

John 19:13-16

So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. (ESV)

Pilate sat down on the judgment seat, Gabbatha. This name is traditionally thought to refer to a place of elevation; a symbol of the Roman authority. It's the same way that a judge in our courtrooms always sits above everyone else. It's a picture of power, authority and even implies that the judgment is just.

Now it was the 6th hour on the day of preparation of the Passover which is the day that the lambs would be slaughtered to be eaten later that evening as the Passover (and the Sabbath) would officially begin on Friday evening. It is believed that the slaughtering of lambs always began at noon—or at the 6th hour—and was finished around 3:00 (around the time that Jesus died). John gives us this detail to make sure we do not miss the prophetic symbolism of Passover. Dating back to the exodus, Passover looked forward to the time when Jesus would offer Himself as our Passover lamb so that the curse of death might pass over our lives and we would live while others died.

Pilate had already made up his mind that Jesus would be crucified, which is why he sat down on the judgment seat, so it seems that now he is just being

antagonistic: "Behold your King!" "Shall I crucify your King?" It's sick how politics and hearts bent on evil make bed partners out of the least suspecting people. The Jews are claiming that Caesar is their king. Ha, they hated their foreign occupiers and yet to get their way in this matter they sell their souls and pledge their allegiance to a tyrant who ironically is considered by his nation to be a god. They wanted to crucify Jesus because He was a blasphemer; He said He is the Son of God. Yet, they pledge allegiance to this Roman king who claims to be a god—and this is after having freaked out and rioted a few years earlier when Pilate hung shields in the Praetorium with inscriptions that indicated that Caesar was a god. The irony is dripping and the hypocrisy is beyond imagination.

It is also twisted because daily the Jews prayed for the coming of their King, the Messiah, and during Passover they would recite a prayer that says, "We have no king but God." Yet, just hours before the beginning of Passover they scream: "We have no king but Caesar." Sickening! Jesus was then delivered to the executioners.

John 19:17-18

They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between.

The full cross would have been over 300 lbs; thus, few men could have carried it and even fewer when you consider the brutality of the scourging. Therefore, the Romans would have many upright bars permanently affixed outside of the city

gates and victims were made to carry just the cross bar, which was no easy task as it weighed between 80-110 lbs. The victim's arms were stretched out and they were tied to the beam which was laid across the back of the neck. Then they made the journey to Golgotha.

Think of the Old Testament symbols or types that were fulfilled in this image. In **Genesis 22:1-14** we find that God had told Abraham to take his only son Isaac and go to the land of Moriah and offer him up as a sacrifice on the mountain which God would choose. Then when they arrived, Isaac had to carry the wood on his back and make the journey up to the place of sacrifice. It is also noteworthy that Isaac made the journey with 2 servants in the same way that Jesus made the journey with 2 other men. In addition, Moriah is a compound word consisting of raa'aah (to see) and Yaah (the abbreviated form of Yahweh). The name signifies the manifestation or appearance of Yahweh which on this day is exactly what happened—the Son of God was lifted up and made manifest to all.

Jesus also made Himself manifest to King David, as the "Angel of the Lord," on this same mountain. David sacrificed to the Lord on what was then the threshing floor of Araunah to stop both the plague of death that had come upon Israel and the Angel of Death that was ready to destroy Jerusalem. David first offered burnt offerings for sin and then peace offerings. The Lord answered his prayer and the plague stopped (**2 Samuel 24:16-17**).

Going back to the story of Isaac, I remember Abraham telling Isaac that God will provide the lamb and how after God had provided the sacrifice: "Abraham prophetically called the name of that place "The Lord Will Provide," as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it will be provided" (**Genesis 22:14**). In

fulfillment of prophecy, in the mount of the Lord, God provided His only Son as the sacrifice for sin to make peace between us and the Father (**Romans 5:1**).

Jesus being forced to carry His cross outside of the city also fulfills the type of the sin offering in that this offering was always taken outside the camp or the city and burned (**Exodus 29:14; Leviticus 16:27**). It also fulfills the type provided by the red heifer found in **Numbers 19**. The red heifer was always taken outside the camp and killed in the presence of the high priest. The high priest would take cedar wood (the cross), a hyssop branch (the branch lifted up to Jesus with sour wine), and scarlet thread (His blood) and throw them into the fire where the heifer was burning. The ashes of the sacrifice would be gathered up and mixed with water and used in a ceremony for the removal of sin. I love the way the Old Testament paints for us a perfect picture of Jesus' redemptive work.

Now, Golgotha (the place of the skull) was probably called this because the hill with its stony barren top looked like a skull. There is such a hill just outside of the gates of what would have been the old city (this is one of the 2 sites that are believed to have been the historic Golgotha). Although some have also speculated that Jesus was crucified on the hill where Adam's skull was buried hence the name—the place of the skull. You probably don't know this, but it is from the word "skull" that we get the word Calvary. When these verses were translated into Latin, the translator used the word for skull, which is *calvaria*, which was later converted into our English word Calvary.

In **Luke 23:32** we are told that the two men that Jesus was crucified with were criminals. This also fulfills Old Testament prophecy. **Isaiah 53:12** says He was "numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and

interceded for the transgressors.” Again, we have prophecy perfectly fulfilled. Jesus was crucified as a criminal with criminals and still was willing to make intercession. **Luke 23:40-43** says that one of these men asked Jesus to remember him in His kingdom and Jesus said: “today you will be with me in Paradise.”

It is amazing how many prophecies, types, and symbols of the Old Testament are fulfilled in every aspect of Jesus’ sacrifice. I am amazed that anyone could dare treat this book as a common piece of historical literature; it is shameful.

As far as the crucifixion, Jesus’ garments would have first been stripped from His body. This would have reopened the wounds from the scourging where the blood had already coagulated and dried to the garment; blood would have once again poured and the pain would have been horrific. Archaeological evidence indicates that although the arms might still have been tied to the cross beam the Romans would nail tapered iron spikes approximately 5-7 inches long through the wrist between the bones. This would crush or damage the large median nerve that runs through this part of the arm and immediately there would have been bolts of immense fiery pain in both arms.

By the way, in an experiment done on the National Geographic’s program “Quest for Truth: the crucifixion,” it was proven that the ligaments and bones of the wrist could support the weight of a body hanging but the palms cannot. And just so you don’t get freaked out when later on after the resurrection Jesus shows the disciples the wounds in His hands, the Greek word translated as hand refers to both the arm and hand as a unit. Normally you would have to add additional words to denote specifically either the hand or the arm; so there is no contradiction between the text and archeological discoveries.

Jesus would have then been lifted up by way of ropes and pulleys and attached to the center beam, where they would have affixed his feet to the beam. The positioning of the feet is probably the most critical part of the mechanics of crucifixion. First the knees were flexed about 45 degrees and the feet were flexed (bent downward) an additional 45 degrees until they were parallel to the vertical pole. An iron nail about 7-9 inches long was driven through the feet between the 2nd and 3rd metatarsal bones and would crush the various nerves that run beneath the bones, again sending shock waves of pain through the body.

With His knees flexed at about 45 degrees, Jesus must bear his weight with the muscles of the thigh. However, as the strength of His legs gives out, the weight of His body must be borne by the arms and shoulders. The result is that within a few minutes of being placed on the cross, His shoulders would become dislocated. Minutes later the elbows and wrists would be dislocated. As a result Jesus' arms would have been as much as 6-9 inches longer than normal.

The pain of crucifixion was unbelievable; it was a slow and agonizing death and considered one of the worst forms of torture ever invented. Death by crucifixion could take as little as a few hours and as long as a few days depending on how severe the person was scourged. For Jesus the hardest part would have been merely trying to breathe; in fact, most victims died due to Asphyxiation because they were too exhausted to keep up the effort of breathing. The weight of the body pulling down on the outstretched and dislocated arms would fix the breathing muscles in an inhalation state and thus exhaling became a huge effort. Jesus would have to push up from his feet and pull with his arms and shoulders in order to exhale and then drop again to inhale. As you can imagine, this would

have led to serious fatigue and would have made talking almost impossible. As His legs weakened and the arms stretched even further, there would be more weight put on the chest wall making breathing even more difficult.

The inability to easily exhale would have led to a high level of carbon dioxide in the blood which would have caused Jesus' heart to pump like crazy trying to circulate what little oxygen there was to the body. This pressure on the heart would have lead to the rupturing of vessels and leakage of watery fluid from the capillaries into the tissue around the heart resulting in a buildup of fluids in the pericardial sac which encases the heart. All of this resulted in most victims dying of Asphyxia or even at times a ruptured heart.

John 19:19-22

Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

What Pilate wrote on this placard was Jesus' "crime." A victim's charges always went with them and were posted on the cross for all to see. However, since there was no actual crime he prophetically proclaimed the truth: Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews. There is no other and never will be; He is the One.

As this passage indicates, the place where Jesus was crucified was right outside of the city. We also know from **Matthew 27:39** that it was near a major road or a highly trafficked area. This is why they wrote the charges in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, for those were the languages of those who most frequented Jerusalem. Public executions served as pretty hardcore warning to anyone who might think twice about crossing Rome.

John 19:23-25

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be"; this was to fulfill the Scripture: "THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS." Therefore the soldiers did these things.

John quotes from **Psalm 22:18**—again, the specificity is simply unbelievable. Mind you, this was written 1,000 years in advance. Absent the powerful hand of God how is it possible that these words, which were penned by King David, could speak so authoritatively over events that would happen so many years later? This prophecy mentions that the outer garments would be divided but the clothes would stay intact—exactly how it happened. And keep in mind this was a discussion that occurred amongst the soldiers. There was no intervention by anyone familiar with the scriptures. In other words, this was not some set up to

try and force the fulfillment of scripture. No, this was supernatural and a work of the Holy Spirit of God.

It is texts like this that demand that we believe the Word of God; there is simply no dancing around the supernatural when it comes to the predictive texts of the Bible. In fact, let's turn to **Psalm 22** and read just verses **1-18**, a portion of scripture that should "trip out" even the most casual of readers.

Psalm 22:1-18

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Jesus speaks this in **Matthew 15:34** right at the point that He became sin and His fellowship with the Father was severed) Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads (**Matthew 27:39**); "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" (**Matthew 27:40-43; Mark 15:30-32; Luke 23:35**) Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God. Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.

Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. (Then speaking of the crucifixion) I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; **they have pierced my hands and feet**—I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

This passage should be in Ripley's Believe it or Not. David wrote these verses 1,000 years in advance of Jesus' death; and, get this, approximately 600-700 years before crucifixion was even invented and put into practice by the Persians. Humanly this is impossible; this is the undeniable handprint of God. Your heart has to be blacker than black to read this text and then just move on as if you were reading the daily news. Discovering this kind of unbelievable predictive text, which speaks of things to come and things not even invented, should make believers break out in praise knowing that we have the inerrant and infallible Word of God and make unbelievers bow their knee to the Lord of all the earth.

Notice that John makes the point of saying that unlike the outer garment that was divided amongst the soldiers, the tunic was woven of one piece of material with no seams and so they did not want to tear it. This is an interesting little detail. **Leviticus 21:10** states that the high priest must never render his garment but it must always be kept intact and **Hebrews 2:17** tells us that Jesus is our Great High Priest.

John 19:25-27

But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.

It is interesting that role that women had in Jesus ministry; especially when you considered the male-centric culture in which they lived. As we have studied, no Rabbi would even talk to a woman in public much less teach her. Yet, we know from **Luke 8:2-3** that a following of women always traveled with Jesus and even financially supported His ministry out of their own private means. And now when everyone else fled for their lives, we have only John and this group of faithful women at the cross. To me it is a powerful and telling scene.

One of these women was Jesus' mother. Can you imagine her agony? Her own son was brutalized, tortured, and is moments from death and she watched the entire thing unable to do anything about it; even the words He tenderly spoke to her caused Him unbelievable suffering. This must have panged her but she was still there. I believe her presence at the cross was a testimony to the fact that she had become a believer. No other family members were there, just mom.

Mary at the scene of Jesus' execution was actually another fulfillment of prophecy. When Jesus was a baby Mary and Joseph had taken him to the temple; and while they were there a man named Simeon, upon whom the Spirit rested, began to prophesy over Jesus and then turned and prophesied over Mary:

Luke 2:34-35

And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed — **and a sword will pierce even your own soul** — to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

I wonder if she remembered the prophecy. I wonder if it had loomed over her like a dark cloud that followed her everywhere she went. "A sword will pierce even your own soul." Surely watching her son get scourged, mocked, and now crucified (struggling for His every breath), must have vexed Mary beyond what we could even imagine—like a sword tearing through her soul.

If you remember our study about "the disciple whom Jesus loved" in **John 18:12-28** we discovered that there is a good chance that the John was Jesus' cousin as Jesus' half sister Salome is said to have married Zebedee who was the Father of both John and James. And this is perhaps why Jesus gave John the responsibility to care for His mother. Have you ever stopped however to wonder why Jesus did not give this responsibility to those on whom it would naturally lay—anyone of his 4 half-brothers? After all it was their legal and moral obligation to care for their mother. Well, we know from **John 7:5** that His brothers did not believe in Him and **Mark 3:21** tells us that His family thought He was out of His mind. So His brothers were, at this time, what we would call unbelievers. In fact, they did not become believers until after Jesus' resurrection.

I want you to understand that Jesus giving this responsibility to John has radical implications for our lives! However, given the flack I often receive when I talk

about the way Jesus redefined the family I am reluctant to mention it; but I have to, it is too intense and too important for us to skip over. The Holy Spirit did not include this story just so we could sleep at night knowing that Mary was well cared for; rather, this story is there to emphasize a deep spiritual truth.

Early in Jesus' ministry His family came to talk to Him but they could not reach Him because of the crowd and He was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you." But He answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it" (**Luke 8:19-21**). Jesus was not waxing all spiritual; He meant what He said. And now in His final moments we see Him put it into practice. Jesus purposefully side-stepped His earthly family and gave the responsibility of life-long care of His believing mother to His "son" in the faith—the disciple whom Jesus loved! And look, both Mary and John complied: "From that hour the disciple took her into his own household."

I know that for many this has been a very touchy subject and has caused some of you a measure of stress; but we must let the Word of God be authoritative. I also think it is beautiful the way that Jesus took care of His mom, or shall I say the way the Father took care of Jesus' mom. Remember, Jesus only did what the Father told Him to do. And, although by this time He could probably barely lift Himself to exhale and get these words out of His mouth, He was still able to listen to His Father and in turn take care of the practical needs of His mother.

John 19:28-30

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing

there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

John only records for us the final 3 of the 7 statements Jesus made on the cross. This was no accident, which is why I am intrigued with this statement: "I am thirsty." After all, during the entire passion Jesus never uttered a word of complaint, He never cried out, or made a demand for personal comfort. As the scriptures say (which were spoken some 700 years or so in advance):

Isaiah 53:7

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.

Therefore, do you really think Jesus was just crying out in agony asking for something to drink? I don't think so! I think Jesus made this statement not to complain but to fulfill scripture knowing full well what the soldiers would do. First of all it is a direct fulfillment of ***Psalms 69:20*** which says: "They also gave me gall for my food and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." So chalk another one up to 100% fulfillment of events predicted 1,000 years in advance.

But notice that it says that all had been accomplished. As our Great High Priest (***Hebrews 4:14***), Jesus had made atonement for our sins. As the Passover Lamb of

God, He was the sin offering. This work had been accomplished; and, in so doing, He fulfilled all the scriptures (from Genesis to Malachi) which spoke of His redemptive work. But now that He had become our sin offering, it was time to fulfill the type of the red heifer and provide the "water for the forgiveness" so that His offering would be available to every man, woman and child that wanted to drink. Going back to **Numbers 19**, the cross provided the wood. The hyssop branch was now thrown into the mix. The scarlet thread is the blood that He shed. His broken body was the ashes or the remnant of the sacrifice. They were all brought together in the presence of the true High Priest (Jesus) and have now become available to be mixed with the water of the Holy Spirit which will provide life and the forgiveness of sins to all who drink. As Jesus said:

John 7:37-38

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

In saying "I am thirsty" and fulfilling the type of the red heifer, Jesus was saying, "Now all of you can come and drink." There is now forgiveness of sins for all who will drink of this living water. As Peter later explained:

Acts 2:38

"Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

This is why the next word Jesus uttered was His last. “Tetelestai” or “it is finished.” The way has been made for men to be forgiven and once again receive the love of the Father and experience the joy of His presence. Jesus completed everything the Father requested of Him and He fulfilled everything the scriptures spoke of Him. In addition, all the requirements of the law were now satisfied thereby making the way for everyone who chooses to drink to have eternal righteousness (***Ephesians 2:14-15; Daniel 9:24***). The entire debt of sin had been paid in full and he cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of charges against us, all of which were hostile to us and which condemned us to eternal suffering. He nailed it to the cross stamped, “paid in full” (***Colossians 2:13-15***). By the way, this was how this word “tetelestai” was used in those days. When a person discharged a debt that they owed, the creditor would stamp the register or the receipt, “tetelestai”—paid in full!

And finally, Jesus time of suffering was now finished and even His body of flesh was finished. He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. This is important! No one took Jesus’ life; He freely offered it.

John 10:17-18

"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again." No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

And once His work was finished He gave up His spirit and died. In the Greek “gave up” is in the active tense meaning His body did not just fail on Him; rather, He said it is finished and so it was. Jesus was, is, and will always be, entirely in control of all things. It should comfort you to know that Jesus is the sovereign Lord and nothing, absolutely nothing, happens absent His assent—even the final collapse of His body.

In closing, I want you to consider this word “tetelestai.” Last week I mentioned that the horrific scourging, mocking, humiliation, brutality, beatings, and the crucifixion were all done according to the Father’s desire. This was hard for me until I realized it was necessary. Jesus could not just lose His head or take a sword to the chest and end it quickly; He needed to not only be separated from His Father, for the first time ever, but suffer beyond anything we could imagine. The debt of sin had to be paid in full. We sinned by nature and by choice and were children of wrath (***Ephesians 2:3***) destined to an eternity of horrific suffering. But Jesus stood in our place and took our eternity (the full wrath of God) upon Himself so that we could live as free men and women with no fear of judgment, punishment, or condemnation (***Romans 8:1***). So we could, like Jesus, become a son of God. Tetelestai—He paid it in full for all who are willing to drink.

If you have not chosen to drink from the living water, I invite you to come to me and we can pray together that God would grant to you the forgiveness of your sins and give you the gift of His Holy Spirit so that you can live as a free man or woman with no fear of judgment, punishment, or condemnation. You can live as one from whose innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

Isaiah 53:10-11

But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.

As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.

(Written by Isaiah 700 + years before Jesus died for our sins)

Let's Pray