International Bible Lesson
International Bible Study Commentary
L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

Everyone Is Important to God
John 19:17-27

This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin (John 19:20—KJV).

Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek (John 19:20—NASB).

Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek (John 19:20—NRSV).

The Bible shows how God sometimes uses people who do not know Him to tell the truth about Him. God did no harm to Pilate and Pilate did no harm to himself when he put a placard on Jesus' cross that read: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Pilate might have done so with impure motives; that is, to insult the chief priests who wanted Jesus crucified, but God used it for good. From that day forward Pilate might have thought a great deal about what he wrote, for the chief priests wanted him to change the placard to read: "This man said, I am King of the Jews," but Pilate refused. Throughout history Christians have been tempted to change the meaning of what they read in the Bible, but most refuse. God used Pilate to show how He wanted the truth about Jesus proclaimed to everyone, not just one nation or religion, for He inspired Pilate to write the truth in Hebrew (the official language of the Jews), in Latin (the official language of the Romans), and in Greek (the universal language at that time, which made it possible for people of all races to talk to one another). When Pilate used the three most widely known languages on the placard, God showed that He loved and wanted to help people of all languages, nations, and races by the death and resurrection of His Son. Many people saw the placard about Jesus, and when they returned to Jerusalem, they told others about Jesus—everyone is important to God.

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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