

The Word

one to one

*A guided read through
John's Gospel
Chapters 18–19*

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Episode 36

JOHN 11	Life (Lazarus is raised by Jesus)
JOHN 12	Death (Jesus predicts His death)
JOHN 13 – 17	Life for His disciples (in the time between Jesus' departure and His return)
JOHN 18 – 19	Death (Jesus' crucifixion)
JOHN 20	Life (Jesus is risen)

Betrayal and arrest

JOHN 18:1–27

*In the previous episode:
Jesus draws His
followers into unity
with His Father.*

*In this episode:
A death in our place.*

¹ When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.

² Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples.

³ So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

According to plan

As Jesus' prayer finishes, we return to the themes of life and death we looked at in chapters 11 and 12:

- Chapters 18 and 19 will show Jesus' death in our place.
- Chapter 20 will show the eternal life His death secures.

Who comes to arrest Jesus?

- It's a massive show of force. Judas comes with an entire detachment of armed soldiers, plus the officials of the religious leaders, lighting up the night with torches and lanterns. **(v. 3)**

Kidron Valley: a valley running along the east side of Jerusalem, separating the city wall from the Mount of Olives. You can still visit this valley and the garden (called Gethsemane) today.

⁴ Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, 'Who is it you want?'

⁵ 'Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'I am he,' Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.)

⁶ When Jesus said, 'I am he,' they drew back and fell to the ground.

But who is in control?

- Jesus. He knows what is going to happen. (v. 4)
- He is the one who goes out to His accusers and starts asking all the questions.
- Again, Jesus identifies Himself with all the authority of the name of God ('I AM'). (v. 5)

Imagine you're one of the officials.

You turn up with a band of soldiers, armed to the teeth, ready to arrest just one unarmed man.

He simply speaks, and you're blown off your feet! (v. 6)

Jesus' voice has total authority.

⁷ Again he asked them,
‘Who is it you want?’

‘Jesus of Nazareth,’ they said.

⁸ Jesus answered, ‘I told
you that I am he. If you
are looking for me, then
let these men go.’

⁹ This happened so that the
words he had spoken would
be fulfilled: ‘I have not lost
one of those you gave me.’

As His accusers pick themselves up,
Jesus does not try to escape. He just
calmly waits.

How does Jesus show His control?

- Again, He leads the conversation. **(v. 7)**
- He gives instructions, so that His disciples might be set free. **(v. 8)**

Why does Jesus command this?

- It fulfils the words of His prayer to the Father in 17:12, *‘None has been lost...’*

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

¹¹ Jesus commanded Peter, 'Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?'

The servant's name was Malchus: what a night for Malchus! By naming him, it is as if John is saying, 'Ask him, or at least his relatives, to confirm what has been written!'

In front of all those armed soldiers, Peter's attempt at a rescue is utterly crazy. (v. 10)

But why does Jesus stop him?

- Jesus knows how this must end. He must die and '*drink the cup the Father has given!*' (v. 11)

What does Jesus mean by '*the cup*'?

- In the Old Testament book of Isaiah, the cup is God's wrath (anger), the judgement the people deserve.

'See, I have taken out of your hand the cup that made you stagger; from that cup, the goblet of my wrath, you will never drink again.' (Isaiah 51:22)

Salvation comes through the Messiah, Jesus. He takes and drinks the cup of God's anger that we deserve as He dies for us on the cross.

¹² Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus.

They bound him ¹³ and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year.

¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

Death in our place

Even after His miraculous show of power, Jesus allows Himself to be arrested and bound. (v. 12)

This arrest and what is to come has been His entire mission. His will is the Father's will.

Why does John remind us of Caiaphas's words?

- So that we will remember what Caiaphas said after Jesus raised Lazarus. (v. 14)

"You do not realise that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." [Caiaphas] did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.' (John 11:50-52)

The technical phrase for what Caiaphas is describing is 'penal substitution'. Sinless Jesus:

- Carries the punishment of God's judgement, His right anger at sin (described by the word 'penal', like in the word 'penalty') through His death on the cross...
- ...in our place (substitution).

¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus.

Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, ¹⁶ but Peter had to wait outside at the door.

The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant-girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

¹⁷ 'You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?' she asked Peter.

He replied, 'I am not.'

¹⁸ It was cold, and the servants and officials stood round a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

Compare and contrast

Peter follows Jesus. Let's just remind ourselves of Peter's importance.

- He is the 'lead' disciple. In John 1 he is called Cephas, which means 'rock'
- He is fully committed to Jesus. 'Lord... I will lay down my life for you.' (13:37)

But how does Peter now respond?

- He immediately crumbles, denying that he is one of Jesus' disciples. (v. 17)
- He can't even stand up to a servant girl.

Peter's commitment has totally gone. Instead of standing with Jesus, he is keeping warm with the opposition.

¹⁹ Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

²⁰ 'I have spoken openly to the world,' Jesus replied. 'I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret.'

²¹ 'Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.'

²² When Jesus said this, one of the officials near by slapped him in the face. 'Is this the way you answer the high priest?' he demanded.

²³ 'If I said something wrong,' Jesus replied, 'testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?'

²⁴ Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

John now takes us back to the action with Jesus.

In contrast to Peter, how does Jesus respond under pressure?

- He is in charge. Clear and reasonable, with nothing to hide. (v. 20)
- Even when He is hit in the face He remains in control and simply states the truth. (v. 23)

John clearly wants us to see how different Jesus is to Peter:

- Jesus stands up to the high priest and the Jewish officers.
- He remains the true 'I AM' – who perfectly and consistently does God's will.

Peter gets another chance to show his loyalty to Jesus. Will he take it?

²⁵ Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, 'You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?'

He denied it, saying, 'I am not.'

²⁶ One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, 'Didn't I see you with him in the garden?'

²⁷ Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a cock began to crow.

The action cuts back to Peter, still standing by the fire.

How does Peter respond this time?

- Again, he utterly fails. He denies following Jesus. (v. 25)
- Even when someone identifies him from the garden, he lies about being with Jesus. (v. 26)

Did you notice how the scene of Jesus' total faithfulness is set between two scenes of Peter's utter failure?

John beautifully arranges his material to make a point.

Peter has failed. In stark contrast, Jesus is going to die in his place, for Peter and for all who sin.

How are we just like Peter? We cannot save ourselves. We hate the idea that our sins mean that Jesus needed to die in our place. The truth is that we desperately need Him to do so.

Let's stop and think

One of the threads running through this episode is that everything that happens is under God's control.

Jesus' death, down to the smallest detail, is all part of a plan. It fulfills...

Jesus' own prophecy:

'I have not lost one of those you gave me.' (18:9)

Old Testament prophecies:
'Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?' (18:11)

Caiaphas the high priest's prophecy: *'...it would be good if one man died for the people.'* (18:14)

Even Peter's failure is no accident.

Luke's account of Jesus' life records these words of Jesus to Peter (also called Simon):

'Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.' (Luke 22:31-32)

This helps us understand Peter's dramatic change from pulling out his sword and being prepared to die for Jesus, to just a few hours later denying three times ever having known Him.

Jesus knew that Peter would turn back and then, in Jesus' strength not his own, be used to strengthen the other disciples.

Nothing happened by chance.

Summary

Total faithfulness, utter failure.

- In a massive show of force, Judas, a detachment of soldiers and officials from the religious leaders all arrive to arrest Jesus. (v. 3)
- Jesus is in control. As He says His name, 'I AM', they fall to the ground. (v. 6)
- Peter takes out his sword and jumps in to defend Jesus. (v. 10)
- But Jesus is clear: He must '*drink the cup*' of God's anger at sin. (v. 11)
- Jesus is sent to Caiaphas, the high priest who prophesied that Jesus would die in the place of the people. (v. 14)
- It only takes a question from a servant girl for Peter, the most committed disciple, to deny following Jesus. (v. 17)
- Meanwhile, Jesus faithfully faces the high priest's questions, with nothing to hide. (v. 20)
- Outside, Peter lies about even being with Jesus. (v. 27)

The contrast could not be greater.

³ ...guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees.

⁶ ...they drew back and fell to the ground.

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter... struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear.

¹¹ 'Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?'

¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

¹⁷ 'You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?'

²⁰ 'I have spoken openly to the world.'

²⁷ Again Peter denied it...

Why not take a moment to re-read what we've looked at in this episode?

John 18:1–27

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*What comes next?
How will the people
respond to Jesus’ death?*

Episode 37

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The trial

JOHN 18:28 – 19:16

*In the previous episode:
Jesus allows Himself
to be arrested.*

*In this episode:
Innocent Jesus on
trial; the guilt of
us all revealed.*

²⁸ Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor.

By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover.

²⁹ So Pilate came out to them and asked, 'What charges are you bringing against this man?'

³⁰ 'If he were not a criminal,' they replied, 'we would not have handed him over to you.'

Guilt and hypocrisy

We're introduced to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who will decide whether Jesus lives or dies.

Why did the religious leaders not go into Pilate's palace?

- A Roman governor's palace would not have been religiously 'clean' to a Jew. So to avoid being made ritually unclean and unable to eat the Passover, they won't go inside. (v. 28)

This forces Pilate to repeatedly come in and out between Jesus, Pilate's soldiers, the religious leaders and their supporters, in seven 'scenes'... and the contrast between Jesus and everybody else we meet couldn't be greater.

Roman governor: the official who governed on behalf of the Roman Empire. There is clear evidence from other historical sources that Pontius Pilate was governor of Judah at this time.

³¹ Pilate said, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.”

‘But we have no right to execute anyone,’ they objected.

³² This took place to fulfil what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

What do the religious leaders want?

- They want Jesus to be executed.

Why can't they do this themselves?

- They have no legal right to execute anyone. (v. 31)

Even as they plot Jesus' murder, the religious leaders are keeping up the appearance of purity.

They want Pilate to do their dirty work. But though they don't know it, this is all part of Jesus fulfilling His plan to die. (v. 32)

Even this ugly hypocrisy is not out of God's control.

³³ Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’

³⁴ ‘Is that your own idea,’ Jesus asked, ‘or did others talk to you about me?’

³⁵ ‘Am I a Jew?’ Pilate replied. ‘Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?’

³⁶ Jesus said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.’

³⁷ ‘You are a king, then!’ said Pilate.

Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.’

³⁸ ‘What is truth?’ retorted Pilate.

Jesus the King

Back in the palace, Pilate directly asks Jesus whether He is the King of the Jews. **(v. 33)**

How are we shown that Jesus is the King?

- Jesus explains that His kingdom is not like the kingdoms of this world. It won’t advance by force. **(v. 36)**
- Pilate understands Jesus to be saying that He is a king. **(v. 37)**
- Jesus confirms Pilate’s understanding with an extraordinary statement: He is not just any king, but the one who has come into the world to bring truth. And if you won’t listen to Him, you aren’t on the side of truth.

For all his worldly power, Pilate has no understanding of the truth. **(v. 38)**

With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, 'I find no basis for a charge against him.'

³⁹ But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release "the king of the Jews"?'

⁴⁰ They shouted back, 'No, not him! Give us Barabbas!' Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

Jesus, our innocent substitute

Pilate returns again to the Jews waiting outside his palace.

How is Jesus' innocence made clear?

- Pilate himself says that he finds no evidence for the charges against Jesus. (v. 38)

How do we see Jesus' death as a substitute in our place being stressed?

- Pilate says that Jesus is innocent. (v. 38)
- He offers to release '*the king of the Jews*' (v. 39)
- Instead, they would rather have a known terrorist released: Barabbas (which interestingly means 'son of the father'). (v. 40)

It could not be clearer.

They want the King to die as a criminal and the terrorist to go free.

Uprising: a very serious offence; domestic terrorism.

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 slapped him in the face.

The guilt of us all - Part 1

To please the mob, Pilate throws Jesus to his brutal soldiers.

- They flog Him, a severe beating. (v. 1)
- They mock Him for claiming to be a king. They crown Jesus with a ring of thorns and clothe Him in purple, the colour of the emperor. (v. 2)
- They make fun of Him, pretending to hail Him as a king. (v. 3)
- They abuse Him, slapping Him in the face.

Jesus, the King of the Jews, has become a brutally ridiculed figure.

When it comes to rejecting Jesus, Jews and Romans are equally guilty.

⁴ Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, ‘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!’

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.’

⁷ The Jewish leaders insisted, ‘We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.’

The guilt of us all - Part 2

Yet again Pilate comes out. He is still looking for a way out. He knows Jesus is innocent. **(v. 4)**

Imagine the scene as Jesus emerges from His flogging, blood-stained and torn, as Pilate parades Him.

What is the religious leaders' murderous reaction?

- They shout, ‘*Crucify! Crucify!*’ **(v. 6)**
- They want this humiliated ‘king’, dressed in purple and wearing the crown of thorns, to die like a murderer. **(v. 7)**

Notice that they know exactly what they are doing, even after Jesus has both told and shown them that He is God’s Son. **(v. 7)**

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.

¹⁰ ‘Do you refuse to speak to me?’ Pilate said. ‘Don’t you realise I have power either to free you or to crucify you?’

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.’

Jesus the King

What impact does all this have on Pilate?

- He is even more afraid. (v. 8)
- He goes back inside the palace to Jesus, who doesn't seem willing to play Pilate's game. (v. 9)

How do we again see that Jesus is King? Compare verse 10 and verse 11.

- Verse 10 is power on earth, Pilate's power.
- Verse 11 is stunning power from heaven. Pilate is not the one in charge.

In this trial it's Jesus who remains in total control.

But what impact will this have on Pilate?

¹² From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders 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).

Guilt and hypocrisy

Pilate is terrified. But the Jewish leaders won't let it go.

They play dirty, questioning Pilate's loyalty to Caesar. As Roman governor, that could get him executed.

How do we see Pilate's guilt?

- He is fully aware Jesus is innocent and no threat to Caesar's earthly rule... but he wants to save his own skin. **(v. 13)**
- He doesn't resist the pressure of the religious leaders, but gives way, despite what he knows to be true.

¹⁴ It was the day of
Preparation of the Passover;
it was about noon.

‘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.

¹⁶ Finally Pilate handed him
over to them to be crucified.

Remember when this is all taking place
- at Passover, the day when people
remembered the sacrificial lamb that
had died in their place.

How do we see the religious
leaders’ hypocrisy?

- They say they are loyal to an all-
powerful God... but they are willing to
betray their faith in favour of Caesar,
just to get what they want. (v. 15)

What a powerful irony! The Jews who
were so keen not to defile the Passover
are rejecting the true Passover Lamb...

*As Jesus, the ultimate Passover
Lamb, goes to the cross, all the
sinful failure and compromise
of humans is exposed.*

Let's stop and think

We've just had seven scenes showing Pilate having to go in and out between Jesus and the religious leaders.

John uses these scenes to show us:

- The guilt and hypocrisy of the Jews.
- Jesus as the ultimate King.
- The innocence of Jesus, taking our place as our substitute.
- All people are guilty (Romans and Jews).
- The innocence of Jesus, taking our place as our substitute.
- Jesus as the ultimate King.
- The guilt and hypocrisy of the Jews.

Yet again, this is carefully structured by John, the eyewitness, to show us our guilt and how much we need Jesus as our substitute.

This challenges all of us.

Can we see ourselves in this episode?

- Have we ever done what the people did and 'gone with the crowd' in rejecting Jesus?
- Have we ever done what the soldiers did and verbally, or mentally, mocked and belittled Jesus – the King of truth?
- Have we ever done what Pilate did and failed to stand up for what we know to be true about Jesus – because we were weak?

- Have we ever done what the Jewish leaders did and tried to protect our own interests rather than obey the true King, Jesus?

The truth is hard-hitting, but it's something we all must deal with.

Can you see now why we all need Jesus to die on the cross for us?

Only Jesus can be our perfect, sinless substitute, the ultimate Passover Lamb who takes away our sins.

Summary

Jesus on trial, but it is everyone else who is guilty.

- The religious leaders hand Jesus over, wanting Pilate to put Him to death. (v. 31)
- Jesus makes clear to Pilate that He is a king, but not of this world. (v. 36)
- Pilate wants to release Jesus, but the crowds want Barabbas, a known terrorist who deserved to die. (v. 40)
- After Jesus is brutally flogged and mocked by Pilate's soldiers, the religious leaders demand that Jesus is crucified. (v. 6)
- There is no evidence that Jesus has done anything wrong and Pilate is terrified of who Jesus really is. (v. 8)
- Jesus shows Pilate's power for what it really is: earthly authority given by God. (v. 11)
- The religious leaders threaten Pilate by questioning his loyalty to Caesar. (v. 12)
- And that is enough. Pilate sends Jesus to be crucified. (v. 16)

³¹ 'But we have no right to execute anyone.'

³⁶ 'My kingdom is not of this world.'

⁴⁰ 'Give us Barabbas!'

⁶ 'Crucify! Crucify!'

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³⁸ 'What is truth?' retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, 'I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹ But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release "the king of the Jews"?''

⁴⁰ They shouted back, 'No, not him! Give us Barabbas!' Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

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 slapped him in the face.

⁴ Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, ‘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!’

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.’

⁷ The Jewish leaders insisted, ‘We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.’

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.

¹⁰ ‘Do you refuse to speak to me?’ Pilate said. ‘Don’t you realise I have power either to free you or to crucify you?’

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.’

¹² From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders 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). ¹⁴ It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon.

‘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.

¹⁶ Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

*What comes next?
The crucifixion -
mission accomplished.*

Episode 38

JOHN 11	Life (Lazarus is raised by Jesus)
JOHN 12	Death (Jesus predicts His death)
JOHN 13 – 17	Life for His disciples (in the time between Jesus' departure and His return)
JOHN 18 – 19	Death (Jesus' crucifixion)
JOHN 20	Life (Jesus is risen)

Mission accomplished

JOHN 19:16-30

*In the previous episode:
The guilt of us
all revealed.*

*In this episode:
As Jesus the King dies
in our place, God's plan
is fulfilled.*

¹⁶ Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.

¹⁷ Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha).

¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others – one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

The king's death

And so the soldiers get to carry out the sentence of execution. (v. 16)

They continue to be brutal, forcing Jesus to carry His own incredibly heavy cross. (v. 17)

How is Jesus' crucifixion described?

- We get none of the gory details. John simply says, '*they crucified Him*'. (v. 18)
- Jesus is not on His own. Two criminals are executed with Him.

Cross: a Roman instrument of execution. A heavy wooden structure large enough for a person to hang on until they died. Crucified criminals were nailed through their hands and feet, so that they had to lift themselves to breathe. It was total agony.

John takes us back to the Old Testament to show how Jesus fulfils so many prophecies about the Messiah, particularly from Psalm 22.

→ Psalm 22:16-17

¹⁶ Dogs surround me,
a pack of villains encircle
me; they pierce my hands
and my feet.

¹⁷ All my bones are on display;
people stare and gloat
over me.

As it was written

Psalm 22, written by King David around 1000 BC, prophesies in great detail about how the Messiah would suffer and die through crucifixion, even though such a means of death had not even been invented at the time David was writing!

How does this Psalm describe Jesus' death?

- Jesus' hands and feet were nailed (pierced) to the cross.
- Stretched out on a cross, all your bones would be displayed.
- Crucifixion was designed to be as public and shameful as possible. People would come from all around to watch the crucified criminal die.

We will see Psalm 22 and many other Old Testament prophecies fulfilled as we keep reading...

Now back
to John

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.'

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

How do we see Jesus is King of the Jews?

- By what Pilate writes. (v. 19)
- By the global languages used. (v. 20)

Writing in these languages meant everyone could understand, not just the Jews.

- Latin was used in the Roman Empire.
- Greek was the language of scholars across the world.
- Aramaic was the local, everyday language.

Why is it important that everybody knows that it is Jesus – the King of the Jews – being crucified?

- *'All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him.'* (Psalm 22:27)
- The notice, in three major languages, fulfils Psalm 22 and makes sure everyone knows who Jesus really is.

At last Pilate resists. He won't change his mind. He insists on everyone knowing that Jesus is the King of the Jews. (v. 22)

Jesus is the King!

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 that said,

'They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.'

So this is what the soldiers did.

Why does John go into detail about Jesus' clothes?

- It's another prophecy. '*They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.*' (Psalm 22:18)

Pinned to the cross, Jesus appears powerless to influence these soldiers, yet they do exactly what was written 1,000 years before.

Why does this matter?

- Jesus' death is not a tragic accident. Everything is happening according to God's plan.

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 her, '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.

How does this show Jesus' love?

- He makes sure that His mother is provided for, that she has somewhere to live and someone to care for her. (vv. 26, 27)

Even as He hangs on the cross, Jesus' love is at work through these instructions to care for His family.

By giving this detail, John is also making it plain that he was an eyewitness. We can believe what he is saying.

The disciple whom he loved: widely thought to be John, the Gospel writer.

²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that 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.

It is finished!

Yet more prophecy fulfilled. '*They put gall [poison] in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.*' (Psalm 69:21)

How do we know that this is the moment everything has been building up to?

- In Greek (which John was originally written in), the word 'fulfilled' means to finish or complete. (v. 28)
- So, three times John stresses the point: Mission accomplished! Finished, fulfilled, finished. (v. 30)

Who is in control as Jesus dies?

- Look who it is that 'gives up his spirit'... it's Jesus! (v. 30)

Mission accomplished! Jesus dies as God's ultimate Passover Lamb and God's King. He dies to carry God's judgement at our sin, once and for all.

Let's stop and think

How does today's section answer the question: 'Can I really be forgiven?'

We've seen that when Jesus died, He paid the price for our sin in full.

What about the statement: 'I don't think God cares about me!'

Just look at His whole plan and purpose. From the beginning His Son set out to die for us, to save us, because He loves us.

Let's remind ourselves of John 3:16, *'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'*

Summary

It is finished - everything is complete.

- The soldiers take Jesus and crucify Him. (v. 18)
- Pilate makes it totally clear who Jesus is: the King of the Jews. (v. 19)
- Every detail of Jesus' death, even the soldiers gambling for His clothing, fulfil the Old Testament prophecies. (v. 24)
- Jesus' love is at work even as He hangs on a cross, making sure His mother is cared for after His death. (v. 26)
- Jesus knows that His mission has at last been finished. (v. 30)
- Still in control to the very end, He bows His head and dies. (v. 30)

¹⁸ There they crucified him...

¹⁹ It read:

JESUS OF NAZARETH,
THE KING OF THE JEWS.

²⁴ This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled...

²⁶ 'Woman, here is your son'...

³⁰ ...Jesus said, 'It is finished.'

³⁰ ...and gave up his spirit.

Why not find a moment to re-read what we've looked at in this episode?

John 19:16-30

¹⁶ Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. ¹⁷ Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). ¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others – one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

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*What comes next?
A burial fit for a king.*

Episode 39

JOHN 11	Life (Lazarus is raised by Jesus)
JOHN 12	Death (Jesus predicts His death)
JOHN 13 – 17	Life for His disciples (in the time between Jesus' departure and His return)
JOHN 18 – 19	Death (Jesus' crucifixion)
JOHN 20	Life (Jesus is risen)

Fit for a king

JOHN 19:31-42

*In the previous episode:
Jesus completes
His mission.*

*In this episode:
A king's burial.*

³¹ Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath.

Because the Jewish leaders 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.

The Passover Lamb

Jesus has died. But what does it mean?

More prophecies are being fulfilled. These are all about the Passover sacrifice.

- Jesus was crucified on the day of Preparation, the day before the Sabbath (which is a Saturday).
- By being crucified on the Friday, Jesus was killed on Passover day itself.

Let's remind ourselves what Passover was all about. The Passover lamb was there to deal with God's judgement of sin.

God's just punishment for sin is death. The blood of the lamb was put on the door frame to show that death had already happened in that house. The Angel of Death passed over every house where a lamb had been sacrificed.

The lamb was kept in the house for four days – to show the bond between the lamb and the family... so that the eldest son could say, 'The lamb died in my place.'

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.

Why does it matter that the soldiers didn't need to break Jesus' legs?

- In the Old Testament book of Exodus, the Israelites were told not to break any of the Passover lamb's bones. *'Do not break any of the bones.'* (Exodus 12:46b)

This shows us again what Jesus' death is all about. He is the Lamb who dies in our place, so that we need not face God's just judgement on our sin.

*Jesus is the ultimate
Passover Lamb.*

Blood and water: it would be hundreds of years before doctors understood that the separation of blood and water within the body was a sign that death had definitely happened.

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.'

Following the plan

Can we trust what John is saying actually happened?

- Yes! Look at verse 35. John wants us to know he saw it happen - it's true. He is giving testimony as you would in a court.

How does John show that this is all happening according to God's plan?

- Jesus couldn't possibly have 'arranged' that His bones weren't broken. As the soldiers hold back from breaking Jesus' bones they fulfil another Bible prophecy. (v. 36)
- Even the spear used to pierce Jesus' side was prophesied. (v. 37)

Zechariah 12:10, written after 522 BC, says: *'And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. 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.'*

³⁸ Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. 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 thirty-five kilograms.

The King's burial

The Roman authorities would have dug a common grave for crucified criminals.

But what happens to Jesus?

- Joseph, described in the other Gospel accounts as a member of the Jewish Council, gets permission to take the body away for burial. **(v. 38)**
- Until now, he's been an undercover disciple but now he takes a huge risk and his faith is out in the open.

Nicodemus, '*Israel's teacher*' (3:10) who tried to stand with Jesus in front of the religious leaders in 7:51, now arrives.

Why does Nicodemus come?

- While the chief priests are celebrating the murder of their enemy, Nicodemus clearly believes Jesus is the King of the Jews.
- We know this because he turns up with a burial kit fit for a king. **(v. 39)**

Nicodemus brings a massive amount of burial spices that would have been worth a fortune!

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.

It is not just the burial spices that point to a kingly burial.

Where was Jesus buried?

- Joseph had access to a new tomb near the city, a very expensive place to be buried. (v. 41)

Yet another prophecy is directly fulfilled, this time from Isaiah, written some 700 years before.

'He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.' (Isaiah 53:9)

How do verses 40-42 make clear that Jesus is dead?

- There are two witnesses: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Jewish law stressed the need for two male witnesses in any court hearing, and here we have two very respected men. (v. 40)
- Jesus is bound up with cloths and a huge amount of burial spices.
- The precise location of the tomb is given. (v. 41)

This is a grave and a burial fit for a king.

Let's stop and think

John is giving solemn testimony to what he has seen... the fulfillment of centuries of prophecy, including events that Jesus could have had no human control over.

So what is it that John wants us to understand?

- Jesus is the Lamb of God, *'who takes away the sin of the world!'* (John 1:29) This means that all those who trust in His death on the cross for them can say (like the firstborn son at Passover) 'The Lamb died in my place.'
- Jesus is the King. Joseph and Nicodemus are convinced enough to take great personal risks and spare no expense to give Jesus a burial fit for a King.

As the evidence stacks up, John wants the readers of his Gospel to come to the same conclusions about Jesus as these two men.

Summary

Jesus the King, the ultimate Passover Lamb.

- Jesus dies on Passover day itself. (v. 31)
- And just like the Passover lamb, none of Jesus' bones are broken. (v. 33)
- John leaves us in no doubt that God's plan is being fulfilled. Even the spear in Jesus' side is prophesied. (v. 37)
- We see too, a burial fit for a king. Nicodemus brings a massive amount of expensive burial spices. (v. 39)
- And Joseph, the second influential witness, has access to a costly tomb. (v. 41)

But is that the end of the story?

³¹ ...it was the Day
of Preparation...

³³ ...they did not break his legs.

³⁷ 'They will look on the
one they have pierced.'

³⁹ Nicodemus brought a
mixture of myrrh and aloes,
about thirty-five kilograms.

⁴¹ ...there was a garden, and
in the garden a new tomb...

Why not take a moment to re-read what we've looked at in this episode?

John 19:31-42

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*What comes next?
A Sunday morning no
one was expecting!*



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