

An Eye Witness

John 19:31-37

31 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. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. 35 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. 36 For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." 37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced." NKJV

In most stories, the story is over after the death of someone. Just a few details to finish up and then only memories are left. But not so with Jesus. He continues to fulfill prophecy even after His death. And everything that is recorded has significance.

Now these self-righteous Jews who are now concerned that the law be kept and that a dead body not remain on a cross over night come to Pilate to ask him to move the execution along so that they might be taken down from the crosses by 6:00 pm that evening.

How could they be so concerned about the letter of the law in this matter and miss the spirit of the law in the matter of putting to death an innocent man for reasons of their own jealousy. But they did. Whenever the love of God does motivate us, we are destined to miss the mark.

So let us look at this passage today.

I. The Day of Preparation

- A. 31 Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day,
- B. that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day),
- C. the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him.
- D. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.
 - 1. By giving up His life when He did, our Lord assured that the soldiers fulfilled prophecy According to Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12, no bone of the Passover lamb was to be broken. Jesus was the perfect fulfillment of the Passover lamb, and as such could not have any of His bones broken.
—MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The

- E. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood

and water came out.

II. The Witness

- A. 35 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.
 - 1. Did he lie, was this all fabricated.
 - 2. Liar, lunatic or LORD said CS Lewis
- B. Last Gospel written about 90-95 A.D.
- C. Oldest part of a manuscript ever found.
 - 1. The Rylands Library Papyrus P52, also known as the St. John's fragment, is a fragment from a papyrus codex, measuring only 3.5 by 2.5 inches (8.9 by 6 cm) at its widest; and conserved with the Rylands Papyri at the John Rylands University Library (Gr. P. 457), Manchester, UK. The front (recto) contains parts of seven lines from the Gospel of John 18:31–33, in Greek, and the back (verso) contains parts of seven lines from verses 37–38.[1] Since 2007, the papyrus has been on permanent display in the library's Deansgate building. Although Rylands 52 is generally accepted as the earliest extant record of a canonical New Testament text,[2] the dating of the papyrus is by no means the subject of consensus among scholars. The style of the script is strongly Hadrianic, which would suggest a most probable date somewhere between 117 CE and 138 CE. But the difficulty of fixing the date of a fragment based solely on paleographic evidence allows a much wider range, potentially extending from before 100 CE past 150 CE. Wikipedia

III. Fulfilling Scriptures even in His death

- A. 36 For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." 37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."