

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 330

Series: St. John's Passion - Gospel of John chapters 12-21

Verses: John 19:31-37

Topic: The One Whom They Pierced

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John 19:31-37 ISV Since it was the Preparation Day, the Jews did not want to leave the bodies on the crosses during the Sabbath, for that was a particularly important Sabbath. So they asked Pilate to have the men's legs broken and the bodies removed. (32) So the soldiers went and broke the legs of the first man and then of the other man who had been crucified with him. (33) But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. (34) Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and blood and water immediately came out. (35) The one who saw this has testified, and his testimony is true. He knows he is telling the truth so that you, too, may believe. (36) For these things happened so that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "None of his bones will be broken." (37) In addition, another passage of Scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they pierced."

"The one who saw this has testified, and his testimony is true." John the apostle was there and saw these things and records them for us "so that you, too, may believe".

The events of the cross were extraordinary - darkness and earthquakes and a sense of doom. The temple curtain torn in two, prophecies fulfilled as the ages turn on a hinge. It would seem like something from the Lord Of The Rings – except it really happened and John saw it with his own eyes and tells us about it.

Here we find the Scriptures being fulfilled in detail: "For these things happened so that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "None of his bones will be broken." In addition, another passage of Scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they pierced."

Apparently the breaking of the legs quickly suffocates the person on the cross as their lungs cannot suck in air under the weight of the person's body. It may also have placed lethal stress on the heart. The gruesome details are not that important. Jesus did not suffer this fate as He had died, astonishingly quickly (Mark 15:44,45), because He had surrendered His Spirit to God.

God works His will through the ages and does His purposes right down to the last small detail. We can trust that the number of the Anti-Christ will be 666, and that Jesus will return in the clouds and that we will be changed in the twinkling of an eye because all the other prophecies, that have been fulfilled, have been fulfilled exactly and completely – and so these will also be fulfilled.

There are two amazing references in Scripture to "Him who they have pierced". One in Zechariah and one in the book of Revelation.

Zechariah 12:10 MKJV And I will pour on the house of David, and on the people of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers. And they shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only *son*, and shall be bitter over Him, as the bitterness over the first-born.

Revelation 1:7 ISV Look! He is coming in the clouds. Every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of him. So be it! Amen.

This is a clear example of the double fulfillment of a prophecy. In the first fulfillment on the cross the Jews and the Romans looked on Jesus with the blood and water flowing out of His side as “one whom they had pierced”. Later when Jesus returns on the clouds every eye shall see Him – even those (Jews and Romans) who pierced the side of Jesus.

In Zechariah those who pierce Jesus are plainly Jews – the house of David. But the people who actually did the work were Roman soldiers! But they did it at the insistence of the Jews (John 19:31), so it is not unfair to say that the Jews pierced Christ.

In Revelation, (written in 90-95AD, well after the demise of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD) it seems the main emphasis is on Rome and Constantinople (both cities built on seven hills) and so the one’s doing the piercing in Revelation 1:7 may be Romans – or the spiritual descendants of the Roman Empire – the West!

The same prophecy applies on the cross, and in the return of the Lord and to both Jews and Gentiles. Some prophecies such as Isaiah 7:14 may have even three or more fulfillments. They become ever-expanding spiritual principles.

One good example is God’s word to Abraham: Genesis 12:3 MKJV And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.

This prophecy applied to Abraham as an individual, then to his family, then to the nation of Israel, then to Christ and then to the Church “Galatians 3:29 MKJV And if you *are* Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” This is at least a five-fold fulfillment! If you believe it also applies even to the modern state of Israel that would make a sixth fulfillment.

All Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in Christ, some seem to “stop at the cross” and go no further (e.g. not a bone of His body will be broken) other are carried forward to the Church Age and the Return of Christ e.g. “they shall look upon Him who they pierced”. The whole Law stops at the cross (Romans 7:1-11) but knowledge (wisdom) and prophecy continue until the return of Christ when they too shall pass away in the perfect knowledge of God. (1 Corinthians 13:8-13)

The word of God is accurate, precise and true – and eternal. God will do His will and fulfill His Word and we can count on that.

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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