

The Jews Sealed Their Fate by Saying, “Crucify Him!”

John 19:1-24

Bible Teacher in Training: Sister Stephanie Wyche

I. Historical Background & Biblical Context

A. Historical Background

The Book of John (cooperatively with Mathew, Mark, and Luke) account the life, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. His coming was part of God’s Plan of Salvation which was orchestrated out of God’s love, grace, and mercy for man after the Fall (Genesis 3) and paves the pathway to our salvation and to eternal life with God. The prophets and prophesies in the Old Testaments and John the Baptist in the New Testament pointed to the coming of Jesus, who would redeem and atone for sin.

Many events occurred in John leading up to where we are studying today in Chapter 19. In John’s account, Jesus performed seven signs that revealed He was, and is, the “Son of God”. Even so, there were still many who did not believe or failed to openly acknowledge and act on their beliefs due to fear (John 12:42-43). There were many divisions, disputes, skepticism, questions, and unbelief among the Jews throughout the book of John: John 2:18-20; John 6:60-66; John 7:12-13; 25-52; John 8; John 9:13-34; John 10:22-39; John 11:45-53; John 12:37-43; and John 18:19-24. A plot was conspired by the Pharisees and chief priests to capture and execute Jesus (John 11:46-53).

Much later, in John 18, Jesus was betrayed, arrested, and questioned by the high priest. Before the entire Sanhedrin, Jesus openly admits that He is the Son of God to the high priests, the elders, and the Pharisees (Matthew 26:64-66; Mark 14:61-62). They did not believe Him; and in their unbelief, they *condemned Jesus to death*. Then *they made plans to have Jesus executed* (Matthew 27:1) and handed Jesus over to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. The Romans could execute; but the Jews could not

(John 18:31). The Jews expressed their allegations to Pilate, but Pilate found Jesus to be innocent. As a Passover custom, the Roman governor was to release one prisoner of the Jew's selection. The Jews chose to release Barabbas (John 18:39-40).

B. Biblical Context

Believing in Jesus and **believing that Jesus is the Son of God** is talked about heavily throughout the book of John.

- ❖ God sent Jesus to this world so that all who **believe in Jesus** can inherit eternal life (John 3:16-18).
- ❖ All who **believe in Jesus** have eternal life (John 3:36, 6:49).
- ❖ To do the work of God, **believe in Jesus** (John 6:29).
- ❖ The Father's Will is that everyone who **believes in the Son** (Jesus) may have everlasting life (John 6:40).
- ❖ All who **believe in Jesus** also believe in the Father. *The Son* and *The Father* are one and the same (John 12:44-45).
- ❖ **Accepting Jesus** means accepting the Father (John 13:20).

These scriptures reveal that salvation and eternal life will only come to those who believe in Jesus and believe that He is the Son of God. The scriptures also warn about what will happen to those who do not believe and do not accept Jesus.

- ❖ All who *reject* Jesus will not see eternal life and will face God's wrath. (John 3:36).
- ❖ All who *reject* Jesus and His message will be condemned and judged on the last day (John 12:48).

II. The Lesson: The Jews Sealed Their Fate by Saying, "Crucify Him!" (John 19:1-24)

John 19:1-24, in conjunction with Matthew 27:11-27, Mark 15:1-26, and Luke 23:1-34, explicitly portray the sentencing and crucifixion of Jesus.

Pilate already declared that Jesus was innocent (John 18:38), but still ordered his soldiers to severely punish Him in John 19:1-3. The soldiers flogged Jesus, beating him with a whip repeatedly, which ripped and tore His body as the whip made contact and pulled away each time. Then they mocked Jesus, because He revealed Himself as the Messiah, as a king. They crafted a crown of thorns and set the crown of thorns on Jesus' head. The thorns cutting, piercing, and drilling into His hair, scalp, and head - as they put it on His head and as He wore it. The soldiers dressed Jesus in a purple robe to imitate the royalty, elegance, and nobility of a king. Then, the soldiers continued and topped it off by saying "Hail, King of the Jews", used to mock a greeting one would make to a king. Matthew and Mark stated the soldiers put a staff in Jesus's hand and bowed down in the front of Jesus to further ridicule Him (Matthew 27:29, Mark 15:19). After this, they struck Jesus in His face repeatedly to torture and humiliate Him. What Jesus suffered was cruel and unjust, because He did no wrong and nothing to deserve it.

1. vv. 4: Pilate did not find any evidence that supported the charges that the Jews had brought against Jesus.

The Jews accused Jesus of many things. In John 18:29, Jesus was accused of being a criminal. In Luke 23:2,6,11, the Jews accused Jesus of undermining the authorities, laws, and orders of the nation; publicly speaking against paying taxes to Caesar; 'claiming' to be the Messiah; and inciting rebellion. Pilate reviewed each claim, but could not find any of the charges worthy of death (Luke 23:15).

Verse 4 says "Once more..."; this was the second time that Pilate told the Jews this. Pilate clarified and emphasized again to the Jews that He found "*no fault*", no wrong, and no substance in their claims against Jesus.

2. vv. 5-6: The chief priest and elders shouted "Crucify! Crucify!"

Pilate brought Jesus back out before the crowd. When the Jews saw Jesus bloodied and beaten with a purple robe and crown of thorns, they still demanded for Jesus to be crucified – to be nailed to a cross, publicly hung, and put to death. **The Jewish leaders knew what they were calling for.** In Matthew 27:20, it was the chief priest and the elders who influenced the crowd to demand for Jesus to be executed. They wanted Jesus to face this death. By calling for Jesus to be crucified, they **outwardly declared their hate for Jesus**, thus sealing their fate.

Pilate responded to them telling the Jews to take Jesus and crucify Him. A third time, Pilate accentuated that he did not find a fault or reason behind why they were calling for Jesus to be crucified. **In other words, Jesus was innocent!**

The Jews by insisting that Jesus be Crucified Sealed their own Fate!

3. vv. 7-11 (KJV): “By our law, he ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.”

The Jews were trying to persuade Pilate that executing Jesus would be justified by their laws. The Jews were referring to the law about putting to death anyone who brings offense or misuses the name of God (Leviticus 24:16). They used this law, because of their unbelief that Jesus is the Son of God. The Jews then continue to say that Jesus “*made Himself the Son of God.*” This further implied that the Jews did not believe Jesus was sent from the Father, but instead that Jesus had put himself in that position on his own authority. Once again, this shows **the degree of unbelief** that the Jews had about Jesus being the Son of God. Additionally, the Jews **outwardly declared their rejection** of everything Jesus said, thus sealing their fate.

Hearing the Jew's accusation, Pilate became afraid. He went to Jesus to reexamine with the hopes of finding more proof of innocence. He asked Jesus where he came from, but Jesus did not respond. Recall, Jesus had already responded to this question (John 18:36). Shocked by the silence, Pilate asserted his power, the power to release or crucify. Jesus inform Pilate that his power, authority, and position (as governor) come from God. Jesus then continues on to say that the one who brought Him to Pilate has a greater sin. As we know, the Jews brought Jesus to Pilate (John 18:35). Pilate is guilty of sin too. However, the Jews are **guilty of a greater sin**, further sealing their fate.

4. vv. 12-15: “We have no king but Caesar!” (NIV)

After this, Pilate kept trying to persuade the crowd to set Jesus free, but the crowd kept the pressure on him.

In verse 12, the Jews challenged Pilate's allegiance to the Roman emperor, Caesar. To the Jews if Pilate released Jesus, then he could no longer consider himself “a friend” – supporter or loyal – to Caesar, because Jesus claimed to be a king which opposed the kingship of Caesar. Every Roman was under the authority of Caesar; Pilate was no exception. Furthermore, Pilate had a governing role in Rome, and therefore had to acknowledge Caesar as king. The Jews were using this against Pilate to guilt and condemn Pilate into meeting their demands. This shows just how cunning the Jewish leaders were.

Later in verse 15, the Jews persistently called for Jesus to be taken away and crucified. By uttering the words “*We have no king but Caesar*” (NIV), they **rejected Jesus** and **fully dissociated with Jesus** by claiming that Caesar was their king. In Matthew 27:25, the Jews take full ownership of their demands.

5. vv. 16-24: “Do Not Write King of the Jews!” (NIV)

Pilate satisfied the demands of the people and sent Jesus to be crucified. As a custom of Roman crucifixion, a sign is prepared and placed on each person’s cross to state their crime. The sign Pilate prepared for Jesus read “Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews” (vs. 19). It was written in all languages so that everyone could read and understand it. The Jews complained about this sign in verse 21 and **rejected Jesus as their king** once more. **By doing so, the Jews sealed their own fate!**

III. Conclusion

Jesus was innocent! All of the Jew’s actions and shouting “Crucify Him!” solidified their unbelief and thus sealed their fate.

Reflection Questions for You:

- Is Jesus your king?
- Do you believe that Jesus is the one who God sent?
- Do you wholeheartedly stand by what you believe?