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The Death of the King **Pastor Ty Blackburn** **John 19:31-42** **April 24, 2016**

Please turn with me in your Bibles to John 19. We'll be looking at Verses 31-42, the last twelve verses of the 19th chapter of John. The title of the message is 'The Death of the King'. We are looking here in these 12 verses at really the certification of Jesus' death in Verses 31-37, and the burial of our Lord in Verses 38-42. I titled it 'The Death of the King' because, as we're going to see, in His death, He is reigning. In His death, His reign is enacted. You could say in His death, His reign is extended, but it is actually actively going on at the moment He dies. We see it played out for us, right before us, in John's account of the death and burial of our Savior, 'The Death of the King'.

You know there is a reason that we sing about a fountain filled with blood, that we glory in the cross, that Paul said, "We preach Christ and Him crucified." That everything that we are about as a people is rooted in the historic reality of the death of the Son of God. The victory is at Calvary. We are going to see that today. It is accomplished at Calvary. That is what we talked about last time, it is finished, it is accomplished, it is done, the victory is won. The resurrection is simply the announcement, the public, unmistakable declaration of the victory that happened on Friday, on the cross. And we see this, 'The Death of the King', let's read from Verses 31-42 of John 19.

John 19:31-42 ~

31 Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), 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 man and of the other who was crucified with Him; 33 but coming to Jesus, when they 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 immediately blood and water came out. 35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. 36 For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken." 37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

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38 After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body. 39 Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. 40 So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings 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 Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, we ask now that You might grant us the power of Your Spirit, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, to reveal to us the glory of Your Son, the majestic beauty, loveliness, perfection of His work. We pray this in His name, Amen.

'The Death of the King'. In His death, His reign is enacted. We are going to consider our time together under two points. The first is *The Proof of His Death*, and we're going to look at *The Power of His Death*.

1) The Proof of His Death:

So the proof first, *The Proof of His Death*, because John is quite emphatic to prove the fact that Jesus died. And in proving His death is actually, in my title of that first point, *The Proof of His Death*, I'm using it in a deliberately ambiguous way. Of His death, *The Proof of His Death*, that prepositional phrase 'of His death' is what grammarians call a genitive, 'of His death', and it can be used in different ways. If I was to say, 'the love of Christ', you can use that phrase 'love of Christ' to mean two, well multiple different things, but primarily two different things for our purposes. You can use that genitive, this refers to the way the last word in the prepositional phrase is being used. 'The love of Christ', let's use that one, and we'll come back to *The Proof of His Death*. I'm using it to show you how I'm using *The Proof of His Death*. So let's try to keep that straight in my own mind, and maybe that'll help you to keep it straight in yours.

But 'The Love of Christ', you can mean when you say 'The Love of Christ', you can be talking about the love that Jesus has for us. That is called a subjective

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genitive. The genitive is the noun at the end of the preposition with ‘of’, ‘of Christ’, or ‘of His death’, okay? Whatever the noun is here, that is the genitive, and if it is a subjective genitive, think about then the word ‘Christ’, ‘Love of Christ’, let’s go back to that, ‘Christ’ is the subject, and the love then is His verb. Do you see that? ‘The Love of Christ’, that is the love that Christ expresses for us. That is one meaning of the genitive, the subjective use of the genitive. Now you can also use that word to mean objective. That is, that the genitive noun is the object of the verb. Do you see that? The difference, our love for Christ. You can say ‘Love of Christ’, and you can mean that, you know, “The love of Christ compels me,” it can mean both. It can mean Jesus’ love for me, that’s subjective, the love of Christ for me, but it can also mean my love for Christ, the love of Christ, my love of Christ.

A) The Objective Proof of His Death:

So when I’m talking about *The Proof of His Death*, I’m using it the same way. John wants to show, he wants, I think, first and foremost, Jesus’ death is proved by the things that he puts before us. So in that sense, death, the genitive, is objective, and we’re going to look at that first, *The Proof of His Death*. But there is another sense in which His death proves some things, and we’re going to look at that secondly. So there are two sub-points under this first point, *The Proof of His Death*. First, objectively, *The Proof of His Death* is seen in John’s careful recounting of the details of Jesus death, which come to a climax when he tells us that the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. John is determined to prove to us that Jesus was literally, beyond doubt, dead on the cross.

The Swoon Theory, and it is nonsense, would never hold weight against the Gospel of John. Some people believe that they came to Jesus, unbelievers have always manufactured ways to not believe, and one of the ways throughout history that has been used is to say that Jesus wasn’t really dead. They came to Him, and they didn’t break His legs, so when they took Him down, He was just passed out, He was weakened, and then He woke up in the grave, and so He came back out. A man who had been beaten like that, and hung out on the cross for hours, and hours, and hours, somehow convinced the disciples that He was raised from the dead, beyond death. Of course, it is ludicrous. Well, John destroys that here. They didn’t just look at Him and determine, “He’s dead.” They didn’t just put their hand up to His nose to see if there was any air coming out of His nose. They stuck a spear in His side, and blood and water came out, signifying completely dead.

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This physiological phenomenon is debated by medical doctors. There are articles written by Christian physicians, talking about what this means, why the blood and water came out together. Basically, two different, primarily two different medical theories. One is that they pierce Jesus' heart when they pierced His side, so that the pericardial sac around the heart was pierced, and heart was pierced, and so blood flowed from the heart, and the water in that sac flowed out together. That is one theory. I think it is more likely, the second theory, which is that His side was pierced, because many doctors argue that if you pierce the heart, the water and blood wouldn't flow out the way John seems to describe. There might be some that comes out, but not much. But rather what happened was, as He was going through the agony of the cross, the fluid began to drain down through His lungs, and after He died, through His lungs, into His chest cavity, so that it was swelling up behind His ribs. Some doctors report that in working on dead bodies, that in making incisions, sometimes as much as two liters of fluid will come out of someone's chest cavity when this kind of strain has happened. I think what happened was, they put the spear into His side, and all of that buildup from the heart flowed out. But the point is, that only happens when someone is dead, regardless to which theory we hold to about whether it was His heart or His side, there is no doubt, John is making clear, Jesus experienced literal, physical death. There is a sense in which he is giving us the death certificate. Inescapable proof, the literal fact of the death of the man, Christ Jesus.

I think the reason that John probably is emphasizing that is not the silliness of the Swoon Theory, but a very real heresy that had already begun to circulate in the early days of the church. We mentioned John probably writes about 85 A.D., more than 50 years after the death and resurrection of Christ. He is the last surviving apostle, and he has already seen the development of Docetism, or Docetic Gnosticism. Docetism, comes from the Greek word '*doceto*', which means '*to seem*', '*to appear*'. The Docetic heresy was that, it was kind of the Greek mind, the Greek philosophical underpinnings of this. They tried to take the Christian message and filter them through the Greek mindset. The Docetists believed there was no way that God, that the word, that the eternal word, could become flesh, because flesh is evil. They followed Plato, and the dichotomy between the spirit and the physical realm. The physical realm is evil, material, and so God would not take that. It would be impossible. They taught that Jesus only appeared, or seemed to be a man. You can see John is dispelling that from the very beginning, because what does he say in John 1, after he talks about the word?

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John 1:1-3 ~ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Verse 14.

John 1:14 ~ And the Word became flesh,...

Blasphemous to the Greek mind, and here we have kind of a counterpart at the end of his Gospel, him reminding us that the word became flesh. The literal physical body of Jesus of Nazareth is essential to our salvation, and John is making this emphatically clear. And look at the emphasis, you can see how important it is to him by noting, you know when you are reading along, Verse 34:

John 19:34 ~ But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

Now look what the next verse says.

John 19:35 ~ And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth,...

That is emphatic. I mean, think about that. He could have said, “He who has seen has testified.” Basically he is saying, “We have eye-witness testimony.” He is basically saying, “I’m offering eye-witness testimony. I saw it, the blood and water come out.” But that is not enough for John, he adds, ***...and his testimony is true;...*** He speaks of himself in the third person, that is John’s characteristic. We are going to see it especially in Chapter 20, constantly referring to himself as ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’ rather than ‘John’, or rather than ‘me’. He speaks in the third person and so he is doing the same thing here. ***...he who has seen has testified,...*** Well who is he talking about? He is talking about himself. He told us a little while ago that he was standing with the mother of Jesus. Remember last time we looked at, “Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother.” And he is there at the cross until the end, and he sees the spear thrust, and he sees the blood and water come out, and he determines to make known his testimony.

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So he says it is eye-witness testimony, that is the first clause, ***...he who has seen has testified,...*** ***...and his testimony is true;***... He reiterates it, but that is still not enough. He adds a third emphasis, ***...and he knows that he is telling the truth,...*** When something is taken to the third level in the Hebrew mindset, that is taking it to the superlative. He is making this, he is like stamping it and saying, “There is no way to be a Docetist and a Christian.” And for us today, we don’t hear about Docetism, but we do have people who continue to offer the same sort of deceptive, heretical teachings. There is nothing new under the sun, and so people emphasize and talk about, “Well, you know, Jesus didn’t really die.” Some of them go as far as to say, “Jesus didn’t really exist.” That is just, frankly it is just stupid. It shows how foolish unbelievers can be, and apart from God’s grace, we could be there too. We have to remember that, but it is a fact. All historians who are real historians know there is no doubt. We have all the testimony from secular sources to the reality of Jesus, and to the fact that He died on a cross, a Roman cross, and to the fact that he was regarded to be resurrected. We talked about this on Easter Sunday, the various proofs for the resurrection. That historians, looking at the evidence, canonical evidence, or the canons of history, looking at history through the canons, the rules of history, the most logical and sound conclusion is that Jesus of Nazareth died on a Roman cross, and rose from the dead. Now we know it is true because the word of God tells us. This perfect book makes it clear, but history confirms it.

Now, John is showing us, and this passage is showing us the importance of real historical truth. We are not following some pie in the sky philosophy. We are following a true human Savior, fully human, fully God, and that is what John wants us to understand here. This is what he deals with in 1 John 4, in his epistle, when he talks about testing the spirits, testing the spirits of the teaching that you are hearing. You know, when you hear someone teach, John is telling those he cares about, the churches that are under his concern, to test the spirits. “Don’t believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God,” 1 John 4.

1 John 4:2 ~ ...every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

He is dealing with Docetism again. So here we see him making the objective proof of Jesus’ death. It is an undeniable fact, and this is going to, of course, set the table for the resurrection. That is the objective proof of His death, proof of His death, death being the recipient of the object of proof.

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B) The Subjective Proof of His Death:

But now I want to talk about the second sub-point under the first point, *The Proof of His Death*. Let's think of it now subjectively, that His death proves three things because that is what John takes us to. We see this in Verse 36-37.

John 19:36-37 ~ "NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN." 37 And again another Scripture says, "THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED."

John basically, after proving that Jesus' death really happened, now proves three things, or shows us three things that Jesus' death proves. The first thing it proves is that He is a righteous man. This first quotation he says:

John 19:36 ~ For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN."

The exact wording is not found in the Old Testament passages, but this seems to be John alluding to three different passages, and two different concepts. He seems to be alluding first of all to Psalm 34:20, which we read earlier, where David, in talking about his own difficulty and suffering, his time of having to call upon the Lord, he delights in the promise that God hears the righteous, that God does not abandon the righteous. Verse 19:

Psalm 34:19-20 ~

***19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
But the LORD delivers him out of them all.
20 He keeps all his bones,
Not one of them is broken.***

What he is basically saying is that the fact that Jesus' bones, none were broken, proves that He is righteous. It proves, the first thing His death proves is that He is righteous, the righteousness of Christ. This is one of the reasons I think that the Jews wanted Him to have His legs broken. I mean, what is going on in this situation, just to put it in context a little bit, it is interesting to note the emphasis on time. Verse 31:

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Psalm 34:31 ~ Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken,...

That emphasis is continued into Verse 42 at the very end of this passage.

Psalm 34:42 ~ Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

The Jewish readers of this Gospel that John is writing to, he is writing to Jews, and Jewish proselytes, trying to convince them that Jesus is truly the Son of God. When they read that, they would understand. The Day of Preparation, that is Friday before the Sabbath, and the Sabbath that is coming up is during Passover week. As the day is drawing to a close, they know they have got to get the body down before sundown. In fact, the Jews themselves had concern for that because Deuteronomy 21:22-23 says that if a body is hung on a tree, in some kind of punishment, they hang someone to death, you must not leave the man hanging overnight, otherwise you will bring pollution to the land. So that even the rulers of the Jews want the bodies taken down because they don't want pollution to come to the land, and especially not during the Passover, the Sabbath, and the Passover.

So they make the request that the bones will be broken, and what happens is, when the person is crucified, we mentioned earlier, that sometimes the body could stay on the cross for days, depending on how bad they had been beaten beforehand, they might survive a couple of days, and actually end up being killed by vultures. It is a horrible way to experience death. But the Jews had the practice of always getting the bodies down before, not allowing them to go overnight, and especially before the Sabbath. So they go and ask that the legs be broken, because when the legs are broken, the person can no longer push up to keep their lungs being filled with air, and they will quickly die of asphyxiation. So that is what they asked, and they come to the two guys on the outside, they start from the outside and they find the guy on the right, and the guy on the left are still alive, and they break their legs. And they come to Jesus, and we read last time, He had already given up His Spirit. They see He is dead, and then they pierce His side to make sure that He is dead. But in doing that, by not breaking the bones, the psalmist, the words of the psalmist, David, are fulfilled—a righteous man will not have his bones broken. They did not break the bones of Jesus.

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But the second thing, it didn't just prove, these are the three things it proves, His death, the way He died, and not having His bones broken, as one would have expected, proves He is a righteous man first. Secondly, it proves that He is the true Passover lamb because Exodus 12:46, and Numbers 9:12, in talking about the Passover, said that you shall not break a bone of the Passover lamb. You were to prepare it, and eat it, without breaking a bone. An interesting requirement of God, but this was to lay the groundwork for the true Passover lamb that would come. When John quotes this, I think he is thinking of all of these things, they are coming together in his mind. He is a righteous man and He is the true Passover, and this is proving it. Even as He's dying, it's being proven that He is righteous and that He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament hopes. So it proves He's a righteous man, it proves He is the true Passover Lamb, and it finally proves that He is God. Zechariah 12:10, the second Scripture He quotes in Verse 37:

John 19:37 ~ And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

In Zechariah 12, the Lord is speaking. Yahweh is speaking in Zechariah 12, talking about His King and the coming of the Day of the Lord, and He says in Verse 10:

Zechariah 12:10 ~ "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn."

John says this verse is being fulfilled. They're looking on Him whom they've pierced. Now, it's interesting in the Hebrew, in Verse 10, it literally reads, the NAS as it's translated, none of the translations do it. It's a difficult translation. Literally it says in the Hebrew, "So that they will look on Me on Him whom they pierced." It almost looks like an error of speech. It's like if I were saying, if I had a great idea the other day, but I realized it was really Patti's idea, so I said, "I had Patti had a great idea the other day," or, "I had she had a great idea the other day." Do you know what I'm saying? It's like God saying, "They will look on Me Him," but of course, the Lord doesn't misspeak like we do. So it's intentional. What He's saying is when they look on Him whom they pierced, the reality is they're looking on Me whom they pierced. When they pierced the King that I sent, they pierced Me. They will look on Me on Him whom they pierced." And John takes that verse and says, "This is fulfilled. This is why not only they didn't break His bones, but He was to

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be pierced, and in His piercing, God is pierced,” because Jesus, as John has been making clear throughout his Gospel, Jesus, though fully man, is Himself no one else but Yahweh. He is Yahweh. He is God. He is Lord. So His death proves He’s a righteous man, He is the true Passover, and He is God’s King and God Himself. That’s the proof of His death. Now I want us to look at the power of His death in Verses 38 to 42.

2) The Power of His Death:

The power of His death, the account of Jesus’ burial. All four Gospels are careful to record Jesus’ burial, and all four Gospels tell us about a man named Joseph of Arimathea and his role in the burial, that it was his tomb. The other Gospels tell us a lot about Joseph. Matthew tells us that he was a rich man. Mark tells us that he was a member of the council, that is the Sanhedrin, the seventy rulers that condemned Jesus to die, that Joseph was a part of that council. But he tells us also that he was waiting for the Kingdom of God. Luke tells us that he was a member of the council, that he was a good and righteous man, that he was also waiting for the Kingdom of God. Now John, when he tells us about Joseph, he knows those other Gospels have been written. He tells us this about Joseph:

John 19:38 ~ After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews,...

John knows we know Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin. He knows we know that from the other Gospels, but he tells us the reason that he’s a secret disciple is for fear of the Jews, and for John, that’s a very serious thing. Turn with me back over to Chapter 12 and look at the words of John in Verses 42 and 43. Jesus has been talking, but this is the Gospel writer here in Verses 42 and 43, not Jesus Himself. When he quotes Isaiah 6 in Verse 40, and in Verse 41 he says:

John 12:41 ~ These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory,...

That is that when Isaiah said, “I saw the Lord,” John is saying he saw Jesus in the temple. “He spoke of Him,” John says. But look what he says next:

John 12:42 ~ Nevertheless...

Even though all this truth has been made known in the Man Christ Jesus:

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John 12:42 ~ Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue;

It's so obvious, and some of them were seeing it, but they would not honor Him. Look what he says in Verse 43:

John 12:43 ~ for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

I think he's talking about Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus at this point. Remember Nicodemus the next guy, back to John 19, who is mentioned as a part of the burial. Verse 39:

John 19:39 ~ Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

Remember Nicodemus is the one who came in John 3 and said, "Teacher, we know You're from God, for no one can do the works that You do without God being with Him." Jesus basically says, "You must be born again." Nicodemus doesn't understand Him. "How can I go back in my mother's womb?" He's almost being sarcastic. He's certainly not understanding. He's not getting what Jesus is saying. But then in John 7:50 we see Nicodemus again. John's the only Gospel writer that records anything about Nicodemus. He was obviously watching these things very carefully and reflecting on all that had happened. In Verse 50, this is after the council sent the temple guards to arrest Jesus, to seize Him. They're tired of hearing Him teach and the things that He's doing. They're tired of Him bucking their authority, and so they send them to seize Him, and those guys go, and they come back empty handed. The scene is almost humorous. The officers come back empty handed, and the Pharisees and the rulers of the people, the chief priests say, "Where is He? Why did you not bring Him?" The officers themselves say, "Never has a man spoken like this man speaks." The Pharisees then answered them, "You have not also been led astray have you?" And then they say, "No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he?" Verse 48.

John 7:49 ~ But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed."

This group of people, they're just stupid. They don't know better.

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John 7:50 ~ Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) (one of the council) *said to them, 51 “Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?”

That’s pretty bold.

John 7:52 ~ They answered him, “You are not also from Galilee, are you? (Look at the scorn upon him.) Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee.” 53 [Everyone went to his home.

We don’t run into Nicodemus again until the burial. So it seems that he’s been pondering all that Jesus said in John 3 and reflecting on it, and he like Joseph had come to the conclusion that Jesus is the Messiah, but they will not publicly align themselves with Him, because they fear the Jews. Think about what that means. Jesus said in Matthew 10, “Everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess before My Father who is in Heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in Heaven.” That saving faith, these guys had a kind of faith that wasn’t yet saving faith. They were not willing to sell out and to follow, to deny themselves, to take up their cross and to follow Jesus. They were believers who were in the shadows, and they had been in the shadows for some time when the events of Calvary come upon them. They had been unwilling to experience the rejection of men, to be cast out of the synagogue. In the shadows, believing in Jesus, but too afraid to declare themselves His followers.

But here they come back in John 19 now. Here Joseph and Nicodemus come boldly out of the shadows. In fact, for Joseph to do what he’s doing was an astonishing thing. Mark, when he comments about Joseph, remember I mentioned the other Gospel writers talk about Joseph of Arimathea. Mark tells us he was a member of the council. He was waiting for the Kingdom of God, and it says that he summoned courage and went and asked Pilate, that it was a great act of courage to go and ask Pilate. What the Jews had wanted to have happen, when they ask Pilate, “We need to take the bodies down, break their legs,” they wanted Jesus to experience the broken legs to continue to confirm that He was not from God, and they wanted to do what they always do with condemned criminals, which is to bury them in a common tomb. There was a burial place for those who had been executed, and so the request to Pilate carried with it the understanding that they would take Jesus along with the other two criminals, and bury them in that God-forsaken tomb. But Joseph intercedes and goes to Pilate, and says, “I have a tomb. Let me bury Him.” He separates himself from the seventy and from the Jews, and

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he does something that really in Roman law, only a family member could do. It was not customary for the Romans to hear from anyone other than a family member to intercede and say, “Please, let us have the body. We will bury him in our tomb.” Joseph does that. Jesus’ brothers aren’t there. His mother doesn’t have the power as a woman. He steps in and says, “I will bury him.” He’s declaring. He’s nailing his colors to the mast and he’s preceding on in love of Christ.

Nicodemus brings 100 pounds—the exact weight was somewhere between 60 and 100 pounds of myrrh and aloes. This is basically a burial mixture for a king. Nicodemus and Joseph have apparently been conferring as they watched Jesus die on the cross. Joseph says, “I’m going to bury Him in a tomb I have that no one’s been laid in.” Nicodemus says, “I’ll go get the spices.” Nicodemus was a wealthy man as well. They come out of the shadows. Why? What accounts for this change?

This is before the resurrection. This is on Friday. The disciples have scattered except for John, that we know of. So many people are despairing. How is it that these guys are now ready to declare their allegiance? It would seem like, if you look at it just on the surface of it, the most unlikely moment. Why now after the Messiah has been rejected and defeated would you now come to His aid? That would appear to be insane. How do we explain this? John is knowing his readers are asking that exact question.

He’s writing to Jews, and when they hear Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, this is only 50 years after that. These are people that were well known. They heard stories propagate. They understand men of the council from the reading of the other Gospels and from the reading of this Gospel. Two men from the Sanhedrin now separate from the Sanhedrin and follow Jesus when they saw Him die. The explanation is that they have seen His glory. Jesus said in John 12:23 when the Greeks came to Him a week before this, on Sunday, before He had come into Jerusalem—the Greeks come to Him. Philip brings them to Him. He says, “Now is the Son of Man glorified.” That is, the cross will be the crowning glory of the Son of Man. The cross will be when the Son of Man is declared to be who He truly is, fully man, fully God, Shekinah glory shining out from Him. It will be as He is lifted up.

Jesus goes on in that same passage to say in John 12, “When I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all men to Me.” So He’s lifted up, and what happens? Nicodemus and Joseph come running. In the most unlikely timing, them watching Him die, they see He truly is the King of Israel. They don’t yet know what the plan

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is about Sunday. They're probably in the dark. Nicodemus brings 100 pounds of spices. You don't need 100 pounds. Jesus is not going to see decay, because the Scripture will not be broken. Psalm 16:11 says, "He will not let His holy One undergo decay." No need for spices, Nicodemus. He doesn't know. He's doing what he can to honor the King.

King Asa we're told about in 2 Chronicles 16, his funeral procession, his burial, the amount of spices that were brought to honor the king. Nicodemus is honoring his King, even a crucified King. He knows somehow this is the one. John is basically giving us an account that the other Gospel writers give in a different way from different witnesses. Think about Luke's account. When we understand Luke's account, he tells us, as all the Gospel writers do, that two men were crucified beside Him. When we read all the different accounts from Matthew and Mark, we know that at the beginning when Jesus was on the cross, that the two men on either side were hurling insults at Him. They hurled insults at Him, but later on as they hang on the cross, one of the men looks at Jesus, having watched Him, having heard Him say, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they're doing. Having heard them say, "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother." Having heard Him and watched Him to His side, he says, "Today when You go into Your Kingdom, remember me." He knows, "You're the King. You're crucified, but You are the King." There's his testimony, and Jesus says those wonderful words, "I tell you the truth. Today you will be with Me in paradise."

Matthew tells us the testimony of a Gentile heathen who had been a part of the folks that had been mocking Jesus, and putting the purple robe on Him, and forcing the crown of thorns upon His head, dividing up His clothes among them, that when Jesus died, the moment He died, Mark records for us in Mark 16:7-8, "The moment Jesus breathed His last, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom." That is the veil that separates the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place, the veil that separates the place where God's presence truly dwells, and no man can enter. The veil was torn, this massive, patently, thick veil was torn from top to bottom at the moment He died. At the moment He died, the earth quaked, tombs opened, and people came out of the tombs outside of Jerusalem, and the Lord kept them in the area of the tombs, in the graveyard basically, until Sunday, because they couldn't come into town until Jesus came into town, because He's the first fruits. But they rose on Friday.

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Now, the centurion doesn't know that, but he's watched this man hang on the cross. He sees the ground shake. He saw the sky get dark. And when Jesus breathes His last, this Roman centurion, Gentile, pagan says, "Surely this Man was the Son of God." And here we have the same kind of testimony. Joseph of Arimathea, they had been believing, but they had been on the outskirts, in the shadows. Nicodemus, hiding, too afraid to declare themselves. When they see Him die, they say, "Forget everything else. I'm following a crucified Savior." They have seen what we saw when we beheld the King the last two weeks in the messages. They saw His judicial abandonment. They saw His voluntary offering, that He carried His own cross, that He was truly in control the whole way. They saw that in His demeanor. They saw His comprehensive agony, physical, emotional, spiritual. They saw His confirmed identity.

They saw the spectacle of the controversy over the *King of the Jews* that Pilate put up there, that God sovereignly through the Roman governor said, "What I have written I have written. Jesus is your King." They saw the scandalous dishonor of being disrobed, and crucified, and nakedness before the people. In all of that environment, they saw the wondrous love of the King when He looked at His mother and said, "Behold your Son. Son, behold your mother." They saw the driving thirst, that He was all about obeying the word of God all the way to the end. They heard Him utter those wonderful words, "It is finished!" the finished work of the Son, and they saw the sense that even when He died, it was a sovereign gift, that He gave up His spirit. And so they laid down every other concern and said, "I want to follow Him."

I think it's also possible that John, in emphasizing the separation of the blood and water, the great emphasis he places on that in Verse 34:

John 19:34 ~ But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

And then he emphasizes:

John 19:35 ~ And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

What's going on there? We talked about the physiological significance, but the theological significance, theologians have discussed this through the centuries. What is John saying? Why did he call such attention to that? Certainly to certify

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His physical death, but is there something more? I think there is. For John, water has great significance, and he understands that as he lays this out, the blood and water coming out together, the blood signifying Jesus' death, and the water signifying that which gives life. I mean, in his Gospel in John 4:14, he's already told us about the woman at the well, when Jesus said to her, "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst, but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." The water Jesus gives, gives eternal life. So what comes out? As the blood comes out, the life-giving water comes out. His shedding of His blood is bringing eternal life.

John 7:37 ~ Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive;

So I think what's happening is as His blood is shed, as His life is poured out, as Jesus' life is given, He experiences death, and He gives life. And to give eternal life is to give the Spirit. And so I think what we're seeing in John 19 is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to Nicodemus and Joseph. Now, they haven't received the Spirit in the way they're going in on Acts 2. No, not at all, but the Spirit worked all throughout the Old Testament. The Spirit worked in all the preaching of Jesus. Whenever someone came to believe, it was because the Spirit had worked. And so as Jesus dies and they behold Him dying, blood and water come mingled out, and the Spirit is working in their hearts, and they get out of the shadows, and they follow Christ.

The question for each one of us is have you received His life? Have you put all of your hope in His death and have you received life? Or are you in the shadows, a believer who believes to a level, but is not yet fully surrendered to Christ? What is the answer? The answer is look at Christ crucified and experience the same thing that Paul talks about in 2 Corinthians 5 when he says the love of Christ (the subjective genitive) the love that Christ has for us, Christ's love for us, constrains us, compels us. It surrounds us. It grasps us so that we no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. It's looking at the love of Christ, the glory of Christ, that's seen in the cross. That is the answer.

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That is what the world needs. That's what you and I need. And for those of us who are truly His today, to keep looking at the cross, to never tire of looking at the wonder of the glory of the cross where He washed our sins away. As He died, He washed us and He made us alive.

Let's go to Him in prayer...

Father, we thank You for the power of the death of Your Son. We thank You for the glory of so great a salvation, and we thank You for the great glory of Jesus Christ. We pray that You would work in every heart to help us to despise the fear of man, the love of the approval of men, and in seeing the supreme glory of Jesus, to lay everything else down and to seek only the glory of God. He is worthy of that, Lord. Help us. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

"The Death of the King"

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