

John 18:1–19:42: Jesus Arrested, Tried, Crucified and Buried

Dr. David Turner | Gospel of John, Session 19

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John, Passion Narrative, Crucifixion, Pilate, Gethsemane, Peter, Judas, Burial, Barabbas

Abstract

This session covers the Johannine passion narrative in John 18:1–19:42, which details Jesus's arrest, trials, crucifixion, and burial. Dr. David Turner explores the structural transition from the Farewell Discourse to the Passion, analyzing key characters such as Peter, Judas, and Pontius Pilate. Through a textual and theological examination, the lecture emphasizes how Jesus actively participates in fulfilling God's sovereign plan while enduring his sufferings. Additionally, the session incorporates geographical and archaeological context, including discussions of the Garden of Gethsemane, the Governor's Palace, and ancient burial tombs.

Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Transition from the Farewell Discourse (Book of Glory, Chapters 13–17) to the Passion Narrative (Chapters 18–19)
- B. Narrative structure: Book of Signs (Chapters 1–12) and Book of Glory (Chapters 13–21)
- C. Approach to Synoptic comparisons: prioritizing John's distinct voice over stereo-synopsis

II. The Arrest and Trials of Jesus (John 18:1–27)

- A. Jesus's arrest in the Garden across the Kidron Valley (John 18:1–11)
 - 1. Transition across the Kidron Valley toward the Mount of Olives
 - 2. Judas arrives with a detachment of soldiers and officials
 - 3. Peter's defense with the sword and cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant (Malchus)
- B. Hearing before Annas and Peter's first denial (John 18:12–18)
 - 1. Jesus brought first to Annas, the father-in-law of High Priest Caiaphas
 - 2. Peter's first denial in the high priest's courtyard ("I am not")
- C. Questioning by the High Priest and hearing before Caiaphas (John 18:19–24)
 - 1. Jesus questioned about his teaching and public ministry; he is struck for his response
 - 2. Jesus sent to Caiaphas; the hearing is highly abbreviated in John's narrative

D. Peter's second and third denials (John 18:25–27)

1. Peter questioned while warming himself by the courtyard fire
2. Denials to the bystanders and the high priest's servant, followed by the rooster crowing

III. Jesus Before Pontius Pilate (John 18:28–19:16)

A. Phase 1: Initial charges and the Kingdom (John 18:28–38a)

1. Jewish leaders take Jesus to the Roman governor's palace (early morning) to avoid ceremonial impurity
2. Jewish leaders seek capital execution, which only Roman authority can authorize
3. Pilate's private interview with Jesus: questioning his kingship and origin
4. Jesus's response: "My kingdom is not of this world" and testifying to the truth
5. Pilate's cynical response: "What is truth?" and declaring no basis for a charge

B. Phase 2: Flogging, mockery, and the Barabbas option (John 18:38b–19:8)

1. Pilate offers to release Jesus per Passover custom; the crowd demands the insurrectionist Barabbas
2. Jesus is flogged by Roman soldiers and mocked with a crown of thorns and a purple robe
3. Pilate presents Jesus ("Ecce Homo" / "Here is the man") and reiterates his innocence
4. Chief priests demand crucifixion, citing the charge that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, which frightens Pilate

C. Phase 3: Power from above and final condemnation (John 19:9–16)

1. Pilate questions Jesus about his origin; Jesus remains silent
2. Jesus's response on power: "You would have no power over me... if it were not given to you from above"
3. Jewish leaders threaten Pilate's standing with Caesar ("If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar")
4. Pilate sits on the judge's seat at the Stone Pavement and hands Jesus over to be crucified after the leaders declare, "We have no king but Caesar"

IV. The Crucifixion, Death, and Burial of Jesus (John 19:17–42)

A. The Crucifixion at Golgotha (John 19:17–27)

1. Crucified between two others; Pilate's trilingual placard ("Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews") despite Jewish objections
2. Soldiers divide Jesus's garments and cast lots, fulfilling Psalm 22:18
3. Jesus's final provision for his mother Mary, committing her to the beloved disciple

B. The Death of Jesus (John 19:28–37)

1. Jesus says "I am thirsty" to fulfill scripture, receiving wine vinegar
2. Jesus's final shout of triumph: "It is finished" (Greek: tetelestai), representing completion of the Father's work

3. Soldiers pierce Jesus's side with a spear instead of breaking his legs, producing blood and water (fulfilling Psalm 34:20 and Zechariah 12:10)

C. The Burial of Jesus (John 19:38–42)

1. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus claim Jesus's body publicly
2. Body wrapped with spices and linen according to Jewish customs
3. Jesus laid in a new, nearby garden tomb due to the Day of Preparation

V. Historical, Geographical, and Archaeological Insights

A. Geography of Jerusalem

1. West Hill (Mount Zion) traditionally associated with the house of Caiaphas and Jaffa Gate (Herod's Palace)
2. Kidron Valley and the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives
3. Location of Pilate's trial: likely Herod's Palace (Governor's Palace) near Jaffa Gate rather than Fortress Antonia
4. Location of crucifixion: outside the ancient city walls, traditionally the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

B. Archaeological discoveries

1. The Pilate Stone discovered at Caesarea in 1961, confirming Pontius Pilate as Prefect of Judea
2. Rolling stone tombs in Galilee and Shephelah (Khirbet Midrash) matching the description of Jesus's tomb
3. Jewish burial customs: use of ossuaries (bone boxes) for secondary burial, including the ornate ossuary of Joseph bar Caiaphas

VI. Key Theological Themes and Character Analyses

A. The Dual Character of Jesus: Passive Sufferer vs. Active Sovereign

1. Passively allows himself to be arrested, tried, and crucified in obedience to the Father
2. Actively aware of all events, taking the initiative to fulfill scripture and care for his mother

B. Comparison of Peter and Judas

1. Judas as an unfruitful branch (John 15): near the means of grace but untouched by its ends, disillusioned by a non-political Messiah
2. Peter as a branch in need of pruning (John 15): boasts self-reliance but denies Jesus, later to be restored by grace

C. Character analysis of Pontius Pilate

1. Driven by political expedience, cynicism ("What is truth?"), and self-interest rather than a moral center
2. Complicit in executing an innocent man despite declaring his innocence three times

3. Contrasted with Jewish leaders; his trilingual placard unwittingly proclaims the sovereign truth of Jesus's kingship