

John 19: Overview and Discussion Questions

Crucifixion was one of the most horrific forms of punishment ever devised in the ancient world. The entire process of crucifixion was specifically designed to not only inflict a slow and agonizing death on the one condemned, but also because of the public nature of the punishment, it was seen as a terrible humiliation. Those sentenced to be crucified were often hung naked on their crosses. Why then did Jesus have to die such an excruciatingly painful and shameful death? As John narrates the events of Jesus' crucifixion, we see the image of Jesus as our Suffering King. Every lash of the whip that Jesus bore and every agonizing second that He endured on the cross, was all for our sake. Through His suffering and death on the cross, Jesus bore the shame and penalty of our sins so that we might be reconciled to God the Father. And yet, if we stopped at Jesus' death, the story would be incomplete. Jesus' Resurrection gives believers an everlasting HOPE that through Him we have conquered both sin and death.

Much of John's focus in this chapter is on Jesus' Kingship. The Jewish leaders could have easily executed Jesus for what they defined as blasphemy. However, in the years that they had been watching Jesus and His ministry, the Jewish leaders recognized that He was popular. Therefore, to make an example of Him and to discourage His followers, they sought to punish Him as a political criminal and a threat to Rome. This would signal to Jesus' followers that if they continued to follow Him, they would not only be enemies of the Temple establishment, but also of the Roman government. However, the Jewish leaders did not have the authority to execute people for political crimes. Only the Roman governor could do this. Therefore, they claimed before Pilate that Jesus called Himself the "King of the Jews." The only legally recognized

“King of the Jews” was Herod, Rome’s puppet king, and anyone who claimed to be a rival political king would be seen as a threat to Roman rule.

However, Pilate did not take the Jewish leaders’ accusations seriously. Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, yet he was concerned more about his political position than submitting himself to Jesus’ Kingship. He thought that by flogging Jesus that this would satisfy the Jewish leaders. But they insisted on Jesus’ crucifixion. At this point, Pilate was afraid that if he did not carry out the sentence of crucifixion, he too would be accused as a traitor to Rome. Yet note that in verse 19 Pilate orders a plaque to be nailed above Jesus’s head when He is crucified: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Despite the protests of the Jewish leaders, Pilate maintains the inscription and has it written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Unwittingly, Pilate not only affirmed Jesus’ Kingship, but by writing the inscription in the common languages of the ancient Roman world, he also hinted at the nature of Jesus’ Heavenly Kingdom. Jesus’ Kingdom is not a political kingdom, but one that proclaims redemption for all from sin and darkness, Jew and Gentile alike.

Although Pilate and the Jewish leaders thought that they had power and authority over Jesus’ life, it was actually the other way around. Every aspect of Jesus’ suffering and crucifixion was in fulfillment of prophecy and God’s plan of salvation for humanity. Jesus, the Lord of all Creation, has the power over life and death, and voluntarily gave His own life for our sake. If only Pilate and the Jewish leaders realized that even as they were putting Jesus’ to death, that He was giving up Himself for their sins as well!

Read the passage prayerfully a few times over and then answer the questions: [John 19](#)

Questions:

1. What does Jesus' response to Pilate in [v.11](#) reveal about God's authority and sovereignty in relation to that of worldly leaders?
2. How does Jesus' crucifixion fulfill Biblical prophecy? How does this affirm your belief in the truth of the Gospel? ([cf. Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, Psalm 34:20, Zechariah 12:10](#))

Application:

In light of the events of John 19, please take time, prepare your heart prayerfully and watch the following video message <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbDPtCeqL8Q&t=164s>. Share how the truths in notes and the video message impact your life in a personal way.

Conclusion & Heart Prayer:

Lord, what are You saying to me? And what are You calling me to do about it?