

What is that a picture of? I hope your eyes are drawn to the light and the empty tomb. Oh, yes...we see the three crosses...yes, Jesus had to die...but death couldn't hold Him...Jesus got up from the grave...destroying death, hell and the grave! And you know what? You have to believe in that, what's picture in that graphic to be saved. You say, "What?" You have to believe in the resurrection of Jesus to be saved?

Romans 10:8-9

⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Do you understand? You must believe in the resurrection of Jesus to be saved. Therefore, the resurrection is so much more than just a fact of history...it's has to be part of anyone's history, who is going to heaven. Because you can't get there and not believe in the resurrection. Resurrection, then, is the point of the coming of Jesus to this earth. Yes, Jesus dying on the cross satisfied God's righteous requirements...Jesus offering Himself for the sins of His people. When Jesus rose from the dead, that assured our resurrection...those who would trust and follow Jesus. Bottom line...because He got up from the grave, so can we!

Thus, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the greatest event in human history. It is the cornerstone of our redemption and when a believer dies...BECAUSE OF HIS RESURRECTION, we will be resurrected straight into His presence. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord and that's critical, because we're all going to die, short of the return of Jesus. The Bible is clear:

Hebrews 9:27

²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.

You and I escape judgment if we believe in Jesus trusting in His resurrection. Today, we're going to see in detail: "The Resurrection of Jesus" You're in chapter 19, let's pick up in verse 31.

John 19:31

³¹ Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would 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.

Really amazing, isn't it? As always with the religious elite, they're totally inculcated in their hypocrisy and it always reeks...nauseatingly so. They have just killed the Messiah, the Savior, the Son of God, at the hands of the Romans, and they're worrying about being defiled. Yes. Straining at gnats. They've get Jesus off the cross by nightfall, which, according to Jewish time, begins at dusk...therefore, according to most scholars, this day is Friday, because the next day is the Sabbath. We just saw this...see it again in the parenthesis:

(for that Sabbath was a high day)

Scholars tell us that a "High Day," is when you have the Passover celebration and the Sabbath coincide. Now there are scholars who debate the exact way this works and the minutia of the way the days fall...and we could put several charts on the screens...but, I'm going to stick with what's here in front of us. Jump down to verse 42, quickly.

John 19:42

⁴² So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Point being...it's the Day of Preparation for what? Sabbath and in verse 14a. Go back there...

John 19:14a

¹⁴ Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover.

We've seen from verses 14, 32 and 42, that the day of Jesus' crucifixion was a day of Preparation...preparation for the Sabbath and the Passover. Peter tells us in Mark's gospel:

Mark 15:42

⁴² And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath.

So, the next day is the Sabbath, that's clear. Now, you may ask, "Well, where do the Jewish leaders get this idea of getting a dead man, hung a tree, buried before a Sabbath?" Watch the screens...

Deuteronomy 21:22-23

²² "And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, ²³ his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance.

And so, there's the law...and there's the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders. They've killed an innocent man, but so as to not defile themselves and their land, WE NEED TO SPEED UP THE DEATH! But how? BREAK THE LEGS...that's what they're using to push up to get air in their lungs. Ultimately all three men on the crosses, including Jesus will die of suffocation. They can't breathe unless they push up on their legs to get air in their lungs. The Romans agree, and out comes the mallet...a large sledgehammer and they're ready to smash legs.

John 19:32

³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him.

See this depiction:



The soldiers start on the legs of the men on either side of Jesus. They break both those men's legs and they're going to come to Jesus, the man in the middle. SIDE NOTE: all three men have only been on their crosses since 9 am...it's now getting near dusk, but historians tell us that many men could live 2-3 days. Unless you break their legs. Now, they come to Jesus...

John 19:33-34

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 at once there came out blood and water.

Jesus is dead. But the soldiers have to make sure. If one of those guys isn't dead, then those soldiers could be guilty of not doing their duty and face death themselves for not completing the job. You see, these soldiers are professional executioners and they don't make mistakes and to make sure Jesus is dead, one of the soldiers, likely charged with the duty, pierced Jesus' side and scholars say the blood and water signified that he pierced either to the pericardial sack around the heart, which contains water, or into one of the lungs, which now full of water/fluid from asphyxiation and that's why blood and water came out. Church, let this be a reminder to us that Jesus was human...just like us. Yes, He was God in the flesh...but He had flesh/body just like us!

Now, let me ask you a question: Why COULDN'T Jesus' legs be broken? Do you know? Because of prophecy! We're told in Scripture how Jesus would die. Think with me... How did John the Baptist, his cousin, describe Jesus when He showed up on the scene? "Behold, the LAMB OF GOD who takes away the sin of the world." Could a lamb being sacrificed have any sort of blemish? No...and certainly not one with broken legs. This is described in Exodus 12:46, quoted in verses 36-37.

John 19:36-37

³⁶ For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken." ³⁷ And again another Scripture says, "They will look on him whom they have pierced."

That's Zechariah 12:10, which BTW, was written almost 500 years before Jesus was born:

Zechariah 12:10

¹⁰ "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn."

Regarding the Passover lamb, Numbers 9:12 says:

Numbers 9:12

¹² They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break any of its bones; according to all the statute for the Passover they shall keep it.

But there's something else you need to know... Pilate, himself, wanted to make sure Jesus was dead, because he was scared to death for his political life. As you know, the Jewish Leaders have no problem reporting Pilate to Rome, because they've done it before. Peter tell us this in Mark 15:

Mark 15:44-45

⁴⁴ Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died.⁴⁵ And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. ⁴⁵ And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

Now church, I tell you all of this, because there are some who say that Jesus just swooned. The SWOON THEORY. Some people say that Jesus passed out on the cross. He didn't really die and once He got into the cool tomb, he was revived. So, He really didn't die. In fact, that's what Muslims say when they quote the Koran, which says this: "They did not kill him, neither did they crucify him; it only seemed to be so." Well, I think what we've just read leaves no doubt... Jesus was dead. The soldiers knew it, Pilate knew it... everyone there on Calvary knew it. There's no doubt... water and blood poured from the Savior! He's dead.

Now let me ask you this... have you noticed that we skipped a verse? Verse 35. We don't skip verses around here... but, I did this on purpose. I now want you to see what the Apostle John said about all of this fulfilled prophecy.

John 19:35

³⁵ He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe.

John would go on to say something similar in 1 John 1:1-2:

1 John 1:1-2

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—

I want to remind you that the entire purpose of John's gospel account that we've been studying for months is that you might believe in Jesus! Remember this...

John 20:30-31

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Well, Jesus is dead and then the religious elite show up again... but, not who you might think...

John 19:38

³⁸ After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body.

Now, the Romans didn't bury criminals. No way are they going to waste time doing that... They would simply wait the 2-3 days for them to finally die their agonizing death, and then simply let the corpses be eaten by the birds until they took the time to get them down and then they'd throw them in the city landfill. Gehenna. A place where they kept a fire burning all the time to keep the stench from overtaking the city. Gehenna is another name for Hell...where the fire never goes out. So, the soldiers were happy to have one less guy, Jesus, to haul down to Gehenna. They could get done quicker and get home for dinner! Yes, yes, take Him!

But guess what Church, this is yet again, in an amazing fulfillment of prophecy...

Isaiah 53:9a

⁹And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death.

What does that mean? Jesus' grave was assigned by the Romans with the wicked, but God would have it that His Son would be buried in a rich man's tomb, Joseph of Arimathea. Peter tells us that Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin.

Mark 15:43

⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

You know, it makes me wonder if he was like an insider? A plant? John said that Joseph was afraid of the Jews. You might ask: "What was he afraid of?" My best guess: losing his job. But some way, somehow, he finally TOOK COURAGE...and as soon as Jesus had died...(and he must have been watching, perhaps even there on Calvary with the other members of the Sanhedrin), He said, "I'm following Him! I believe He is the Messiah!" Problem is: when he showed up to get Jesus' body from Pilate, that's it...his role with the Sanhedrin would forever be finished. He's out! Done. Nope! No more lucrative position for Joseph. Now he's the enemy.

You know sometimes Jesus asks us to step out of the crowd and TAKE COURAGE. Are you doing that? Is the Holy Spirit saying anything to you? Listen, it won't be easy...it wasn't easy for Joseph, he gave up everything; but, I challenge you to take courage and step out of the crowd, or in the case of Nicodemus, to step out of the darkness, and into the light. He's another one of the religious elite who has shown up...a man we saw back in John 3, (six months earlier). The one who came at night.

John 19:39

³⁹ Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus^[a] by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds^[b] in weight.

What a scene! These two men...religious elites, turned Christ followers, come to prepare Jesus' body for burial. Now, think about it...they're going to touch a dead body, which will defile them for the Sabbath and the Passover celebration. But you know what? When you go after Jesus, you don't mind touching Him...being associated with Him, because He'll change your life...He'll cleanse you and purify you...and make you new! But, oh, to the world you'll be seen as defiled. Not following their system. Well, Joseph and Nicodemus have the body...

John 19:40-41

⁴⁰ So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

Time passes and we reach chapter 20 and Sunday morning is dawning...the first day of the week...and this, by the way, is why we worship on Sundays. Chapter 20, verse 1.

John 20:1

¹ Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

So, John tells us that Mary Magdalene came to the tomb. Remember, Jesus had cast seven demons out of her...and because of that...she was totally devoted to Jesus. He had delivered her from such a terrible bondage and this is why: "One who has been forgiven much, loves much."

Think of that! Mary Magdalene, a woman, got to see Jesus alive first! How about that! Oh, listen, Jesus raised the status of women immeasurably. Why? Because women were seen as property...as no better than a good horse, donkey or cow... Yet, Jesus revealed Himself first to a woman. Sadly, we're told that many of the Rabbi's said: "**It is better that the words of the Law be burned, than be delivered by a woman.**" How utterly ridiculous! Jesus sent word of His resurrection by women. Yes, women. Mary Magdalene wasn't alone. Peter tells us...

Mark 16:1-4

¹ When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ² And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³ And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴ And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large.

You may ask, "Who moved the stone?" Answer...there was an angel and an earthquake. Watch:

Matthew 28:1-4

¹ Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.

And that's when the guards fled...(which, BTW, could cost them their lives...leaving the tomb unguarded)...but that's how afraid they were. Well, Mary Magdalene heads out to tell the news...

John 20:2-4

² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³ So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴ Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

John is younger, late teens or early 20's by now and he outruns Peter. But, I sometimes wonder if Peter was hesitant or afraid of what He would see or even (in his mind) the outlandish possibility of running into Jesus first, after having denied Him three times.

But there's something else: John hadn't deserted Peter. John could have easily been done with Peter. He could have thought, "What a head case...a loose cannon. He almost got us all killed in Gethsemane with the sword stunt, cutting off Malchus' ear." But John was willing to stay connected with Peter. They had fished together...they had known each other for years...

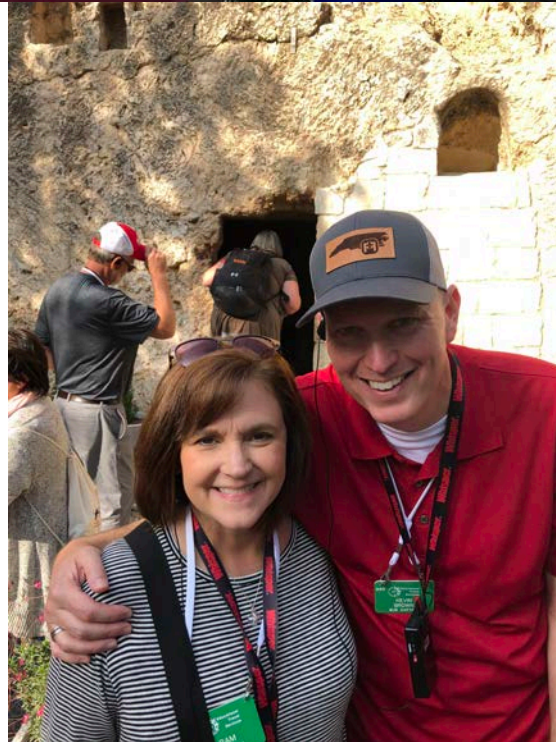
NO! John wasn't going to throw that friendship away, not when Peter desperately needed a friend. And that reminds us all that we should not be too quick to give up on someone who's made a grave mistake. Haven't we all? John didn't give up on Peter, and isn't it interesting that John, nicknamed

by Jesus as a “Son of Thunder,” because of his temper, had matured quite a bit, don’t you think? John gets to the tomb...

John 20:5

5 And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in.

I’m convinced those grave clothes looked like an empty cocoon, meaning Jesus passed right through them in His glorified body. And Jesus had folded the face cloth and placed it by itself. He’s in total control. You know, I’ve had the privilege, (twice), of stooping myself to go into a tomb that is much like the one Jesus would have been buried in. Some say it’s THE tomb, but there’s no way of knowing that for sure. Here’s some pictures from my trip in 2018. This is walking up to the tomb...



We got to go inside and it's gated off now



I want you to think about this...if you're John and Peter and you look inside that tomb and you see only the graveclothes, what would you think? Watch this...

John 20:6-7

⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus'^[a] head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself.

What does all this mean? It means that for those who say that Jesus' body was stolen, well, that doesn't hold water. Why? Because if you come to steal a body, why would you unwrap it. Grave robbers don't take the time to unwrap bodies. They would have taken the body, graveclothes and all! For John, when he came to the entrance, he saw the graveclothes, but it seemed to paralyze him. He didn't go in. But Peter did. You know Peter's a lot of things...but, he's not bashful. Finally, John goes in...

John 20:8-9

⁸ Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to their homes.

Peter was puzzled by what he saw, but John believed...he finally made the connection. Perhaps for John there was an "explosion of reason." That what skeptic, turned believer Lee Strobel, the Case For Christ guy, said happened to him. I believe for John, finally, all of those OT prophecies and everything Jesus had said about His resurrection on the third day came flooding into his mind...it's true! He's alive!

So, I ask you: Are you puzzled or do you believe? Death is coming to us all...that's the Bad News. But the Good News is that Jesus overpowered and conquered death, hell and the grave...not just for Himself only, but for all who place their trust in Him. Warren Wiersbe says, "the empty cross and the empty tomb are the receipts telling us that our sin debt has been paid in full." The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:

1 Corinthians 15:55-57

⁵⁵ “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Where do you stand? Will you remain puzzled or will you believe?