

The Gospel of John: That You May Believe Jesus, Our Sacrificial Lamb

John 19:31-42

Sunday, January 7, 2018

Introduction

As believers in Christ there are some things that are so central to what we believe that if they are not true our entire faith crumbles. One of these most foundational truths is the death of Christ. Our faith rests wholly on the reality that Jesus is the One whom God sent to die on our behalf to accomplish our salvation.

One verse that underlies the importance of the sacrifice of Jesus is Hebrews 9:22b: *Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*

As believers we must be sure of the work of Christ and in John 19 John helps to strengthen our faith. He gives us evidence that Jesus is the One whom God promised and He provided the shed blood that we need to be forgiven.

Using John's evidence we can answer some important questions:

How do we know that Jesus is the One whom God promised to be our ultimate sacrifice?

One thing that John goes to great lengths to demonstrate is that Jesus is in fact the One whom God had promised. Jesus is the One who had been prophesied throughout the Old Testament and even the way in which He died and was buried fulfills the Scriptures. John provides three examples:

- **Not One of His Bones was Broken (19:36)**

Over and over again we see that Jesus is the ultimate and final Passover Lamb. When John the Baptist first saw Jesus He declared Him to be the 'Lamb of God.' (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7b)

In Exodus God gave very specific instructions for how the Passover Lamb was to be chosen and sacrificed and part of those instructions was that no bone of the animal was to be broken. In spite of what was traditional, and what happened to the other two being crucified, not one of Christ's bones was broken (Exodus 12:46; John 19:36).

- **They will look on Him whom they have pierced (19:37)**

While it was not traditional for a person being crucified to be pierced, and while the other two crucified that day weren't pierced, Jesus was, fulfilling the Scriptures. And one day all will look on the One who was pierced for the salvation of man (Zechariah 12:10; Revelation 1:5-7).

- **He was buried in a rich man's tomb (19:38-42)**

It was not customary for the crucified to be taken from the cross until days after their death and they were usually thrown in large common graves. But, that the Scriptures would be fulfilled, Jesus was taken down and buried in the tomb of a rich man (Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57).

How do we know that Jesus experienced an actual, physical death?

There is a common argument, that while Jesus may have gone to the cross, and been seen alive after the crucifixion, it wasn't because He rose from the dead. The argument is that He never actually died. But John provides several witnesses to the reality of His death:

- **The Testimony of the Roman Soldiers:** These men were expert executioners and their job was to ensure death. When they went to break the legs of Jesus there was no need, they knew that He was dead.
- **The Testimony of the Water and Blood:** When Jesus's side was pierced something happened that would only happen to a dead man – water and blood poured from His side. This was most likely the result of His heart having burst.
- **The Testimony of John:** John offers himself as an eyewitness to the surety of Christ's death. He saw the pierced side and he saw the water and blood flow (1 John 1:1-4).
- **The Testimony of those who Buried Him:** Joseph and Nicodemus respected Jesus, they did not want Him dead. If He had been alive they would have been glad, but He wasn't alive, He was dead, so they buried Him.

What does the blood of Jesus accomplish for us?

As we have already said, the blood is central to our salvation. According to the plan of God, blood had to be shed, and John makes it clear that the blood of Christ was shed as our sacrifice. He was the perfect and final Passover lamb (Hebrews 9:18-28; 1 John 1:7-9)

*There is a fountain filled with blood - Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood - Lose all their guilty stains.*

*The dying thief rejoiced to see - That fountain in his day
And there may I, as vile as he, - Wash all my sins away.*

*Ever since by faith I saw the stream - Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme - And shall be till I die.*