



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: John 19:31-37

31 Since it was the preparation day, the Jews did not want the bodies to remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a special day). They requested that Pilate have the men's legs broken and that their bodies be taken away. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other one who had been crucified with him. 33 When they came to Jesus, they did not break his legs since they saw that he was already dead. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. 35 He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth. 36 For these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: **Not one of his bones will be broken.** 37 Also, another Scripture says: **They will look at the one they pierced.**

I. The Narrative – 19:31-37

A. Only found in this gospel

B. Jesus has died (19:30)

1. Not a typical death by crucifixion

2. He was in control; He "gave up his spirit" (10:17-18)

- The execution squad was well acquainted with the signs of death. Consequently, not fracturing Jesus' legs shows that they considered him to be already dead. His swift death undoubtedly indicates a voluntary ending of his life because his work was ended (v.30; cf. Lk 23:46). He had said of himself that he could lay down his life that he might take it again (10:17). Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament

C. Jewish leaders requested his legs be broken

1. to hasten death

- To hasten death because then the victim could not put any weight on their legs; asphyxiation would

follow when arm strength failed. NIV Zondervan Study Bible

2. So they could remove his body and not defile the land (Deut. 21:22-23) on the Sabbath

- The Romans normally left crucified people on the cross until they died (which could take days) and then left their rotting bodies hanging there for vultures to devour. But the Mosaic law says not to leave a body hanging on a pole overnight because that would desecrate the land (Deut 21:22-23). NIV Zondervan Study Bible

3. Since He was already dead there was no need to break his bones 19:33

4. Fulfilled the scriptures

D. Soldier pierced his side to make sure he was dead

1. Blood and water came out

2. Fulfilled scripture

31 Since it was the preparation day, the Jews did not want the bodies to remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a special day). They requested that Pilate have the men's legs broken and that their bodies be taken away. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other one who had been crucified with him. 33 When they came to Jesus, they did not break his legs since they saw that he was already dead. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. 35 He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth. 36 For these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: **Not one of his bones will be broken.** 37 Also, another Scripture says: **They will look at the one they pierced.**

II. Jesus as the Passover Lamb

A. The OT Passover

1. Israel as a nation is in slavery in Egypt

2. God sees and will judge the Egyptians by killing their firstborn sons

3. God commands the Israelites to kill a lamb and put the blood on the doorposts.

4. This will indicate they are God's people and will not suffer the judgment of death. Instead, God will pass over their households

5. They eat the lamb and that night they are sent out of Egypt while the Egyptians mourn the death of the firstborn

6. Israel is to keep this as an annual celebration to remember their deliverance from death and from Egypt.

7. One condition is that they are not to break the bones of the lamb that they eat.

B. No bones broken points to the Passover Lamb – 19:33,36

- Not one of his bones will be broken. After vv. 24, 28, this is now the third scriptural proof cited by John to indicate that Jesus' death fulfills Scripture (Ps. 34:20; also Ex. 12:46, reiterated in Num. 9:12). Jesus escaped the breaking of his legs, and the spear piercing his body likewise failed to break any bones. ESV Study Bible

C. Symbolizes the deliverance from bondage – 1 Pet. 1:18-19

18 For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb.

- "The present OT reference constitutes an instance of a typological use of Scripture whereby Jesus is shown to fulfill Passover symbolism. This taps into one of the most powerful symbols of Jewish national identity and connects Jesus' death with God's deliverance of his people from bondage in Egypt. According to the Fourth Evangelist, just as God effected deliverance from bondage of OT Israel through the exodus, so also he provided redemption from sin for the world through the vicarious death of Jesus. This Passover symbolism, in turn, is applied to God's preservation of the righteous

sufferer, signaling that both motifs converge in Jesus, who was both God's perfect Passover lamb and the paradigmatic Davidic righteous sufferer." G. K. Beale & D. A. Carson, Commentary on the NT use of the OT, pp. 503-504

D. The Lamb who takes away the sin of the world (1:29)

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

- "Sin, in John's Gospel, is a problem in one's relationship with God, which by extension affects one's relationships with other people. Sin is the alienation from God that is expressed in a refusal to believe [unbelief] in Jesus...The particular sins that people commit manifest this underlying antipathy toward God & Jesus, so that sin encompasses both unbelief & the actions that proceed from it (15:18-25)." (Craig Koester, The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel, p. 113)

- Jesus is the Passover lamb slain for his people (1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pet 1:19)... As the Passover lamb brought life to the Israelite firstborn males, so Jesus brings eternal life to all for whom he dies. NIV Zondervan Study Bible

1. The last sign
2. Book ends – John 1:29 and John 19:33, 36
3. Takes away sin
4. Brings life and freedom

E. Into a relationship with God

- "In Johannine theology, sin [unbelief] is taken away when faith is evoked. Sin is the opposite of faith...If sin is a deadly alienation from God, then faith is a life-giving relationship with God. The death of Christ takes sin away when it creates faith in the face of unbelief." (Craig Koester, The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel, p. 114)

1. Living as people of faith (believing)
2. Living as redeemed, cleansed, forgiven people – Heb. 9:12, 14, 22
3. Living in freedom and in life
4. Living as God's people under his protection

- "The blood on the doorposts marked the inhabitants who lived within as God's protected ones. The lamb's blood thus serves as a sign that one belongs to God, not as an act of expiation or atonement. If there is any link between Jesus' death and the slaughter of the Passover lamb, it is not in terms of Jesus' death as an expiatory sacrifice, but as the new sign of what it means to be marked as God's people. To share in Jesus' death, to love as Jesus loves, is the new sign of "the Passover of the Lord," of a new exodus to freedom and life (cf. 8:31)." Gail O'Day, The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary: John, p. 717

31 Since it was the preparation day, the Jews did not want the bodies to remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a special day). They requested that Pilate have the men's legs broken and that their bodies be taken away. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other one who had been crucified with him. 33 When they came to Jesus, they did not break his legs since they saw that he was already dead. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. 35 He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth. 36 For these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: **Not one of his bones will be broken.** 37 Also, another Scripture says: **They will look at the one they pierced.**

III. Jesus – the one pierced

A. Done by soldiers to confirm he was dead

B. Done according to God's sovereignty – fulfilling scripture 19:37

C. Blood and water came out

1. Showing he was truly human – apologetic argument

? The flow of blood and water indicates that Jesus truly died as a fully human being with a genuine human body (cf. 1 John 5:6–8). ESV Study Bible

• John saw a special significance to the blood and water that came from the wound in the side. For one thing, it proved that Jesus had a real body (see 1 John 1:1-4) and experienced a real death. By the time John wrote this book, there were false teachers in the church claiming that Jesus did not have a truly human body. There may also be a symbolic meaning: the blood speaks of our justification, the water of our sanctification and cleansing. The blood takes care of the guilt of sin; the water deals with the stain of sin. Some students connect John 19:34 with 1 John 5:6, but perhaps the connection is weak. In 1 John 5, John deals with evidence that Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh, and he presents three witnesses: the Spirit, the water, and the blood (1 John 5:6, 8). The Spirit relates to Pentecost, the water to His baptism, and the blood to His crucifixion. In each of these events, God made it clear that Jesus Christ is what He claimed to be, God come in the flesh. In fact, in John 19:35, the apostle makes it clear that the water and blood should encourage his readers to believe that Jesus is the Christ (see John 20:31). ESV Study Bible

2. Blood – that takes away the sin of the world

a. For redemption

b. Forgiveness

c. Cleansing

3. Water – giving life, quenching thirst

a. Jesus promised the Samaritan woman the water that gives eternal life – John 4:13-14

13 Jesus said, “Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. 14 But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up in him for eternal life.”

b. At the festival, Jesus promised water to those who believe – John 7:37-38

37 On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 The one who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him.”

4. Symbolizing life emerges from death – 7:38

38 The one who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him.”

• “The attention that the Fourth evangelist gives to the flow of blood and water suggests that he also attached symbolic significance to it. Jesus is the source of “living water” in the Gospel (4:10, 12-14; 7:37-38). In the eucharistic imagery of 6:53-58, his blood, too, is identified with his gift of life (6:53-55). It is thus possible to read a second level of meaning into v. 34; that life flows out of Jesus’ death.” Gail O’Day, The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary: John, p. 714

31 Since it was the preparation day, the Jews did not want the bodies to remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a special day). They requested that Pilate have the men’s legs broken and that their bodies be taken away. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other one who had been crucified with him. 33 When they came to Jesus, they did not break his legs since they saw that he was already dead. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. 35 He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth. 36 For these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: **Not one of his bones will be broken.** 37 Also, another Scripture says: **They will look at the one they pierced.**

IV. His death Fulfilled Scripture – 19:36-37

36 For these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: **Not one of his bones will be**

broken. 37 Also, another Scripture says: **They will look at the one they pierced.**

A. Four incidents in ch. 19 where scriptures were fulfilled

1. Cast lots for clothing – 19:24; Ps. 22:18
2. Thirst – 19:28; Ps. 22:15; 69:21
3. Bones not broken – 19:33; Psa. 34:20; Exo. 12:46; Num. 9:12
4. Pierced side, blood and water – 19:34; Zech. 12:10; Psa. 22:16

B. Fulfilling Scripture

1. No bones broken

- “After 19:24, 28, this [19:33] is now the third scriptural proof adduced by John that Jesus’ death fulfills OT Scripture. Not only were Jesus’ garments divided in fulfillment of Scripture (19:24) and did Jesus thirst on the cross (19:28), but also after Jesus had breathed his last, his legs were not broken thus fulfilling OT Passover symbolism. G. K. Beale & D. A. Carson, Commentary on the NT use of the OT, p. 503

- “By this third of four fulfillment citations the Fourth Evangelist underscores the pattern of fulfillment characteristic of Jesus’ death. This authenticates Jesus’ claim of his messianic identity. In the present instance a powerful link is established between Jesus’ sacrificial DEATH AND THE Jewish Passover, which commemorated the deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12). This marks Jesus as the ‘lamb of God’ who takes away the sins of the world (1:29, 36), in keeping with the Baptist’s witness. This pattern of typology is also part and parcel of the Johannine replacement theme, according to which Jesus fulfills the symbolism inherent in a variety of Jewish festivals and institutions. Also, Jesus, in keeping with Davidic typology, is presented as a righteous man who is preserved by God in accordance with the assurance expressed by God’s servants in the past (Ps. 34:20).” G. K. Beale & D. A. Carson, Commentary on the NT use of the OT, p. 503

2. His side pierced

a. Spoken about by Zechariah – Zech. 12:10

“Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem, and they will look at me whom they pierced. They will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly for him as one weeps for a firstborn.

- Prayer for mercy; a sign of repentance. me . . . him . . . him. Suggests that the people “pierced” God (metaphorically) and a closely associated third party (literally). The immediate and wider contexts of Zechariah suggest that this third party is the future king of the “house of David” (see 3:8; 6:12; 9:9), the shepherd of 13:7-9. pierced. Piercing with a weapon normally meant death (cf. Isa 13:15). The close connection between God and his anointed (cf. Ps 45:6; Isa 9:6) explains how the death of the Messiah also “pierced” God. This prophecy gains even greater clarity for Christians who see its fulfillment in the piercing of Jesus on the cross by a Roman soldier’s spear (John 19:34-37). After Jesus’ death, God’s Spirit was poured out on the God-fearing Jews in Jerusalem, who were “cut to the heart” and repented (Acts 2:32-37). At his return, all the nations will mourn the one who was pierced (Rev 1:7). as one mourns for an only child. Immense sorrow. firstborn. The heir. NIV Zondervan Study Bible

- John’s appropriation of Zech. 12:10 in the present passage [19:37] operates on the basis of the hermeneutical axiom that Yahweh acts in the person of his authorized representative, the messianic shepherd, so that to strike and kill the shepherd, or to pierce him, is in a sense to pierce Yahweh himself. This is indicated in the original text by the shift from the first to the third person...even though both John 19:37 and Rev. 1:7 simply read “on him,” the presupposition seems nonetheless that Yahweh in the source text is represented by Jesus in their present context. Beale & D. A. Carson, Commentary on the NT use of the OT, p. 505-506

- Not only this, but also it follows from the present text that people are looking at the same time at Yahweh and at the one whom they have pierced.... The mourning for the “only son” and “firstborn”

described in Zech. 12:10, likewise, is taken up in Johannine theology with reference to Jesus, the “one-of-a-kind Son” of the Father (1:14, 18; 3:16, 18). G. K. Beale & D. A. Carson, Commentary on the NT use of the OT, p. 505-506

- The Fourth Evangelist’s citation of this passage may be intended as a final judgment on “the Jews,” who, in looking at Jesus on the cross, the executed king, still do not see the revelation of God (cf. 8:28). The full context of Zech 12:10 suggests, however, that it is cited as a word of hope for the reader, as confirmation that even in death, when one looks on the One who is pierced, one sees God’s only child, the firstborn (cf. 1:18). Gail O’Day, The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary: John, p. 715

b. Spoken about by Isaiah – Isa. 53:5-7

5 But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. 6 We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the LORD has punished him for the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not open his mouth.

c. Alluded to in Psalm 22:16

16 For dogs have surrounded me; a gang of evildoers has closed in on me; they pierced my hands and my feet.

- they pierce my hands and my feet. Continuing the imagery of fierce beasts opposing him, this would suggest the dogs attacking and biting David, which follows the readings in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Septuagint ... The image becomes prophetic of the wounds the suffering servant would suffer (Isa 53:5) and was literally fulfilled in Jesus’ wounds on the cross (John 19:34; Acts 2:23). NIV Zondervan Study Bible

C. According to God’s sovereignty – Acts 2:23

23 Though he was delivered up according to God’s determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him.

- Paradoxically, the death of Jesus, though carried out by “wicked men,” was all along part of “God’s deliberate plan.” This is a major theme throughout Acts (3:15; 4:10; 10:39-40; 13:29-30; 17:31). Peter affirms both God’s sovereignty over the events of history and human culpability for evil actions. Though this paradox is not easy to explain, similar statements stand beside each other throughout Scripture. NIV Zondervan Study Bible

31 Since it was the preparation day, the Jews did not want the bodies to remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a special day). They requested that Pilate have the men’s legs broken and that their bodies be taken away. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other one who had been crucified with him. 33 When they came to Jesus, they did not break his legs since they saw that he was already dead. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. 35 He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth. 36 For these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: **Not one of his bones will be broken.** 37 Also, another Scripture says: **They will look at the one they pierced.**

V. The writer’s testimony – 19:35

A. He was present and saw these events

B. So that we may believe

35 He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth.

1. Believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, the King
2. So that faith will bring us into a life-giving relationship with God (no longer alienated from God)