

John 19:1-42

Be careful of that little word "but."

It often flies in the face of known truth.

For instance, even though Pilate had freely admitted that he found **"in him no fault at all,"** he still used that word.

"But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the Passover," giving the Jews the choice between an innocent man and a robber.

It would mark him forever as a compromiser.

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And Chapter 19 does nothing to improve his image.

John 19:1 **"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him."**

Under Jewish law, a man could be punished by whipping.

However, regardless of the severity of the crime, God had limited this punishment to 40 stripes.

Paul had been beaten five times by the Jews. Each time he received the maximum punishment of "**forty stripes save one.**"

I suppose they always stopped at 39, lest a miscount might inadvertently put them over God's limit.

But the point is this.

Paul had received this maximum punishment five times, and yet he had survived.

That would have been highly unlikely if he had been subjected to the Roman method of scourging.

No, the Roman system was designed more with the thought of destruction in mind rather than punishment.

To begin with, there was no limit to the stripes that could be inflicted.

And not only that, but the many-thonged whip that was used was laced with pieces of metal or bone to make it more lethal.

As might be expected, it was not uncommon for the victim to die under this punishment, and those who survived would probably be maimed for life.

It was a testament to Jesus' strong physical physique that He had survived such an ordeal as well as He had.

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And there was a second purpose behind this punishment.

Under the lash, it was quite possible that the prisoner might say something that would condemn him.

And any utterance against Rome would be duly reported to the governor.

But Jesus had said nothing, and more importantly, He had done nothing.

Remember His words in the garden ---

"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"

54: But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

That's right, He could have ended His torment in a moment, but He bore it all for our sakes, a point that was duly noted 700 years before the actual event.

Isaiah 50:6, "I gave my back to the smiters,
and my cheeks to them that plucked off
the hair: I hid not my face from shame
and spitting."

Again, in Isaiah 53:5 we read "--- he was
wounded for our transgressions, he was
bruised for our iniquities: the
chastisement of our peace was upon him;
and with his stripes we are healed."

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One would have thought this inhuman
treatment would have been enough to
satisfy the soldiers' lust for blood.
But no, their sadistic minds found a way to
combine mockery with cruelty.
He wants to be a King --- let's give Him a
coronation.

V 2-3 "And the soldiers platted a crown of
thorns, and put it on his head, and

they put on him a purple robe,
3: And said, Hail, King of the Jews!
and they smote him with their hands."

And where did these thorns come from?
Were they not produced by a world under
judgment?

Remember God's words to Adam --- "**cursed is
the ground for thy sake; in sorrow
shalt thou eat of it all the days of
thy life;**
**18: Thorns also and thistles shall it
bring forth to thee."**

No, there would have been no thorns to
pierce our Saviour's brow had it not
been for man's sin.

And God's judgment would have never fallen
upon His Son's innocent head had it not
been for our sin.

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"And they put on him a purple robe" ---

probably retrieved from another victim
of Rome's displeasure.

And they hailed Him King; not with a salute,
but with blows.

I'm sure it was only God's great mercy that
prevented Him from striking them dead
on the spot.

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V 4-5 **"Pilate therefore went forth again,
and saith unto them, Behold, I bring
him forth to you, that ye may know that
I find no fault in him.**

**5: Then came Jesus forth, wearing the
crown of thorns, and the purple robe.
And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the
man!"**

The purple robe would have been stained red
with the blood of His lacerated back,

while more blood would be oozing from the crown of thorns.

But worst of all was the condition of His face.

Jesus had been given such a beating that He was almost unrecognizable.

In fact, Isaiah 52:14 says **"--- his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."**

And yet, as Jesus stood there in this pitiful condition, Pilate had the audacity to say, **"I find no fault in him."**

It's a wonder he didn't choke on his words! And yet, to be perfectly fair, he might have thought this display of Roman brutality would have been enough to satisfy the Jews.

If that were the case, then he would look in vain for a single morsel of pity in their wicked hearts.

V 6 **"When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him."**

Certainly Pilate knew they were powerless to do so.

After all, they had already admitted, **"It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."**

But he just couldn't help reminding them that he was in charge.

But they weren't beaten yet.

Forsaking their trumped-up charge of
insurrection, at least for the moment,
they revealed their true complaint.

V 7 **"--- We have a law, and by our law he
ought to die, because he made himself
the Son of God."**

To their surprise, Pilate took them
seriously, but not in the way they had
expected.

They had presented Jesus' claim as both
ridiculous and blasphemous, but V 8
says **"When Pilate therefore heard that
saying, he was the more afraid."**

You see, the Romans feared many gods, even
the gods of the peoples they had
conquered.

They also believed that their gods could
clothe themselves in human form.

Was it just possible that he was dealing
with a deity?

Certainly Jesus wasn't like any other
prisoner he had encountered.

And there was another ominous shadow
hovering over his head.

Matthew 27:19 says --- **"When he was set down
on the judgment seat, his wife sent
unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to
do with that just man: for I have
suffered many things this day in a
dream because of him."**

Yes, their accusation had unsettled him, and
he must have answers before he went any
further.

John 19:8-9 **"When Pilate therefore heard
that saying, he was the more afraid;
9: And went again into the judgment
hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art**

thou? (That was the burning question, wasn't it?) **But Jesus gave him no answer."**

Certainly this would have been the ideal time to assert His deity, and Pilate would have listened, but Jesus said nothing.

No, He wasn't there to win His freedom.

He was there to accomplish God's will ---

"the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

So, He said nothing.

The prophet Isaiah records His reaction in

Isaiah 53:7 **"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."**

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John 19:10 **"Then saith Pilate unto him,
Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou
not that I have power to crucify thee,
and have power to release thee?"**

Did he really have that power?

Then why hadn't he released a man whom he
had declared innocent three times
already?

V 11 **"Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no
power at all against me, except it were
given thee from above: therefore he
that delivered me unto thee hath the
greater sin."**

No, Pilate really didn't have any power to
release Him.

He was completely bound by his fear and his
ambition.

He was afraid of the Jews. He was afraid of losing his job, and ultimately he was afraid of Caesar.

Granted, his superstition had influenced him for a short time, but, in the end, his personal agenda had overruled any fear of God.

And he wasn't the first man to make such a choice.

Jesus had warned His followers, "**Ye cannot serve God and mammon,**" and yet Judas betrayed Him for the love of money --- "**What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?**"

And then there was Caiaphas, whom Jesus had identified as having "**the greater sin.**" He had delivered Jesus into the hands of the Romans because his power over the people was being threatened.

And now see Pilate, a man who was thoroughly convinced of Jesus' innocence, condemning Him to death in order to protect his job.

V 12 **"And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."**

They had found his point of weakness, and they knew it.

V 13-14 **"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.**

14: And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and

he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!"

Having lost the battle, his only tool now was sarcasm.

So, looking at the man whom Rome had rendered almost unrecognizable, he said --- **"Behold your King!"**

V 15 **"But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him."**

And then, no doubt with a cynical smile on his face, he answered, --- **"Shall I crucify your King?"**

In response --- **"The chief priest answered, We have no king but Caesar."**

What a pronouncement, coming from men who hated both Rome and Caesar.

In fact, in less than 40 years, their nation would fight the fiercest war they had

ever waged against Caesar, and would fail.

Sixty years later they would be involved in another war against Rome, but to no avail.

The fact of the matter was they would rather have Caesar as their king than accept their true Messiah.

And they would get their wish.

For nearly the next 2000 years, they would remain under Gentile rule.

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

And so the awful deed began.

It had been expedient for the religious leaders **"that one man should die for the people."**

And it had been expedient for Pilate to
crucify an innocent man.

We must never let life's expediencies
pressure us into denying our Lord.

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

"The place of a skull" --- What a fitting
name for the place of death in its most
cruel form. And the suffering could go
on for days.

Physically speaking, the two thieves endured
the same torturous death as Jesus did,
but that's really not the point.

It wasn't the physical suffering that caused
Jesus to cry out in the garden, **"If it**

**be possible, let this cup pass from
me."**

No, it was the spiritual aspect of the cross
that pressed upon His soul with awful
force.

As you will remember, John had introduced
Jesus as " --- **the Lamb of God, which
taketh away the sin of the world.**"

To do that, He must bear the full weight of
God's righteous judgment upon our sin.

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Many years ago when God's judgment had
descended upon Egypt, Israel had been
shielded from death by the blood of the
Passover Lamb.

On the cross, Jesus shielded us from God's
righteous judgment by stepping into our
place.

Romans 3:24-26 describes both the sickness and the remedy --- **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;** (and then the next verse quickly adds)

24: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

(referring to the sins of the Old Testament believers)

26: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

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John 19:17-18 **"And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:**

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

Yes, Jesus has always taken His rightful place in **"the midst"** of mankind.

In Luke 2:46, we see Him as a child **"in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions."**

In John 20:19 we see our risen Lord **"in the midst"** of His anxious disciples comforting them with the words ---
"Peace be unto you."

And in Revelation 1:13 we find Him **"in the midst of the seven candlesticks"** (or seven churches).

And all through this Age of Grace, He has been **"in the midst"** of His church, for He has promised **"where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."**

So now, in John 19:18, we see Jesus forming the dividing line between the saved and the lost.

This will always be the case.

1 John 5:11-12 **"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.**

12: He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

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John 19:19-22 "And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

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

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

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

The sign over Jesus' head was an embarrassment to the Jews, and it was written in all three official languages.

Of course they wanted it changed, but Pilate was immovable on that point --- **"What I have written I have written."**

They had pressured him into crucifying an innocent man, but he would have his revenge.

Actually, they were the truest words he had ever written.

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V 23-24 **"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.**

24: They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled,

which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did"---"that the scripture might be fulfilled."

Psalm 22:18 had foretold this very incident long before Rome had even come into existence --- **"They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."**

Seeing the value of such a garment, the soldiers were reluctant to tear it. But it was one of the few things connected with Jesus crucifixion that wasn't torn.

In anger **"--- the high priest rent his clothes."**

And God would rend the very veil of the temple, symbolically opening the way

into the holiest for all believers, and at the same time proclaiming Judaism null and void.

But there would be no rending of this beautiful garment that so vividly reminds us of the seamlessly perfect nature of the One who had worn it.

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

Certainly, all of these women had a close relationship to Jesus, but none like His mother's.

Because of the physical nature of birth, there is a special relationship between a mother and her child.

We can only imagine the depths of Mary's grief as she looked upon the Son of her womb hanging on the cross.

No wonder old Simeon had told her --- **"Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also --"**

V 26-27 **"When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!
27: Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."**

Obviously, Mary was a widow, and being the eldest son, Jesus would have shouldered the responsibility that normally belonged to His father.

And now, as the eldest son, He continued to concern Himself with His mother's welfare.

But the significant point here is the fact that He chose someone outside the family circle to care for her.

Significant that is, until we realize that at this particular time, His brothers were still antagonistic towards His ministry; a point that was brought out quite clearly in John chapter 7.

No, the environment of that beloved disciple's home would be much more conducive to Mary's piece of mind.

And John willingly "**took her unto his own home**" --- beginning a long line of individuals who have opened their homes and their hearts for Jesus' sake.

Yes, orphans have found homes, the sick have been nursed back to health, and many unlearned have been taught for Jesus' sake.

What can we do to show our love for our Master?

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V 28-29 **"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.**

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

At the beginning of Jesus' crucifixion, as recorded in Mark 15:23, we are told that **"---they gave him to drink wine**

mingled with myrrh: but he received it not."

This mixture was a stupefying drink to
lessen the pain before crucifixion.

A little bit of mercy in a cruel world.

But He refused it.

However, now, because His work was finished,

He received the vinegar, and in so
doing, fulfilled another scripture.

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

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

No, Jesus didn't say I am finished.

He said "**It** (referring to His work of salvation) **is finished,**" never again to be repeated.

Hebrews 9:26 "--- **but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.**"

Yes, to "**put away sin,**" not just cover it, as the Old Testament sacrifices had.

And now that sin had been truly "**put away**" and the work of salvation had been truly "**finished,**" He could deliver up His spirit unto death.

No, Jesus didn't die from the loss of blood. He simply "**gave up the ghost.**"

"**It is finished**" --- It wasn't a cry of defeat. It was a shout of victory!

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V 31-37 "**The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should**

not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

32: Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33: But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

34: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

35: And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

36: For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A

bone of him shall not be broken.

**37: And again another scripture saith,
They shall look on him whom they
pierced."**

Here again, two more scriptures were fulfilled.

The one is found in Psalm 34:20, and was fulfilled on the very day of His crucifixion.

The other one, although it happened at the same time, also looks forward to the future.

Zechariah 12:10 **"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and**

**shall be in bitterness for him, as one
that is in bitterness for his
firstborn."**

Yes, when Jesus returns to the Mount of
Olives to save His people from their
enemies and set up His millennial
kingdom, they will finally recognize
Him as their Messiah.

And with that recognition, Israel's
blessings will begin to flow once
again.

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V 38-39 **"And after this Joseph of
Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus,
but secretly for fear of the Jews,
besought Pilate that he might take away
the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him
leave. He came therefore, and took the
body of Jesus.**

39: And there came also Nicodemus,
which at the first came to Jesus by
night, and brought a mixture of myrrh
and aloes, about an hundred pound
weight."

It's so good to see these two secret
believers finally proclaiming their
faith in Jesus.

V 40-42 "Then took they the body of Jesus,
and wound it in linen clothes with the
spices, as the manner of the Jews is to
bury.

41: Now in the place where he was
crucified there was a garden; and in
the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was
never man yet laid.

42: There laid they Jesus therefore
because of the Jews' preparation day;
for the sepulchre was nigh at hand."

This wasn't the usual weekly Sabbath that was nearly upon them, but rather "**an high day,**" being the first day of the Feast of Passover.

So it was particularly important to the Jews that the bodies be removed.

And because the Sabbath was nigh at hand in which no work could be done, Joseph and Nicodemus had to move quickly.

Joseph's "**sepulchre was nigh at hand,**" and for Jesus' sake, it was freely given.

It was to become the most famous sepulcher in history; a symbol of life, rather than a place of death.

Just imagine what God can do with what you have "**at hand**" if it is freely given out of a heart of love.