

A. John 19:31-42 – Events immediately following Jesus' death

1. John 19:31 – *Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away . To **hasten** their death, the religious leaders asked Pilate to order the legs of the crucified men to be broken.*
 - a. It was the Friday before Passover. Concerned with fulfilling **minor** details of the Law, the chief priests wanted the bodies taken down.
 - 1) According to the Law of Moses, the Israelites were never to **leave** a dead body hanging in a tree (or on a cross) overnight. Deuteronomy 21:22-23, Matthew 27:57-58, Galatians 3:13
 - 2) Depending on the year, Passover could fall on any **day** of the week. This particular year Passover fell on the Sabbath, making it an extra special Sabbath. John 12:12
 - b. Although, breaking the legs of the victim would add insult to injury, it would greatly speed up death. Not only would the pain be more than anyone could bear, with broken legs the individual would be unable to lift up the body to **breathe**, and this would result in death by asphyxiation.
 - c. In 1 Corinthians 5:7b Paul said, “ *For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.*” If Jesus’ legs were **broken**, Jesus would not have qualified as a suitable Passover lamb. Exodus 12:46 highlights that the legs of a Passover lamb were never to be broken.
 - d. This passage also proves that Jesus did not merely die by asphyxiation as some might contend. He willingly **gave up** His life. He was both the sacrifice and the priest on the Cross. Hebrews 2:17, 7:26-27; 1 John 3:16
2. John 19:32-33 – *So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. Since Jesus was already dead, there was no **reason** to break His legs.*
 - a. Way back in Exodus, God knew that in the distant future when Jesus the perfect Passover lamb would be slain, His legs would not be **broken**. That is the only reason the Israelites were not to break any of the Passover lamb’s bones. Keeping the bones intact certainly did not make it easier to prepare or consume the Passover lamb. Exodus 12:46
 - b. Jesus did not picture the Passover sacrifice; the Passover sacrifice pictured **Him**.
 - c. After hundreds of years of wondering why God did not allow the lamb’s bones to be broken on Passover, any honest Israelite would have taken **note** of the fact that Jesus’ bones were not broken when He was crucified.
3. John 19:34a – *But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. This literally fulfilled Zechariah 12:10b which says, “So that they will look on Me whom they have **pierced**.”* The piercing of Jesus’ side proved He was truly dead. Jesus later offered to show this scar to Thomas.
 - a. Just to make sure Jesus had not simply swooned, one of the soldiers **jabbed** his javelin into Jesus’ chest cavity right below His ribs. John recorded that when he did this, both blood and water came out. This separation of Jesus’ blood was proof that He had died.
 - b. The prophetic Psalm 22:14 says, “*I am poured out like **water** , and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within me.*”
4. John 19:35 – *And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe .* John, who witnessed these events, emphasized that this was a **literal** and accurate description of what happened and the actual fulfillment of prophecy. Exodus 12:46
 - a. There was an eyewitness to this actual moment who gave accurate testimony of what occurred. This was not mere conjecture or hearsay. The one who gave this report was 100% correct. You can believe it now and keep right on believing it into the future (Jn. 20:31). Jesus **verifiably** died on the cross for our sins.
 - b. This passage may help us understand a puzzling passage in 1 John 5 where John included proof of the humanity of Jesus Christ. When John wrote 1 John there were those with **Gnostic** thinking who denied that Jesus came in true humanity (Docetism), so John gave the water, blood and Spirit as proofs of His humanity. 1 John 5:1

- c. 1 John 5:6-8 – *This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that **testify** : The Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. Jesus Christ was fully human and fully God.*
- d. Who was this eyewitness who was so certain? It was John himself. He was there at the crucifixion and could verify both the water and the blood that flowed from Jesus' punctured human body. Claiming Christ was merely a **phantom** or apparition was considered blasphemous from John's perspective. 1 John 4:1-2
5. John 19:36 – *For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, “Not a bone of Him shall be broken.”* Christ's bones not being broken is important because it fulfilled Hebrew scriptures. In the Old Testament, Psalm 34:20 predicted the following concerning the Messiah: “*He keeps all his bones, not one of them is **broken**.*”
- a. This detail about Jesus' bones not being broken is significant, because when you consider how Jesus was put to death you might expect many broken bones, but Jesus' bones remained **intact**.
- b. This parallels the sacrificial death of animal victims in the Old Testament, whose bodies were not shattered and torn apart as in pagan religions, but whose flesh (**neck**) was cut instead in a way that allowed the blood to flow freely and the animal to bleed out. Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12, Hebrews 9:7
6. John 19:37 – *And again another Scripture says, “they shall look on Him whom they pierced.”* Here is another mention of Zechariah 12:10 that predicted people would **gaze** at the one they had stabbed or pierced. This scripture came true.
7. John 19:38 – *After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission.* So, he came and took away His body. Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin who up until now had remained a **secret** believer in Christ.
8. John 19:39 – *Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a **hundred** pounds weight .* This exorbitant amount of costly spices showed Nicodemus' love for the Lord. Exodus 30:23, Psalm 45:8, John 7:50-52
9. John 19:40 – *So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews .* Together these two **wealthy** men wrapped Jesus' lifeless body with strips of linen cloth drenched with fragrant spices. This was the common practice of the Jewish people when they buried their dead.
- a. This was in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:9 which says, “His **grave** was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth.”
- b. Contrary to first century heresies, Jesus' lifeless human body was **real**. Joseph and Nicodemus handled Him and prepared Him for burial. However, Jesus wouldn't make use of these preparations for very long!
10. John 19:41 – *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 .* Near the site of the cross was a **brand-new** tomb freshly carved out of the rocks. In those days, only wealthy people were buried in these types of tombs. This tomb was in a garden. John 20:15
11. John 19:42 – *Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there .* Nicodemus and Joseph had to hurry to get Jesus buried before the Sabbath; therefore, they placed His body in a nearby tomb. However, unknown to them, this would only be a **temporary** burial.