

The Death Of God

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[0 : 00] Amen. Well, please take your Bibles and open them up again to John chapter 19. Only three more sermons left in the Gospel of John, if you can believe it.

We've made our way now to the cross of Christ. Chapter 19, and I'll pick up in the second half of verse 16. We'll read through the end of the chapter, and when you found that there in your Bibles, John 19, 16 through the end of the chapter, if you would, let's please stand in honor of the reading of God's Word.

So they took Jesus, and he went out bearing his own cross to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross.

It read, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek.

[1 : 19] So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, Do not write the King of the Jews, but rather this man said I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier, also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

So they said to one another, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to see whose it shall be. This was to fulfill the scripture, which says, They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

So the soldiers did these things. 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 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.

[2 : 25] And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill the scripture, I thirst.

A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, It is finished.

And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Since it was the day of preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for that Sabbath was a high day, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other, who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness. His testimony is true.

[3 : 34] And he knows that he is telling the truth that you also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled. Not one of his bones will be broken.

And again, another scripture says, They will look on him whom they have pierced. After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus.

And Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 75 pounds in weight.

So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. 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. So because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

[4 : 40] This is God's holy word. Let's pray once more. Lord, as we've come here to this crucial moment in the Gospel of John, this crucial moment in human history, Father, we pray that we would, with fresh eyes, see the truth of the cross.

And as John would have us, Lord, we pray that we would see it, hear it, and believe that Jesus is exactly who he claims to be. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

What do you think is the most important question a person could ask? Your answer to that question might depend on who you ask.

And I read a couple of articles this week just searching for what others might have to say about that question. Harvard Business Review published an article several years ago arguing that the most important question a person could ask is, why am I here?

That's a good question. It's a question of purpose. Another article that I read this week, it listed 15 important questions to ask. What are my values?

[5 : 56] Am I living in accordance with my values? We're numbers one and two on the list. How can I better take care of myself? Was on there. How can I improve the lives of others? Was on there.

All of them pretty good questions. And when you stop and think about it, you realize that so much of our life is shaped and defined by the answers that we give to certain key questions.

Who am I going to marry? Where am I going to live? What kind of work am I going to give myself to? But if I could add in my two cents to that conversation, I'd like to just point out that all of these questions have one thing in common.

Did you notice what they were? They all start in the wrong place. All of these questions begin with us. And interestingly enough, what I'd like to point out this morning is that the most important question that any of us could possibly ask this morning doesn't begin with us at all.

The most important question we could ask is, who is Jesus? Who is this man, Jesus? And what we've seen in the Gospel of John is he's been trying to answer that question for us all along.

[7 : 11] He began in chapter one, telling us, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. And the Word was with God. This Word has come down and has become flesh and dwelt among us.

We've seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. We've seen these claims from the lips of Jesus, that I am the light of the world. I am the good shepherd of the sheep.

I am the door of the sheep. I am the resurrection and the life. He's claiming for us, building a case, that this man, Jesus, is God in the flesh.

He is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, we might have life in His name. See, these are bold claims, aren't they? And John is making a bold claim for us this morning.

And as we follow Jesus now to this crucial moment, as He prepares to suffer and die on the cross, now is the time where we have to settle this question in our minds.

[8 : 14] John is forcing us this morning to pick a side. Is He who He claims to be or is He not? What John gives us this morning is a claim and a case.

The claim is that Jesus is King. He is the Messiah, the Son of God. And then He builds this case for us to substantiate that claim by pointing us to four Old Testament passages that prophesy the death of Jesus on the cross.

So, the claim and the case. First, let's consider the claim. Look there to verse 16 with me. Verse 16 says that they took Jesus and He went out bearing His own cross to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

And there they crucified Him and with Him two others, one on either side, and Jesus in between them. It was customary for the condemned criminal to carry the cross beam, the horizontal cross beam, on their back as a part of the sentence.

And this, after being beaten and whipped nearly to the point of death, but just nearly, the Romans were very skilled at this. They knew exactly how far they could push the guilty party, the condemned party, before the point of death.

[9 : 36] And they prolonged the suffering as long as they possibly could while beating them as much as they possibly could. The condemned would carry that wooden cross beam to the place of their execution where the upright beam would likely already be in place.

They would be forced to lay down on their back and have their arms secured to the beam, whether by tying them there or in the case of Jesus, by nailing them in place. And then the Romans would then lift up that horizontal beam with the criminal attached and secure the horizontal beam to the vertical beam and then fasten their feet to the vertical beam in the same way that they did the arms. We know from the other gospel writers, Jesus carried His cross as far as the city gates before collapsing. He was so weary and so exhausted from the beating that He had endured to that point. Simon of Cyrene was enlisted to carry the cross the rest of the way. And John tells us that Jesus was lifted up and He was crucified alongside two others. There were three men crucified that day, but He was crucified there between two thieves, one on His left, one on His right. We know from Luke's account that one of the criminals railed at Him if you are who you say you are, come down. Bring us down with you.

[10 : 58] Save yourself and us if you are who you say you are. But the other criminal, we know, rebuked Him and said, we're guilty. We're receiving what's due for our sins, but this man on the middle cross is innocent.

And He asked Him, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. This last moment, this guilty criminal believed that Jesus was in fact the King, that He was in fact headed to His kingdom, and that if He so desired, He could bring even a guilty criminal along with Him.

And Jesus told him, truly I tell you, today, you will be with me in paradise. It was also customary for the crime of the accused to be written down and fastened to the top of the cross right there in public eye for all to see.

And the goal here is not just public execution, it was public humiliation. They did this in public. They wrote this sentence in three languages right there in the side of the city on a hill so that anybody who walked by might be able to look up and see the shame and the guilt of the condemned party. They wanted to shame the accused. So verse 19, it tells us that Pilate wrote a message and put it up on the cross. And here's what it said, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.

[12 : 21] Naturally, the chief priests of the Jews tried to correct him. They didn't like what that sign said. They said, don't write the King of the Jews, rather write this man said I am King of the Jews.

Do you see the difference? The King of the Jews, an identity claim or this man simply said I am King of the Jews. That's his crime. He claimed to be King but was in fact not.

Pilate said, I have written what I have written. What I want us to see and understand is that this inscription hanging there above the head of Christ written there in three languages so that any who looked up and read might read it.

This was a claim. This is a bold statement. It's a truth claim. This man, Jesus, is King. The man on the cross that you are crucifying is King.

This is the claim that John's been making all along that Jesus, this man, is the King. Not just a King but this is the Messiah.

[13 : 30] This is the King that we've been waiting for. God promised David all the way back in 2 Samuel 7 a King from His line who would rule forever, whose kingdom would have no end.

Jesus is that King. John's claiming that Jesus is the King from Daniel chapter 7 who was promised, prophesied that He would have glory and a kingdom that all peoples and nations and languages should serve Him.

An everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, a kingdom that shall not be destroyed. This is the claim John is making. And you can agree with that claim or you can disagree with that claim but you cannot ignore that claim.

And you cannot be neutral here. John is forcing us to take a side. I was at a coffee shop the other day and I had my Bible open.

I was studying and writing and preparing for a message and somebody struck up a conversation with me and as we talked we started talking about what I was reading, what we were doing and we started talking about the Bible and he said, you know, you really ought to meet Bill.

[14 : 44] I'm making that name up. Not you, Bill. Sorry. It's a fake name. Bill. You ought to meet Bill. He's in here all the time. He talks about religious things. He knows a lot about the Bible and other religions too.

And another man that was at the same table he piped up at that point and he said, oh yeah, you know, Bill is, he's not one of those unreasonable Christians. He's the most reasonable Christian you will ever meet.

And so Bill, what he does is he just basically says that there's something good that you can pluck out of just about every religion and he finds the good in all of it and he's very, very, very reasonable. And so what I said in the moment was, well that's interesting. I'd love to meet Bill and talk about that. It wasn't the right time to get all the way into it right then and I do hope one day I will get to meet Bill and talk with him about these things.

But what I thought was, I guess that makes me unreasonable. I guess I'm one of those unreasonable Christians that thinks that there actually is a truth or an untruth that he is king, he may be king, he isn't king are not all equally valid answers to the question, who is Jesus?

[16:06] Do you see the issue here? This is a black and white yes or no proposition. Either he is not king of all the earth and if he's not, disregard him, ignore him, forget this.

But if he is, then that defines every other question we might ever ask about our life. The question, who is Jesus, defines every other question you could ever ask.

What is my purpose if he's king is to honor him? I wonder what you would say if someone found out you believe Jesus Christ is Lord, absolute truth statement.

And they told you, I think that that is unreasonable. I wonder how you would respond. What John does in the rest of our passage, what I want us to see is he builds a case here to substantiate this claim.

From the Old Testament, he shows us that this isn't just some religious mumbo-jumbo, some unfounded claim that we made up to say we follow Christ, Christ is our king.

[17:15] No, he takes the Old Testament, these passages written thousands of years before Jesus was born, thousands of years before the events of the cross and he says we've been talking about this moment all along.

So second, let's consider the case that John makes here for us. I praise God that we have good reason to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. John builds the case with four Old Testament prophecies that are fulfilled in the death of Jesus.

I want us to look here. This is exhibit A, B, C, and D. Look with me to verse 23. John says, when the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four pieces, four parts. One part for each soldier and also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom and so they said to one another, let us not tear it but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.

Why in the world does John feel the need to include this seemingly meaningless detail about Jesus' crucifixion? Why does he feel the need to tell us about his clothing and what the Romans did with his clothes?

[18:28] Well, he says there in verse 24, look there, this was to fulfill the scripture which says, they divided my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots.

This is exhibit A. And I just want you to note here that whenever John says something like this was to fulfill the scripture or this happened in order that scripture might be fulfilled, we ought to marvel at this.

And when we're reading our Bibles and we come across something like this, slow down and dig backwards in the Old Testament to see the link that he's making. We tend to just jump right past this but when we see that he's doing this, what he's doing is he is building a case for us from the Old Testament that we might believe what he's saying about Jesus here in the New Testament. This is proof of the identity of Jesus. He's quoting the Old Testament scriptures written centuries before the events of the cross and he's telling us that this moment was planned out by God before the ages began.

It has been foretold and prophesied all along every step of the way in the Old Testament and now we're here and it's executed perfectly in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus.

[19:56] So, exhibit A. Here he's quoting from Psalm 22. You can turn there if you like. I'm going to read it for you. You'll recognize it as I read it. Psalm 22 begins like this.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Do you recognize that? You recognize this because this is, these are Jesus' words.

Jesus quotes this psalm up on the cross. Psalm 22 continues verse 6. Verse 14.

It says, 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 pot shirt and my tongue sticks to my jaws. You lay me in the dust of death. In verse 18, Psalm 22, they divide my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots.

[21 : 13] You realize the Romans likely would have had no idea what Psalm 22 said. And it seems like such a small detail.

But John here as he stands at the foot of the cross as he reflects on what he's seeing, he says, it was written so the soldiers did these things.

He's showing us that the death of Jesus down to the very smallest details was exactly as was written centuries before it happened. Exhibit B, verse 28.

John tells us yet another fulfillment in verse 28. He says, after this, that is, after Jesus entrusts his mother into the care of John, he says, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill the scripture.

Do you notice that? Do you see that phrase? He said, to fulfill the scripture, I thirst. You can only imagine the physical anguish that Jesus is experiencing here in this moment.

[22 : 27] The loss of blood and sweat. He's been up all night having his body pushed to the breaking point. We know that he was under such physical duress that his body literally sweat blood in the garden as he prayed.

prayed. Here's a good time for a reminder that we have to remember as we look at these accounts of the cross that this man, Jesus, is both God and man.

This is God in the flesh, God incarnate. The word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus is both God and man, not 50% one or the other.

He is 100% God, 100% man. the eternal son of God took on our physical weakness, stepped into our physical weakness in order to redeem us.

And we see his humanity on full display here as we march to the cross in the suffering. The eternal all sufficient son of God who in his divine nature has never needed anything.

[23 : 31] Here in his humanity, in his human nature, says I thirst. And again, John shows us that Jesus is quoting again here from the Psalms.

This time, Psalm chapter 69. I'll start at verse 16 of Psalm chapter 69. Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good.

According to your abundant mercy, turn to me. Hide not your face from your servant, for I am in distress. Make haste to answer me.

Draw near to my soul. Redeem me because of my enemies. Verse 19. You know my reproach and my shame and my dishonor.

My foes are all known to you. Reproaches have broken my heart so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none. And for comforters, but I found none.

[24 : 31] Listen to this, verse 21. They gave me poison for food and for my thirst. They gave me sour wine to drink. And so John says, back in our passage at verse 29, a jar full of sour wine stood there.

So they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and they held it to his mouth. For my thirst, they gave me sour wine to drink.

Does this sound like coincidence to you? Maybe. And maybe you could chalk up the garment thing to coincidence. Maybe.

But this is at least a little bit odd, isn't it? These Old Testament passages of these events dividing garments, sour wine, and here it's happening in real life and in real history and real time.

John is witnessing these things, recording them for us and he says, this is a little bit odd, isn't it?

Isn't this a little bit more than coincidence? Just think about it for a minute.

[25 : 40] I know we get so used to what we know from the scriptures, but when you zoom out and just recognize this, these are Psalms of David all the way back here in the Old Testament. Psalms of David, the king, Old Testament David, king of Israel, David.

He wrote these Psalms roughly a thousand years before Jesus was born. But John is saying that this Psalm of King David all the way back here in the Old Testament was pointing forward to a greater, truer, more accurate fulfillment in the true king.

John is showing us Jesus isn't just quoting these Psalms, he is fulfilling them. they are written about him. I love Luke chapter 24.

That may be one of my favorite chapters in the whole Bible. After the resurrection of Christ, he goes, he walks with his disciples on the road to Emmaus. His disciples are kept from recognizing him.

They're discouraged by his death. They're processing all these things that have happened. And he says to them in verse 25 of Luke chapter 24, O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

[27 : 02] Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Did you hear that? beginning with Moses. That's where Jesus went when he wanted to explain to his disciples the significance of the cross. You know where he went? Moses and the prophets and all the Old Testament scriptures and he interpreted to them all the things concerning himself.

What would I give to be a part of that Bible study? There are There's a pastor out of Atlanta.

A very popular pastor who over the past several years he made a claim that said, you know, to reach the current generation we really ought to unhitch our Christianity from the New Testament. Have you heard this? excuse me, from the Old Testament. In order to reach our current climate, our current generation, we have to unhitch Christianity from the Old Testament.

[28 : 22] I hope you see the point that John is making is exactly the opposite. Christianity unhitched from the Old Testament isn't Christianity at all. We cannot have an unhitched Christianity.

Our gospel is thoroughly hitched to all of the scriptures, prophets, Moses, the Psalms, all the way from Genesis to Malachi. If it's not properly hitched, it's not believable.

The gospel, the death of Christ, His resurrection is rooted in an eternal plan of God that He has worked out in human history and foretold from the very first pages of Genesis.

Jesus. The point that He was making and the point that John is making is this. All the scriptures are about Jesus.

All the Old Testament scriptures have been talking about His death and His resurrection, the reign of the King. The cross is not a tragic accident. The cross is a perfect fulfillment of the eternal plan of God.

[29 : 31] Which is why here in verse 30 of our passage, John says this, when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, it is finished. And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

What is finished? If we remove the Old Testament scriptures, what in the world is Jesus saying is finished? That word there, it means fulfillment, it means completion, it speaks about the complete carrying out of a task given to you by an authority.

This is the fulfillment, the complete fulfillment of the task that was given to Jesus by the Father. It means His suffering is finished. His obedience, the plan of God written and foretold in all the scriptures, the plan of God for the Son of God to bear the wrath of God for the people of God is finished.

His suffering on behalf of sinners and the place of sinners is finished, which means for us who bowed the knee to the crucified King, for us it is finished.

Our separation from God is finished. The curse of sin for you who believe is finished. The weight of sin and guilt that we used to bear, the sting of death, the powers of darkness that stand against you for us who are in Christ, it is finished, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more as we sing often.

[31 : 07] That's glorious news. John tells us in verse 31 that since 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, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.

Again, the normal practice for a Roman crucifixion was to just let the victim hang on the cross until they died. And even then, they would let the bodies stay and be eaten by the birds.

They're in the sight of all the people. Out of observance of the upcoming Sabbath day and that being a high holy day with Passover approaching, the Jews asked Pilate to go ahead and break the legs of the criminals, get it over with.

This would keep them from being able to push up the weight of their bodies and essentially with their legs broken, they would suffocate there on the cross. And they started with the other two thieves on either side, but as they made their way to Jesus, they discovered that this man was already dead.

So instead of breaking his legs, says they pierced his side with a spear and at once there came out blood and water. We often sing another song, a rock of ages cleft for me.

[32 : 31] Let me hide myself in thee, let the water and the blood from thy wounded side which flowed be of sin the double cure, save from wrath and make me pure.

And again John says that this, even this, down to the very finest details of the last seconds of Jesus' earthly life before the resurrection, all of this happened in fulfillment of the scriptures.

He says in verse 35, he who saw it has borne witness, his testimony is true, he knows he's telling the truth that you also may believe. It's as if he's saying maybe you can write off the first as coincidence, maybe you can write off the second thing as coincidence, but this is so clearly in line with scripture, it's so clearly a fulfillment of the divine word, I was there and I saw them pierce his side with a spear, and you gotta do something with that.

He won't let us ignore it, will he? So John says this is exhibit C and D, verse 36, says these things took place that the scriptures might be fulfilled, not one of his bones will be broken.

And again, another scripture says they will look on him whom they have pierced. He's shown us two from the Psalms, and now in this third fulfillment, exhibit C, he takes you all the way back to Exodus, to Moses, Exodus 12, verse 46, where the law was given, instructions for the Passover lamb, preparing the Passover lamb for the sacrifice, and it says of the Passover lamb that you shall not break any of its bones.

[34 : 22] Now John the Baptist has hinted about this already, all the way back in chapter 1, as he saw Jesus, you remember what he said? Behold the, what? The lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

John the Baptist understood, he's been talking about this all the way back in chapter 1, and now, here on the Friday before the Passover, John tells us that the true Passover lamb is sacrificed to take away our sin, not one of his bones are broken.

Is it coincidence? All the way back to Moses, he says it's not only what they didn't do, it's also what they did do, it's also fulfillment.

They didn't break his bones, that's fulfillment in Moses, but they did pierce his side, and John says that's fulfillment, of Zechariah 12 verse 10, which says, they will look on him whom they have pierced.

Do you see the case that's being made here? Our religion, Christianity, our belief in a sovereign God, and a reigning King, Jesus Christ, that is a thoroughly founded and reasonable belief because of the scriptures.

[35 : 47] You begin to look at all the evidence, all the many scriptures, the way they weave together to find their fulfillment perfectly to a T, and just this one man and the events of his life, his death, and soon to be his resurrection, when you take all of this into account, you start to wonder, how can all of this be accidental?

How could this all be just coincidence? What are the odds of all of this coming together exactly as the Old Testament said that it would? I've mentioned this study before.

It's appropriate, I think, to mention it again this morning. Dr. Peter Stoner, he was the former chairman of the Department of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena City College and a believer, and he set out to calculate the mathematical probability, the mathematical probability of just one person fulfilling just eight of the clearest messianic prophecies.

So he looked through all of the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, and there are way more than eight, but he whittled it down to make this as friendly as he possibly could to skeptics and non-believers and said, let's just read eight statements here from the Old Testament and calculate the probability that those eight statements would come true and be fulfilled in just one man.

And what he determined was this, he said, the chance that any one man might have fulfilled all eight prophecies is one in ten to the seventeenth.

[37 : 23] That would be one in, I can't even read this number, one in one hundred quadrillion. That's one with seventeen zeros at the end, right?

And we can hardly imagine, our minds can't really comprehend that type of number. One in one hundred quadrillion. Dr. Stoner goes on, he says, if we were to take one in one hundred quadrillion, if we were to take ten to the seventeenth silver dollars and lay them all over the face of the state of Texas, they would cover the entire state of Texas two feet deep.

Now, take one of those silver dollars, and mark it, get a sharpie, mark it up, however you'd like to mark it, throw it back in the mask, stir up the whole lot thoroughly, blindfold a man and tell him he can walk as far as he'd possibly like, as far as he'd wish, but he must pick up that one marked silver dollar.

What is the chance he would have of getting the right one? He says he would have just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing those eight prophecies, and having them all come true in any one man.

See, the point John is making is that Jesus' death is not accidental. This is fulfillment of the eternal plan of God.

[38 : 56] The case, I believe the case is clear. This man, Jesus, is exactly who he claimed to be. He is the promised king, king, and if that's true, then now, now that that's settled, now we can begin to ask the question, well, what does that mean for me?

If you're with us and you're not a believer, what that means for you, this is a call to repent and bow the knee to King Jesus. It is a call for you to stop raging against his rightful rule in your life and in the world and to humble yourself, if you still have breath in your lungs, you still have the opportunity now like the thief on a cross to say, I believe you're the king, would you please forgive me and carry me into your kingdom?

And for the believer, church, the fact that Jesus Christ is king, that's reason to rejoice at this death on a cross that we're so familiar with, the death of Jesus that we read about weekly and especially here at Easter, is not accidental, he did not die a meaningless death, he died to conquer our enemies, to deliver us out of the domain of darkness and to transfer us into the kingdom of God. He came to perfectly obey in our place and to die in our place so that he can say on our behalf that it is finished. The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks the question, how does Christ execute the office of a king?

And it answers, Christ executes the office of a king in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

[40 : 54] John closes this chapter out by telling us about Jesus' burial. He says in verse 38 that after these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus.

And Pilate gave him permission, so he came and took away his body. And Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 75 pounds in weight.

So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. And 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.

So, because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. Why do you think John tells us about these two men?

why do you think he thinks it's important for us to know about Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus?

[42 : 08] Joseph of Arimathea, John says, was a secret disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, he said. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, and he feared what the Jews might think of his loyalty to Jesus, but here in the aftermath of the cross, it seems like something has changed, doesn't it?

That fear seems to have turned into boldness. He goes straight up to Pilate himself and asks if he might be able to take away the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, John says, this is the same Nicodemus that we saw earlier from John chapter 3.

Do you remember Nicodemus? Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night, out of fear, possibly, out of shame, possibly, out of embarrassment, came to him by night for fear of the Jews, for fear of being publicly associated with this man, Jesus.

Here Nicodemus came to anoint the king. It says he anointed him with how much? 75 pounds.

You know the average Jewish burial only called for five pounds of spices? And Nicodemus apparently brought 15 times that much. Something has changed in Nicodemus and in Joseph.

[43 : 30] Here's the point. These two men have apparently become convinced that this is the king. And if he's the king, why should I fear what anybody else might say about my loyalty to him?

Why should I withhold honor from him? Why should I be scared to be associated publicly with him? If he is the king, then he demands my loyalty, he demands my praise, he demands my honor, and he demands my life.

Something's changed about these men. They've become convinced that Christ is king. Their lives are different for it. as we close out this passage, I think the question we have to ask ourselves is what about you?

What about you? Have you become convinced that this man Jesus is who he says he is? Is your heart convinced that this man Jesus is the king?

And if he is, then have you bowed the knee to him in submission? Have you brought your heart to him and committed yourself to him to say, my life is yours, I want to give you everything I am?

[44 : 51] These men were convinced. And we close out this chapter with Jesus in a tomb, but if we know our Old Testament, we know that this is not the end. I'll close by reading Isaiah 53 for us.

It says this, Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him. He has put him to grief. When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days.

The will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied. By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

let's pray. Lord, we praise you for the death of Christ the King. This was not a surprise to you, this was no accident.

The King himself laid down his life willingly for our good, for our salvation. We thank you for the scriptures that so clearly point us forward towards Jesus, and we pray, Father, that you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear what you've written.

[46 : 13] Lord, we pray that we, Father, would bow the knee to King Jesus. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.