

The Gospel of John Pt. 29

John 19:17-42

Big Idea

Jesus offers Himself as the full atonement for sin.

Exposition – John 19:17-42

This passage gives the account of the trip from the Praetorium down the Via Dolorosa to Golgotha, the crucifixion, Jesus' final words, His death, and His burial.



- The Crucifixion (V17-30) – as with the previous passages related to Jesus' trial, John is brief in his account of the Crucifixion when compared to the Synoptic Gospels.
 - (V17) – The Greek word for “Cross” is *stauros* and it literally means “pole” or “stake”. The crossbeam is often referred to as the *patibulum* (Latin for crossbeam). According to Roman custom, the accused was forced to carry the *patibulum* to the place of crucifixion themselves. This beam would weigh approximately 100 lbs. Eventually, a man known as Simon from the town, Cyrene, who was in Jerusalem to observe the Passover, was made to carry the *patibulum* in Jesus' place. Presumably, this was needful because of the weakness resulting from the brutal beating Jesus has already received. Interestingly, all the other gospels mention Simon by name. The place known as Golgotha is the same as Mt. Calvary. Golgotha is a transliteration of the Greek word that is translated from an Aramaic word that means “skull”.
 - (V18) – John described Barabbas as a “robber” (18:40). The same Greek word is used here to describe the two other men being crucified. The term literally means “guerilla fighter”. This is key to understanding the tension between the Jews and Rome because the Jews often revolted against the much better armed, better trained Romans by using guerilla warfare. Centuries before, the Maccabean revolt was a guerilla resistance that resulted in the heavy-handedness of the Romans in Israel.
 - (V19-22) – It was customary for a placard to be placed around the neck of the accused and then later attached to the cross. Pilate makes a swipe at the Jews by writing “The King of the Jews” on Jesus' placard. It seems that Pilate was getting a bit of revenge for being pressured into the execution. The Jews demand the placard be edited, but Pilate refuses.
 - (V23-25) – Although it is not stated, it seems there were four soldiers present by the way the clothing was divided. It was customary for the executioners to be rewarded for their grisly work by receiving the clothing of those being executed. The term “outer garments” likely refers to his belt, sandals, head covering, and a mantle. The tunic was worn closest to the skin. John specifically mentions that the tunic was seamless, indicating that it was a more valuable article of clothing. Therefore, the recipient of the tunic was determined by casting lots. When David prophesied about this in Psalm 22:18 he was describing a torturous event that culminated in the casting of lots for his clothes, he was describing a process that had never seen before. This shows the divine inspiration in David's psalm. Incredible!
 - (V26-27) – Jesus appoints John to care for His mother after His death. It is notable that Jesus was the eldest son and the breadwinner before He began His ministry. He likely passed over His brothers to be caretaker to Mary due to their lack of faith and lack of appreciation of Jesus' ministry. Not to mention the fact that they are not present at the moment.

- (V28-30) – The wine that Jesus takes here is not the same as what was offered to Him previously. Wine mixed with myrrh had an analgesic effect, Jesus refused to take this so that He might pay the full price for man’s sin. Sour wine was a cheap wine often drunk by Roman soldiers that was intended to extend life and the torture of crucifixion. Ultimately, Jesus dies immediately after drinking the wine which was meant to prolong life. Perhaps this is intended to show that Jesus lays down His life on His terms.

Tetelestai – “It is finished”. Ancient tax documents have been found with this word used to mean “paid in full”.

“He bowed His head and gave up His spirit” – Jesus gave up His spirit. No one took His life, He gave it up willingly.

- The Burial (V31-42)

- (V31) – The Romans typically left the bodies of those crucified on the cross to be devoured by predators. However, the Law of Moses demanded that impaled bodies be removed before nightfall (Deut. 21:22-23). This law indicates that it was a desecration to the land to leave a body out that had been impaled, which Jesus’ body was impaled (V34).
- (V32-34) – The Romans would often break the legs of those crucified to hasten their death by additional blood loss, shock, and the inability to lift themselves with their legs to breath. However, as already seen, Jesus has already died. This made true the prophesy that no bone shall be broken in the Messiah to come (Psalm 34:20). It also shows that the Passover lamb of Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12 are Old Testament foreshadows of Jesus.
- (V35) – John sneaks in his reason for writing – He was an eyewitness to the event and he tells the story so that others might also believe on Jesus.
- (V36-37) – Fulfillment of two Old Testament prophecies about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Psalm 34:20; Zechariah 12:10). Notice that the Jews in Zechariah 12:10 are mournful at the death of Jesus. This prophecy is dual-pronged, it refers to Jews reaction at the crucifixion and also at His return in Revelation 1:7.
- (V38-42) – From the burial we are only introduced to two participants. Joseph of Arimathea is mentioned in all four gospels, but only in relation to the burial, and the synoptics tell us that he was rich (Matt. 27:57); a member of the Sanhedrin (probably a Pharisee) (Mark 15:43); and looking for the kingdom of God (Luke 23:51). Nicodemus, also a Pharisee who was looking for the kingdom of God, who came to Jesus by night in John 3:1ff to which Jesus uttered the words, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

These two men have striking similarities, both are Pharisees, seeking the kingdom of God, came to Jesus by night, and now convene to tenderly lay the body of the crucified Lord Jesus in a tomb.

The Jews did not actually embalm. The purpose of the spices was merely to diminish the smell of decaying flesh.

John mentions that the tomb was near to the place of the crucifixion. He may have included this because the time of the Passover, when all work must cease, was drawing near. The proximity of the tomb would have been important. Some speculate that the tomb actually belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. Regardless of the owner, Jesus would not need it long...