

John 19:23-30

23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, 24 so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did these things,

23,24 This is the third clear fulfillment in the Psalm Jesus began to quote on the cross. It begins, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me."* (Psalm 22:1) It goes on to say *they pierced my hands and feet* (Psalm 22:16). As for being crucified while being surrounded by evil men, *"a company of evildoers has encircled me."* And then the passage we have before us, *"They divide my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots."* (ESV)

The Jewish person of that day had an outer and an undergarment. The outer one was removed in warm weather or for working. It could be used as a blanket. They divided up His sandals, belt, head covering and outer garment, a part for each soldier of the squad. The other garment that was woven as one piece was more valuable whole, so they cast lots for it fulfilling the details of the prophecy to both divide and cast lots for His clothes (Psalm 22:18).

25 but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"

25,26 Though the wording in Greek can be two to four people, this translation is likely correct, three named Miriam and Jesus' aunt whom some believe to be Solome, the mother of James and John (Mark 3:17; 15:40). The four soldiers callously divided up the clothes as Jesus looked on in agony while these four women stood in confused grief. What had the angel told Mary? *32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."* Luke 1:32-33 (ESV) It certainly did not look that way then. The words of Simeon came back to Mary, *"A sword will pierce through your own soul also."* (Luke 2:35 ESV) His words had come to pass.

The disciples had just confessed that they believed He came from God (John 16:30). They declared His kingdom was at hand (Mark 10:37), and here He is battered beyond recognition hanging from a Roman cross. Consider how hopeless it all must have seemed to them. We will be faced with those faith-stretching times when it looks like the promises of God cannot possibly come to pass. When we do, remember how hopeless it must have seemed for Mary and the disciples and how gloriously God turned it all around in three days.

27 Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

27 We assume this is John, as he never mentions himself in his own Gospel. Tradition tells us that he took her to Ephesus, where he remained the elder of the church until his natural death. Jesus, struggling for breath to speak, took care of his last obligation on earth. As the oldest son, He cared for His mother. Women in that culture had to be supported by a male relative. He appointed that responsibility to the one disciple who would outlive her.

You might think that all that Jesus was dealing with on the cross would render this issue insignificant. After all, He was dealing with the sins of the world. Jesus is always our perfect example. Family is important, and family obligations, though second to our commitment to God, are still of great importance. Honor your father and mother are godly things because they are a picture of honoring our heavenly Father (Exodus 20:12).

Jesus, the King of kings, hung there gasping for breath, in agony, and then in darkness for three hours as all hell assailed Him (Mark 15:33). John left out this portion of suffering of which we know so little due to the complete darkness that covered the land. Jesus bore it all, all the evil of all of humanity.

28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst."

28 One more fulfillment of Psalm 22, "My tongue sticks to my jaws." (Psalm 22:15 ESV) There are a total of seven sayings on the cross. John only mentions three. The one that had to do with him personally and the one that is a fulfillment of Psalm 22, as this seemed to be a focus of his Passion account. The last will come in a moment, mentioned because of its significance.

"I thirst!" speaks to us of the humanity of Jesus. The cross was not easier because He was the Son of God. He felt what we feel. He was tempted like we are and yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). He knew what a hard day of work was like. He knew what it felt like to be pushed beyond one's limits. He knew insult and injury, and even family rejection (John 7:5). He was every bit human, but without sin.

We are tempted to think it was not as hard for Him as it would be for us, but it was worse. He knew the darkness of sin to a greater extent than we will ever understand, and He took it, along with the physical abuse. We may never understand the assault of hell on Him in those hours of darkness. We would have given-in in a second. That is another reason why only He could do this for us, to face the punishment we deserve in our place. Only He could do it because He had no sins of His own to be judged for so He could take ours upon Himself, and only He could endure the justice our sins deserve and come out victorious. Hallelujah, what a Savior (1 Corinthians 3:11)!

29 A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.

29 Thus fulfilling another prophecy, Psalm 69:21, "For my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink" (ESV) Hyssop was used to sprinkle the blood on the doorposts in the

Exodus (Exodus 12:22). It was a small common shrub. One could not make a long stalk that could hold much, but a soldier would only need about a foot extension which matches with what we know historically about the height of the common cross of crucifixion. These are amazing details with amazing connections with the ancient Scriptures and historical facts. What we are reading is a true account. We must never allow ourselves to be hardened to the agony Jesus endured for us.

Now we look back at Jesus asking His disciples and us to take up our cross and follow Him. He is not asking us to do anything He was not willing to do Himself. He did this for you. Will you take up your cross and follow Him (Matthew 10:38)?

30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

30 Another Gospel writer tells us that He said this with a loud voice (Matthew 27:50). All that the Father had sent Him to do was finished (John 17:4). The word for "finished" is *tetelestai*. It can also mean to be finished paying a debt. Invoices were marked with this word to show they were paid in full. Indeed, our sin debt was paid in full. That is what Jesus came to do. It also means "accomplished" and He accomplished the work His Father gave Him.

Then He gave up His spirit (Luke 23:46). He did not just die because of the loss of blood or cardiac arrest. He released His spirit. He said that no one could take His life from Him as He had the power to lay down His life and to take it up again (John 10:18). Here He used that power to surrender it into the hands of His Father. It was a shout of accomplishment, of victory! So amazing was His conduct in death that one of the four soldiers, a centurion, declared, "*Truly this man was the Son of God.*" (Mark 15:39 ESV)

He was dead. Now some secret followers would ask for the body, and one of them would put Jesus in his own grave. It seemed like the end of the promises. It looked like evil had triumphed. How could you have any hope if you were there that dark day? Sometimes, we just cannot see or even imagine what God is doing.

How can you have hope every day of your life no matter how dark things seem? We know this story goes on to produce a wonder that is unimaginable. No matter how disheartening your current situation is, if you are in Christ, then you can know it will not only work for good, but that a glorious future awaits us (1 Corinthians 2:9). I am not saying you will be free from pain on the way, but you can know that your Sovereign Lord has allowed it for your eternal good. He will help you endure and walk with you through it. The face of God was turned from Jesus during those hours of darkness, so that it would never be turned from you during your hours of darkness.

Jesus endured the cross because of the joy that was set before Him (Hebrews 12:2). There is a joy set before us as well. Let us persevere in carrying our cross each day for the joy set before us as we follow our great example, our Lord Jesus. We need a vision of the glory to come. Keep your eyes on Jesus and not on this passing world.

Are your sins there on the cross with Jesus? If they are, He becomes your King and you become His subject. If not, you are going to have to face the justice your sins deserve. If you are trying to be your own little king, you will go the way of Tiberius,

Pilate, Annas, and all the other sad characters in this true story. Choosing Jesus is choosing to serve a king, a king who only asks us to do what He has modeled for us, for our good. He is a king who has graciously provided forgiveness and calls us to abundant life. He is a king who loves you enough to endure the cross for you.

Questions:

What details of Psalm 22 were fulfilled?

What promises seemed unfulfilled?

How can that help us in similar times?

What three sayings on the cross does John describe?

What other prophecy was fulfilled from the Psalms?

How did Jesus die?

How can we endure?