

Gospel of John Chapter 19 - John Karmelich

We're in the "gruesome" section of the Gospels. The details about Jesus suffering, crucifixion and His death are all recorded in this chapter. I must admit I'm one of those people who never liked gruesome movies, although I admit I can tolerate a lot more now than I could even a few decades ago. I'd assume most of us know these details pretty well and truthfully, want to simply accept the truth that Jesus died for our sins and suffered willingly to pay the price for all the sins we did. Yes I could talk about all the Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in just about every line of this chapter. I could discuss the fact that it was our sins that Jesus suffered for in all of that agony. For the sake of the few newcomers I will touch on a few of those things here. The question to ponder here is what do we who already know all of these facts do with them? Obviously the book is written to convince people Jesus is God and that is stated in the next chapter. Still, I don't believe the bible is a book one reads once then forgets about it for the rest of their lives. Bottom line, what does God want us to get out of this given all of "that"?

The first thing that comes to mind is the topic of dealing with suffering. Let's be honest all of us at one time or many have dealt with suffering. It comes in many forms. What I noticed is Jesus never pleads for mercy nor asks to be let go here! Once did He speak from the cross, "I thirst", to say the immortal words "It's finished" referring to the price for sin being paid. The point I want to point out here is how Jesus dealt with pain and a biblical perspective about suffering and what we can do during such times.

Don't get me wrong. I've had my own horrid periods in my life and I've seen suffering so harsh that I'd never want to experience it. Just saying that through the worse periods, I've watched Christians still be a great witness for Him through such times. With that said, I'd like you to notice those details as we do go through well a gruesome part of the bible. Let's begin:

The text opens with the statement that Pontius Pilate had Jesus "flogged". At the end of the last chapter Pilate was convinced Jesus was a harmless philosopher, so why the change of heart? Realize Pilate was stuck "between a rock and a hard place". He was on "thin ice" with the Jewish leaders as he upset them by disrespecting their freedom of religion. Pilate believed that if he messed up again he'd lose his job at the least! His main job was to keep the peace. By hurting Jesus badly by that method, Pilate was trying to please the Jewish leaders by saying in effect, "I've physically hurt this guy badly, so can we drop the matter now?"

Notice we never read of Jesus asking for mercy! We never read of him yelling this isn't fair. He deals with it as painful as it was, accepting God's will for the situation. I hate pain as much as anyone, and I don't know if I could accept injustice as easily as Jesus did. Just saying this is a good example of being a good witness for God through the worst situation imaginable!

Ok back to the gruesome stuff. If beating Jesus with whips (with tiny bones on the end to rip the flesh) isn't bad enough, they also made a crown of thorns (and yes it ripped into his head). That's a symbol of sin (thorns) and it's a nice picture of Jesus bearing our sins by the way. If all that is not bad enough, the soldiers also put a robe on him, slapped his face and falsely hailed him as a king. Keep in mind it's the "hour of darkness" and Satan was allowed to do his worst here. After all that, Pilate took Jesus back to show the crowd what he did! You'd think they'd be satisfied. The reason the crowd yelled out "crucify Jesus" was the religious leaders didn't want Him to heal and start again! Jesus was a threat to the status quo of the religious leaders getting rich off the people charging high prices to honor God. Bottom line is Jesus was losing this fight badly for Him to live any further as is!

It's amazing how much Pilate wanted to not do this but his "hand was forced". He brought Jesus out to the crowd in horribly beaten condition and the Jewish (leaders) got the crowd to yell crucify Him! That is the same crowd who welcomed Jesus as their Messiah a week earlier on Palm Sunday. I suspect they saw Jesus beaten and figured He'd never overthrow Rome and "that's that". Pilate agreed to do it as the Jewish leaders threatened to turn Him into Rome for disobedience and Pilate feared for his own life now! All of this lead to Jesus (who never uttered a word in His defense) carrying His cross to where He was going to die. Other Gospels tell us Jesus collapsed at this point, so another person carried it for Him to the place where He was killed. Pilate got a "small revenge" by writing "Jesus the king of the Jews" on a sign explaining His crime! Then we get a few verses explaining that the soldiers who beat Jesus went on to gamble for Jesus clothes. It's stated as prophesy fulfillment (from Psalm 22). If you want to proof the bible is the word of God, you'd spread proof of that message all over the bible. I'm convinced every aspect of Jesus birth life and death are predicted all over the Old Testament again as proof!

Jesus had one piece of business left to do before He died. Not to plead for mercy or help, but to tell His mother who watched the whole thing that the disciple John was to take care of her. Why him when she had other children? It's because Jesus half-siblings were not believers yet. It is a way to show how the church is to take care of their own as much as possible.

Again the only other thing Jesus said from the cross was "I thirst" which is normal from being hanging from the cross in the sun. Another gospel tells of a sour-wine given to Him, so He could then make the classic statement "It is finished" meaning the price for sin was paid as He gave up His life!

The Jewish leaders didn't want bodies hanging on the cross overnight (as it was against Jewish law). It led to those leaders asking Pilate to kill those on crosses to bring it to an end. So the soldiers were told to hasten death by breaking knees (so they couldn't breathe and death would come quickly). When they got to Jesus, the order was ignored and they threw a spear in Jesus heart to verify death. Water & blood flowed out to verify Jesus was literally dead at that moment!

The final set of verses mentions two mentioned other men: Two Jewish leaders who believed Jesus is the Messiah but didn't worship Him out of fear of being outcast. One took Jesus dead body and set the body up for burial with traditional spices. The other provided his family grave site for Jesus' body! It's all prophesy fulfillment! In short that's how Jesus punishment suffering and death occurred.

I'm well aware most of us have known this story well most of our lives. Yes it's written as to show the non-believer Jesus is God through all of the fulfillment of prophesy. What we as veteran Christians do need to see is that just as Jesus was willing to suffer for a better future, just as the disciples and most of the key Bible characters suffered for the hope of a better future, we must keep in mind during the tough times in our lives that Jesus never promised us a pain free life! He promised it'd all be worth it! I'm not saying we must suffer on purpose, just that Jesus had his "hour of darkness", before the key moment in human history occurred. In a similar way, we must be patient and have hope even through the toughest moments of our lives. If you get that, you can appreciate a little more what Jesus went through for us!

If you liked this little study, I wrote a more detailed account about twenty years ago! To read the other one, click on one of the two links on this page. Thanks again for reading this. John