



JOHN 19:17-22 | THE CRUCIFIXION OF OUR LORD

- Verse 17 –
  - The word **cross** is σταυρός [stauros] is exclusively used as a singular stake in ancient Greek texts.
    - Christian art does not portray a cross of two beams until fourth century.
    - Whether the cross is as we view it almost exclusively or as a stake is a matter of diverging and unprovable speculation.
    - The manner of death would have been the same either way.
    - See *The Companion Bible* Appendix 162 for Bullinger’s defense of *stake over cross*.
    - The English cross comes from the latin *crux*, introduced to theology by Jerome in the fourth century.
  - Note that *Gordon’s Calvary*, one of the more modern possible sites for the crucifixion, does have the *similarity* of a scull.
    - However, topography of limestone changes far too quickly to assume that what we see today is what was seen then.
    - Even in the past 15 years the scull at Gordon’s Calvary has deteriorated to the point of making it most difficult to see the “scull.”
- Verse 18 –
  - Christian art always pictures Jesus with one thief on either side. The Greek actually allows for *two on either side*, that is, four all-together, with Jesus in the middle.
  - To understand four all-together helps with a couple of discrepancies.
    - Matthew 27:44 speaks of **The thieves** who reviled Him, while Luke 23:39 tells us that **one of the malefactors...railed on him** while in verse 40 **the other** malefactor **rebuked** the first. If there were only two, then Matthew speaks in error.
    - John 19:32-33 speaks of the breaking of the legs, **the first and of the other** and then came to Jesus. This seems odd since Jesus is in the middle.
  - Once again, it is possible that artists have determined our view more than scripture itself.
- Verse 19 –
  - If these words are to be taken literally, it looks as if Pilate himself **wrote a title** (see also v. 22). It is possible (even likely?) that he **put it on the cross** prior to Jesus leaving the place of judgment.
  - Pilate clearly settled on *insurrection* as the charge, and thus **Jesus of Nazareth** was put to death as **the King of the Jews**.
- Verse 20 –
  - The crucifixion of Jesus was in a public, highly traveled location **nigh to the city** but not within the city walls themselves.
  - The inscription was in the three common languages of the area, **Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin**.

- Verses 21-22 –
  - This is really the only time in the whole scene in which Pilate shows any semblance of leadership with backbone.
  - Perhaps he is trying to “save face,” or perhaps he has just been pushed too far.

#### JOHN 19:23-24 | AFTER THE CROSS: *THE SOLDIERS*

- Verse 23 –
  - The **soldiers** that **had crucified Jesus** were likely the lowest rank of soldier. It was possibly not uncommon for them to take the garments and any other personal effects of the criminals and divide them among themselves as a form of bonus for the gruesome work.
  - This is the only passage that tells us there were **four parts** of the clothing, **and also his coat**.
    - The coat was the most valuable, being **without seam**.
    - This was the same as the priestly garments (according to Josephus), but it is unknown whether this was common or indicative of a priest alone. See also Exodus 28:32.
- Verse 24 –
  - The soldiers, wise toward the garment and unwittingly toward prophecy, **cast lots for it**. This was in fulfillment of Psalm 22:18.
  - The use of Psalm 22 in the crucifixion account defines once and for all that Psalm 22 is prophetic.
    - While the Psalm is certainly Messianic, it is also prophetic of the experience of the nation of Israel, as a *psalm of the remnant* giving the experience of the tribulation.
    - Perhaps it will be Israel’s future experience shadowed in the suffering of Jesus that the nation will recognize that Jesus is their substitute.