

JESUS IS TRIED AND CRUCIFIED

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Summary and Historical Background

Jesus' hour had arrived that He should lay down His life for His sheep (Jn 10:11, 18). John does not reveal all of the events surrounding the crucifixion, but it must be remembered that he primarily portrays Jesus as the Son of God (20:30-31). Judas betrayed Jesus in the place often frequented by Jesus and His disciples for prayer (18:2). Jesus willingly surrendered Himself to the officers but He asked that His disciples remain free (18:8-9). He was bound and led before the high priest for interrogation (18:12-14, 19-24). This ecclesiastical trial was similar to the civil trial in that both resulted in violence rather than proper legal proceedings. It was during this interrogation that Peter denied his Lord three times as Jesus had prophesied (18:15-18, 25-27).

The Jewish religious rulers, pious in their way (18:29), delivered Jesus to Pilate because they were not allowed to impose the death penalty (18:30-31). When Jesus was questioned by Pilate concerning His kingship, He declared that His Kingdom was not "of," that is, "out of" or "according to" this world (18:34-36). Pilate could find no fault in Jesus but he decided to appease Jesus' angry accusers by giving them a choice as to whom he should release at the Passover. He gave them the choice to release Jesus, Who had committed no crime, or Barabbas, who was condemned for robbery and murder (18:38-40; Lk 23:19). Pilate desired both justice and popularity. He most likely thought that the Jewish leaders would free Jesus rather than Barabbas. In this way he would keep his popularity and justice would be done, but the mob demanded the release of Barabbas.

Popularity then became Pilate's dominant motive and justice was trammled. Jesus was brutally scourged, humiliated with a crown of thorns, and mocked with a purple robe (19:1-3). Again Pilate had to admit he could find no fault in Jesus, but the mob cried out for Jesus' crucifixion (19:4-6). In the ensuing conversation, Pilate was troubled by the injustice being done, yet the desire to be popular and to be approved by Caesar was most obvious (19:7-15). Although Pilate failed to be just, Jesus condemned Caiaphas to a greater degree: Caiaphas had the Scriptures, but he had rejected the Messiah of the Scriptures (19:8-11).

Jesus was crucified with two sinners, one on each side, about 9:00 a.m. The crucifixion events were a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (19:23-24, 31-37). He was beaten more than that of any man with blood and bruises covering His body, making it difficult to recognize Him (Isa 50:6; 52:14). Although forsaken by many of His disciples, two secret disciples, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, came forward and took care of His burial (19:38-42). The greatest injustice ever done against man was done against One Who had never sinned. When He would rise from the dead, He would provide the greatest and only salvation for those who had caused His death (Acts 4:12).

I. Jesus Betrayed by Judas — 18:1-14

A. The Place — 18:1-2

18:1 — "Cedron" - It is spelled Kidron on most maps. It was a brook that flowed down the Kidron Valley on the east side of Jerusalem, and it separated Jerusalem from the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus often took His disciples for rest and relaxation.

B. The People — 18:2-14

18:2-3 — **Judas** was familiar with the Garden and he came with a multitude of men to arrest

Jesus. Judas singled out Jesus and betrayed Him with a kiss (Mk 14:44).

18:3 — **The arresting group** consisted of Roman soldiers ("band"), priests and elders. They came with weapons, fully expecting that Jesus would resist them.

18:4-9 — Jesus knew His hour had come and so He did not attempt to escape. He went to them and asked who they wanted. When they said, "Jesus of Nazareth," He said, "I AM." "He" is not in His answer. When the group heard Him say, "I AM," they went backward and fell to the ground. This was the name of God. He was asserting that He was more than Jesus of Nazareth, He also was I AM, Yahweh (Jehovah), their Messiah (cf. Ex 3:14; Jn 8:58). Furthermore, Jesus wanted them to clarify the purpose of their mission. He wanted them to clearly say that they had come to arrest only "Jesus of Nazareth." So He asked them twice as to whom they had come to arrest (vv. 4, 7). He did not want His disciples to be arrested.

18:10-11 — **Simon** Peter impulsively cut off the ear of the high priest's servant with his sword. This could have affected Jesus' reason for dying in the eyes of the people and it would have contradicted His answer before Pilate (vv. 35-36), so He miraculously restored the servant's ear (Lk 22:51). Peter needed to learn that the way to fight Satan was with spiritual weapons (cf. 2 Cor 10:4-5; Eph 6:11-18).

Jesus said He must drink the cup that His Father had given Him. What was that cup? The cup represented His death and burial. When Jesus prayed, "Let this cup pass from Me," He was not asking His Father to keep Him from dying on the cross, He was seeking assurance from His Father to deliver Him from (*ek*, "out of") death and the grave (Heb 5:7). His prayer was answered when He was resurrected three days after His death on the cross.

18:12-14 — **Annas** had previously been the high priest, but the Romans had removed him and put Caiaphas into that office. The Jews never accepted that appointment. Annas, no doubt, was still the high priest as far as the Jews were concerned, and so Jesus was taken to him first.

II. Jesus Denied by Peter — 18:15-18, 25-27

A. The Background

Peter had boldly stated he would never deny Christ (cf. Mt 26:33, 35; Lk 22:31-34; Jn 13:37; 1 Cor 10:12). However, Peter had failed to keep spiritually alert and had fallen asleep in the Garden while Jesus was praying (cf. Mk 14:32-41).

B. The Occasion — 18:15-18

18:15 — Peter and John followed Jesus to Annas' house. Through John's connections both of them were admitted to the inner court of the high priest's quarters.

18:16-17 — The girl at the door literally asked Peter, "You are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" This made it easy for Peter to deny that he was.

18:18 — Peter stood with the servants and officers near the fire and warmed himself (cf. Ps 1:1). It is difficult to be in the presence of God's enemies and keep a right relationship with God. It is dangerous business and such a person must look to God for protection and help.

C. The Fulfillment — 18:25-27

18:25-27 — Peter denied the Lord two more times and, thus, fulfilled the words of Jesus in 13:38. Even though Peter repented of his sin, he did it with bitter tears (cf. Mt 26:74).

III. Jesus Interrogated by Annas — 18:19-24

A. Questioned — 18:19-21

18:19 — Annas questioned Jesus first (v. 13) concerning His doctrine that he might have evidence to bring against Him. When Matthew's account is read, he skips the interrogation by Annas and only records the account of Jesus before Caiaphas (Mt 26:57).

18:20-21 — Jesus responded by saying that His teaching was public knowledge and these people who heard Him could serve as witnesses. It is not proper to have a man testify against himself; witnesses were to be used to testify for or against a person.

B. Smitten — 18:22-24

18:22-23 — After Jesus answered, He was struck by one of the officers. Violence, rather than legal evidence, was characteristic of Jesus' trial.

18:24 — "Now" - At this time. "Annas had sent Him to Caiaphas" - After Annas had interrogated Jesus, allowed Him to be mocked and beaten, He sent Him to Caiaphas, where He would endure more mistreatment and be unjustly judged. Then he would bring Jesus to Pilate. The "had" in this sentence is confusing and is not needed to translate the aorist tense of the verb, "to send." Adding "had" makes one think that Annas had sent Jesus to Caiaphas before and now he is going send Jesus to him a second time. This is not likely since Annas could not ask Pilate to crucify Him. He had no authority with the Roman government. So he sent Jesus to Caiaphas and he would take Jesus to Pilate and ask him to have Jesus crucified.

18:25-27 — See comments about Peter's denial under II, C.

IV. Jesus Arraigned before Pilate — 18:28-40

A. Jewish Leaders' Hypocrisy — 18:28

18:28 — These Jewish leaders, though unjustly plotting for Jesus' death, would not go into the judgment hall lest, according to their tradition, they would become ceremonially unclean for the Passover.

B. Jewish Leaders' Determination — 18:29-32

18:29-31 — They accused Him of being a malefactor. This has the idea of one who continually does evil.

18:31 — The Jewish leaders were determined to put Jesus to death, but under their law they could not, so they had to bring Him to Pilate, the Roman governor.

18:32 — Jesus knew He would be crucified – cf. Jn 3:14; 8:28; 12:32-33.

C. Pilate's Predicament — 18:33-40

18:33 — Pilate questioned whether Jesus was really the King of the Jews.

18:36 — Jesus explained that His Kingdom was not of the political systems of this world. However, He did not deny that His Kingdom would be set up on earth. The phrase, "of this world" should be translated, "from this world." His kingdom was derived from heaven, not from this world; it consisted of people who were born of God.

18:37 — Jesus bore witness to the truth, but Pilate did not understand truth – cf. 1 Cor 2:14. When Pilate asked, "What is truth?" He was so near it, he could have touched it (Jn 14:6).

18:38 — Pilate concluded that he could find no fault in Jesus.

18:39 — Since Pilate could find no fault in Jesus, he thought the Jews would accept his decision, but to help them save face, he gave them a choice: they could choose the person to be released on the Passover. They could release Jesus, Who was faultless, or Barabbas, who

was a robber and a murderer (Lk 23:19).

18:40 — The Jews surprised Pilate when they immediately cried out to have Barabbas released instead of Jesus. He was left with the choice of crucifying an innocent man or setting free a guilty man.

V. Jesus Condemned by Unjust Leaders — 19:1-16

A. Pilate's Injustice — 19:1-4

19:1-4 — Although Pilate could find no fault in Jesus, he had Him scourged, crowned with thorns, mocked, and struck. No doubt he did this to satisfy the Jews' desire to have Jesus punished. He probably hoped that this would satisfy them enough to drop their demand to have Him crucified. Nevertheless, Pilate was unjust in his treatment of Jesus.

B. Jews' Cry — 19:5-6

19:5-6 — Even after Pilate's avowal of Jesus' innocence, the religious leaders cried out to have Jesus crucified.

C. Pilate's Fear — 19:7-10

19:7-10 — Pilate was aware of his injustice, but he was even more afraid when he heard Jesus' claim that He was the Son of God. He had thought that he had the power to crucify or release Jesus.

D. Jesus' Reply — 19:11

19:11 — Jesus informed Pilate that the only power he had came from God. An abuse of that power was sin. Therefore, Caiaphas had greater condemnation than Pilate because he abused his power from God. He knew the Scriptures, but still he rejected Christ.

E. Pilate's Determination — 19:12-16

19:12a — Pilate sought to release Jesus because of His innocence and His sayings.

19:12b-16 — Pilate was determined to release Jesus, but when he realized it would cost him his popularity with Caesar, he yielded to the Jewish leaders and delivered Jesus to be crucified.

VI. Jesus Crucified by Roman Soldiers — 19:17-37

A. His Crucifixion — 19:17-27

19:17 — Jesus needed help to carry His cross to Golgotha (cf. Mt 27:32).

19:18 — He was crucified between two malefactors (cf. Lk 23:32).

19:19-20 — Pilate placed the title on Jesus' cross — "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS" in three languages:

- (1) Hebrew — national language of Israel
- (2) Greek — language of the common people
- (3) Latin — language of the government

19:21-22 — Pilate may have done this to insult the Jews. But Caiaphas as high priest had unintentionally prophesied that "Jesus should die for that nation" (Jn 11:49-52).

19:23-24 — The soldiers cast lots for Jesus' raiment in fulfillment of Ps 22:18.

19:25-27 — Amid all the agony and suffering, Jesus still showed concern for His mother. All of

the disciples had fled (Mk 14:50), but now John had returned and Jesus gave him the responsibility of caring for His mother.

B. His Death — 19:28-37

19:28-30 — Fulfillment concerning the vinegar: when Jesus knew that all things were done to pay for the sins of the people, He said, "I thirst." Someone put a sponge in some vinegar and lifted it to His mouth to drink as it was prophesied in Ps 69:21. This would clear His throat for His final words from the cross.

"It is finished" — Jesus' final words meant the price for the sins of all people had been paid. He had suffered the full penalty of all sins in the past, present and future (1 Jn 2:2). Now it was left up to each individual to accept or reject that payment for his or her sins.

19:31-33, 36 — Fulfillment concerning His bones: the breaking of leg bones would hasten the death of a crucified person, because the victim would be unable to raise himself up on the cross in order to breathe better. Thus, he would die of suffocation. However, since Christ was already dead, His bones were not broken (cf. Ex 12:46; Num 9:12; Ps 34:20).

19:34-35, 37 — Fulfillment concerning His piercing: the soldier pierced Jesus' side to make sure He was dead, and in so doing, he fulfilled the prophecy in Zech 12:10.

VII. Jesus Buried by Two Secret Disciples — 19:38-42

A. The People — 19:38-40

19:38-40 — Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus now came forward to claim the body of Jesus. These two men had been secret disciples in the Sanhedrin, which had condemned Jesus. This was a bold move, but their conscience would not allow them to keep silent any longer and still remain believers.

B. The Place — 19:41-42

19:41-42 — Jesus was buried in a new sepulcher in a garden. This was a rich man's grave (cf. Isa 53:9).