

# The Gospel of John #12

*by: Ronald L. Dart*

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I can understand why Jewish leaders were concerned about Mel Gibson's movie 'The Passion.' If I were Jewish, I would probably feel the same way. I know I'm profoundly disturbed by some of the things my countrymen have done and not done in history. I would just like for it to be forgotten.

The Jews have suffered terrible persecution so often in the past. It's easy to see why they would be sensitive to this, but that's no reason to block the distribution of the movie. Let it be shown, then offer your criticism and your disagreements or your comments on it.

## **Jewish Involvement In Jesus' Death**

There's no way to tell the truth honestly about John's Gospel without telling the story of the involvement of the Jewish religious establishment in Jesus' death. It's just there. It's in the story, nor can you tell the story without acknowledging that all of Jesus' disciples were Jews, the people who admired Him were Jews. The entire early church was Jewish, the man who betrayed Jesus was a Jew and the people who arrested Him and accused Him were Jewish. It is a Jewish story, from start to finish, and from front to back. It's hard to find justification for opposing a movie on it, when the story has been out there for 2,000 years.

## **The Chief Priests Led Jesus To The Hall Of Judgment**

So what is it about this story that is so worrisome to people. I want to begin in John 18 verse 28, "Then the chief priests led Jesus from Caiaphas who was a high priest to the Hall of judgment. It was early and they themselves didn't go into the judgment hall." (We are talking about Pilate's Judgment Hall here.) "lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover."

The Jews actually ate the Passover the following evening where as Jesus, according to the Gospel accounts, had eaten His Passover the previous evening.

Verse 29, "Pilate went out to them and said, "Okay, what's the charge, what accusation are you bringing against this man?" {30} And they said, "If He was not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to you."

It's funny, you would almost think that these guys think, "We don't have to tell you what's wrong with this guy, we just have to tell you he's bad and you need to do something about Him and He should die."

"And Pilate said," {31} ""Well, Take Him and judge Him according to your law then." The Jews said, "Well, it is not lawful for us to put any man to death.""

The hypocrisy is breathtaking, because on several occasions the Jews had taken up stones to try to kill Jesus and had not been able to get it done and then sometime later they actually do stone and kill a man named Stephen, so why all the scruples about this one? Well there's a reason for it, and the reason comes to light as the story goes on.

"Then the Jews said, "Well, it is not lawful for us to put any man to death." {32} They did this, that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He spoke signifying what death He should die."

In other words, Jesus was not to die by stoning. He had said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up (John 3:14)." The gospel accounts tell us that in saying that, He signified by what death He would die. He would have to be lifted up and hung between heaven and earth (John 12:32-33).

"So Pilate entered the judgment hall again," John 18 verse 33, "and called Jesus, and said, "Are you the King of the Jews?" {34} Jesus answered, "Did you make this up yourself or did others tell you this of me?" {35} Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You unto me. What have You done?""

The Jews wouldn't tell Pilate what Jesus had done. Pilate is asking Jesus, "What did You do?"

"Jesus answered" in verse 36, "My kingdom is not of this world, if My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now My kingdom is not here."

### **Jesus Was Born To Be A King**

Verse 37 of John 18, "Pilate said, "Are you a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am the King. To this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to Me."

What an interesting thing that Jesus said, in talking about this King business. "Jesus said, "This is why I came, I came to bear witness to the truth." {38} and Pilate said, "What is truth? And when he said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said, "I can't find any fault in this man." {39} "But you have a custom that I should release to you, at the Passover, one prisoner, shall I release to you the King of the Jews?" {40} And they cried out again, saying, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber."

Well, they didn't want to see Jesus let go. They rejected Pilate when he said, "I'll let Him go." They asked for Barabbas instead.

## **Pilate Scourges Jesus**

Continuing in John 19 verse 1, "So Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged him."

I haven't seen Mel Gibson's movie, but I understand from people who have, that this particular scene will be very difficult to take. At the same time, it was very difficult for Jesus to take the scourging. I will not try to describe it to you, because from what I understand it's almost beyond description, what you go through in that kind of a flogging.

Now verse 2, "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, slapped Him, {4} Pilate therefore went out again and brought Him out, and said, "Look, I bring Him forth to you that you may know, I find no fault in Him.""

This is after the scourging, after putting the crown of thorns on Him, after all of this and Jesus came forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe and Pilate said to them, "Behold, the man!" {6} When the chief priests therefore and the officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him!"

Who's doing this? The chief priests, the Temple structure of the Jews was to have one person at the center and he was the high priest, around him was another circle, the chief priests and around them, another circle, the ordinary priests or Levites. These men were the insiders of the religious establishment at the Temple in Jerusalem and they are the ones who called out to Pilate, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him!"

Jesus was a man whom they could find no legitimate accusation against and for which there is no historical record of any sin that He committed.

### **What Was The Issue That The Jews Had Against Jesus?**

Verse 7 of John 19, "The Jews answered, "We have a law, and by our law, He ought to die because He made Himself the Son of God.""

That was the issue! Jesus claimed to be the Son of God.

"When Pilate heard that, he was more afraid."

Now that's hard to figure exactly, why was Pilate afraid? What was it about this that struck fear into him?

Verse 9, "Pilate went back into the Judgment Hall (Praetorium) and he said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" He could have said "Who are you really? Where did you come from really?" "And Jesus didn't even answer him." {10} Pilate said, "Aren't you are going to talk to me? Don't you understand I have the power to crucify you and I have the power to release you."

Jesus at that point probably could have talked His way right out of that, but He didn't.

Jesus said, {11} "You could have no power against Me except it was given to you from above. Therefore, he that delivered Me unto you, has the greater sin." {12} And from that moment forward Pilate tried to release Him, but the Jews cried out and said, "If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend, whoever makes himself a King speaks against Caesar."

Now this is pure politics folks, and you should recognize this as so much political spin as we get on television. You should surely see that that's what's going on here. They wanted Jesus dead! They wanted the Romans to do it! And they were using whatever artifice they could find to get it done. They were scared to death of Jesus. I think they may have even been afraid that He was what He said He was.

"When Pilate heard that saying, (being the politician that he was), He brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat in a place called the Pavement, in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. {14} And it was the preparation for the Passover and about the sixth hour, He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" {15} And they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him" and Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?"

### **We have no King, But Caesar**

Now listen to the answer that the chief priests on this occasion, not just any priest, but the chief priests answered. "We have no King, but Caesar" (John 19:15).

You know it's really staggering to think about how far these men had come in their blind anger against Jesus Christ, for no Jew in his right mind would have ever said anything like that. Not back in their history, not down through time. You wouldn't think that they would ever acknowledge that we have no King, but Caesar, or anyone as a matter of fact, not even David would've been their King, except that God was his. So they said, "We have no King, but Caesar," and in the process denied even God as there King.

### **Jesus Is Crucified**

John 19 verse 16, "Then Pilate delivered Jesus to them to be crucified and they took Jesus and led Him away. {17} And He, bearing His cross, went forth to a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, {18} Where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side and Jesus in the middle."

Such a simple statement, "They crucified Him!" What lies behind that statement is hard for us to imagine, and perhaps we will have to see the movie to show it to us, but it is staggering to consider that they nailed this man to pieces of wood and then hung Him up before God and before man to die in the sun.

"Pilate wrote a title on a sign and put it on the cross. The writing was, "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." {20} Many of the Jews read this title, for the

place where Jesus was crucified was near to the city where anybody could see it and it was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin so no one would fail to understand it."

Let's not imagine for a moment that Pilate did not have a sense of irony, he knew what he was doing.

"The chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate," {21} "Don't write 'The King of the Jews,' write, 'He said 'I am the King of the Jews,'" {22} Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

I think by this time the chief priests may have decided it was time to cut their losses and get away.

"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and divided them up into four parts, where every soldier had a part, and His coat was without seam, woven from the top to the bottom. {24} So they said, "Let us not tear it but cast lots for it to see who gets it." They did this, that the scripture might be fulfilled which says "they parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots"" (Psalms 22:18).

Each step of the way, something is picked out of the Psalms or out of the prophets so that it can be a fulfillment of Scripture.

### **Jesus Cared For His Mother**

Verse 25 of John 19, "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. {26} And when Jesus saw His mother and the disciple standing by whom he loved, He said to his mother, "Woman behold your son!" {27} Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home."

And at this moment of extremis in his life, Jesus took care of His mother. We have no idea what happened to Joseph. He had disappeared from the scene long before this.

### **It Is Finished**

John 19 verse 28, "After this Jesus knowing that everything was now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled said, "I thirst." {29} Now there was a vessel full of vinegar (sour wine), and they filled the sponge with vinegar and put it up on hyssop, and put it to His mouth, {30} and when Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, "It is finished." He bowed His head and gave up the ghost."

Actually this is an expression that has passed into our language now. To give up the ghost seems to say what the Bible speaks of as a 'spirit in man.' There is something in man that differentiates man from a beast, and at this moment, I gather that departed from Jesus.

Continuing in verse 31, "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, and they did not want the bodies to remain up on the cross on the Sabbath day, (because that

Sabbath was a high day. [It was the first day of unleavened bread and it was a celebration and they did not want bodies up on the cross]) so they came and begged Pilate to break their legs that they might be taken away. {32} To hasten the death, the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and the other crucified with Him. {33} But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they didn't break His legs, {34} But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and immediately there came out blood and water. {35} And he that saw it bare record, his record is true and he knows that what he said is true, so you might believe."

That's a strange thing for him to be saying. It seems to be such a gruesome but normal thing going on here. There's a dead man on the cross, you puncture his side and blood comes out with water, but I gather it must not have been so normal, that in fact, really nothing should've come out if he was already dead. The heart was not pumping to pump any blood out of the body. Some have speculated that perhaps the heart hadn't stop while Jesus himself was clinically brain-dead, that the heart was still beating and that this was the moment when he was killed with this puncture of the spear. Others think that Jesus died of a broken heart, which seems a little bit romantic, but nevertheless he was dead and the witness is here.

These things were done that the scripture might be fulfilled, "a bone of him shall not be broken" and another Scripture that said, "they shall look on him whom they pierced," and so this may be the reference to the "He who saw these things bore witness and his witness is true, they didn't break His legs and they did pierce Him.

### **Jesus Buried In A Sepulcher**

Continuing in verse 38 of John 19, "After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, secretly for fear of the Jews, went to Pilate and asked that he might take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission. He came therefore and took the body of Jesus. {39} And along with him came Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, a long time ago, and they brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 100 pound weight {40} And they took the body of Jesus, wrapped it in linen clothes with the spices, as the matter 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 sepulcher, that no one had ever been laid in it, {42} They laid Jesus there because of the preparation day and because the sepulcher was close."

[Matthew records that Joseph of Arimathea placed Jesus' body in his own new hewn tomb (Matthew 27:57-60)]

And then time passes.

### **First Day Of The Week**

"Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came," John 20 verse 1, "very early, when it was still dark, and she saw the stone had been taken away from the sepulcher."

Now this is something worth, at least, pausing momentarily on. Jesus did not rise at sunrise on Sunday morning, because Mary got there before sunrise and He was gone. Now we have no testimony to the moment of Jesus' resurrection because as far as we know no one saw it happen. They only testify that it had happened before the time when they were there.

Verse 2, "So Mary Magdalene ran and came to Simon Peter, and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken our Lord out of the sepulcher. We don't know where they have laid him. His body is gone."

Now looking back as we do, knowing what we know it seems impossible that they would not have understood Jesus' resurrection, but they didn't. They just did not expect it at all. They thought that Jesus would be there, when they went back to take care of the body, but when they got back there, He was gone.

"Peter went forth with the other disciple, they ran to the sepulcher. {4} So they both ran together, and the other disciple got there a little quicker than Peter, when he got to the sepulcher {5} He stooped down and looked in and saw the linen clothes lying there, but he did not go in. {6} Then Simon Peter came following him and he went right on in and saw the linen clothes lying there. {7} And the napkin, that had been around His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself."

Very descriptive. They are telling us in no uncertain terms what they saw in great detail.

"So finally the other disciple that had gotten there first came in and he saw and also believed. {9} For as yet they did not know the Scripture that He had to rise again from the dead."

That is odd, because Jesus had told them what was going to happen, but they were just simply unable to put it together, and it's easy for us, looking back to think we would have, but the truth is, if we had been there we would have had the same frame of reference they had. There was nothing for them to look to for this.

"So the disciples went away again to their own house. {11} Mary stood there outside the sepulcher weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked inside {12} And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the foot, where the body of Jesus had lain. {13} They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said, "They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have laid Him."

All I can conclude from this is, when she looked in there and she saw two men, she had no idea that they were angels. She had no idea that Jesus had been raised from the dead. All she knew was the body was gone.

"After saying these things," {14} "she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing there and didn't know it was Him. {15} Jesus said to her, "Woman why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener said, "Sir, if you carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him and I'll take Him away," {16} Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned herself and said "Master." {17} Jesus said to her, "Don't touch me, for I

have not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren and say to them, "I ascend to my Father, and to your Father, and to my God and to your God."

Sometime between the time Mary saw Jesus and the time He saw the other disciples, He ascended to the Father in heaven and was presented to Him and came back. Now what is fascinating about this is, that this was also about the same time of day when the high priest in the Temple took a sheaf of the first ripe grains, the first ripe barley harvest into the temple and waved it to be presented before God and Jesus was the firstfruits from the dead, presented to God at the same time that wave sheaf was presented on this one day out of the year in the Temple.

"Mary Magdalene then came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that He had spoken these things to her. {19} Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews. Then came Jesus and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be unto you.""

As far as I can see what this is trying to tell us as the doors were closed and they weren't open to let Jesus in, one minute He was not there and the next minute He was.

"And when He had said this," {20} "He showed them his hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. {21} Then Jesus said, "Peace be unto you, as my Father has sent Me, even so I send you." {22} And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. {23} Whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted, whoever sins you retain they are retained."

Now this is interesting because some people think that the disciples received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, described in the second chapter of Acts, but no, Jesus said, "Receive you the Holy Spirit" here. So what happened in the second chapter of Acts, that was the day they were empowered with the Holy Spirit. There was however one disciple that was missing, we will hear his story in just a moment.

### **Doubting Thomas**

Continuing in John chapter 20 verse 24, "Thomas, surnamed Didymus, was not with the twelve when Jesus came, {25} And the disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord, we have seen the Lord." But he said unto them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into His side, I am not going to believe it." {26} And after eight days again, His disciples were there, and Thomas was with them this time: the doors were shut, one minute Jesus was not there, and the next minute He was, and He said "Peace be unto you." {27} Then He turned to Thomas and said, "Reach here with your finger, and behold my hands; and reach here your hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."

Thomas apparently didn't need to do that because he answered and said, {28} "My Lord and my God." Jesus said to him, {29} "Thomas, because you have seen me, you believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

Here we are, 2,000 years later, we haven't seen, but we believe.

Continuing in John verse 1 of John chapter 21, "Later Jesus showed Himself to His disciples one more time at the sea of Tiberius. {2} Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, and Nathaniel and some other disciples were together {3} And Simon Peter said to them, "I am going to go fishing, and they said "We will go with you." They went forth and entered the ship immediately, and that night, they fished all night long and caught nothing. {4} Morning was now come and Jesus was standing on the shore. (I presume it still a bit dark). The disciples didn't know that it was Jesus."

It does appear that after his resurrection His appearance was somewhat changed.

"Jesus said, "Boys do you have any food?" They said, "No." {6} Jesus said, "Put the net on the other side of the boat and you'll find some." They cast it over there and they couldn't get it in because of the multitude of fish. {7} The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Peter realized that it was the Lord, he put his fisher's coat around himself, because he was working naked and jumped into the sea and started swimming. {8} But the other disciples came in a little boat. They were not far from the land, about 200 cubits and they drug the net with fish in it. {9} As soon as they came to land they saw a fire of coals there and fish laid on it and bread {10} And Jesus said, "Come on and bring some of the fish that you caught." {11} Simon went up, and drew in the net to land, 153 fish, for there were so many and yet the net didn't break. {12} Jesus said, "Come on and eat." And not one of the disciples would dare ask Him, who are you? Knowing it was the Lord."

It had to be, and yet they couldn't just tell.

### **"Do You Love Me?"**

Verse 1 of John 21, "Jesus then, came and took bread, and gave them some and fish likewise." He wanted to eat with them, to show them that He was real and when they were all through eating. He said to Simon Peter, {15} "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me more than these?" He said, "Yes Lord, You know I love you." Jesus said, "Feed My lambs." {16} Jesus said to Peter the second time, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me." Peter said to Him, "Lord, You know I love you." He said, "Feed my sheep." {17} He did it a third time. Peter was grieved the third time that he had to do this, and he said, "Lord, You know all things, You know I love You" and Jesus said, "Feed My sheep."

Why three times, well that's easy, because Peter had denied Jesus three times and Jesus insisted on a three fold affirmation of faith in Him.

"Jesus said," {18} "When you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you wanted to go, but when you are old, you will have to stretch forth your hands and another will gird you and carry you where you don't want to go." {19} Jesus spoke this signifying by what death Peter would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to Peter, "Follow Me." {20} Peter must've been feeling the heat a little because he turned

around and saw the disciple Jesus loved following {22} And he said, "Lord, what shall this man do?" {22} Jesus said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!"

In other words, He says, "That is none of your business Peter. You follow Me." {23} The saying went abroad that the disciple that Jesus said this about would not die, but he didn't say that, {24} This is the disciple that testifies of these things and wrote these things." It was John. "And we know that his testimony is true. {25} There are also many other things Jesus did, that which if every thing had been written, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that could be written. Amen"

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