

“BELIEVE ME, I’M TELLING YOU THE TRUTH!”

John 19:31-37

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

In our last message from John we entered into the Holy of Holies and witnessed some profound truths that we are unworthy even to consider! Jesus spoke His last words on the cross—and majestic words they were:

- “Woman, behold your son. Behold your mother.”
- “It is finished.”
- “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” (Implied in John—found in Matthew)

The work of redemption was completed—and remains so permanently. Nothing else need or may be added. *If you ever hear anyone state that something else must be added in order to make salvation possible, he is a liar! Run away from that teacher as fast as you can!*

When Jesus’ work was completed, He delivered over His human spirit—no one took it away from Him. He willingly surrendered it!

Now the Jewish leaders who were plotting Jesus’ death were not present to see Him willingly submit His spirit; they were busy trying to get the process over with as quickly as possible so as to avoid breaking the Sabbath and violating the regulations in the OT concerning the Sabbath. **It was OK to commit judicial murder against a totally innocent person; it was OK to kill the holy and harmless Son of God; but it was not OK to break the rules concerning the observance of the Sabbath Day!**

However, there was someone who was there and who accurately observed and recorded all the important details. He left for us a record of these most important events—a record that is totally accurate and reliable. Moreover, the Scriptures reinforce the truth of these events. What has just happened did not catch the Lord by surprise—the Lord predicted the details of Messiah Jesus’ death hundreds of years before they took place.

No one need have any doubt about the events of Christ’s death; no one need fear that the record is mistaken; no one need worry that the salvation they have experienced through the completed work of Jesus Christ is in danger of being nullified due to human or divine error!

God here is in complete control, and everything happens exactly as He has said it would, and exactly as He determined that it would.

You must believe God’s word, for the human author witnessed these events with his own eyes, and God himself has told us about these events long before they ever took place.

BELIEVE, BE SAVED, BE SECURE!

I. I’VE SEEN IT WITH MY OWN EYES (31-35)

A. Hastening the Death of the Victims (31-33)

1. The approach of the Sabbath
2. The requirements of the law—not overnight; not on a Sabbath.

3. A special Sabbath connected with Passover—possibly the feast of first-fruits celebration.

B. Breaking the legs of the victims (*crurifragium*)

A custom often united with crucifixion; often insisted upon by the Jews in order to keep bodies off crosses overnight.

A **brutal** custom! Often resulted in quick death; certainly hastened death.

1. The legs of the two criminals broken.
2. Jesus' legs not broken—He was already dead.

C. Piercing Jesus' side (34)

1. Purpose—to guarantee His death; not likely an action of sheer cruelty.
2. Result—**water and blood** gush out.

Many ideas about the significance of the water and blood.

- Indicates that He was already dead.
- Likely shows us the manner of His death—not denying the truth that He willingly gave up His life on His own terms.
- He likely died of a ruptured heart—due to the extreme stress of being the sin-bearer of the world.
- A possible allusion to the Jewish theory of the body consisting of water and blood—shows that Jesus was fully human.
- Symbolical significance of the water and blood. Blood—redemption; water, cleansing and life-giving power.
- Does not refer to the sacraments—baptism and Eucharist!
- Life comes by the appropriation of Jesus' blood (John 6:53-56).
- John refers to us being born of water (3:5), drinking living water (4:10-14), and having living water flow from the inner being (7:38-39).
- Water frequently refers to cleansing in the Scriptures.
- Both terms show us that **life comes from Christ**—in His death He is still the source of life.
- *The death of Jesus was the real life of men.*
- Many early church fathers made a connection with Eve from the side of the first Adam—which led eventually to man's death, and Water and Blood coming from the second Adam's side leading to life.
- Many early church fathers refer to the so-called “two-fold baptism” undergone by Christians—by water and by blood, baptism and martyrdom.

Dead bodies don't give life to others; but Jesus' body does!

D. Bearing Witness to the event (35)

1. The author has seen and has borne witness. (cf. I Jn. 1:1-3)
Past action with certain continuing results!
2. His witness is true and genuine. (His testimony is sufficient.)

3. What he says is the truth—he knows that. (It is not false.)
4. He wants you to believe.

John the apostle's testimony is reliable—but there is another testimony even more reliable—God's Word.

II. THE SCRIPTURES TOLD OF THIS HUNDREDS OF YEARS BEFORE (36-37)

These events happened because they had to occur just the way Scripture predicted.

A. Jesus is the perfect Passover Lamb with no broken bones (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12)
Not as likely as a reference to Ps. 34:20—speaks of preserving saints alive; Ex. And Num. refer to the treatment of dead bodies of lambs.

B. Jesus is the rejected, abused, and pierced Savior of His people (Zech. 12:10; cf. Rev. 1:7)

- Zechariah refers to a future scenario when the nation will turn back to the rejected Savior.
- John speaks of a present scenario when they look on Him whom they have just now pierced. The point is that they have now become guilty of this piercing that will enable them to one day look upon Him again and believe in Him.

CONCLUSION

The Bible spoke about all of this—Believe the Bible.
John bore witness to all of this—Believe John.

You have nothing to be ashamed of in being a Christian and trusting in Christ as your Savior.
You have every reason to be confident.

- Jesus was a real man.
- Jesus was God.
- Jesus really died.
- Jesus' death brings redemption and life.
- The Scriptures are true and fulfilled.

John was there and saw it. God was there and saw it hundreds of years before it happened.
Jesus' death is sufficient for your life—trust Him, love Him, live for Him.