

# JOHN 19:16-42 - THE CRUCIFIXION: TO FULFILL THE SCRIPTURES

Stonebrook Sunday AM, 11/11/18, Matt Heerema

## INTRO

Please turn in your Bibles with me to John chapter 19. In preparing for this message, it occurred to me how strange it felt to be preparing a "Good Friday Sermon" in mid-November. But, we have devoted ourselves to the preaching of the scripture, over and above the church seasons. A fact which I love. And so today we are going to reflect on the crucifixion of Jesus.

### **The most horrific act ever committed by humanity:**

- The false accusation of the only truly righteous human.
- The rejection of the long-awaited messiah by the people to whom he was promised
- The betrayal of their rightful and true king, in favor of a lesser, merely human ruler
- The murder of the most glorious, most worthy, most innocent, most loving person ever to have lived.

This was humanity's darkest hour. It was also the means of our salvation.

But we are not merely reflecting on the crucifixion, we are specifically studying the gospel account of the apostle John, and he had **a specific purpose** in writing this gospel account as he did.

John brings out some **unique details** not found in other gospel accounts, and in so doing sends **a strong message to the early church**, who are under oppression from the Roman Empire and under pressure from the Jewish synagogue to abandon their faith and return to what is now a dead religion, (the true, living religion, having passed into worship of Jesus the Christ, the fulfillment of the Jewish religion.)

In the face of familial pressure from fellow Jews, and political and societal pressure from the empire, John sends a clear message. Do not fear, and do not look back.

- The Jewish leaders had rejected Jesus. Don't go back to them.
- The Roman Empire are mere vassals of the heavenly king, and would have no power at all if it had not been given by God. Do not fear them. We belong to a higher kingdom.
- Jesus proved that he was the long-awaited Jewish Messiah, believe! See the works he did, hear the words he said!

- The situation you find yourself in today is not an accident. The persecution and pressure you face, in fact, was predicted by Jesus, planned by God who is in complete control of and care for your situation.

Let's read John's account of the crucifixion and then we reflect on some of its uniqueness and significance.

### **John 19:16-42 (ESV)**

16 So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, 17 and he went out, **bearing his own cross**, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.

19 Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "**Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.**" 20 Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in **Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek.** 21 So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" 22 Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, 24 so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was **to fulfill the Scripture** which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did these things,

25 but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (**to fulfill the Scripture**), "I thirst." 29 A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, **he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.**

31 Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

35 He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. 36 For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” 37 And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”

38 After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. 39 Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. 40 So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42 So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

## TO FULFILL THE SCRIPTURE

All four gospel accounts record most of these same events, some go into even greater detail, but only John explicitly points out that these events happened **“to fulfill the scripture.”** These statements by John that these events happened “to fulfill the scripture” show us three things:

1. God’s sovereign plan and absolute control of the situation
2. Jesus’s total faithfulness and obedience to God’s plan
3. Jesus’s worthiness as a substitute sacrifice on our behalf

### God’s Control over His Plan

- **The soldiers divided the garments**, just as God said they would in Psalm 22:18. They acted on their own, but they did so “because God said they would.” - “The scriptures said... *...so this is what they did...*”
- **No broken bones** (Exodus, the passover lamb, and Psalm 34:20, God’s protection of the righteous) - As foretold by God. He kept his watch over his son, his sacrificial lamb, so that all would be according to his plan.
- **The soldiers pierced him** (Zechariah 12:10)
- All this answers the question in chapter 12:34: “...what do you mean the son of man must be lifted up?” - They didn’t have the full picture of who the Messiah was.
- **The trilingual declaration of Pilate** “Jesus of Nazareth, Kind of the Jews”, a declaration to all the nations!, made him an unwitting, yet free-acting prophet, like Caiaphas the high priest in 11:49-52 when he said that it would be better for one man to die for the many.

## Jesus' willing obedience

- **He carried his cross** - no one forced him to it
- **"It is finished."** - he saw the entire task through, and did not give up until all that needed accomplished was accomplished, and then on *his* timeline, his father's timeline, he gave up his spirit.
- **He gave up his spirit** - No one took it from him
- He was in complete control the entire time

## Jesus's worthiness as a sacrifice

- Numbered among the transgressors (Isaiah 53:12 - not explicitly declared)
- Not a bone was broken (passover lamb from Exodus 12 and Numbers 9)
- Carried his cross, as Isaac carried the wood for the sacrifice
- Use of the hyssop branch to quench his thirst

## BECAUSE OF THE CRUCIFIXION

**Because of the crucifixion, Be humbled:** It is important for us to remember our place in the story - in our refusal to acknowledge Jesus as our lord and king, we were the mocking crowd. In our fear to speak up about our savior, we were the denying Peter, we were the hiding Joseph of Arimathea.

We are the insurrectionists on the cross next to Jesus. Having betrayed our true king and instead following the rulers of this world. We deserve the death he died. We deserve the punishment he bore.

But he bore it for us willingly. For those of us who turn to him in submission and faith, marveling at his work and seeking then to live as he commanded, he clears our debt just as he welcomed the thief on the cross next to him into paradise. As he provided for his mother and brothers on the cross so he provides for us.

**Because of the crucifixion, Care for the body:** We are to love as he loved. Just as Joseph and Nicodemus came out of hiding in order to claim and care for Christ's body, so we are to boldly declare our status as followers of Jesus, by joining with the church: the body of Christ on earth today, and caring for it.

**Because of the crucifixion, Bear the cross:** We are to take up our cross, as he took up his. Perhaps literally, perhaps only metaphorically in the form of scorn and derision from our friends,

family, peers, and society. This is what our savior did, and as he told his disciples, if they did this to him, so they will do it to us.

But we are not to fear. Because the crucifixion is not the end of the story.

Resurrection comes next.

He died, so that we could die to our sin. Paul wrote to the Galatian church that all our sin was nailed to the cross with him, canceling it. And he was raised so that we could be raised with him.

In bearing our cross, which will not merely feel like death to some, it will mean death for some who live in areas where naming Christ can get you killed, you will find true, lasting, joy-filled life, and you cannot truly find that anywhere else.

### **Finally, because of the crucifixion, take joy in salvation:**

John has carefully outlined God's plan in Jesus: the fulfillment of all the promises of the old testament. We are to believe it! Find life by understanding that your debt is paid, the way back to God has been made. Rejoice in the brilliance and beauty of God's plan. Find relief from your guilt and shame.

Perhaps you find yourself today, trying to cling to faith, or just in need of a fresh reminder that Jesus is who he said he is, and did what he said he did. Perhaps your friends & family, classmates & coworkers do not know Christ, and mock you or shun you because of your faith.

Because of what Jesus has done on the cross, we can take the same comfort that an exiled nation of Israel, an early church under persecution and pressure did, in the words of the prophet Micah. In your doubt, in your faintness of heart, and when under pressure and persecution, say with him:

#### **Micah 7:7-10 (ESV)**

But as for me, I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.

Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me.

I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me.

He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication.

Then my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me,  
"Where is the Lord your God?"  
My eyes will look upon her; now she will be trampled down like the mire of the streets.

### **Micah 7:18-19 (ESV)**

Who is a God like you, **pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression**  
for the remnant of his inheritance?

He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love.

**He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot.**

**You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.**

And that is what God did, through Jesus did on the cross.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Re-read the account of the crucifixion in John 19:16-42, and consider what we have read up to that point, and what comes after (the resurrection).

(It may be best to read all these questions first, and then give answers as a whole rather than one at a time.)

1. In what ways can you relate to the different people described in John's account of the crucifixion: The mocking crowd. The rejecting religious leaders. The denying Peter. The compromising Pilate. The doubting Thomas. The hiding Joseph and Nicodemus.
2. What is true about God's sovereign and caring control of your circumstances?
3. What is true about the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus?
4. How do these truths impact the way you view your present circumstances?
5. What should your response be in terms of a changed life because of these truths?

Take the time to pray for one another along these lines.