

# GOSPEL OF YOHANAN

## Chapter 19

### Trial 4A

As we are now approaching the end of the many trials of the Son of God, and getting closer to the moments of the crucifixion, we realize that the atmosphere in Jerusalem is getting increasingly tense, by the moment. Feelings are flaring up and as time goes on, both the Jews and the Gentiles are progressively in disarray. Both groups fear the loss of grip on the situation and, in turn, are beginning to lose their own sense of logic. As you witness all these things, you quickly come to realize that the only person who is at peace and in complete control of all is the one who is suffering the most—Yeshua.

I think that the most beautiful thing here is that we, as the readers, are brought to experience an array of different and very powerful emotions by these various groups, surrounding Yeshua. These emotions are mixed with anger and confusion, until our eyes rest on Yeshua, who is the Sar Shalom, the Prince of Peace. Here, in spite of great pains and sufferings, we learn that our hearts can find rest with Him, even under these circumstances.

There would have been no other place, whether in Jerusalem, or in the whole world for that matter, where I would have preferred to be, but next to the One who was so despised, so reviled and so hated, because it is in Him that we find our true peace.

Yeshua's sufferings have now begun to show us this ultimate and great work He was about to accomplish, only a few hours later, when He would be nailed on the tree. The passages we are about to study bring out this marked contrast between peace and turmoil, between light and darkness, between volatility and stability.

As the trial reaches its pinnacle, one becomes very aware of what the entire world actually succeeded in doing. It succeeded in proving Yeshua's perfect innocence.

He was accused of any possible thing that appealed to them:

- They accused Him of wanting to destroy the Temple.
- They accused Him of perverting the nation of Israel.
- They accused Him of forbidding the people to pay their taxes to Caesar.

They had formally begun to accuse Him of blasphemy, but later on, they took the liberty of changing that accusation and charged Him of sedition against Rome.

The irony in all of this is that it was not only Pilate and Herod who declared Yeshua innocent, but yet another. Do you know who else declared Him innocent?

Judas Iscariot declared Him innocent, as we read in **Matthew 27:4**, where he said:

... *"I have sinned by betraying innocent blood."* ...

In a final count, Jesus was declared innocent seven times.

Here we find three of the most infamous men in history confirming the innocence of the Son of Man. This is quite an irony; greater testimonies of Jesus' innocence would be hard to find.

The declarations of these three still speak out today, especially to those who continually defame and slander Jesus Christ. They also speak to the many liberal authors, speakers and anti-missionaries, who are determined to smear the truth about the Messiah.

What these passages of the Gospels are telling them is that their accusations are meaningless and without truth. For, if those who had even greater reason to accuse Him found Him innocent, how can any of our accusations against Him adhere today?

Speaking of these three infamous men (Herod, Pilate and Judas Iscariot), it is vital to remember that having found Him innocent of blasphemy or sedition is one thing, but it is quite another to recognize Him as one's personal Savior. None of them came to a saving knowledge of Yeshua, yet they knew He was innocent. This helps us properly place today's comments from people who say: O yes, Jesus was innocent... He was a good man... He should not have died. These declarations mean nothing, unless the person sees the complete Messiah, the God-man who came to die for our sins.

Today we are in the midst of seeing how one of the three, Pontius Pilate, slowly realized that he was caught in a situation which he tried very hard to avoid, but could not. As the Roman procurator of the time, he was called to render a decision that brought him to repel and to ward off all attempts from the Spirit of God. We are going to see again that God is at work in the heart of men, always trying to bring them to Him.

How did this situation with Pilate begin?

Pilate sent Yeshua off to Herod, resulting in Pilate and Herod becoming friends. It is interesting how enemies can align themselves, once a common goal is realized. But nothing transpires from this encounter. We now come to where Pilate, under pressure from the crowd, frees Barabbas and sits on the Judgment Seat.

He is now about to give the final blow to condemn Jesus to the cross. It is here that something very interesting happens because, here again, there was still a hope before the final action. I believe The Spirit of God was after Pilate, just like He was after Judas Iscariot, to the very last opportunity. As Pilate sat down on the judgment seat, something happens.

**Matthew 27:19**

*While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."*

This, I believe, was one of God's last attempts to bring Pilate to repentance. Here, the Spirit went the extra mile with Pilate in giving his wife a dream and it came right after the last conversation he had with Jesus.

God gave His wife a dream, a very disturbing one, which prompted her to warn her husband, with all urgency, not to have anything to do with that *just Man*. Notice what she calls Yeshua—*just Man*. This term was so appropriate, as Pilate had just sat on the judgment seat. This was yet another declaration of His innocence. Superstitious, as Pilate was, his wife's dream must have had a great impact on him.

Claudia, as tradition gives us her name, reminds us of Zeresh, the wife of Haman the Edomite. When Haman wanted to do away with Mordecai, she and Haman's advisors came with a similar wise counsel.

**Esther 6:13**

*...If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him.*

While both Mordecai and Yeshua are of Jewish descent, what we have here is a much more serious matter for Pilate, because this "Someone"—this Yeshua—is not just of Jewish descent, but of heavenly origin.

I believe that this dream was a warning that God arranged, so that Pilate may have that one last opportunity to pull out. But, he did not.

While this was given to Claudia through a dream, please don't misunderstand. I do not believe that God speaks through dreams today, except in very exceptional situations. Dreams, in the Old and New Testament times, were used in few and exceptional circumstances. In similar fashion, they do occur today in times of extreme circumstances. For instance, look at what we hear of, in the Muslim countries, where the Word of God is forbidden. The Lord, it appears, is using dreams to bring people the saving Word. This, I believe. But, I do not believe that God uses dreams as a common venue by which to address and to inform. Keep in mind, as well, that the second most common reason that Muslims give for their coming to a saving knowledge of Yeshua is the exemplary and highly esteemed behavior of Christians in their midst.

But, for you who have the Word of God and have been saved, you have enough in the Bible to lead you to a blessed and sanctified life, needing no other miraculous signs. Our own salvation and the salvation of others should confirm and satisfy our need for "other" signs and supernatural events.

As Peter compared his amazing experience on the mount of Transfiguration with the written Word, he said that the Word is: "*more sure.*"

**2 Peter 1:19**

*And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;*

Concerning dreams, those who believe that God speaks to them in dreams should consider that a very few number of people in the Bible experienced revelatory dreams. In the history of the Church, most of those who had experienced long journeys with God never received such supernatural messages. Neither did most believers in the bible. Furthermore, dreams that were given in biblical times were specifically for the benefit of others and not for personal use. Also, it is important to remember that whenever a dream was given, a divine interpretation followed.

God is not a God of secrets, speaking in darkness, but the God of the Bible is open and sincere.

So if someone comes and says I had a dream and I don't know what it means, know that if God did not give you the explanation, it is because it is from his own mind.

There are specific verses in the Bible that help us understand the nature of dreams. Let me show you a couple of them:

The first part of **Ecclesiastes 5:3** says:

*For a dream comes through much activity ...*

This is a very scientific explanation of what dreams are. What it says is that dreams come from the activities that one had during the previous hours, days, or perhaps months. The Hebrew word speaks of work, of business. Dreams come through much work, or business. There is no evidence of divine messages here.

In **Ecclesiastes 2:23**, the same word is used, where it says:

*For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; ...*

So dreams act as a relief and, as some scientists have said, as an evacuation of all these daily intakes.

There is even a warning in **Ecclesiastes 5:7** when it says:

*For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity. But fear God.*

I know that it seems easier to evaluate dreams than to study the Word, because it doesn't involve much work. We tend to go to the easier ways, but nothing is clearer and nothing can replace the Word of God.

It is interesting that dreams, like wonders and miracles, do not play a big part in the history of Israel, unless they reveal important prophecies for the nation. The dreams of Joseph or Daniel are such examples.

While there were always dreamers in Israel, this phenomenon seems to be one that we find mainly in pagan religions. For example, we find dream books in which different images are codified. These are found in Egyptian and Mesopotamian literature. Is there such a book in the Bible?

No! If the Bible reader falls into the trap of believing that dreams are from God speaking to them, they will have to resort to materials outside the Bible to satisfy their curiosity.

Even in rabbinical Judaism, dreams are played down. While the Talmud is somehow ambivalent on dreams; we find that those who oppose them do so quite strongly. We read one of these oppositions in the book of Berachot: "a man is shown in a dream only what is suggested by his own thoughts" (Ber. 55b).

The Talmud sometimes even mocks those dreamers of dreams. While the book does record that there were 24 professional interpreters of dreams in Jerusalem, we also read the following from the pages of the Talmud:

Bar Hedyā was an interpreter of dreams. To one who paid him he used to give a favourable interpretation and to one who did not pay him he gave an unfavourable interpretation.

Then it goes to a lengthy description of both the dreams of the one who pays and the other who does not pay. The one who does not pay gets so many curses that, at the end, he finally pays. This is what it says:

“Finally Raba went and gave him a fee. He said to him: I saw a wall fall down. He replied: You will acquire wealth without end.”

The whole story was for those who pretend to know the interpretation of dreams. This does not say that Judaism is free from the influence of dreams and dreamers. Today two small marginal groups within Judaism, the kabbalists and Hasidim, put high priority on dreams. But moderate Jews, in general, do not make a big deal about it.

Much of modern day Judaism, as we know it, is based upon the works of Maimonides or the Rambam, as he is also known. This revered and renowned rabbi from the 12<sup>th</sup> century spoke much about dreams, totally rejecting all supernatural aspects of it.

But the general rabbinical approach to dreams can be summed up by a story I read the other day: A great mystic, who apparently had the power to interpret dreams, came to a rabbi and offered his services to his congregation – the rabbi said to him, “Listen, it’s hard enough for us to figure out what to do while we are awake!

Let us deal with our dreams once we’ve figured out how to live our wakeful hours...”

One last word on dreams, that I find quite revealing, is that God gave a reason why he sends dreamers to Israel.

### **Deuteronomy 13:1-3**

*If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder,*

*and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’ --which you have not known-- ‘and let us serve them,’*

*you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

So the Lord sent them a dreamer of dreams, and as it says in **Verse 2**, even though they say things that come true, this is still not a valid proof of the inspiration of the dream. There, God tells them that He sent them for what.....To test them... *for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God.* The same test is given to us today. How do you fare in this test?

Someone may come to you and say, I had a dream about you yesterday. How do you respond? Do you begin by getting excited, ready to fully rely on this dream?

This would not be a healthy biblical response. The real question is what has greater power and authority: Dreams or the Word of God?

The excitement that is triggered in you, when someone tells you that he had a dream about you, should not even compare to the thrill of opening up the Word of God and receiving Words from the Spirit of God.

Let us now turn back to the trial. After hearing about his wife's dream, Pilate sought the more to get out of this dire dilemma. With the crowd choosing Barabbas, Pilate begins to panic and even repeated his plea.

We read in **Luke 23:22** that he repeats the plea three times:

*Then he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go."*

*But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.*

Pilate was forced to make a decision for himself. There was no way he could evade this life or death choice, as all men and women will one day have to make that same decision for themselves, concerning Jesus.

Knowing the ferocious character of Pilate, one may take for granted that all his pleadings with the crowd were done, not for the sake of Jesus, but because he was scared, especially by his wife's dream.

Seeing himself trapped in this situation, he does something strange and superstitious.

**Matthew 27:24**

*When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it."*

That's interesting! He wanted so much to pull away from this situation that he washes his hands, because there was nothing else he could think of doing. He was completely ensnared by his own unwillingness to recognize Yeshua for who He was.

It is similar to Adam, who chose to cover himself, when he sinned. This washing of the hands was a covering for Pilate, a public cleansing from his guilt. But it demonstrated that he had absolutely no understanding of remorse or godly repentance. Do we also feel we can cleanse our conscience or rid ourselves of sin by choosing our own means of reconciling with God?

Reconciliation with God is done on His terms and requires godly repentance. God is quick to forgive us when we follow the way of the Master.

This man's action was worse than many religious fanatics of the time who were obsessed with washing everything with water. This only shows how superstitious he was. During all this turmoil, Pilate asked the crowd a very pertinent question—a question that later turned to himself—a question that we all faced or will face at some point in time.

In **Matthew 27:22** we read that: *Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"*

This is the question that will remain with us: What are we going to do with the Messiah?

There is a true story attached to this verse:

One evening in 1871, D. L. Moody was preaching in Chicago's Farwell Hall from this very passage and he said:

"Our eternal destiny depends on our answer to Pilate's question: "What shall I do with Jesus?"

At the conclusion of his sermon, Moody said:

"I wish you would take this text home with you and turn it over in your minds during the week, and next week we will decide what to do with Jesus of Nazareth."

But something happened in between. You must have heard of the Great Chicago Fire. This fire burned from that Sunday October 8 to early Tuesday October 10, killing hundreds and destroying about four square miles in Chicago, including the Farwell Hall where Moody spoke.

In fact as the soloist Ira Sankey closed the meeting singing, "Today the Savior Calls," his voice was suddenly drowned out by cries of alarm.

The Great Chicago Fire had started and was sweeping toward the Hall. Gas mains were exploding and the streets were clogged with panicked, fleeing people.

It spread quickly into and through the downtown areas, consuming everything in sight.

Some observers later said that the ground itself seemed to burn, which is quite possible since the streets, sidewalks, and bridges were all made of wood.

Even the river seemed aflame, for several vessels caught fire and the grease along the water's surface ignited.

Not until the following Tuesday morning did firefighters, helped by rain, manage to bring the fire under control. Gone were eighteen thousand buildings. One hundred thousand people were homeless.

Among them were the Moodys.

Twenty-two years later on the anniversary of the fire, Moody again spoke in Chicago from Matthew 27:22, saying:

“Twenty-two years have passed away, and I have not seen that congregation since, and I never will meet those people again until I meet them in another world. But I want to tell you of one lesson I learned that night, which I have never forgotten, and that is, when I preach, to press Christ upon the people then and there, and try to bring them to a decision on the spot.” He added: “You will notice that Pilate was just in the condition of my audience that night, just the condition that you are in today—he had to decide then and there what to do with Jesus.” “I have asked God many times to forgive me for telling people that night to take a week to think it over. I have never dared to give an audience a week to think of their salvation since.”

This is a great story that comes from a man of God.

While Pilate was forced to make a decision about Yeshua, as all men will have to at some point in their lives, you may not be forced to make that decision today at this very moment. But it is nevertheless very pressing, because you do not know what tomorrow can bring. No one knows. If you have listened up to now, it is probably because the Spirit of God is working in you as He did in Pilate’s heart. But, let’s not follow Pilate’s path, but recognize that Yeshua is the Messiah, the one who guarantees our eternal future with our Creator.

**Romans 10:9-10**

*that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

*For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

This is the point of decision; that you confess Yeshua died and resurrected and believe in your heart that He is the Messiah. It is that decision that everyone must resolve. It is this decision that will determine the outcome of your eternal future.

Now at this point, Pilate has not made a final decision yet. What he decides to do next is to scourge Jesus. Why does he do that?

For one thing, we realize that he did not care about Jesus at all, because here he is sending a man, that he pronounced innocent, to be scourged. Scourging was considered the second most painful experience one could endure; the first is the crucifixion.

Some commentators have said that perhaps Pilate sent Jesus to be scourged in order to soften the crowd’s heart toward Jesus, reasoning that after they would see Him disfigured, they would have compassion on him and allow for his freedom. This scourging was yet another evidence of Pilate’s means to get himself out of this difficult circumstance. It was not for the sake of Jesus, but primarily to save his own skin.

Let’s read the passage of **John 19:1-6** to see what happened, and then we will talk about what it means to be scourged.

*So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

*And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe.*

*Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands. Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him." Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!" Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him."*

Pilate orders Jesus to be scourged or flogged as required by Roman law before crucifixion. This is what happens during a scourging. The accused stood naked, and was flogged with a whip consisting of several strips of leather. The leather thongs were knotted with a number of small pieces of metal, causing deep bruising. In addition, we learn that sheep bone was attached to the tips of each strip. Scourging would quickly remove the skin and expose the muscle and then the bones. There was then excessive bleeding that would leave the person half-dead. According to history, this punishment was particularly dreadful.

Death was often the result of this cruel form of punishment. This is why it was the duty of the Centurion in charge to make sure that the person does not die before he reaches the cross. This is why I believe that the Roman soldiers put a robe on His back. They knew what they were doing. The covering of the robe was to help clot the blood, similar to putting gauze over a cut. This they did, in order to prevent Yeshua from bleeding to death. They kept him for the cross.

Along with that, they put on His head a crown of thorns. We read in **Matthew 27:30** that they *struck Him on the head*, and in so doing the thorns were pushed into the skin and blood was flowing everywhere over His face. This, I believe, they also did it for show, but the accused was suffering unbearable pains.

With all that was done to Him, Jesus was undoubtedly in shock. This is why He was not able, at some point, to carry the cross so a man named Simon of Cyrene was called to carry it for Him. Did Pilate need to make such a mockery of the Messiah in this manner? Did he need to scourge Him to such a point?

Furthermore, even after the scourging, the soldiers beat Him with their hands. That was unnecessary cruelty. Like J.C. Ryle said in his commentary on John: It was Satan's hour.

**Isaiah 52:14** prophesied so well of the Messiah's scourging:  
*Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men;*

That was the outcome of the scourging. But something very interesting happened after that—something which I believe was another attempt by the Spirit of God to bring Pilate to see that Jesus was the Messiah. Now notice the force of love that, even after the scourging, the Spirit gives him yet another opportunity to repent. There is something that religious leaders said that triggered something in Pilate. See what happens in **John 19:7-11** after Pilate said to them, *"You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him."*

**John 19:7, 8**

*The Judeans answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."*

*Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid,*

What exactly did he become fearful of here?

There is actually something new that he learns about Jesus here. He did not only say that He was King, but that he was what? ... *The Son of God*

Not "a son of god" like the Caesars thought they were, but The Son of God.

The Romans also deified (or made gods of) people who were very popular with the population, but here it is different.

That touched a sensitive chord here in Pilate. See what he does next. He goes back to the Praetorium and speaks again with Jesus. I believe that this is the very moment where He could have accepted the Messiah and have salvation.

**John 19: 9**

*and (he) went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" ...*

He knew that something beyond the visible—something extraordinary was happening. *Where are you from? .....he asks Him.....But Jesus gave him no answer.*

Everything that could be said was uttered. There was nothing else to say. Confused, Pilate takes on a more aggressive stand and says: **John 19:10, 11**

*..... "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"*

*Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."*

Yes! This man had no power at all against the Son of God. He thought he had power, but whatever he had was according to what God gave him. Apparently, this went much further in history.

Tertullian, who was a church leader and a prolific author, in his Apology written around the year 198, reports something quite amazing. He says that there was an attempt from Tiberius, the Caesar of the time, to deify Jesus. Interesting, is it not?

He wrote, and I quote:

"There was an ancient decree, that no one should be received for a deity unless he was first approved by the senate.

Tiberius, in whose time the Christian religion had its rise, having received from Palestine in Syria an account of such things as manifested our Saviour's divinity, proposed to the senate, and giving his own vote as first in his favor, that Christ should be placed among the gods. The Senate refused because he himself had declined that honor."

What we learn is that Tiberius tried to outrun Constantine, because it is a very similar thing to what Constantine did 200 years later and married the state to religion. But Tiberius was too early.

Pilate's attempts to free Jesus, or more precisely to free himself from this situation, did not work. We see him, after the scourging, and after this dream, trying to gain time in order to avoid making a decision. But this did not go well with the crowd which was led by the religious leaders. This is where the spiritual authorities pull out their last card, one that forced Pilate to make that final decision. See **John 19:12-13** and see how they cornered Pilate and compelled him to make that final decision:

*From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar." When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.*

What did the religious leaders say to trigger such strong reaction for Pilate, to sit right away on the judgment seat and to comply with their demand?

**Verse 12** gives us a good clue – there they say:

*"If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend –*

This was a well calculated phrase that can be understood when you consider the historical setting of the time and how Pilate came to power. Let me briefly tell you what happened then. Just before that time there was a man named Sejanus, who according to Dio Cassius, was a first century historian (150-225 AD). He wrote that Sejanus aspired to Tiberius Caesar's throne. He wanted to become a Caesar and usurp Tiberius. This man succeeded to become so popular that in A.D. 29 the Senate voted that his birthday should be publicly observed. But Tiberius uncovered this threat and had Sejanus and many of his friends killed in a blood bath in Rome. The problem was that Pilate was a friend of Sejanus, and it was Sejanus who helped him hold that position in Judea.

So these religious leaders knew what to say...*If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend.* They hit it right on the target, and right away he sat on the Judgment Seat. They had succeeded in their demand to have Yeshua crucified.

History gives us a sense of the powerful words of these religious leaders. Philo, a Jewish Historian of the time, living in Egypt, wrote about Gaius, who later replaced Tiberius. We know him as Caligula. At one time, he was also accused of usurping the authority of Tiberius, but look at how he defended himself. His words will shed light on the power of the words uttered by these leaders:

“..... I have given sufficient proof that I myself am individually a friend to Caesar, and a friend to Tiberius, since it was I who carried into execution, your intentions respecting the downfall of Sejanus.”

So one being a “friend to Caesar” was a mark of allegiance, and the religious leaders used the same phrase to corner Pilate. Pilate got so scared that he sat down on the judgment seat and made that final decision to send Jesus to the cross.

But before we leave this man, Sejanus, there is something else we learn about him. According to Philo, in His Works called *The Hypothetica, Apology for the Jews*, he speaks of this man’s deep hatred and hostility toward the Jewish nation. He was a marked anti-Semite who apparently falsely accused the Jews of Rome. It is possible that Tiberius expelled the Jews from Rome in 19 AD, under the influence of this man. That would explain why Pilate started his work in Israel by showing his hatred toward the Jewish nations.

Here again, it is to the Jew first!

It is then that we learn in **John 19:13** that:

*When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.*

That was the final blow. This **verse 13** represents a demarcation line. From this point on, Jesus took the road to the cross. This is why we read in following **verses 14-16**:

*Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"*

*But 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!"*

*Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led Him away.*

**Verse 14** has been a verse of great debates, and it is still is. For one thing we read that this was the preparation of the Passover. Many say that the preparation already took place the day before and quote passages like **Luke 22:8**, where Jesus sends Peter and John and tells them:

*"Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat."*

The second thing in this verse is that it says it is the *sixth hour* when **Mark** says that it is the *Third hour*.

**Mark 15:25:**

*Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.*

These things make our study of the Word so interesting. But we will tackle this problem next, where we will begin to speak about the crucifixion also.

To conclude, I would like to say, like David:

*Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven! For His mercy endures forever.*

Do you know that this phrase is repeated some 33 times in the Psalms, yet David did not read what we have the privilege of reading in this great Gospel of Yohanan. No wonder we read that the angels in heaven do not stop saying:

*"Holy , holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" (Revelation 4:8)*

I would like to quote you a prayer that was written long ago:

He whom none may touch is seized;  
He who looses Adam from the curse is bound.  
He who tries the hearts and inner thoughts of man is unjustly brought to trial;  
He who closed the abyss is shut in prison.  
He, before whom the powers of heaven stand trembling, stands before Pilate;  
The Creator is struck by the hands of his creature.  
He who comes to judge the living and the dead is condemned to the cross.  
The destroyer of hell is enclosed in a tomb.  
O thou who dost endure all these things in thy tender love,  
Who has saved all men from the curse,  
O long-suffering Lord, glory to thee.

(Vespers liturgy for Good Friday, "Eastern Orthodoxy," Christian History, no. 54)