

John 19:16-30 | David Baumgartner

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[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, Knowing Jesus, Making Jesus Known. This morning, we continue our study on the Gospel According to John.

Morning, we're going to be looking at his burial. John doesn't really have a whole lot to say about his burial, at least in terms of all the technicalities. I think Luke gives the most detail, and I think that's because he's a physician, right?

So he's probably interested in all of the details about what goes on with the body. But certainly, with John's account here, he continues in this very important study.

You'll recall that the circumstances of Jesus' birth were very humble, right? Well, actually, so too was his burial. Let's go ahead and read John 19.

I'm picking it up in verse 31. The Jews, therefore, because it was the day of preparation so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for that Sabbath was a high day, asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.

[1 : 23] The soldiers, therefore, came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other man who was crucified with him. But coming to Jesus, when they 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 there came out blood and water. And he who has seen has borne witness.

And his witness is true. And he knows that he is telling the truth so that you also may believe. For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

Not a bone of him shall be broken. And again, another scripture says, they shall look upon him whom they pierced. And after these things, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus.

And Pilate granted permission. He came, therefore, and took away his body. And Nicodemus came also, who had first come to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

[2 : 49] So they took the body of Jesus, they bound it in linen wrappings 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. Therefore, on account of the Jewish day of preparation, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Oh, Heavenly Father, we read these words, Lord, and we know that they've been written for us.

Lord, we pray that just sensing here our Lord and Savior Jesus, that there was a time when he was physically dead, placed in a tomb.

And those who would have followed him for those three and so years would have been so discouraged, would have been wondering what happened.

And yet, Lord, I think we can relate to that, Father, oftentimes, because sometimes maybe we sense that you're not with us. But, Lord, you have given us this gospel account that we may believe.

[4 : 08] And, Lord, as we'll see, all of these words are true. And we know that the story didn't end here with Jesus in a tomb, but rather Jesus left and rose again.

What a great hope we have, Lord, in our Savior. What great promises we find in your word. We pray, Lord, through the ministry of the word and through the power of your spirit, you'd work in us, Lord, these things, that we may trust you and love you with all of our hearts and minds.

We ask for this in Christ's name. Amen. I wanted to ask you a question. How would you like to be remembered?

In our text here, we read about these two gentlemen, Joseph of Arimathea and then there's Nicodemus. And just think about how we, are talking about them some 2,000 years later.

How would you like to be remembered? I think oftentimes we see some of that, it ends up on tombstones. Isn't that right? Like an epitaph. Here's one that said, he got, speaking of a dead man here from the New York, and this is in New York, he got a fish bone in his throat and then he sang an angel note.

[5 : 33] Pretty good. Here lies the body of our Anna, done to death by a banana. It wasn't the fruit that laid her low, but the skin of the thing that made her go.

Here lies the father of 29. He would have had more, but he didn't have time. Yeah. How about this one? I got kind of a kick out of this here.

This is written by a widow, a young widow, sacred of the memory of my husband, John Barnes, who died January 3rd, 1803. His comely young widow, age 23, has many qualifications of a good wife and yearns to be comforted.

Here's one, describing a guy here. He looked up the elevator shaft to see if the car was on its way down. It was.

Here lies Lester Moore, four slugs from a 44. No less, no more. He was young, he was fair, but the engines raised his hair.

[6 : 47] That's from a tombstone in Arizona. I guess where there's engines. Here's one. I told you I was sick. You've heard that one. Here lies the body of Jonathan Blake, stepped on the gas instead of the brake.

Remember, man, as you walk by, as you now are, so once was I. As I am now, so shall you be. Remember this and follow me.

And then I guess next to it was, to follow you, I'll not consent until I know which way you went. Here lays Butch. We planted him raw.

He was quick on the trigger, but slow on the draw. That's from Arizona again. Here lies the body of Arkansas Jim. We made the mistake, but the joke's on him.

She always said her feet were killing her, but nobody believed her. Here lies the body of Margaret Bent.

[7 : 52] She kicked up her heels, and away she went. Those are some things that we can remember people by, but again, 2,000 years, and we're still talking about these two guys that we're going to be looking at in our text today.

But even more importantly, Jesus Christ, the one who died and went into a tomb here. And all the people are wondering, what now?

What are we going to do? I'd like to begin by looking at our text here this morning. Beginning in verse 31, notice that John reminds us that Jesus and two other men were crucified on what's called preparation day.

Now this is an important work day as far as the Jews are concerned. If you had to fill your water bowls or jugs, if you had to prepare wood or gather it, if you had to get your food ready, that's the day to do it.

Because everything had to be finished by sundown because that's when Passover would begin. Well, the Jews wanted to get these three bodies down from the cross and they needed to do it before about 6 p.m., which would have been sundown.

[9 : 06] Or else, according to Deuteronomy chapter 21, it would defile the land. Well, there's a problem here is that crucifixion did not always kill a person.

In fact, there would be some people who would linger for hours and maybe even days before dying. Well, time is short here. What are they going to do?

Well, verse 31 continues here, telling us that the Jewish leaders, they go to Pilate and it says, they asked Pilate that their legs, that's the three men here, might be broken.

And of course, this is going to hasten their death. They would die of asphyxiation. And so that they can take these bodies away. Well, verse 32, you have these obedient soldiers, they come and it says, they broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with them.

But notice verse 33. But coming to Jesus, it says that when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Well, just to be sure that he's dead, verse 34 says that one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear and immediately blood and water came forth.

[10 : 24] I want to ask, is there any symbolic meaning in the blood and water that came out of Jesus? You know, some people say that the blood represents the justification and the water represents cleansing.

You know, personally, I don't think so. I think that's reading a lot into it. Most likely, the water was from the pericardium. That's that watery sack that houses our hearts.

And I believe that John mentioned this, though, because it's just to show that Jesus indeed had a physical body. If you look in John's letters, there were already false teachers that were spreading the notion that Jesus wasn't a man.

He only appeared to be a man. That's called docetism. You can look that up in Wikipedia here. In John's first epistle, chapter 4, listen to what he says.

By this you know the Spirit of God, every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. That Spirit is from God. So that's an important thing here.

[11 : 35] But getting back to this, the Romans didn't care about Sabbath regulations. They didn't care about purification rites. They'd leave a, in fact, they would leave a crucified body on a cross long after it was dead.

And eventually, these bodies would be dumped into a trash or a rubbish heap. You know, or for the animals to eat, not Jesus. In our account here, John tells us of these two men.

First, verse 38, Joseph of Arimathea. It says, being a disciple of Jesus, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus.

And Pilate granted permission. He came, therefore, and took away Jesus' body. Now, who's Joseph? Well, besides being told he's from Arimathea, we actually learn about him from the other gospel accounts.

For instance, in Mark 15, tells us that he was a prominent member of the Jewish religious council. In Luke's account, chapter 23, Joseph was a good man and a righteous man.

[12 : 44] And then in Matthew 27, we're told he was a rich man that who himself had become a disciple of Jesus. Well, he's not alone.

In verse 39, tells us, and Nicodemus came along. Who's he? Well, actually, Nicodemus was mentioned earlier in John chapter 3, verse 1.

It tells us he was a man of the Pharisees and he was a ruler of the Jews. So, verse 40, Joseph and Nicodemus, it tells us, they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with 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 laid. You know, Matthew's account tells us that Joseph of Arimathea actually owned this tomb.

In other words, and we're told that it was new. In other words, it had never housed anything dead or anything that was decaying. And it also tells us that this tomb was hewn out of rock.

[13 : 57] Verse 42, therefore, on account of the Jewish day of preparation, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. And that's it.

It's all we're told. Really, not too many words told about Jesus' burial here. I want to ask, what can we learn?

What does this tell us? Well, there's a very important verse, and I would say this is the controlling verse of this passage that we read. Verse 35. Notice this.

John says, and he who has seen, in other words, John himself has borne witness, and his witness is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth.

And here's why. So that you also may believe. Boy, just think about all the terrible things that we read about in chapter 19.

[14 : 55] Terrible things of human violence against an innocent man. But John makes it clear that Jesus wasn't just any man. He's God.

And it may appear in our reading that the enemy won. They got the best of them. That's not true. They didn't.

Because Jesus has power. Jesus has authority. And I believe there's three things that we can see in our text here today. First, notice, Jesus turns Old Testament prophecies into realities.

John says, look what this is really important here. These things came to pass that the scriptures might be fulfilled. Well, you may ask this question, what things?

Well, these are among the many proofs of Jesus' deity. For example, last week, when Jesus was crucified, we saw all of these numerous Old Testament passages.

[15 : 59] Do you guys have your hand out there? Look with me on there. Look at all of these prophecies that Jesus fulfilled when He was crucified.

They're prophesied in the Old Testament. He was betrayed. He was accused by false witnesses. And so on. He was forsaken by God.

And you'll see there listed the actual Old Testament passage and then when were they fulfilled. And the thing is, is that these prophecies, they begin to pile up on each other.

I don't think, do we have any mathematicians in the room? We can talk about the statistical probability that one man could fulfill all of these.

Pretty impossible, huh? It is. It's beyond our comprehension. Well, this morning, we can add four more to that list.

[16:58] Notice here first, verse 36. Not a bone of him shall be broken. That's from verse 36. And notice, this comes from Psalm 34:20.

That was written about a thousand years before Christ. He keeps all his bones and not one of them is broken. What this means is that it wasn't an accident, it wasn't a coincidence that Roman soldiers did not break Jesus' legs, but instead that they pierced his side with a spear.

Secondly, from the text, verse 37. And again, another scripture says, they shall look upon him whom they pierced. This comes from Zechariah chapter 12.

Again, written some 500 years before Jesus Christ. When they look on him, when they look on me, on him whom they pierced, they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and will bitterly, and will weep bitterly over him as one weeps over a firstborn.

We read here, thirdly, that Jesus was placed in a tomb, but not just any tomb. He was placed in a tomb that was owned by a rich man. Look in this text in Isaiah 53.

[18:17] His grave was assigned with the wicked men, yet he was with a rich man in his death because he had done no violence nor was there any deceit in his mouth.

That was written some 700 years before Christ. And then lastly, we read that this isn't just any tomb, it's a new tomb. In other words, Jesus' body did not come in contact with corruption.

As the psalmist said, again, a thousand years earlier, for you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, nor let your Holy One see corruption. once again, doesn't this just prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that God was in total control of this whole thing?

You realize, in two Sundays, we're going to be celebrating Resurrection Sunday. And there's some flyers out there, I hope you pick one up and give them to your friends. Easter is the most popular religious holiday, and throughout the world, people are going to be attending churches after churches.

And here's the thing, they'll go for a variety of reasons. Maybe some will go because it's a family custom. Maybe some will go because it's just the right thing to do, but yet deep down, they will have these nagging questions about who is Jesus.

[19:44] Why are we still talking about Him some 2,000 years later? Friends, I would just say to them, consider all of the proofs. All of the Old Testament passages that He fulfilled.

Jesus is not just any man. He turns Old Testament prophecies into realities. Secondly, Jesus makes dead men alive.

At some point, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus placed their faith in Jesus Christ. You might want to ask, well, when did that happen?

You know, we're not really told. But I believe that it had to take place before Jesus' crucifixion. And here's the reason I say this. In Luke 23, speaking of Joseph, it tells us that Joseph had not consented to their plan and action, but was waiting for the kingdom of God.

How about Nicodemus? Nicodemus was the very first person to hear John 3, 16, that God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son.

[21:00] Maybe he understood what Jesus said in John 3, 14, that Jesus would be, when Jesus said that He would be lifted up, in other words, as in crucifixion, Jesus would be lifted up and that a man could look upon Him and by faith in Jesus be born again.

And let me ask you this. Having seen all of these things, do you think Nick and Joe, as I'll lovingly call them, do you think that when they were by themselves that they actually talked about Jesus? You think? I do. All this is happening right before our eyes. What a wonderful thing we're seeing here.

Again, we're not told here, but one thing is for sure, Jesus made quite an impression on them. And personally, I believe that these two men studied God's Word together.

They saw the Old Testament prophecies become realities. And right before their eyes, they came to believe believe that Jesus is who He said that He is.

[22 : 15] And isn't that what you and I long to see, brothers and sisters? For people to actually say, I came to know Jesus is who He said He is.

I'm going to go one step further. I'm going to step out on a limb here. I believe that there's evidence that Nick and Joe not only came to faith in Jesus, but that they came to understand that God had something for them to do.

In other words, they had a part in God's plan. What might that be? Here's the answer. They prepared for Jesus' burial even before Jesus went to the cross.

Yeah. I might be wrong. And I'm going to ask them that when I get up there to see Nick and Joe. But I want you to consider this. How did Joseph have a tomb ready so quickly?

He had it made for Jesus beforehand. You know, a wealthy religious leader like Joseph would not have wanted to be buried right next to where criminals are being executed.

[23 : 30] He had intended this to be for Jesus. And how about Nicodemus? How did he have so much perfume on hand so quickly? I mean, weren't the stores closing for Passover?

Notice here in verse 39 that Nicodemus, it tells us, brought 100 pounds of burial spices, a mixture of myrrh and aloe to the tomb.

If you want to get an idea of just how much that is, in John chapter 12, when Mary broke that alabaster box to anoint Jesus, we're actually told that it was worth a year's wage.

But even though it would have been less than a pound, which is why Judas complained here, but Joseph, he brings 100 pounds of it.

That's 100 years worth of salary, worth of wages. Here these two guys are together, and I believe they would have studied the Old Testament. They knew that Messiah would die, when he would die, how he would die, and where he would die.

[24 : 38] And their faith in Jesus moved them to action. Joseph, he commissions the building of this new tomb. Nicodemus, he brings this lavish amount of costly burial spices.

But there's a problem still. Nick and Joe were told here that in verse 38, Joseph was a secret disciple of Jesus for the fear of the Jews.

And then not only that, John tells us, he reminds us that Nicodemus first came to Jesus by night. Here's the problem. These men were members of the religious establishment.

And you know, it's one thing to talk secretly about what you believe. You can even plan things in secret, but at some point, they're probably saying to one another, we're going to have to come out of the shadows, and we're going to have to get Jesus' body off the cross.

But when we do, everyone's going to know we're followers of Jesus. But Jesus is not just any man. He turns Old Testament prophecies into realities.

[25 : 57] He makes dead men alive. And third, he turns timid men into lions. I want you to, we need to consider here.

What did Joseph and Nicodemus, what did they face? Ridicule? Expulsion from the Sanhedrin? Even from a synagogue?

Social, becoming social outcasts? According to Jewish law, they would have defiled themselves because they touched a dead body. But here they are, sticking their necks out for Jesus.

And I think that it's, it's a good question to ask, what changed? What changed? Well, first, I want this here. We must remember they believed in a God of miracles.

They did. Some people that we read in the scriptures have big faith. You might even read about them in Hebrews 11, the hall of faith. Others have small faith.

[27 : 03] But regardless, who is the object of our faith? Jesus Christ never changes. And I think it's easy to talk boldly about Jesus and to declare Him, Jesus as Lord, when I'm in church here with all of you.

What about outside? What about outside? I think it's easy to remain silent, not take a stand, to go with the flow and let the current just take you wherever it flows, which is usually downstream.

I was talking to Aaron's dad here. Is he still here? Aaron and Sheila? Larry and Sheila? We were talking about just churches today that actually eliminate from their teaching, their preaching, anything that is offensive to the human psyche.

All things that are offensive are taken out. Well, friends, Jesus turns timid men into lions. Look with me what Paul said in Romans in his first chapter of that letter.

I'm not ashamed of the gospel. He says, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

[28 : 29] For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith as it is written, but the righteous man shall live by faith.

You know what that tells me, brothers and sisters, is that we may not be 100% certain of how something's going to happen for us, but no matter what, God's in control and we can trust him. Amen. Just like these guys did. Laid it on the line. What a wonderful example as they are. But there's a second point.

If I can ask the musicians to come up, I believe there are times when God gives his children a renewed surge of strength to accomplish his purposes.

And that's what I think happened here. God gave them strength and courage to go through with it, what the Lord had laid on their hearts. Isn't it interesting that Joseph of Arimathea was able to use his position and his wealth to get an audience with Pontius Pilate?

[29 : 39] How did that happen? Most of us would not get access to Pontius Pilate or the movers and shakers of this world.

But I think it's interesting Joseph used that to accomplish God's word. And you know what? The second thing is we're not told anything more about them. Were they executed for their faith?

Do you realize that all of the apostles would eventually die for the cause of Christ? Except for John who went to an island of Patmos. Would they die for a hoax if it wasn't true?

Jesus turns timid men into lions. Oh, for you and I to have that kind of faith. When you read in the Old Testament about these people, Daniel, Joseph, not this Joseph, another Joseph, he turns people, gives courage.

we see his deity here. How would you like to be remembered in your life? What would you like for people to read on your tombstones?

[30 : 53] Maybe something not hilarious, but something for the Lord. Let's pray. Father, thank you for just showing us what happened to your son, Jesus.

and we know that it doesn't end here. We know that he is God and that there's a great purpose in mind.

We're excited, Lord, as we anticipate just the reading of your word when Jesus is alive again. And he's still alive today, transforming hearts and minds, giving us the basis for which we can enter eternal life because he died for us.

And Lord, we have these emblems that are here before us that serve as a reminder of those truths that we stand in sacred ground where Jesus died for us.

Thank you, Lord, for the hope that you've given us. Thank you for your word. Thank you for your spirit, Lord, who dwells in our hearts by faith. May you have your way with us, Lord, and turn us not only from just being believers but into being lions for you.

[32 : 19] I ask this in his name. Amen. ■