

John 19

1 Flogging was also known as "half-death". One to four medically trained soldiers would wield whips in which bone or lead shards were attached. These would shred the back of the victim, at times even exposing the organs. Most would become unconscious during the flogging. A soldier would check for shock and consciousness and begin again. Jewish law allowed only 40 lashes so Pharisees insisted that only 39 be administered so as to not make a mistake and break the Law. Many died during or after being scourged. Here is another brazen example of ignoring the spirit of the Law while conforming rigidly to the letter. Isaiah 53:5; Luke 23:16,23

2-3 Dressing Jesus in royal colors, the soldiers mock the accusation of declaring himself a king. They did not know any better. Matthew 27:27-31

4-5 Pilate may be thinking his insults and battery of Jesus would arouse some sympathy or satisfy the crowd's thirst for blood. Instead, seeing the royal robe, they were infuriated even more. Hebrews 12:2 When we look at Him after being beaten and scourged, what does it do to you. Behold the man!

6 Pilate could find no reason to crucify Jesus, yet the crowds insisted.

7- 8 Jesus' behavior was certainly unique. Now Pilate is fearful. The Greek legends did have gods' becoming men and walking the earth. Was this an incarnated god who was being abused by man?

9 Jesus has been silent a number of times. We do not always have to answer men. Sometimes our answer will only incriminate them all the more and it is better to remain silent. Consider the full surrender to the Spirit that Jesus is exhibiting though his body is beaten and torn. See 8:14; Psalm 38:13-15; Isaiah 53:7; Philippians 1:27-28

10-11 Man often misses the sovereignty of God. Jesus is in charge, though Pilate thinks he is. It sounds to me like Jesus had compassion for Pilate's predicament. Who delivered Jesus up? Judas? The religious leaders?

12 There is no question here that Pilate wanted to free Jesus. The position Pilate held was appointed by Rome. It was only a few years prior to this that the Jews had lost their right to condemn a person to death. Pilate had been playing chess with the Jews since he began his rule. They had won the first round, forcing him to take Caesar's face off their standards. They had lost the second. He had looted the Temple treasury to pay for expanding an aqueduct. The Temple needed the water and what he took was from the Corban money that couldn't be used on the Temple itself. When the Jews rioted to complain, plain clothes soldiers hid in the crowd and on cue slaughtered a great number. The Jews has some influence in Rome, and Pilate's sponsor had been executed for treason. That put him on shaky ground. The Romans were not as mean spirited as we might imagine. The people could complain

about their governor and have him removed. This would happen a few years after this trial. The Jewish claim to sympathize with Rome is not entirely hypocritical. At least the Sadducees remained in power through their cooperation with Rome. Without Rome one Jewish writer declared, "our people we destroying our own." It is somewhat reminiscent of the Muslim world today. The Jews were just as divided.

13 This was probably a place where verdicts were rendered, an elevated tiled platform. Pilate sits in a little judgment seat to render a verdict toward the One who will someday sit in the real judgment seat and determine his fate.

14 This verse presents us with a problem. Mark has Jesus crucified at the third hour (9A.M.) That is the time of the morning sacrifice. John has him crucified at the 6th hour – noon. That is when the Passover Lamb was slain. I can't reconcile the differences. Mark 15:25

15 What hatred! Only a week earlier they were singing His praise. When Jesus does not do as you expect, are you ready to yell with the crowd. Their response must have been bewildering to Pilate. The Jews had special privileges that got them a pass on Emperor worship. They were generally disgusted with the Emperor even though they tried to win his support. They got their special treatment because of their strong conviction of worshipping only God. Now they scream, "We have no king but Caesar!" Of course it is a threat toward Pilate. They are saying, "We are patriots and will report you if you don't kill this dissident." In doing so, they have declared that earthly power is their god.

16-18 Once the person with the right of the sword pronounced the death penalty, the cross beam was strapped to their arms. A rope was tied around the waist to nudge them along when they slowed or if they made any attempt to flee. The victim carried the beam to the place of crucifixion, usually a crossroad or main gate. They hung there as a warning to any who would break the laws of Rome.

19-22 Was Pilate mocking the Jews in so doing, or had Jesus made an impression on his heart? His historical character would point to the former, though Scripture gives me that later impression.

23-24 A piece of clothing like this was very valuable. Psalm 22:18

25-26 Most believe this disciple to be John. Recently a theory has come out that this is James, Jesus' brother. In that case, "He took her into his home" would not seem to make sense. He would already be expected to care for her. It may have been the official handoff, but words on the cross are precious. The expected would not need to have been said. If it is John, it is interesting that he would have him care for her, rather than his brother who was soon to lead the early church in Jerusalem. It also demonstrates to us family responsibility. Though Jesus told the would be follower to let the dead bury the dead, Mary is a believer, and Jesus made sure she would be cared for.