

The Piercing of Christ
John 19:31-37

I. Introduction

A. Review

1. The **earthly** life & ministry of Christ in the **flesh** has **ended**—He's **finished** the work **given** Him to **do**, **obeying** His Father to the **utmost**
2. Now, in His **last** act, He **surrenders** His spirit into His **Father's** Hands
3. His **reward**, the **payment** for His **service**, unseen **now**, **surely** follows!

B. What Day is This?

1. Much has been **written** concerning the exact **day** of Christ's **death**
2. Some want to **synchronize** His **death** with that of the **Passover** Lamb:
 - a. They cite **Vs. 14** & claim the Passover has not **yet** been **eaten**
 - b. However, the "**paraskeue**" was **all** but **synonymous** with **Friday**, & "**Passover**" might refer to the entire **week** of **feasting**—**Lk. 22:1**
 - c. If **not**, it brings us into **direct** contradiction w/the **Synoptics**!
3. Better, to see this as **Friday**, w/the **Sabbath** following a "**special**" one!

C. What They Did

1. This **explains** then the **motivation** of the **Jews** to **remove** the **bodies**:
 - a. **Roman** practice let them die **slowly** & then **leave** their **bodies**
 - b. But **Deut. 21:22-23** required bodies **not** to remain overnight
2. **Since** this was **Passover**, Pilate was **willing** to **grant** this **concession**
3. So, to **hasten** death, the **soldiers** broke (or **smashed**) the **legs** of the crucified man—**presumably** making it more **difficult** to **breathe**
4. But, finding **Jesus** already **dead**, one **pierces** His **side**, from which flows **blood** & **water**—**THAT'S** what **happened**, what does it **MEAN**?

II. The Piercing of Christ

A. He's a MAN

1. This **might** not sound **controversial** to **us**, but **was** to **John's** readers!
2. **Because** of **Greek** ideas, w/its **assertion** that all **matter** was **evil**, there was a **tendency** to **deny** Jesus' **material** body—"Docetism"
3. But it **undermined** the **atonement**! For if He only **seemed** to have to have a **body**, He only **seemed** to **suffer** & only **seemed** to **die**!
4. John **reasserts** the info in **Jn. 1:14**—the "**Word**" became "**flesh**"!
 - a. If He's but a **phantom**, or "**God in a man-suit**", we expect a **hiss**!
 - b. Cp. **Jewish** lit. that **suggests** man is **mainly** "**blood** & **water**"
5. Point: To "**monkey**" with the **Gospel** in **1** place **alters** it in **another**!

B. He's DEAD

1. These **executioners** were **experienced**, & an almost **universal** law required that **anyone** failing to **execute** someone took their **place**!
2. In **this** case, w/**Jesus** dying **quickly** the soldier makes **certain** He's **not** just in a **swoon**, **unconscious**, or in a **coma**—He's **dead**!
3. Cp. "**Passover Plot**" that **claimed** this—but this **contradicts** it!

C. He's the FULFILLER of PROPHECY

1. Re: **Vs. 28**—is His death **orchestrated**? Surely **none** would claim it **here**—for He's **dead**, yet it's **followed** by **2** unanticipated **actions**!

2. They **DID** break the legs of the **others**, but did **NOT** break **HIS** legs!
 - a. In so doing, they **fulfill** prophecy—**maybe Ps. 34:20**, but **certainly Ex. 12:46 & Num. 9:12** concerning the **Passover** lamb!
 - b. It's even **more** striking as it **occurs** during **Passover**, & He's been **declared** the **LAMB** taking away **SIN** (*Plus, 1 Cor. 5:7*)
3. That they did **NOT** pierce the **OTHERS**, but they **DID** pierce **HIM**!
 - a. **This** fulfills **Zech. 12:10** (*difficult!*), where the **repentance** of **Israel** is **coupled** with their **"looking"** on the one they **pierced**!
 - b. Already **Zech. 13:7** is quoted in **Matt. 26:31 & Mark 14:27**
4. At the **least**, **prophecy** continues to be **fulfilled** after His **death**, supplying the **wounds** which **identify** Him to us—**Jn. 20:20,27; Rev. 5:6**

D. He's the FULFILLER of TYPES

1. Is there some **DEEPER, SYMBOLIC** meaning here? Cp. **1 Jn. 5:6,8**
 - a. **Some** (*Chrysostom*) said it's the **sacraments**—hard to see!
 - b. More **likely**, it's what **Toplady** had in mind in **"Rock of Ages"**
 - c. Throughout the **LAW** we see constantly **BLOOD & WATER**
2. Consider **BLOOD**:
 - a. **"Blood"** came from a **"vicarious" sacrifice**—to represent the **appeasement** of **wrath** upon the **guilt** of sin
 - b. **Further**, not just **blood** in the **veins** but **blood** **"poured out"** on the **altar**—see **Lev. 17:11**--& **HERE** it's **SHED** in a **visible** way!
 - c. Note **Rev. 7:14**—Washing something in **blood** doesn't **cleanse** it from **defilement**, but from **GUILT**!
 - d. I'm **free** from **guilt** because **washed** in the **blood** of a **substitute**!
 - e. Cp. **Toplady**—"Payment, God cannot **twice** demand..."
3. Consider **WATER**:
 - a. **Water** was **always** employed in the **removal** of **uncleanness**
 - b. Sometimes, **mixed w/ashes** (*Red Heifer*) or **blood** (*Leper*)
 - c. Note **John 3:5** & its **connection w/Eze. 36:25**—There is a **washing** of the **Spirit** (*Regeneration*—**Tit. 3:5**) that **cleanses** us!
 - d. **Farfetched?** Cp. **Zech. 12:10 w/13:1**-- **"In that day there shall be a FOUNTAIN** opened to the house of **David** & to the inhabitants of **Jerusalem** for **sin** & for **uncleanness**"—**blood & water**!
 - e. Doesn't this **permeate** our **hymnology**—**'Rock of Ages'**, **'Are you Washed'**, **'There is a Fountain'**; etc.
4. The **WATER & BLOOD**, applied by the **SPIRIT** do **TESTIFY**!
 - a. Our **conscience** is **sprinkled** w/His **blood** & its **condemning voice** is **silence**—Cp. **E.W.**—It **answers** in **2 COURTS**!
 - b. Our **lives** are **washed** w/**water**—we're **"cleanned up"**, **inside & out**, w/no more **taste** for **sin** but a **love** of the **law & holiness**!
5. It's **real**, it's **real**, O I know, It's **real**; Praise **God** the doubts are **settled**!