



Text: John 19:23-42¹ [p. 905]
Series: *Life in His Name* – The Message of John’s Gospel
Title: Part 40 – “For this purpose I was born...” (3)
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Jesus interrogation before Pilate: “**Are you the King of the Jews?**” (John 18:33)

The connection with the Christmas story...

Luke 1:32-33 **Gabriel’s announcement** to Mary: “And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Matt 2:2 **The Magi’s question** to Herod: “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

- Jesus answered “My kingdom is not of this world.” John 18:36

Pilate: “So you are a king.”
Jesus...

“You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth.” John 18:37

“Yes, I am a king,” ... and now, we witness **his death!**

- Jesus bore witness to the truth with his life – in how he lived AND in how he died!

Pilate placed a placard above Jesus’ head on the cross...

“Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” John 19:19

“What I have written I have written.” John 19:22

Cf. Pharaoh (Yul Brenner) in “The Ten Commandments”: “So let it be written, so let it be done!”

Cf law of the kings of Persia...

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“an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king’s ring cannot be revoked.” Esther 8:8

An unbelieving, arrogant, prideful, stubborn Roman governor unwittingly spoke the truth about Jesus BUT Pilate was only following the script that God has already written!

“written” = grapho (verb)

“Scripture” = graphe (noun)

John is not willing to leave the situation hanging on the words of a man.
He wants us to know that...

In his death, our King was fulfilling God’s Word

- he puts his finger on **four key Scriptural references** that underscore Jesus’ death as a death died according to God’s revealed will, not according to man’
- **John doesn’t commonly quote Bible texts** in His Gospel so the fact that he quotes four in quick succession gets out attention.²
- Pilate’s commands are merely the words of a man; Jesus is directed by the will of God

The Cross is God’s plan for our salvation, not man’s! Our plan is to save ourselves, and many of us are still trying to do that.
- as we walk deeper into our text, I’ll be encouraging you to quit trying and simply trust in God’s plan

The First Fulfillment Scripture

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

² Borchert, G. L. (2003). *Vol. 25B: John 12-21* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (266). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.



In his death, our King fulfilled God's Word and... demonstrated the depth of His love for us

The clothes of condemned prisoners were considered the right of the executioner
- clothing divided into **four lots** – there were **four Roman guards**
- sandals, belt, outer robe, head covering, etc. – one piece each
- **the tunic, a fifth piece**, was very high quality – instead of cutting it up, they cast lots to see who would get it.³

“This was to fulfill the Scripture which says,

“They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.” John 19:24 quoting Psalm 22:18

Just as **Pilate had unwittingly** spoken truth about Jesus “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” (19:19), **these soldiers unknowingly** were fulfilling prophecy, all the while they thought they were simply serving their own, selfish, grasping interests!

- God even uses the actions of unbelievers to accomplish his purposes!
- **Our God is sovereign over all things**, even down to minute details!

And to make the point crystal clear,⁴ John adds...

“So the soldiers did these things.” John 19:24

**NB. The significance of Psalm 22 [p. 457]
– a prophetic picture of the Cross**

[READ v.1-19]

The Significance of the clothing...

Jesus' garments came into view in a significant way just hours before the cross. He had determined to eat the last Passover meal with his disciples...

“Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.” John 13:1

³ Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (612). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

⁴ Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (612). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans



In love, “**He laid aside his outer garments**” (John 13:4) to wash his disciples feet – a picture of what he would do in cleansing them, and us, from sin by his death on the cross

- **At the Cross ALL his garments are laid aside = TOTAL cleansing!**
- **He loved us “to the end” – to the completion, *in toto***

The Significance of the Women...

Connection between soldiers & women – the number four

- Jesus’ mother (Mary), her sister, Mary of Clopas & Mary Magdalene
- four women who loved Jesus and who were loved by Him
- four soldiers who killed Jesus BUT who were also loved by Him! (cf. John 3:16)

Mary “his mother” – never referred to by name in John’s Gospel

She is **at the foot of the cross** with other women and “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (probably John, but again, unnamed) – **because she’s “one of us”**

Mary is not a “special saint” – cf. Luke 1:28, “Greetings, O *avored* one...” cf. Ephesians 1:6 “with which he has *blessed* us in the Beloved.”

- Mary stands with us as a recipient of God’s grace

This moment at the foot of the cross was foretold in the Christmas story of Luke. Eight days after his birth, Joseph & Mary took the baby Jesus to the temple to present him before the Lord and they met a godly man named Simeon...

“Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.” Luke 2:34-35

“When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother...” (v.26)

“Woman, behold, your son!” (v.26)

“Behold, your mother!” (v.27)

Why is this here? Jesus’ love is what drew him to the cross ... his obedience to the Father and his love for lost people, like his own mother, is what moved him to the cross. (cf Gal 2:20 “the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”)

Jesus’ concern for his mother was **a very personal expression of love ...** and that is what the cross is all about! Even as he died in agony, his love is directed toward us.



Cf. Kent Hughes:

“Love is the Son of God hanging by his arms, his muscles paralyzed and unable to respond. Love is God’s Son fighting to raise himself in order to get just one short breath. Love is carbon dioxide mounting in the lungs, cramps partially subsiding, allowing our Lord to push himself spasmodically upward for life-giving oxygen. This is a picture of God’s love. Still, it is only suggestive of his deeper love, his willingness to bear our sin and suffer separation from his beloved Father.”⁵

**In his death, our King fulfilled God’s Word and...
Demonstrated the depth of His love for us**

The Second Fulfillment Scripture

²⁸ After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” 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. ³⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

**In his death, our King fulfilled God’s Word and...
completed the work he had come to do**

Others might be unwitting participants in God’s plan, but not the Son of God!

“After this, Jesus, **knowing that all was now finished**, said (to fulfill the Scripture), ‘I thirst.’” (v.28)

What Scripture is meant?

- John has already ref’d to Psalm 22 so it could be...

“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.” Psalm 22:14-15

OR it could be...

“I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God ...They gave me poison for food and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.” Psalm 69:3, 21

⁵ Hughes, R. K. (1999). *John : That you may believe*. Preaching the Word (443). Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.



- John refers to Jesus being given “sour wine” to drink on the cross (v.29-30)

Why does he say, “I thirst”?

Because he is – the crucifixion was **real death** for Jesus!

Because he is consciously fulfilling **the Father’s will** – Jesus’ whole life was lived for that purpose

**“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.”
John 4:34**

Because he needs to **moisten his throat** in order to clearly declare...

“It is finished.” John 19:30

Cf. “tetelestai”

Papyri **receipts** for taxes have been recovered with the word *tetelestai* written across them, meaning “**paid in full.**” This word on Jesus’ lips was significant. When He said, “It is finished” (**not “I am finished”**), He meant His redemptive work was completed.⁶

What was *finished* at the cross? For Jesus, at least three things.⁷

First of all,

His response to his Father’s will was completed.

⁶ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Jn 19:30). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. Cf. Carson “But this is no cry of defeat; nor is it merely an announcement of imminent death (though it is not less than that). The verb *telē* from which this form derives denotes the carrying out of a task, and in religious contexts bears the overtone of fulfilling one’s religious obligations. Accordingly, in the light of the impending cross, Jesus could earlier cry, ‘I have brought you glory on earth by completing (*teleiōsas*; *i.e.* by accomplishing) the work you gave me to do’ (17:4). ‘Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them *eis telos* ‘ (13:1) —not only ‘to the end’ but to the full extent mandated by his mission. And so, on the brink of death, Jesus cries out, *It is accomplished!*” Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (621). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans -

⁷ These three points are taken from Milne, B. (1993). *The message of John : Here is your king! : With study guide*. The Bible speaks today (282–283). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press.



With his death his obedience was completed. His passion to do his Father's will, and thereby to bring glory to him, here reaches its triumphant conclusion as he gives up his life at the Father's command. In doing so he becomes the great model for all who would live the life God purposed for us, a life of complete obedience.

Secondly,

His revealing of the Father's heart was completed.

'No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.' John 1:18

At the cross, we see, as nowhere else,

In the Cross we see how holy is the heart of God.

Cf. Bruce Milne,

"That God should purpose this terrible deed as the means of dealing with the sin of the world tells us, as nothing else ever could, that these sins matter terribly to God. All our human efforts to please him fall short, all our best moments are vitiated [and degraded] by sin. Jesus' death shows us that in ourselves we are utterly lost..."

But at the cross, we also see..

In the Cross we see how loving is the heart of God

As Milne put it,

That he should 'give his only Son' for us, going to the depths of the hell of Golgotha in order to snatch us back from everlasting shame and judgment, is the supreme wonder of the ages. It is the proof, which nothing else could ever give, of how loving God is. ... At Calvary we hear not simply 'Behold the man'! and 'Behold your king!' but also 'Behold your God!'

Thirdly, when Jesus said, "It is finished," he meant that...

His redeeming of his Father's world was completed.

It's no accident that Jesus' death occurs in Jerusalem during Passover
- Passover – ref's to God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt
- to take a lamb, smear its blood over their doors to protect them from God's angel of destruction who killed the firstborn child in every home that did not have the blood on its door



- year after year the people of Israel kept this command of God
- BUT this year, 2000 years ago, was the LAST PASSOVER!

- Jesus' death fulfills what John the Baptist had said of him...

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” John 1:29

Jesus, the last Lamb, has died ... God's plan was complete. God's wrath against sin has been satisfied: “It is finished.”

Cf. Bruce Milne,

The Christian is called to affirm the completeness and sufficiency of that sacrifice by trusting in it constantly and by exhibiting the peace and confidence which are the fruit of such a trust. Our often strained and frenetic forms of Christian life are witness to how much we need to affirm again with Jesus, ‘It is accomplished!’ It is finished!⁸

Let me ask: Is it “finished” for you?

The Third & Fourth Fulfillment Scriptures

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. ³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other 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 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. 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. 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.”

**In his death, our King fulfilled God's Word and...
revealed his identity as the Lamb who died for us**

Again, the Romans unwittingly fulfill Scripture by not breaking Jesus' legs...

⁸ Milne, B. (1993). *The message of John : Here is your king! : With study guide*. The Bible speaks today (282–283). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press.



- the Romans broke the legs of the crucified (*crurifragium*) to stop them from pushing themselves up to breath – the arms would give out and they would suffocate to death

BUT if Jesus was to be our Passover lamb then he had to fulfill God's Passover law which stated...

“you shall not break any of its bones.” Exodus 12:46

Again, by piercing his side with a spear to make sure he was dead, they unknowing fulfilled another Scripture which declared...

“They will look on him whom they have pierced.” John 19:37 quoting Zechariah 12:10

Why blood and water flowed from Jesus' side is a matter of medical conjecture and differing opinion⁹ but what is clear and unmistakable is that Jesus was dead. As D.A. Carson puts it:

“However the medical experts work this out, there can be little doubt that [John] is emphasizing Jesus' death, his death as a man, his death beyond any shadow of doubt.”¹⁰

Cf. Dicken's, *A Christmas Carol*

We have our favorite versions: Albert Finney in the musical, George C Scott, the Muppets, Alistair Sim (in black & white NOT the coloured version!)

The opening line: **“Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it.... Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.”**

⁹ Medical experts disagree on what was pierced. The two most common theories are these: (a) The spear pierced Jesus' heart, and the blood from the heart mingled with the fluid from the pericardial sac to produce the 'flow of blood and water'. (b) By contrast, it has been argued that fluid from the pericardial sac could not so readily escape from the body by such a wound; it would fill up the chest cavity, filling the space around the lung and then oozing into the lung itself through the wound the spear made. In tests performed on cadavers, it has been shown that where a chest has been severely injured but without penetration, hemorrhagic fluid, up to two litres of it, gathers between the pleura lining the rib cage and the lining of the lung. This separates, the clearer serum at the top, the deep red layer at the bottom. If the chest cavity were then pierced at the bottom, both layers would flow out. Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (623). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

¹⁰ Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (623). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.



Why is it so important that we know that Marley is dead? Because he appears in the story from beyond the grave to warn Scrooge of what awaits him in death, unless he mends his ways.

Why is it important for John to emphasize the “deadness” of Jesus? Because it sets us up for the resurrection!

- a wounded and battered Jesus didn't revive in the cool of the tomb and hobble into the light of day!
- a dead Jesus rose to life!

Let me add one more little detail that John provides to complete the picture of the “deadness” of Jesus...

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. ³⁹ Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. 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. ⁴² So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Matthew tells us that the burial place was Joseph's own rock-hewed tomb (Matt 27:60). Jesus was laid in a borrowed tomb. But John's emphasis is on **the emptiness of the tomb...**

“a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.” John 19:41

He wasn't concerned about the cleanliness of the tomb. He was concerned to establish the emptiness of the tomb. Because if there was only one body in the tomb, then only one person could have been raised out of it!

Jesus was dead and buried. “There is no doubt whatever about that.”

The burial of Jesus is part of the gospel. Paul wrote...

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James,



then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.” 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

The glory of Jesus’ resurrection **depends** on the reality of his death!

cf Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ* – presents the death of Jesus in excruciating detail...

- the prolonged vicious whipping
- the searing agony of the cross
- the earth-shaking finality of his death
- the darkness of the tomb

THE SUDDEN FLASH OF LIGHT – just a flash, but because of the darkness that precedes it, it is glorious!

Without the death of Jesus, there is no glorious resurrection!

In his death, our King fulfilled God’s Word and...demonstrated the depth of His love for us

In his death, our King fulfilled God’s Word and...completed the work he had come to do

In his death, our King fulfilled God’s Word and...revealed his identity as the Lamb who died for us

My prayer for us this Christmas season is that we will know God’s love for us more fully, that we will rest in Jesus’ finished work for us more completely and that we will worship the Lamb who died for us more passionately. Amen.

- **Invitation to prayer ministry**
- **Final Song:** From the Squalor of a Borrowed Stable (Immanuel)
- **Benediction**