

John 19

- In tonight's teaching, we conclude the trial before Pilate and go directly into the passion of Christ on the cross
 - We've reached the moment where Jesus is standing before Pilate
 - He's bloodied, beaten and whipped beyond recognition
 - Pilate is trying to release Jesus, since it's clear that Jesus has done nothing wrong
 - Yet the crowd below, egged on by the Pharisees, continues to insist that Jesus would be crucified
 - It a scene reminiscent of times when crowds encourage a would-be suicidal teenager to jump from the ledge of a building
 - It's pure bloodlust
 - And it's evidence of the evil and darkness of their hearts
 - Knowing how the enemy has been actively working to bring about this outcome from the beginning suggests his excitement must have been at a fever pitch
 - Imagine Satan's anticipation at putting Christ to death
 - There must have been a legion of demons in and around that crowd working to bring about Christ's death
 - How maniacal, how crazed they must have looked and sounded
 - Which explains why Pilate is so perplexed by their determination to see Jesus killed
- In the end, however, we know it's the Father orchestrating these events, through the agency of Satan and sinful men
 - Therefore, the enemy may be doing what he believes is best, yet he's playing right into the Father's hands
 - So now we rejoin Pilate and Jesus as they stand before the crowd

[John 19:5](#) Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!"

[John 19:6](#) So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him."

[John 19:7](#) The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God."

[John 19:8](#) Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid;

[John 19:9](#) and he entered into the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

[John 19:10](#) So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?"

[John 19:11](#) Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

- At the emergence of Jesus before the crowd, the call was to crucify Him
 - Not even Jesus' horrifying appearance was enough to satisfy the crowd's demands for blood
 - This is further evidence of their dark hearts
 - And of the enemy's powerful influence in that moment
 - They have no rationale explanation for wanting Jesus dead
 - He hasn't harmed anyone, sinned against anyone
 - He hasn't broken any laws
 - He has healed, He has taught, He has raised people from the dead
 - And yet here they are calling for Him to die
- Pilate isn't a very sympathetic figure in this drama, nor should he be
 - He's a man easily manipulated, he's timid and in the end he allows an innocent man to be murdered
 - Nevertheless, we can at least say he does seem hesitant to agree with the crowd's requests
 - We see him working very hard to convince the crowd not to demand Jesus' death

- In fact, this scene in John 19 is the fourth time Pilate has attempted to offer to free Jesus before the crowd
- After his fourth attempt is rebuffed, Pilate responds to the crowd in disgust, saying that they should crucify Jesus themselves
 - It's an empty offer, because the Jews could not crucify Jesus on their own
 - Therefore, we know Pilate was merely speaking out of frustration that they wouldn't relent
- What's truly important in Pilate's words is found at the end of his statement
 - Pilate, by his own admission, found Jesus guilty of absolutely nothing
 - Jesus is an innocent man according to Pilate's judgment
 - Nevertheless, Pilate has not released Jesus as any judge should do when faced with an innocent man
 - Moreover, Pilate has beaten and abused his Prisoner to within an inch of His life even though he knows Jesus to be innocent of all charges
 - Pilate is undoubtedly culpable in Jesus' murder
- In response to Pilate's comment, the crowd responds that their Law requires Jesus die for He calls Himself the Son of God
 - The Jews were referring to the charge of blasphemy leveled against Jesus by the Sanhedrin
 - Under Jewish Law, anyone claiming to be Messiah but who was not must be put to death
 - Jesus has been accused of this crime, yet He has vindicated Himself throughout His three years of ministry
 - The people and the leaders saw the evidence that Jesus was Messiah
 - Nevertheless, men preferred the darkness
 - The crowd's statement rattle's Pilate's cage all the more, and now he's fearful

- I suspect his fear comes from hearing that Jesus might be a god
- Though John doesn't mention Pilate's wife, the other Gospels tell us that Pilate's wife experienced a powerful dream that night
- She was so disturbed by it, she relayed what she had dreamed to Pilate in the middle of these proceedings
- Her message had come to Pilate just as he was offering Jesus and Barabbas to the crowd
- Imagine what Pilate must have thought when he received a note from his wife telling her husband to steer clear of Jesus, for He was a righteous man
 - His wife couldn't have known that Pilate was involved in these proceedings
 - Even less could she have appreciated the decision Pilate was facing at that moment
 - He must have wondered greatly over that warning
- And now he hears that Jesus is claiming to be a god
 - The Romans were pagans and polytheistic
 - They accepted the idea of multiple gods ruling and competing with one another
 - So the idea that Jesus was a god meant something very different to Pilate than it would to the Jews
 - Ironically, Pilate shows more concern for Jesus' claims than do the Jews
- Pilate goes back inside, and asks Jesus where He was from?
 - Pilate knew Jesus was from Galilee, so His question is targeting a deeper issue
 - He's asking Jesus whether He originated in a spiritual world or earthly world
 - In a round about way, Pilate is trying to understand if Jesus is a god
 - Interestingly, Jesus refuses to answer this question

- Why is Jesus willing discuss other points with Pilate but not this one?
- Isaiah says:

**Is. 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.**

- Isaiah foretells that Jesus would be oppressed and afflicted in misery and injustice
- And yet He won't open His mouth
- We've seen Jesus speaking all along the way during His various trials, so what does Isaiah mean when he says that Jesus didn't open His mouth
 - He means that Jesus never undertook an effort to defend Himself
 - Isaiah means that Jesus went to the cross willingly
 - He made no effort to stop the mistreatment
 - He said nothing to exonerate Himself
 - Pilate's earlier questions didn't hold the potential to persuade Pilate to release Jesus
 - But now that Pilate is fearful and wondering if Jesus is divine, Jesus clams up
 - He won't do anything to undermine the process the Father has put in progress
 - Can we even begin to imagine what this was like for Jesus?
 - Knowing He was on the way to the cross
 - Having already been beaten to the point of disfigurement
 - Already in unimaginable pain
 - And He suffers these things while having the power to stop it
 - And now we see He must play along to ensure it proceeds

- Jesus was so innocent and underserving of this death that He has to work at not being let go
- So in v.10, Pilate grows frustrated as Jesus' lack of cooperation, and in amazement he asks Jesus if He knows that Pilate is His only hope
 - Jesus says that Pilate's authority over Him was power given to Pilate from the Father
 - Notice Jesus doesn't say Pilate has no power
 - Jesus says that power has been given with a purpose from God
 - In fact, Paul tells us in Romans that all government exists by God's hand
 - And then Jesus adds that since Pilate is working under an authority given to him by God, his sin is not as great as the one who delivered Jesus to Pilate
 - Notice here that Jesus doesn't say that Pilate has no sin in this matter
 - On the contrary, Jesus implies that Pilate is sinning in how he is treating Jesus
 - But there is a greater sin in this process
- This statement is one we could probably explore all evening, though we won't
 - First, this statement teaches that there are degrees of sin
 - Any sin is enough to separate us from God, but some sin is worse than others
 - If all sin is offensive to God, then in what way can one sin be worse?
 - The answer is in the punishment it requires
 - All sin puts men in Hell apart from the grace of God in Christ
 - But some places in Hell are worse than others, so it would seem
 - Secondly, Jesus offers Pilate some consolation that he won't be in the hottest part of Hell; that's been reserved for those who handed Jesus to Pilate

- Who is this “one” that will receive a worse punishment for handing Jesus over to Pilate?
- We might assume he means Judas, but Judas didn’t hand Jesus over to Pilate directly
- And the chain of custody was filled with men from the priests to Annas to Caiaphas to Herod who could be blamed for handing Jesus over
- Therefore, I personally believe Jesus was referring to Satan, who was the ultimate authority behind Jesus’ betrayal
 - Satan was inside Judas when Judas betrayed Jesus
 - Satan was working through the Jewish leaders
 - And now Satan is influencing Pilate
- So while Pilate claims to hold all the cards, he doesn’t realize that he is a puppet being made to dance by a puppet master
 - Not even a warning from his wife can move Pilate
 - If Pilate has power to kill Jesus, it’s only because God has chosen to use Pilate for that purpose
 - But the true power working in Pilate and the others has been Satan
 - And even Satan is a under the Father’s control
 - As John is showing, this is Jesus giving up His life for us
- Having gotten no where with Jesus, Pilate returns to trying to persuade the crowd

John 19:12 As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, “If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar.”

John 19:13 Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

John 19:14 Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, “Behold, your King!”

[John 19:15](#) So they cried out, “Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.”

[John 19:16](#) So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified.

- The crowd would not let relent, and finally they happened upon a charge Pilate couldn't ignore
 - It wasn't a charge against Jesus; it was a charge against Pilate
 - The crowd said that if Pilate didn't crucify Jesus, then the people would say that Pilate wasn't a friend of Caesar
 - They were threatening to turn Pilate in as a disloyal leader, which could be fatal for Pilate as well
 - So Pilate is finished fighting, and he sends an innocent Man to His death
 - He has only his own interests in mind, not the cause of justice
 - Pilate comes out before the people with Jesus in tow and seats himself in a judgment seat
 - This seat, called the bema seat in Greek, is the formal place for pronouncing sentence
 - The chair is placed on a place called “The Pavement,” an area of pavement stones forming a courtyard outside the Antonia Fortress
 - This would have been a place well known in John's day, even after the temple was destroyed decades earlier
 - Giving this detail gave John's readers a point of reference to make these events all the more real
- As the sentence of crucifixion is pronounced, John gives an important time reference
 - It's the sixth hour on the day of preparation
 - The sixth hour in Roman time keeping would be 6:00 AM
 - Mark's Gospel records Jesus placed on the cross at the third hour, according a Judean method of counting from sunrise, which would be 9:00 AM

- So it seems three hours passed between the moment the sentence is pronounced and the moment Jesus is raised up on the cross
- The day of preparation refers to the day before a Sabbath
 - Jews used this day to prepare for the day to come when no work could be done
 - This reference has led many to conclude that this day was Friday, since the Sabbath comes on Saturday
- But there was a second Sabbath on this week
 - The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is also a Sabbath
 - That Feast immediately follows Passover
 - So the day after Passover is always a Sabbath no matter what day of the week it lands upon
- Why does John mention this hour at this moment?
 - I believe he does so to connect Jesus' death directly to the events of Passover
 - On the day of Passover, the sacrifice of the spotless lambs began at daybreak in the temple
 - Many thousands of lambs were sacrificed on this day in the temple, so the work began early
 - It will continue all day until the mid afternoon when the national lamb is sacrificed
 - Then the people retreat to their homes to eat their lambs before sundown
 - So Jesus' death takes place during the time between the sixth hour when He is sentenced to death until He dies on the cross at 3:00 PM
 - This is the same period of time for the slaying of the Passover lambs
 - John is clearly demonstrating Jesus as the Lamb of God
 - While the people of Israel were preoccupied with sacrificing their lambs, the Father was at work sacrificing His Lamb

- John's reference to the day of preparation also gives us an important clue to arriving at the day of Jesus' death
 - Let's review what we find in scripture concerning Jesus' death, working backwards
 - First, Luke and Matthew tell us that Jesus was raised before sunrise on the first day of the week

Luke 24:1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

Luke 24:2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

Luke 24:3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

- The first day of the week in Jesus day was the same as it is for us today: Sunday
- Matthew says the women went to the tomb before dawn and yet it was empty
- So Jesus rose before sunrise on Sunday
- Secondly, Jesus told us how long He would be in the tomb

Matt. 12:40 for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

- Jesus says He will be present in the tomb on three successive periods of daylight and darkness
- Counting full twelve-hour periods of daylight or darkness is not necessarily
- Jews commonly counted any part of a day or night as equally the whole
- So Jesus will spend some part of three days and three nights in the grave
- So let's count backward to find the day Jesus entered the tomb
 - We start counting with Saturday night, since Jesus was resurrected before dawn on Sunday

- Then we continue backward with Saturday day, Friday night, Friday day, Thursday night, and Thursday day
- Jesus must have entered the tomb on Thursday daytime (prior to sunset)
- In doing so, Jesus was in the grave three days and three nights
- We find confirmation in several ways
 - First, if Passover was a Thursday, then Wednesday night was the start of Passover
 - This corresponds to the days Jesus spent in the city prior to His death
 - Jesus entered the city on a Sunday and spent four days teaching in the temple according to the Gospels
 - This period corresponds to the four-day period for inspection of the Passover Lamb required by the Law
 - Those days were Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday
 - This fits with a Thursday crucifixion
 - Secondly, the Passover always happens on the 14th of Nisan, which is timed to correspond to a full moon
 - As we look at the astronomical calendar for the first century, there is only one Passover that fits the chronology of the Bible
 - Jesus was born no later than 4BC, since He was born in the days of Herod who died in 4BC
 - And He was crucified at the age of 33 according to John
 - So Jesus must have died no later than AD 28 (there is no year "0" so subtract 4 from 32)
 - In AD 28, Passover occurred on April 28th, which fell on a...Thursday
 - All the data points to a Thursday crucifixion and burial
 - This illustrates how church tradition can supersede biblical truth
 - Today, the vast majority of believers are taught that Jesus died on Friday, though the Bible teaches otherwise

- As Pilate releases Jesus, he asks if he should crucify the Jewish king, but the leaders reply they have no king but Caesar
 - They speak more truth than they can know
 - They do not accept the Messiah as king
 - And so they reject Jesus in favor of an earthly king
 - They would not accept God ruling over them
 - John makes clear that the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus as Lord, and they did so with malice
 - These decision carried consequences for the nation
 - Jesus declared in Luke 13

[Luke 13:35](#) "Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"

- Because of their rejection of Jesus, this generation of Israel is rejected by the Father
- And they will see their nation judged in AD 70 by the very same Romans who they manipulated to kill their Messiah
- At this point Pilate released Jesus to the Roman soldiers to be crucified
 - John doesn't record Jesus' second scourging, which preceded crucifixion
 - This was even more brutal than the 40 lashes Jesus experienced earlier
 - Many prisoners didn't survive this torment to even make it to the cross
 - Crucifixion is perhaps the most cruel form of death invented
 - It's designed to prolong immense suffering
 - Leon Morris describes the process this way:

"It was so brutal that no Roman citizen could be crucified without the sanction of the Emperor. Stripped naked and beaten to pulpy weakness . . ., the victim could hang in the hot sun for hours, even days. To breathe, it was necessary to push with the legs and pull with the arms to keep the chest cavity open and functioning. Terrible muscle spasms wracked the entire body; but since collapse meant asphyxiation, the strain went on and on. This is also why the sedecula [a piece of wood that served as a small seat in some cases] . . . prolonged life and agony: it partially supported the body's weight, and therefore encouraged the victim to fight on.

- John now moves to the events leading up to Jesus' death

[John 19:17](#) They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.

[John 19:18](#) There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between.

[John 19:19](#) Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

[John 19:20](#) Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek.

[John 19:21](#) So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'"

[John 19:22](#) Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

- Jesus went out carrying the cross to His crucifixion place
 - When John says Jesus went "out" he means outside the city
 - This fulfills scripture which says that Jesus would be crucified outside the gates
 - Referring to the scapegoat, Leviticus says

[Lev. 16:27](#) "But the bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be taken outside the camp, and they shall burn their hides, their flesh, and their refuse in the fire.

- The exact place of the skull, Golgotha, is debated
 - The name probably came from the frequency of executions in that place during the first century under Roman authority

- There is no indication from scripture that it was a hill or high point, though it was common for Romans to choose prominent places for executions
- The location from tradition is at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which is a site selected by Constantine's mother
- Her selection was based on reports of locals living in the region whom she met when visiting the city in AD 326
- A more modern suggestion north of the city wall is even less likely
- Then Jesus is nailed to the horizontal cross beam of the cross and hoisted up until it rested atop the vertical beam permanently fixed in the ground
 - On either side of Jesus were two thieves crucified for their crimes
 - It's interesting to consider that these two men were also subject to this horrible punishment for merely theft
 - And yet the threat of such punishment didn't stop them from thievery
 - It's an interesting irony that the same punishment Jesus endured wasn't enough to deter these common criminals from their thefts
 - Further proof that we needed God to provide a solution to put an end to the cycle of sin and death
 - Roman tradition required that above each condemned person's cross, an inscription is placed to identify the victim's crime
 - The purpose was to allow the convict's cruel death to serve as a deterrent to others
 - In this case, Pilate faced an interesting dilemma in what to write, since he himself declared Jesus was innocent of all crimes
 - So left with nothing else, Pilate wrote Jesus, King of the Jews in three languages: Hebrew, Latin and Greek
 - Hebrew for the Jews
 - Latin for the Roman soldiers and officials
 - Greek for the common man

- The truth of Jesus' claims are made known to the entire world
- Naturally, the Jewish leaders object to this inscription because Pilate worded it as a statement rather than as a claim
 - Pilate is unwilling to correct what he wrote
 - Here again we see the sovereignty of God at work through the agency of an unbeliever
 - Pilate may have had his own reasons for what he did
 - Perhaps he was showing Rome's superiority over Israel by exhibiting the Jewish King crucified
 - Nevertheless, it was clearly God's intent that this sign read in the way it did for His purposes
- As Jesus hangs on the cross, John's narrative gives attention to a number of details largely overlooked by the other Gospel writers

[John 19:23](#) Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece.

[John 19:24](#) So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be"; this was to fulfill the Scripture: "THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS."

[John 19:25](#) Therefore the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

[John 19:26](#) When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"

[John 19:27](#) Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.

- First, we have the soldiers dividing up Jesus' clothes
 - It was tradition in Rome for the executioners to receive the condemned's clothing
 - The victim was always crucified entirely naked, which was intended to shame the person, so all clothing was taken from him

- In this case, Jesus' clothing consisted of five items, probably including foot wear, head covering and outer clothing
- The soldiers each claimed one of the items, leaving just the tunic
- A tunic is the undergarment, and it is usually sewn together from sections of woven fabric
 - In such a case, the soldiers would have torn the garment at the seams to each obtain a section of woven cloth
 - But Jesus' tunic was a single woven piece of material
 - So they gambled to decide who should receive the tunic
- John points out this moment to show how it fulfilled scripture taken from Psalm 22:18
 - In fact, I encourage you to read that Psalm
 - Psalm 22 is an amazing description of crucifixion from the perspective of the condemned
- It's interesting for two reasons
 - First, it's written centuries before crucifixion was ever practiced
 - Secondly, it's the only description that exists from someone who has experienced the event, since it's always fatal
 - Only a God who controls the future and survives death could write such an account
- While the Romans cast lots, Jesus is attended to by a group of women
 - By consulting all four Gospels, we find that four women were present
 - John mentions Jesus' mother, Mary
 - Matthew, Mark and John mention Mary Magdalene
 - John mentions another Mary, the wife of Clopas
 - This seems to be the same Mary, mother of James and Joseph mentioned by Matthew and Mark
 - And John mentions Mary's sister, Salome, who is the mother of Zebedee's sons, including the Apostle John

- Standing with these women was John, who remembered this scene for obvious reasons
 - To picture the scene, do not imagine Jesus lifted high above the people
 - More likely, Jesus' feet are less than a meter above the ground
 - It would have been possible for someone to touch Jesus body, though His head was probably out of reach
 - There was a great deal more intimacy between victim and the crowd in this moment than is often portrayed in movie scenes
- Jesus gathers His breath and tells John to take charge over Mary
 - This meant John would have responsibility to care for Mary after Jesus' death
 - Since John was Jesus' cousin on his mother's side, John was the natural person to take charge in this way
 - Jesus chose John over His natural brothers presumably because John and Mary were believing in Him while Jesus' earthly brothers were not at this time
 - That reminds us that from God's perspective, our relationships in the body of Christ take precedence over earthly relationships
 - As Jesus said:

[Luke 8:21](#) But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

- Jesus hangs on the cross from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, a total of six hours
 - The number six is the number for sinful man, and as Paul said

[2Cor. 5:21](#) He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- Jesus hangs on the cross and dies in the place of sinful humanity
- And even the division of six becomes important in this period

- The first three hours of the cross represent Jesus experiencing the curse of sin
 - Jesus was exposed to painful consequences in His body as sin requires
 - He was treated as a criminal
 - He was mocked
 - He made plans for His own death, which sin requires
 - In all these things Jesus suffered things that only come upon a person because of sin
 - Yet Jesus suffered them without cause, for He had no sin of His own
- The second three hours on the cross were a period in which Jesus experienced the wrath of God against sin
 - Though John does not record it, the other Gospel writers tell us that at noon, the world experienced three hours of intense darkness
 - The darkness enveloped the entire earth, according to Luke
 - Records from other ancient cultures reflect this moment, including Niogenes in Egypt, who wrote that the “solar darkness was such that either deity Himself suffered at that moment of sympathized with one who did.”
 - Other such records note the exact timing and length of a great darkness upon the earth
 - These are three hours of Jesus’ separation from the Father, a kind of spiritual death for Messiah
 - In the other Gospels, we see Jesus crying out to the Father asking My God why He had been forsaken, in fulfillment of Psalm 22:1
 - That cry reflects Jesus’ separation from the Father
 - At this moment, Jesus experienced spiritual death, which is the separation from an intimate relationship with the Father
 - In fact, this is the only time Jesus addresses the Father as “My God” to reflect that they lacked a relationship for this moment

- That was a moment the Godhead had never previously known
- And the depths of that experience we will – thankfully – never know ourselves, by the grace of God
- Jesus spiritual death preceded His physical death, just as Adam’s spiritual death preceded his physical death
 - Spiritual death is the penalty for sin
 - While physical death is the consequence of the curse on the earth
 - As Paul taught

Rom. 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned –

- Jesus died spiritually speaking at noon
 - He was forsaken by God as will be the case for all who die under the penalty of sin
 - Jesus died the second death in our place, so we will never experience that second death
 - We will never know separation from God
- But then because Jesus had no sin, the Father could also be just in restoring fellowship to His Son, which the Father does at 3:00 PM

John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, “I am thirsty.”

John 19:29 A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth.

John 19:30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

- Jesus said everything had been accomplished
 - In other words, the work of redemption was complete at this moment
 - Jesus’s spiritual separation from the Father ended at this moment
 - Jesus was no longer subject to the wrath of God

- He endured it for three hours and it is now finished
- Notice then Jesus said He was thirsty
 - Remember the response by the rich man in Luke 16 when he found himself separated from God in the afterlife?

[Luke 16:24](#) "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'

- His first request of Abraham was for a drink as well
- So it's significant that following His time of spiritual separation, Jesus' first request is for something to wet His mouth
- It's also significant that scripture always presents God's mercy and grace as water to quench thirst
- How desperately must the lost desire for that relief when under judgment?
- The drink Jesus receives is sour wine, or vinegar we would say today
 - The vinegar was a common drink
 - And receiving it fulfilled scripture, specifically Psalm 69:21
 - Once again, John includes this detail to stress Jesus as fulfillment of OT prophecy concerning the Messiah
- There was also a practical reason Jesus requested the vinegar
 - Jesus was about to say two very important phrases from the cross
 - And so if His mouth was so dry He couldn't speak, then He needed the vinegar to wet His mouth
 - Those statements were the one recorded here and those of the other Gospels
 - In both cases, they reflect the end of a process by which the Creation was redeemed from sin and the curse

- So if Jesus' separation from the Father ended before Jesus' physical death, then why does Jesus die at all – much less spend three days in the grave?
 - To answer this, first notice *how* Jesus dies
 - In v.30 we're told that Jesus gave up His spirit
 - In other words, Jesus brought Himself to death
 - The cross didn't take Jesus' life
 - Jesus handed over His Spirit to the Father
 - No one took Jesus' life
 - He died voluntarily
 - In the other Gospels, Jesus is recorded as saying, "Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit"
 - Notice once again, Jesus is calling God His Father, indicating that the spiritual separation has ended
 - Since Jesus had no sin of His own, He would have never died no matter how long He hung on the cross
 - Physical death is a product of the curse
 - Yet Jesus was not under the curse of God
 - But He bore the curse for our sakes
 - So Jesus' physical death was of His own accord, to take our place in receiving the curse for sin, though He had no sin of His own
- Secondly, Jesus' time in the grave was not a period of punishment or restitution in which He took our place in Hell
 - Some assume that Jesus was tormented in Hell in our place for three days
 - But this is not the teaching of scripture
 - First, Jesus' atoning work was finished on the cross, as Jesus declares in v.30
 - The Greek word here (tetelestai) is often found marked on invoices from that period, meaning an account is paid in full

- Secondly, if Jesus were to take our place in Hell, He would need to remain there for an eternity, since that would be our sentence
 - Third, scripture says that the wrath of God was satisfied in the death of Christ alone, which occurred on the cross

Rom. 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

- Fourth, scripture never says Jesus experienced any torment while in the grave
- In fact, Jesus was spared from the misery of Sheol

Psa. 16:9 Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will dwell securely.

Psa. 16:10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

- Instead, Jesus time in the grave was intended to accomplish two things
 - First, the three days proved He truly died
 - So that at His resurrection His power over death would be evident
 - Secondly, Jesus preached to the souls in Sheol, and set free the saints held captive and awaiting the Messiah's atonement
 - Paul and Peter teach these truths in Eph 4 and 1Pet 3
- Therefore, as John says the process of atoning for sin was finished at the moment of Jesus' earthly death
 - He had experienced three hours of separation from the Father and now He suffered the penalty of the curse in our place
 - These things were sufficient to atone because the Father's wrath was appeased by them
 - Christ's death was the propitiation for our sins
 - Now the burial must take place in haste

[John 19:31](#) Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

[John 19:32](#) So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him;

[John 19:33](#) but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

[John 19:34](#) But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

[John 19:35](#) And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

[John 19:36](#) For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN."

[John 19:37](#) And again another Scripture says, "THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED."

- Once again, John mentions that this is a day of preparation prior to the Sabbath that marks the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (notice John says this Sabbath is a High Day, meaning a feast Sabbath, not the Saturday Sabbath)
 - It was not considered proper to allow a body to hang on the cross over a Sabbath
 - So the Jewish authorities want to rush this process along so they may bury the bodies before sundown
 - Therefore, they request of Pilate that the legs of the prisoners be broken to hasten death
 - Without their legs to help them push up, they wouldn't be able to breath, so death would come quickly
 - Pilate evidently agrees, and the soldiers are directed to break the legs of all three prisoners
 - This was typically done by means of a large iron bar which the soldiers swung at the shin
 - As the bones broke, the person lost their ability to push against the nails in their feet
 - The two thieves saw their legs broken first, which resulted in Jesus' words to the repentant thief coming true
 - He found himself in paradise with Jesus that very day

- But John says in v.33 that as they come to Jesus, they find He has already died and therefore it was unnecessary to break Jesus' legs
 - Just to be sure Jesus was dead, a soldier pierces Jesus' side with a sword
 - Out comes blood and water John says
 - Various explanations exist for what John saw, including the escape of natural bodily fluids that resemble water
- The importance though is not physical but in the picture it creates concerning the meaning of Christ's death
 - As John repeats in 1John 5, our Savior saves us by means of blood and water
 - Notice in v.35 John speaks of himself in the third person saying he testified to these things and his testimony is true
 - Later, John echoes this thought explaining that these events all testify to Jesus as the sacrifice for our sin

1John 5:6 This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

1John 5:7 For there are three that testify:

1John 5:8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

- This scene is also recorded to demonstrate fulfillment of other OT scriptures
 - Specifically, Jesus' death without broken bones completes the picture of the Passover lamb, that was to be killed without breaking any bones
 - And it fulfills Zechariah 12 which says the Jewish people pierced their Messiah
- Lastly, John covers the burial of Jesus

John 19:38 After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body.

John 19:39 Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

[John 19:40](#) So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

[John 19:41](#) Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

[John 19:42](#) Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

- With Jesus confirmed dead and the Sabbath fast approaching at sundown, something must be done to Jesus' body
 - At this point, two secret followers of Jesus come forward to claim the body and bury Him
 - This was incredibly risky
 - Notice that none of the eleven apostles come forward for the body
 - They probably feared that anyone who would publicly identify themselves with Jesus would share His fate
 - The first follower is Joseph of Arimathaea
 - From all the Gospels we learn that he was a righteous and good man who was wealthy and was a believing Jew
 - He comes from Arimethaea, a town about 21 miles northwest from Jerusalem
 - This is the same city where Samuel the prophet lived and was buried
 - A legend grew up in the church that Joseph later became an evangelist traveling to England, founding the first Christian church outside Judea in Glastenbury and is buried there
 - Joseph was also a member of the Sanhedrin along with Nicodemus
 - But scripture also says that neither of them were present at the moment the Sanhedrin voted for Jesus' execution
 - They were probably trying to hide their allegiance at that time
- But now they act boldly, stepping forward, probably at the loss of their careers to publicly identify themselves with Jesus

- These men claim the body, bound it up in strips of linen and spices hastily
 - And then they placed the body in a new tomb, one presumably constructed for Joseph's eventual burial
 - It was available and it was nearby, which were both important considerations since time was of the essence
- Joseph made a significant sacrifice in burying Christ
 - The tomb he had constructed was hewn out of rock
 - This was an expensive kind of burial that only the wealthy could afford the labor to build
 - The cost would have been close to the price of a small home
 - Yet Joseph willingly gave up that wealth for his Lord
- Joseph was fulfilling scripture by his obedience

**[Is. 53:9](#) His grave was assigned with wicked men,
Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.**

- Interestingly, Joseph saw that wealth returned to him when Jesus was resurrected
- His tomb could be reused
- Next week we look at the resurrection and appearance of Jesus as we conclude our study...