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John 19



Gospel of John - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg discusses the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion in John 19, highlighting Pontius Pilate's role in the decision. Pilate ultimately declared himself without fault in Jesus' case before mockingly referring to him as the "King of the Jews". The crucifixion was a brutal death, and Jesus' cries and actions on the cross were noted by onlookers as a fulfillment of Psalms. After his death, Jesus' body was wrapped in linen and spices and placed in a carved rock tomb, which was later found empty.

Transcript

Let's turn to John 19. We're in the midst of the story of Jesus on trial before Pilate. Or perhaps to Pilate, it felt more that he was on trial before Jesus, because Pilate really was not comfortable in the situation.

He knew that Jesus was an innocent man, and that he could not rightfully condemn him. He wasn't even sure that Jesus was the kind of man that the Romans would object to, because he was obviously somebody that the Jews objected to, and the Romans often objected to the Jews. So, Pilate was somewhat sympathetic toward Jesus for a variety of reasons, and not least is that he had interviewed him and found no occasion of death in him.

He had not found that he had committed any crimes that he could be condemned for. And so, at the end of chapter 18, Pilate came out after interviewing Jesus and spoke to the people out in the courtyard and said, I find no fault in him at all. And at that point, by the way, and I didn't mention this last time, but Luke inserts a significant detail in Luke 23, verses 5 through 12.

It tells us that when Pilate came out and said that he found no fault in Jesus, they protested more and they said he's been causing trouble beginning in Galilee and even down to here in Judea. And when Pilate heard that Jesus had begun in Galilee, he said, oh, is he a Galilean? Then that's not my problem. He's Herod's problem.

And because of the festival, Herod happened to be in town. And so Pilate sent Jesus to Herod and said, okay, I'm washing my hands of this. He didn't wash his hands literally at

this point yet, but he wanted to pass off the responsibility to another jurisdiction.

And so he sent Jesus at this point, although not recorded in John, over to Herod's palace in Jerusalem. And Herod was glad to see Jesus because he had heard about Jesus and wanted to see some miracles, but Jesus didn't humor him in any way, didn't do any miracles and didn't even speak to him, wouldn't even answer him. And Herod became disgusted about this.

And so he sent him back to Pilate. And so we now have Pilate stuck with him again after Herod had pretty much disavowed any interest in the case. And that's when Pilate then went to his next effort to deliver Jesus and to be rid of the problem of Jesus, really.

And that was he offered to release a prisoner, which was customary at Passover for the governor to do. And he suggested maybe he should release Jesus. But the Jews shouted out they wanted Barabbas released instead, who was an actual criminal.

And Pilate accommodated them there. But then Pilate wasn't finished trying to resist the will of the Jews in this matter. It says in chapter 19, so then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him.

Now, Pilate didn't scourge him himself. Scourging is whipping, flogging. And this is that procedure that was so graphically drawn out in the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, that was the most, probably the most difficult part of the movie to watch, was the 39 lashes given to Jesus by the Roman floggers.

Now, Pilate did this actually with a mind, hopefully, to spare Jesus' crucifixion. He thought, it would appear, that if Jesus was sufficiently abused and punished in other ways short of crucifixion, that it might satisfy the Jews and that they might be satisfied not to see him crucified. Now, Pilate knew he was innocent and yet had him flogged.

This obviously is an abuse of justice on his part and Pilate was not the most just man that ever ruled in a court case. But he had Jesus flogged with the mind that this might be enough. And the soldiers that he turned him over to twisted a crown of thorns and put them on his head and they put on him a purple robe or a scarlet robe, some of the Gospels say.

Maybe there were two robes. Then they said, Hail King of the Jews and they struck him with their hands. They were mocking him because he was called the King of the Jews.

So they struck him, they flogged him, they put crown of thorns on his head. Then when they brought him back to Pilate, Pilate then went out again and said to the people, Behold, I'm bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no fault in him. Now, that's a very strange way to treat a prisoner that you find no fault with is that you flog him and abuse him like this.

But Jesus came in shredded by the whip and it says Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe and Pilate said to them, Behold the man. Most would agree that this was an attempt on Pilate's part to elicit a bit of sympathy from the Jews for Jesus. However, he miscalculated the degree of hatred that the Jews felt for Jesus.

And it's therefore when the chief priests and officers saw him, they said, they cried out saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate said to them, You take him and crucify him. I find no fault in him.

Now, this might sound like Pilate has now given them permission, but he doesn't mean it that way. He's saying, I'm not going to crucify him. I don't find any cause of death in him.

If you want to crucify him, you be my guest. Of course, you'll have to suffer reprisals from Rome because the Jews don't have the right to crucify people. He's not giving them a formal permission.

He's saying if he's going to be crucified, it's going to have to be done by you, not by me. I'm not the one who's going to do it. I have not found any occasion for condemning him of any crime.

Then the Jews answered him saying, We have a law and according to our law, he ought to die because he made himself the son of God. Now here they kind of, in spite of themselves, let out their real motivation. They knew that they couldn't bring this accusation initially because the Romans couldn't care less if Jesus was a blasphemer against the Jewish God.

The Romans would not find that offensive. The Jews, in fact, in their Sanhedrin the night before, had used that very thing as their cause for saying he ought to die because they were sensitive to what they consider to be blasphemy. Therefore, based on Jesus saying he was the son of God to them, they said, Okay, he's a blasphemer.

We have no need of any more witnesses. He should die. They had withheld that particular information from Pilate until now.

They were getting frustrated. Pilate was not cooperating and this was dragging on much longer than they thought. They just exasperatedly said, Listen, our law condemns man for saying the kind of thing he said.

So just work with us here. He said he was the son of God. Now when Pilate heard that, it says he was more afraid.

Now that's interesting. He wasn't afraid of the Jews. Who was he afraid of? He was apparently afraid of Jesus.

He didn't know that Jesus had claimed to be the son of God. And now that he hears that,

he apparently has been so positively impressed with Jesus by Jesus' demeanor and probably by the dream that Pilate's wife had sent him news of about Jesus being innocent and he should have nothing to do with him. He apparently thought, If this man claims to be the son of God, maybe he is.

Now the Romans, of course, wouldn't have a Trinitarian or a Christian idea of what it means to be the son of God, nor would the Jews for that matter. But to the Romans, the gods who lived up on Mount Olympus or wherever they lived, that was the Greek gods who lived on Mount Olympus, the gods sometimes would come down and cohabit with people in Greek and Roman mythology. The gods did have relations with human women and have children.

And when Pilate heard that Jesus had claimed to be the son of God, now many people would just write him off as a lunatic when he said such things. But Pilate was more open to that suggestion. It didn't seem ridiculous to him from what he had observed.

And it frightened him to think that the man that he had to judge was maybe a son of God or the son of God. And so he went in again to the praetorium and said to Jesus, Where are you from? He didn't mean what town. He meant, Are you from earth or from somewhere else? But Jesus gave him no answer.

He answered, No. Then Pilate said to him, Are you not speaking to me? Do you not know that I have power to crucify you and power to release you? Jesus answered, You could have no power at all against me unless it had been given to you from above. Therefore, the one who delivered me to you has the greater sin.

What he means by that apparently is that Pilate was God's appointed ruler. As Paul said, there is no authority but of God. Paul said in Romans chapter 13.

And God had placed Pilate in a position to administrate the country justly. And the people who were turning Jesus over to him for an unjust verdict were more guilty than they would otherwise be because they were not only trying to corrupt justice, but they were trying to corrupt God-ordained justice. That you have authority because God has given you authority.

And those who are trying to corrupt you are trying to corrupt the appointment of God. They're sinning against God trying to get an unjust verdict here. Therefore, their sin is the greater than it would otherwise be if that were not the case.

From then on, Pilate sought to release him. Now, we don't know all the forms that took, but he apparently was arguing with the Jews and doing what he could to persuade them to change their mind. But the Jews cried out saying, If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend.

Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar. Now, when Pilate therefore heard

that saying, when he heard them say things, he responded various ways. When he heard them say, he said he's the son of God.

When he heard that, he was more afraid. When they said, You're not Caesar's friend, if you don't condemn this man who claimed to be a king, then Pilate realized that they were playing dirty. They're essentially hinting that, Well, you know, if you let him go, I guess Caesar can hear that you let a man walk who is a rival to Caesar in Caesar's own empire.

That sounds like treason. You have an obligation to stop people from exerting their authority against Caesar. And if you let him go, well, you can't be any friend of Caesar.

And of course, by implication, Caesar will have to hear about this. And so they're blackmailing him. Finally, they're saying, If you don't do what we say, your head is going to roll.

Caesar will hear about it, and he'll not be pleased about your verdict. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the pavement, but in Hebrew it's called Gevatha. Now, it was the preparation day of the Passover.

Preparation day is a formal term for Friday, generally speaking. The Jews had different names than we have for the days of the week, of course, and Friday was called preparation. That was the official name of Friday, because every Friday they prepared for the Sabbath, which began at sundown Friday.

So the day of the week that was the sixth day of the week, which was Friday, was called preparation day. And so it says, this was the preparation day of the Passover. Now, this can mean two things.

It can mean it was Friday of Passover week, or it could mean simply it was the day that people would prepare for the Passover meal, because the Passover can be the day of Passover, or it can be the whole week, which includes the Feast of Unleavened Bread, making it a total of eight days long. Passover plus seven days of Unleavened Bread. So, it's based on this statement that traditionally Jesus is said to have been crucified on Friday, because it's basically saying, I mean, one way to read this is this is Friday of Passover week.

But others have suggested that this was not Friday. It was either Thursday or Wednesday, based on the assumption that there are additional holy days in the course of a festival week, especially the first and the last day of the festival week was treated as if it was a Sabbath day, even if it was not on Saturday. And therefore, the first day of Passover week would be like a Sabbath, and the day before it would be like a preparation day, like a Friday, though it would be some other day of the week, perhaps.

So, some have argued that this was not really Friday, but some other day of the week. And the main reason for arguing it is that Jesus had said that he would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and if he rose on Saturday night or Sunday morning before dawn, then for him to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth would have to mean that he was crucified either on Thursday or Wednesday, depending on how you count it. And so, there are alternate theories.

Those who hold that he was crucified on Friday say that he was parts of three days in the tomb, and that three days and three nights is merely a Jewish idiom. So, anyway, it was the preparation day of the Passover and about the sixth hour. Here we have one of the problems in harmonizing the Gospels, because here we have Jesus about ready to be condemned, it's about the sixth hour, but after this, of course, Jesus was crucified.

And according to Mark chapter 15, verse 25, Jesus was crucified at the third hour. Mark 15, verse 25 says it was the third hour and they crucified him. Now consider, if Jesus was crucified at the third hour, and yet he's on trial before Pilate at the sixth hour, this ostensibly would have the crucifixion taking place three hours before the trial of Jesus.

Or another way of putting it, this trial is taking place three hours after the crucifixion, which obviously is ridiculous. Now, the solution that's generally offered to this, and I think makes sense, is that Mark used the Jewish reckoning of time. The Jewish reckoning of time begins the day at six in the morning and starts numbering the hours from then.

The third hour, therefore, to the Jew is nine in the morning. And most scholars agree that Jesus was crucified at nine o'clock in the morning, which Mark calls the third hour. Mark also says that Jesus expired at the ninth hour, Mark 15, verse 33.

So Mark 15, verse 25 says Jesus was crucified at the third hour, and Mark 15, verse 33 says he died at the ninth hour, so he was six hours alive on the cross. And all scholars I know of understand this to mean he was crucified at nine in the morning and died at three in the afternoon. And by the way, Mark could not be using any other form of counting time because otherwise he has Jesus crucified at three in the morning and died at nine in the morning, and Jesus certainly was not crucified at three in the morning.

Or you have him crucified at three in the afternoon and dying at nine in the evening. Again, that doesn't work because Jesus died before sunset and they were hastily desiring to bury him before the sun went down. It's clear that Mark has to be using Jewish reckoning.

When he says Jesus was crucified at the third hour and died at the ninth hour, that would mean crucified at nine in the morning and died at three in the afternoon. Now, John, it is thought, may be using Roman reckoning of time. This is disputed.

But John's use of Roman time would mean he starts numbering the hours at midnight,

the same as we do. And therefore, when he says that it was the sixth hour, he means it was six in the morning by Roman reckoning. So this removes the difficulty that Jesus' trial before Pilate was taking place around six in the morning.

He was crucified three hours later, and so that would solve our problem. So in verse 14, now it was the preparation day of the Passover, about the sixth hour, and he said to the Jews, Behold your king. But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him.

Pilate said to them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. So he delivered him to them to be crucified. And so they took Jesus and led him away.

Now Mark and Matthew, we won't look at right now, but at this point they say that once Pilate turned him over to them, there was continued mockery and abuse that Jesus suffered from the soldiers, which is recorded in Mark 15 and in Matthew 27. Now verse 17, And he bearing his cross went out to a place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha, but in Greek it's called Calvary. It means the place of a skull.

The hill where Jesus was crucified apparently looks like a skull. There is such a hill just outside Jerusalem today, and has been ever since that time of course, and before, that really does look a lot like a skull. The etchings in the side of it, when the sun hits a certain way, look very much like the eye sockets and nose and such of a skull.

And so it is thought that that's the place where Jesus was crucified, since we're told it was called the place of a skull, and that would be a good place to fit that description. Now it says that he went out bearing his own cross. In the Synoptic Gospels, we do not read of Jesus bearing his own cross, but we read in all of them that a man named Simon of Cyrene was picked by the guards to carry Jesus' cross for him.

Because John says that Jesus went out carrying his cross, and the other gospels tell us that Simon of Cyrene was chosen by the Romans to carry his cross, the assumption is made, although it's never stated in scripture, that Jesus began to carry his cross, but was unable to make it all the way to Golgotha. Due to having been abused and beaten, and lost a lot of blood, and had no sleep the previous night, he was exhausted, and therefore, though he began by bearing his cross, apparently he was not able to complete it, and so another man was chosen to carry the cross the rest of the way. And it says in verse 18, where they crucified him, and two others with him, one on either side, and Jesus at the center.

Now these two others who were with him were told nothing about them or what their crime was. In fact, John tells us little else than what we have here. The other gospels actually tell us that he was mocked by the criminals, as well as bystanders and passers-by, and the chief priests.

While Jesus was on the cross, everybody was mocking him, except of course the women that were there, and John. But even the men who were crucified with him mocked him. Luke, however, tells us what none of the other gospels do, and that is that one of those other criminals got weary of mocking him and became impressed with Jesus to the point where he believed that Jesus may in fact really be the king of the Jews.

And he said, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Both of these thieves mocked him initially, but one of them changed his tune and changed his mind and got saved. Now the question arises, why were these men crucified with him? Why this day? This was a strange day to crucify people since the Jews throughout the city were getting ready for Passover.

Were these guys already slated for crucifixion that day, and Jesus was just added to their number since they were going to have a crucifixion anyway? Or is it the other way around? Is it because Jesus was crucified and Pilate was forced to crucify him against his wishes that he also had these two men crucified at the same time? When Barabbas was arrested, some of his partners in the insurrection were arrested with him. It is possible that these two were Barabbas' companions, and that Pilate decided that he would not let Barabbas' companions also get away, but rather to spite the Jews, having been forced to release Barabbas, he may have chosen to crucify Barabbas' companions at the same time as Jesus. It is only a guess.

I am not sure how normal it would have been to crucify two extras along with Jesus on a day like this. I know the Romans crucified many people in their careers, but this day was a holy day for the Jews, or at least one was soon coming upon them by sundown, and it was an inopportune time to have a crucifixion. Yet, when it was decided to crucify Jesus, apparently Pilate also decided to crucify these guys at the same time.

It may be his way of getting back at the Jews for having gotten Barabbas released. This may have also been a way of punishing Barabbas by killing his two companions. It is only a guess.

Now, Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross, and the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. And many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, do not write the King of the Jews, but he said I am the King of the Jews.

Now, this plaque that was put over a prisoner's head on the cross would be usually representing what the charges were against him, so that passers-by would know why he was being crucified, because of the crime that was written on the plaque over his head. Pilate just wrote, King of the Jews, like he is being crucified because he is the King of the Jews. And they said, well, his actual crime is not that he is the King of the Jews, only that he said he was the King of the Jews.

But Pilate answered, what I have written, I have written. Which either means that he really wanted to honor Jesus in this final declaration of him being King of the Jews, or more likely that he wanted to aggravate the Jews. After all, Jesus did not look much like a king there.

If this is the kind of king that the Jews have, then the Jews must be a pretty sorry folk, because here is their king, crucified and battered and beaten and bloodied, and it may be that he did not want to change it. Because he worded it that way in order to insult the Jews. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts to each soldier a part, and also the tunic.

Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece, so rather than an expensive garment, apparently Jesus had been given that by some admiring woman who had probably made it for him. And so they did not want to tear that up. There were four centurions at the foot of the cross, and they took his robe and tore it into four pieces.

Cloth was of value, and they just tore it up and each took one piece. But they did not want to do that to the tunic, because what good would that do? A fourth of a tunic would not help them, and it was an expensive garment. So instead, it says, they therefore among themselves said, let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be.

And John says, this happened so that the scripture might be fulfilled, they divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing. Which, of course, is a remarkable prophecy in Psalm 22.18, which is a psalm that describes the crucifixion of the Messiah, and one of the things is they divided his garments and cast lots for his garments. Well, they did that.

One of his garments they divided among themselves, the other one they cast lots for. A remarkable fulfillment of that prophecy. Therefore the soldiers did these things.

Now, verse 25. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. The way this is worded and punctuated, it could be saying that Jesus' mother's sister was Mary the wife of Clopas, but that doesn't seem like a reasonable way to punctuate it, since that would mean that Mary the mother's sister was Mary the wife of Clopas.

And therefore, it's likely that there are four women mentioned here. Mary the mother of Jesus, then Mary's sister who is not named for us here, and then another Mary, Mary Magdalene, and another Mary, Mary the wife of Clopas. So all the named women are named Mary.

Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the wife of Clopas. And there's another woman whose name is not given, and that was Jesus' aunt, his mother's sister. Now, in the parallels in Mark and in Matthew, we find, for example, in Mark 15.40, these

women are mentioned again, and it says, There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the less than of Joseph, and Salome.

Now, the mother of Jesus is not mentioned here. Instead of four women, there's only three mentioned, so these are the three other than Jesus' mother. Mary Magdalene is in both lists.

Another Mary is given here, although here she's called the mother of James the less than of Joseph, which must be also the Mary the wife of Clopas. And then the third woman is Salome, and this must be the sister of Jesus' mother, whose name is not given in John, but is given as Salome in Mark. And when you look at Matthew 27, we have again these women mentioned.

In Matthew 27.56, actually 55 and 56, it says, Many women who followed Jesus from Galilee ministered to him, and were looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. So again, we have the same three that are mentioned in Mark, and they are also mentioned in John, but John adds the mother of Jesus to the list. We have Mary Magdalene here, we have Mary the mother of James and Joseph, who is also apparently the wife of Clopas, and we have the third woman, who goes unnamed, and is only mentioned as Mary the mother of Jesus' sister in John, but is called Salome in Mark, and here is said to be the mother of Zebedee's sons.

In other words, she is the mother of James and John, she is also Salome, she is also Jesus' aunt, and therefore James and John are Jesus' first cousins. This explains perhaps why it was in the Synoptic Gospels that we read that when James and John wished to ask Jesus for positions at his right and left hand in his kingdom, they went to their mother, and had her approach Jesus. Why would their mother have any bargaining power with Jesus? Well, because she was his aunt, she was his mother's sister, and therefore she thought perhaps Jesus would honor her differently than just his first cousins.

They were mistaken. But, anyway, these women are there, four women. There are other women too, by the way, the other gospels mention and other women beside, but these ones are named.

Verse 26, When Jesus therefore saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved, which we take to be John, standing by, he said to his mother, Woman, behold your son. Then he said to the disciple, Behold your mother. And from that hour, that disciple took her to his own home.

This means that Joseph must have been dead. Joseph was alive last we knew when Jesus was 12 years old. According to Luke chapter 2, Mary and Joseph had misplaced Jesus when he was 12 years old at the temple and found him again.

But we never hear of Joseph again after that, after Jesus' 12th year. Joseph may have lived on for some time, but by the time Jesus began his ministry, apparently Joseph had died. This is seen in the fact that during the ministry of Jesus, including the very early part, in John chapter 2 at the wedding feast of Cana, Jesus' mother and brothers were there, but Joseph was not.

And later when Jesus went to another town, Capernaum, his mother and brothers went with him, but not Joseph. Apparently Mary was now a widow and Joseph was not in the picture. And if Joseph had been living, there would be no reason for Jesus to commit the care of his mother to one of his disciples.

Now why didn't he commit her care to one of his brothers, like James, who later became an apostle? Well, because it was later that he became an apostle. James was not a believer at this time, and Jesus apparently, as the oldest son of the family, having the right to make such decisions, committed the care of his mother to one who was a trusted disciple, the disciple whom Jesus loved. And he said, Behold your mother, behold your son, to them.

Now these two statements together are taken to be the first of the seven saints of Jesus from the cross. There are four of the seven saints in John. Actually three.

There are two here in verse 26 and 27, but they are usually joined as one. So there are three such saints in John. We find the other two in the next few verses.

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished and that the scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst. Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there, and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on his head, which was just kind of a shrubbish branch, and put it up to his mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, It is finished.

And bowing his head, he gave up his spirit. So here we have three of Jesus' saints from the cross. The comment to his mother and to John, which is taken as one, generally speaking, when people count these up.

Then his statement, I thirst, which resulted in them giving him this sour wine that was nearby. And then, It is finished. Now there are four other statements of Jesus he made from the cross that the other gospels record.

Three of them are found in Luke, and one of them is found in Matthew and Mark. Luke 23-34 records Jesus saying, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. And Luke records this as if it was happening perhaps while they were nailing him on the cross.

It was very early in the crucifixion. Jesus did hang on the cross for three hours alive before he died. I'm sorry, six hours before he died.

And therefore, early on, sometime he said, Father, forgive them, they do not know what they do, as Luke records in Luke 23-34. The order of the others, we don't know, because we don't have them all in one gospel. We don't know at what point in that time Jesus said these.

But at one point, he said to the thief on the cross, Verily I say unto you, this day you shall be with me in paradise. That's another one of the sayings that Luke records. That's in Luke 23-43.

And the other one that Luke records is apparently among his dying words. It's not clear whether the last thing he said was, It is finished, as John records, or this saying, which is recorded in Luke 23-46, which was, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. In all likelihood, that saying was his last.

So he probably said, It is finished, and then, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. We can't be sure about this. The other saying that is not recorded in John or in Luke, but is found in Mark and in Matthew, is the Aramaic words, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, which in English means, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And obviously a quotation from Psalm 22-1.

Psalm 22 was a psalm whose prophecies were being fulfilled right there and then, with him on the cross. And his crying out Psalm 22-1, no doubt, at least in part, was intended to call attention to the onlookers, that that psalm was in the process of fulfillment before their eyes. That's found in Matthew 27-46, and also Mark 15-34.

So these are the seven sayings of Jesus from the cross. Their exact order is not known. Each of them, you know, is pregnant with meaning, really.

I mean, we could go into them, but we won't, because our time is limited. But when he said, it is finished, the last thing recorded in John's gospel, in John 19-30, this is not a cry of defeat. It is, in fact, a, it appears to be a cry of victory, saying it's accomplished.

It's actually one word, in Greek it's tetelestai, and in the Greek language that was a cry of victory, such as a general might declare upon seeing that the enemies are routed by his own troops. He would declare, we've won, essentially. Tetelestai essentially meant we win.

Victory is ours, essentially. And that's apparently the word that Jesus cried out, although he may have cried out an Aramaic equivalent to it. John felt that the word that Jesus used could be properly translated with the Greek tetelestai.

And then it says he gave up his spirit. And so Jesus then is dead on the cross. Therefore, because it was the preparation day, that the body should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for that Sabbath was a high day.

Now it says that Sabbath was a high day, it means it was the first day of the Passover week. And those who argue that it was not a Friday use this as a proof text. They say, you see, this wasn't an ordinary Sabbath, this was a special Sabbath, on a different day of the week, that it was only called a Sabbath because it was the first day of the Passover ceremonies.

On the other hand, the way it's worded, it does sound like it says it's a Sabbath, it was also a high day. That particular Sabbath was a high day. That is, it sounds as if the Passover week began on a Sabbath, that particular year.

Which it would on various days, different years. It sounds like he's pointing out that this was the Sabbath, and this particular Sabbath was a high day. In any case, whether it was Friday or some other day, it says the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Now the breaking of the legs might just seem like a further act of cruelty, but that was actually to hasten their death. A person who died of crucifixion did not die of bleeding to death. Although they bled, they often lived for three days before they expired, and the blood would coagulate, and they wouldn't lose massive amounts of blood in those three days.

They would bleed initially, but then they would scab up and so forth, and then they'd just be hanging there in pain. What they died of was asphyxiation. Hanging by the arms prevented them to breathe properly.

They had their feet nailed to a platform with their legs bent, and they could straighten their legs to relieve the pressure on their chest and their lungs so that they could breathe. In order to take a breath, they had to lift themselves a little bit with their feet, with their legs. If they could not do this, they would suffocate.

The breaking of their legs was simply to mean they'd suffocate immediately, rather than linger for days. It was cruel to break their legs, very painful, but if they didn't have their legs broken, they'd hang there and suffer for three days longer. In a sense, it was mercy killing, but it wasn't done to be merciful.

It was done to get the job done so they could take their bodies down and bury them and have this done before the Sabbath day would arrive. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and the other who were crucified with him, but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true.

He knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, not one bone of his shall be broken. And

again, another scripture says, they shall look on him whom they pierced.

They did not break Jesus' legs because there was no need. He was already dead. The Romans knew how to tell a dead man.

They knew how to kill people. They were well-trained, these soldiers, and they could tell he was dead. But just so that anyone could make sure of it, they pierced his side, and apparently pierced his heart.

There is around the heart a sack of clear fluid, looks like water. And when Jesus' side was pierced, this fluid and blood came out together, meaning his heart had been pierced and he was certainly dead. This is important for John to testify to because there have always been people who thought, well, this resurrection of Jesus you talk about, maybe he wasn't really dead.

Maybe he was mistaken for dead. And therefore, when they put him in the tomb, he just kind of revived and came out, and everyone mistakenly thought he was risen from the dead. Well, John testifies he was there at the cross.

He saw the blood and the water come out of his side. He knows that his heart was punctured, that he was really dead. And the Romans didn't do this just for fun.

They did this to make sure. And they knew how to make sure a man was dead, and Jesus was clearly dead. Now, this served two purposes.

One, it fulfilled a prophecy in Zechariah 12.10, which says, they shall look at him whom they have pierced. And Zechariah is referring to the Messiah there. And so it seems obvious that that was the fulfillment of that, that he was pierced on this occasion.

Also, it fulfilled another prophecy that none of his bones would be broken, and his being dead prematurely because he gave up the ghost, he didn't die naturally. He would have lived days longer, but he gave up the spirit. Remember he said, no one takes my life from me, I lay it down.

And that was the time he decided to lay it down. He decided to hold on to it for six hours, so he could suffer and make the comments he made to various persons. It led to the salvation of this other thief, and Jesus did not give up his ghost immediately.

Instead, he suffered for six hours, having full power to give up his spirit at any time. But he gave it up very much early. It surprised Pilate to learn that he was already dead, because it was much too soon.

And they didn't have to break his bones. Now, the scripture that says, not a bone of his will be broken, is apparently a reference to Psalm 34. It says in verse 20, he guards all his bones, not one of them is broken.

Although it's not clearly a messianic prophecy, that is, if you read it in Psalm 34, it's not necessarily obvious that it's about the Messiah. But, apparently John's use of it indicates that the apostles recognized this as a messianic reference. The previous verse to it, in Psalm 34, 19, says, Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

He guards all his bones, not one of them is broken. And so, the afflictions of the righteous apparently refer to the afflictions of Christ, and not one of his bones is broken, seems to refer to this fact. Also, in Exodus 12, in verse 46, in talking about the Paschal Lamb, the Passover Lamb, in describing the ceremony that the Jews would celebrate this Passover year by year, they were to pick out a lamb without spot or blemish, and it says, and they should not break any of its bones, not any of its bones should be broken.

That's found in Exodus 12, in verse 46, and it may be that that's how John is thinking about it. That he's not so much thinking of Psalm 34, though those words are found in Psalm 34, but maybe he's thinking even more of Jesus offered as the Lamb. It was John, after all, who wrote the book of Revelation, where Jesus is continually referred to as the Lamb.

And, notably, in Revelation 5-6, where he's described as a Lamb as if it had been slain. A sacrificed Lamb, or a Paschal Lamb. And so, John thinks about Jesus as a Lamb.

Only John's Gospel mentions the words of John the Baptist, Behold the Lamb of God, twice. So, John is mindful, in ways that the other Gospels do not give evidence of being mindful, of Jesus as the Paschal Lamb. Both in the Gospel of John and in the book of Revelation, he is called the Lamb.

And the statement, not a bone of his shall be broken, can easily be seen as a reference to the Passover commandments in Exodus 12, that the Passover Lamb shall not have any broken bones. Now, verse 38, After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave him permission.

Now, the other Gospels tell about this too, and they tell us that Joseph of Arimathea, along with Nicodemus, were members of the Sanhedrin. It says here that he was a disciple of Jesus, secretly, but it doesn't tell us he was a ruler of the Jews. He and Nicodemus were both rulers of the Jews, both part of the Sanhedrin.

And they obviously disagreed with the Sanhedrin's decision to crucify Jesus. And although he and Nicodemus were both very shy about coming out publicly with their loyalty to Jesus, at this point, they publicly took a stand to give Jesus an honest burial. It was the least they could do.

The court they belonged to had wrongfully condemned him. They could not stop it. It was

a runaway trial that got out of hand and was done unjustly.

It's even possible that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were not invited to the proceedings in the middle of the night, because they were known to be sympathizers toward Jesus. Hard to say. But in any case, they were part of the court that had Jesus killed, and no doubt they thought it was only a small way to somehow atone for the evils of the court that they were part of, that they would give Jesus an honorable burial.

And so they came to Pilate, and he gave permission to take the body. One of the Gospels says that Pilate was surprised to find that Jesus was already dead. And so he sent messengers to check and found out that Jesus had died indeed that quickly.

So he came and took the body of Jesus, and Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. That's a lot of weight to drag, but this is how they were going to embalm Jesus. They didn't really embalm.

The Egyptians embalmed, and we embalm in modern times. The Jews didn't really embalm. They just kind of spiced the body, wrapped it up, and let it rot.

It did not really embalm it, but they did what they could to honor it with these myrrh and aloes. Remember, Jesus had been anointed for burial prematurely in the house of Simon the leper, when Mary of Bethany came and poured expensive perfume over his head and feet and wiped them with her hair. Then they took the body of Jesus and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is, to bury.

So he's kind of wrapped up a little bit like a mummy with strips of cloth, and they'd put strips in, then they'd mix the spices in and put more strips over it until he was kind of sort of mummified. This was the custom of the Jews, so we have to assume that Lazarus also had been bound in this same way, which is why when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in John 11, Jesus said, unbind him and let him go. He was still wrapped up in these grave clothes.

Jesus, however, didn't need to be unbound when he rose from the dead because he did not simply have his physical body come back to life bound in grave clothes, but rather he had a supernatural glorified body that escaped the grave clothes and left them undisturbed, as we shall see later on. Now, in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden. And in the garden, a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

According to Matthew 27:60, this tomb was Joseph of Arimathea's own tomb. And apparently it says he'd hewn it out of rock, which apparently is a pretty expensive way to make a tomb. He was a rich man.

He had it carved out of solid rock, probably for himself. It was his own tomb. And yet he decided instead to put Jesus' body there instead of being buried there himself, or maybe

he hoped to be buried there with Jesus later on.

They certainly did not expect Jesus to rise from the dead at this point. Therefore, he didn't know that the tomb was only on loan to Jesus for three days, but he thought it was going to be a permanent burial place of Jesus. There is a garden tomb in Jerusalem today which is commonly identified with the tomb of Jesus.

It does seem to be in the right location. It does seem to be just kind of not too far from Golgotha, where Jesus is believed to have been crucified on this particular mountain that can be identified probably as the place of the skull. And it is an empty tomb, which is one reason to make it seem possibly the real thing, because people who carve tombs out of rock usually use them.

It's an expensive thing to carve out of rock, especially with ancient tools. And yet there's this room carved out of rock with a garden around it, and there's a slab for a body to be laid on, but there's no one on it. The tomb is empty, and therefore it has at least the marks of being the correct tomb.

We can't always be sure about the modern holy sites in Israel that people claim to be the site of the Sermon on the Mount or the site of this or that happening, and we can't be sure about the tomb that's now called the garden tomb in Jerusalem. But it does seem as if it may well be the right tomb. It says, So there they laid Jesus because of the Jews' preparation day, for the tomb was nearby.

That is, they didn't want to take too much time because they couldn't. If the sun went down on them, they would be violating the Sabbath. So sundown would be about 6. Jesus died at about 3. In the time between 3 and 6, Joseph of Arimathea had gone to Pilate, asked for the body.

Pilate checked, sent some soldiers to check and see if the body was really dead, got news back, delivered the body to them, they carried it off to a nearby tomb. It must have been getting very close to dark by this time. And they gave him as much as possible a typical customary treatment of his corpse and buried him.

However, the women still would like to have done more for the body. And they couldn't do anything over the Sabbath. So as soon as the Sabbath was over, Sunday morning, they came to the tomb hoping with some spices and so forth to do more toward honoring the body of Jesus.

But that's of course when the tomb was found empty. And that is what we read about in the next chapter. But we will wait until next time to take that chapter.