

The Crown Of Thorns John 19:1-16

INTRO: There are four references to the crown of thorns in the Gospels; two of these references are found here in John 19 verses 2 and 5. In Matt. 27:29, we read: "And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!" Then in Mark 15:17, we have this account: "And they clothed Him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head."

Those soldiers who pressed the crown of thorns upon the sinless brow of Jesus Christ did not know that they were wounding the head of the sin bearer. Christ was born to die. At Christmas folks decorate with holly. According to tradition, the pointy leaves represent the thorns of Christ's crown of thorns, and the green leaves represent eternal life, and the red berries represent His blood shed for man's salvation. Thorns are emblems of the curse of God upon creation. There were not thorns until man fell. When man fell, thorns came into existence (Gen 3:17-18). The crown of thorns says that Jesus Christ bore the curse of sin on His head: Jesus Christ is the curse-bearer (II Cor 5:21).

- I. VSS 1-5, THE KING OF THE JEWS– CROWNED WITH THORNS
 - A. Vs 1, In an act of compromise, Pilate the Roman governor orders that Jesus be scourged.
 1. The Roman scourge had a short wooden handle to which several leather thongs were attached. The ends of the thongs were equipped with pieces of sharp bone and with lead or brass.
 2. Stripes were laid upon the victim's bare back.
 - a. The first blow, administered with all the strength the soldier could muster, knocked the breath out of the body. The second blow laid open the skin.
 - b. Often the body was so torn and lacerated that arteries, veins, and even inner organs and entrails were exposed.
 - c. This scourging often ended in death.
 - d. Pilate had ordered the torture of an innocent man.
 3. Isaiah 53:4-6, tells of our Lord's suffering for His people.
 - B. Vs 2, The scourging was followed by a mock coronation in the courtyard of the Praetorium (Mark 15:16-18). The crown of thorns

placed upon our Lord's brow was a parody or imitation of the Roman emperor's festive crown of roses.

1. It is possible that one of the soldiers yelled to the others: "Let's crown Him King.." Another may have shouted: "What kind of crown shall He wear?" "A crown of thorns" is the answer.
 - a. Thorns are plentiful in Palestine. In Israel today, there are about 100 different species of "thorns and thistles." They are silent reminders of the curse of God upon the land. Soon they had woven a crown of thorns possibly from the *Spina Christi*.
 - b. With gruesome cruelty, the soldiers press the crown upon the brow of Jesus. Blood runs down his face, neck, and body.
 - c. Jesus is here pictured as bearing the curse that lies upon nature. He bears it in order to deliver nature and us from the curse (Rom 8:20-21). *Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature sing, And heaven, and heaven and nature sing. No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found, Far as, far as the curse is found.*
 2. The crown of thorns mocked and tortured Jesus. Now one of them grabs a cloak and throws it around His shoulders. By nature, we are sinful and defiled. Our sins which are many are as scarlet and crimson (Isa 1:18). Because of this our Lord was wrapped "in a purple robe." Matthew 27:28 calls it "a scarlet robe."
 3. Many pretend that Jesus is King, but He is not at home and work.
- C. Vs 3, Matthew tells us that they put a reed in His hand, a mock scepter. Then they marched around Him saluting in mockery and saying: "Hail, King of the Jews!" As they did this, they continually struck Him with their hands.
1. Arthur W. Pink says of the preceding verses: "Here then is the Gospel of our salvation. The Savior scourged, that we might go free; He was crowned with thorns, that we might

be crowned with blessedness and glory; He was clothed with a robe of contempt, that we might receive the robe of righteousness; He was rejected as king, that we might be made kings and priest unto God” (210).

2. Jesus Christ suffered in our stead (I Pet 2:24; 3:18).
 3. They praised Jesus, but did not mean what they said.
- D. Vs 4, Once again Pilate comes out to the crowd and tells them that he is bringing Jesus to them so that they may know that, “I find no fault in Him.”
1. The man who would shortly sentence Jesus to death is the man who repeatedly stated that “the Lamb of God was without spot or blemish.”
 2. In the Gospels, there is witness given of our precious Lord’s innocence:
 - a. Judas says: “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood” (Mt 27:4).
 - b. Pilate said: “I find no fault in him” (Jn 18:4).
 - c. The witness of Pilate’s wife: “Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him” (Mt 27:19).
 - d. The thief on the right hand cross said: “We receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss” (Lk 23:41).
 - e. Here are the words of the Roman centurion: “Certainly this was a righteous man” (Lk 23:47).
 - f. Those standing near the centurion gave a strong witness: “Truly this was the son of God” (Mt 27:54).
- E. Vs 5, Jesus was innocent, yet Pilate does not release Him. Instead he brings Him out before the ruthless crowd. The body of Jesus is covered with gashing wounds, blood runs down His face, neck, and back.
1. John says: “Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns.....” The crown of thorns symbolizes grief, trials, and sin. Symbolism, types, and shadows are found throughout the Bible, especially the Old Testament.
 - a. In Matthew 12:38-40, Jesus applies the symbolism of the book of John to Himself: “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whales belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (vs 40).

- b. With Matthew 12:40 in mind, Jonah 2:5 takes on a symbolic reference to the crown of thorns: "...the weeds were wrapped about my head."
 - c. John Gill says concerning Jonah 2:5: "In this Jonah was a type of Christ in his afflictions and sorrows, which were many and heavy, that he is said to be 'exceeding sorrowful,' or surrounded with sorrow, 'even unto death.'"
 - d. Floods of sin, our sin, came over the sinless Christ: "the weeds were wrapped about my head" (Vol 4 706).
 - e. Because of Jonah's rebellion, he, according to Matthew Henry, saw the "tokens of God's displeasure, and in them the terrors of the Almighty set themselves against him; this reached to his soul...." (Vol 4 1288). Thomas Adams (1600-1662) said: "'Now is my soul troubled' (John 12:27). All the outward afflictions were but gentle prickings in regard of that His soul suffered. He had a heart within that suffered unseen, unknown anguish" (tract).
 - f. As God's hand of judgment came upon the weed wrapped head of Jonah, the hand of God's judgment came upon the thorn crowned head of Jesus; not for His sin but because of ours. Christ suffered our hell for us. He was buried, but arose (Jonah 2:2,6).
2. Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of the great fish (Jonah 1:17). On the third day, Jonah was delivered, vomited out, upon dry land (Jonah 2:10).
- a. On the third day, our Lord rose from the dead as prophecies (I Cor 15:4).
 - b. Just as the fish could not retain the prophet Jonah, the grave could not hold the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:24). The grave is empty!

II. Vs 6, Pilate's Appeal

- A. It fell upon sin hardened hearts.
- B. The cry was "Crucify Him."

CONCLUSION: Christ is risen! (I Cor 15:17, 20-23).