

What Happened After?

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[0 : 00] As we come to the Word of God again this morning, we're continuing in the story of Jesus as told by John. You can open your Bibles, if you have them with you, to John chapter 19.

We heard last Sunday how after the trial with Pilate, Jesus was handed over to be crucified. And John shared with us a few of the things that he witnessed as he watched Jesus die.

The last thing we heard was those very moments prior to Jesus' death. I'm just going to read it quickly again for us. This happened as Jesus was hanging on the cross. Later, knowing that everything had now been finished and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, I'm thirsty. A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, It is finished. With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. As we continue on with John's account now, he's going to tell us what happened after Jesus' death.

[1 : 21] And we notice that there are two parts to what happens next. There's the stuff that happens soon after Jesus dies. John tells us about this in verses 31 to 37.

And then there's the stuff that happened a little bit later, the same afternoon, getting towards the evening. That's in verses 38 to 42. And John's main emphasis here seems to be that, yes, Jesus really did die.

He was buried. Yet he died in a way that fulfilled God's ancient words. Let's read what John has to say, starting with this first section, verse 31.

Now, it was the day of preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.

The soldiers, therefore, came and broke the legs of the first man, who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

[2 : 41] Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true.

He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled. Not one of his bones will be broken.

And as another scripture says, they will look on the one they have pierced. So the first thing John tells us about after Jesus died is how the soldiers came along and broke the legs of those who were crucified with Jesus.

Yet they didn't break the legs of Jesus. And to understand what's going on here, John gives us some information. First of all, why did the Roman soldiers break the legs of those who were crucified?

Why did they do this at all? Well, John tells us in verse 31 that the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath.

[3 : 54] It was they that asked Pilate to have the legs of those on the crosses broken and the bodies taken down. So this was not something that the Romans did for every person who was crucified.

It wasn't a matter of routine. Sometimes they would if they wanted to speed things along. Other times they would leave the bodies up there until the men died and the birds would come and I won't even say any more about it.

But this breaking of the legs was a special request by the Jewish leaders. Now why did they want the legs broken? John tells us they didn't want the bodies left on the cross during the Sabbath.

So breaking the legs was a way to speed up the death of the men on the crosses. According to medical experts who have studied this when a person was hanging by their arms on the cross it was very difficult for them to breathe in that position.

And so to open up the chest cavity and exhale a man would have to push himself up using his feet. It was an utterly excruciating and torturous way to die.

[5 : 15] And so breaking the legs made it next to impossible for a person to push up for breathing. Instead they would have to use their arms to pull up and eventually strength would fail in their arms making breathing so difficult that they would soon die of suffocation.

So the Jews asked for this to be done in order to speed up the deaths of those on the crosses. And John tells us that it was because they didn't want the bodies on the crosses during the Sabbath.

And John doesn't unpack this too much further for us but he does give us some sense of the timing here. He says it was the day of preparation. That's the day prior to the Sabbath.

It's the day that you would get ready for the Sabbath. You'd get all your work done so that on the Sabbath day you could rest in obedience to the fourth commandment. It was the day of preparation and the next day was to be a special Sabbath says John.

Now there's much speculation about why it was going to be a special Sabbath. Some suggest that whenever a Sabbath happened during one of the annual religious festivals that automatically made it a special Sabbath.

[6 : 29] Perhaps the thinking was something like a holy day in the midst of a holy week is even holier. Others point to a particular offering that was to be offered at the temple on the Sabbath during the Passover festival which is what is happening right now in Jerusalem.

Whatever the case it was considered a great Sabbath a special Sabbath and according to the law of Moses anyone executed on a wooden pole or anyone who was hung on a pole their body was to be taken down before the end of the day so as not to desecrate the land.

That from Deuteronomy 21 verses 22 and 23. So we don't know exactly what the religious leaders were thinking but perhaps a bit of superstition on their parts you know this is a special Sabbath coming a holy day in the midst of a holy week and executing someone well that's something that shows God's curse on that person leaving him up overnight that goes against God's law and so we don't want to defile or desecrate the holy day that's coming right after so let's get those men down from there before the Sabbath begins keep in mind that the Jewish day started in the evening and was counted from one evening to the next but again I mean this is religious posturing look at what they did to Jesus it was the most unholy thing imaginable now all of this John tells us so that we understand why the Jewish leaders wanted to speed up the death of the men on the crosses by having their legs broken but why is this important what's the significance of this well John tells us in verse 32 and 33 that after breaking the legs of the two men on either side of

Jesus they came to Jesus and they did not break his legs why because they found that he was already dead now think about this why would John make so much of this detail that they didn't break Jesus legs John wants everyone to know what he saw that Jesus really did die on the cross and this is the evidence these soldiers and what they did when they came to Jesus it proves that he was really dead they were soldiers they were professional killers executioners they would have known if Jesus was dead or not and it was their job to ensure that nobody was taken down off these crosses and somehow survived their sentence the soldiers were witnesses they were proof they recognized Jesus was dead and so they didn't even bother to do the thing that would speed up his death there was no need and this is crucial to see that Jesus really did die because after he rose from the dead there's going to be all kinds of people for generations to come who are going to deny that Jesus really rose from the dead by claiming that he never actually died on the cross the Muslims are among those who have that view and make that claim somehow he survived

John saying no evidence number one I saw the soldiers intentionally take a pass on breaking his legs because they recognized that he was already dead and there's a second piece of evidence that John gives to drive this even further home verse 34 John says instead one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear bringing a sudden flow of blood and water now why would the soldiers do this well it probably wasn't something they did out of contempt or just out of fun probably to them it was their way to make absolutely sure just in case that Jesus was dead they knew he was dead but you know things happen occasionally and rarely sometimes a heart that's in cardiac arrest regains its rhythm and the person comes back usually it doesn't happen many many very often sometimes it's minutes after very rarely there's been stories about people regaining consciousness

after hours of being pronounced dead

[11 : 21] I guess they call this the Lazarus syndrome and medically ROSC return of spontaneous circulation for these soldiers it's their job to make sure that the person being executed does not survive so a spear into the side of Jesus is plunged water but John notices something curious as he witnesses this a flow of blood and water came out now the blood we expect but water what's the meaning of this well it's probably no surprise that medical doctors and researchers have been debating back and forth on this for a long time sometimes it's difficult to know who you can even trust in that community I mean some of them are staunch atheists and they're out to discredit the Bible and disprove it others are committed believers and

Christians and sometimes maybe a little over eager to prove that what's in the Bible is true this is also a very very unique situation Jesus has been brutally flogged almost to the point of death and then hung up to die and so the medical issues at play in Jesus' body would have been many this likely isn't something that most doctors would ever see nevertheless the usual medical explanation that is given and is somewhat agreed on is that Jesus experienced such heavy bodily trauma during his flogging and now his crucifixion that he went into what they call hypovolemic shock which is a term that refers to low blood volume loss of blood lack of blood and the results of this would typically be that the heart would begin to race to pump blood that was not there the victim would collapse or faint due to low blood pressure kidneys would shut down to preserve body fluids a person would experience extreme thirst as the body desires to replenish lost fluids and we certainly see some of these things as Jesus goes through this we see him collapsing weak possibly indicating low blood pressure on his way out of the city unable to carry the cross and so they forced Simon to do it we see him thirsty at the cross as we just read and so there's this phenomenon that's been observed in cases of hypovolemic shock that prior to death that rapid racing of the heart causes fluid to gather in the sac around the heart and around the lungs and this gathering of fluid in the membrane around the heart is called pericardial effusion and the fluid around the lungs is called pleural effusion and so it's generally thought that when the spear went in the blood and this fluid is what came out and that's what had the appearance of water some suggest that it's evidence that the spear went all the way in to Jesus heart whatever the case it's obvious that Jesus body was pierced so deeply by the spear that there can be no doubt that he was dead that seems to be John's main reason for including this it's the confirmation it's the final blow which after this there can be no denying he really did die there was simply no way he could have survived this and John's point here is not that the spear is what killed him John already said up in verse 30 that after Jesus said it is finished he gave up his spirit so this was sometime after that these things John witnessed are the confirmation that yes he really did die and no he didn't survive the crucifixion in verse 35 John says the man who saw it has given testimony and his testimony is true he knows that he tells the truth and he testifies so that you also may believe so John the apostle is the one writing this and he affirms yes this is what I saw again he seems to refer to himself in the third person we talked about that already why he might do that but he wants anyone reading this story to know I saw this happen with my own eyes I'm giving you my testimony I'm telling you the truth so that you may believe John goes on he says these things happen so that the scripture would be fulfilled not one of his bones will be broken and as another scripture says they will look on the one they have pierced so there's more there's a deeper significance to all this says John yes these two things I witnessed confirm beyond the shadow of a doubt that he really died on that cross but there's more these two things that I witnessed were signs these two unique things things that didn't happen with the other men both of them were fulfillments of prophetic words that God spoke long ago in ancient times through the prophets and then he quotes the words the first one not one of his bones will be broken this is a scripture that

John quotes from a psalm of David written about a thousand years earlier psalm chapter 34 verses 19 and 20 back then David was the king the one that God had anointed and chosen to reign over Israel David was that king that God made the special promise to he would be the head of an enduring kingdom that would last forever and King David before he came to his throne he said this in one of his poems or psalms he said the righteous person may have many troubles but the Lord delivers him from them all he protects all his bones not one of them will be broken now David's point here in the poem is very simple it's that God protects the righteous that's what David experienced for himself at this point in the story he's had many troubles Saul's been hunting him down trying to kill him and

[18 : 25] David's fled to Philistine territory he's been pretending to be insane so that the Philistine king Abimelech won't kill him and so he has been knowing God's protection God has been keeping him safe and this was part of a poem or a song perhaps that he wrote but surprisingly without David knowing it God had a deeper meaning and intention with these very words these words were inspired by God himself God's spirit was speaking through David so that whether he realized it or not these words would come to be fulfilled quite literally over a thousand years later with the king of God's choosing the son of David the Messiah that not one of his bones would be broken though there's also another meaning here another angle that we can look at this with

John has been careful all along to highlight that this is happening during the time of the Passover Passover do you remember what John the baptizer said about Jesus he said look the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is it any coincidence that this lamb Jesus who has come from God was slaughtered at Passover no and part of what feeds into this and shows this is this whole detail about the breaking of bones thousands of years ago as God gave his requirements for the Passover the Israelites were to take a lamb and slaughter it this was going to be the way that their sins would be covered back then that punishment would pass over them they would be saved they had to slaughter a lamb put its and remain inside the house and one of the things specifically they were not to break any of the bones of that lamb

God made it clear thousands of years earlier and then here Jesus God's Passover lamb and not one of his bones were broken so it seems that God himself is giving another sign yes this is my son this is my king this is the lamb that I have provided the same kind of fulfillment is seen in John's second statement as another scripture says they will look on the one they have pierced this too this detail that John noticed about the spear was a fulfillment of God's ancient words as well these words uttered hundreds of years earlier by the prophet Zechariah Zechariah chapter 12 verse 10 and this is God speaking through Zechariah said

I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication they will look on me the one they have pierced and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son hundreds of years before Jesus came God spoke of a future day when the inhabitants of this very city Jerusalem would cry would grieve would mourn why because they will look at God the one they have pierced and that grief would be intense like the grieving you would do if you lost your only child or your firstborn son what is this well it's a prophecy about how one day the people of Jerusalem will have God's spirit poured out on them and they will see clearly that the one they pierced was their God the Lord Yahweh the one who had come to them it's a prophecy detailing the grief and sadness that will overtake them on that day when they realize that Jesus the one that they killed really was the one and only the son of God their Messiah their king and I won't get into all the details of how this is fulfilled it reaches all the way to the book of Revelation when Jesus comes back but the striking feature of the God who spoke through Zechariah and of this one who is coming back at the end Jesus the identifying mark is that he is the one they pierced they pierced him with the nails they pierced him with the spear this is a sign says John this thing happened with the spear it's a sign another sign piled on top of all the other signs that this is no ordinary man he is the [23 : 52] Lord he is the king of heaven's kingdom God said it long ago you my people will recognize me as the one you pierced and God fulfilled it quite literally pierced not beheaded not some other form of execution or death don't miss this says John the nails in his hands and the spear in his side pierced as God foretold long ago so this is what happened soon after Jesus died and now quickly we're going to hear from John what happened later in the afternoon towards the evening verse 38 to 42 later Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus but secretly because he feared the

Jewish leaders with Pilate's permission he came and took the body away he was accompanied by Nicodemus the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes about 75 pounds taking Jesus body the two of them wrapped it with the spices in strips of linen this was in accordance with the Jewish burial customs at the place where Jesus was crucified there was a garden and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid because it was the Jewish day of preparation and since the tomb was nearby they laid Jesus there now there's lots we could draw out here but I'm going to keep it short this morning because we're going to go to the Lord's table in just a minute here John tells us that two men were responsible for the burial of Jesus again the fact that it was preparation day seems to have influenced their decision about

where to bury

Jesus body the Sabbath was almost upon them there's no time to make other arrangements Matthew tells us that actually Joseph offered his own tomb this was a tomb that belonged to him that he had built or made for burial Joseph of Arimathea was a wealthy man he was actually a member of the Jewish ruling council the Sanhedrin and we're told in one of the other gospels that he didn't side with all the other religious leaders who had agreed to condemn Jesus so John tells us here that Joseph was a secret disciple of Jesus he believed Jesus but he was afraid of what would happen if he let it be known publicly with him was a man named Nicodemus Nicodemus was also a member of the Jewish ruling council the Sanhedrin and if you remember way back in the story he was that guy that came to Jesus at night in

John chapter 3 and Jesus had told him that he needed to be born again by the spirit of God he knew back then that Nicodemus did not believe he was looking at the miracles and signs that Jesus was doing but Jesus said to him I've spoken to you about earthly things and you do not believe and Jesus had given Nicodemus a sign to watch for he said watch for the moment when the son of man is lifted up on a wooden pole just like the snake was in the wilderness in the days of Moses well finally we see that Nicodemus three years later it's obvious he has come to believe doesn't say that he believed in the text but given the fierce opposition and ridicule he would have faced from the other religious leaders towards Jesus there's no way he would be doing this honoring Jesus by helping to bury him unless he too had become a disciple in fact this is his great deed that springs out of his faith

John tells us that Nicodemus brought approximately 75 pounds of myrrh aloes and spices to wrap Jesus body with an extraordinarily large amount I mean this is the kind of amount the historians and scholars say is fit for honoring the death of a king royalty one commentary I read suggested that if Mary's lavish gift of perfume back in John 12 was worth almost a year's wages this gift of myrrh and spices in this amount may have been worth almost a hundred years wages of the average day labor of the time lavish gift so it's pretty clear that Nicodemus has come to faith and this is the deed that gives evidence of it so these two men prepared Jesus' body for burial according to the Jewish customs and then they lay his body to rest in the tomb that belonged to

[29 : 11] Joseph which was nearby can you imagine how difficult a thing that must have been for Joseph and Nicodemus to have watched all this happen to Jesus and now to just constantly relive it and see it all up close and personal as they carefully wrapped his body and laid it to rest in the tomb and then rolled the stone in front of the entrance this is what John witnessed that day near the cross where he stood this is what we remember as we come to the table we remember the death of Jesus we remember with the bread and the cup his body his blood the blood that flowed the body that was pierced with the nails and the spear we remember the agony but the good news of God is that this death was for you behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world in the words of

Isaiah spoken centuries earlier he was pierced for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities and so I just want to simply ask you this morning do you believe this gospel that's why John included all this wrote this so that you may believe do you believe this good news about Jesus Christ our Passover Lamb do you believe that every selfish sinful wretched thing that you've ever done can be forgiven and taken away your guilt taken away your punishment passed over by God because Jesus Christ our Passover Lamb was slaughtered and his blood God sees it he sees it there on the posts of the cross do you believe that his wrath need not visit you do you believe this good news that

Jesus died for you that's what this table is all about if you believe that with all your heart this table is for you and I invite you to partake with us again this morning as we do this as we reflect on the love of God for us if not simply let the elements pass you by so we're going to take a moment now just to reflect and to pray and I encourage you to confess your sins again to God think about this past week and I encourage you to thank God to thank Jesus for this gracious gift we'll wait until everyone has been served and then we'll give thanks and we'll eat and drink all together of him Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[34 : 31] Thank you.

Thank you.

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Thank you.
[37 : 01] Thank you.

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[39 : 31] Thank you.

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