



The Gospel of John, Lesson #53...Gerald Cumby, Teacher

John 19:31-37, “Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should 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. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was 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 immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, “Not one of His bones shall be broken.” And again another Scripture says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”

Every person who is living today should make plans for a “preparation day” for his/her body.

Just as we should prepare for our body’s final days and final burial, we MUST prepare for our soul and spirit’s departure for our final days as a human being!

- **Preparation Day:** John’s point is made clear again. The lambs (the unblemished lambs) were prepared and made ready for sacrifice during this time of Passover. *The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world* ([John 1:29](#)) is ready for sacrifice at **Passover**.
John 1:29, “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”
- The normal Roman routine for those executed by crucifixion remained affixed to their cross for many days (stench and the putrefying decay were evident). It served as a warning of the consequences of disobeying the Roman government.
- Yet because of the approaching **Sabbath** and the week of the Passover, the religious leaders demanded that the Romans take away the disgusting sight of the three crucified men.
NOTE: *Their consciences were not wounded by the murder of Jesus, but they were greatly moved by the fear of ceremonial pollution seen by those who held high the religious rites of Jewish traditions.*
- The breaking of the legs of a crucified man hastened his death because he could not support himself making it harder to breath. Because of the

lack of oxygen, death would follow shortly. The heart would actually burst causing immediate death.


- Answering the request of the religious leaders, the **soldiers** hastened the death of the men on either side of Jesus.

This was brutal work for rough men. To secure speedy death the breaking of the legs with a heavy mallet or bar, was sometimes resorted to. This breaking of the legs must have been terrifying for a man still alive on a cross.

- **They came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead:** These soldiers had (presumably) supervised many executions on the cross. It was their experienced judgment that said Jesus **was already dead**.
- To confirm the death of Jesus, a Roman soldier **pierced His side with a spear** fulfilling several prophecies.
- The gash in His side from the point of the spear flowed forth with a substance that looked like **blood**, and a substance that looked like **water**. One of the great Bible scholars (Spurgeon) stated this proved that Jesus died of a broken heart; not because of the piercing of the flesh...but the understanding that the world had betrayed him.

What do you think about Spurgeon's statement?

Augustus Toplady used this image in his great hymn, *Rock of Ages*:

 *Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee
Let the water and the blood, From Thy riven side which flowed
Be of sin the double cure, Cleanse me from its guilt and power...*

- “And He who has seen has testified that the testimony is true” ...With this statement in Scripture, John gave us assurance that he was present at the crucifixion of Jesus and saw these things with his own eyes.

He also explained the reason for his testimony: so that the reader may believe.

- ✓ ***The innocence of Jesus leads us to believe.***
- ✓ ***His great dignity under suffering leads us to believe.***
- ✓ ***The manner of His death — crucifixion — leads us to believe.***
- ✓ ***The title on His cross leads us to believe.***
- ✓ ***The gambling for His clothes leads us to believe.***
- ✓ ***The love for His mother leads us to believe.***
- ✓ ***The cry, “It is finished!” leads us to believe.***
- ✓ ***His peaceful giving up of His spirit leads us to believe.***

- ✓ *The certainty of His death leads us to believe He was really resurrected from the dead.*

All of these things were done so that the Scripture should be fulfilled:

Not one of His bones shall be broken: This prophecy of [Psalm 34:20](#) (as well as [Exodus 12:46](#) and [Numbers 9:12](#)) leads us to **believe...GOD KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!**

We don't fully understand...but we will understand it better by and by!

John 19:38-42, "After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being 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 the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. 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 there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby."

- God raised up two previously secret disciples (**Joseph of Arimathea** and **Nicodemus**) to receive the body of Jesus and give it the best burial they could in the short time they had before sundown and the start of Sabbath ([Luke 23:54](#)).
- Customarily, the bodies of crucified criminals were left on their crosses...leaving the body to birds and beasts of prey.
- God used these two men to protect the body of Jesus from what Satan would have desired...that is, humiliation and total destruction of God's only Son.
- It is not precisely said, but the implication is that Joseph and Nicodemus did this *themselves*. They were wealthy and influential men ([Matthew 27:57](#), [Mark 15:43](#), [John 3:1](#)) who could find servants to do the work for them; **yet they did this themselves.**

Carefully removing the spikes from the hands and feet; tenderly carrying the body of Jesus to a place where they can wash the blood, dirt, spit, and thorns from his head...It was a genuine act of love and devotion.

Preparation performed by men who would have normally turned away from such an unhealthy and despicable service. Where was the family of Jesus? They had not prepared for this!!

In God's plan this burial of Jesus was so important that it is said to be one of the essential components of the gospel itself ([1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#)).

We can consider many reasons for this:

- ***This burial fulfilled the Scripture.*** [Isaiah 53:9](#) says, *And they made His grave with the wicked*; so that meant the Messiah would be buried in a grave — and He was.
- ***This burial fulfilled the promise, the prediction of Jesus.*** Jesus said that He, like Jonah, would be buried away for three days ([Matthew 12:40](#)), and so it had to be fulfilled.
- ***This burial demonstrated that Jesus was truly dead; it was proof of the glory of the coming resurrection.*** No one could tell Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus that Jesus did not really die.
- ***This burial was important because burial spices and preparations protected His holy body from decay***; as it was said in [Psalm 16:10](#): *You will not allow Your Holy One to see decay.*
- ***This burial gave both Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus a way to proclaim their relationship with Jesus***; it called them out of their state of secret discipleship.
- ***This burial and the days of Jesus in the tomb tested the faith and devotion of the disciples***; it made them die a certain kind of death for those days they knew Jesus lay in the tomb.
- ***This burial and the days of Jesus in the tomb were ways to prove that at the cross Jesus defeated not only sin, but also death.*** The burial and the empty tomb show that Jesus conquered sin *and* death.
- ***This burial was another great and final connection of the Son of God with the humility of man.*** We are buried with Him — spiritually by faith, ceremonially by baptism. He identified with us; we by faith identify with Him.

In the place where He was crucified there was a garden:

The fall of the first Adam took place in a garden; and it was in a garden that the second Adam (JESUS) redeemed mankind from the consequences of Adam's transgression.

TO BETTER UNDERSTAND GOD'S PLAN, WE MUST CONFESS OUR DEPENDABILITY ON THE WORD OF GOD!

Some information and bible study materials were taken from David Guzik's Bible Commentary of John 19. None of this material and comments are to be distributed beyond our personal use.