

The Gospel of John

The Conqueror of Death (Part 2)

John 19:38-42

INTRODUCTION:

The more I have read and studied the scriptures, the more I realize that they have to be inspired by God. One of the convincing factors of the inspiration of scripture is the harmony that exists throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament we see prophecies made hundreds of years before Christ that tell of the events that the Messiah will experience. John often refers to the Old Testament to prove that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies concerning Him as the Messiah. It is from the Old Testament scripture that we can identify Jesus as being the Messiah. The fact that Jesus was able to perfectly fulfill each prophecy concerning Him was in itself a miracle. We saw a few weeks ago that, by human experience, it would be utterly impossible for any human except Jesus to accomplish this feat.

We have seen in the latter part of chapter 19 of John how Christ's power is being exhibited as He hung on the cross and in His death. This morning, Lord willing, we will continue to see His power even in His burial. Jesus had complete control over His death. This will be magnified in chapter 20 when we will experience His resurrection from the dead.

Jesus was not caught off guard by His death. He had tried to tell the Jewish leaders and their followers as well as His disciples that He was going to die and return to His Father in heaven. It was an event that they just could not fully believe.

John 10:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it back. ¹⁸ No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it back. This commandment I received from My Father.”

Jesus said He had the power to lay down His life and the power to take it up again. And that is exactly what He did! He controlled what happened as He hung on the cross; He controlled what happened after He died; He controlled His burial; and then He controlled His own resurrection.

John 19:30 (NASB)

³⁰ Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

He allowed His spirit to leave His body and return to His Father in heaven at the exact time in history to fully accomplish His Father's will. He willed His own death, and then He controlled the events that happened while His dead body was hanging on the cross, during

His burial, while He was in the grave, and most importantly, when He rose from the dead. When He said “**It is finished!**” on the cross, He shouted it at the top of His voice for all to hear through all the ages, the work of redemption was finished. Salvation was accomplished and Satan was defeated.

As prophesied, the soldiers did not break the legs of Jesus. Why? Because the thieves were still alive but Jesus is dead. Although the soldiers knew He was dead, they decided to pierce His side with a spear anyway and immediately blood and water came out. This also fulfilled prophecy.

Stand and Read Scripture

John 19:38-42 (NASB)

³⁸ Now after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret *one* for fear of the Jews, requested of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body. ³⁹ Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred litras *weight*. 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. ⁴¹ Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden *was* a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴² Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Prayer

BODY:

I. POWER OVER DEATH IN HIS BURIAL.

First John shows Christ's power while He was on the cross and during His death. Now I would like to examine His power over death in His burial.

Do you know what would happen normally to a crucified individual?

The Romans would simply let them be eaten by birds or be thrown like road kill on the side of a road somewhere, as a constant reminder that they must not mess with Roman authority. They might end up in the dump. Or, if they were in Jerusalem, their bodies might be thrown in Gehenna where the fire never ceased and the garbage of Jerusalem was burned. The Romans did not bury criminals. The Jews would normally bury them however. That was typically a Jewish thing to do. But I do not know that they had any particular plans to bury Jesus whom they viewed as a blasphemer.

In an amazing, amazing fulfillment of prophecy, we see a name: Joseph of Arimathea. Now there is a prophecy back in Isaiah. Speaking of Jesus, Isaiah writes...

Isaiah 53:9 (NASB)

⁹ And 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.

His grave was assigned to be with wicked men. Sure, He was going to be thrown wherever criminals were thrown. But He was with a rich man in His death.

How is that going to happen?

Who is the rich man?

There are no rich apostles. And there is only one apostle there, and that is John, and he is not rich. The other apostles are hiding out of fear. So who will all of a sudden emerge and claim to be a follower of Jesus, be rich, and have an unused tomb that is close enough that the burial can happen immediately so that Jesus can be buried on Friday?

It was only one person, and we meet him in verse 38.

John 19:38 (NASB)

³⁸ Now after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret *one* for fear of the Jews, requested of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body.

Arimathea: that is the town that Joseph was from. So here is a man who is a secret disciple. He was afraid to entertain any public confession of faith about Christ even though he believed.

John 12:42-43 (NASB)

⁴² Nevertheless many, even of the rulers, believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing *Him*, so that they would not be excommunicated from the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the approval of people rather than the approval of God.

So here is one of these secret believers. Now we know a lot about him because he is mentioned in the other gospels. He is very rich.

Matthew 27:57 (NASB)

⁵⁷ Now when it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea came, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.

He is a good man. He is a member of the Jewish supreme court, the Sanhedrin that sentenced Jesus to death. It is certain that he did not vote that way. He has been a coward, afraid to acknowledge himself when Jesus was ministering and alive. Somehow, in some dramatic way, by divine work on his heart, the coward becomes almost heroic in bravery; and as soon as Jesus has died – which means he must have been around – he sets aside all that fear and all that dread and all that cowardice, and he goes to Pilate and has to reveal that he is a disciple of Jesus, and he asks that he could take away the body of Jesus. Pilate granted permission after checking to make sure He was dead; and Joseph came and took away His body. So now instead of Jesus having a grave with the wicked, He is going to be with a rich man in His death just as had been prophesied in **Isaiah 53:9** that we just read.

We know scripturally that Joseph gathered up courage.

Mark 15:43 (NASB)

⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself also waiting for the kingdom of God; and **he gathered up courage** and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.

Even though Jesus was dead He was still causing men to fulfill prophecy for Him. God used Joseph to allow Jesus to be buried as prophesied on Friday night so that when He resurrected on Sunday morning He would have been buried for three days.

Jesus had said in that He would be in the grave three days and rise.

John 2:13-22 (NASB)

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And within the temple *grounds* He found those who were selling oxen, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated *at their tables*. ¹⁵ And He made a whip of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple *area*, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; ¹⁶ and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away from here; stop making My Father's house a place of business!" ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written: "Zeal for Your house will consume me." ¹⁸ The Jews then said to Him, "**What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?**" ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**" ²⁰ The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and *yet* You will raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But He was speaking about the temple of His body.

And then John jumps ahead and tells us that when Jesus resurrected from the dead they remembered what Jesus had said and, really for the first time, they **truly** believed what Jesus had taught them.

John 2:13-21 (NASB)

²² So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

Before Jesus' death they had tried **so hard** to believe. But Jesus just was not meeting **their** expectations of what they thought the Messiah was going to be and do. They could just not wrap their heads around the fact that a Messiah who was going to reign as a king forever would have to die! How could that be?

Then John reiterates this...

John 20:8-9 (NASB)

⁸ So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb also entered then, and he saw and believed. ⁹ **For they did not yet understand the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead.**

Even the Jews remembered what Jesus had claimed. We just read where Jesus went in and single-handedly cleansed the temple and the Jews asked "**What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?**" and Jesus said "**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**" Listen to what Matthew tells us.

Matthew 27:39-42 (NASB)

³⁹ And those passing by were speaking abusively to Him, shaking their heads, ⁴⁰ and saying, "**You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.**" ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking *Him* and saying, ⁴² "He

saved others; He cannot save Himself! He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him.

This was one of Jesus' signs that He was the Messiah. The Jews were always asking for signs so "they could believe." But even when the signs were given, many of them still refused to believe!

If Jesus was going to resurrect on Sunday then He **has** to be in the grave on Friday. Joseph was the man that God chose to make it happen.

Although Jesus was dead, Joseph was moved in ways that he refused to be moved when Jesus was alive. Jesus' death brought Joseph to an open confession of Jesus and caused him, probably unknowingly, to fulfill prophecy. He was the right guy, because he was a believer; he was the right guy because he was very rich; he was the right guy, because he had a tomb that had never been used; and he was the right guy, because the tomb that he had was right next to where Jesus was crucified, which meant they could get Him in the tomb on Friday.

And there was another man. After Joseph came and took away His body, Nicodemus – remember him from John 3, the teacher in Israel? He had also become a secret disciple.

John 19:39 (NASB)

³⁹ Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred litras *weight*.

The Jews didn't embalm, they wrapped in linen; and in the wrappings they poured fragrant rosin, called myrrh, and fragrant sandalwood, called aloes – strong spices, literally to overpower the stench of death. And by the way, a hundred-pound weight would be what would be used for a king. So the two secret disciples meet, fulfilling prophecy, which, once again, showed the power of Jesus to control the details even during His burial.

I want you to understand that these are not disciples plotting a resurrection or they would not have used a hundred-pound weight on Him. They were not planning to steal His body. Certainly the other disciples were not; they are not even there. Some women helped we know.

John 19:40-41 (NASB)

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. ⁴¹ Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden *was* a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

Matthew 27:60 tells us that the tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea.

John 19:42 (NASB)

⁴² Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

So He was in the grave on Friday, that's Day One. He was in the grave on Saturday, that's Day Two. He was in the grave on Sunday until the morning, that's three days.

Any part of a day to a Jew constituted that day. Prophecy was fulfilled. He had power over His dying. He had power over the treatment of His body after He was dead. He had power over His burial to fulfill prophecy. **And He rose from the dead!**

Jesus was truly the Son of God!

CONCLUSION:

I want to remind you that the purpose of John in writing his gospel, every account, is that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing have eternal life in His name.

John 19:30b (NASB)

“**And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true;**” says John in verse 35. John identifies himself as “**he**” “**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, an eyewitness of the cross and the events that followed, recorded them for us as true testimony. What it tells us, along with the resurrection, is that Jesus conquered death. He brought about His own death, controlled the events after His death, controlled His own burial, and then exerted the power to rise from the dead. This is important for us to know, because the promise to every believer is that we, just like Christ, will also one day rise from the dead and our newly created bodies will be joined with our glorified souls to prepare us for an eternity in heaven.

“I’m telling you about Christ. I was there; I saw; I heard; and I touched.” Jesus died. He was dead, he was buried, and He arose from the dead. That is the testimony of the executioners, that is the testimony of the spear, and that fulfills Scripture.

Let me assure you that your soul and spirit are eternal. You **will** live forever! You will live **forever**. You will not only live forever in a spiritual form, but you will live forever in a body that will be raised from the grave to prepare you for your eternal dwelling place. You will have a body suited for maximum enjoyment of heaven or your **new body** will have to pay the price for your sins, that Jesus died to pay, by suffering eternally with Satan and his followers. When you understand death that way all of the uncertainties of death take on a new meaning. It should cause us to seek God because there is something magnificent on the other side of death if we seek and find Him.

Jesus provided a way for us to no longer fear of death because even if we die, we live because He lives and we will live with Him for eternity with no fear of judgment. There is no judgment to those who are in Christ, because He bore all our sins.

What it comes down to is that although God is all powerful, He loves us immensely and He sent His Son to teach us His ways. He preserved those teachings in the Bible for us to read and understand. He gave us the ability to **CHOOSE** to love Him or reject Him. Yes, He could **MAKE** us love and obey Him, but that is not what God does! Just because He **COULD** cause force us to serve Him, He has chosen to give us free will to believe or reject. God does not want His people to be His puppets. He wants people to willingly choose to believe and **WANT** to serve Him because of His love and all that He has done for us.

He is Lord!