

# EXPLANATION OF 43<sup>RD</sup> BIBLEBOOK

## JOHN 19 (A.D. 70-95)

### INTRODUCTION

John 18 described the three trials of Jesus before the Jewish authorities and the three trials before the Roman authorities. The first trial before the Roman authorities was before the Roman governor, Pilate, in which Jesus was *charged* and *investigated*, but Jesus was declared innocent. The second trial was before king Herod, who had jurisdiction over Galilee, but also he found no ground for a death penalty. And the third trial was before Pilate again, in which Jesus was declared innocent, but nevertheless was *martyred* and *condemned*.

The sixth or last trial is mainly described in John 19. Jesus is *persecuted or martyred* by the Roman soldiers and *condemned* to be crucified by the Jews and the Romans. Romans 19 continues to describe the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. The Jews had condemned Jesus to death and the non-Jews had executed the death sentence.

### OUTLINE

Title: THE SUFFERING OF JESUS - continued

(I) 18:13 to 19:16a. Jesus tried six times, yet completely innocent.

(6) 18:39-40; 19:1-16a The sixth trial was official, again before Pilate.

(Matthew 27:15-31; Mark 15:6-20; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39-40; 19:1-16a)

The sixth trial begins in John chapter 18:39-40.

a. Pilate's official verdict of the fifth trial (Luke 23:13-16; cf. John 18:38)

(After public examination no basis for the charges against Jesus was found. Jesus has done nothing to deserve death)

b. Pilate's third attempt to avoid making a decision by proposing to release a criminal, Barabbas

(Matthew 27:15-18,20-21; Mark 15:6-11; Luke 23:18-19; John 18:39-40)

(II) 19:1-5. Jesus martyred.

(Matthew 27:26-31; Mark 15:15-20; John 19:1-5)

In two of the Synoptic Gospels (Mark, who is followed by Matthew) Jesus is martyred after his condemnation, but in the Gospel of John Jesus is martyred in another attempt of Pilate to avoid making a decision in which he had to hand Jesus over to be crucified. By rousing the sympathy of the crowd for a martyred Jesus, he hoped that the crowd would demand that Jesus would be set free (Matthew 27:26-31; Mark 15:15-20; John 19:1-5)

a. Jesus flogged (19:1)

b. Jesus crowned (19:2-3)

c. Jesus declared innocent (The verdict) (19:4-5)

(III) 19:6-16a. Jesus condemned.

(Matthew 27:19-31 ; Mark 15:12-20 ; Luke 23:20-25; John 19:6-16a)

a. Pilate sits on the judgement seat (Matthew 27:19a; cf. John 19:13-14)

b. Pilate warned by his wife (Matthew 27:19b).

c. Jews are persuaded to demand crucifixion (Matthew 27:22-23; Mark 15:12-14; Luke 23:20-21; John 19:6a)

d. Pilate's final attempt to avoid making a decision by telling the Jews to crucify Jesus themselves (John 19:6b)

e. The Jews demand that Jesus must be crucified, because he claimed to be the Son of God (John 19:7)

f. Pilate privately investigates the origin of Jesus (John 19:8-9)

g. Jesus says that Pilate is guilty of a great sin (John 19:10-11)

h. Pilate tries to set Jesus free, but the Jews threaten Pilate (John 19:12)

i. Pilate's official verdict of the sixth trial from his judgement seat (Matthew 27:24-25; Luke 23:22-24)

j. The trials against Jesus were not fair.

(IV) 19:16b-30. Jesus crucified.

(Matthew 27:32-56; Mark 15:21-41; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:16b-37)

a. Simon of Cyrene carrying the cross (Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26)

b. The women mourning and wailing (Luke 23:27-31)

c. The crucifixion (20:25)(Matthew 27:33-35a,38)

d. The first saying from the cross (Luke 23:34)

e. The form of the cross (Luke 23:38)

f. The notice above the cross (19:19-22)(Matthew 27:37;

g. The soldiers dividing the clothes (19:23-24)(Matthew 27:35b-36;

h. The bystanders ridiculing (Matthew 27:39-44; Luke 23:35-36)

i. The second saying from the cross (Luke 23:43)

j. The followers of Jesus standing around the cross (19:25)

k. The third saying from the cross (19:25-27)

l. Darkness over the land (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33-34; Luke 23:44-45a)

m. The fourth saying from the cross (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34)

n. The fifth saying from the cross (19:28-29; cf. Matthew 27:48)

o. The sixth saying from the cross (19:30)

p. The seventh saying from the cross (Luke 23:46)

q. The miraculous signs (Matthew 27:51-54)

r. Jesus really died (19:31-37)

s. The Bible records the fulfilment of very many prophecies

(V) 19:38-42. Jesus buried.

(Matthew 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42)

a. Those who buried Jesus (19:38-39a)

b. Jesus embalmed (19:39b-40)

c. Jesus buried (19:41-42)

d. The tomb sealed and guarded (Matthew 27:62-66)

### EXPLANATION

(6) The sixth trial was official, again before Pilate.

(Matthew 27:15-31; Mark 15:6-20; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39-40; 19:1-16a)

**(I) 19:1-5. Jesus martyred.**  
(Matthew 27:26-31; Mark 15:15-20; John 19:1-5)

In two of the Synoptic Gospels (Mark, followed by Matthew) Jesus is martyred after his condemnation. However in the Gospel of John Jesus is martyred in another attempt of Pilate to avoid making a decision in which he had to hand Jesus over to be crucified. By rousing the sympathy of the crowd for a martyred Jesus, he hoped that the crowd would demand that Jesus would be set free.

a. Jesus flogged (19:1)

**19:1.** Then Pilate therefore took (viaa) Jesus and had him (publicly) flogged (scourged)(viaa).

Jesus had already been beaten (with fists in the face)<sup>1</sup> by the servants of the Jews<sup>2</sup>.

Flogging with a whip was a terrible method of torturing someone. The Roman whip (scourge) consisted of a short wooden handle with several leather thongs, which had pieces of lead, copper and bone attached to its tips. The victim was bent over and the lashes were laid over his whole body. According to the historian Josephus the back was ripped up to such an extent that often the deep-seated blood vessels and even inner organs were exposed. It often resulted in death. Only Roman citizens were exempted from flogging and crucifixion. By flogging Jesus in public, Pilate tried to evade sentencing him to death<sup>3</sup>. John 19:12 clearly says that Pilate tried to get Jesus released.

The flogging of Jesus was prophesied 700 years before it actually happened! The Servant of the LORD (Jesus) says through the prophet Isaiah (740-680 B.C.), "I offered my back to those who beat me"<sup>4</sup>. The prophet also said, "By his wounds we were healed"<sup>5</sup>. The suffering of Jesus was not only very painful, but served as a substitution for our punishment! The Bible recorded his suffering NOT to evoke sympathy or abhorrence with the crowd, but to cause us today to realise that Jesus Christ did this *in our place!*

b. Jesus crowned (19:2-3)

**19:2.** And the soldiers plaited (vpaa) a crown of thorns, and put (viaa) it on his head, and threw (viaa) a purple robe around him.

**19:3.** and they kept on marching up (viin) to him and saying (viia), "Hail (vmppa), King of the Jews!" And they kept on giving (viia) him slaps (in the face).

Jesus was mocked and crowned with a crown of thorns (19:2-3)<sup>6</sup>.

The soldiers led Jesus into the residence of the governor (Praetorium)<sup>7</sup>. They undressed him<sup>8</sup>. Then they dressed him with a purple robe (probably an old discarded soldier's mantle) to symbolise that he was a king (19:2b)<sup>9</sup>. They plaited a crown of thorns and pressed it onto his head (19:2a)<sup>10</sup>. Blood must have flowed over his face. There are several kinds of thorn bushes in Palestine. They gave him a reed to hold, symbolising his royal sceptre<sup>11</sup>. They marched up to him (or marched passed him) and fell onto their knees with a mocking salute, "Hail!" which means "Be happy!" or "I am happy to see you!" It was the usual greetings in that day (19:3a)<sup>12</sup>. They spat into his face<sup>13</sup>. They continually slapped him in the face or beat him on his head (19:3b)<sup>14</sup>.

Because everyone is a sinner (a transgressor of the law) God's curse rests on everyone. But the cross releases everyone who believes in him from that curse and brings the spiritual blessing of God's covenant to him! The fall into sin also brought thorns and thistles on the earth<sup>15</sup>, but the curse of the cross will finally also heal the earth from its bondage to decay and bring the new earth into the freedom of the children of God<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> cf. 1 Corinthians 9:26; 2 Corinthians 11:20

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 26:67; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:63

<sup>3</sup> cf. Matthew 27:26; Mark 15:15; Luke 23:16,22

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 50:6

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 53:6

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 27:27-30; Mark 15:16-19

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 27:27; Mark 15:16

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 27:28a

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 27:28b; Mark 15:17a; cf. Isaiah 9:7

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 27:29a; Mark 15:17b

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 27:29b; cf. Genesis 49:10

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 27:29c; Mark 15:18

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 27:30a; Mark 15:19b; cf. Isaiah 50:6

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 27:30b; Mark 15:19a

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 3:18

<sup>16</sup> Romans 8:20-21

c. Jesus declared innocent. (The verdict) (19:4-5).

**19:4.** And Pilate went out (viaa) again and said (vipa) to them, “See, here, I am bringing (vipa) him out to you in order that you may know (by study, observation and experience)<sup>17</sup> (vsaa) that I find (vipa) no charge (ground for complaint)<sup>18</sup> whatsoever in him.”

**19:5.** So Jesus came (viaa) outside, still wearing (vppa) the thorny crown and the purple robe. And he (Pilate) said (vipa) to them, “Look! The man!”

Pilate, the governor and thus the representative of the Roman government, had the soldiers martyr Jesus inside his residence. Then, instead of throwing him into prison, he had Jesus brought out to the Jews to prove that the Roman government found not a single charge against him (cf. 18:38; 18:6)<sup>19</sup>! Jesus was completely innocent!

Time and again human jurisdiction had declared Jesus completely innocent (18:38; 19:4,6)<sup>20</sup>. Jesus knew that he was completely sinless (8:46). The Bible declared Jesus perfectly sinless<sup>21</sup>.

There Jesus stood, mocked as a pseudo-king, with his back torn open, his head bleeding, his face beaten up and spit running down his face. “Look! The man!” Pilate hoped that the Jews would see that Jesus was no threat at all. But Pilate underestimated the hatred and enmity of the Jewish religious leaders and teachers against Jesus (and against the Romans).

Pilate hesitated to release Jesus immediately, because he feared the Jews. By releasing Jesus he would risk the anger of the Jews against him. He was afraid that the Jews would accuse him before the Roman emperor (Caesar) and he would lose his political position and even his life. So Pilate tried to appease and please the Jews<sup>22</sup>. *This was the human reason why Jesus was not released.*

Why did God the Father then allow Jesus Christ to be crucified? Jesus was crucified *in our place* for our sins. *He exchanged places with us: we received his perfect righteousness (justification, acceptance, approval) and he took our place of complete unrighteousness (condemnation, rejection, disapproval)*<sup>23</sup>. *Jesus Christ was completely innocent and yet he died in our place as an atonement sacrifice for our sins. This was the divine reason why Jesus was not released!*

(II) 19:6-16a. Jesus condemned.

(Matthew 27:19-25 ; Mark 15:12-14 ; Luke 23:20-25; John 19:6-16a)

When Pilate went to sit on his judgement seat in order to deliver his verdict, there were several interruptions. When Pilate heard that Jesus was the Son of God, he tried to release Jesus (19:12a). But under intimidation and threats to accuse him to Caesar, Pilate gave in and handed Jesus over to be crucified (19:16a).

a. Pilate sits on the judgement seat (Matthew 27:19a; cf. John 19:13-14).

See John 19:13 for the judgement seat.

b. Pilate warned by his wife (Matthew 27:19b).

At this point his wife Claudia Procula (Procla) sent him a message: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man (Jesus), for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.” God certainly speaks to people through dreams. God speaks to people through dreams to warn them to turn away from wrongdoing<sup>24</sup>. God spoke to the ordinary prophets in riddles in dreams, but with Moses God spoke face to face, clearly and not in riddles<sup>25</sup>. God spoke to king Solomon in a dream in which Solomon asked for God’s wisdom<sup>26</sup>. God spoke to Joseph in dreams, to tell him what to do<sup>27</sup>. Whenever God speaks in a dream, one should test the content with the Word of God<sup>28</sup> and whenever a person with a prophetic gift speaks, other Christians should weigh carefully what is said<sup>29</sup>.

Pilate’s wife had suffered a great deal in a dream or nightmare about him. The content of her dream is unknown, but it alarmed her. She was convinced that Jesus was innocent. But also she was superstitious, weak and afraid of the Jews who threatened the position of her husband. Instead of advising Pilate to declare Jesus innocent, she advised him not to have anything to do with him. Pilate should not condemn him guilty, but also not declare him innocent!

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<sup>17</sup> G: ginóskó

<sup>18</sup> G: aitia

<sup>19</sup> Luke 23:22

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 27:23,24; Mark 15:14; Luke 23:4,13-15,22

<sup>21</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22,24; 1 John 3:5

<sup>22</sup> cf. Galatians 1:10

<sup>23</sup> Isaiah 53:5-6,8; Romans 4:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 7:27; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18

<sup>24</sup> Job 33:14-17; Genesis 20:3

<sup>25</sup> Numbers 12:6-8

<sup>26</sup> 1 Kings 3:5-15

<sup>27</sup> Matthew 1:20; 2:12,13,19,22

<sup>28</sup> Jeremiah 23: 25-29

<sup>29</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:29

c. Jews are stirred up to demand crucifixion.  
(Matthew 27:22-23; Mark 15:12-14; Luke 23:20-21; John 19:6a)

**19:6a.** Then when the chief priests and servants saw (viaa) him, they cried out (viaa), saying (vppa), “Crucify (him) (vmaa)! Crucify (him)!”

In the meantime it was no longer the crowd of Jews, but the religious leaders and their officers that kept on shouting and stirring up the crowd to release the criminal, Barabbas, and to crucify Jesus (18:40)<sup>30</sup>. The Jews had become completely hardened, insensitive and unmerciful<sup>31</sup>. Pilate was about to give his verdict and deliver sentence, so they put Pilate under pressure by stirring up the crowd. They shouted commands to Pilate: “You must crucify him and remove him once for all!” Pilate hated the Jews, but at the same time he feared the Jews, because this incident could cost him his political position.

Pilate asked again, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” And the crowd of Jews shouted “Barabbas!”<sup>32</sup>. Pilate had not expected this turn of events. He asked, “What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ?” And they all shouted, “Crucify him!” Pilate asked, “Why? What crime has he committed?”<sup>33</sup>. But the crowd of Jews shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!” “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us”<sup>34</sup>!

d. Pilate’s final attempt to avoid making a decision  
by telling the Jews to crucify Jesus themselves (19:6b).

**19:6b.** Pilate said (vipa) to them, “Take (vmaa) him yourselves and crucify (vmaa) (him); for I on my part, do not find (vipa) any ground for an accusation (i.e. basis for a charge) in him.”

The Jewish religious leaders realised very well that Pilate was trying to get out of his predicament by playing the ball back to them: “You take him and crucify him!” If they did, the Jews would be guilty of transgressing the Roman law.

e. The Jews demand that Jesus must be crucified,  
because he claimed to be the Son of God (19:7).

**19:7.** The Jews answered (viao) him, “We have (vipa) a law and according to that law he ought (vipa) to die (vnaa), because he made (viaa) himself the Son of God.”

The Jews demanded that Pilate crucify him (give him the death penalty) because Jesus had allegedly blasphemed God<sup>35</sup>. They believed that Jesus had blasphemed God by calling himself ‘the Son of God’. But they did not realise that JESUS CHRIST REALLY WAS GOD! Jesus Christ was GOD who had taken on the human nature (1:1,14; 14:9). Compare the name: ‘Immanuel’ which means: ‘God with us’<sup>36</sup>! Jesus had again and again called himself ‘THE SON OF GOD’ (3:16; 5:17-18; 8:54-58; 10:30,33,36)<sup>37</sup>.

f. Pilate privately investigates the origin of Jesus (19:8-9).

**19:8.** Now when Pilate heard (viaa) this word (i.e. that Jesus was the Son of God) he was even more afraid (viao),

**19:9.** and he entered (viaa) into the Praetorium again and said (vipa) to Jesus, “Where are (vipa) you from?” But Jesus gave (viaa) him no answer.

When Pilate heard that Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God, he became very afraid. He did not fear the stubbornness of the Jews, but feared, because he was superstitious and afraid that he might offend some unknown god. Could this be the reason for the dream of his wife<sup>38</sup>? He inquired where Jesus came from, but Jesus gave him no answer. The Roman governor deserved no answer, because he was a very corrupt person. He had repeatedly pronounced Jesus innocent and yet he did not release him, but nearly martyred him to death! If Pilate had really listened to the word of Jesus in John 18:36-37, he would have known the answer to his question.

g. Jesus says that Pilate is guilty of a great sin (19:10-11).

**19:10.** So Pilate said (vipa) to him, “To me you do not speak (vipa)? Don’t you know<sup>39</sup> (vira) that I have (vipa) the authority to release (vnaa) you and that I have (vipa) the authority to crucify (vnaa) you?”

**19:11.** Jesus answered (viao), “You would have (viia) no authority at all over me if it had (viia) not been given (+vprp) to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over (vpaa) to you (Caiaphas) has (vipa) the greater sin.”

In order to camouflage his fear Pilate began to brag about his power and authority! He was indignant that Jesus did not acknowledge his power and authority!

<sup>30</sup> Matthew 27:20-21; Mark 15:11; Luke 23:18-19

<sup>31</sup> cf. James 2:13

<sup>32</sup> Matthew 27:21

<sup>33</sup> Matthew 27:22-23

<sup>34</sup> Luke 23:18-19

<sup>35</sup> Leviticus 24:16

<sup>36</sup> Matthew 1:23; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 2:8; 1 John 5:20; Colossians 1:15; 2:9; Revelation 1:8; 21:6-8; 22:12-13

<sup>37</sup> Matthew 26:63-64

<sup>38</sup> Matthew 27:19

<sup>39</sup> G: oida

But Jesus pointed out to Pilate that all political, military and judicial power and authority on earth came from God and was delegated by God to the various authorities<sup>40</sup>. The power and authority which God delegated to people was entrusted to them as a responsibility from God and they were accountable to God for how they executed their power and authority! People ask, “Who has the real power in this world?” The consistent message of the Bible is, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus Christ”<sup>41</sup>. Because all power belongs to Jesus Christ, Psalm 2 warns the leaders of this world, “You kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son (of God), lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way”<sup>42</sup>.

When Pilate as political ruler neglected to exercise his responsibility to speak justice, then no one less than GOD himself holds him accountable for his neglect! Pilate was corrupt, but did not fully realise what he was doing.

Caiaphas, however, fully realised what he was doing! Caiaphas and all his Jewish religious leaders and teachers ought to have known the Old Testament Scriptures with its just laws and prophecies and yet he delivered Jesus to be crucified with deliberate cruelty. He was a coldblooded plotter against Jesus Christ and therefore his sin was greater than that of Pilate.

The Bible speaks of various gradations of sin (19:11) and of various gradations of punishment<sup>43</sup>. Much has been given to the political leaders in the world. Much will also be required from them!

But this verdict of Jesus scared Pilate! Even though Caiaphas was guilty of a greater sin, he, Pilate, was guilty of a great sin!

#### [h. Pilate tries to set Jesus free, but the Jews threaten Pilate \(19:12\).](#)

**19:12.** Because of this Pilate was making efforts (viia) to release (vnaa) him. But the Jews cried out (viaa) saying (vppa), “If you release (vsaa) this man, you are (vipa) no friend of the emperor (Caesar). Whoever makes (vppa) himself king rebels (vipa) against the emperor (Caesar).”

When Pilate heard Jesus say that he (Pilate) had great sin, he made efforts to release Jesus. He knew that Jesus was no rebel opposing the government, but that this was a plot of the Jews to get rid of Jesus. He was convinced of the innocence of Jesus and again went out to the Jews trying to release Jesus.

The Jews realised that Pilate, who was the judge, was convinced that Jesus was innocent and so they began to shout threats at Pilate! If Pilate would not do what they demanded then they would accuse him before the Caesar. They would accuse Pilate of high treason against Caesar, because he released someone who called himself the king of the Jews and stirred up the whole nation (12:13)<sup>44</sup>. Normally, the Jews were completely disloyal towards Caesar, but here they feigned loyalty to Caesar in order to get rid of Jesus. It is notable that Jesus never spoke a word against Caesar!

Evil political methods were used to get rid of Jesus: plotting behind his back<sup>45</sup>; bribery<sup>46</sup>, betrayal<sup>47</sup>, public arrest<sup>48</sup>, false witnesses<sup>49</sup>, false charges<sup>50</sup>, to martyr<sup>51</sup>, stirring up the crowd<sup>52</sup>, and finally threatening the judge<sup>53</sup>.

#### [i. Pilate’s official verdict of the sixth trial from his judgement seat \(19:13-14\). \(Matthew 27:24-25; Luke 23:22-24; John 19:13-14; cf. 4,6b\)](#)

“I find no basis for a charge against him!” There is no ground for the death penalty against Jesus. Jesus is the king of the Jews, but the Jews reject him. Pilate washed his hands of the blood of Jesus, but the Jews accepted responsibility for his death.

**19:13.** Then Pilate, on hearing (vpaa) these words, led (viaa) Jesus out and sat down (viaa) on the judgement seat, in a place called (vppp) ‘The Stone Pavement (platform)’ (Lithostrotos), in Aramaic: ‘Gabbatha’.

**19:14.** Now it was (viia) the Preparation of the Passover (the Friday before the Sabbath of the Passover Week)<sup>54</sup>. The hour was (viia) about the sixth (06.00 hours). And he said (vipa) to the Jews, “Look! Your king!”

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<sup>40</sup> Romans 13:1-2

<sup>41</sup> Matthew 28:18

<sup>42</sup> Psalm 2:10-12

<sup>43</sup> Psalm 2:10-12; Luke 12:47-48

<sup>44</sup> Mark 11:10; Luke 19:38

<sup>45</sup> Matthew 26:3-5

<sup>46</sup> Matthew 26:14-16

<sup>47</sup> Matthew 26:48-49

<sup>48</sup> Matthew 26:47,50,55

<sup>49</sup> Matthew 26:59-62

<sup>50</sup> Luke 23:2; John 18:30

<sup>51</sup> Matthew 26:67; John 19:1-3

<sup>52</sup> Matthew 27:20,24

<sup>53</sup> John 19:12

<sup>54</sup> G: paraskeué tou pascha

Finally Pilate gave in to their shouts and threats. Pilate was a weak ruler who lacked the moral power to speak justice and to maintain justice. He gave in because he feared the suspicious nature of Caesar and he feared the threats of the Jews. He feared to lose his position of power, his possessions and maybe his life.

**The judgement seat and the final verdict.** This judgement seat consisted of a chair raised on a platform that could be reached by stairs.

Pilate's official verdict of the sixth trial from his judgement seat is, "I find no basis for a charge against this man" (19:4,6). "I have found in him (Jesus) no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished (to satisfy the Jews) and then release him"<sup>55</sup>. Pilate still maintained that Jesus was *completely innocent*.

**The Preparation of the Sabbath belonging to the Passover.** The words, 'the Preparation of the Passover', do not refer to any preparations made for the Passover feast, because the slaughtering of the Passover lamb, the bread, the wine and the spices, etc. were already completed on the previous day (Thursday) and the Passover meal had already been eaten on the previous Thursday evening! *The words 'the Preparation of the Passover' refer to 'the preparation of the Sabbath that belonged to the Passover week'!* They refer to the 'Friday', "the day before the Sabbath"<sup>56</sup>, on which people prepared everything (cooking the food, etc.) for the following Sabbath (Saturday). This particular Friday was the Preparation *for the Sabbath* belonging to the Passover Week (13:1; 18:28)<sup>57</sup>.

**The different ways of keeping time.** The hours of a day was calculated differently by the Jews and by the Romans. The Jews counted the hours from daybreak onwards, while the Romans counted the hours from midnight onwards. According to Matthew 27:1 and Luke 22:66 the Jewish Council (the Sanhedrin) condemned Jesus to death very early on Friday morning. This mock trial probably lasted a very short time, because the decision to give him the death penalty had already been made long before. According to John 19:14 during the second trial before Pilate, Jesus was brought out to the Jews at about 6 a.m. (the sixth hour according to Roman calculation). Because John says 'about' it could have been 6.30 a.m. The procession of Jesus carrying the cross to Golgotha took about two-and-a-half hours'. According to Mark 15:25 Jesus was crucified at 9 a.m. (the third hour according to Jewish calculation). According to Matthew 27:45 and Luke 23:44 there was darkness between 12 noon and 3 p.m. (the sixth and ninth hour according to Jewish calculation).

#### **j. The Jews rejected their king (19:15-16a)**

**19:15.** Then they cried out (viaa), "Away (vmaa) with him! Away (vmaa) with him! Crucify (vmaa) (him)! Pilate said (vipa) to them, "Shall I crucify (vsaa) your king?" The chief priests answered (viao), "We have (vipa) no king but the emperor (Caesar)."

**19:16a.** So he then handed (viaa) him over to them in order to be crucified (vsap).

**Pilate mocked the Jews (19:14-15).** The words of Pilate "Look! Your king!" (19:14) were meant to be a mockery of Jesus and of the Jews, who were threatening him: "You Jews! See your king!" "He is chained, helpless, weak and condemned to death on your own request!"

The Jews had understood Pilate's jarring remarks about Jesus being their king and angrily shouted that Jesus must be crucified and removed from the scene! The Jewish religious leaders disowned Jesus. The most chief priests were Sadducees who never had a strong expectation of the Messiah. They even said they had no king except the Roman Caesar! The truth was that they also despised the Romans. This was really the hour of darkness.

**Pilate washed his hands**<sup>58</sup>. When Pilate saw that he could not get Jesus released, but that a rebellion against him was rising, he publicly washed his hands in water as a symbol that he washed the blood of Jesus from his hands! He said, "I am innocent of this man's blood! It is your responsibility!" Then all the people (the Jews) answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children"<sup>59</sup>.

Jesus was condemned to be crucified by the Jews and finally crucified by the Romans. The jealousy of the Jews against Jesus won the battle, but they lost the war!

Although these Jews had rejected Jesus, *it does not follow that all Jews had rejected Jesus, and also not that Jesus had rejected all Jews*. God gives his Kingdom to Jews and to non-Jews that bear the fruit of the Kingdom<sup>60</sup>. Not only the full number of non-Jews will be saved, but also the full number of Jews will finally be saved<sup>61</sup>.

**Pilate condemned Jesus**<sup>62</sup>. Then Pilate released Barabbas, who had been imprisoned for revolution and murder<sup>63</sup>, had Jesus flogged and handed Jesus over to be crucified. At this point two Synoptic Gospels report Jesus being martyred.

#### **k. The trials of Jesus were not fair.**

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<sup>55</sup> Luke 23:22

<sup>56</sup> Mark 15:42

<sup>57</sup> Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54

<sup>58</sup> Matthew 27:24-25

<sup>59</sup> Matthew 27:24-25

<sup>60</sup> Matthew 21:33-44; cf. Mark 9:1; Luke 12: 32; Colossians 1:13-14

<sup>61</sup> Romans 11:25-26

<sup>62</sup> Matthew 27:26

<sup>63</sup> Luke 23:24-25

**The three trials before the Jews were not fair.** The three trials before the Jewish religious authorities were not fair at all. John 11:49-50 says that they had decided long ago that Jesus had to be put to death. The Jewish religious leaders were envious of the fact that they were losing their hold upon the Jewish nation. They were angry that Jesus had exposed them and denounced them publicly. Therefore, these three trials before the Jewish religious leaders were not real trials, but a plot.

It was the Jewish religious leaders who devised the plot and saw to it that it was carried out. It was they who sent their officials to arrest Jesus and brought him bound as a criminal to trial<sup>64</sup>. It was they who produced false witnesses. It was they who condemned Jesus, while he was completely innocent. It was they who delivered him over to the Roman governor. It was they who stirred up the whole crowd to choose Barabbas and have Jesus crucified<sup>65</sup>. It was they who intimidated the judge, Pilate, until he handed Jesus over to be crucified (19:12-16). It was they who mocked Jesus<sup>66</sup>. It was they who spread lies about his resurrection<sup>67</sup>. And according to the book of Acts it was they who continued to persecute Christians.

*This envy and anger of the Jewish religious authorities at the time of Jesus does not make Jewish people in general worse sinners than anybody else! Remember, the non-Jewish Roman leader tried him equally unfair and had him crucified. Therefore, the Bible says, "all have sinned". Both Jews and non-Jews equally need to be saved from their sins!*

**The three trials before the Gentiles were not fair.** Also the three trials before the Gentile authorities were not fair at all. The governor, Pilate, did not want to be a judge and tried several times to evade his responsibility to try Jesus. He knew the real reason why the Jews accused Jesus, but did not confront the Jews, because he feared them. Finally he allowed himself to be intimidated by threats of the Jews if he would give a different verdict than the Jews demanded!

**The trials were a charade from the human point of view, but indispensable from God's point of view.** The trials of Jesus were not fair at all. It was public murder<sup>68</sup>. Of all the bogus trials in the history of mankind this was the biggest! *The heavenly High Priest was found guilty by the earthly high priest. The Ruler of the universe was condemned to death by the rulers on the earth!*

Everything points to these trials against Jesus as a charade, to give people a semblance of justice. The trials were pushed through with great haste and as quickly as possible. From the point of view of the Jews, Jesus had to be killed before the Sabbath began! And from the point of view of God, Jesus had to die, because this was the only possible way to bring a perfect sacrifice of atonement for sins (10:18)<sup>69</sup>.

### **(III) 19:16b-30. Jesus crucified.** (Matthew 27:32-56; Mark 15:21-41; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:16b-37)

When Pilate had heard that Jesus was the Son of God he had tried to release him (19:12a). But under constant pressure and threats of the Jews to accuse Pilate before Caesar, he gave way and handed Jesus over to be crucified (19:16).

**19:16b.** Then they (the Roman soldiers and Jews) took (viaa) Jesus along.

**19:17.** And carrying (vppa) the cross by himself he went out (viaa) to (a place) called (vppp) 'The Place of The Skull', which in Aramaic is called (vipp) Golgotha:

**19:18.** where they crucified (viaa) him, and with him two others, on this side and on that, and in the middle, Jesus.

a. Simon of Cyrene carrying the cross (Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26).

John tells that Jesus first carried the cross on his torn up back. This must have caused him much pain. When he could no longer do that, they forced a bystander, Simon of Cyrene, who was just entering the city, to carry his cross. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus.

b. The women mourning and wailing (Luke 23:27-31).

A great crowd of people followed Jesus to Golgotha. Also women, wailing and mourning, while beating themselves on their breasts. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then 'they will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Although Jesus suffered much, his future was completely safe with God in heaven. But the future of these women and their children was not safe at all! The divine punishment that struck Samaria at the hand of the Assyrians in 721 B.C.<sup>70</sup> would also strike Jerusalem at the hand of the Romans in A.D. 70. God will not allow guilty people to remain

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<sup>64</sup> Mark 15:1

<sup>65</sup> Matthew 27:20

<sup>66</sup> Hosea 10:5-8; Mark 15:29-32

<sup>67</sup> Matthew 27:62-66

<sup>68</sup> Acts 3:14-15

<sup>69</sup> Matthew 1:22; 16:21; Luke 9:22; 22:37; 24:44; cf. Acts 4:12

<sup>70</sup> Hosea 10:5-8

unpunished: not now at the first coming of Jesus Christ<sup>71</sup>, but also not at the second coming of Jesus Christ<sup>72</sup>! The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans would be so terrible that women without children are praised to be blessed. “If men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?” It is a comparison between the punishment of Jesus Christ on the cross (in A.D. 30) and the punishment of Jerusalem by the Romans (in A.D. 70). Green trees are not easily destroyed, but dry trees are. The first represents God’s punishment of Jesus on the cross for the sins of all people who repent and believe in Jesus. The second represents God’s punishment of people who do not repent of their sins and do not turn to Jesus Christ. God’s judgement begins with the family of God<sup>73</sup>. What will happen to those who keep on rejecting the gospel?

c. [The crucifixion \(Matthew 27:33-35a,38; Mark 15:22-24; Luke 23:32-33; John 20:25\).](#)

Jesus was brought “outside the camp” as something unclean<sup>74</sup> and he was thus crucified outside the city of Jerusalem<sup>75</sup>.

The place where Jesus was crucified was called Golgotha, which means ‘skull’. The exact place is not known today. It is also not known where the name came from. Execution through crucifixion was first practised by people in Phoenicia, Carthage, Macedonia, Persia, Syria, Egypt and the Romans. The Romans used it to execute slaves and serious criminals. Jesus was crucified between two other criminals<sup>76</sup>, fulfilling the prophecy, “He was numbered with the transgressors”<sup>77</sup>.

Long iron nails were driven through his hands (cf. 20:25) and feet<sup>78</sup> into the cross, fulfilling the prophecies “They pierced my hands and my feet”<sup>79</sup>. While he was hanging with the weight of his full body on nails, the cross was pulled upright until it fell into a hole with a thump to keep it standing upright. The feet rested on a small crossbeam and he did not hang very high from the ground. The physical suffering of Jesus was indescribable: there was severe inflammation, swelling of the wounds, unbearable pain from torn tendons, fearful discomfort from the strained position of his body, throbbing headache and burning thirst. Contemporary writers describe crucifixion as the most painful form of death.

*But his spiritual suffering under the load of peoples’ sins (1:29) and under the wrath of God<sup>80</sup> was worse! Far more than all his physical suffering, Jesus Christ suffered vicariously for all the sins of his people! On the cross, he experienced what it means to be forsaken by God.*

The Old Testament regarded a person hanging on a cross as ‘accursed by God’<sup>81</sup>. The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ became a curse for us so that the blessing given to Abraham might not be limited to Jews but may be given also to the Gentiles<sup>82</sup>.

Jesus Christ was crucified between two criminals, one on his right and the other on his left<sup>83</sup>. From a worldly point of view this was intended as an insult to the Jews. Their king was regarded as a criminal. Yet from God’s point of view this was an honour, because Jesus Christ came into the world “to seek and to save sinners”<sup>84</sup>.

d. [The 1<sup>st</sup> saying from the cross \(Luke 23:34\).](#)

“Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.”

e. [The form of the cross \(Luke 23:38\).](#)

There were three forms of crosses: the Andrew cross had the form of an X, the Antonius cross had the form of a T and the Roman cross had the form of a sword, with a longer upright beam and a shorter crossbeam. Because there was a title fixed at the top of the cross above his head<sup>85</sup>, the traditional form of the Roman cross is correct. The cross was regarded as a curse<sup>86</sup>, a stumbling block<sup>87</sup> and a humiliation<sup>88</sup>.

f. [The notice above the cross \(Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19-22\).](#)

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<sup>71</sup> Luke 13:34-35a; 21:20-24; Romans 2:5-6

<sup>72</sup> Revelation 6:12-17

<sup>73</sup> 1 Peter 4:17

<sup>74</sup> cf. Leviticus 4:12,21; 9:11; 16:27; Hebrews 13:11

<sup>75</sup> Hebrews 13:12-13

<sup>76</sup> Matthew 27:38

<sup>77</sup> Isaiah 53:12

<sup>78</sup> Luke 24:40

<sup>79</sup> Psalm 22:16; cf. Isaiah 53:5

<sup>80</sup> Matthew 27:46

<sup>81</sup> Deuteronomy 21:23

<sup>82</sup> Galatians 3:13-14

<sup>83</sup> Luke 23:33

<sup>84</sup> Luke 19:10

<sup>85</sup> Luke 23:38

<sup>86</sup> Deuteronomy 21:23; Galatians 3:13

<sup>87</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:23

<sup>88</sup> Philippians 2:8

**19:19.** Now Pilate also had a title written (viaa) and had it put (viaa) on the cross. There was (viia) written (+vprp). ‘Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews’.

**19:20.** Now this title many of the Jews read (viaa), because the place where Jesus was crucified (viap) was (viia) near the city; and it was (viia) written (+vprp) in Aramaic, Latin and Greek.

**19:21.** Then the chief priests of the Jews were saying (viia) to Pilate, “Do not write (vmpa) ‘The King of the Jews’, but that he said (viaa), ‘I am (vipa) the king of the Jews.’ \_

**19:22.** Pilate answered (viao), “What I have written (vira), I have written (vira)!” \_

The Jews had successfully threatened the governor Pilate and forced him to sentence the innocent Jesus to be crucified. But now the governor returned this insult by publicly declaring that this crucified wretch is ‘the king of the Jews’.

During the trial, Pilate had even forced the Jewish religious leaders to acknowledge publicly that their only king was the worldly Roman emperor Caesar (19:15)!

The governor aggravated this insult to the Jewish leaders by having a title written on a plaque saying, “This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews”. The plaque with its inscription was intended to be an insult to the Jewish religious leaders. They had forced the governor to sentence Jesus to death. Now they had to face the fact that *they had rejected and crucified their own king!* This title was an outrage to the Jewish religious leaders and teachers. This was the last thing they wanted to hear and so they tried in vain to get the governor to change this title into a description of the crime they said Jesus had committed<sup>89</sup>. But the governor refused.

The plaque was fastened above Christ’s head<sup>90</sup>. Matthew 27:37 calls this ‘a written charge’ and Luke 23:38 ‘a written notice’. Usually the crime of a criminal that is sentenced to be crucified was written on it (for example: armed robbery, murder), but in Jesus’ case, there was no crime! Pilate could only write a public insult to the Jews on it. When the Gospel writers give their own summary of these events, then there is no contradiction in the Bible: Matthew said: ‘This is Jesus, the king of the Jews’. Mark said, ‘The king of the Jews’. Luke said, ‘This is the king of the Jews’. John stood near to the cross and he said that the inscription read, ‘Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews’. An eye-witness of an event is not a liar when he does not report every detail of everything that happened. The words were written in three languages: Aramaic of the Jews, Latin of the Roman government and Greek, which was the world language at that time.

When the Jews rejected Jesus, they rejected themselves as a nation. But their rejection signified the reconciliation with the world, that is, the reconciliation of all believers from all languages and cultures in the world<sup>91</sup>. The crucifixion of Jesus had international significance. Everyone in the world should know about it!

God guided the hand of Pilate to write what had to be written: Jesus is the King! The king of the Jews (the Messiah) was crucified in order to be the King of the spiritual Kingdom which makes no difference between race, language or nationality (18:36; cf. 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 6:33,51; 8:12; 9:5; 10:16; 11:52; 12:32)! The Jewish religious leaders thought they had gotten rid of Jesus by having him crucified. But the sovereign God turned their victory into the greatest victory in the history of the world. The death of Jesus Christ became God’s means to atone for sins and to reconcile sinners to himself! The death of Jesus Christ became the victory over all sin, over all the wicked people, over the sinful world and over Satan and all his evil spirits. From God’s point of view, Jesus Christ is not simply ‘the king of the Jews’, the long expected Messiah. He is much more and is ‘the King of kings’, ‘the Ruler of all the kings of the earth’<sup>92</sup>! From now on, all power in every nation of the whole world will be in the hands of Jesus Christ and as the King of kings he will rule the world in the interest of the Christian Church<sup>93</sup>.

**g. The soldiers dividing the clothes (Matthew 27:35b-36; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34b; John 19:23-24).**

**19:23.** Then when the soldiers had crucified (viaa) Jesus, they took (viaa) his garments and made (viaa) four parts, for each soldier a part, and (they took) the tunic (undergarment). Now the tunic was (viia) seamless, woven all the way from top to bottom.

**19:24.** So they said (viaa) to each other, “Let us not tear (vsaa) it, but cast (vsaa) lots for it (to see) whose it will be (vifd). (This was) in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled (vsap), “They divided (viam) my garments among themselves and for my vestment they cast lots (viaa).” The soldiers then did (viaa) these things.

The fact that they cast lots for his clothes<sup>94</sup> shows that his clothes were not torn in pieces. There were probably four pieces of clothing of unequal value: his headgear, his shoes, his belt and his upper garment. Then there was a fifth, his under garment (tunic) that was worn against the body. It was woven in one piece. They cast lots for that, fulfilling the prophecy, “They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing”<sup>95</sup>.

Jesus carried the shame and the curse of nakedness in order to save us from it<sup>96</sup>. These shameful things the soldiers did. But God nevertheless used them to fulfil his divine plan of salvation.

<sup>89</sup> Luke 23:2-3

<sup>90</sup> Matthew 27:37

<sup>91</sup> Romans 11:15; Revelation 5:9; cf. Matthew 21:43; Acts 13:46

<sup>92</sup> Revelation 1:5; 17:14; 19:16

<sup>93</sup> Ephesians 1:22

<sup>94</sup> Mark 15:24

<sup>95</sup> Psalm 22:18

<sup>96</sup> cf. Genesis 3:9-11,21; 2 Corinthians 5:4; Revelation 7:13-14

[h. The bystanders ridiculing \(Matthew 27:39-44; Mark 15:29-32; Luke 23:35-36\).](#)

The bystanders. There were many bystanders at the crucifixion of Jesus; they passed by, saw the spectacle and read the notice on the cross. They shook their heads and mocked Jesus, especially with respect to his claim that he would rebuild the temple in three days (2:19) and with respect to his claim that he was the Son of God. If he was the Son of God, let him save himself from the cross<sup>97</sup>. They did not realise that Jesus did not want to escape from the cross and that he was willingly laying down his life for his sheep (10:11).

The religious leaders ridiculed Jesus. They said, “He saved others, so let him save himself. If he is the king of the Jews, let him get off the cross. If God was pleased with him, let God then save him<sup>98</sup>”.

The soldiers came up to the cross and mocked Jesus, offering him wine vinegar to drink<sup>99</sup>.

The robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him<sup>100</sup>. Luke 23:39-43 says that only one robber mocked Jesus, but that the other rebuked him. He defended Jesus, saying that he had done no evil!

Thus the prophecy in Psalm 22:6-8 went into fulfilment, “I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults; shaking their heads. He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.”

[i. The 2<sup>nd</sup> saying from the cross \(Luke 23:43a\).](#)

The robber who defended Jesus asked Jesus to think of him when he came into his Kingdom. And Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise”<sup>101</sup>. It is probable that the words of Jesus, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”<sup>102</sup> brought him to repentance.

[j. The followers of Jesus standing around the cross \(Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; Luke 23:49; John 19:25\).](#)

**19:25. Now there were standing (vila) near the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister (Salome), Mary the (wife) of Clopas and Mary Magdalene.**

Luke 23:49 says, “All those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance.” Of all the eleven disciples of Jesus only John stood near the cross. Several women stood near the cross.

- Matthew 27:56 mentions (1) Mary Magdalene, (2) Mary the mother of James and Joses, (3) and the mother of the sons of Zebedee (Salome).
- Mark 15:40 mentions (1) Mary Magdalene, (2) Mary, the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and (3) Salome.

Therefore it is most likely that Salome was the mother of John and James, the sons of Zebedee. The disciple/apostle John was therefore a cousin of Jesus. Luke 23:49 says that the women had followed Jesus from Galilee and had seen the things that happened.

- John chooses four women out of this group of women and mentions (4) Mary the mother of Jesus, (3) the sister of Mary (Salome) (the mother of John and James), (2) Mary, the wife of Clopas (and the mother of James the younger and Joses) and (1) Mary Magdalene.

[k. The 3<sup>rd</sup> saying from the cross \(John 19:25-27\).](#)

**19:26. Then when Jesus saw (vpaa) his mother and the disciple whom he loved (viia) standing there (vprra), he said (vipa) to (his) mother, “Woman, look! Your son.”**

**19:27. Then he said (vipa) to that disciple, “Look! Your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took (viaa) her into his own home.**

Jesus said to Mary, “Look! Your son!” and to John, “Look! Your mother!” Since the time Jesus had left his parental house, he called his mother: ‘Woman’ (2:4)<sup>103</sup>. He called his mother ‘woman’ not to increase her suffering<sup>104</sup>, but in order to let her understand that *the relationship between her and her son in his human nature had once for all changed. He was not her son who suffered and died under the hands of evildoers, but her Saviour who suffered and died for her sin!* After his ascension, Mary worshipped him as her Saviour<sup>105</sup>! John was in all probability her nephew. Both John and Peter had homes in Jerusalem (cf. 20:2), even though they lived and worked in Galilee.

[l. Darkness over the land \(Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33-34; Luke 23:44-45a\).](#)

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<sup>97</sup> Matthew 27:39-40

<sup>98</sup> Matthew 27:41-43; Luke 23:35

<sup>99</sup> Luke 23:36

<sup>100</sup> Matthew 27:44

<sup>101</sup> Luke 23:43

<sup>102</sup> Luke 23:34

<sup>103</sup> cf. Mark 3:31-35; Acts 1:14

<sup>104</sup> Luke 2:35

<sup>105</sup> Acts 1:12-14

Jesus had now been crucified for three hours<sup>106</sup>! From the sixth hour (12.00 noon) until the ninth hour (15.00 hours) (according to Jewish calculation) darkness came over all the land. The sun stopped shining.

m. [The 4<sup>th</sup> saying from the cross \(Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34\)](#).

At the end of this three hour darkness, about 15.00 hours, Jesus gave a shout and said, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” This being forsaken by God is part of ‘the hell’ which Jesus suffered for the sake of believers. When Jesus had taken all sin upon himself, God turned his face away. Jesus had to experience what ‘hell’ meant<sup>107</sup>. This was the hour in which the Light of the world suffered utter darkness for the sake of those who would believe in him!

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<sup>106</sup> Mark 15:25

<sup>107</sup> cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

n. [The 5<sup>th</sup> saying from the cross \(John 19:28-29; cf. Matthew 27:48; Mark 15:36; Luke 23:36\).](#)

**19:28.** After this, Jesus knowing<sup>108</sup> (vpra) that everything was already finished (virp), he said (vipa) in order that the Scripture might be accomplished (vsap), “I am thirsty (vipa).”

**19:29.** A vessel full of vinegar was standing there<sup>109</sup>(viin). So having stuck (around)<sup>110</sup>(vpaa) a sponge full of vinegar around a hyssop stick, they brought<sup>111</sup> (viaa) (it) to his mouth.

Matthew 27:46-50 relates that after Jesus had spoken the fourth saying from the cross, the bystanders thought that he was calling Elijah. Then Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” Someone tried to give him some vinegary wine to drink, which was the common drink for soldiers and labourers. Others said that he should refrain from doing this so that they could see whether Elijah would come to rescue him<sup>112</sup>. John records this as the fulfilment of Scripture, “They gave me vinegar for my thirst”<sup>113</sup>.

o. [The 6<sup>th</sup> saying from the cross \(John 19:30\).](#)

**19:30.** Then when he had received (viaa) the vinegar, Jesus said (viaa), “It is finished (completed, brought to an end) (virp)!” And having bowed (vpaa) his head, he gave up (viaa) his spirit.

Finally Jesus shouted once more, “It is finished!” The words are written in the perfect tense. Jesus meant that his entire work of redemption had been brought to completion. In the mind of Jesus Christ, his death and burial is so certain that he could speak about it as if it had already been accomplished! *No man, religious leader or prophet on earth can add anything to the completed work of Jesus Christ!* When anyone is saved, he is saved only by the completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross and never by anything he himself does! No single religious person will be saved by doing religious works. No single religious person will be saved by dressing in particular religious clothes, by praying every day, by fasting regularly, by giving money to a religious cause or by visiting holy places. Galatians 2:16 clearly says, “No one will be justified by observing the religious law!” “For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith and *this not from yourselves*, it is the gift of God – *not by works*, so that no one could boast”<sup>114</sup>

*The work of salvation which Jesus fulfilled would remain fulfilled forever! No one can add to it or subtract from it!*

p. [The 7<sup>th</sup> saying from the cross \(Luke 23:46; cf. Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37\).](#)

In Luke 23:46 Jesus says the seventh saying, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” He committed his own human spirit (not the Holy Spirit) into the hands of his heavenly Father. He it freely (10:11); it was not taken from him (10:17-18). He died so that those who believe in him may live! He died for believers and in their place! When he committed himself into the hands of God the Father, it showed that God the Father had never rejected God the Son, but had accepted his sacrifice of atonement in the place of everyone who would believe in him!

The Roman centurion in charge of the soldiers saw what happened, was deeply impressed and said in praise of God, “Surely, this was a righteous man”<sup>115</sup>. All the people who had witnessed what had happened returned home, beating their breasts as a sign of woe, guilt and remorse<sup>116</sup>. All those who had known Jesus and had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance, watching these things<sup>117</sup>.

q. [The miraculous signs \(Matthew 27:51-54\).](#)

**The tearing of the curtain.** Matthew 27:51a says that at the moment Jesus died (about 15.00 hours), the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” On the basis of Hebrews 6:19; 9:3 and 10:20 the curtain separating the Most Holy Place from the rest of the temple is meant. It was beautiful, made of blue, purple and crimson yarn and fine linen, with cherubim worked into it. The cherubim symbolically guarded the entrance to the presence of God<sup>118</sup>.

The symbolical significance of this tearing is that Jesus had fulfilled the shadow significance of the Old Testament temple and had consequently abolished the temple building. From now on God does not live in temples<sup>119</sup>, but in the midst of believers everywhere on earth<sup>120</sup>. It also means that the atonement of sins had taken place once for all in history, that all sins of believers have been forgiven and that all believers may enter the presence of God with confidence<sup>121</sup>. This event symbolised that God is completely approachable through Jesus Christ!

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<sup>108</sup> G: oida

<sup>109</sup> G: keimai

<sup>110</sup> G: perithémi

<sup>111</sup> G: prosperó

<sup>112</sup> Matthew 27:49

<sup>113</sup> Psalm 69:21

<sup>114</sup> Ephesians 2:8-9

<sup>115</sup> Luke 23:47

<sup>116</sup> Luke 23:48

<sup>117</sup> Luke 23:49

<sup>118</sup> 2 Chronicles 3:14

<sup>119</sup> Acts 7:48-49; 17:24-25

<sup>120</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:19-22

<sup>121</sup> Hebrews 10:19-20; 4:14-16; Ephesians 2:18

**The earthquake.** Matthew 27:51b says that at the moment Jesus died, the earth shook and the rocks split. The symbolical significance of the earthquake is that the death of Jesus not only has significance for people, but also for the whole creation. On the basis of his death and resurrection, the creation will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God<sup>122</sup>; all things on earth and in heaven will be reconciled to him<sup>123</sup> and there will be a new heaven and new earth, the home of righteousness<sup>124</sup>. This event symbolised that the inheritance of believers is nothing less than the new universe and the new earth!

**The rising from the dead.** Matthew 27:52-53 says that at the moment Jesus died, the tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died before were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, went into the city and appeared to many people.

Because Jesus Christ is the first to be resurrected with an immortal body forever<sup>125</sup>, this event could not have been an everlasting resurrection to immortality, but was a temporary raising from the dead, as in the case of the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Nain and Lazarus. The everlasting resurrection of all the dead will take place only at the second coming of Christ (5:28-29; 6:39)<sup>126</sup>. This event symbolised that the future resurrection of the body is certainly going to take place! On the basis of his death and resurrection, the bodies of believers will be raised from the grave and will be completely transformed to be like Christ's glorious body<sup>127</sup>.

#### r. Jesus really died (19:31-37).

19:31. Then the Jews, since it was (viia) the Preparation (of the Sabbath, not of the feast)(the Friday before the Sabbath), in order that on the sabbath the bodies might not remain (vsaa) on the cross – for great was (viia) the day of that sabbath – asked (viaa) Pilate that their legs might be broken<sup>128</sup> (vsap) and that they might be removed<sup>129</sup> (vsap).

19:32. So the soldiers came (viaa) and broke (viaa) the legs of the first (man) and of the other who had been crucified together (vpap) with him.

19:33. But having come (vpaa) to Jesus, after<sup>130</sup> they saw (viaa) that he was already dead (vpaa), they did not break (viaa) his legs.

19:34. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced<sup>131</sup> (viaa) his side and immediately there came out (viaa) blood and water.

19:35. And he who has seen (vpaa) (it) has testified (vira), and genuine is (vipa) his testimony, and he knows<sup>132</sup> (vira) that he is telling (vipa) the truth, in order that you also may come to believe (vsaa or vsap).

19:36. For these things took place (viad) in order that the Scripture may be fulfilled (vsap), “Not a bone of him shall be shattered (crushed)<sup>133</sup> (vifp)

19:37. And again another Scripture says (vipa), “They shall look upon (vifd) him whom they pierced (viaa)<sup>134</sup>.”

#### The Jews made certain that Jesus was dead.

- *The Jews tried to keep the ceremonial law* (19:31). The Friday on which Jesus died was the day of Preparation for the Sabbath the following day. This Sabbath was very special because it belonged to the Passover Week. The Jews wanted to keep the ceremonial laws with respect to the Sabbath. So they took hurried measures to remove the dead bodies from the cross, because bodies hanging on trees would defile the land<sup>135</sup>.
- *The legs of the robbers were broken* (19:32-33). By breaking the legs of the robbers they could no longer push themselves up in order to breathe and so they died quickly. This was done to the two robbers. But Jesus had already died and so they did not break his legs. John saw this as a fulfilment of the Scripture: Not one of the bones of the Passover lamb must be shattered (crushed) (19:36a)<sup>136</sup>. Jesus was the Passover Lamb (1:19)<sup>137</sup>.
- *Jesus was pierced by a spear* (19:34). In order to make very sure that Jesus had died, a soldier pierced his heart with a spear. Immediately blood and water came out. This proves that death came by a heart seizure. Jesus gave his life when his heart broke in pain and sorrow due to the sin of the world. David said prophetically, “Scorn has broken my

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<sup>122</sup> Romans 8:21

<sup>123</sup> Colossians 1:20

<sup>124</sup> 2 Peter 3:13

<sup>125</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:20,23a

<sup>126</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:23b,50-57

<sup>127</sup> Philippians 3:21

<sup>128</sup> G: katagnumi

<sup>129</sup> G: airó

<sup>130</sup> G: hós

<sup>131</sup> G: nussó

<sup>132</sup> G: oida

<sup>133</sup> G: suntribó

<sup>134</sup> G: ekkenteó

<sup>135</sup> Deuteronomy 21:23

<sup>136</sup> Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12

<sup>137</sup> 1 Corinthians 5:7

heart”<sup>138</sup>. At heart arrest blood coagulates into dark red clot (blood) and transparent serum (water) that came out when his heart was pierced.

John saw this. He is a witness of the death of Jesus. He testifies so that his readers may begin to believe that Jesus really died! He records this so that his readers would not be misled by the false teachings of Docetism. John sees this as the fulfilment of the Scripture: “They will look on the one they have pierced” (19:37)<sup>139</sup>.

#### **Where the false teaching originated, namely, that Jesus had not been crucified.**

*The false teaching of docetism.* Among the Gnostics (end of first century A.D.) were teachers who taught that the Son of God (the Logos, the Word of God) at his appearance on earth had only taken on a body ‘in appearance’ (Greek: dokeó > docetism), but not in reality. This heresy taught that Christ’s body was only apparently human; it was a spiritual body, a body only in appearance. They taught that Jesus Christ did not really come “in the flesh” (1:14); that he did not have a real human nature (1 John 4:2-3; 2 John 7-11); that the two great facts in salvation history, namely, the death and resurrection of his body, were not real historical facts.

Or they taught that the real physical death and physical resurrection applied to another person, called ‘Jesus’, but not to ‘the Son of God’, thus completely separating the human nature of Jesus Christ from his divine nature. This false teaching is today repeated and spread by one of the largest religions in the world.

*The biblical truth.* The apostle John testifies against this false teaching that Jesus Christ is really and in truth both God and Man (1:1,14); that he united in one Person both the divine and the human nature; that the unfathomable, invisible, unapproachable God, who is Spirit (4:24), took on the human nature without letting go of his divine nature and entered the divine creation and human history as the knowable, visible and approachable Jesus Christ!

John very clearly declares: “He who knows (by relationship, reflection and intuition)<sup>140</sup> (vila) Christ, knows<sup>141</sup> (vila) God” (8:19). “He who has seen <sup>142</sup>(vpra) Christ, has seen (vira) God” (14:9-10). And “He who receives (accepts)<sup>143</sup> (vppa) Christ, receives (accepts)(vipa) God” (13:20)<sup>144</sup>.

The Son of God really died according to his human nature. Very many people witnessed his public crucifixion! The Roman centurion, the apostle John, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus all testified that Jesus Christ really and truly died.

#### **s. The Bible records the fulfilment of very many prophecies.**

*Someone counted 332 prophecies in the Old Testament that were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.* The mathematical probability that all these prophecies would be fulfilled in one historical person would be very, very small: one chance in 84x10 to the power of 97, that is, one chance out of 840 trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion! One trillion is 1 000 000 000 000 000 000 (one million million, million).

Only the God of the Bible made prophecies concerning Jesus Christ hundreds<sup>145</sup> and even thousands<sup>146</sup> of years before he was born. And only the God of the Bible fulfilled all these prophecies in Jesus Christ! No other religious book equals this! Prophecies and their fulfilment are an important proof that the Bible is God’s inspired Word<sup>147</sup> and the only Word of God<sup>148</sup>!

#### **(IV) 19:38-42. Jesus buried.**

**(Matthew 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42)**

**19:38.** Now after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a secret (concealed)<sup>149</sup> (vprp) disciple of Jesus due to fear of the Jews, requested (viaa) Pilate that he might take away (vsaa) the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave permission<sup>150</sup> (viaa). So he came (viaa) and took away (viaa) the body.

**19:39.** And there also came (viaa) Nicodemus, who came (vpaa) to him at night at an earlier occasion, bringing (vppa) a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about one hundred litra (about 34 kilograms).

**19:40.** Then they took (viaa) the body of Jesus, and wrapped (bound) (viaa) it with linen bandages<sup>151</sup> together with the aromatic spices, as is (vipa) the custom with Jews in burying (vnpa).

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<sup>138</sup> Psalm 69:20

<sup>139</sup> Zechariah 12:10

<sup>140</sup> G: oida

<sup>141</sup> G: oida

<sup>142</sup> G: horaó, opsomai, eidon, heórika

<sup>143</sup> G: lambanó

<sup>144</sup> Matthew 10:40

<sup>145</sup> Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 53:1-12

<sup>146</sup> Genesis 3:15; 22:17-18; 49:10; cf. Deuteronomy 18:15-19

<sup>147</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16

<sup>148</sup> Hebrews 1:1-2

<sup>149</sup> G: kruptó

<sup>150</sup> G: epitrepó

<sup>151</sup> G: othonion

**19:41.** Now at the place where he (Jesus) was crucified (viap) there was (viaa) a garden<sup>152</sup> and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had (viia) ever been laid (+vprp).

**19:42.** There then, because of the (day of) Preparation (the Friday before the sabbath) of the Jews, since the tomb was (viia) nearby, they laid (viaa) Jesus.

a. Those who buried Jesus (19:38-39a).

**Joseph of Arimathea.** He was a rich man who had become a disciple of Jesus Christ<sup>153</sup>. He was a prominent member of the Jewish Council (the Sanhedrin) and was waiting for the Kingdom of God<sup>154</sup>. He was a good and upright man who had not consented to the decision and action of the Jewish Council when they condemned Jesus to death<sup>155</sup>. Previously because of fear for the Jews he had followed Jesus secretly, but now he boldly stepped out and asked the Roman Governor, Pilate, for the body of Jesus Christ<sup>156</sup>.

After the Roman centurion had affirmed that Jesus Christ was really dead, he gave Joseph permission to take the body away<sup>157</sup>. Joseph possessed a new tomb in a garden close to Golgotha (19:21) that he had cut out of the rock for himself<sup>158</sup>.

**Nicodemus.** He was a Pharisee, a teacher and leader of the Jews (3:1,10) and apparently also a member of the Jewish Council (7:45-52). In the beginning he also feared the Jews, but later was very courageous when he questioned the authority of the Sanhedrin to judge anybody without giving him a fair trial (7:50-52).

Joseph and Nicodemus had previously arranged what they would do. Joseph asked permission to remove the body from the cross for burial and Nicodemus brought the linen bandages and about 34 kilograms of spices to balsam the body of Jesus.

**The women.** The woman, who had followed Jesus and his disciples from Galilee, followed Joseph to the tomb to see where and how Jesus was buried.

b. Jesus embalmed (19:39b-40).

The Jews did not embalm their dead as the Egyptians, who first removed the brains and intestines. They embalmed their dead by wrapping (binding) linen bandages around the limbs and body and spraying the aromatic spices between every swath. Joseph and Nicodemus embalmed Jesus according to Jewish custom.

c. Jesus buried (19:41-42).

Because we do not know exactly where Golgotha was, we also do not know exactly where the garden and the tomb were. Traditionally two places are mentioned: the first is 'the church of the holy sepulchre' inside the present walls of Old Jerusalem; the other is 'Gordon's Golgotha and the garden tomb' about half a kilometre NE of this outside the walls of Old Jerusalem. The Bible does not regard such places as 'holy' and they should not be venerated as places that pilgrims should visit.

The tomb was new in the sense that it had never been used yet. The rich Joseph of Arimathea had hewn it out of rock for himself. It was not an existing cave. The door was low, because Peter and Mary had to stoop in order to look inside (20:5,11). Inside was an elevation on which people could sit and in between a deeper hollowed-out part in which the body was laid (20:12). Thus the prophecy went into fulfilment, "He was assigned a grave with the wicked, but he was with the rich in his death"<sup>159</sup>. Joseph with the help of others rolled the very large stone<sup>160</sup> in front of the entrance<sup>161</sup>.

d. The tomb sealed and guarded (Matthew 27:62-66).

The next day (Saturday), the one after Preparation Day (the Friday before the Sabbath), the chief priests (mostly Sadducees) and the Pharisees, who together represented the Jewish Council, went to Pilate. They said that they remembered that the deceiver, Jesus, had said, "After three days I will rise again". It is remarkable that even after several predictions about his resurrection<sup>162</sup> the disciples of Jesus could not grasp or believe that he would rise from the dead (2:22), while the enemies of Jesus remembered his predictions.

They requested Pilate to seal and to guard the tomb until the third day in order to prevent his disciples from stealing the body and then tell the people that he was resurrected. In their eyes that deception would be worse than the first. They meant that the claim that he was resurrected to prove his greatness would be worse than the claim that he was the Messiah.

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<sup>152</sup> G: képos

<sup>153</sup> Matthew 27:57

<sup>154</sup> Mark 15:43

<sup>155</sup> Luke 23:50-51

<sup>156</sup> Mark 15:43

<sup>157</sup> Mark 15:44

<sup>158</sup> Matthew 27:60

<sup>159</sup> Isaiah 53:9

<sup>160</sup> Mark 16:4

<sup>161</sup> Matthew 27:60

<sup>162</sup> Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34

The Pharisees, who believed in the resurrection of the dead<sup>163</sup>, did not reckon with the fact that Jesus' own disciples did not really expect the resurrection. The Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead<sup>164</sup>, did not reckon with the fact that they could not prevent Jesus Christ from being resurrected when that was God's plan<sup>165</sup>. Jesus had said that everything that was written about him in the Old Testament would certainly go into fulfilment<sup>166</sup>!

Pilate gave them permission to seal the tomb and post a detachment of Roman soldiers as guard. The word 'to seal' means 'to lock', like feet in blocks<sup>167</sup>. They went to the tomb and locked the stone in front of the entrance by putting a seal on it. The seal consisted of a rope pasted with clay to the stone and the tomb and the seal of the Roman governor stamped into the clay. The detachment soldiers guarded the tomb, so that no one could come near it.

### APPLICATIONS

- 19:1-3. 1 Peter 2:21 says, "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps." Jesus was arrested and tried although he was completely innocent! He was flogged with a whip that tore up his back. He was crowned with a crown of thorns. He was beaten in the face. Finally, he was crucified. You may experience similar treatment from the hands of your persecutors.
- 19:9. Isaiah 53:7 says that he was maltreated and humiliated and yet he did not open his mouth. There are situations in which it is wise not to open your mouth.
- 19:11. No matter persecutions and sufferings, you may confidently believe that your enemies would have no power over you unless God the Father allowed them to do these things to you.
- 19:12. Never give in when people make veiled threats. Do not yield to immoral pressure.
- 19:15. Never give evil people a choice. They may make the worst choice.
- 19:25-27. Make preparations for your elderly parents. Let someone take care of them.
- 19:30. Be determined to be a finisher, like Jesus Christ<sup>168</sup>.
- 19:30. When you die, give up your spirit into the hands of God the Father<sup>169</sup>.
- 19:36-37. Make a study of all the prophecies about Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.
- 19:38-39. When you are still a secret disciple of Jesus Christ, ask him to make you bold and courageous like Joseph or Nicodemus.

### QUESTIONS

- 19: 1-7. How was Jesus martyred?
- 19:8-9. In which situations should Christians not give an answer to questions?
- 19:10-11. Why is the sin of Caiaphas greater than that of Pilate?
- 19:12. Why did Pilate try to release Jesus?
- 19:19-22. What is the significance of calling Jesus 'King' in the notice above the cross?
- 19:30. What does Jesus mean when he said, "It is finished!" What is finished?
- 19:31-37. What shows that Jesus really died?

Why does the Bible record so many fulfilments of prophecies?

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<sup>163</sup> Acts 24:15; 26:5,8,22-23

<sup>164</sup> Matthew 22:23

<sup>165</sup> Isaiah 14:24,27

<sup>166</sup> Luke 24:25-27,44-45

<sup>167</sup> cf. Acts 16:24

<sup>168</sup> John 4:34; 17:4; Colossians 4:17

<sup>169</sup> Luke 23:4