

# GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

## 19



### CHRYSOSTOM

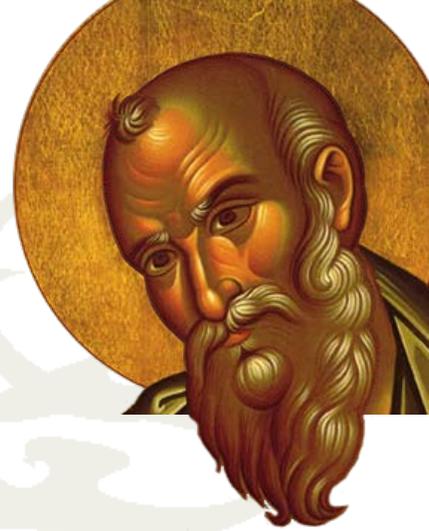
Read St. John Chrysostom's homilies on John chapter 19.



### PRACTICE QUIZ

Take a quiz to test your knowledge of John chapter 19.

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Chapter nineteen focuses on the Crucifixion of our Lord. The narrative takes up immediately after the events of chapter eighteen: after the crowd rejected freeing Jesus, Pilate took Him to be scourged (and mocked by the soldiers for being the “King of the Jews”) (19:1-3). Pilate twice stated that he found Jesus innocent of any crime (19:4, 6), but the chief priests and their officers nonetheless demanded Christ’s death (19:6, 7, 15). Pilate only had the legal authority to crucify Jesus for political crimes, and he was therefore concerned that the only accusation against Christ was blasphemy (19:7-8); this led Jesus’ accusers to claim that He was guilty of crimes against Caesar (19:12, 15).

Notice Jesus’ silence during Pilate’s interrogation (19:9)—St. Romanos the Melodist says simply,

“He Who had caught the wise, conquered by His silence.” Pilate could only order Christ to be crucified because, in the words of St. Cyril of Alexandria, “The Only-Begotten Himself gave Himself to suffer for us and... the Father suffered the fulfillment of the mystery in Him” (see 19:11).

In addition to the physical pain

of crucifixion—as excruciating and horrifying as that was—Jesus also suffered shameful mockery (with additional mockery described in Matthew 27): the soldiers mockingly dressed Him as a king and beat Him (19:2-3); He was executed with common thieves (19:18; see Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:27; with one thief’s conversion at Luke 23:39-43); and the soldiers even gave away and gambled for His clothing (19:23-24, fulfilling the prophecy in Psalm 22:18). The chief priests even objected to His being called “the King of the Jews,” but Blessed Theophylact says Pilate left the sign over Jesus’ head “partly to defend Christ’s reputation” (19:19-22).

We can learn two important things from Jesus’ concern for His mother in verses 26-27. First, the Church Fathers point out that this demonstrates our need to lovingly care for our parents. Secondly, Christ’s action reminds us, in the words of Elder Anthimos of Chios, “The Panagia (the Greek word for “the All-Holy One”) is the salvation of the whole world, she is the only mother for all Christians.”

Shortly before He died, Jesus stated that He was thirsty (19:28, fulfilling Psalm 21:16). The people nearby offered him sour wine (i.e., vinegar) mixed with gall or myrrh (which were used to drug the crucified and reduce their pain), but Jesus refused to drink after tasting the drug (19:29-30; see Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:23). St. Cyril of Jerusalem says Christ’s last words before His death, “It is finished,” mean, “The mystery has been fulfilled. The things that are written have been accomplished. Sins are forgiven.”

The fact that Jesus’ legs were not broken, but instead He was impaled with a spear to ensure He was dead, is highly significant. First, this fulfills the words given in Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12, Psalm 34:20, and Zechariah 12:10 (19:36-37). Secondly, the blood and water that came from Christ’s side is directly related to the Holy Eucharist, as St. John Chrysostom says, “And so, the mysteries take their beginning. In this way, when you approach that awesome cup, you may so approach as though you were drinking from His very side.”

The chapter ends with Ss. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus burying Jesus. Blessed Theophylact points out that “the fact that the Lord’s tomb was new indicates symbolically that something utterly new in human history would take place there: deliverance from the power of death and corruption, and the renewal of all mankind.”



### LIFE TIP

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann tell us to live by what we read in the Gospel: “These Gospel lessons are not merely to be listened to in church; the whole point is that they are to be ‘taken home’ and meditated upon in terms of my life, my family situation, my professional obligations, my concern for material things, my relation to the concrete human beings with whom I live.”

