

John 19.16b-30—The Passover Lamb

- I. Introduction
 - a. The world takes issue with the claim that God is holy and yet there exists evil in the world. The answer to the problem of evil is the cross of Jesus Christ, God's Son.
 - b. We need to see the cross of Christ as the greatest display of God's love that man could ever behold and the cross of Christ as the greatest display of the seriousness of sin and the holiness of God man could ever behold.
 - c. I'd also like for us to notice that there's something missing in these verses. It is necessarily assumed but intentionally absent. This passage is obviously about death by crucifixion but there is not mention of blood and gory details we might expect.
 - d. It seems John is far more concerned about identifying Jesus as the promised Messiah who fulfills the Scriptures and the mission for which God sent him instead of the pulling at your heartstring with the details of his sufferings.
 - e. So, the glories of this passage are not the degree of suffering but rather who suffered, namely the Son of God and Christ's wise, faithful response to the very end.
- II. Main Point
 - a. Jesus is who he says he is and his death was the fulfillment of the Scriptures and the completion of his mission.
- III. Outline
 - a. The Lord did Provide (16b-17)
 - b. King Jesus bears the false charge (18-22)
 - c. What is done with Jesus' clothes identifies who he is (23-24)
 - d. He loves his own to the end (25-27)
 - e. Victory—It is Finished (28-30)
- IV. Exposition
 - a. We left off last week with Pilate handing Jesus over to be crucified. Therefore, he is taken by the soldiers to carry out the sentence. Thus, bearing his own cross, Jesus is led outside the gate to the place of the Skull. Why would I entitle this section: The Lord did Provide? Let's take a look.
 - i. The manner Jesus went out was bearing his own cross. It reminds me of the story of Abraham and Isaac. You might recall that God was testing Abraham to see if he loved him.
 1. (Gen. 22:1-2) After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."
 - a. This is a strange request that Abraham doesn't even hesitate to obey.
 - b. We are told it is a test to which we must anticipate that God has no intention of letting him go through with it. God did not tell Abraham that this was a test but he passed the test.
 2. The connection with our passage is the fact that the wood was laid on Isaac.
 - a. (Gen. 22:6) ⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together.
 - i. Isaac had obviously done this before because in the next verse he asks his father, "Where is the lamb?"
 - ii. Abraham replied, "The Lord will provide."
 3. You probably know how the story ends. Abraham laid the wood on his only son and in nerve wracking fashion, God stops the knife of Abraham at the very last second.

- a. That part is so dramatic that we might have just focused on the love and obedience of Abraham. Yet, there's more to the story. God does provide a lamb as a substitute for Isaac.
 - b. But that lamb only pointed to the Lamb here in verse 17 who is bearing the wood himself. God did provide the perfect sacrifice needed to save us.
 - ii. John also tells us that Jesus was crucified with two others. But why is this information important to the story?
 1. These two criminals have not been part of the story. How are they significant? Again, John is concerned with the identity of Christ. He didn't need to explain what a crucifixion looked like. They all know that.
 2. But what is important is who is dying on a cross. Again and again, we have looked back to what had been promised to confirm Jesus' identity.
 - a. What are we to see here? (Isa. 53:12) he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors.
 - b. This was how they should have known who Jesus was. To be numbered with transgressors was to be thought of as a transgressor yourself. Jesus was innocent but the crowd thinks that surely, he has done something or he would not be numbered with other criminals.
 - c. Could you die an innocent death with everyone thinking you were guilty? Would you have been silent like Jesus? This should indicate to us how much he loves his people.
 - iii. At every point, John emphasizes the sovereign plan of redemption by God in every detail and the Son's perfect obedience. The OT can be understood as "Promises Made" and the NT as "Promises Fulfilled."
 - iv. The promise that God will provide has been provided in his one and only Son. The fact that God's own Son dies for the sins of his people is unfathomable. It should move us to worship!
- b. Next, Pilate makes a sign to display the charge for which he is crucified. Therefore, Jesus bears the false charge for us. And ironically, the claim is true. He really is the King.
 - i. "It was the custom for the crime of which the person doomed to crucifixion had been found guilty to be written on a tablet or placard and hung around his neck or carried before him as he made his way to the place of execution" (Carson 610).
 - ii. We must conclude from Pilate's inscription that Jesus died for being the King of the Jews, not blasphemy. The original charge stood. There was no death penalty for claiming to be king in God's law. But Roman law demanded any claim to rule what Caesar owned resulted in public crucifixion for all to see.
 1. In other words, if you oppose Caesar this is what will happen to you.
 2. That's why it was near the city and written in three languages so that all would be warned.
 - iii. The chief priests of the Jews do not like the wording of the sign. The statement sounds like a stated fact instead of a false claim.
 1. The chief priests suggest an edit that would reflect this as a claim they did not believe to be true: "This man said, 'I am King of the Jews.'"
 - iv. Pilate has been pushed around enough and perceives they have no legal grounds for their demand. His edit is permanent: What I have written, I have written."
 - v. More about this sign at the end of the sermon but I have a problem with the sign.
- c. But let's move on for now. Again, this story is lacking the gore and blood you might expect. John had rather talk about Jesus' clothes. And as I hope we will see; they reveal that he is the righteous sufferer of Psalm 22.

- i. Why is this more important than the details of his death? Well, because God wants you to have all the most obvious proof that Jesus is who he says he is. I mean there are two other men dying the same death next to him but for significantly different reasons.
 1. They die because of the consequences of their crimes not because of their righteousness. And it was promised that he would be numbered with the transgressors.
- ii. Really...there must be something more to these clothes, right? Why would John waste time and space to talk about these soldiers dividing up his clothes? This is normal for them. Everyone knows they do this.
- iii. Indeed, there is something more. Psalm 22 is significant to the crucifixion of Jesus. Matthew and Mark make use of the beginning line of the psalm: "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" But John makes note of this seemingly insignificant part to make sure we know Jesus is the one spoken of in that psalm.
 1. Psalm 22 describes the afflicted one. "Though David is the author, he is not the one speaking. The afflicted one is. David begins to address the congregation in v. 23 about the afflicted one. He then speaks to the righteous sufferer beginning in v. 25." (Sailhamer 319).
 - a. David says in (Ps. 22:27) all the families of the nations shall worship before you, which alludes to that image of the Son of Man in Daniel 7:13-14.
 - b. It appears that his suffering will be victorious over death. The death of the afflicted one and the Son of Man in Daniel are the same.
 - c. Listen to this passage in (Dan. 7:13-14) ¹³ "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.
 2. You might be wondering how this has anything to do with Jesus' clothes being divided up.
 - a. John is telling us that the one who suffered like what is described in Psalm 22 is Jesus. And by his death he is presented before God and this everlasting kingdom was given to him and peoples of all nations come to serve and worship him forever in his eternal kingdom.
 - b. Jesus is the afflicted one in Psalm 22 and the Son of Man in Daniel. His suffering purchased the eternal Kingdom which is marked by the praise of the nations.
 - c. That is the great and awesome purpose of salvation—to the praise of his glorious grace!
 - d. Can we take a sneak peek into the future to see if this actually happens? Sure! (Rev. 7:9-10) ⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"
- iv. So, yes. I think seeing four Roman soldiers doing what was customary to them fulfilling Psalm 22 is very important. Unknown to them it says in (Jn. 19:24) So the soldiers did these things. Wow. How did that happen? Luck? I don't think so.
- d. This next scene displays the kind of love Jesus is known for—loving his own to the end!
 - i. John describes the scene of four women standing by the cross of Jesus. One of them being his mother.

- ii. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother."
 - 1. Again, the details of his mother's response would be fitting for a "Go Fund Me" page. No doubt their hearts are broken and the tears flow with ease.
 - 2. We understand that Jesus, even at his dying moment, was making provisions for his mother to be taken care of by the disciple that we normally understand to be John.
 - a. It says in (Jn. 19:27) And from that hour the disciple (John) took her to his own home.
 - b. It's strange that Jesus doesn't somehow seek to pass this responsibility on to his younger brothers. But we have been told that his brothers do not believe.
 - i. Back in (Jn. 7:5) ⁵ For not even his brothers believed in him.
 - ii. And it's worth noting that his family thought Jesus had gone crazy-- (Mk. 3:21) ²¹ And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."
 - c. I think Jesus gives John the responsibility to care for his mother, who has given evidence of her own belief here and in Acts, is because it's a picture of how the church is to look.
 - i. When Jesus' family came looking for him because they had heard he was out of his mind, they were unable to get to him. Word came to him that they were seeking him.
 - ii. Jesus defined family—indeed the family of God like this: (Mk. 3:35) ³⁵ For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."
 - iii. I think this is why he gives John and not his own brothers care for his mother. His brothers did come to faith later.
- iii. Jesus radically defines what it truly means to be a family. So much so, that he will say you must not love anyone more than Jesus!
 - 1. (Lk. 14:26-27) ²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.
 - 2. If the ultimate love of our heart is not Jesus, then we cannot be his disciple. Nothing else can occupy that spot. That's why it is so important that we not make some impulsive, emotional decision to follow Jesus. That why it's important that we have clear evidence that he is who he says he is. The decision to follow Christ is not easy. If Christ suffered then those who follow him will suffer as well.
 - 3. But we live in an age that has cheap grace and easy believism. We have evangelistic rallies where many professions are made but very few continue to follow Christ. We are content with sealing the deal by saying a prayer and we believe they are now good to go and move on to the next. That's just not how the Bible describes the process.
 - iv. You must take up your cross and follow Jesus.
- e. Why? Because Jesus took up the cross and finished the mission of redemption! This last section is void of the gasps for breath but rather Jesus uses his last breath to fulfill what has been promised in the Scriptures to the very end. He uses his last breath to sound the victory!
 - i. Most would understand Jesus saying "I thirst" as a fulfillment of Psalm 69. In that Psalm, there is a great desire for the salvation of Zion and the establishment of God's Kingdom. The psalm ends like this: (Ps. 69:34-36) ³⁴ Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them. ³⁵ For God will save Zion and build up the cities of Judah, and people shall dwell there

and possess it; ³⁶ the offspring of his servants shall inherit it, and those who love his name shall dwell in it.

1. The psalmist isn't saying this with no basis. But rather he is looking back on the promises of Psalm 2 which finds its basis in the promise made to David in (2 Sam. 7:16) ¹⁶ "And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."
 2. But the bulk of the content of Psalm 69 is focused on the miserable state God's people are in as they await the fulfillment of the promise.
- ii. I think the wait is over. Jesus is here taking their misery. He is the fulfillment of the promises made for which they longed for. It says in (Ps. 69:21) "for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink."
1. Do you see it? He is the promise keeper. He is their salvation. He is their King! Victory. It is finished. The mission for which he came has been completed. He came to save his people from their sins by taking the punishment for them.
 2. He bows his head and willingly hands over his spirit. It was taken but given.
 - a. What wonderful love is this? When I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown, Christ laid aside his crown for my soul!

V. Response

- a. But guess what? I have a problem with the signage.
 - i. I do not want to change Pilate's words for they are true. But I would like to add some. I need to add my sins to sign to which Jesus would not refuse and the list is long and ugly. But Jesus' grace is greater than my failures.
 - ii. He didn't come to save the righteous but the unrighteous. We find our greatest need met in the cross of Christ if we will come to Jesus and bow the knee!
 - iii. The cross is the greatest display of love and the greatest display of the seriousness of sin. There is no clearer picture than this. If by faith you come and apply the blood of the Lamb then God judgment will pass over you!