# Week 30

# ***Tried & Crucified***

##### John 18:29-19:42

## Day One

18:29-38a

*Prayer Suggestion*

1. Why did the Jews refuse to enter the governor’s headquarters *(18:28-29)?*
2. If they specified no charges against Jesus, why did they bring Him to Pilate *(18:29-32)?*
3. What does Jesus mean by the statement, "My kingdom is not of this world." *(18:33-38)?*

*What kind of weapons are effective in advancing and defending this kingdom? (2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-18)*

## Day Two

18:38b-19:19a

*Prayer Suggestion*

1. What do Pilate’s statements in 18:38; 19:4; and 19:6 indicate about Jesus?
2. How do the Jews finally convince Pilate to crucify Jesus? (19:12-16)

*Concluding Question*

## Day Three

19:19b-24

*Prayer Suggestion*

1. Why do you think Pilate chooses the inscription "JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS" for the cross?

What is the irony in the Jews objection?

1. Why is it significant that even the minor details of Jesus’ crucifixion, such as the division of his clothing, fulfilled prophecy? (vv. 23-24; see Psalm 22:18)

*Concluding Question*

## Day Four

19:25-30

*Prayer Suggestion*

1. What do Jesus’ words in vv. 26-27 reveal about him?
2. What does Jesus mean by "it is finished"? (v. 30; see John 6:37-38; 17:4)
3. Why is it significant that Jesus "gave up" his spirit? (v. 30; see John 10:17-18)

*Concluding Question*

## Day Five

19:31-42

*Prayer Suggestion*

1. How are Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12 fulfilled in verse 33? (v. 36; notes on John 1:29; see also 1 Corinthians 5:7)
2. Where and how did they bury Jesus *(19:38-42)?*

*Concluding Question*

What most impresses you about Jesus in this passage? How does this serve as an example for you to follow?

Who in this passage can you most easily identify with?

How do you feel about the fact that God used even the actions of godless men like Pilate to accomplish his plan?

If you had been standing by the cross when Jesus died, how do you think you would have evaluated his success in life? What does this tell you about the limits of our own reason and judgment?

## Bonus Material

18:28 the palace of the Roman governor . . . Although Pilate’s usual residence was in the coastal city of Caesarea, he made his headquarters in Jerusalem during the feasts (see notes on 18:3). The specific location is not certain; it may have been Herod’s former palace on the western wall of the city (as assumed by the NIV translation of *praitorion*, "headquarters," as "palace"), or it may have been the Fortress of Antonia adjacent to the temple court. to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover . . The religious scruples of the Jews are quite ironic: while maneuvering to kill Jesus, the true Passover lamb (see 1 Cor. 5:7; notes on Jn. 1:29; 6:4; 12:1; 13:1), they are carefully avoiding any ritual defilement which would prevent them from participating in the Passover (see Mt. 23:23-28). "Passover" here probably refers, not to the Passover meal itself, but to the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread which followed it and which was part of the same celebration (see Lk. 22:1).

vv. 29-30 At this point the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, had already determined to put Jesus to death (Mt. 27:1-2). However, under Roman rule they had no authority to enforce the death penalty; only the Roman governor could do that (v. 31), so they brought Jesus to Pilate. Evidently, they had reviewed the case with Pilate in advance (evidenced by the fact that Roman troops were involved in Jesus’ arrest), and thus they fully expected that he would accept their judgment and order Jesus executed. But instead, Pilate asks them to state the charges against Jesus, in effect ordering a new trial! This explains their belligerent answer, "If he were not a criminal . . . we would not have handed him over to you." It also explains why they were not better prepared to prosecute Jesus; only after two unsuccessful attempts (18:38; 19:4) were they able to persuade Pilate to crucify him (19:12).

v. 31 "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law . . . " Knowing that the Jews want to crucify Jesus, Pilate threatens to thwart them by dismissing the case; thus they are forced to admit that they cannot carry out their plan without him. It appears that Pilate is asserting his authority, reminding the Jews that they have to play by his rules to get what they want.

v. 32 This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled . . The Jews’ appeals to Pilate, which eventually resulted in Jesus’ crucifixion, fulfilled Jesus’ prophecy that he would be "lifted up from the earth" (Jn. 12:32-33).

v. 33 "Are you the king of the Jews?" Pilate’s question indicates that the Jews had previously presented the case to him in these terms: that Jesus, by claiming to be their Messiah, was also claiming to be their king (see notes on 1:41, 49). The charge against Jesus was undoubtedly cast in political terms in order that he might be viewed as a threat by the Roman authorities (19:12; see Mt. 2:1-18; 26:55).

vv. 34-35 "Is that your own idea . . . or did others talk to you about me?" Jesus asks if Pilate is sincerely inquiring after the truth (see v. 37) or whether he is merely repeating the charges of the Jews. He does this in order to prompt Pilate to consider his personal response to Jesus’ claims, rather than considering only his official response as governor. Similarly, each of us, whether ruler or ruled, potentate or peasant, must decide how we will respond to the one who is "king of kings and lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16).

v. 36 "My kingdom is not of this world . . . " Jesus is not saying that his kingdom has nothing to do with this world, as if his rule were irrelevant to the lives we live in the world (17:16). Rather, he means that his kingdom (Gr. *basilea*; signifying primarily "reign" or "kingship", not physical territory) is not *from* this world. It does not have its source or origin in this present created order, which is in rebellion against its creator and is the "domain of darkness" rather than light (Col. 1:13; see notes on 3:3; 8:23; 17:14). The kingdom of God has to do with hearts and minds, rather than states or nations. Thus its strength and progress cannot be measured by the status or recognition it receives from human governments, nor can it be promoted or defended through the use of earthly weapons (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-18). Although it grows in the midst of this world (Mt. 13:31-33), it will not be attained through the improvement of this present world order, but through its eventual overthrow and destruction from heaven (1 Cor. 7:31; 2 Pet. 3:3-13).

v. 37 "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth." Jesus’ kingship is displayed in his bearing witness to the truth; i.e., the truth about God, revealed in his own life and works (see notes on 14:6). The result of his testimony is the bringing of men to salvation, thus transferring them into his kingdom (Col. 1:13-14).

v. 38 "What is truth?" Pilate asked. Pilate did not wait for the answer to his question, or he might have learned that the one to whom he was speaking was himself the truth (Jn. 14:6). "I find no basis for a charge against him . . . " This statement, repeated in 19:4 and 19:6, emphasizes the fact that Jesus was sinless, and that therefore he did not die for his own sins, but for ours (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26-27).

vv. 39-40 The Jews’ demand that Pilate release Barabbas instead of Jesus exposes their blind hatred: they preferred to murder an innocent man, the lord of glory, even though it meant freeing a violent criminal. This is also a picture of salvation, in that we who were guilty of rebellion against God have been set free through the death of Jesus Christ. 19:1 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged . . . If Pilate had determined that Jesus was innocent (18:38), then why did he have him beaten? It appears that by punishing Jesus, Pilate hoped to appease the Jews, so that they would allow Jesus to be released (Lk. 23:13-16, 22). vv. 2-3 These verses are a graphic illustration of Jesus’ humility and obedient self-restraint. Although he could have called forth twelve legions of angels to defend himself (Mt. 26:53), he chose instead to endure the abuse and humiliation of sinful men, and ultimately, death at their hands (Phlp. 2:8). The soldiers’ mocking worship of Jesus is another example of irony: although they do not realize it, they are speaking the truth (see v. 14; also 11:49-52), for Jesus is in fact the king of the Jews (18:37).

19:4-5 Pilate again attempts to release Jesus. By presenting to the Jewish leaders a man clothed in a ridiculous costume, who is beaten, bruised, and bloody, Pilate hopes to demonstrate that Jesus is not the dangerous rebel they had thought, but a pathetic and harmless figure. Thus the sarcastic announcement, "Here is the man!" i.e., "here is the poor, wretched man whom you fear so much!" However, his strategy fails; the Jews will not be satisfied with anything less than Jesus’ death.

v. 6 "You take him and crucify him . . . " Pilate is not actually giving the Jews permission to crucify Jesus, as is shown by their failure to take him up on his offer. Rather, he is expressing his disgust and frustration toward the Jews for their obstinate refusal to accept his verdict. In other words, he is saying, "If you are determined to carry out this injustice, then why don’t you just kill him yourself, instead of using me to put a facade of legality on it!"

v. 7 "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." The political charge of insurrection having been rejected by Pilate, the Jews now reframe their accusation against Jesus in theological terms, revealing their real objection to Jesus, his alleged blasphemy (see Mk. 14:55-56; also Jn. 5:18; 8:58-59; 10:33). Their call for the death penalty is based on Lev. 24:16, *"anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord must be put to death."* They correctly understood that Jesus’ reference to himself as the Son of God was a claim to deity; what they did not realize was that his claim was true.

v. 8 When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid . . . Although Pilate does not understand who Jesus is, he perceives that there is something unique about him; the news that Jesus claims the title "Son of God" only heightens his superstitious fear. Matthew also tells us that Pilate had received word from his wife of a dream concerning Jesus, warning Pilate not to harm him (Mt. 27:19). It seems that Pilate is sensing something very wrong with what is happening, but is unable to muster the will to stop it.

v. 11 "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." Jesus is not speaking in general of the fact that Pilate’s authority derives ultimately from God (Rom. 13:1-7); rather, he is referring to the sovereignly guided chain of events which has placed Jesus before him for judgment (see Acts 4:27-28). Since Pilate did not initiate the plot against Jesus, but was merely being used by the Jewish leaders to carry out their evil purpose, his guilt was less than the one who actually handed Jesus over to him (Judas, or perhaps Caiaphas). However, although Pilate’s guilt is less, it is not eliminated; he is still responsible for condemning a man to death whom he knew to be innocent.

v. 12 "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." These words carry an implied threat: failure to convict and execute Jesus for the crime of sedition would be viewed as an act of disloyalty to Caesar, and would be reported to Caesar as such. If this were to happen, the subtleties of Jesus’ claim to kingship being "not of this world" would be difficult for Pilate to explain to the emperor.

v. 15 "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered . . . In claiming allegiance to Caesar alone, the Jewish leaders not only reject Jesus as their king, but also repudiate Israel’s Messianic hope and, ultimately, God’s kingship over them as well. By doing so, they demonstrate that they are not true Israelites at all (see Rom. 4:12; 9:6-8; Gal. 3:7) and make themselves guilty of the blasphemy of which they accuse the Lord.

v. 17 Carrying his own cross, he went out . . . Jesus likely carried only the horizontal beam, the cross-member. The typical procedure would be for the condemned man to carry this beam to the place of execution, where his arms were nailed or tied to it. After this, the cross-beam, with the victim attached, was hoisted up and attached to the vertical beam already planted in the ground. (The other gospels include a detail omitted here, that Simon from Cyrene carried the cross for part of the way [Mt. 27:32; Mk. 15:21; Lk. 23:26]). This experience of Jesus, who carried the cross for his own execution, parallels that of Isaac, who carried the wood for the burnt offering on which he himself was to be sacrificed (Gen. 22:6).

v. 18 Here they crucified him, and with him two others----one one each side and Jesus in the middle. Jesus’ execution between two criminals is a vivid picture of the fact that he was "numbered with the transgressors," as Isaiah writes in the prophecy of the suffering servant (Isa. 53:12). Only by bearing our sins, and thus being considered a sinner himself, could Jesus atone for those sins and thereby make us righteous (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24).

vv. 19-22 It was a common practice in cases of crucifixion for the convicted person’s offense to be posted on the cross as a warning to others. Here, in revenge against the Jews who had manipulated him throughout the trial, Pilate taunts them by affixing an inscription to the cross which publicly proclaims Jesus as their king, and then stubbornly refuses to change it. But this petty spite serves God’s purposes, for in doing so Pilate unwittingly proclaims the truth about Jesus to the world.

vv. 23-24 Even the customary act of dividing the convicted man’s possessions among his executioners fulfilled prophecy, thus underscoring God’s sovereign control over all the events surrounding Jesus’ death (see Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28). The reference is to a Psalm in which David, an Old Testament character whose life experiences foreshadowed those of Christ (i.e., a *type* of Christ), compared his own sufferings to those of a man being executed (Ps. 22:18). The fact that Jesus’ sufferings were a typological fulfillment of Psalm 22 is also supported by his quotation of Ps. 22:1 while on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46; see notes on 13:18). The four pieces of clothing divided among the soldiers might have been an outer robe, a belt, sandals, and a head covering.

v. 25 John names four of the women who came to visit Jesus on the cross (see Mk. 15:41). If the women in this list are the same as those mentioned in the other gospels, it is quite possible that the sister of Jesus’ mother Mary is Salome, the mother of the disciples James and John (Mt. 27:56-57; Mk. 15:40), making them Jesus’ cousins. This would help explain the connection which Jesus establishes between John ("the disciple whom he loved," v. 26; see notes on 13:23) and Jesus’ mother, who in this scenario would be John’s aunt.

vv. 26-27 Although Jesus earlier found it necessary to issue a mild rebuke to his mother (see notes on 2:4), he nonetheless loves her, and so takes care to see that she will be provided for after his death.

vv. 28-29 Later, knowing that all was now completed . . . This should not be taken to imply that Jesus’ work was at this point finished, even prior to his death; rather, Jesus realizes that the purpose for which his Father sent him into the world is now drawing to a close, and that the final consummation, death itself, is all that remains (see v. 30). and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." While others, such as Pilate and the soldiers, fulfilled their part in the divine plan unknowingly, Jesus both knowingly and willingly carried out the task the Father had given him, a task which he knew was foreshadowed and foretold throughout the Old Testament scriptures (Lk. 24:27). The specific reference may be to Psalm 22:15, where the Psalmist’s tongue is said to stick to the roof of his mouth. Another possibility is Ps. 69:21, *"They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst."* In this case, it would not be Jesus’ cry of thirst alone which fulfilled Scripture, but that which resulted from it (v. 29).

v. 30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Jesus words, "It is finished," express not only the fact that his life is now ended, but that he has accomplished all that the Father had given him to do (see 17:4). He was faithful and obedient to the end, not failing to carry out the Father’s will in even the smallest detail (Jn. 8:29; 14:31; Phlp. 2:8; Heb. 3:2, 6). This fulfillment of the Father’s will included, most importantly, securing the salvation of all those whom the Father had given him (Jn. 6:37-39). Note the emphasis once more on the voluntary nature of Christ’s atoning death, as John tells us that he "gave up" his spirit to God (Lk. 23:46; see Jn. 10:17-18)

v. 31 Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. Again, the Jewish leaders meticulously adhere to the Mosaic regulations, even as they go about tying up the loose ends of a murder (see notes on 18:28; also Mt. 15:8-9). The relevant statute here is Dt. 21:22-23, which prohibits leaving the corpse of an executed person hanging on a tree overnight, lest it "desecrate the land." Breaking the legs of the condemned men would make it impossible for them to support their weight sufficiently to breathe, and they would soon die of suffocation.

v. 33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs . . . Jesus’ relatively quick death (see Mk. 16:44) may have been due to the brutality of the beatings he suffered from the Roman soldiers.

v. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water . . . The best medical explanation for this phenomenon is that this was hemorrhagic fluid which had accumulated between the rib cage and the lung and had separated into two blood components, one watery clear and one red. Theologically, this gives conclusive evidence that Jesus was fully a flesh-and-blood man, and not simply a spiritual being who only appeared to be a man, as the heresy of *docetism* later taught (see notes on 1:14; also 1 Jn. 4:2; 5:6-8). It also demonstrates that Jesus actually died, and was not just in a coma.

v. 35 The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true . . . The importance of what has been described in the prior verse is underscored by John’s insistence that this version of events is supported by eyewitness testimony. Furthermore, this testimony is such as to lead the reader to faith in Christ; it is given so that you also may believe (see 20:31). Thus, the physical evidence of Jesus’ humanity and death lends critical support to those doctrines, and ultimately, to the gospel. The most likely person to identify as the eyewitness is John, the author of this gospel (see 21:24).

v. 36 These things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken . . . " Note once again that while Jesus knowingly and willingly acted to fulfill Scripture, the other actors in this drama were God’s unwitting servants, guided by his sovereign hand in carrying out his purposes (see Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28).

There are two possibilities as to the passage being referred to here, and either or both may be in view. First, Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12 are regulations instructing that none of the bones of the Passover lamb may be broken. This accords well with other Scriptures which refer to Jesus as the true Passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:19; see notes on Jn. 1:29). And Psalm 34:20 speaks of God’s care for the righteous man by stating that *"he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken."* Here the point would be that in spite of his shameful death on a cross, Jesus was indeed a righteous man, as Pilate testified (19:4,6; see also Lk. 23:47), and that even in death, Jesus was in God’s care.

v. 37 and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." The reference here is to Zechariah 12:10. In the context of a prophecy concerning the end-time destruction of the enemies of the Lord, this verse states that:

 *"I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."*

In Mt. 24:30 and Rev. 1:7, the fulfillment of the Zechariah passage is related to the Second Coming of Christ. Thus, while the piercing of Jesus has already taken place, the time when ethnic Israel (and all the people of the earth) will look upon him and grieve over their sin is now still future. In the case of ethnic Israel, this grief appears to be the mourning of repentance (Zech. 13:1; see Rom. 11:11-32). Note also that since the one speaking through the prophet in Zech. 12:10 is Yahweh God, the identification of Jesus with the subject of that prophecy is a recognition of his deity, and evidence of the unity of God the Son with God the Father. vv. 38-42 The other gospels tell us that Joseph of Arimathea was a wealthy and prominent member of the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin; a man who was seeking the kingdom of God and who had become a disciple of Jesus (Mt. 27:57; Mk. 15:43). Perhaps the presence of Nicodemus on this expedition indicates that he had also become a disciple of Jesus since their first encounter (see Jn. 3:1-15).