

## Connecting Minds

"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" (John 20:31)

### The Gospel of John

Chapter 19:31-34

**"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."**

"Because it was the Preparation Day..." The Preparation Day was the day just before the Passover feast was to start. It was the day that the Passover lambs were to be slaughtered, and thus, Christ our Passover Lamb was killed at the same time.

However, there seems to be a difficulty in this verse. John indicates that Jesus was crucified on the Day or Preparation for the Passover, while the three other gospel writers indicate that Jesus had already eaten the Passover meal (read Luke 22:15; Matthew 26:17). There are various solutions offered to this discrepancy.

- One, is that there were two calendars in Judaism at the time, which is confirmed by the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Jesus was following a calendar that had the Passover a day before the official calendar.
- Two, the Day of Preparation is referring to the day before the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which came right after the Passover. The Day of Preparation, the Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread had all become one large feast, alternately called Passover or Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- Three, the meal Jesus had only contained Passover characteristics... but notably was missing any mention of the sacrificial lamb... although *the* Passover Lamb was present.

However, we look at this day, the important point for us to see is the actions of the Jewish leaders. Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 21:23, these words – “his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the Lord your God is giving you...” The leaders of Israel are concerned about the outward appearance of their religion. They are preoccupied with a very small, letter of the law, while they have neglected the weightier matters. The land was more defiled by the murder of the Son of God than by His body hanging on the cross overnight.

Pilate gave orders that the soldiers were to break the legs of the crucified so that they would die sooner. So they break the legs of the two thieves on either side of Christ. One of these thieves was a believer, just recently saved by Christ. But just because he was saved does not mean that he would avoid suffering the same as a non-Christian person. He wasn't saved and immediately taken to paradise, he was saved and made it to heaven through intense suffering. Some Christians suffer just as much as the most wicked man.

"One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out..." Dr. Alexander Metherell says "Even before He died... the hypovolemic shock would have caused a sustained rapid heart rate that would have contributed to heart failure, resulting in the collection of fluid in the membrane around the heart, called a pericardial effusion, as well as around the lungs, which is called a pleural effusion."<sup>1</sup> Basically, the piercing of Jesus' side is unmistakable evidence that Jesus was actually dead. This is the primary point that John wants to make to us by indicating this fact. It is just John's way of finally putting to rest any nonsense of people saying that Jesus had not actually died on the cross.

## TableTalk

The thief on the cross who came into paradise with our Lord Jesus Christ is a reminder to us of how our faith in Christ does not exempt us from suffering. But it also shows us how Jesus is always with us in our suffering, assuring us of His love and care.

<sup>1</sup> The Case for Christ, Lee Strobel, pg. 266