



Session

7



THE FIRST EASTER

John 19:1–20:10

At the end of John chapter 19, Jesus had been arrested, sent to the high priest, and sent further to Pilate, the Roman governor, since the Jews had no authority to condemn someone to death. Pilate was a Roman official and, as such, he likely recognized that he had a riot in the making. Pilate's job, especially during the Passover festival, was to keep the peace and protect Roman interests at all costs. In opposition to Pilate's frenzied endeavor to keep the peace, Jesus remained in complete and total control, not only of His emotions, but more so of His soon-to-be sacrifice.

Challenged by the crowd who played on Pilate's sovereign tie to Rome, Pilate agreed to have Jesus crucified. Crucifixion appeared to be the last thing Pilate wanted to happen. Pilate would have been happy having Jesus beaten and released, but the rabid crowd had been worked up to such a frenzy that Pilate was left with little choice. Having been politically threatened by the Jewish leaders, Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified. John brilliantly displayed Jesus' control of this situation when Jesus responded to Pilate by telling him that no one had power over Jesus unless it had already been granted by God.

The reality of Roman crucifixion and the horrors crucified people endured should not be forgotten. John, the author of this Gospel, stood at the foot of the cross and watched as Jesus breathed His last breath. Many years later, as John penned this Gospel, he recalled with vivid detail the events of that day. The soldiers casting lots for Jesus' clothing fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. That along with other events of this single day in history fulfilled about 20 prophecies found in Old Testament Scriptures, leaving no doubt who Jesus was.

After Jesus' death, Jesus' followers, including Nicodemus, wrapped His body and placed Him in a tomb. On the third day, Jesus arose from the dead, comforted Mary Magdalene, and commissioned His disciples to preach the message about Him to everyone.