



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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John 19:17-27 Commentary New International Version

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse [International Bible Study Commentary](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Study Forum](#).

(John 19:17) Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha).

Translators of the NRSV began this sentence with the concluding words in John 19:16, "So they took Jesus." John saw no need to repeat what we learn from Matthew, Mark, and Luke that on the way to the cross the soldiers forced "a man from Cyrene named Simon" to carry the cross of our suffering Savior the rest of the way to Golgotha (Matthew 27:32, Mark 15:21, Luke 23:26). Two thousand years later, we do not know the location of The Place of the Skull. Most believe the place was named because of its appearance and shape. It may also have been named Golgotha because it was a place of death. We do learn from John 19:41 that Golgotha was in or close to a garden cemetery, "Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid." Jesus prayed with His disciples in a garden where the soldiers arrested Him. He died on a cross in a garden, and His followers buried Him in a garden tomb. From this garden tomb, He arose from the dead, and then He appeared to Mary Magdalene in this garden. The hymn "In the Garden" written by C. Austin Miles commemorates the meeting of

Jesus and Mary Magdalene in the garden after He rose from the dead. Jesus suffered and died for the forgiveness of our sins in a garden. We cannot help but remember that Adam and Eve first met with God in a garden. They sinned for the first time in the Garden of Eden, and their sin brought death into the world. After they sinned, God promised to send them and the world a Savior to reverse the consequences of sin. When God spoke to the serpent in the garden, God spoke of the Savior He would send. In Genesis 3:15, God promised, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” The serpent, the devil who tempted Jesus and entered Judas to betray Jesus, had his head struck when Jesus died on the cross for our forgiveness and when He rose from the dead to give eternal life to all who believe in Him. By comparison to the final victory Jesus had over the devil when He died and rose again in a garden, what the devil did to Jesus can be compared to striking Jesus’ heel. As we continue our study, John will reveal additional applications from the Scriptures.

(John 19:18) There they crucified him, and with him two others--one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

Again, John did not always repeat what the writers of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) recorded. Obviously, those crucified with Jesus were convicted criminals. In John 18:32, Jesus foretold He would die as a criminal by crucifixion. In John 12:32-33, Jesus foretold: “‘And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.’ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.” He would be lifted up on a cross and die; He would not be stoned to death by the Jews. Two thousand years later, Jesus still does what He foretold: He draws people to himself. Psalm 22:16-17 describes some of what Jesus experienced as He suffered on the cross: “For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me. My hands and feet have shriveled; I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me.” The KJV, the NASB, and the NIV translate more accurately, “they *pierced* my hands and my feet.” Through Isaiah, God foretold why Jesus would die. See especially, Isaiah 53:11-12, “Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their

iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because *he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*”

(John 19:19) Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Unintentionally, but unknowingly influenced by God, Pilate wrote the truth on a placard that he placed on Jesus’ cross. Whereas most placards, if used, would proclaim the convict’s crime to deter others, Pilate did not convict Jesus of a crime. He only did what the chief priests demanded of him after they threatened him. God used Pilate to proclaim the truth about Jesus. Jesus was from the town of Nazareth in Galilee. Jesus was and is the Messiah that God promised to send into the world, the King of the Jews.

(John 19:20) Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek.

God influenced Pilate to write the inscription in Hebrew (the official language of the Jews), in Latin (the official language of the Romans), and in Greek (the universal language that the once conquering Greeks had spread around the known world so everyone could speak to one another in Greek). Latin was a language of law, while Greek was a language of commerce and philosophy. Likewise, the New Testament was written in Greek so people of all nationalities, races, and religions who knew Greek could read the good news about Jesus and come to believe in Him. All who passed by Jesus as He hanged on the cross outside the city could go into the city and tell others that the King of the Jews had been crucified. Perhaps only to insult the chief priests, Pilate deemed it important for every person of every important language (at that time) to read about Jesus. God deems it important for people all around the world to learn who Jesus is, the Lord and Savior of the world, by being able to read the good news about Jesus and the Bible in their own language. Hence, Bible translators work and hope to work for many years to translate the Bible for every language group.

When the Apostle Paul preached the good news about Jesus in the Book of Acts, he explained what happened in Acts 13:27-30, “Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or *understand the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath*, they fulfilled those words by condemning him. Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have him killed. When they had carried out *everything that was written about him*, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead.”

(John 19:21) The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.”

Perhaps Pilate intended to offend the chief priests and those who demanded Jesus’ crucifixion with his placard on Jesus’ cross. Whatever Pilate may have intended, God used Pilate, a Roman governor, to announce the truth about Jesus. The chief priests wanted the placard to announce that Jesus’ crime was saying He was the King of the Jews, but Pilate had told them repeatedly that he found no case against Jesus and he wanted to release Him.

(John 19:22) Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

Pilate wrote what he wrote because Jesus had not committed a crime. Pilate had done what they wanted, and he was determined not to be intimidated or threatened by the chief priests again regarding Jesus. Without knowing it, Pilate wrote what God wanted.

(John 19:23) When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

One of the benefits of being one of the soldiers who crucified a convict was being able to divide their possessions, mostly only clothing, among themselves, and the opportunity to pass the time by gambling—no crucified

man was going to come down from a cross. But notice once again the comparison between what Jesus suffered for the forgiveness of our sins and the behavior of Adam and Eve. In Genesis 3, we learn that after they sinned, Adam and Eve felt ashamed for they were naked, and they tried to cover themselves with fig leaves sown together; then, they hid from God. On the other hand, the soldiers tried to bring shame upon Jesus (as they did upon all the convicts they crucified) when they stripped off His clothing before they hanged Him on the cross. God forgave Adam and Eve (though they still had to die one day in the future), and God provided a better covering for them. When He made them garments of skin, God showed them what it meant to die. One of their animal companions had to die (as a sacrifice for them, to cover them, because they had sinned). Our loving God could justly and mercifully forgive them because Jesus, God's only Son, would come into the world and die a sacrificial death on the cross, a shameful death, that He might forgive them and us for our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In 1 John 1:9, John promised, "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection made it possible for all who believe in Him to be cleansed and someday dressed in white. In Revelation 7:13-15, John wrote, "Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' I said to him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.'"

(John 19:24) "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." So this is what the soldiers did.

In John 5:39-40, Jesus said to the Jews, "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life." Previously, we read how

Paul described the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders: “they did not recognize him or understand *the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath* [the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament], *they fulfilled those words* by condemning him.” In Psalm 22:18 and John 19:24, we read how these soldiers unknowingly fulfilled the Scriptures: “they divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

(John 19:25) Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

At the foot of the cross, four soldiers crucified and mocked Jesus, but four women who loved and followed Jesus also stood near the foot of the cross. Jesus’ mother, Mary; Jesus’ aunt (Mary’s unnamed sister); Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

(John 19:26) When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,”

Jesus certainly was not disrespectful when He called His mother, “Woman.” Jesus, the Son of God, was born and had to be born of a woman to fulfill Scripture. To fulfill Genesis 3:15, Jesus had to be the offspring, the child, of a woman. Jesus was not an immaterial being or spirit that could not suffer, as later heresies claimed. Jesus suffered as a real flesh and blood human being, just as we suffer, for a reason, as Paul wrote in Galatians 4:4-7, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.”

Jesus loved His mother, and He loved the one disciple of His who accompanied His mother to the foot of the cross for love of Jesus and His mother. Jesus’ brothers did not yet believe in Him, as John explained in John 7:5, “For not even his brothers believed in him.” In Matthew 12:50, Jesus explained the nature of His family: “For whoever does the will of my

Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.” Jesus first spoke to His mother and told her that from that moment John would be her son. His mother and John did the will of His Father in heaven. He would be the one that she should look to physically to meet her needs. Later, she would receive the Holy Spirit and Jesus would be closer to her than He had ever been before.

(John 19:27) and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

As He suffered and died, Jesus showed that He loved and cared for those He gave His life to save, that included the practical and spiritual care of His mother by John. Quite simply, John revealed that Jesus gave His mother into his care—should Jesus’ brothers ask. John immediately did what Jesus requested: he met her needs in his own home and made her part of his family. He may have delayed his missionary travels and made his home in Jerusalem in order to serve the newly forming Christian Church and to care for Mary until she died. Thus, he kept his promise to Jesus.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. In 8 to 10 words, how might you improve on this truth that Pilate put on the cross of Jesus: “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews”?
2. What does it mean to you today when you think about Pilate’s inscription written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek?
3. What is one way John shows that the Bible is important and Jesus’ coming the way He did is important?
4. Who stood near the cross of Jesus? What do you think their presence meant to and did for Jesus?
5. As He hanged on the cross, in what ways did Jesus show His love?

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