



CAPITOL COMMISSION

The Crosswork of Jesus (John 19:25-42)

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FOUR WOMEN WHO LOVED JESUS

John 19:25—Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

Consider the cruel indifference of the soldiers compared to the concern of the women at the cross. There appear to be four women mentioned here: Mary, the mother of Jesus; Salome, Mary's sister; Mary the wife of Clopas; and Mary Magdalene.

Salome is the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee. She brought spices to anoint Jesus' body (*Mark 16:1*). Mary wife of Clopas was the other Mary who watched with Mary Magdalene at the tomb and returned the next day and witnessed the empty grave. She may be the mother of James (also referred to as James the son of Alphaeus). Mary Magdalene is a central witness in the Gospels to the Resurrection of Jesus. Magdala was a village on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. She was delivered from seven demons, but she should not be confused with the prostitute of *Luke 7:37-50*.

John 19:26-27—When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

In the original it merely says, "woman," and not "dear woman." This is not being disrespectful (*see John 2:4*); rather it is a polite way for a Jew to address a woman. That is why the NIV here translates it "dear woman." Jesus consistently shows his concern for others, even as He hangs on the cross and receives all of its terrors and humiliation. It is interesting that Jesus gave custody of his mother to John and not to her other children. This reminds us of *2 Corinthians 6:14* where Paul instructs us not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. In *Mark 10* Jesus tells us we will have many brothers and sisters if we follow Him.

THE CROSS AND PROPHECY

John 19:28-30—Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Psalm 69:21 was the last prophecy for Christ to fulfill before His death. It has been calculated there are 300 prophecies in the Old Testament that are completed in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Try to imagine anyone else fulfilling this staggering number of very specific prophecies—it is mathematically and logically inconceivable.

The wine vinegar was the common drink of the soldiers, but it is not the drink He earlier refused. That drink had a pain numbing property that Jesus would not consume.

"It is finished." The word is *tetelestai* and it literally means it has been completed. It was stamped on ancient loan documents to show the debt had been paid. Jesus paid what we owe. From *Luke 23:46* we know His next and last words were, "...Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

In Christ, this is our hope also. When this life is done we will flee to the palaces of Paradise (*Luke 23:43*). We know this is true because Jesus told the thief next to Him that he would be in Paradise with God that very same day. Paul reminds us that it is better to be absent from the body and present with the Lord (*2 Corinthians 5:6-9*).

John 19:31— Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.

The sun was setting and the Sabbath would begin very soon so the Jews asked for the legs to be broken which would bring death quickly from shock, blood loss, and particularly suffocation. Note how the Jews upheld the letter of Sabbath keeping but consented to the crime of murder. (cf. *Matthew 23:23*)

John 19:32-37—The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

BIBLE STUDIES

MONDAYS @ 5-6 P.M., ROOM 1425-PIZZA 1200 CT
MONDAYS @ NOON, CHAPEL

NORTH CAROLINA

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Exodus 12:46 and *Numbers 9:12* instructed the Israelites not to break the bones of the Passover lamb. *Psalms 34:20* says, "He keeps all his bones, not one of them is broken." *Zechariah 12:10* states, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken."

John, the eyewitness, gives us the remarkable testimony of blood and water (order of words is not important to the practice of the time) that flowed from the side of the Savior. This unusual fact is evidence of the veracity of John's report. It is not likely such a fact would have been mentioned in a false or mythologized report.

It has been suggested that the flow of blood and water from the pierced side of Jesus is evidence that he succumbed to a broken heart and not suffocation as would be the usual cause of death from crucifixion.

THE BURIAL

John 19:38-39—Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.

Joseph and Nicodemus were both members of the Sanhedrin. Now they mustered the courage to ask Pilate for the body of Christ. Joseph is mentioned in each of the Gospels, but only in connection with the burial of Christ. Nicodemus is the same man who came to Jesus by night in *John 3:1-21*. The spices were used to mask the odor of death as the body began the process of decomposition. It appears that these men did not expect a resurrection.

John 19:40-42—Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

The Lord continues to control all circumstances, even those of His own death! His body was placed in a rich man's tomb fulfilling prophecy.

**He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.** *(Isaiah 53:9)*

First century Jewish burial practices often used caves modified for burial. Platforms were fashioned into the walls where the body would be placed. After the body was decomposed and only the skeleton remained, the bones would be placed in an ossuary, or a bone box. This smaller box then could be kept in the tomb along with many other ossuaries. This custom did not persist among the Jews after the first century.

Why does the prophecy say He was assigned a grave with the wicked? How should we understand this?

In *Matthew 12:40* Jesus likened his time in the grave to the account of Jonah.

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

It was the practice in biblical times to count all days inclusively and to mark any part of a day as a day. Therefore, using our calendar days, Jesus was buried on Friday, remained in the grave on Saturday (which started sundown on our Friday night), and resurrected on Sunday morning).

Here are two summations by Charles Spurgeon:

Leave out the cross, and you have killed the religion of Jesus. Atonement by the blood of Jesus is not an arm of Christian truth; it is the heart of it.

Nothing provokes the devil like the cross. Modern theology has for its main object the obscuration of the doctrine of atonement. These modern cuttle-fishes make the water of life black with their ink. They make out sin to be a trifle, and the punishment of it to be a temporary business; and thus they degrade the remedy by underrating the disease.¹

1. Spurgeon.US Quotes, Exploring the Mind and Heart of the Prince of Preachers, <http://spurgeon/quotes.htm>, The Cross