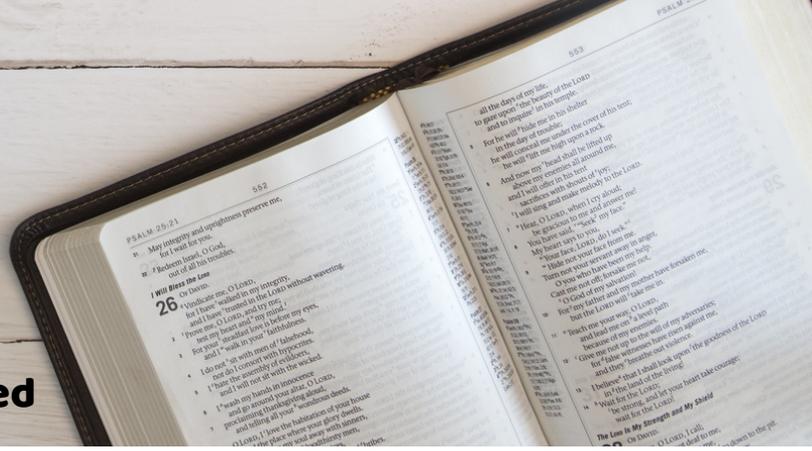


THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

John 19: Jesus is Crucified



Describe a time when something "ended" for you (relationship, death, divorce, career)? How did you feel?

Into the Word

- Why do the Jewish leaders clamor for Jesus to be crucified? What does Pilate's fearful response to that charge show about him? How might this conversation with Jesus in 18:33-37 have influenced him?
- According to the sign on Jesus' cross, for what "official" reason was he crucified? What meaning does this title have for Pilate (18:33-37)? For the soldiers (19:2-3)? For chief priests (19:14-15)?
- Why did secret believer, Joseph and Nicodemus, risk public exposure to bury Jesus?
- Some say Jesus did not really die, but revived in the tomb. How do John 19:1,18, 32-34 and 40 disprove this idea?

Into the Heart

- When have you made a decision based upon fear or ambition (or both), rather than do what is right? How do you feel about that now?
- How would you explain the need for the crucifixion to someone else? How is Jesus' death real to you?

What is your greatest takeaway from this passage?

What specific life changes do you need to make?

How will you hold yourself accountable?

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED (John 19)

Everybody likes a good thriller of a story. And political thrillers are particularly popular. In this highly political tale we'll get a sneak peak behind the curtains at first century politics.

THE JEWISH LEADERS

In the first century, the Jews were subjects of Rome. And the Roman way was to allow its subjects to self-govern themselves as long as they caused no trouble. Unfortunately, the Jews were uncooperative, stubborn subjects. It's why Rome had a clear presence in Palestine, especially at the Passover. The Jews executed by stoning, but a crucifixion was better optics. Jews viewed crucifixion with disgust. Their initial dislike created hate. Their hatred created hysteria. Their hysteria created paranoia and insanity. It was so bad they refused to enter Pilate's house for fear it would make them unclean for the Passover. They created lies (that Jesus was a king) and manipulated laws (such as holding a trial by night) to crucify Jesus. In their minds, the end result certainly justified the means.

PILATE

In 4 B.C. when Herod the Great died, his will divided Palestine among his three sons: Antipas (Galilee, Peraea), Philip (Batanea, Auranitis, Tracheonitis) and Archelaus (Idumaea, Judaea and Samaria). Archelaus was only 18 years old and proved a poor ruler. It got so bad the Jews asked Rome to replace him. Rome saw Palestine as a troubled land in need of Roman authority. Rome employed a procurator in AD 6 to administrate and control the region. His job was pretty simple. Visit annually. Hear cases and complaints. Oversee taxation. Between AD 24 and 35, Pilate held this procurator's position, but Pilate proved a failure. He was unsympathetic to Jewish concerns. In one incident, Jerusalem's water supply was inadequate and Pilate set out to build a new aqueduct. But he needed money to do it, so he stole it from the Temple Treasury (several millions of dollars). When the people caught wind of the deed, they rioted. So Pilate sent in his troops, in plain clothes and concealed weapons, to club and kill as many Jews as possible. Consequently, the Jewish leaders and Pilate were not exactly on good speaking terms. However, at this point, the Jews needed his authority.

THE SOLDIERS

These henchmen for Rome were simply doing their job. But they picked up on Jesus as a "king of the Jews." At first they mocked this idea (with a crown of thorns and purple robe), but as the day wore on and they discovered WHO this JESUS really was. Maybe He IS the King of the Jews. Consequently, they tended to his thirst and respected his mother's presence. One even said, "Surely this was a righteous man." One man got the message about Jesus. But, in general, these Roman soldiers MISSED it. They were too busy doing their job to think about what their job was actually doing. They stole every last stitch of clothes Jesus owned, then gambled for his underwear. Jesus was crucified completely naked, exposed to be shamed.

THE WOMEN AT THE CROSS

Of all the thousands that once followed Jesus, of his entourage of believers that traveled with Jesus, of his chosen disciples and closest friends, in the end only FIVE stayed through to the end: four women and John the author of this work. But who are these women? John 19:25 (and Mark 15:40) lists the women gathered at the cross: Mary, *the mother of Jesus*; Mary *the wife of Cleophas and mother of James the Younger and Joseph*. Mary *Magdalene* and Salome. Mark names Salome but John tells us WHO she is (Mary, the mother of Jesus', sister). Matthew 27:56 tells us Salome was Zebedee's wife and mother to James and John. It's another amazing story. And its about to get even more *miraculous*.