

IT IS FINISHED.



*good
friday*

2026 REFLECTIONS

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JOHN (SO THAT YOU MIGHT BELIEVE)
Good Friday Reflection, Part A: “God’s Son”
by Justin Lai (03/04/2026)

예수님은 하나님의 아들이십니다 | 耶稣是神的儿子 | இயேசு தேவனின் குமாரன்

Bible Passage: John 19:1-16a

[1] The Flogging of the “king” (19:1-6)

- After the Last Supper, things unravel quickly. Jesus is betrayed, arrested, questioned, and now brought before the Roman governor, Pilate.
- Pilate finds Jesus both morally and legally innocent, but the crowds protest his release.
- Under pressure, Pilate then takes Jesus and has him flogged (19:1).
 - John doesn’t give many details about the flogging, probably because people know how brutal it was.
 - Roman flogging was not just punishment; it was devastation - whips with metal tips would tear the victim’s flesh open. Some never even survived it. (*P. Barnett, John, RBT, 259*)
 - Yet, Jesus endures it...
- But it doesn’t stop there.
 - The soldiers mock him: “Let’s dress Jesus up like a king - not!” They twist together a crown of thorns and press it onto his head. They throw a cheap purple robe, shaming him, “Hail, O king of the Jews.” (19:3a). Then “they slapped him in the face.” (19:3b)
 - No human being should be treated like that, let alone an innocent man. Jesus dedicated his life to healing the sick, caring for the poor, showing tenderness to the weak, and teaching people to love their neighbours and pray for their enemies. What has he done to deserve this?
- “Once more Pilate came out and said,” to the crowds, “Look... I find no basis for a charge against him” (19:4). Perhaps Pilate is thinking, “Surely that’s enough...Surely they’re satisfied.”

- “Crucify [him]! Crucify [him]!”
 - This man has just been declared innocent, again. And can they not see what is in front of them? This man is bloodied, humiliated. And they still want him dead? Have they lost their mind?
- The governor, the man with power, suddenly looks very small.
 - He says it again, “You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him” (19:6)
 - Pilate is caught between truth and pressure.
 - But the crowd? They are not confused. This is not about lack of evidence. Their hearts are set against Jesus. It is as though the world is saying, “boo, not this Jesus. We don’t want him. Get rid of him.”
 - Frustrated by Pilate, the leaders of the protesting crowd now reveal the real reason why they want Jesus dead: “We have a law, and according to that law he must die,

2. Because he has made himself the Son of God.” (19:7)

- So here’s the real issue: they want Jesus dead because he claimed to be the “Son of God”
- The charge is more than political; it’s about *identity*.
- “Son of God” is not a small religious title:
 - Jesus is not just claiming to be a teacher or a prophet.
 - He is claiming a unique authority from God - *equality with God*.
- And that leaves only two possibilities:
 - If this claim is false - then it’s blasphemy, worthy of death
 - If this claim is true - then Jesus is God himself standing before them
- Obviously, the leaders refuse the second option. So they say, “he must die.”
 - Because if Jesus is really the Son of God,
 - Then they cannot remain in control - their authority is threatened
 - So rather than submit, they reject...and kill.
- In a quieter way, our world might respond similarly:
 - We may not shout “crucify him”
 - But we may say - “nah, not this Jesus - not this authority - and not this claim over my life, Jesus can’t be the Son of God!”

3. “When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid.” (19:8-16a)

- Before, he feared the crowd. Now, after hearing the real charge, he fears Jesus.
- *He could “mock Jesus as a king, but what if this fanatic is really from God?” (Barnett, 261)*
- So Pilate pulls Jesus aside and asks, “Where do you come from?”
- Silence.....Jesus gives no answers.
 - He does not defend himself. He does not argue his case.
- Frustrated, Pilate says: “Don’t you realise I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” (19:10)
- Now Jesus finally speaks, but in an unexpected way:
 - “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.” (19:11)

- In that moment, everything is turned upside down:
 - Pilate thinks he is in control.
 - But Jesus makes it clear that all authority is given by God.
 - Even here, in all the chaos and evil, there is a higher throne above Pilate's.
 - God is still sovereign!
- Jesus is not trapped. He is not overpowered. He is not losing control.
- Rather, he is the Son, **willingly submitting** to the Father's sovereign plan...
- Pilate now tries to realise Jesus - but in the end, under pressure, he chooses his own safety over truth. And the Jewish crowd would rather pretend they like the oppressor Caesar than receive their true king, the one who brings love and peace.
- And so Pilate hands Jesus over to be crucified:
 - Not because Jesus is guilty, but on the charge that he is **the Son of God**.

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and honour and glory and praise.

JOHN (SO THAT YOU MIGHT BELIEVE)
Good Friday Reflection, Part B: “Jesus is God’s King”
by Amy Norman (03/04/2026)

예수님은 하나님의 왕이십니다 | 耶穌是神所立的君王 | இயேசு தேவனின் ராஜா

Bible Passage: John 19:16b-27

Here is Jesus, the King of the Jews.

- Pilate’s notice is fastened to the cross.
The man hanging here is “Jesus of Nazareth: The King of the Jews”.
- It is a humiliating sight.
Jesus is nailed to wooden beams, lifted up for all to see.
He is crucified just outside the city walls, so passing Jews as they came into Jerusalem for the Passover could see their king.
- Here is their King: naked, guarded, and dying.
His clothes have been divided,
his hands have been pierced,
his bones are on display,
he is surrounded by enemies,
he is on show for all to stare and gloat.
- There is no confusion as to why Jesus is hanging there.
Crucifixion was not just a death sentence for the guilty,
but it was meant to be public display of the power of Rome
and the ultimate warning to anyone who might follow them.
Seeing a body on the cross was not enough, the notice attached spelt out the warning:

this is *why* this man is hanging here.

And the implicit threat: if you try the same thing, you too will be crucified.

- Pilate is not messing around with Jesus.
He is crucified just outside Jerusalem - for all to see,
the charge is written in three languages - for all to understand.
- The man crucified is “Jesus of Nazareth: The King of the Jews.”
The Jews protest this charge.
They wanted Jesus eliminated because he *claimed* to be King, not because he is their king.
They have rejected Jesus, that’s why he is there.
- Pilate had this notice written to mock the Jews and humiliate Jesus.
But rather than being a threat, it announces the truth: Jesus *is* the king.

But if Jesus *is* a king, then surely crucifixion is a disaster.

- If you are going to *begin* your reign as king,
you don’t start it off by being executed by a foreign power.
A king who is crucified is a failure.
- Anything you might ever hope for in a King *comes to an end* when they are killed.
And that’s why Jesus on the cross *as a king*,
looks like utter foolishness in the eyes of the Romans.

- If Jesus *is* a king, then the cross makes it look like a joke:
Instead of glory, Jesus is humiliated.
Instead of dignity, Jesus is naked.
Instead of power, he is under the rule of Roman.
Instead of freedom, he is facing death.
Instead of victory, Jesus crucified looks like the *ultimate defeat*.
- Across every measure, crucifixion overcomes any claim to kingship.
Death defeats kings.

**But Jesus is not defeated. In a way no one expects, the cross reveals his reign,
for *he is God’s King*.**

- The cross, instead of eliminating Jesus and ending his power,
is the very means through which his ultimate authority as God’s King is made known.
- The cross *is how* Jesus is enthroned as God’s King,
for it is *the place* in which he faces the greatest battle and is victorious.
- The cross was designed for humiliation, but it is the place Jesus is glorified.
It was meant to destroy dignity, but it reveals Jesus’ majesty.
It was meant to empty him of power, but it was where he faced the greatest power.
It was meant to bring defeat, but it was the place he brought defeat to death
and claimed victory.

The cross was meant to end Jesus, but through it, his reign is established forever.

- The Jews long expected God to send them a king, the Messiah.
One that would come from David's line,
to lead his people, defeat their enemies, and reign forever.
- But even the Jews did not expect *this type of King*.
It's obvious Jesus didn't meet their expectations, for they want him to be crucified.
They wanted a king to destroy Rome, not be executed by Rome.
- But *this is* the King of the Jews.
Jesus is God's King, and the cross is his enthronement.
- His crucifixion is an indispensable part of his reign *for through it* he displays his power,
brings defeat, wins victory,
earns peace, and establishes his rule forever.
- The King is on the cross. No amount of humiliation will change who he is.
You can decide to welcome him or reject him,
but *he is God's King*.

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and honour and glory and praise.

JOHN (SO THAT YOU MIGHT BELIEVE)
Good Friday Reflection, Part C: “It is Finished”
by the Rev’d Adam Lowe (03/04/2026)

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Bible Passage: John 19:28-37

It was *success* to those who despised him.

It was *shocking* to those who loved him.

BUT this hour was no *surprise* to Jesus.

- He had been warning the disciples of *this hour* all along. /
- ...as he had come from the Father *so he would return*.
...as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, *so he must be lifted up*.
...as a seed dies *in order to bring life so he too must die*.
...as the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, *so Jesus would lay down his life for us*.
- But the disciples can’t make sense of that right now.
How could they? The horror of what is happening is simply too much to bear. /
- *The goal of crucifixion wasn’t merely to destroy a person, but to dehumanise them in EVERY conceivable way, until every aspect of their personhood was comprehensively stripped bare.* /
- God’s Son? God’s King?
- This looks like failure.
This looks like shame.
This looks like another wannabe King whose grandiose claims have been decisively—and definitively—pummelled by the power of Rome.
- Yet that’s **not** *how Jesus sees it*.

Just after a wine-vinegar-soaked sponge is lifted up, on the end of a hyssop stalk, and pressed to his lips, Jesus utters something astonishing: *it is finished!*

- What does he mean? / It is finished? **WHAT** exactly does he think *is finished*?
- The schemes of his enemies? **They're done!**
The hopes of his friends? **They're dashed!**
The life in his body? **He's near dead.** *In fact, he's about to breathe his last.*
- It's not long after the soldiers confirm that he's dead.
They pierce his side and report what appears to be blood and water flowing.
It's a tell-tale sign of death. Backed up by medicine now. Known by experience then. /
- Yet, when Jesus says, "*it is finished*", he doesn't mean:
murderous plots, his followers' hopes, or even his own life.
- He means THE work that *his* Father gave him to do. /
- *Jesus proclaimed time-and-time again, that it was his will to FINISH the work he was sent to do. Jesus going to the cross wasn't a failure but the FULFILLMENT of God's salvation plan.*

This is where he was headed all along.

- Not because it was *inevitable*—but because it was *necessary*. /
- **Over-and-over people heard Jesus say** that THE HOUR, *the ultimate moment of his glorification* had not come. But now it had.

- **Sign-after-sign people witnessed** glimpses of his glory.
But now as he is lifted up, they are seeing the weight of his glory unveiled.
- It doesn't look glorious.
It looks like defeat. / IT IS A DEFEAT. /
- But it's not the defeat we might first think:
FOR HIS DEATH shattered sin's grip on us and therefore DEFEATED the very power of death. / Death no longer has the final word for those who belong to him.

This was the plan.

Everything that happened was to fulfill the promise of Scripture.

- His garments divided.
His thirst and the provision of sour wine.
His bones not broken.
His side being pierced.
- It's *ALL* the fulfillment of Scripture.
- *Not in order to "tick off the boxes" to meet the criteria and get the credentials to be the Messiah.*
- But everything is signalling that Jesus is the very fulfillment of God's promises.
Everything God's Word has been pointing to is coming true *in him*.

And this is all happening — *as John reminds us* — at the time of Passover.

- Every year God's people looked back and gave thanks for their deliverance out of Egypt.
- God had freed their ancestors from slavery and the evil rule of Pharaoh.
- They looked back with a simple meal. *Of bitter herbs, roasted lamb, and bread without yeast, remembering the meal their ancestors shared the night before judgement fell and they were freed.*
- But this wasn't just a meal shaped by memory, but also by *expectation*.
*They looked back when God had delivered them. AND:
They looked forward to the time when God would act again. When God's King would deliver them./*
- John makes no mention of a lamb at the Passover meal the disciples, because he wants us to see that Jesus is the ultimate sacrificial lamb.
- He's the lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Once-and-for-all.
- His death has paid the price for our sin.
His death has broken the power of death.
His death is the means that we can know his forgiveness and life.
It's through his death that we are reconciled *with God* and can know relationship with him.
- This is not tragedy but triumph.
That's what Jesus accomplished for us.
That's why he can say, 'it is finished!'.

At first glance, Jesus' death on a cross *can* look like failure and shame...

- But a closer look reflects something more confronting.
It reveals our failure and shame.
- We weren't there. But our sin still put him there.
- Through his death: God's King, God's Son carried it all for us.
Through his death: God's King, God's Son drank the cup of judgement for us.
Through his death: God's King, God's Son made possible a new beginning for us.
- The revolution that Jesus began on that day,
is an invitation for us to believe *in him* today.
- Many would sooner mock him and crucify him
than recognise him and bow their knee.
- But for those who do believe in him,
they can delight *forever in the finished work of Jesus*.

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and honour and glory and praise.