

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

JOHN 19:16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led *him* away.

17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew **Golgotha**:

18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was, **JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS**.

20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin.

21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.

28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

NOTES

Crucifixion and Death

Lesson Text: John 19:16-30

Related Scriptures: Psalm 22:12-18; Matthew 27:27-56;
Mark 15:16-32; Luke 23:26-43

TIME: A.D. 30

PLACE: Jerusalem

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GOLDEN TEXT—"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30).

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Lesson Exposition

CHRIST CRUCIFIED—John 19:16-22

Pilate tried to release Jesus, but the religious leaders insinuated that such an action would be tantamount to treason against Caesar (vs. 12).

Pilate did not want to be perceived as treasonous, so he relented, giving the order for Jesus to be crucified.

Suffering the cross (John 19:16-18). The place of execution was known as "Golgotha" or "Calvary" (cf. Luke 23:33); both words mean "skull."

Two criminals were also crucified along with Jesus, fulfilling Isaiah 53:9 and 12: "He made his grave with the wicked" and "he was numbered with the transgressors."

Inscription controversy (John 19:19-22). Since crucifixions were carried out in public, a placard was often placed on the cross of the condemned person to identify the criminal and the crime for which he was being executed. This was usually for inspiring fear in the populace rather than for merely informational purposes.

Since the Jewish leaders had convinced Pilate to execute Jesus because He claimed to be the King of the

Jews, Pilate had that title inscribed on His cross.

So that anyone would be able to understand what was written, the inscription was presented in three languages: Aramaic (the language spoken by most Jews at this time, usually known as "Hebrew" to Greeks and Romans), Latin (the official language of the Roman Empire), and Greek (the universal language of the known world at this time, and used by the writers of the New Testament).

The chief priests were highly indignant about this inscription. They wanted Pilate to change the message to say that Jesus only *claimed* to be the King of the Jews (19:21). But Pilate was no longer in a mood to accommodate the Jewish leaders, and so he refused to give their request any consideration. He told them brusquely, "What I have written I have written" (vs. 22).

PROPHECY FULFILLED— John 19:23-24

It was a common practice at this time for those on the death detail to simply divide the clothing and oth-

er personal possessions of the condemned among themselves. There were four soldiers at the cross, so most of Jesus' clothing was parceled out among them in four ways.

But they were still left with Jesus' coat, or tunic, which was woven in one piece with no seams. Rather than tear this garment into four ruined rags, the soldiers decided on gambling to see who would get the whole garment.

PROVISION ARRANGED— John 19:25-27

While the chosen followers largely forsook Jesus after His arrest, there were some disciples who remained faithful during that time. Among them were certain women who stood near His cross. Jesus' own mother, Mary, stood there.

The disciple whom Jesus loved has traditionally been understood as a reference to the author of the fourth Gospel, the apostle John himself.

When Jesus said to Mary, "Behold thy son!" (vs. 26), He was telling her she should now think of John as her son; he would be taking His place. Then, when He said to John, "Behold thy mother!" (vs. 27), He was likewise telling John he should now consider Mary his mother. It was a means whereby Jesus could be assured that Mary would be cared for.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED— John 19:28-30

Hour of sacrifice (John 19:28-29). Jesus was taking away the sins of the world on the cross through the perfect, once-for-all sacrifice of Himself.

Indeed, "all things were now accomplished" (19:28). And knowing that all was accomplished, Jesus fulfilled one more prophecy by declaring aloud the thirst He experienced on the cross.

Psalm 69:21 says, "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." The

vinegar was a cheap wine vinegar.

Hyssop is also known as Syrian oregano. It is an herb used both as a seasoning and also in religious rituals (Heb. 9:19). Here it was a long branch or bunch of hyssop that had a sponge attached to it, and it was used to offer a drink to Jesus to assuage His thirst.

It is finished! (John 19:30). After receiving the wine vinegar, Jesus declared, "It is finished," a single word in the original language. The term was often used at the completion of a contract, as when a debt was paid in full. Far from an admission of defeat, "It is finished" is an affirmation of victory! Jesus' redemptive work to save lost sinners was now accomplished.

—John Alva Owston.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Pilate finally give in to the demands of the chief priests?
2. What was another name for Golgotha, and what did it mean?
3. Who was crucified alongside Christ?
4. What was the purpose of the placard on the cross?
5. In what languages was the message on the placard written? Why?
6. How did Pilate respond to the request to change the words on the placard?
7. What happened to Jesus' clothing?
8. How did Jesus make provision for His mother?
9. Why did Christ utter the words "I thirst" (John 19:28)?
10. What is the significance of Jesus' declaration "It is finished" (vs. 30)?

—John Alva Owston.

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. Jesus bore His cross for us; we are called to bear ours for Him (John 19:16-18).
2. Those who do not know the Lord may unwittingly testify to who He is (vss. 19-20).
3. God uses even the mockery of unbelievers to shine light on the truth (vss. 21-22).
4. Everything that the Lord declares will come to pass in exact detail (vss. 23-24).
5. Even in His suffering, Jesus looked to the needs of those He loved (vss. 25-27).
6. We can trust Jesus fully because He has finished His work (vss. 28-30).

—Charity G. Carter.

Golden Text Illuminated

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost” (John 19:30).

When I was a child, I always wondered why they gave Jesus vinegar for His thirst. Maybe it reduced pain, I thought. But that was not really the reason. Jesus knew the Hebrew Bible, and one of His last prophecies to fulfill was Psalm 69:21, which speaks of the Messiah ingesting vinegar. Roman soldiers were not known for their kindness or respect for condemned criminals. Rather than honor a dying man’s last wish, they mocked His thirst with bitter drink.

John records that on the cross, Jesus mustered the lung power for His final proclamation: “It is finished.”

The text does not say that Jesus’ head drooped, but rather, “He bowed his head.” When it says Jesus “gave up the ghost,” it is not envisioning paranormal activity. The phrase simply means that He surrendered His spirit to God.

I did not understand the emotions accompanying death until I spent time with the elderly in the 1990s.

The conversations that I *have* had with elderly believers have not always been what I would expect. Many talk hopefully about heaven and seeing God, but others have regrets about children, a spouse, or something they wish that they had or had not done.

Comparing my experiences with the dying to Jesus’ death, I now recognize that His approach was fully human. He did not use His deity to make it easier.

—David Samuel Gifford.

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Why did Pilate hand Jesus over to be killed when he had previously found absolutely no fault with Him (John 19:16; cf. vs. 6)?
2. The sign that Pilate hung above Jesus was offensive to the Jewish leaders. Why might Pilate have refused to change it (vs. 22)?
3. It seems that only one disciple was at the cross. Where were the other disciples (vss. 25-26)? List some possibilities.
4. Why did Jesus tell His mother and the disciple He loved that they were now mother and son (vss. 26-27)?

—Charity G. Carter.