

CHURCH.

LESSON 42

1	PRAYER
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Group leader. Pray and commit your group and this course on building Christ's Church to the Lord.

2	SHARING (20 minutes) <i>[QUIET TIMES]</i> 1 JOHN 4 -5, 2 JOHN, 3 JOHN
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Take turns and **share** (or **read** from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times with God out of the assigned Bible passages (1 John 4 – 5, 2 John and 3 John).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

3	MEMORISATION (5 minutes) <i>[CHRISTIAN PARENTS]</i> REVIEW SERIES H
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Review two by two the 5 Bible verses about series H. "Christian parents".

(1) Love by spending. 2 Corinthians 12:14b-15a. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well.

(2) Develop all areas. Proverbs 22:6. Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it.

(3) Teach God's Word. Deuteronomy 6:6-7. These commandments I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children, Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

(4) Bring up in the Lord. Ephesians 6:4. Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

(5) Love through discipline. Proverbs 13:24. He who spares the rod, hates his son, but he who loves him, is careful to discipline him.

4	BIBLE STUDY (85 minutes) <i>[THE GOSPEL OF JOHN]</i> JOHN 19:1-42
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Introduce. Make use of the five steps method of Bible study to study John 19:1-42 together. In John chapter 19, Jesus is *persecuted* by the Roman soldiers, *rejected* to be crucified by the Jews, *crucified* by the Romans at the place of the skull, called Golgotha, and after his death, *buried* by two disciples, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in a new garden tomb. The Jews had condemned Jesus to death and the non-Jews had executed the death sentence. This is the first part of the greatest event in human history!

Jesus was *martyred* (19:1-7; cf. Matthew 27:22-23,27-30; Mark 15:12-14,16-19; Luke 23:20-22)

Jesus was *condemned* (19:8-16a; cf. Matthew 27:24-26,31; Mark 15:15,20; Luke 23:23-25)

Jesus was *crucified* (19:16b-37; cf. Matthew 27:32-56; Mark 15:21-41; Luke 23:26-49)

Jesus was *buried* (19:38-42; Matthew 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56)

STEP 1. READ.

GOD'S WORD

Read. LET US READ John 19:1-42 together.

Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.

STEP 2. DISCOVER.

OBSERVATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU?

Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART?

Record. Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share).

Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered.

(Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things)

19:4-12

Discovery 1. The complete innocence of Jesus.

(1) The governor pronounced Jesus completely innocent.

It is remarkable how many times during this trial the Roman governor, Pilate, pronounced Jesus completely innocent! The governor brought Jesus out of the courtyard to stand in front of the Jews with the purpose of letting the people know that he found not a single basis for a charge against Jesus! Three times in the Gospel of John he said, "I find no basis for a charge against him!" (John 18:38; John 19:4,6).

And three times in the Gospel of Luke. He said, "I find no basis for a charge against this man" (Luke 23:4). "I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death" (Luke 23:14-15). And for the third time he spoke to them, "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty" (Luke 23:22). Thus, by means of the highest human authority, God himself declared the perfect innocence of Jesus Christ.

But if Jesus was innocent, how could the righteous God permit his death? The only answer is found in Isaiah 53:6,8, "The LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken" (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:8). This was the divine reason why Jesus was not released! Jesus Christ was completely innocent and yet he died in our place as an atonement sacrifice for our sins.

(2) The governor feared man more than he feared God.

When the governor heard that the real reason why the Jews wanted to kill Jesus was that he had claimed to be the Son of God, he feared. Pilate feared both the spiritual world of God as well as the political world of the Jews. Pilate was superstitious and was very afraid that he might offend some unknown god. He took Jesus back into the palace and asked him where he came from. If he had listened to Jesus earlier, he would have known that Jesus came from heaven to establish a spiritual kingdom on earth (John 18:36-37). But this time, Jesus gave him no answer. The governor deserved no answer, because although he had publicly pronounced his innocence again and again, he still ordered Jesus to be flogged nearly to death! The governor was utterly corrupt, untruthful and unreliable. The governor also feared the Jews. He was afraid that the Jews would accuse him before the Roman emperor Caesar and he would lose his political position and even his life. This was the human reason why Jesus was not released.

19:30

Discovery 2. The meaning of the last words of Jesus on the cross.

(1) The seven words of Jesus on the cross.

From the four Gospels we know that Jesus spoke at least seven times from the cross.

- To God the Father he said, "Father, forgive them: for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).
- To one criminal he said, "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).
- To Mary he said, "Woman, look! Your son!" and to John, "Look! Your mother!" (John 19:26-27).
- To God the Father he cried, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)
- To the soldiers he said, "I am thirsty" (John 19:28).
- Then he said, "It is finished." (John 19:30).
- And his last words were, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

(2) The work of salvation has been completed.

When Jesus said, "It is finished" *and remains forever completed* (Greek: tetelestai) (perfect tense), then he meant that his entire work of redemption had been brought to completion. In the mind of Jesus Christ, his death and burial is so certain that he could speak about it as if it had already been accomplished! No man on earth can add anything to the completed work of Jesus Christ! When anyone is saved, he is saved only by the completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross and never by anything he himself has done! No single religious person will be saved by doing religious works (Ephesians 2:8-9). No single religious person will be saved by praying every day, by fasting regularly, by giving money to a religious cause or by visiting holy places. No terrorist will go to paradise because he died in a holy war! Galatians 2:16 clearly says, "No one will be justified by observing the religious law!"

(3) Jesus suffered and died as to his human nature.

When Jesus finally committed his human spirit into God the Father's hands, it showed that nobody took the life of Jesus Christ from him, but that he voluntarily laid down his life (John 10:17-18). He died so that those who believe in him might live! He died *for* believers and *in the place of* believers! And when he committed himself into the hands of God the Father, it showed that God the Father had never rejected God the Son, but had accepted his sacrifice of atonement in the place of everyone who believes in him! This also proves that between his death and resurrection He was in heaven and had not descended into Hades to give people a second chance.

STEP 3. QUESTION.

EXPLANATIONS

Consider. WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in John 19:1-42 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

Record. Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

Discuss. (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

19:1-3

Question 1. How was Jesus Christ tortured?

Notes.

(1) Jesus was flogged.

Pilate ordered that Jesus be flogged. He continually sought a compromise in order to avoid sentencing Jesus to death. He hoped that the people would pity Jesus and save him from death. "Flogging" was a terrible way of torture. The Roman whip consisted of a short wooden handle to which several thongs were attached and the tips of these thongs consisted of pieces of iron or sharply pointed bones. The lashes of the whip were laid over the whole body, but especially over the victim's bared and bent back. The body was torn and lacerated to such an extent that often the deep-seated blood-vessels and even inner organs were exposed! It often resulted in death. When flogging preceded execution, it was ordered as a sign to indicate that the victim was about to be crucified. In the Roman Empire, Roman citizens were exempted from flogging and crucifixion.

(2) Jesus suffered a mock-coronation.

The soldiers desired to torture Jesus in the courtyard. They pressed a crown made of thorns on his head, so that blood ran down his face. They threw an old discarded soldier's mantle around his shoulders and put a reed in his hand, in order to make him look like a king. Then they marched up to him again and again giving him their mock-salute and striking him at the same time in the face.

19:10-11

Question 2. How was Jesus Christ threatened?

Notes. The governor was angry that Jesus refused to give him an answer. So he began to threaten Jesus. He claimed that he had the power or authority to set him free or to have him killed. Then Jesus calmly answered him, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above." Jesus teaches that although political and military leaders have power and authority, it is God who has delegated to them this power and authority. Political and military power and authority is a sacred trust given by the Almighty God to certain people on earth and they are responsible and answerable to God for how they use it (Romans 13:1-7).

People ask, "Who has the real power in this world?" The consistent message of the Bible is, that the Satan and his demons and the people under his control only have (limited) power in the evil world (1 John 5:19), but that "all power in heaven (the universe) and on earth has been given to Jesus Christ" (Matthew 28:18).

He holds the key that shuts doors which no one can open and that opens doors which no one can shut (Revelation 3:7-8).

Because all power belongs to Jesus Christ, Psalm 2 warns the political, military and religious leaders of this world, "You kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son (of God), lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way" (Psalm 2:10-12).

19:14-22

Question 3. How was Jesus Christ publicly mocked?

Notes.

(1) From the governor's point of view - the king of the Jews.

The Jews had successfully threatened the governor and forced him to sentence the innocent Jesus to be crucified. But now the governor returns this insult by publicly saying that Jesus is "the king of the Jews". This was the last thing the Jewish leaders wanted to hear and they tried in vain to change the governor's mind. Because the Jews refused to acknowledge the Messiah, Jesus, as King, Pilate forced the Jews to say publicly that their only king was the worldly Roman emperor Caesar: "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15)!

The governor aggravated this insult to the Jewish leaders by having a title written on a plaque saying, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews". This plaque was fastened above Christ's head (John 19:19). Usually the crime of a criminal that is sentenced to be crucified was written on it, but in Jesus' case, there was no crime! The Jewish leaders wanted the governor to write that Jesus had said that he was the king of the Jews. But in vain! The governor put the inscription in the three main languages in Judea used at that time (Hebrew, Greek and Latin) (John 19:20). Thousands and thousands of Jews passed by the main road and read the message. The plaque with its inscription was intended to be

an insult to the Jewish religious leaders. They had enforced the death of Jesus. Now they had to face the fact that they had rejected and crucified their own king!

(2) From God's point of view - the King of all the kings on earth.

The Jewish religious leaders thought they had gotten rid of Jesus by having him crucified. Also the leaders of this sinful world thought that, because Paul said, "If they had understood the wisdom of God, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8)! The sovereign God turned the seeming defeat of Jesus Christ into the greatest victory in the history of the world (1 Corinthians 2:8)! The death of Jesus Christ became God's means to atone for sins and to reconcile sinners to himself and to one another! The death of Jesus Christ became the victory over all sin, over all the wicked people, over the sinful world and over Satan and all his evil spirits. From God's point of view, Jesus Christ is not simply "the king of the Jews", but "the king of all kings on earth" (Revelation 1:5; 17:14; 19:16)! From now on, all power in heaven and on earth is in the hands of Jesus Christ and he rules over the world in the interest of the Christian Church (Ephesians 1:19-22).

19:17-18

Question 4. How was Jesus Christ crucified?

Notes. John says that Jesus first carried his own cross. But because the lashes with the whip had bruised his body, this became too heavy. Luke 23 describes in more details what happened on the way to Golgotha. Simon of Cyrene carried the cross behind him; a great crowd followed; women mourned. Jesus was crucified together with two criminals, one on each side of Jesus.

(1) The form of the cross.

Much has been written about the form of the cross. Some people think it had the form of an "X" and others think it had the form of a "T", but the best is to regard the cross in the form of "a Roman dagger" with a longer upright beam and a shorter crossbeam, because the plaque was fastened *above* the head of Jesus (Luke 23:38).

(2) How do crucified people die?

Death by crucifixion was a very cruel way of torture and dying. It was practised by several ancient nations, but the Romans reserved it only for slaves and criminals. While the cross was lying on the ground, Roman soldiers hammered large iron nails through his hands and feet. Then the cross was pulled upright and fell with a thump into a hole to help it stand upright. The feet rested on a tablet not far from the ground. Crucifixion was unspeakably painful: there was severe inflammation, swelling of the wounds, unbearable pain from torn tendons, throbbing headache, burning thirst and fearful discomfort when the victim had to pull himself up on the nails at every breath he took.

(3) The meaning of his crucifixion.

Far more than all his physical suffering, Jesus Christ suffered vicariously for all the sins of the world that he took upon himself (1 Peter 2:24)! On the cross, he experienced what it means "to be forsaken by God". The Old Testament regarded a person hanging on a cross as "accursed by God" (Deuteronomy 21:23). The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ became a curse for us so that the blessing of Abraham could be given to Jews and non-Jews (Galatians 3:13-14).

(4) The place of crucifixion.

Jesus Christ was crucified *outside the city* of Jerusalem and this was another sign of being "accursed" (Leviticus 16:27; Hebrews 13:12-13). This place was called "the place of the skull". No one knows the exact place anymore and it is not important to argue about where it was (whether at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or at Gordon's Calvary). The Bible does not regard such places as "holy" and they should not be venerated as places that pilgrims should visit.

(5) The crucifixion of two criminals.

Jesus Christ was crucified between two criminals (cf. Isaiah 53:12). From a worldly point of view this was intended as an insult to the Jews. Their king was regarded *as a criminal*. Yet from God's point of view this was an honour, because Jesus Christ came into the world "to seek and to save sinners" (Luke 19:10).

19:38-43

Question 5. How was Jesus Christ buried?

Notes. He was buried openly by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Joseph was a rich man (Matthew 27:57), a devout man expecting the kingdom of God (Luke 23:51) and a member of the Sanhedrin (Mark 15:43). But he had not consented to the plot to condemn Jesus to be crucified (Luke 23:51). He was a secret follower of Jesus Christ, because he feared the Jews. He probably feared that the Jews would throw him out of the Sanhedrin and the synagogue (excommunication) (cf. John 9:22)! However, the result of the atoning death of Jesus Christ and Christ's love for him was that Joseph became very courageous. Before the beginning of the Sabbath (before sunset on Friday) he boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus (Mark 15:42-47).

Nicodemus was also a member of the Sanhedrin, a Pharisee and a professional interpreter and teacher of the law. In the beginning he also feared the Jews, but later was very courageous when he questioned the authority of the Sanhedrin to judge anybody without giving him a fair trial (John 7:50-52).

These two men took the body of Jesus from the cross, wrapped strips of linen intermingled with costly spices around his limbs and laid him in a new tomb which Joseph himself had cut out of rock (Matthew 27:57-61). No one had ever been laid in this tomb and it was nearby the place where Jesus had been crucified. They closed the entrance by rolling a large round stone in front of the entrance. Several women were present and saw where they buried him.

19:24,36-37

Question 6. Why does the Bible record so many fulfillments of prophecies?

Notes. The fulfilment of prophecies is one of the greatest proofs that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God. A scientist counted that there are 332 distinct prophecies in the Old Testament that have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. See the prophecies about Jesus Christ in manual 3, supplement 15. He calculated that the mathematical probability that 8 of these prophecies would be fulfilled in one person in world history, would be one chance in a hundred thousand billion (100 000 000 000 000 000). Only the God of the Bible can prophesy and fulfil prophecies like this! No other religious book equals the Bible!

STEP 4. APPLY.

APPLICATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from John 19.

Consider. WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

Record. Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications from John 19:1-42.

- 19:1-3. 1 Peter 2:21 says, "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps." Jesus was arrested and tried although he was completely innocent! He was flogged with a whip that tore up his back. He was crowned with a crown of thorns. He was beaten in the face. Finally, he was crucified. You may experience similar treatment from the hands of your persecutors.
- 19:9. Isaiah 53:7 says that he was maltreated and humiliated and yet he did not open his mouth. There are situations in which it is wise not to open your mouth.
- 19:11. No matter persecutions and sufferings, you may confidently believe that your enemies would have no power over you unless God the Father allowed them to do these things to you.
- 19:12. Never give in when people make veiled threats. Do not yield to immoral pressure.
- 19:15. Never give evil people a choice. They may make the worst choice.
- 19:25-27. Make preparations for your elderly parents. Let someone take care of them.
- 19:30. Be determined to be a finisher, like Jesus Christ (John 4:34; 17:4; Colossians 4:17).
- 19:30. When you die, give up your spirit into the hands of God the Father (Luke 23:46).
- 19:36-37. Make a study of all the prophecies about Jesus Christ in the Old Testament (cf. manual 3, supplement 15).
- 19:38-39. When you are still a secret disciple of Jesus Christ, ask him to make you bold and courageous as Joseph or Nicodemus.

2. Examples of personal applications from John 19:1-42.

I simply cannot imagine how much Jesus suffered for me. Although I can form a mental picture of his suffering, I can never fathom or feel his vicarious suffering, when he took all the holy wrath of God against my sins upon himself! I want to thank God with all my heart that Jesus Christ was crucified in my place. I thank him for making atonement for all my sins. I want to thank him for reconciling me to God. I want to thank him for saving me for eternity!

I am deeply impressed how Jesus behaved throughout his immense suffering. When he was questioned, he calmly answered or even kept quiet. When he was insulted, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he did not threaten (1 Peter 2:23). He did not cry out in pain, but behaved like a lamb that was led to be slaughtered (Isaiah 53:7). No human being could have done what he did! I pray that God will give me much grace to learn from the example of Jesus' suffering.

STEP 5. PRAY.

RESPONSE

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in John 19.

(Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	<i>[INTERCESSION]</i> PRAY FOR OTHERS
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Continue to pray in groups of two's or three's. Pray with one another for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	<i>[ASSIGNMENT]</i> FOR NEXT LESSON
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(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples and build Christ's Church.
2. Preach, teach or study the Bible study of John 19 together with another person or group of people.
3. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time with God from half a chapter of Revelation 1 - 3 each day.
Make use of the favourite truth method or question method. Make notes.
4. Memorisation. Meditate and memorise the new Bible verse. (16) John 16:8.
Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
6. Update your notebook on building Christ's Church. Include your notes on personal time with God, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.