
THE BOOK OF JOHN

| Week Twenty-Six | The Journey

Day One: Jesus Gives Over His Power

John 19:7-14 "The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." ⁸ When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, ⁹ and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" ¹¹ Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." ¹² From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." ¹³ When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). ¹⁴ It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews."

COMMENTARY: In John's account, with this the religious leaders showed their true charge against Jesus. They wanted Him dead not because He claimed to be King of the Jews, but because He claimed to be God, the unique Son of God. Pilate was not angry or amused when he learned that Jesus made Himself the Son of God, he was more afraid of Jesus than ever. Pilate saw something in Jesus - even beaten, bloodied, and spat upon - that made him think that it could be true that the Man before him was more than a man. Pilate wanted Jesus to defend Himself and give Pilate more reasons to let an innocent Man free. He wanted Jesus to explain what made Him different than the dozens of other prisoners Pilate had judged. Yet Jesus already told Pilate that He was King of a kingdom not of this world, Jesus already said where He was from. Therefore, Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate couldn't believe that Jesus would not speak to defend Himself. He couldn't believe that Jesus would not beg for His life as many others had done. Pilate also couldn't believe that Jesus was not awed and intimidated by the representative of Rome who judged Him. Pilate was amazed that Jesus was not intimidated by his power as judge to condemn and crucify. In his understanding of power, Pilate felt that he held the power position and was mystified that Jesus didn't see it. Jesus answered, explaining the true nature of power to Pilate. In the thinking of the Roman governor, Rome had the power. In reality, God held the power. Jesus didn't say Pilate was without sin; simply that the religious leaders were guilty of greater sin. We sense panic in the Roman governor. The panic was greater when his wife told him to let the accused free because of a dream she had. He knew this innocent Man, a Man not like any other prisoner he had seen

Questions:

1. **This week we talked about taking an honest look at the loss that Jesus took for us.** Take some time this week to really reflect on Christ's sacrifice. Think through how He was hurt, humiliated, and hung on a cross for you.
2. Ask yourself how the fact that Jesus wasn't out to win His own game but to lay Himself down for us. Let that impact your desire not to win for yourself daily, but to lay yourself down so others can experience the love of Jesus.

before, should be set free - yet he felt the full force of the crowd and religious leaders demanding His crucifixion. By some accounts, Pilate was an unremarkable man who only had his position because he married the granddaughter of the emperor. Holding his position only by relationship, Pilate would be greatly concerned that the relationship was damaged. The religious leaders and the crowd knew Pilate's weak point and they pressed upon it. Pilate was ready to deliver his final judgment, presenting Jesus both before the crowd and the judgment seat. In truth it was Pontius Pilate who was on judgment, not Jesus Himself.

Day Two: Jesus skips Broken Legs

John 19:32-37 "The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵ The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶ These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," ³⁷ and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

COMMENTARY: Answering the request of the religious leaders, the soldiers hastened the death of the men on either side of Jesus. These soldiers had (presumably) supervised many executions on the cross. They knew when a man had died and when he was still alive. It was their experienced judgment that said Jesus was already dead. The customary way to make sure of the death of a crucified man was to club and break the legs. After doing so to the first two victims, it was entirely normal for this soldier to do the same to Jesus - he was even presumably ordered to do it. Yet he did not; instead he pierced His side with a spear and unwittingly fulfilled several prophecies, mentioned below. This was taken as absolute confirmation that Jesus was dead. The gash in His side from the point of the spear flowed forth with a substance that looked like blood, and a substance that looked like water. There are some who regard this as something of an on-the-spot autopsy of Jesus, revealing

that His actual cause of death was of a ruptured (burst) heart. The thinking is that in such cases, the sack surrounding the heart (normally filled with a watery substance) fills with blood. If that sack is opened and its contents allowed to flow outside the body, it would look like an issue of blood and water (because the two substances do not mix, something like oil and water). Normally this would be a trickle; perhaps there was something supernatural at work to demonstrate this sign. John gave solemn assurance that he was present at the crucifixion of Jesus and saw these things with his own eyes. He also explained the reason for his testimony: so that the reader may believe. Remarkably, what seemed to be a random choice by an anonymous Roman soldier - to pierce the side of Jesus instead of breaking His legs - was done that the Scripture should be fulfilled. The Roman soldier was commanded to break the legs of the crucified men, yet for some reason he did not break Jesus' legs. This was a remarkable fulfillment of prophecy.

Day Three: Jesus is Buried

John 19:38-42 "Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴⁰ Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹ At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴² Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there."

COMMENTARY: In this final step of the earthly work of Jesus before His resurrection, the Son of God remained passive. God raised up two previously secret disciples (Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus) to receive the body of Jesus and give it the best burial they could in the short time they had before sundown and the start of Sabbath. Customarily, the bodies of crucified criminals were left on their crosses to rot or be eaten by wild animals. But the Jews wanted no such horror displayed during the Passover season, and Romans were known to grant the corpses of executed men to friends or relatives for proper burial. It is not precisely said, but the implication is that Joseph and Nicodemus did this themselves. They were wealthy and influential men who could find servants to do the work for them; yet they did this themselves. Joseph and Nicodemus did what they could to wrap the body of Jesus with the myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds Nicodemus brought. Before the body was wrapped it had to be prepared. One of the customs of the Jews in preparing a body for burial is the requirement to remove all foreign matter from the body and to carefully wash it. Matthew 27:60 tells us that this tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea himself. A rich man like Joseph would probably have a tomb that was carved into solid rock; this tomb was in a garden near the place of crucifixion.