

Olivet Baptist Church

3500 Edmondson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21229

Wednesday Night Bible Study (7:00 pm)

Book of John – Facilitator: Rev. Alex O. Stone

Overall Theme: Jesus' Passion and Resurrection (18:1–20:31)

- I. The Arrest of Christ (John 18:1-18:11)
- II. First Jewish Trial Before Annas (John 18:12-18:23)
- III. Second Jewish Trial before Caiaphas (John 18:24-18:27)

THE CIVIL TRIAL AGAINST JESUS (18:28–19:16)

- IV. The First Roman Trial Before Pilate (John 18:28-18:38)
- V. Second Roman Trial Before Pilate (John 18:39-19:16)
- VI. The Crucifixion of Christ (John 19:17-19:37)

Chapter Review:

- **Chapters 13–17** concentrate on His teachings on that fateful night in which He was arrested.
- Before the instruction, Jesus washed His disciples' feet and predicted His betrayal.
- **The disciples are given two divine assignments: spread the gospel and build the Church.**
- **John 10:28.** *This is one of the clearest statements in the Bible that one who believes in Jesus for salvation will never be lost.* Believers sin and stumble, but Jesus as the perfect Shepherd loses none of His flock (cf. Luke 22:31–32).
- **John 10:17–18.** Again, Jesus predicted His death, saying **four times** that He would voluntarily **lay down His life** (vv. 11, 14, 17–18). The **Father** has a special love for Jesus because of His sacrificial obedience to the will of God. **John 13:34–35.** The 11 disciples would survive in His absence by obeying His example of **love**. The command is **new** in that it is a special **love** for other believers based on the sacrificial love of Jesus: **As I have loved you, so you must love one another**
- Jesus “shed blood” was needed for our redemption. Our “Atonement”
- **Jesus is the only access to the Father because He is the only One from the Father** (cf. John 1:1–2, 51; 3:13).

- **John 14:12–14.** To ask Me for anything in My name means to ask according to His will (cf. “in My name” in John 15:16; 16:23–24, 26). The goal of answered prayers is to bring glory to the Father. Also bearing fruit glorifies the Father (John 15:8).
- **John 14:15.** The disciples’ love for Christ is revealed in their obeying His commands (cf. vv. 21, 23; 1 John 2:3; 3:22, 24; 5:3). Christ has set the pattern of love and obedience (John 14:31); His disciples are expected to follow (13:15–16).
- The Holy Spirit has now replaced Jesus’ physical presence; and He mediates God to believers.
- The Spirit worked in their minds, reminding them of His teaching and giving them insight into its meaning (cf. 2:22; 7:39; 20:9).
- The Spirit is in a believer forever (cf. Rom. 8:9).
- **John 15:2.** He (i.e., the Gardener, the Father) desires fruit, which is mentioned eight times in this chapter (vv. 2 [thrice], 4 [twice], 5, 8, 16).

CURRENT FOCUS: “JESUS ARREST AND CRUCIFIXION” (18:1–19:37)

The Arrest of Christ

Matt. 26:47–56; Mark 14:43–52; Luke 22:47–53

18 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. ² And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. ³ Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. ⁴ Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, “Whom are you seeking?” ⁵ They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am He.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them.

⁶ Now when He said to them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

⁷ Then He asked them again, “Whom are you seeking?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁸ Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am *He*. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,” ⁹ that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, “Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.” ¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. ¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?”

First Jewish Trial Before Annas Matt. 26:69, 70; Mark 14:66–68; Luke 22:55–57

¹² Then the detachment *of troops* and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. ¹³ And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. ¹⁴ Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. ¹⁵ And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so *did* another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. ¹⁶ But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ Then, the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, “You are not also *one* of this Man’s disciples, are you?” **He said, “I am not.”**

¹⁸ Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself. ¹⁹ The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.

²⁰ Jesus answered him, “I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing.

²¹ Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.” ²² And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, “Do You answer the high priest like that?” ²³ Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?”

Second Jewish Trial Before Caiaphas

Matt. 26:57–68, 73–75; Mark 14:53–65, 70–72; Luke 22:59–65

²⁴ Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. ²⁵ Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, “You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?” **He denied it and said, “I am not!”**

²⁶ One of the servants of the high priest, a relative *of him* whose ear Peter cut off, said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?” ²⁷ **Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed.**

First Roman Trial Before Pilate **Matt. 27:2, 11–14; Mark 15:1–5; Luke 23:1–5**

²⁸ Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.

²⁹ Pilate then went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?” ³⁰ They answered and said to him, **“If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.”** ³¹ Then Pilate said to them, “You take Him and

judge Him according to your law.” Therefore the Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,” ³² that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.

³³ Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” ³⁴ Jesus answered him, “Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?”

³⁵ Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?” ³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is

not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

³⁷ Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?” Jesus answered, “You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” ³⁸ Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.”

Second Roman Trial Before Pilate **Matt. 27:15–31; Mark 15:6–20; Luke 23:13–25**

³⁹ “But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” ⁴⁰ Then they all cried again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

19 So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. ² And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. ³ Then they said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they struck Him with their hands.

⁴ Pilate then went out again, and said to them, “Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.” ⁵ Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, “Behold the Man!” ⁶ Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!”

Pilate said to them, “You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.”

⁷ The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” ⁸ Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, ⁹ and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?” ¹¹ Jesus answered, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”

¹² From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, “If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar’s friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.” ¹³ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The Pavement*, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. ¹⁴ Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” ¹⁵ But 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!"¹⁶ Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led *Him* away.

The Crucifixion of Christ

Matt. 27:32–38, 48, 50; Mark 15:21–26, 36, 37; Luke 23:26–33, 38, 46

¹⁷ And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called **the Place of a Skull**, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha,¹⁸ where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.¹⁹ Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS

²⁰ Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, *and* Latin.²¹ Therefore **the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate**, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.' ' "²² Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

²³ Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece.²⁴ They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: **"They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots."** Therefore the soldiers did these things.

²⁵ Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶ When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, **"Woman,**

behold your son!” ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, **“Behold your mother!”** And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.

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

³¹ Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day*, that the bodies should 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. ³² Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. **“But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.”** ³⁵ And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. ³⁶ For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, **“Not one of His bones shall be broken.”** ³⁷ And again another Scripture says, **“They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”**

The Burial of Christ *Matt. 27:57–60; Mark 15:42–46; Luke 23:50–54*

³⁸ After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being 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 the body of Jesus. ³⁹ And Nicodemus, who at

first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰ Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. ⁴¹ Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴² So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

Commentary: JESUS' ARREST AND CRUCIFIXION (CHAP. 18:1-19:42)

A. The arrest of Jesus (18:1–11).

John 18:1. Jesus left the room where He ate the Last Supper **with His disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley**, to the east. The Kidron, the modern Wodien-Nar, is a valley or torrent bed which starts north of Jerusalem and passes between the temple mount and the Mount of Olives on its way to the Dead Sea. David was betrayed by a friend (Ahithophel) while crossing the Kidron and going up to the Mount of Olives (2 Sam. 15:23, 30–31). So too Jesus was betrayed by His “trusted friend” Judas while crossing the Kidron and going to the Mount of Olives. The **olive grove** was a place where Jesus **and His disciples** came each night to bivouac when they were in Jerusalem (Luke 21:37). During festival times (e.g., the Passover) thousands of Jews flocked to the Holy City and most of them had to stay in tents or other temporary shelters.

John 18:2–3. **“The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil”** (1 Tim. 6:10). So it is not surprising that **Judas ... betrayed** Jesus for money (John 12:4–6; Matt. 26:14–16). Judas was not an unusual monster but a common man caught in a common sin

(greed) which Satan used to accomplish his purpose. Judas knew the habits of **Jesus**, and his deed stands out in black contrast with Jesus' unselfish love. **The soldiers ... officials from the chief priests, and Pharisees** united in their hostility toward Jesus. The **detachment of Roman soldiers** was a cohort (*speiran*, 10th part of a legion), which here included about 600 men. They were probably commanded to pick up this insurrectionist who claimed to be some kind of king.¹

John 18:4. **Jesus** was conscious of **all** the events coming on Him. He was not taken by surprise, but was a willing voluntary sacrifice (10:14, 17–18). Earlier in His ministry Jesus was unwilling to be made a popular king (6:15). The scene in 18:4 is one of intense drama and irony. Judas came with soldiers and religious leaders to take Jesus by force. But Jesus stood alone (the disciples had fallen asleep; Luke 22:45–46); though unarmed, He was in command. In the darkness of the night, He could have fled as all the disciples would soon do (cf. Mark 14:50). But instead He gave Himself up.

John 18:5–6. His words **I am He** (lit., "I Am") startled them and **they ... fell backward to the ground**, struck no doubt by the majesty of His words (cf. 7:45–46). The phrase **I am** is ambiguous and could refer to Jesus' deity (Ex. 3:14; John 8:58). Or it may simply have been Jesus' way of identifying Himself (as in 9:9).

¹ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 334). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

John 18:7–9. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus laid down His life for the sheep (10:11). His protection of the apostles was a perfect illustration of His substitutionary atonement. He died not only for them but instead of them. As the Good Shepherd He did not lose any of His sheep but fulfilled His Father's will for the apostles (6:38) and fulfilled His own prophetic Word (6:39).

John 18:10. Peter had promised that he would die for Jesus (Matt. 26:33–35) and he thought he perhaps could save Jesus or at least go down fighting. Undoubtedly he was better at fishing than at swordplay, for he no doubt tried to take off the head of **the high priest's servant ... Malchus** not just his ear. Both Luke (22:50) and John recorded that it was his **right ear** which is an incidental evidence of the historical reliability of these Gospel books. (Luke added that Jesus healed the man's ear [Luke 22:51], an amazing touch of love for His enemies!) Peter's blind loyalty was touching, but it missed God's plan. Zeal without knowledge in religion often leads men astray (cf. Rom. 10:2).

John 18:11. Earlier that same night **Jesus** had rebuked **Peter** (13:6–11). Now He rebuked him again, this time for not understanding God's will. In spite of constant teaching about His approaching death (3:14; 8:28; 12:32–33; cf. Luke 9:22) the disciples did not understand its need (cf. Luke 24:25). The cup which the Father had given Jesus refers to the suffering and death He would experience under God's wrath against sin (Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15; Ezek. 23:31–33). The words **the cup² the Father has given Me** indicated that Jesus saw all the things coming

² Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 334–335). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

on Him as part of God's sovereign plan. His rhetorical question to Peter was designed to prod Peter's thinking. Jesus had come to do the Father's will and so He must now embrace it.

B. The religious trial and Peter's denials (18:12–27).

John 18:12–14. When **Jesus** was **arrested**, it was dark and late at night. Jesus had already had a long day. His disciples were so exhausted by the schedule and the pressures that they had fallen asleep. But for Jesus, the time while they were sleeping was a deep crisis in prayer and agony (Mark 14:33–41; Luke 22:44). Now Jesus was **bound** and in the hands of His enemies. He was alone since His disciples had been scattered (Matt. 26:56; John 16:32).

The religious trial began (cf. **the list of Jesus' six trials at Matt. 26:57**). The words, **They ... brought Him first to Annas**, provide information not given in the other Gospels. Annas had been appointed high priest by Quirinius, governor of Syria, in A.D. 6 and remained until he was deposed by Valerius Gratus, procurator of Judea, in A.D. 15. According to the Jewish law the high priestly office was for life, but the Romans did not like the concentration of power in one person so they frequently changed high priests. Annas was succeeded by five of his sons and by his son-in-law **Caiaphas** (see the chart at Acts 4:6; cf. Luke 3:2). Evidently Annas remained the power behind the throne; a preliminary investigation was carried out by him before Jesus' formal religious trial. **Caiaphas** was **the high priest that year**, that is, that fateful year of Jesus' death. John reminded his readers of Caiaphas' unconscious prophecy (John 11:49–52).

John 18:15–16. After the immediate fright in the olive grove, when the mob took **Jesus** and the disciples ran, two disciples returned and followed the Lord and His enemies back across the Kidron and into the city. They were **Simon Peter and another disciple**. The other disciple is unknown but he may well have been John, son of Zebedee (cf. 20:2; 21:20, 24). **This disciple** knew **the high priest** and therefore had access **into the high priest's courtyard**. Thus he was in a unique position to know what was going on and to enable **Peter** to get into the courtyard.³

John 18:17–18. Peter's denial before the servant **girl** was a striking contradiction to his earlier boast to lay down his life for Jesus (13:37), and his show of offense in cutting off Malchus' ear (18:10). Evidently the other disciple was also in danger (perhaps greater) but he did not deny Jesus. **Peter** stood by the **fire ... warming himself** in the **cold** spring evening, Jerusalem being about 2,500 feet above sea level. This little detail about the cold evening is another indication that the author of this book was an eyewitness.

John 18:19. The events in *the narrative in verses 12–27 are like a drama presented on two stages*. **Stage one** was set (vv. 12–14) while the action on **stage two** went on (vv. 15–18). *Then the action shifted back to stage one* (vv. 19–24), and then *returned to the other stage* (vv. 25–27).

The preliminary investigation of Jesus may be likened to what might happen today when an arrested person is first brought into a police station. Annas **questioned**

³ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 335). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Jesus about people who held His views and about the nature of **His teaching**. If an insurrection was feared (cf. 11:48), these would be normal questions.

John 18:20–21. **Jesus** responded that He had no secret cult or organization. He had an inner circle of disciples but the character of His teaching was not private. He **taught** in the open and in public places (**in synagogues or at the temple**). The people knew **what** He taught so if there was a **question** concerning what He taught, answers were readily available. Jesus did not have two kinds of truths or teaching. He was innocent unless proven guilty. Therefore they should produce witnesses if they had something substantial against Him. Of course, they had no clear accusation so they sought some way to trick Him or catch Him in a trap.

John 18:22–24. **One of** Annas' assistants did not like Jesus' answer so he **struck Him in the face**. The preliminary hearing had several illegalities, and this was one of them. It was improper to try to induce self-accusation, and it was wrong to hit an unconvicted person. Jesus' response concerned not the manner of His speech (**Is that any way ...?**) but the substance of His teaching (**If I said something wrong ...**). It was easier to evade **the truth** or to silence the One who spoke the truth than to attempt to answer the truth. *Truth has a self-evident power of persuasion and those who oppose it find it difficult to deny.* **Jesus** pressed this point and exposed their hypocrisy. They knew the truth but loved error.

They ⁴ saw the light but loved darkness (cf. 3:19; Rom. 1:18). Following this preliminary interview, **Annas sent** Jesus on to his son-in-law **Caiaphas** (cf. John 18:13). (The NIV text is more probable than the NIV marg.)

John 18:25–27. In this section **Peter** denied the Lord for the second and third times. Peter's betrayal is reported in all four Gospels, which indicates something of the importance the Gospel writers saw in this defection of the disciples' leader. Since all men fail and even many noted Christians stumble greatly, the record of Peter's denials (and his subsequent restoration; cf. chap. 21) is of great pastoral comfort.

The final denial was prompted by a question by **a relative of the man** Malchus, whom **Peter had** tried to kill in the garden. Just after Peter denied Jesus the third time, the Lord looked on him (Luke 22:61) and he went out weeping bitterly (Luke 22:62). Then **a rooster began to crow** (cf. Matt. 26:72–74), which fulfilled Jesus' prophecy (John 13:38). (Mark wrote that a rooster crowed twice; see comments on Mark 14:72.) A rooster crowing and Baalam's donkey speaking reveal God's sovereignty and the movement of all things in His plan and timing.

C. The civil trial (18:28–19:16).

John 18:28–29. Each of the Gospel writers had a special emphasis in his presentation of Jesus' trial, death, and resurrection. John seems to supplement the

⁴ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 335–336). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

material of the first three Gospels. Only he reported the interview with Annas, and he reported the interview with Pilate in much more detail and psychological insight. John did not report the trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin (Mark 14:55–64) with the charge of blasphemy. (See the list of Jesus' six trials at Matt. 26:57.)

Since the Jewish council did not have the legal right to put Jesus to death, the case had to be brought before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate (A.D. 26–36). Normally the governor lived in Caesarea, but during the great feasts it was prudent for him to come to Jerusalem in case a riot or insurrection took place. **Passover** was particularly dangerous because emotions ran high as the Jews remembered their deliverance from bondage.

The location of **the palace of the Roman governor** is disputed. It could have been at the Antonia Fortress on the north side of the temple area or at one of Herod's two palaces on the west of the city. **The Jews would not⁵ enter** a Gentile house (in this case **the governor's palace**), but they could go into the courtyard or under the colonnades. It is ironic that the Jewish leaders were concerned with ritual **uncleanness** while they planned murder! **So Pilate came out to** the Jews (probably to a courtyard) and began an informal inquiry.

John 18:30–31. The Jews' reply to **Pilate** revealed the hostility between them. (Pilate was hated by them for his harshness and the fact that he was a Gentile ruling over them. Pilate despised them and eventually in the year A.D. 36 they were able

⁵ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 336–337). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

to get Pilate recalled to Rome.) At this time Pilate refused to be their executioner. He knew what was going on. He had seen the Triumphal Entry a few days earlier. He knew that envy was the cause of their accusation against Jesus (Matt. 27:18). So Pilate decided to play a game with the Jews with Jesus' life as the prize. He refused to do anything without a sufficient charge. The Jews' accusation of blasphemy would be difficult to prove and would not impress Pilate as worthy of death under Roman civil law. The Jews seem to have lost the official **right to execute** but in certain cases people were stoned (cf. Acts 6:8–7:60). Jesus was popular, and the Sanhedrin wanted Him dead and, if possible, killed by the Romans. The Sanhedrin could condemn, but only the Romans could execute legally.

John 18:32. John explained why **Jesus** was delivered by the Jews to the Romans. Jewish executions were normally by stoning, which broke bones. The Roman method of execution was crucifixion. It was necessary for three reasons for Jesus to be crucified by the Romans at the instigation of the Jews: (a) to fulfill prophecies (e.g., that none of His bones be broken; cf. 19:36–37); (b) to include both Jews and Gentiles in the collective guilt for the deed (cf. Acts 2:23; 4:27); (c) by crucifixion, Jesus was “lifted up” like “the snake in the desert” (cf. comments on John 3:14). A person under God's curse was to be displayed (hanged) on a tree as a sign of judged sin (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).

John 18:33–34. **Pilate** had a private interview with **Jesus** (vv. 33–38a). He realized that the Jews would not normally turn over one of their own to the hated Romans so something was strange about this case. According to Luke (23:2) they accused Jesus of three things: subverting the nation, opposing payment of taxes to Caesar,

and claiming to be “Christ, a King.” Pilate began by asking Jesus if He was **the King of the Jews**. Jesus asked ⁶ Pilate if he had that **idea** on his **own** or if **others** (Jews) talked **to** him. Jesus here asked Pilate if he was concerned that He was some political threat to Rome, that is, a revolutionary.

John 18:35–36. Pilate sarcastically **replied** with a question as to whether he was a **Jew** or not. Of course he was not interested in Jewish questions, but only in matters pertaining to civil government. It must have hurt Jesus deeply to have Pilate press the point that **it was** the Jews, His own **people**, and their own religious leaders **who** had accused Him. In his prologue John had sounded this sad theme, “He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him” (1:11). **Jesus** replied that Rome need not fear a political insurrection. He was not a zealot or a revolutionary guerrilla leader. His **kingdom** is not like that. **It is not of this world; it is from another place**, that is, heaven. Therefore it comes not by rebellion but by submission to God. Its source was not from men’s acts of violence but from a new birth from heaven which transferred a person out of Satan’s kingdom into God’s **kingdom** (cf. Col. 1:13; John 3:3).

John 18:37. Since Jesus spoke of a kingdom, **Pilate** seized on the word “king.” **You are a king, then? Jesus answered** that question in the affirmative, and then clarified that His kingdom is not like Rome’s. It is a kingdom of truth which overshadows all kingdoms. He said, **Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me**. Jesus in a few

⁶ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 337). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

words asserted His divine origin (**I was born ... I came into the world**) and ministry (**to testify to the truth**). Later *He* became Pilate's judge.

John 18:38. Pilate's question, **What is truth?** has echoed down through the centuries. How his question was intended is problematic. Was it a wistful desire to know what no one could tell him? Was it philosophical cynicism concerning the problem of epistemology? Was it indifference to anything so impractical as abstract thought? Or was it irritation at Jesus' response? These are all possible interpretations of his words. But the significant thing is that he suddenly turned away from the *One* who is "the Truth" (14:6) without waiting for an answer. Pilate's declaration of Jesus' innocence is important. He would die like a Passover lamb, a male in its prime without blemish (Ex. 12:5).

John 18:39–40. Having displayed a lack of interest in truth, Pilate then revealed a lack of commitment to justice. He lacked the courage of his convictions. If Jesus⁷ was innocent of all charges, then Pilate should have set Him free. Instead, Pilate began a series of compromising moves to avoid dealing with an inconvenient truth in a difficult circumstance.

- **First**, when Pilate found out Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Him to Herod (Luke 23:6–7).
- **Second**, Pilate tried to appeal to the crowd (John 18:38), hoping to bypass the desire of the chief priests and elders.

⁷ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 337–338). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Knowing Jesus was popular, he thought the crowd would prefer Jesus to **Barabbas**. But the leaders proved to be persuasive (cf. Matt. 27:20). The offer **to release ... Barabbas** who was guilty of murder and insurrection showed poor judgment for a person responsible for Rome's interests.

John 19:1–3. Third, **Pilate ... had him flogged**. 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. 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).

John 19:4–5. Again Pilate's attempt to free Jesus by an appeal to the crowd missed the mark. Their taste for His blood was beyond recall. Pilate's words, **Here is the Man!** (ΚΙΥ, "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**.

John 19:6–7. The Jewish leaders displayed their hatred of Jesus and **shouted** for His death. Crucifixion was a shameful death, usually reserved for criminals, slaves, and

especially revolutionaries. **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 ⁸ Him" (Matt. 27:19).

John 19:8–11. 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. Jesus' refusal to **answer** Pilate's question, **Where do You come from?** fulfilled the words of prophecy in Isaiah 53:7.

Pilate had his opportunity for truth and was found wanting. 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. Pilate, Jesus said, was under God and therefore responsible to Him: **The one who handed Me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.** In this statement was Jesus referring to Judas, Satan, Caiaphas, the priests, or the Jewish people? Perhaps Caiaphas is the best choice since he is the one who handed Jesus over to Pilate. Pilate was guilty (cf. the words in the Apostles' Creed, "suffered under Pontius Pilate"). But Jesus put more weight on Caiaphas as the responsible one (cf. John 11:49–50; 18:13–14).

⁸ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 338). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

John 19:12–13. 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. The title friend of Caesar (Latin, *amicus Caesaris*) was an important consideration. 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. The dilemma had to be resolved so Pilate made the official decision.

John 19:14–16. The sixth hour, by Roman reckoning of time, could indicate 6 A.M. (some scholars, however, take it to mean noon; cf. comments on 1:39; 4:6). 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; see comments on Luke 22:7–38).

Pilate said, **Here is your King** (KJV, “Behold your ⁹ King!”). This is another example of irony. (John is the only Gospel writer who mentioned this incident.) 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**

⁹ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 338–339). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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).

D. The Crucifixion (19:17–30).

John 19:17–18. **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). **Golgotha** in **Aramaic (The place of the skull)** was probably called this because the hill with its stony barren top looked like a skull. 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).

John 19:19–20. 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.

John 19:21–22. **The chief priests** naturally did not want this to be proclaimed as a fact. They wanted Jesus to die for *claiming* to be the Jews’ **King**. So they **protested to Pilate** to change the superscription. **Pilate** refused to do so. 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 ¹⁰ 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!

John 19:23–24. 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. The **seamless tunic (undergarment)** may be significant as the type of garment which the high priest wore, yet John did not expound on this point. 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.

¹⁰ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 339). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

John 19:25–27. 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). 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. The words of Jesus to Mary and the beloved disciple were His third saying from the cross (the first one recorded by John). In the other Gospels Jesus had already given a respite to the Roman executioners (Luke 23:34) and a pardon to one thief (Luke 23:42–43).

John 19:28–29. Jesus' fourth of seven sayings from the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" is not recorded by John (cf. Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34). John recorded the fifth saying, **I am thirsty**. 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). The paradox of the One who is the Water of life (John 4:14; 7:38–39) dying in thirst is striking. Giving Him **wine vinegar**, a sour wine, fulfilled Psalm 69:21. Putting the vinegar-soaked **sponge** on the end of a **hyssop plant** stalk seems odd. Perhaps this detail ¹¹ **points to Jesus dying as the true Lamb at Passover**, for hyssop was used in the Passover ceremonies (cf. Ex. 12:22).

John 19:30. The sixth word or saying that **Jesus** spoke from the cross was the single Greek word *tetelestai* which means **It is finished**. Papyri receipts for taxes have been recovered with the word *tetelestai* written across them, meaning "paid in

¹¹ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 339–340). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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.

E. The burial (19:31–42).

John 19:31–32. 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).

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.

John 19:33–34. Jesus had **already** died so **His legs** were not broken. **Instead**, just to make sure, a soldier **pierced Jesus' side with a spear**. The result was a **sudden flow of blood and water**. This flow has been interpreted in various ways. Some have seen this as evidence that Jesus died of a broken heart so that His pericardium was full ¹² of blood and serum. Others see a symbolic or sacramental significance of the stream which heals people. More likely, it indicates that Jesus was a real human who died a real death. Possibly the spear struck the stomach and the heart, which accounted for the flow. The one who saw this (v. 35) saw saving significance in the sign. At the time of the writing of this Gospel, Gnosticism and Docetism were current problems. These ideologies denied the reality of the Incarnation and of His death. But the blood and water are firm answers against those heresies.

John 19:35–37. 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). 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).

John 19:38–39. **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.)

¹² Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 340). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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. But Jews removed exposed bodies (cf. comments on John 19:31–32).

Joseph got **permission** to bury Jesus’ **body**. He along with another influential man (**Nicodemus**; cf. 3:1; 7:51) made the necessary arrangements. **About 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes** was an extensive amount of spices, used in preparing the body for burial. 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.

John 19:40–42. Because it was almost **the** Sabbath (which began at sundown) the burial had to take place quickly. **Jewish burial customs** did not involve mummification or embalming, which took out the blood and body¹³ organs. Their normal process was to wash a body and cover it with cloth and aromatic oils or **spices**. The NIV translation of *othoniois* as **strips of linen** has some support (cf. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957, p. 558). However, some Roman Catholic scholars argue for the translation “cloth wrappings” since Matthew refers to a linen cloth in which Jesus’ body was wrapped (Matt. 27:59, *sindōn*).

¹³ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 340–341). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Recent discussion on the Shroud of Turin has raised considerable controversy. The translation “strips of linen” would argue against the authenticity of the shroud. But at this time, because of the uncertainties of Jewish burial practices, the meaning of *othoniois*, and the Shroud of Turin, dogmatism should be avoided. Jesus’ body was placed in **a new tomb** in **a private garden**, not in a cemetery. 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).

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.

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).¹⁴

¹⁴ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 341). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.