

An Innocent Man Condemned and Cursed
International Bible Lesson

John 19:1-7

Sunday, April 13, 2014

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“When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him” (John 19:6—KJV).

“When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, ‘Crucify him! Crucify him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him’” (John 19:6—NRSV).

Pilate declared twice that he found no case against Jesus. If Jesus had broken any Roman laws, certainly the religious leaders would have made these accusations against Jesus too. Perhaps Pilate hoped that when they saw Jesus suffering after His severe flogging and mocking that would satisfy His accusers. However, the religious authorities were so intent on the “legal” murder of Jesus they shouted back to Pilate, “Crucify him!” The Jewish law stated specifically how the Jews were to execute someone convicted of a serious crime, but only after a legal trial with two or more witnesses: “Take the blasphemer outside the camp; and let all who were within hearing lay their

hands on his head, and let the whole congregation stone him” (Leviticus 24:14). Later, in a rush to judgment, the religious leaders and people stoned Stephen to death (Acts 7:56-60). In fulfillment of prophecy, the Messiah was not to be stoned but hanged from a tree (the wooden cross was the preferred method of Roman execution). Quoting Deuteronomy 21:23, the Apostle Paul wrote: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’” (Galatians 3:13). The prophets foretold the method of Jesus’ execution; still, those who hated Jesus bore responsibility for their thoughts and actions. Jesus told Pilate, “you would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin” (John 19:11). —

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Thinking Further

The International Sunday School Lesson for April 13, 2014 is from Jeremiah 23:1-6; Zechariah 6:9-15; and John 19:1-7. The “Thinking Further” Questions below are from these three lessons.

1. What are some of the ways believers today can proclaim: “The LORD is our righteousness”?

2. Why is it important for the followers of Jesus Christ to study the Old Testament prophets even when they seem difficult to understand?

3. Why might it be important that Pilate found and declared no legal case against Jesus?

4. What reason did the Jews give Pilate when they insisted that Pilate have Jesus crucified? Do you think the reason they gave was the real reason? If not, what do you think their real reason might have been?

5. In your opinion, what did the high priests, scribes, and Pharisees who insisted that Pilate crucify Jesus really think about the Law of God and how did they treat it?

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