

Gospel of John Chapter 19 -- John Karmelich

1. Chapter 19 is a familiar story to most of the world: the death and burial of Jesus.
 - a) The reason Christians are endlessly focused on this story,
 - b) is because our faith *grows* more and more as we study it and contemplate its meaning.
 - c) The Gospel writer John wrote this at the end of his life.
 - i) He had a lot of time to reflect upon these events.
 - ii) There are a lot of Old Testament predictions about Jesus' life quoted here.
 - iii) I think as John meditated (which simply means thought about it) on these Old Testament prophecies about "The Messiah", he became more and more *amazed* at "God's big game plan".
 - iv) "God's big game plan" is the way God laid out the course of human history *in advanced*. Once you can comprehend this, one's life gains meaning & purpose.
 - v) The Old Testament has over 300 predictions about Jesus first coming. Why?
 - a) To prove *beyond any coincidence* that the greatest **fact** in human history is Jesus death, burial and resurrection.
 - b) Why is this so important?
 - c) Because our eternal *destiny* depends upon believing these *facts*.
 - d) This is why God went through so much painstaking detail throughout history to prove the evidence of these facts.
 - e) The writer John is simply a "message man". A man used by God to record the facts of history for us to believe.
 - f) That is our role too. A "message man". To *be* a witness so that people can *believe* the facts and *have* eternal life.
2. In Chapter 19, Jesus is put on trial. But the reality is Jesus is putting *everybody else* on trial.
 - i) What is the charge? Sin. But the good news is we are acquitted of this charge if we *choose* to let Jesus pay the penalty for us. That is the question of the trial.
 - b) There is a great old expression I like: "People are like teabags. You never know what flavor they are like until you get them in hot water."
 - i) In Chapter 19, the water is boiling.
 - ii) We are going to see a lot of personality types and their reaction under pressure.
 - c) The first of these is Pontius Pilate. A large chunk of Chapter 19 focuses on Pontius Pilate. Although I'm going to say a lot about Pilate over the next few pages,
 - i) the most important thing to remember is "You can't take a neutral stance over Jesus Christ. This is what Pilate tried to do."
 - a) Although Pilate put Jesus on trial, it was really Jesus who put *Pilate* on trial. That is what Jesus does to everybody. You can't be neutral. You need to make a commitment or suffer the consequences.
 - d) The next set of verses deals with the religious leaders of the Jewish world. Although they make a lot of false charges about Jesus, the truth comes out when Pilate puts the pressure on them. As you read this chapter, notice the hypocrisy of their actions.
 - i) The lesson to remember about the religious leaders is that "God does not judge us on how *sincere* we are. I am sure the religious leaders were very sincere in their beliefs. We are judged based on what we do about Jesus!
 - e) The next group mentioned is those who truly loved Jesus. They go through great pains as they watch Jesus on the cross. Notice in these few verses that despite Jesus' great pain, he still reaches out to comfort others!
 - f) The last group is what I call the "secret" believers in Jesus. There are 2 members of the Jewish ruling counselors who believed in Jesus. Although they are saved, their witness is minimal because their fear of being "unpopular" is greater than their boldness to stand up for Jesus. Notice how God still uses believers no matter their level of faith.

3. With that, let's go to Verse 1: Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ² The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe ³ and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck him in the face.
- a) If you remember the last few verses of Chapter 18, Pilate announced "He found no fault in this man (18:38), and now Pilate is having Jesus "flogged". Why?
 - i) Remember that the chapter breaks and verse numbers were not added until many centuries later.
 - b) Pontius Pilate was a "bureaucrat". Anybody who's been in the business world for a few years has met many a bureaucrat .
 - i) When I think of the stereotype of a bureaucrat, I think of a middle-manager position in the government or a very large corporation. The #1 fear of a "bureaucrat" is to not lose his job.
 - a) This was Pilate's greatest fear: Losing his job.
 - ii) Roman officers had two primary duties:
 - a) 1) Enforcing Roman law. Romans prided themselves on "fairness".
 - b) 2) Keeping the peace (not allowing any uprising against Rome).
 - (1) Because the Roman Empire was spread across such a large geographic empire, the constant worry was against uprisings.
 - (2) You have to keep this in mind when judging Pilate's actions.
 - iii) Which leads back to my question, why flog Jesus?
 - a) To satisfy, and hopefully calm-down, an ugly mob (the crowd).
 - b) Pilate knew Jesus was innocent
 - (1) Pilate probably thought of Jesus as a harmless philosopher.
 - c) A flogging is a horrible, cruel form of punishment, which often causes death itself. It involves whipping and the tearing of flesh.
 - d) Pilate figured if the crowd saw Jesus in this condition that would satisfy their hatred of him
 - e) What was Pilate doing? Trying to compromise!
 - c) Why the "crown of thorns" and the "purple robe?"
 - i) The soldiers dressed up Jesus to "look like" an emperor.
 - ii) Some commentators point out that "thorns" in the Bible is a symbol of sin. In Exodus 3, Moses saw a burning bush that was not consumed by fire. This was the "bramble bush" of the desert. Many believe this is the type of bush that produced Jesus' thorns of crowns. It is symbol of Jesus bearing our sins for us.
 - d) The scourging of Jesus brings out some interesting questions. I understand why Jesus had to *die* for our sins, but why did he have to *suffer* so much beforehand? There are a number of possibilities to consider.
 - i) It is God pouring out his wrath upon sin. Jesus "bearing the blows for us".
 - a) "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong."
 - (1) Habakkuk 1:13a (NIV)
 - ii) It was predicted in the Old Testament. Another proof of Jesus as Messiah
 - a) "But He was *wounded* for our transgressions, He was *bruised* for our iniquities; The *chastisement* for our peace was upon **Him**, And by **His stripes** we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5 NKJV)
 - iii) By his "stripes" (flogging) we are healed? What does that mean?
 - a) This is how the grace of God is revealed. By Jesus' suffering, he can relate to the *pain* we suffer. This is the release of God's grace.
 - (1) Some commentators point out that the blood is produced by the bone marrow. By the flogging, and the exposure of Jesus blood' it is poured out for the world's sake.

- b) “Thus while the Crucifixion provides for our redemption, presently and eternally, it is the stripes Jesus bore and absorbed which actually release the grace of healing for our bodies physically.” (Jon Curson)
 - (1) Peter repeats this thought in 1 Peter 2:24
 - (2) “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his **wounds** you have been healed. “(1 Pet 2:24 NIV)
- 4. Verse 4: Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." ⁵ When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"
 - a) Pilate said two times in the first five verses that he finds Jesus innocent.
 - b) Pilate was hoping that when the crowd saw Jesus in this horrible, beat up state, they would have mercy on Him and demand his release.
 - i) Pilate was appealing for the crowd's sympathy.
- 5. Verse 6: As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."
 - a) I want you to visualize was the chief priests were doing.
 - i) Ever try to manipulate a large crowd?
 - a) You do it by starting a simple chant, and repeating it over and over
 - b) You start yelling “Crucify! Crucify! Crucify! Crucify! Crucify! Crucify!
 - c) Pretty soon the crowd will join in! They may not necessarily agree, but psychologically, they want to be part of the “in” crowd.
 - d) Think about this the next time someone tells you to “go along with the crowd” or “everybody's doing it”.
 - b) When Pilate said “You take him and crucify him”, it was an act of sarcasm.
 - i) This was probably where Pilate washed his hands (but not his heart) of the crime as mentioned in Matthew 27:24.
- 6. Verse 7: The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."
 - a) The truth comes out. The Jewish leaders originally said they brought Jesus to Pilate because Jesus was rebelling against Rome. Now they are telling the truth.
 - b) Remember Jesus' prediction in Chapter 8:
 - i) “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him.” (John 8:44a NIV)
- 7. Verse 8: When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, ⁹ and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer.
 - a) Pilate understood that the Jewish leaders were claiming Jesus to being equal with God.
 - b) Some commentators theorize that Pilate, like most Romans, believed in many god's. Sometimes these “gods” came down to be with men. Pilate was now wondering if Jesus may be one of those “gods”.
 - c) Notice Verse 8 says that “Pilate was *more* afraid”. Pilate's initial fear was about the conviction of an innocent man. Now he was afraid about there may be “some truth” to the Jewish charges.
- 8. Verse 10: "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?"
 - a) Pilate's assertion of authority at this point seems almost ridiculous in comparison with the weakness and indecision he exhibited so far in this case.
 - b) This verse begs the question: Who is *really* on trial here, Pilate or Jesus?

9. Verse 11: Jesus answered, "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."
- a) Suppose you want somebody killed, but you are too scared to do it yourself. You hire a Mafia-style "hit man" to complete the job. Who is *more* guilty of murder?
 - i) In this verse, Jesus says the *more* guilty person is the group (religious) leaders because they are the ones who *hired* the "hit man"
 - ii) Pilate is the "hit man". Notice Jesus does not say Pilate is innocent.
 - a) Jesus just says the religious leaders have the "greater sin".
 - b) This verse argues that there are different levels of punishment in hell.
 - b) Jesus statement of ""You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above" is an awesome statement.
 - i) Do you realize God *appointed* Pilate to this station of power for *this* purpose!
 - ii) This is a reminder to *pray* for your political leaders. They are *appointed* by God.
 - a) "the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses." (Dan 5:21b NKJV *emphasis added*)
 - iii) "In a thousand and one circumstances, we need to remember that God is in charge of human life. The world does not recognize this. It tries to forget God. The business of Christians is to recall that he is in charge and in control of life." (Ray Steadman)
10. Verse 12: From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."
- ¹³ When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha).
- a) You may not notice this on first glance, but the religious leaders are threatening to "blackmail" Pilate.
 - i) Pilate's #1 job is not allow an uprising against the empire.
 - ii) The religious leaders are saying in effect: "if you don't crucify Jesus, we're going to tell your bosses that you allowed a rebellious, "anti-Rome" person to go free". That is what is being implied by the "friend of Caesar" comment.
 - iii) There may come a time where you have to take a stand for Jesus. This could mean losing your job. In some areas of the world *currently*, it could mean losing your life. (Pray for the persecuted church!)
 - iv) Pilate choose wrong, and is therefore condemned. He choose to save his job and condemned an innocent man to death.
 - a) Even though it was part of God's "game plan" for this to happen, it does not excuse Pilate's action. (Again we have "pre-destiny" and "free-will" played out simultaneously.)
11. Verse 14: It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.
- a) "The day of Preparation of Passover Week" does not mean they were preparing to eat the Passover feast (that was that night before).
 - i) It was the day before the "holiday" of the Sabbath.
 - b) The "sixth hour" is about 12 noon.
 - c) In Mark's Gospel, It was the third hour when they crucified him. (Mark 15:25 NIV)
 - i) This can be reconciled a number of ways. The *most likely* explanation is that John was using "Roman-time" and Mark was using "Jewish" time. The Jewish day began at sundown and the Roman day began at midnight.
 - ii) There are a handful of verses in the Bible that initially appear contradictory. There are good books written to reconcile these differences. Most Christian book stores have a section called "Apologetics". You can find these books in this section. (Apologetics is about defending your argument, not apologizing!)

12. Verse 14b: "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. ¹⁵ But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered.
 - a) Notice the dignity of Jesus. Notice Jesus is not the one on trial. The religious leaders are forced to choose (Jesus or Caesar). "Friend listen, every man must make his choice about Jesus Christ. He says that is who is not with me is against me (Matthew 12:30)" (J. Vernon McGee)
 - b) Notice again how the Jewish leaders manipulated the crowd by repeating simple chants over and over again.
 - c) The Romans' never called Caesar "king". The Jews *hated* Rome. I believe this was the Jewish leaders' trying to manipulate Pilate to execute Roman crucifixion.
13. Verse 16: Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.
 - a) Pilate finally gave in to their demands.
 - b) Pilate sacrificed truth for what he thought was security and lost *both*.
 - i) That's a danger for you & I. Compromising the truth for security.
 - ii) "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." (John 12:25 NIV)
 - iii) Great occasions do not make heroes or cowards, they simply unveil them to the eyes of men. Silently and imperceptibly, as we wake or sleep, we grow strong or we grow weak, and at last some crisis shows us what we have become.
 - a) (Bishop Wescott, Biblical scholar)
 - c) From the standpoint of the world, the Cross is nothing but a brutal murder. They see "Jesus of Nazareth". They see the man. They don't see Jesus "The Christ".
 - i) "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18 NIV)
14. Verse 17: Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). ¹⁸ Here they crucified him, and with him two others--one on each side and Jesus in the middle.
 - a) A man named Simon was picked to bear Jesus' cross (Matthew 27:32, et.al.)
 - i) "Carrying his own cross" here is probably a reference to Jesus bearing our sins.
 - b) The geographic location of "Golgotha" is debated to this day. The "most likely" spot is a tourist attraction when visiting Israel. There is also a secondary "possible" spot that is debated among archeologists.
 - c) "Crucifixion with two others" is another fulfilled prediction:
 - i) "because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors (sinners)." (Isaiah 53:12b)
 - ii) To those not familiar with Isaiah Chapter 53, it (along with Psalm 22) is one of the greatest single chapters to the fact that Jesus is Messiah. The "Jews for Jesus" are famous for putting out full page ads in Jewish communities that read "Why do you ignore Isaiah Chapter 53?"
 - d) Most Bible commentators and archeologists believe the same hill that Jesus was crucified, was the same hill that Abraham offered Issac as described in Genesis 22.
 - i) The study of Abraham's offering of Issac is a *detailed* model of God's offering of Jesus on the cross (& one of my favorite topics!) Some examples:
 - a) God told Abraham to offer his son. In Abraham's mind Issac was dead. The actual event took place 3 days later, where Issac was spared!
 - b) Issac carried the wood for the sacrifice!
 - c) Abraham was mentioned coming off the mountain but not Issac!
 - d) We don't read of Issac again, until a "bride" is prepared for Him!

15. Verse 19: Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read:
JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 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. 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."
 - a) John did not dwell on the physical horror of the cross. It was well known to the readers and did not want to dwell on it.
 - b) The sign of "King of the Jews" was written in the 3 languages of the day and location: Greek, Latin and Aramaic. Aramaic was the Hebrew dialect of the day. It would be like us saying "It was written in American English".
16. Verse 22: Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."
 - a) This is Pilate's psychological revenge on the Jewish leaders for forcing his decision.
 - b) "What I have written, I have written" means "take it and deal with it".
 - c) It is sobering to think that you cannot change the past, you cannot take back words you wish you had not said. What we have written we have written. Pilate speaks for all of us in his remarks on the impossibility of changing the past. Only God can cleanse it. (Ray Steadman)
17. Verse 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. 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 which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did.
 - a) Usually the clothing of crucified man became the property of executioners.
 - b) The writer John states another fulfillment of prophecy.
 - i) They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing. (Psalm 22:18 NIV)
 - ii) For those of you who never studied Psalm 22, it reads like it was written first hand from the Cross. One of the things Jesus says from the cross is the opening line of Psalm 22.
 - a) The most powerful line of this cross, written *centuries* before Jesus was born, or even before crucifixion was *ever invented* is Verse 16:
(1) they have pierced my hands and my feet. (Psalm 22:16b NIV)
 - c) Sometimes we forgot that Jesus was left to hang on the cross naked. With his shame He bore the shame of our sins.
 - d) A lot of commentators make the point that the "seamless undergarment" is a reference to Jesus our "High Priest". This is one of the roles of Jesus in heaven. To "make intercession" of our requests to God. This is why we pray "In Jesus name".
 - i) God appointed the descendants of Aaron (Moses' brother) to be "The High Priest". One of the requirements of "The High Priest" wore a seamless garment when interceding for the prayers of the people.
18. Now we switch views to the people staring at Jesus on the cross: Verse 25: Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," ²⁷ and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.
 - a) What Jesus is saying to his mother was "John (the writer) is going to take care of you for now on. Remember that Jesus had five brothers. Why did Jesus put Mary in John's hands, and not his brothers?"
 - b) "I am a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my own mother's sons;" (Psalm 69:8 NIV)

- c) John could give to Mary what his brothers could not, an understanding of His sorrow.
 - i) I find God does that in our life too. I'm always amazed when people go through some sort of tragedy, God brings into their lives another person who can relate to the pain they can go through. Also keep this in mind when God puts *you* through some sort of tragedy, God may use that in the future to comfort another person.
 - d) Many commentators believe Mary's sister was mother of James and John.
 - i) This would make the writer John, a cousin of Jesus (again, speculation).
 - e) One of the details omitted in the Gospel of John is the discussion between the other two people on the cross and Jesus (Luke 23:39-43).
 - i) John's temporary absence (to take Mary home) may explain the omission of some of the details found including Jesus' dialogue with the criminals who were crucified with Jesus.
19. Verse 28: Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. ³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.
- a) Jesus didn't accept a pain-numbing drink at the beginning of His ordeal (Mark 15:23), but now He accepts a taste of greatly diluted wine, to wet parched lips and a dry throat so He can make one final announcement to the world with a "great cry" (David Guzik)
 - b) When Jesus said "It is finished", it was a cry of victory. Today, we would raise our fist in the air and yell "It is finished" to describe the same feeling.
 - c) The Greek word (roughly "tel-eh'-o) literally means "paid in full". Like paying off the final payment on your car and getting the "pink slip" in your hands.
 - i) There is *nothing* you can do to add to your salvation. It is paid in full.
 - d) An interesting bit of trivia. Psalm 22, which I mentioned is written "as if it were written by Jesus on the cross", when translated by the Jews into Greek (3-4 centuries before Christ), ends with the same Greek word tel-eh'-o (it reads different in English).
 - i) Psalm 22 begins with "My God, My God why have you forsaken me?"
 - ii) Psalm 22 ends (in the Greek) with the expression that means "paid in full".
20. Verse 31: Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. 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. ³² The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵ The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶ These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," ³⁷ and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."
- a) Isn't it interesting that the soldiers disobeyed a *direct order* to fulfill prophecy! (Vs. 32)
 - b) The "water and blood" pouring out can be medically explained. Several people with medical backgrounds have written papers & books describing the medical conditions of death caused by crucifixion. The scriptures validates their findings.
 - c) John spends a lot of time in this chapter talking about fulfilling of prophecy.
 - i) John understands the impossibility of breaking the scripture.

- d) Another interesting side study is to compare Jesus to the original “Passover Lamb” as described in Exodus Chapter 12.
 - i) “It must be eaten inside one house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones. (Exodus 12:46 NIV)
 - ii) Now re-read Verse 36: ““Not one of his bones will be broken,”
 - e) I want to point out Verse 37 again: ³⁷ and, as another scripture says, “They will look on the one they have pierced.”
 - i) This is the only prophecy mentioned in John 19 that is *future*.
 - ii) There are over 300 Old Testament prophecy’s fulfilled of Jesus’ first coming.
 - iii) There are over 600 Bible prophecy’s *to be* fulfilled of Jesus second coming!
 - a) This is one of them right here.
 - iv) There will come a day when the nation of Israel will admit their mistake
 - a) Isn’t it interesting how Israel is a nation again after almost 2,000 years!
 - v) This scripture is taken from the Old Testament Book of Zechariah:
 - a) They will look on me, the one 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. (Zechariah 12:10b NIV).
 - f) Last comment on this section, Verse 35 again: The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe
 - i) Why does John go to all the trouble of pointing out these prophecies?
 - a) “and he (John) testifies so that you also may believe.
 - (1) That’s the purpose of the Gospel of John in a single verse!
 - (2) John wants to show you the evidence for Jesus is overwhelming.
21. Last set of verses & a new topic: Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴⁰ Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹ At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴² Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.
- a) There’s a cute joke that asks why would Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Pilate said: “You want to give your new grave to this criminal, What for?” Joseph responded, “Big deal, it’s only for the weekend” ☺
 - b) Joseph of Arimathea is mentioned in all 4 gospels Matthew says he is wealthy, Mark says he is a member of Jewish ruling council (The Sanhedrid) Luke said that he did not concur with vote to condemn Jesus.
 - i) Joseph’s request for the body was an open confession of his faith.
 - c) Nicodemus is a case study all unto Himself.
 - i) We first meet him in Chapter 3 where he is “intrigued” by Jesus.
 - ii) We next hear of him in Chapter 7 where he tries to argue to the Jewish council to have an “open mind” about Him.
 - iii) Now we read about him preparing Jesus’ body for burial.
 - iv) I believe (but can’t prove) Nicodemus was saved. He falls in the category of people who “slowly, bit by bit”, become a Christian.

- d) Joseph and Nicodemus served Christ too late. Not too late to fulfill prophecy, not too late to be of tender service to Christ. But too late to satisfy their own timid hearts; too late to escape the painful regret of what they might have been and what they might have done for Christ. May we never wait to give ourselves fully to Christ!
(David Guzik)
 - e) The way to motivate people to serve Christ is not to make them feel guilty, not to put pressure on them, not to try and manipulate their emotions, but simply to allow them, like Nicodemus and Joseph to see what He did for them on the Cross. (Jon Curson)
 - f) Some commentators like to compare “this garden” (Verse 41), where Jesus was buried to the original “Garden of Eden”.
 - i) Sin entered the world through one garden.
 - ii) In another garden the price was paid for this sin.
 - iii) For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:22 NIV)
22. One of the things I kept coming back to in this chapter was the words “Day of Preparation”
- a) It is used 3 times in this chapter.
 - i) Each time it was to describe a different action that took place.
 - ii) Why? (This bothered me all week. I go off on strange tangents some time. ☺)
 - iii) I think John likes to deal in “double references”. This is common throughout out John’s Gospel. There is the immediate reference & the “higher” references.
 - a) There “immediate” references were all to actions as to not violate Jewish laws and customs.
 - b) The “higher” reference of “Day of Preparation” is a reference to God’s great “game plan” as I like to call it.
 - b) This was the Day of “Preparation” preparing us for?
 - i) In one context it is the resurrection. That is Chapter 20.
 - a) The resurrection is God’s validation of accepting what Jesus did.
 - ii) But I believe the “preparation” is also for us!
 - a) All of this “preparation” was for us, the church, His people:
 - b) But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9 NIV)
23. Let’s Pray: Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for the lessons you have taught us in these verses. Help us not to be like Pilate, and compromise our faith for security. For in those cases, we lose both. Help us to understand prophecy, to remind us through the overwhelming evidence that your word *is* truth, and is validated through the scriptures. Help us to not be like a Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who out of fear of their own reputation would not take a stand for Jesus. And finally, help us to comprehend more and more, the price *you* paid for us in the garden, that we may dwell with you forever. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.

Supplement: The debate over “three days and three nights”

There is a traditional debate in Christianity that asks the question: If Jesus was crucified on “Good Friday”, and rose again on “Easter Sunday”, how could he be in the grave 3 *full* days and *full* nights? You can make a good Biblical case for either a 3 “full” days or 3 “partial” days viewpoint. Since this question often comes up when discussing the crucifixion, I thought I would summarize each viewpoint:

“3 *full* days & nights” argument: This argument is that Jesus was in the grave for three full days and nights (72 hours), being crucified on Wednesday. The key scripture is Matthew 12:40. It says: “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth. (*emphasis added*, New King James Version). There are subtle references in the Gospels where one can build a case for a “Wednesday” crucifixion.

“3 *partial* days & nights” argument: Most scholars believe that Jesus was crucified on Friday. They take the phrase “Three days and nights” to be a Hebrew figure of speech referring to any part of three days and nights. The Hebrew phrase “day and night” does not necessarily mean a complete 24 period. Psalm 1:2 has a reference to meditating on God’s word “day and night”. It does not mean one literally has to read the Bible all day and all night. Second it is clear from the use of the phrase “three days and three nights” in the Book of Esther (Ester 4:16) that it does not mean 72 hours. In Esther, they fasted three days and nights. In Chapter 5 Verse 1 of Esther, she appeared before the king “on the third day” Therefore, in the case of Esther, it is not 3 full days.

Source: “When Critics Ask” Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe.