucifixion for their own refreshment. Only John mentioned that the soldiers put a sponge full of the sour wine on a branch of hyssop, which they brought up to His mouth. Hyssop was readily available, since it grew out of many rocky crevices like a weed. The hyssop reference may simply be a detail in the testimony of an eyewitness to Jesus' crucifixion. However, it may hint at Jesus being the Lamb of God, since the Jews used hyssop to sprinkle blood on their doorposts and lintels at Passover (cf. Exod. 12:22; 1 Cor. 5:7) ... Some interpreters believe that the soldiers gave Jesus the drink out of compassion. Others believe that the soldiers were really giving Jesus something that would increase His sufferings.*
 - 2) Warren Wiersbe, *One of the soldiers took pity on Jesus and moistened His lips with the cheap vinegar wine the soldiers drank. We must not imagine Jesus hanging many feet up in the air, almost inaccessible. His feet were perhaps three or four feet from the ground, so it would be easy for the man to put a sponge at the end of a reed and give Jesus a drink. You and I today can "give Jesus a drink" by sharing what we have with those in need (Matt. 25:34–40).*
 - 3) Kenneth Gangel, *Wine vinegar would contract the throat muscles and keep the victim from shrieking in pain. This liquid is not to be confused with the "wine mixed with myrrh" of Mark 15:23. We should not read any compassion into this act, since the bitterness would prolong pain by extending the life of the victim.*
 - 4) Leon Morris, *It was not some wine that some people just happened to have with them. That there were also a sponge and some hyssop seems to indicate that it had been provided for the crucified, not simply for the soldiers. They now soaked a sponge in the wine, put it on "hyssop," and thus raised it to Jesus' mouth. The sponge was a useful way of conveying liquid to the lips of a crucified man, a cup of any sort being manifestly unsuitable.*
 - 5) Edward Klink, *Some have even argued (based primarily on Mark 15) that the wine was a form of torture, based upon the corroding mixture of wine and vinegar/myrrh. While this cannot be verified from the text alone, the probable allusion to Psalm 69:21 strengthens the possibility, where the drink given to the victim is an act of hostility to increase suffering. What is clear is that the response of the soldiers is the fulfillment of Scripture and highlights the cup of suffering Jesus must drink.*
3. Jesus declared that He completed His task and physically died (30), *When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) John 17:4, *I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.*
 - 2) Matthew 27:50, *And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.*
 - 3) Mark 15:37, *And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.*
 - 4) Luke 23:46, *Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.*

b. Comments

- 1) Thomas Constable, *Jesus cried out with a loud voice (Mark 15:37): "It is finished!"* (Gr. *tetelestai*). He probably shouted this with an exclamation of triumph. The verb *teleo* denotes the completion of a task. Jesus was not just announcing that He was about to die. He was also declaring, proleptically (in advance), that He had fulfilled God's will for Him (cf. 17:4) ... Nothing more needed, or ever needs, to be done in order to finish it. This finished work of Jesus Christ is the basis for our salvation (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10) ... Having thus spoken, Jesus handed over (Gr. *paredoken*) His spirit to His Father (cf. Luke 23:46), and bowed His head in peaceful death. Normally victims of crucifixion experienced the gradual ebbing away of life, and then their heads would slump forward. All four evangelists presented Jesus as giving up His life of His own accord. No one took it from Him (cf. 10:10, 14, 17–18). He did this voluntarily, and in harmony with His Father's will (cf. 8:29; 14:31).
- 2) Arthur Pink, *The death of Christ may be viewed from five main viewpoints*. From the standpoint of God the Cross was a propitiation (Rom. 3:25–26), where full satisfaction was made to His holiness and justice. From the standpoint of the Saviour, it was a sacrifice (Eph. 5:2), an offering (Heb. 9:14), an act of obedience (Phil. 2:8). From the standpoint of believers, it was a substitution, the Just suffering for the unjust (1 Peter 3:18). From the standpoint of Satan it was a triumph and a defeat: a triumph, in that he bruised the heel of the woman's Seed (Gen. 3:15); a defeat, in that through His death Christ destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil (Heb. 2:14). From the standpoint of the world it was a brutal murder (Acts 3:15). It is with this last-mentioned aspect of the death of Christ that our present passage principally treats.
- 3) Edwin Blum, *Papyri receipts for taxes have been recovered with the word tetelestai written across them*, meaning "paid in full." This word on Jesus' lips was significant. When He said, "It is finished" (not "I am finished"), He meant His redemptive work was completed. He had been made sin for people (2 Cor. 5:21) and had suffered the penalty of God's justice which sin deserved. Even in the moment of His death, Jesus remained the One who gave up His life (cf. John 10:11, 14, 17–18). He bowed His head (giving His seventh saying, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" [Luke 23:46]) and then dismissed His spirit. This differs from the normal process in death by crucifixion in which the life-spirit would ebb away and then the head would slump forward.
- 4) Warren Wiersbe, *The death of Jesus on the cross "completes the picture" that God had been painting*, the story that He had been writing, for centuries. Because of the cross, we understand the ceremonies and prophecies in the Old Testament ... Jesus' death was not an accident; it was a divine appointment. He was not murdered in the strictest sense: He willingly gave His life for us. His death was an atonement, not just an example. He actually accomplished the work of redemption on the cross ... It will take eternity to reveal all that happened when Jesus Christ died on the cross ... As John has told us repeatedly, and as we have emphasized in the pages of this commentary, the significance of Christ's death on the cross centers in substitutionary atonement—his death on our behalf. God's holiness and justice made the cross an absolute necessity.
- 5) Leon Morris, *Jesus died with the cry of the Victor on his lips*. This is not the moan of the defeated, nor the sigh of patient resignation. It is the triumphant recognition that he has now fully accomplished the work that he came to do. Then he bowed his head, a detail mentioned only by John, and possibly the touch of an eyewitness. It is perhaps worth noting that the same expression is used of going to bed: "the Son of Man has no place to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58). There is the thought of a peaceful death, the death of one who trusts his Father. John goes on, "and gave up his spirit." This is not the usual way of referring to death. Indeed, in none of the four Gospels is any usual expression employed to describe the manner of Jesus' end. His relation to death is not the same as that of other people. It may be going too far to say that he "dismissed his spirit," but there does seem to be an element of voluntariness that is not found in the case of others.
- 6) William Hendriksen, *As Jesus saw it, the entire work of redemption (both active and passive obedience, fulfilling the law and bearing its curse) had been brought to completion*. And if someone should object that the burial had not yet taken place and that this too (as well as the repose in the tomb until the moment of the resurrection) was part of Christ's humiliation, the answer would be very simple: in the mind of Christ the burial is so certain that he can speak as if that too had already been accomplished.

- 7) George Beasley-Murray, ... *Jesus breathed his last ... it is possible that it reflects the thought in 10:18, "I have authority to lay down (my life)...." The death of Jesus is then "a conscious act ... a self-offering to the Father" ...*
- 8) John Hart, *Since He Himself gave up His spirit, Christ fulfilled His prophecy that no one would take His life from Him (Jn 10:11, 15, 17, 18).*
- 9) Edward Klink, *This is no cry of defeat or mere announcement of imminent death; it is an announcement of victory!*
- 10) Grant Osborne, *The one-word cry (Tetelestai) is quite significant, meaning the entire work of God assigned to the Christ is "finished." There is double meaning here—he has "ended" his earthly life and at the same time has "accomplished" his divinely appointed destiny. With the Passover implications, it means Jesus has now carried out his atoning work on the cross (one of the primary emphases of John, found in 1:29; 10:11, 15; 11:50, 52; 18:14). The paschal sacrifice has been offered for the sins of humankind, and redemption has now been accomplished. The age of salvation has now been inaugurated ... Still in sovereign control, even at the last moment of his life, Jesus did not passively die but actively "bowed his head and gave up his spirit" ("breathed his last" in Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46). Jesus earlier stated, "No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (10:18). This is precisely the case here. Obedient to his Father to the very end, Jesus relinquishes his life to him.*

E. Confirmation of Jesus' death (31-37)

1. The Jews demanded that Jesus' death be speeded up (31-34)

- a. They asked Pilate that Jesus' legs be broken (31), ***Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.***

1) Related verses

- a) John 19:14, *Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"*
- b) Deuteronomy 21:23, *his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.*
- c) Joshua 8:29, *And he hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening. And at sunset Joshua commanded, and they took his body down from the tree and threw it at the entrance of the gate of the city and raised over it a great heap of stones, which stands there to this day.*
- d) Joshua 10:27, *But at the time of the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves, and they set large stones against the mouth of the cave, which remain to this very day.*
- e) Exodus 12:16, *On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you.*

2) Comments

- a) Leon Morris, *"The Preparation" (NIV inserts "day of") had become a technical term for "the Preparation for the Sabbath," that is, Friday ... According to Jewish law the dead body of an executed criminal was not to remain all night "on the tree," but was to be buried that same day, because "You must not desecrate the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance" (Deut. 21:23). Thus a body should be removed from a cross on any day before evening.⁸⁴ But especially was this the case when a sabbath was approaching, and even more so when that sabbath was "a high day" (NIV, "a special Sabbath"), that is, one of the important feasts ... "The Jews" did not want their land defiled by the dead, but they were not concerned that they themselves were defiled by their deed.*
- b) Warren Wiersbe, ... *the Jewish religious leaders did all they could to hasten the death of Jesus and the two thieves ... However, our Lord was in control; and He dismissed His spirit at "the ninth hour," which was 3 P.M. (see Matt. 27:45–50).*

- c) Thomas Constable, *This Sabbath was an extra special day because it fell during Passover week. The Jews wanted to get the bodies down off their crosses so they would not defile the land. The Mosaic Law instructed the Jews to allow no one to remain hanging on an instrument of execution overnight. Such a person was under God's curse (cf. Deut. 21:22–23; Josh. 8:29) ... Normally the Romans left victims of crucifixion hanging until they died, which sometimes took several days. They would leave their corpses on their crosses until the birds had picked the flesh off them. If they had to hasten their deaths for some reason, they would smash their legs, breaking the bones with an iron mallet. This prevented the victims from using their legs to push themselves up in order to keep their chest cavities open, allowing them to breathe. Death by asphyxiation, loss of blood, and shock would soon follow.* 1276 Archaeologists have found the remains of a victim of crucifixion with his legs smashed in Israel.
 - d) Edwin Blum, *In the only known archeological find of a crucifixion, which came to light in 1968, the skeletal remains revealed that the lower legs had been shattered by a single blow. This illustrates this passage. Because of the Law (Deut. 21:22–23) a body was not to remain exposed on a tree (or cross) overnight and certainly not on a Sabbath. A person so executed was under God's curse and his body if left exposed would defile the land (cf. Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).*
 - e) William Hendriksen, *He also saw that upon noticing that Jesus had already died, they did not break his bones. It is altogether probable that they refrained from doing so upon orders from the centurion, on whom the central Sufferer had made such a deep impression (Luke 23:47).*
 - f) Edward Klink, *The Jews think the corpse of the Son of God is the source of their defilement at Passover, when in reality his "flesh" is the true Passover Lamb and the only source of true purification ... For while the religious leaders of the Jews were preparing to perform their Passover duties on behalf of God for the people, God himself had personally already "completed" the task. This truly was the great day—perhaps Christians should refer to this Friday not as Good Friday but as Great Friday.*
 - g) Charles Swindoll, *Jesus' death came relatively quickly. The combination of the "halfway death" He endured earlier, the blood loss and shock from the nails, and sheer exhaustion from the sleepless night before were enough to kill any man swiftly. It seems best, however, to take the phrase "gave up His spirit" (v. 30) at face value. His life ended by His choice. His life was not taken from Him.*
- b. The soldiers broke the legs of the two other two but Jesus was dead (32-33), ***So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.***
- 1) Related verse, John 19:18, *There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.*
 - 2) Comments
 - a) Thomas Constable, *The Roman soldiers therefore broke the legs of the two terrorists whom they had crucified with Jesus, because they were still alive. They did not break Jesus' legs since He was already dead.*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *The smashing of the lower leg bones was called in Latin the crurifragium. This caused death to occur fairly quickly by shock, loss of blood, and inability to breathe (the chest cavity would bear the pressure of the body's weight after the legs were broken). Without this procedure, a person could live for many hours or even days. This crurifragium was done to the two thieves on each side of Jesus.*
 - c) Leon Morris, *It is not said that Pilate gave his approval, but evidently he did for the soldiers came to break the legs of the sufferers. They did actually break the legs of both the men who were crucified with Jesus, which indicates that they were at this time still alive. But when they came to Jesus they saw that he was already dead. Therefore they did not break his legs. There was no point in it.*
 - d) Grant Osborne, *The soldiers first break the legs of the two criminals on either side of Jesus (19:32), and according to Mark 15:33–34 this took place shortly after three in the afternoon, allowing for time to remove and bury the bodies before sundown. However, when they come to Jesus they realize this is not needed since he is already dead (19:33; these hardened soldiers were experts on death).*

- e) Edward Klink, *The importance of the fact that Jesus's legs were not broken will be given significance from Scripture in v. 36. This detail does not only intend to confirm Jesus's death but may also highlight the manner in which he died. Befitting the Gospel thus far, especially in the trial and crucifixion scenes, the implication might simply be that Jesus was the acting authority over his life until its very end (cf. 10:18), choosing to die once "all things" had been "completed" (v. 30).*
- c. A soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear(34), ***But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.***
- 1) Thomas Constable, *Whatever moved one of the soldiers to pierce Jesus' side with his spear (Gr. longche) is unclear and unimportant. Perhaps it was just another senseless act of brutality, or he may have wanted to see if he could get some reaction from Jesus ... It is also unclear why the wound produced a sudden flow of blood and water (cf. 1 John 5:6). Probably the spear pierced Jesus' heart and its surrounding pericardial sac that contains water. The fluids could have drained out as John described if the spear had entered the body near the bottom of the chest cavity. Apparently the soldier pierced Jesus' side before His blood congealed into a solid. This eyewitness testimony stresses the fact that Jesus really did die and that He was a genuine man (cf. 1:14).*
 - 2) Warren Wiersbe, *His side was to be pierced (Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7), so that was done by one of the soldiers ... John saw a special significance to the blood and water that came from the wound in the side. For one thing, it proved that Jesus had a real body (see 1 John 1:1–4) and experienced a real death. By the time John wrote this book, there were false teachers in the church claiming that Jesus did not have a truly human body ... There may also be a symbolic meaning: the blood speaks of our justification, the water of our sanctification and cleansing. The blood takes care of the guilt of sin; the water deals with the stain of sin.*
 - 3) Kenneth Gangel, *Perhaps to make sure Jesus was dead, one of the soldiers slashed his side with a spear, causing a flow of blood and water that removed any doubt since, had he still been alive, only blood would have flowed out. Countless pages have been written on this verse and multiple medical explanations offered. But John's point seems simple. The word had become flesh, genuine flesh that could bleed and die. Many people have argued that John intended some theological symbolism by emphasizing blood and water. It seems to me he was focusing on the reality of the death Jesus died.*
 - 4) Leon Morris, *But one of the soldiers was not content simply to pass by. Either out of brutality or to make sure that Jesus was really dead he thrust his spear into his side. Immediately blood and water came out (cf. 1 John 5:6). The significance of this is not clear. In view of the following verse it is plain that John wants us to take this as a record of what actually happened. He is not manufacturing an edifying piece of symbolism but describing an event. The author was struck by it, and therefore included it in his Gospel ... We conclude, then, that John is reminding us that life, real life, comes through Christ's death.*
 - 5) William Barclay, *... why does John stress it so much? He does so for two reasons. (1) To him it was the final, unanswerable proof that Jesus was a real man with a real body. Here was the answer to the Gnostics with their ideas of phantoms and spirits and an unreal humanity. Here was proof that Jesus was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. (2) But to John this was more than a proof that Jesus was truly human. It was a symbol of the two great sacraments of the Church. There is one sacrament which is based on water—baptism; and there is one which is based on blood—the Lord's Supper with its cup of blood-red wine. The water of baptism is the sign of the cleansing grace of God in Jesus Christ; the wine of the Lord's Supper is the symbol of the blood which was shed to save people from their sins. The water and the blood which flowed from the side of Christ were to John the sign of the cleansing water of baptism and the cleansing blood commemorated and experienced in the Lord's Supper.*

2. John confirmed the events at the cross (35-37)
 - a. He was eyewitness to the crucifixion (35), *He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe.*
- 1) Related verses
 - a) 1 John 1:1-3, *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.*
 - b) Revelation 1:2, *who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.*
 - c) John 21:24, *This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.*
 - d) John 20:31, *but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*
 - 2) Comments
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Lest the reader miss the point of verse 34, John explained that he had personally seen what he narrated, and that he was telling the truth. Furthermore, the purpose of his reliable eyewitness testimony was that his readers might believe what he wrote, and what it meant, namely, that Jesus was God's Son (cf. 20:30–31; 21:24).*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *This section relates the testimony of the eyewitness who is also most probably the writer of this Gospel, John the disciple (cf. 13:23; 21:20–24). The value of His testimony is an important claim of truth, given so that others may grasp the facts and discern their significance (cf. 20:31).*
 - c) Kenneth Gangel, *Scholars suggest that John may have been the only disciple eyewitness at the cross and therefore referred to himself in verse 35. This language is common to the Johannine epistles. He wanted his readers to know that he was there, and he wanted his readers to know that the cross, like virtually everything else in Christ's earthly ministry, fulfilled Scripture (in this case, Exod. 12:46; Num. 9:12; Ps. 34:20).*
 - d) Leon Morris, *This incident evidently made a profound impression on the mind of the Evangelist. He brings out emphatically that he has good evidence for what he is saying. This evidence is surely the testimony of the Beloved Disciple ... What is plain is that John is placing some emphasis on the fact that this incident may be relied on. He is maintaining that it is recorded "so that you also may believe." The production of faith in the readers is the main purpose for the writing of this Gospel (20:31). John does not explain how faith will result from the narration of the issuing of water and blood from the side of the crucified Savior, but clearly he expected it to do so.*
 - e) Charles Swindoll, *John breaks his narrative with an extended parenthetical aside. John offers eyewitness testimony that Jesus did in fact die. More than sixty years later, a number of heresies had infected communities of believers. Ironically, few false teachers in John's day doubted the deity of Christ; they challenged the reality of His being human! One heresy, called Docetism, claimed that Jesus merely seemed to be human but was instead a divine apparition that could be seen and touched. Some of the so-called Gnostic gospels spin fanciful stories of Jesus appearing to eat without actually consuming food and then never needing to get rid of waste ... Some ancient critics may have claimed that Jesus didn't actually die, that he merely "swooned"; however, this was not likely John's chief concern. He fought hard against the notion that the Son of God was not fully human. John's detailed account of the physical evidence proved that Jesus inhabited a body like ours and died just as certainly as all humans will. This will bear witness to the literal, bodily resurrection later in his narrative.*
 - f) F. F. Bruce, *That eternal life is received through faith in the Son of God is repeatedly emphasized in this Gospel, but this faith must be exercised in him not only as the one who truly became flesh but as the one who truly died. The testimony of verse 35 is thus an aid to saving faith.*

- g) Edward Klink, *His witness is grounded in a truth he already believes and trusts in its veracity. Second, it suggests that the witness is not only correct but competent. He has seen firsthand what needs to be seen—the whole truth—so that when he “speaks the truth” he does so in regard to both the record and interpretation of the events at hand.*
 - h) Grant Osborne, *In 19:35 John anchors the reality of Jesus’ death with the blood and water in eyewitness testimony, namely his own. He wants his readers to recognize the absolute reliability of his account of Jesus’ crucifixion. This is important for us as well, telling us the early church demanded as much historical accuracy as we do. This is paralleled in 21:24 (“we know that his testimony is true”), referring to the accuracy of his Gospel as a whole. Other important witnesses are Luke 1:1–4 (claiming eyewitness testimony behind that Gospel) and 2 Peter 1:16 (denying that Peter invented “cleverly devised stories” about the transfiguration). Clearly the early church claimed historical authenticity for its stories about Jesus. The purpose of this accurate testimony is “so that you also may believe,” paralleling 20:31, “But these are written that you may believe.” The goal of apologetics is not just theoretical accuracy but also spiritual conversion.*
- b. He confirmed the events fulfilled Scripture (36-37), ***For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” 37 And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”***
- 1) Related verses
 - a) Matthew 1:22, *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:*
 - b) Exodus 12:46, *It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones.*
 - c) Numbers 9:12, *They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break any of its bones; according to all the statute for the Passover they shall keep it.*
 - d) Zechariah 12:10, *“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.*
 - e) Revelation 1:7, *Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.*
 - 2) Comments
 - a) F. F. Bruce, *As with the fulfillment of scripture by the partition of Jesus’ clothes, so here there is no suggestion that the soldiers had any inkling that their actions were giving effect to what had been written long before. Rather, their actions were providentially overruled by God for the accomplishment of his purpose.*
 - b) Thomas Constable, *“These things” refer to the facts that the soldiers did not break Jesus’ bones but did pierce His side. Here were two more fulfillments of Old Testament prophecy ... In verse 36 John could have had any of three passages in mind: Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; and/or Psalm 34:20. The first two specify that the Israelites were not to break the bones of their Passover lambs. Elsewhere, Paul and Peter described Jesus as the Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:19), and this figure is prominent in John’s Gospel as well (cf. 1:36; et al.). Psalm 34:20 describes the righteous man by saying that God would not allow anyone to break his bones (cf. Luke 23:47). The first passage seems most probable since its fulfillment was more literal, though admittedly it involves the Passover typology ... In verse 37 the prophecy in view is clearly the one in Zechariah 12:10 (cf. Rev. 1:7). Jesus quoted this verse in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:30). There He stressed a different part of it. The piercing of God’s coming Shepherd happened when Jesus died on the cross (cf. 10:11). The Gentile nations will look at Him whom they pierced when He returns at His second coming (cf. Rev. 1:7). As we have seen, both Jews and Gentiles were responsible for Jesus’ death.*
 - c) Edwin Blum, *John explained that soldiers not administering the crurifragium to Jesus but simply piercing His side fulfilled two specific prophecies or types. Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, did not have any of His bones ... broken (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12; Ps. 34:20) and people in the future will look on the pierced One (Zech. 12:10; cf. Rev. 1:7).*

- d) Warren Wiersbe, *It is remarkable that the Roman soldiers did not do what they were commanded to do—break the victims’ legs—but they did do what they were not supposed to do—pierce the Saviour’s side! In both matters, they fulfilled the very Word of God! The bones of the Passover lamb were not to be broken (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12; and note Ps. 34:20), so our Lord’s bones were protected by the Lord. His side was to be pierced (Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7), so that was done by one of the soldiers.*
- e) Leon Morris, *Most commentators think that the passage John has in mind for the first is Exodus 12:46 or Numbers 9:12, both referring to the Passover (or perhaps Exod. 12:10, LXX). When that sacrifice was instituted the command was given that not one bone of the victim was to be broken. If this is the allusion, John is referring to Jesus as the perfect Passover offering (cf. the death at the time of the killing of the Passover sacrifices, v. 14, and the use of hyssop, v. 29) ... The other Scripture does not seem so difficult. There is agreement that John is referring to Zechariah 12:10 (cf. also Rev. 1:7). It is not the kind of allusion that a modern student would readily discern, but it fits in with the habit of mind of the first century. And this passage from the prophet certainly strengthens the Evangelist in his conviction that in the events associated with the crucifixion the will of God was done. John was evidently impressed by the fact that, though Jesus’ body was pierced, not one bone was broken, and that this corresponded exactly with Scripture.*
- f) William Hendriksen, *When John saw how the soldiers were restrained from breaking the bones of Christ, he saw in this a fulfilment of the words recorded in Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12. No bone of the paschal lamb was to be broken. Christ was the true paschal lamb. See on 1:29; read also 1 Cor. 5:7 ... When the apostle observed the piercing of Christ’s side, he saw in this the fulfilment of the prophecy of Zech. 12:10. For the general import of Zechariah’s prophecies see on 12:14, 15. The words of the prophet are quoted here not according to the LXX but more nearly according to the original Hebrew. The same prophecy, in slightly modified form, is found in Rev. 1:7. For the present—here in 19:37—all that is meant is that the spear-thrust fulfilled the prophecy.*
- g) John Hart, *As further proof of the truth of Christ’s death, John cited the fulfillment of two messianic prophecies ... Israel will one day call for the Messiah to return to them and they will see Him as the One who was pierced. Thus, Zch 12:10 indicates that the Messiah, at His first coming, would be pierced. But at His second coming, THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM in faith WHOM THEY PIERCED (cf. the quote of Zch 12:10 in Rv 1:7, and the comments on Zch 12:10).*
- h) Charles Swindoll, *John augments his eyewitness testimony with that of Passover imagery (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12) and biblical prophecy (Ps. 34:20; Zech. 12:10) ... Make no mistake; we are all guilty of sin and we deserve to suffer death as the just penalty of rebellion against our Creator. Justice cannot be set aside. This rebellion demands a penalty, and that penalty is eternal separation from God in a place of torment ... Jesus, though absolutely innocent, took the place of a hopeless sinner. He took the place of another on the cross. Yes, Barabbas went free, but his unmerited freedom is merely a metaphor for a greater, more personal truth ... It was your place on the cross He took. Jesus died for you!*

F. The burial of Jesus (38-42)

1. Joseph of Arimathea received permission to bury Jesus’ body (38), ***After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body.***
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) See Matthew 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; and Luke 23:50–56.
 - 2) John 7:13, *Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) Edwin Blum, *Joseph of Arimathea was rich (Matt. 27:57) and was waiting for the kingdom (Mark 15:43). (Arimathea was about 20 miles northwest of Jerusalem.) Though a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council, he was “a good and upright man who had not consented to their decision” (Luke 23:50–51). After a crucifixion the Romans usually left the dead body to the beasts of prey. This lack of proper burial was the final humiliation in a crucifixion.*

- 2) Thomas Constable, *All four evangelists mentioned Joseph of Arimathea, but only in regard to Jesus' burial. The Synoptics tell us that he was a rich God-fearing member of the Sanhedrin who was a follower of Jesus and who had not voted to condemn Jesus. Only John identified him as a secret disciple who feared the Jews, namely, the unbelieving Jewish leaders. Jesus had warned His disciples about trying to hide their allegiance to Him (12:42–43). Finally Joseph came out publicly by courageously requesting Jesus' body from Pilate ... Normally the Romans placed the bodies of crucified offenders, whose bodies they did not leave to rot on their crosses, in a cemetery for criminals outside the city. Family members could not claim the bodies of people who had undergone crucifixion as punishment for sedition (inciting rebellion against Rome). Thus Jesus' corpse would normally have ended up in the grave of a common criminal but for Joseph's intervention. Pilate probably granted his request for Jesus' body because he realized that Joseph wanted to give Jesus an honorable burial. That would have humiliated the Jews further.*
- 3) Warren Wiersbe, *When you assemble the data available about Joseph of Arimathea, you learn that he was rich (Matt. 27:57), a prominent member of the Jewish council (Mark 15:43), a good and righteous man who had not consented to what the council did (Luke 23:50–51), a member of that "believing minority" of Jews who were praying for Messiah to come (Mark 15:43, and note Luke 2:25–38), and a disciple of Jesus Christ (John 19:38). It was he who asked for the body of Jesus and, with his friend Nicodemus, gave the Saviour a decent burial ... From the human standpoint, Joseph kept "under cover" because he feared the Jews (John 7:13; 9:22; 12:42); but from the divine standpoint, he was being protected so he could be available to bury the body of Jesus.*
- 4) Kenneth Gangel, *As a member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph would have had some legitimate access to Pilate's ear. Though his act drew the attention of all four Gospel writers, it would have earned Joseph nothing but contempt from his fellow members of the religious elite.*
- 5) Leon Morris, *... the death of Jesus apparently affected Joseph in a way different from that of the closer disciples. They all fled, but Joseph now went to Pilate (Mark says that he went in "boldly") and asked permission to take Jesus' body away for burial. It may be that he felt that in Jesus' lifetime he had paid him little honor, and that he was now presented with his last opportunity. The Jews of that day regarded proper burial of their dead as most important. Many went out of their way to see that fellow countrymen received proper burial, and this may have had something to do with Joseph's action. He now came to ask Pilate's permission to remove Jesus' body. The Romans did not normally give such permission in the case of people executed for sedition. That Pilate gave it may be a further indication that he did not think that Jesus was guilty. Joseph took the body away. Clearly Joseph was a rich man, and we may find in his action a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:9.*
- 6) William Hendriksen, *Pilate, having ascertained that Jesus had really died (Mark 15:44), granted the request. So Joseph returned to Calvary and, with the help of others, took the body from the cross. Just how this was done has not been revealed. We shall leave it to the artists to fill in this gap.*
- 7) George Beasley-Murray, *It was therefore an uncommonly courageous act for Joseph to dissociate himself from the Sanhedrin and to show his sympathy with Jesus, who had been so ignominiously condemned and killed. He will have been aware that he had no right to make the request, since he was unrelated to Jesus. But he was equally aware that none of the brothers of Jesus would attempt to take this step. His position and wealth naturally will have commended him to Pilate; nevertheless he should have been denied what he asked in view of the nature of Jesus' offense against Caesar. That Pilate acceded to it is in line with John's whole account of the trial of Jesus. Pilate knew well that the charge against Jesus was unfounded, and so he released the body to Joseph.*
- 8) William Barclay, *Jesus had not been dead an hour when his own prophecy came true: 'And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself' (John 12:32). It may be that the silence of Nicodemus or his absence from the Sanhedrin brought sorrow to Jesus; but it is certain that he knew of the way in which they cast their fear aside after the cross, and it is certain that already his heart was glad, for already the power of the cross had begun to operate, and already it was drawing all people to him. The power of the cross was even then turning the coward into the hero, and the waverer into the man who took an irrevocable decision for Christ.*
- 9) Grant Osborne, *When Jesus was lifted up on the cross, he entered his glory (3:14; 8:28; 12:32), and this constituted the enthronement of the royal Messiah. So it is only fitting that he would be given a royal burial. The Davidic Messiah is buried as the true King of the Jews.*

2. Nicodemus brought burial spices and they bound Jesus body (39-40), *Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. 40 So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.*

a. Related verses

- 1) John 3:1-2, *Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him."*
- 2) John 7:50, *Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them,*
- 3) Psalm 45:8, *your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia. From ivory palaces strunged instruments make you glad;*
- 4) Proverbs 7:17, *I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.*
- 5) Song of Solomon 4:14, *nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all choice spices—*
- 6) John 11:44, *The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."*
- 7) John 20:5-7, *And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself.*
- 8) Luke 24:12, *But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.*

b. Comments

- 1) ... *bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight.*
 - a) Thomas Constable, *Only John mentioned that Nicodemus also played a part in burying Jesus (cf. 3:1–15). He also was probably a member of the Sanhedrin (cf. 3:1). He, too, was now taking a more visible position as a disciple of Jesus (cf. 7:50–52). Nicodemus brought about 65 pounds (100 litrai, cf. 12:3) of spices ("myrrh and aloes") with which to prepare Jesus' body for burial. This was a large quantity and reflected Nicodemus' great respect for Jesus. Evidently these two wealthy rulers decided to honor Jesus together. They apparently divided their responsibilities with Joseph securing Pilate's permission and Nicodemus preparing the spices ... Myrrh was a fragrant resin that the Jews turned into powder and then mixed with aloes, which was powdered sandalwood. The purpose of covering a corpse with this aromatic powder was to dry it out and to lessen the foul odor that the process of decay caused. Obviously these men, as well as all of Jesus' disciples, did not expect Him to rise from the dead.*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *Perhaps Nicodemus now understood the teaching of Jesus that He would be lifted up and that a man could look in faith to Him and live (cf. 3:14). Both men who had been secret disciples now became manifest.*
 - c) Leon Morris, *It was the custom to put spices of this kind in with the sheets round the body in a burial, so Nicodemus was performing a normal courtesy. What is unusual is the amount, "about seventy-five pounds" (34 kilograms), though if Nicodemus wished to cover the body completely the quantity is not excessive. But there is evidence that large quantities were used in royal burials (2 Chron. 16:14), and the probability is that John is reminding us again of Jesus' kingship. The thought may well be in mind that when he spoke with Nicodemus Jesus talked of the kingdom (3:3). The lavish provision may also be meant to show that Nicodemus, like Joseph, was trying in the hour of Jesus' death to make some reparation for his failure to do more in Jesus' life. The amount shows that Nicodemus must have been a wealthy man ... Whereas the disciples who had openly followed Jesus ran away at the end, the effect of the death of Jesus on these two secret disciples was exactly the opposite. Now, when they had nothing at all to gain by affirming their connection with Jesus, they came right out into the open.*

- d) William Hendriksen, *While Joseph furnished the linen bandages and his own new tomb* (Matt. 27:60), Nicodemus provided the spices or aromatics. He brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes. The myrrh had probably been derived from a small tree with odoriferous wood, namely, the *Balsamodendron* of Arabia; the aloes from a large tree, the *Agallocha*, whose wood contains resin and furnishes powdered perfume.
 - e) George Beasley-Murray, *The family of Nicodemus appears to have been enormously wealthy, and the bringing of huge amounts of spices at royal funerals was familiar to Jews. It is related in 2 Chron 16:14 that when King Asa was buried he was "laid on a bier which had been heaped with all kinds of spices skillfully compounded; and they kindled a great fire in his honor."* That was eclipsed in the funeral of Herod the Great; according to Josephus (Ant. 17.199) five hundred slaves bore spices in the funeral procession as they followed the army to the king's burial place.
 - f) Edward Klink, *The Gospel's concern is not with the conversion of Nicodemus per se, however, but with the message Jesus offered through his encounter with Nicodemus (3:14–15). He comes this time as "night" approaches with an entirely different agenda, knowing full well that Jesus, not he, is the true "conqueror" (cf. 3:1), made manifest and possible by his death.*
 - g) Grant Osborne, *It would have taken at least the two of them to transport Jesus from Golgotha to the tomb, and they may have also used the service of slaves, for handling the body themselves would have rendered them unclean for seven days and made it impossible for either of them to observe the Passover celebration.*
 - h) F. F. Bruce, *... only John mentions Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus has appeared on two earlier occasions in this Gospel: when he sought Jesus out by night during one of Jesus' previous visits to Jerusalem (3:1ff.)—the occasion to which John makes reference here—and when he challenged his fellow councillors' right to pass judgment on Jesus unheard, six months before the events now being recorded (7:50ff).*
 - i) Warren Wiersbe, *... the man who started off with confusion at night (John 3) ended up with open confession in the daylight! Nicodemus came out of the dark and into the light and, with Joseph, was not ashamed to publicly identify with Jesus Christ. Of course, when the two men touched His dead body, they defiled themselves and could not participate in Passover. But, what difference did it make? They had found the Lamb of God!*
- 2) ... and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.
- a) Thomas Constable, *The burial custom of the Jews was to place the corpse on a long sheet with the feet at one end of the sheet. Next, they would cover the corpse with thick layers of spices. They would then fold the cloth over the head and back down to the feet, which they would tie together. They would also tie the arms to the body with strips of cloth. Normally a separate cloth covered the face. John's interest was not in the manner of the burial, as much as the honor that Joseph and Nicodemus bestowed on Jesus by burying Him in linen cloth ("wrappings," Gr. *othonia*). Their work had to be hasty, because sunset was approaching quickly and all work had to cease when the Sabbath began at sunset on Friday.*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *Jewish burial customs did not involve mummification or embalming, which took out the blood and body organs. Their normal process was to wash a body and cover it with cloth and aromatic oils or spices ... Matthew wrote that this was Joseph's "own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock" (Matt. 27:60). Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah, the suffering Servant, though despised and rejected by men, would be with the rich in His death (Isa. 53:9).*
 - c) Leon Morris, *These men gave Jesus decent burial according to the Jewish custom. This provided for an embalming, but unlike, for example, the Egyptian practice, there was no mutilation of the body. They first prepared the body by wrapping it in linen cloths. This will mean long, bandage-like strips rather than a shroud or the like. They put the spices between the folds.*
 - d) William Hendriksen, *As the linen bandages were wound around the body, limb by limb, the mixture of myrrh and aloes was strewn in. That was the manner in which the Jews prepared their dead for burial.*
 - e) Edward Klink, *The Gospel's concern here is less the Jewish customs and more the fact of Christ's burial, reflected in the church's later creeds: he "was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried" (Nicaea/Constantinople).*

- f) F. F. Bruce, ... *why so great a weight of aromatic spices to prepare one man's body for burial? One would not be surprised if it were for a royal burial—but that is precisely what Jesus' burial was in the eyes of Nicodemus, and probably of Joseph too. To them he was in fact what the inscription on the cross had proclaimed him to be in mockery—"The King of the Jews."*
 - g) Warren Wiersbe, *The Sabbath was about to dawn. Jesus had finished the work of the "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17), and now He would rest.*
- 3. They laid Jesus body in a nearby tomb (41-42), ***Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42 So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.***
 - a. Related verses
 - 1) John 20:15, *Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."*
 - 2) Luke 23:53, *Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid.*
 - 3) John 19:31, *Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.*
 - 4) John 19:41, *Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.*
 - b. Comments
 - 1) *Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden ...*
 - a) Thomas Constable, *John is the only evangelist who recorded that there was a garden and an unused new tomb near the place of Jesus' crucifixion. The tomb was probably an artificial cave in the limestone, several examples of which are observable in Israel today. Matthew noted that the garden and its tomb belonged to Joseph (Matt. 27:60). John's mention of the garden anticipates his later reference to a gardener (20:15). His reference to the tomb being new and unused sets the stage for the Resurrection—at which no other corpse would be in the tomb (20:8, 12) ... The site was probably not the Garden Tomb near Gordon's Calvary, though many Christians prefer this site, mainly because of its location just outside the present wall of Jerusalem and its proximity to a hill that resembles a skull. Jesus' tomb would have been closer to the crucifixion site than the Church of the Holy Sepulcher now covers. Jesus' tomb could have been quite similar in appearance to this Garden Tomb however.*
 - b) Edwin Blum, *The burial of Jesus is part of the gospel ("He was buried," 1 Cor. 15:4). Its significance lies in the fact that it was the completion of Jesus' suffering and humiliation. It also pointed up the reality of His death and set the stage for His coming bodily resurrection. Also, in Jesus' burial He identified with believers who will die and be buried.*
 - c) Leon Morris, *There was a tomb in a garden (only John mentions the garden) very near to the place of execution. John actually says that it was "in" the place, so it must have been very close indeed. The tomb is described as "new," as one "in which no one had ever been laid." Tombs were commonly hewn out of the solid rock, and closed with heavy stones. The stone at the mouth would run in a groove and finish right over the opening. Such tombs were expensive, and there would be a tendency to use them again and again. Sometimes this would arise because from the beginning the tomb was designed to take more than one body, but on this occasion John tells us that the tomb had never before been used, a detail that Luke also mentions (Luke 23:53). Matthew tells us that it was Joseph's own tomb (Matt. 27:60).*
 - d) John Hart, *Joseph of Arimathea was the wealthy owner (Mt 27:57, 60) of a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. This demonstrates that after the resurrection, Jesus' body could not be mistaken for another lying in the same tomb. Christ's burial fulfilled prophecy: "They intended to bury him [the Messiah] with criminals, but he ended up in a rich man's tomb" (NET, Is 53:9).*

2) ... they laid Jesus there.

- a) Thomas Constable, *John implied that the burial of Jesus was hasty. Mark and Luke described similar circumstances by writing that three of the women came to anoint Jesus' corpse, on Sunday morning, with additional spices that they had prepared (Mark 16:1; Luke 23:56). Joseph and Nicodemus' work had necessarily been hasty because the day of preparation before the Sabbath (i.e., Friday) was about to end with sundown.*
- b) Leon Morris, *There was need for haste, for clearly it would be getting near to sundown when the Sabbath would start. It was necessary therefore to get the burial completed before then. So, because it was Friday ... and because this tomb was near, they buried Jesus there.*
- c) William Hendriksen, *Kind providence provided a near-by tomb. It was the Jews' day of Preparation ... In other words, it was Friday. Sunset was approaching. Hence, in order that everything might be finished before sabbath, no time must be lost. The body of Jesus could not be buried in a distant tomb. Time would not allow.*
- d) Edwin Blum, *Joseph and Nicodemus' act of love and respect for the body of Jesus was for them dangerous, costly, and without any personal gain. The service of Christians for their living Lord should be equally courageous and sacrificial, for their labor is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58).*
- e) George Beasley-Murray, *... in the providential ordering of God, Jesus was not buried in the common criminals' grave, but in a tomb that was at hand, unused and therefore fit for the Holy One of God, and one that could be an unmistakable witness to the victory of the Lord of life over death.*
- f) Edward Klink, *Jesus was the first person to walk out of a tomb on his own power. The uniqueness of this tomb, then, was that it became the womb of life, "the place" where the dead body of Jesus took on a resurrected life.*
- g) Grant Osborne, *... the burial of Jesus (vv. 38–42) is a beautifully crafted narrative of the royal burial of the true King of the Jews. Three elements bring out the royal implications—the huge amount of perfumed ointment that anointed Jesus' corpse, the new tomb where no one had ever been laid, and the garden in which the tomb was placed. The result is the sumptuous burial of the king of the ages. The true Davidic Messiah is entombed, but only for three days, for the garden will become the new Eden, harbinger of the resurrection of Jesus as the firstfruits of all God's people.*