

I mentioned several weeks ago, our Savior's suffering takes place in five stages—His arrest in the garden, trial before the Jews, trial before the Gentiles, crucifixion, and burial. In coming to verses 31-37, we come to finish the fourth of these (His crucifixion), leaving His burial (vv38-42), until next week.

Our Savior is dead. Having finished the work of redemption given to Him by the Father, He's bowed His head and given up His Spirit (v30). All that happens to Him in verses 31 and following, happens to His dead body. He is pierced with a spear (v34), and laid in a tomb (v42).

I suggest there are basically three things in vv31-37—A Passover Lamb, A Fountain Opened, and A Personal Testimony.

- I. A Passover Lamb
- II. A Fountain Opened
- III. A Personal Testimony

I. A Passover Lamb

1. All throughout this larger passage, there are several hints that point us to the fact, Christ is our Passover Lamb.
2. We learned last week, that when Christ cried out "It is finished" He meant in part, the sacrificial system was finished.
3. All of the types and shadows, including the Passover Feast, were finished, 1Cor.5:7—"Christ our Passover, was sacrificed for us."
4. (1) Preparation day, v31—"Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for the Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."
5. The Jews viewed Fridays as preparation for the Sabbath, this would allow them to give the Sabbath wholly to worship.
6. It appears that this particular Sabbath was special—"for that Sabbath was a high day"—that is, a special Sabbath.
7. If we were to compare v31 with v14 we would learn, this Sabbath was "a high day" because of the Passover Feast.
8. Now, if you remember when we considered v14, I mentioned it's unclear exactly when the Passover was celebrated.
9. Was it celebrated on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday (or possibly on more than one day)? Well, for our purposes it really doesn't matter, for what's important is, it was Passover Week.
10. The Passover had been celebrated or it would be celebrated, and this made the weekly Sabbath a special Sabbath (a high day).
11. Our Savior was crucified during Passover week, to underscores the fact that, He is the fulfillment of that holy feast.
12. The OT law mandated that those put to death and hung upon a tree, had to be taken down and buried before evening.
13. Deut.21:22-23—"If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance."
14. Now, obviously the Romans had no concern for this commandment, but the Jews did, and the Romans largely accommodated them.
15. Thus, when Jews were crucified, in order to speed up their death, they would break the legs of those being executed.
16. When a man was crucified, the majority of his weight rested on his lungs, and this made breathing almost impossible.

17. As a result, most people would push up with their legs in order to shift their weight which would enable them to breathe.
18. The Romans would break their legs, so that they could no longer push up, and thus would die quicker by suffocation.
19. (2) OT prophecy—as the soldiers broke the other two men crucified with our Lord, they found Him already dead.
20. Verses 32-33—"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 they did not break His legs."
21. There was no need to break His legs because He had already died, v30—"And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit."
22. V36—"For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken.'"
23. Ex.12:46—"In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones."
24. Now, here I want to wrestle with the question—what is the significance of having no bones broken (both in the type and antitype).
25. Ps.34:19-22—"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned."
26. Let me say at the outset, many people believe that John, in John 19, is actually referring to this Psalm, and v20.
27. This is a possibility, but either way, one thing is very evident, this Psalm sheds light upon why the bones were not broken.
28. Now, I do believe that this Psalm is typical and thus, in the first place David is recounting his own experiences.
29. But he's also speaking typically and shadowy of Christ, whom this passage describes in the most perfect sense.
30. Thus, I want to suggest the imagery of no broken bones, underscores two things with regards to Christ—the Father's providential care over Christ in His sufferings, and the Father's open vindication of Christ after His sufferings.
31. (a) The Father's providential care over Christ in His sufferings—"He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken."
32. That is, nothing happened to Christ, but the Father allowed it, and He watched over Him throughout His afflictions.
33. This is fundamentally what this imagery implies. The Father watches over the very bones of His beloved people.
34. Most people would consider a person's bones as insignificant, but God guards all his bones, that is, He guards everything about him.
35. Matt.10:30—"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered"—that is, the Father guards or watches over every hair (every bone).
36. Thus, at the very heart of this imagery, of no bones being broken, is the fact that God alone determines what happens to His people.
37. Robert Rollock—"If God has ordained and said anything, it lies not in the hands of any man to disannul it. If God shall say, 'There shall not be one bone of my anointed broken,' great Caesar and all the kings of the earth, the King of Spain, and the Pope, and all their adherents, shall not be able to do the contrary. So, in the midst of fear and danger, let us depend on the providence of God."
38. (b) The Father's open vindication of Christ after His sufferings—the Father placed every bone in the grave, and raised Him from the dead.
39. V21—"Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned."
40. And thus, Christ's bones were not broken because, in a very short while He would be gloriously raised from the dead.

41. The Father guarded every bone because they were precious to Him, and Christ would be vindicated in that very same body.
42. Now, as I have said, I believe Psalm 34:19-22, has a specific application to Christ, as God's righteous sufferer.
43. But what is said of Christ in the fullest sense, is true of all Christians in some sense—we too will endure afflictions.
44. And the Father will also guard every one of our bones, and not one of them will be broken, apart from His will.
45. Now, I want to apply this for a minute, to the two other thieves that were crucified with Christ that Friday afternoon.
46. If you remember, one of them had become a follower of Christ, while the other remained in his rebellion and unbelief.
47. Both of these men had their legs broken—thus, how does Psalm 34:19-22 apply to the penitent thief on the cross?
48. I suggest, in same exact way! This man was now righteous, and was within the loving providential care of the Father.
49. For him, it was the will of the Father that His bones be literally broken, but brethren, if we are thinking rightly, Psalm 34:19-22 is no less true for this man then it was for Christ.
50. Yes, it's true that in a literally sense, it only applies to Christ, but in a spiritual sense it applies to all of Christ's body.

II. A Fountain Opened

1. V34—"But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a (long) spear, and immediately blood and water came out."
2. Now, let me say in the first place, it's debated whether or not, what the soldiers did to Jesus was common practice.
3. That is, not everyone is agreed that piercing the side of those crucified was a common practice that was often done.
4. It's possible that the Romans rather frequently pierced the sides of those crucified to ensure they were in fact dead.
5. Or else, it's also possible that what this Roman soldier did to Jesus, was a unique act, done to fulfill Holy Scripture.
6. But either way, it makes little difference, the soldier pierced His side, to ensure that He was in fact truly dead (this further confirms that Jesus was actually dead).
7. John informs us—"immediately blood and water came out"—now again, there are two views about this blood and water.
8. Some have maintained, the presence of blood and water was merely a biological response to crucifying and piercing.
9. Others have maintained, the presence of this blood and water was not biological but was unique and supernatural.
10. But, either way, here is the most important point—all of this was orchestrated by God to teach us spiritual truth.
11. Whether or not the presence of blood and waters was merely a biological reality, or perhaps it was a supernatural fact.
12. But either way—the main point is this—the Holy Spirit recorded this event as a means to teach us spiritual truth.
13. Thus, the question becomes—what exactly is signified by the blood and water? What did these intend to teach?
14. Well, I suggest the answer is found in v37—"And again another Scripture says, 'They shall look on Him whom they pierced'."

15. Zech.12:10—"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."
16. This is a glorious prophecy of the gift of the Holy Spirit at the Day of Pentecost, and the conversion of many Jews.
17. Many within the Jewish leadership that had Jesus arrested and put to the death, thus in that sense, they pierced Him, were after Pentecost converted.
18. They came to mourn over Him and grieve over their sins, and in particular, their sins committed against Christ.
19. And yet, while this prophecy has a specific fulfilment in the first century, there's a sense in which it's fulfilled every time a sinner is converted.
20. The Holy Spirit creates true conviction and remorse within a sinner's heart, which is expressed through humble prayer and supplication.
21. Zech.13:1—"In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."
22. I trust it's obvious this prophecy is closely related to Jn.19:34—"one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out."
23. There is a sense in which, when literal blood and water came from Jesus' side, it symbolized a fountain open for our salvation.
24. Zechariah says this fountain is open—"for sin and for uncleanness"—these two (sin and uncleanness), correlate with what came from Jesus's side (blood and water).
25. By sin is meant the guilt of sin, which is remedied by the blood, and by uncleanness is meant moral impurity which is remedied by the water.
26. In fact, if we were to boil the entire OC sacrificial system down, we could reduce it into two words—blood and water.
27. Heb.10:19-22—"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."
28. (a) Blood, v22—"having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience"—this refers to the OC practice of sprinkling blood on the mercy-seat—it depicted the provision of atonement and forgiveness.
29. (b) Water—"and our bodies washed with pure water"—before the priests entered the temple, they washed in a large brass basin—this illustrated moral cleansing.
30. Thus, the High Priest entered the temple washed in water and carrying blood—this pointed to man's twofold problem—guilt and filth.
31. Heb.9:19—"For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people."
32. (1) True conviction concerns the guilt and filth of sin—that is, sinners must come to know they are guilty and filthy.
33. When a sinner is being convicted by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit impresses upon him these two humbling facts.
34. He comes to know he is guilty and filthy! Both are true, and both to some degree, must be known by the sinner.
35. Now, this doesn't mean that both are always equally known—it's possible that one is known more than the other.
36. Hymn (Augustus Toplady)—"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."
37. (2) True conviction results from looking to the cross—"They shall look on Him whom they pierced, and they shall mourn."
38. That is, the Jews who hand a direct hand in crucifying Christ, after Pentecost, will reflect upon their wicked behavior and repent.

39. The literal image of Christ being pierced in His side, would be a means to break the heart of these wicked Jews.
40. Thus, let me suggest to you, that all sinners must look to Christ, through Scripture, to break their heart for sin.
41. There are other ways to have the heart broken for sin—you can look to Sinai and tremble under it's just demands.
42. You can look to hell and God's judgments against sin and tremble—but nothing breaks the heart like a humble and believing look to Christ and His cross.
43. But notice, sinners must look to the cross as something their sins caused—"They shall look upon Him whom they pierced."
44. Let me simply say that this principle is true also for Christians. Nothing will break our heart for sin like a sight of the cross.
45. And this is one of many reasons, dear Christian, we must always live with the shadow of His cross upon us (over us).
46. (3) True salvation entails liberty from sin's guilt and filth—that is, the cross provides the remedy to man's two-fold need—justification and sanctification.
47. MH—"The blood and water signified the two great benefits which all believers partake of through Christ – justification and sanctification. Blood stands for remission, water for regeneration; blood for atonement, water for purification. The two must always go together."
48. Thus, every believing sinner, who comes to Christ by faith, is washed both in the blood (justification), and water (sanctification).
49. And thus, I want to briefly apply this point to Christians, showing you that the fountain open for sin and uncleanness is still open.
50. Ps.51:1-2—"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."
51. Fundamentally, David asks for two things—blot out my transgressions (blood), and wash me from my iniquity and sin (water).
52. To blot out transgressions refers to forgiveness, and to wash from iniquity and sin refers to the removal of sin's defilement.
53. Dear brethren, where can a poor sinning Christian go, but back to that fountain opened for sin and uncleanness.
54. He doesn't need to be re-justified or re-born again, but he desperately needs the same blood and water, whereby he was justified and born again.
55. Remember the important distinction between judicial and parental forgiveness—Christians have the first and need the second.
56. Thus, we must ask that our Father would, for the sake of Christ, remove the guilt and filth of our sin from our conscience.
57. O dear Christian brother or sister—where can we go to have our consciences cleaned afresh, but that fountain filled with blood.
58. Hymn (188)—"Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood shall never lose its power, till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin nor more."

III. A Personal Testimony

1. V35—"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."
2. I suggest it's rather evident, that John here refers to himself—John had seen these things, and testified of them.
3. He witnessed Christ's perfect life, heard His teaching, witnessed His arrest, crucifixion, and the piercing of His side.
4. And I suggest that most likely, it's the latter of these that John specifically has in mind—that from His side came blood and water.

5. That Christ is the fulfillment of the OT Scriptures, that Christ is the true Passover, and a Fountain opened for sinners.
6. But it's the last part of the text that I want you to notice—"so that (this is why he's witnessing of these things through this book) you may believe."
7. He wrote these things, under the inspiration of the Spirit, so that his readers would believe these events and believe upon Christ.
8. Jn.20:31—"but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."
9. Now, I do believe that John wrote this book for Christians, that their faith might be strengthened and increased.
10. But surely brethren, this is no the only reason, for John himself testifies it was goal that his readers would have eternal life.
11. John wanted people to read his witness (in Scripture), and hear his witness (through preaching and evangelism)—"that believing you may have life in His name."
12. The will and purpose of John is the will and purpose of the Holy Spirit who inspired him to wrote these words.
13. Thus, it's in every way right for me to assert, it was the will and purpose of God in recording these events, that those who read about them, would believe them.
14. (1) Saints—that is, the NT gospels in general, and Jesus' crucifixion in particular, were written to strengthen your faith.
15. Dear Christian, surely, we here find great comfort for our souls—our Father knows how weak and needy we are.
16. And thus, He has provided John as an eye witness to these things—everything you believe is historical factual.
17. (2) Sinners—that is, the NT gospels in general, and Jesus' crucifixion in particular, were written that you would believe.
18. God, the Holy Spirit, inspired the apostle John to record these events, that you would read about them and believe them.