

“IT IS FINISHED!”**Read John 19.1-41****I / INTRODUCTION: MAKING THE CONNECTIONS**

1 / This lesson is a continuation of [Lesson 17](#) from John 18. In fact, the opening paragraph of **chapter 19** is a continuation of Jesus’ appearance before the Roman governor Pilate / **ch 18.28-40**. I am going to continue reiterating the main point that John is making all throughout his Gospel: that Jesus Christ is the Christ, the Son of God / **see ch 20.31-31**.

2 / So again, to reiterate, the reason why John includes what he does in his accounts, and why he doesn’t include what he doesn’t is because *John is accentuating the events he does describe to give specific emphases to Jesus’ testimony to His Deity*. Refer back to Lesson 17 for those emphases.

3 / Although Jesus made specific references and performed specific works to demonstrate His Deity to the arresting party and in His appearances before the religious leaders and their councils [**see Matthew 26.62-66 & Mark 14.60-64**], perhaps He gave no clearer testimony to His Deity than when He made His appearances before Pilate [**see, for example, ch 18.33-37**].

4 / Those testimonies will continue here in **chapter 19—and on** throughout the ordeals of His crucifixion.

II / vv 1-16 / “Behold the Man!” ... “Behold your King!”

1 / Jesus actually made two appearances before Pilate. If you read **Luke 23.5-12**, you’ll see how that the whole religious council [Sanhedrin], had convened in the wee morning hours to formally accuse and charge Jesus with blasphemy, charging Him with claiming to be the Son of God – and therefore, God [**see Luke 22.66-71**]. Jesus also gave some clear and unmistakable testimony to His Deity in that hearing by citing His identity with **Daniel 7.13-14**.

2 / Then when the high-court religious council came before Pilate to seek a capital indictment and sentence against Jesus, and Pilate kept insisting **“I find no guilt in this Man,”** they let it drop: **“But they were urgent, saying, ‘He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place.’ When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the Man was a Galilean. And when he learned that He belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent Him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time.”** / **Luke 23.4-7**. Jesus was further mocked, beaten, and abused by Herod and his soldiers before being sent back to Pilate for His final sentencing / **Luke 23.8-12**.

3 / But John ‘compresses’ both of Jesus’ appearances before Pilate into one account. Some of John’s narrative would have taken place during the first accusation and hearing, and some would have occurred during the second appearance. But, we will consider them as John relates them...

4 / Pilate agrees to ‘flog’ Jesus and release Him back to the Jews. This ‘flogging’ was not just a whipping, but rather a total laceration of His body with a scourge, or ‘cat o’ nine tails.’ This was a handle that had numerous strands of leather attached to it. Woven or braided into the strands of leather were pieces of metal, glass, and bone. They were lashed across the back and abdomen of the victim, imbedded into the flesh, and then forcefully jerked back, deeply lacerating and separating the flesh – even until the internal organs would have been exposed. This is what the Psalmist prophesied in **Psalm 129.3: The plowers plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows.**

5 / **“Behold the Man!”** Pilate hoped to elicit some human sympathy from the religious leaders and the people who had begun to gather to watch the spectacle [remember: this was the well-attended Passover Feast and national holiday]. Or that the mob would be satisfied with this brutal scourging. But they would not be appeased with anything short of killing Jesus: **“Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”**

6 / **“...He has made Himself the Son of God!”** This terrified Pilate even more. Could Jesus actually be the Son of God? Was he killing the Son of God? [Remember also that, at this juncture, Pilate’s wife came to him to warn him with the dream she had just dreamed / **Matthew 27.19.**]

7 / Pilate begged Jesus to clearly identify Himself to him, reminding Jesus that he had authority to either release Him to His freedom or crucify Him. Jesus reminded Pilate again of His own ultimate authority as Deity: **You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above / 19.11.**

8 / **“Behold your King!”** When Pilate presented Jesus again with this appeal, he was hoping to release himself from any part and involvement in Jesus’ crucifixion ... by offering to release their own King back to them. ***Look at Him! He is your King! Let me give Him back to you!*** But then, the Jewish leaders made this ridiculous, pandering, hypocritical pledge of allegiance to Pilate, Caesar, and the Roman government: **“If you release this Man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar ... We have no king but Caesar!”** It was also a threat to Pilate, who was already on shaky ground with Caesar’s approval and favor.

9 / So Pilate ‘washed his hands’ [or so he thought and hoped] to release and absolve himself of any involvement in Jesus’ death / **Matthew 27.24. “So he delivered Him over to them to be crucified.”**

III / vv 16-27 / “There they crucified Him...”

1 / Jesus was led out to a place called ‘**The Place of a Skull,**’ or ‘**Golgotha**’ [which means, ‘The Skull’ in Aramaic, their spoken language]. Jesus was crucified between two criminals who were already on death row and sentenced to be executed. Barabbas had been one of them sentenced for crucifixion, but he had been released at the mob’s insistence / **see ch 18.39-40 & Luke 23.18-19.** Jesus took his place.

2 / **The inscription over Jesus’ head.** This inscription was usually in the form of some kind of crude placard. The purpose was to identify the criminal who was being executed and the crimes he had committed to add to his shame and humiliation. Pilate had written in three languages so anyone from anywhere who was attending the Passover could read it. The placard itself was an expression of mockery of the Jews, an insult to them, a sort of gloating over them. **‘Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.’** ***OK, you forced my hand to do this, so I’m going to dunk on you. I’m gloating over my mockery of you by crucifying your King!*** The Jews protested this also: *He’s not our King! We don’t claim Him! We are crucifying Him for this very reason that He claimed to be our King! So, change it, Pilate! Make it say, This Man said, I am King of the Jews.* Pilate responded with this cryptic, snarling retort: **‘What I have written, I have written.’** He repeated the same two past perfect tense verbs. As if to say, *‘No! I have made my last concession to your demands. I’m changing nothing! It stands as I have written it!’*

3 / But do you know what charges against Jesus was really on that placard...in the Father’s judgment? *It was our sins! Jesus had no sins of His own, and He had certainly committed no crimes or transgressions worthy of punishment – and certainly not death by crucifixion!* **Colossians 2.13-14: And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to His Cross. See also 1 Peter 2.22-25.**

4 / The soldiers took what few articles of clothing Jesus wore and divided them up among themselves – as their tokens and souvenirs to have been assigned to crucify the King of some of those whom they had subjugated. But when they looked at His outer tunic, they could see that someone had lovingly, painstakingly, and carefully woven it in one piece from top to bottom instead of sewing pieces together at the seams]. So they gambled on it to see which one of them should get it. **This, too, was to fulfill the Scripture of Psalm 22.18: They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.** Another testimony to Jesus’ Deity.

5 / **“Woman, behold your son ... Behold your mother.”** With this committal, Jesus gave Mary, His mother, over to John’s care. And John received the honorable responsibility. From that moment on, John took Mary to his own home to care and provide for Mary until she died.

IV / vv 28-37 / “IT IS FINISHED!”

1 / **After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture)...** John is careful and precise to continue giving us testimonies to Jesus’ Deity. Jesus is not only dying His death of crucifixion of His own willingness and voluntary volition, but He is dying with full and comprehensive knowledge of the ages-old Scriptures He had come to fulfill. Numerous times throughout this Gospel, John [and all the other Gospels] has reminded us how Jesus was fulfilling all the ancient prophetic writings that had foretold His coming – and the death He would die. **See again Luke 24.25-27.** NOTE that John uses the same word here for all of Jesus’ fulfillment of Scriptures that Jesus will utter when He has completed the work the Father had sent Him to do: **After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst!”** See **Psalm 22.15: ...my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws...** and **Psalm 69.3: I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched.**

2 / **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.** This, too, fulfilled **Psalm 69.21: They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.** Yet another testimony to Jesus’ being the promised Christ and Deity. Some historians have written that this ‘sour wine’ potion may have been provided by some of the more sympathetic women of Jerusalem to help sedate and therefore alleviate the end-of-life sufferings of those being crucified. **Luke 23.36-37** tells us that they had offered this same ‘vinegar’ or ‘sour wine’ earlier to mock and taunt Him – maybe to offer it and then deny giving it to Him – but Jesus had refused it at that time. This time, He took it because He knew the final moments of His life’s mission had come, and He was fulfilling it to the last breath, word, and deed.

3 / **“IT IS FINISHED!”** This declaration was the climax, the crescendo, the victory cry of His mission [see ch 17.1-4]. ‘Finished’ means: **It has all been done! It has been completed! It has been fulfilled!** With that word, Jesus pronounced and announced that He had just successfully ‘FINISHED!’ the Father’s promised salvation of His people, the Father’s commission and commandment to come and die for our redemption, the New Covenant that in His Blood, all that was required and sufficiently supplied to save us from our sins and reconcile us back to God ... to be with Him forever! **“It has been done!”**

4 / **“Tetelestai!”** This is the English pronunciation of the past perfect tense of the verb Jesus exclaimed [teleo]. *“Definition: to end, i.e. complete, execute, conclude, discharge (a debt)”* It means ‘to reach the end, the completion, the full and final conclusion of the work that was being done.’ Notice that last part of the definition: ‘discharge (a debt).’ THIS is the word that was used on a debt contract or document to signify that the debt had been ‘PAID IN FULL’! And so it was with our debt of sin and unrighteousness before God. **“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” [Romans 3.23].** But when Jesus Christ died and offered up His life of perfect, sinless obedience to the Father, He paid a double-debt that everyone of us owed: [1] He offered His life as a substitutionary sin-payment for the sins we have committed against God, and [2] He offered His life as a substitute for the life of obedience that we did not and could not have offered. THIS is the Gospel! And it is the ONLY Gospel there is! And God Himself provided it for us when He sent Christ into our world to die for us! And Jesus Christ was willing to give Himself as the ONLY payment for sin that God the Father will accept!

5 / AND He didn’t cry **“IT IS FINISHED!”** with a weak voice, either. **Matthew 27.50, Mark 15.37, and Luke 23.46** all declare: **And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice...** Jesus didn’t ‘succumb’ to His own death. He didn’t die as a ‘victim’ to any hands who delivered Him over to Pilate or those who physically impaled Him to His Cross. **He died strong! “...and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.”** Jesus gave up His own life! Remember how He foretold in **John 10.17-18: For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from My Father.**

6 / And it was with this last, final, victory cry that He gave Himself and His life to the Father as the once-for-all sufficient offering for our sins: **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 / **Luke 23.46.**

7 / **Hebrews 7.27: He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since He did this once for all when He offered up Himself.**

V / vv 31-37 / “They did not break His legs”

1 / It was a scandal among the Jews for a dead body to be hanging exposed for public view on a holy day. The next day was a Sabbath and also the Passover, and they didn’t dare ‘desecrate’ their ‘holy’ day and their planned ‘holy’ ceremonies. Why, they were going to be offering Passover sacrifices to God for the ‘passing over’ of their sins! They couldn’t have these dead bodies hanging on their crosses, and thus render their ‘holy’ activities ‘unclean’ and ‘unacceptable to God!

2 / So they came to Pilate again to ask him to break their legs, and thus hasten their deaths. Death by crucifixion was a death from physical trauma, shock, dehydration, loss of blood, even infections - but most of all a death by asphyxiation. When the body is impaled on the cross and the weight of the body is hanging from the suspended arms, the effect is to compress the diaphragm and abdomen, constricting the lungs. And often, death by crucifixion could linger on for 2-3 days before death occurred. By breaking the legs, the crucified one couldn’t ‘push up’ with his legs, making more room for his lungs to inhale.

3 / The soldiers broke the legs of the other two evil-doers. But when they came to Jesus, they discovered He was already dead [voluntarily, of His own will and volition]. Another fulfillment of Scripture, John is careful to note: **Not one of His bones will be broken [Exodus 12.46]**, speaking of the Passover lamb from Yahweh’s first prescription in the first Passover! **So it must be with this, The Passover Lamb of God!**

4 / So, in their resentment and spite against Jesus because they couldn’t further abuse Him by breaking His legs, **‘but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.’** This was from the fluid that had gathered around His heart and lungs from the trauma He had suffered during the crucifixion agonies. Yet another fulfillment of the ancient Scriptures! **Zechariah 12.10: ...when they look on Me, on Him whom they have pierced...**

5 / John himself is amazed at all this fulfillment of the ancient Scripture prophecies [especially after having had the past seventy years to reflect upon it]. Lest anyone think he is making any of it up, John affirms the truth of it all as an eye-witness: **‘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.’ DO YOU BELIEVE? For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled...**

VI / vv 38-42 / “...they laid Jesus there”

1 / Enter two friends, both believers and followers of Jesus – though both of them were just now publicly confessing their faith in Him: [1] **Joseph of Arimathea**. He was apparently a well-known, wealthy citizen of Jerusalem. He asked Pilate for permission to take possession of Jesus’ body to give Him a respectable burial, rather than having His body dumped in the ‘landfill’ of the Valley of Hinnom. Joseph had prepared a burial sepulcher for himself. No one had ever lain in it. And Jesus wouldn’t for long! Joseph would have it back after three days! **Isaiah 53.9: And they made His grave with the wicked and with a rich man in His death...** [2] **Nicodemus**. Yes! That same **Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night [ch 3]**. We have seen Nicodemus speak up in Jesus’ defense another time before / **ch 7.50-51**.

2 / Both of them are now fully-committed, whole-hearted confessors of their faith in the Deity, Lordship, and Gospel of their Lord Jesus Christ. They, at the risk of their own lives and public reputations, and at their own expense, come to prepare Jesus’ body for burial – because they believe in their hearts and confess with their mouths that **‘Jesus is LORD’!**

DO YOU BELIEVE?