

The Crucifixion of Christ
John 19:16-30
Part One

We are now transitioning from the trial of Christ before Pilate in **John 19:1-16** to the crucifixion of Christ in **John 19:16-30**.

So where did we leave off? We left off in **John 19:16**, at the conclusion of Christ's trial with Pilate handing Jesus over to his soldiers for crucifixion.

The Jewish leadership at this point had prevailed. They wanted Christ crucified and this is exactly what is about to happen in spite of Pilate's multiple attempts to protect Christ. And why had Pilate attempted to protect Christ? He had attempted to protect Christ because he truly believed that Christ was innocent of the charges that had been brought against Him. But even in spite of these attempts to protect Him, he was even more concerned about protecting himself and his own political career. He therefore, when the Jews threatened to take this matter to Caesar, caved in and gave the Jews what they wanted.

What does **John 19:16** tell us? **“So he [Pilate] then handed Him [Jesus] over to them [His soldiers] to be crucified.”**

The crucifixion of Christ is the apex of redemptive history. It is the focal point of God's plan of salvation. Apart from Christ coming into this world as His Father's sacrificial lamb and being willing to shed His blood on the cross of Calvary as a propitiation for our sin there would be no possibility for salvation.

Christ's crucifixion, being the apex of redemptive history, provides us the opportunity not only to see the clearest expression of God's redeeming love, but also the clearest expression of the depravity of man. In other words, in Christ's crucifixion we are not only able to see the Lord of glory being willing to lay down His life for sinful wretches such as ourselves, but we also see a group of men both Jew and Gentile who are willing to kill the Lord of glory in the most appalling, shaming and painful way possible. And why did they do this? They did this in order to serve their own hateful and selfish purposes.

We will now be considering the Apostle John's account of this most monumental event. And once again we will see, as throughout John's gospel, his emphasis on the deity of Christ. And this emphasis on the deity of Christ will be the focal point of this message and our message next week as well.

My hope for these two messages is that we, in seeing Christ's unfathomable love against the backdrop of man's sinfulness, will once again renew our commitment to wholeheartedly live for Him who died for us. This is my hope for this message. It is about us as the disciples of Christ getting our hearts right before Christ.

We are now ready to consider John's account of Christ's crucifixion in **John 19:16-30**. And the question that we will begin to answer this morning is this: How was the deity of Christ in John's account of Christ's crucifixion highlighted?

First of all, the deity of Christ was highlighted by fulfilled prophecy (John 19:16-18, 23-24). The exact number of prophecies that were given in the Old Testament and later fulfilled by Jesus is of course open to debate, but what is not open to debate is that Jesus did in fact fulfill each of these prophecies in their entirety.

This is important to understand because it is a necessary pre-requisite in identifying Jesus as the Messiah. And of course if Jesus could be identified as the Messiah through fulfilled prophecy, then we and others, according to **Psalm 2:7** and **2 Chronicles 17:11-14**, should be able to conclude that He in fact was not only the Messiah, but also the very Son of God.

This morning as we consider John's account of Christ's crucifixion, we will consider three very specific Old Testament prophecies related to the death of the Messiah that were fulfilled by Christ in the current text we are studying.

But before we begin to consider these very specific Old Testament prophecies related to the death of the Messiah, that were fulfilled by Jesus in the current text, I need to explain something to you about prophecy.

There are two types of prophecy that we find in the Scriptures: one verbally predictive and the other typically predictive.

Verbal prediction is I say this event will happen and it does. But typical prediction consists of types or pictures such as sacrificial lambs in the Old Testament being a picture of God's future sacrificial lamb.

In John's account of Christ's crucifixion we will find both types of prophecy. This morning I will only be highlighting for you the verbal prophecies. In other words, I will only be highlighting for you the Old Testament prophecies related to the crucifixion of Christ that said a certain thing would happen rather than just picturing it.

This means that I will not be highlighting for you the following Old Testament prophecies that when written only pictured what would one day happen, rather than clearly stating it. Specifically this means:

- (1) I will not be highlighting for you the story of Isaac in **Genesis 22**, who having been designated by God to be a sin offering was made to carry the very wood that could have possibly later consumed him on a fiery altar. This story, though truly prophetic in the picture it painted, since Isaac was in truth a type of Christ, was only a picture. And what was it a picture of? It was a picture of what Christ would later endure when He, as our sin offering, would later be made to carry His cross.
- (2) I will not be highlighting for you the prohibitions against sin offerings being offered up within the camp of Israel throughout the Old Testament. These prohibitions, though truly prophetic in the picture they painted, were only pictures. And what did they picture? They pictured the necessity of Christ, who is our sin offering, being crucified outside the city of Jerusalem. And how do we know that these prohibitions clearly were prophetic pictures of this future necessity? By reading Hebrews 13:11-12.

These typical prophecies will not be my focus this morning, nor any other more debatable so-called typical prophecies that some might believe are fulfilled in our text this morning.

This morning I will only be focusing on three very specific Old Testament verbal prophecies concerning the death of the Messiah that were clearly fulfilled in John's account of Christ's crucifixion.

So let us begin by looking at **John 19:17**. And what does this verse say? **“They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.”**

So, what do we learn from this verse. First of all, we learn that after Pilate turned Jesus over to his soldiers, they immediately took Him so that they might lead him to the place of His execution. They could do this immediately because Jesus was not a Roman citizen and was therefore not protected from the immediate prosecution of the sentence.

But even though the Roman soldiers did in fact take Christ immediately and began to take Him to the place where He would be executed, they obviously paused long enough to place His cross, upon which He would be crucified, on His shoulders. Isn't this what the verse tells us? **“And He went out, bearing His own cross.”**

Now just for your information, the cross that He at this point in time was forced to carry was probably not the entire cross, which would have weighed nearly 300 lbs. It most likely, if not certainly, was only the cross-member whose weight was approximately 75 to 125 lbs. And it is most likely this cross-member that the Roman soldiers placed at the nape of his neck and most likely helped him to balance on His shoulders

Was this a common practice to make the condemned man carry his own cross? Of course! However, though it was a common practice, it did not mean that those who were forced to carry their cross to the place of execution would necessarily always be able to do so. And this certainly was the case with Christ.

Luke 23:26 tells us that the Roman soldiers, because of the weight of the cross and because of Christ's weakened condition and due to all that he endured during the course of His trial, had to enlist the help of a man named Simon of Cyrene at some point along the way.

Should we feel sorry for this man? No! We should envy him. Knowing what we now know about Christ and what He has done for us, I would have hoped that we would have begged the Roman soldiers to give us an opportunity to enter in and share in the sufferings of Jesus. Isn't this true?

But even though this may be true it is not as if the opportunity to share in the sufferings of Christ has passed. Let me read for you **1 Peter 4:12-13**. **“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; (13) but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. (14) If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”** Hallelujah! Praise God! Our opportunity to share in Christ’s sufferings did not end with His death since Christ is alive and hopefully even now living His life in and through us.

So where did Christ and Simon of Cyrene finally end up? Let us go back to **verse 17** and what does **Verse 17** tell us? It tells us that Jesus was taken to **“the Place of a Skull [KRANION], which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.”** Or in the Latin it would be CALVARIA (from which we, of course, derive our word Calvary). This place, the place of the skull or Golgotha or Calvary, was approximately a quarter to a third of a mile from the Praetorium.

We are now ready to consider the first of the Old Testament verbal prophecies associated with Christ’s death whose fulfillment is recorded for us by the Apostle John. Let us now read **John 19:18**. And what does it say? **“There they crucified Him.”**

Based on John’s account, the first fulfilled verbal prophecy associated with Christ’s death was the manner of His death, or in other words His crucifixion (John 19:18). What did John say in **John 19:18**? And **“There** [at the place of the skull in the Greek, or Golgotha in the Hebrew, or Calvaria in the Latin] **they crucified Him.”**

The crucifixion of Christ fulfilled David’s Old Testament prophecy in Psalm 22:16 that clearly states that the Messiah would have His hands and feet pierced.

And this is exactly what happened to Christ. David in **Psalm 22:16** said it would happen to the coming Messiah, the one whom the Old Testament very clearly taught would in fact be the very Son of God, and it happened exactly in the way that David had said it would.

Could I be the messiah? Could you be the Messiah? Not very likely! This one single verbal Old Testament prophecy pretty much eliminates everybody who has ever lived except for those crucified by either the Persians, the Seleucids, the Carthaginians or the Romans from approximately the 6th century BC to the 4th century AD which of course would be, relatively speaking, an extremely small number compared to the approximate 15 ½ billion people who have lived on this planet since the time of Adam and Eve.

But even though this is true of us, this is not true of Jesus. He, based on Old Testament prophecy, is very much in the running for being identified as the promised Jewish Messiah of Israel and therefore God's very Son based on this one single Old Testament prophecy.

But this is not the only verbal Old Testament prophecy that the Apostle John alluded to in his account of Christ's crucifixion. There is another still another.

Based on John's account, the second verbal prophecy associated with Christ's death that was fulfilled involved those whom Christ was crucified with (John 19:18).

Let us go back to **John 19:18** but this time let us read a little bit further. And what does it say? **“There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between.”**

Even though we might not now exactly why Pilate either directed or permitted Christ to be crucified with others one thing is clear. He was not crucified alone. There were two others that were crucified with Him, one on one side and one on the other. And what kind of men were these? Were they righteous men who had been falsely accused as Christ had been falsely accused or were they truly guilty of the crimes for which they had been charged? What is the answer? The answer is this: They, according to **Matthew 27:38**, were in fact guilty of the crimes for which they had been charged and under the Laws of Rome deserved to die. In other words, what we learn from **John 19:17** is not only that Christ was not crucified alone, but He was also crucified between two criminals. This is extremely important in light of a very specific verbal Old Testament prophecy. So, what specific prophecy was fulfilled?

Christ being crucified with criminals fulfilled the Isaiah's Old Testament prophecy in Isaiah 55:12 that clearly states that the Messiah would be put to death among evildoers.

So why was this so important to God that Christ be crucified with evildoers? Again there is no clear-cut answer to this question. But I would suspect that it was in order for Christ, in a very tangible and visible way, to be identified with sinners in His death.

Wasn't this the whole point of His death; that He, through giving up His life, might be able to eternally save people such as these who were being crucified with Him? And isn't this thought reinforced when we listen in on the conversation among these condemned men while they were in the process of dying by crucifixion?

Let me read for you their words in **Luke 23:39-42**. **“One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, ‘Are You not the Christ? Save yourself and us!’ (40) But the other answered, and rebuking him said, ‘Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? (41) And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.’ (42) And he was saying, ‘Jesus remember me when You come in Your kingdom!’ (43) And He said to him, ‘Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.’”**

Why was Christ crucified? He was not crucified in order to satisfy His debt but rather to satisfy our debt, the debt we owed to God because of our sin. This work of bringing salvation to repentant sinners who come to Him in faith certainly was able to come alive for us when Christ, in fulfillment of **Isaiah 55:12**, was crucified among these evildoers as John records for us here in **John 19:18**.

Another very extraordinary verbal Old Testament prophecy fulfilled, but we are not done. I would like to highlight for you one more verbal Old Testament prophecy associated with the death of Christ that was fulfilled in John's record of Christ's crucifixion.

Let me now read for you **John 19:23-24**. And what does it say? **“Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and**

made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. (24) So they said to one another, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be’; this was to fulfill the Scripture: ‘They divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing, they cast lots.’”

According to John’s record, the third verbal prophecy associated with Christ’s death that was fulfilled involved the specific conduct of the soldiers who crucified Christ (John 19:23-24).

So, what do we learn about the soldier’s conduct who crucified Christ according to **John 19:23-24**? The soldiers, according to custom, divided up the clothing of Christ into four parts, which would have consisted of His head covering, belt, sandals, and outer robe. **Mark 15:24** makes it clear that they then cast lots in order to determine who would get which of these four items. But there was another item of clothing that was of far greater value. It was Christ’s tunic or undergarment that was in fact seamless. The soldiers apparently decided to cast lots for it separately rather than ripping into parts and this is exactly what they did.

Christ clothes beings divided up between the Roman soldiers by the casting of lots perfectly fulfilled what David prophesied in Psalm 22:18. In this verse David represented the future Messiah speaking and saying in the midst of His passion, **“They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.”** What an amazingly accurate prophecy and especially amazing when we consider that David had never witnessed a Roman crucifixion and therefore certainly would not have had any knowledge of how the Roman soldiers would have conducted themselves.

This morning we have considered only the first way that John highlighted Christ’s deity. And what was that? Fulfilled prophecy! And how many verbal prophecies in John’s account of the crucifixion did we consider this morning? Only three, but be assured that this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Canon Liddon, a conservative Bible scholar of the 19th century, believed that there were 332 distinct prophecies literally fulfilled in Christ. Now that doesn’t include the types; that just includes the verbal prophecies. William Hendricksen states that the mathematical probability of each of these prophecies being literally fulfilled in one man is one in eighty-four with one

hundred zeroes after it. There isn't even a word for that number. It is a number that is truly beyond comprehension.

So if this is true, then what should be our logical conclusion? Our logical conclusion should be this: That Jesus is certainly the Christ, the promised Messiah of the Nation of Israel and therefore truly the eternal, and only begotten Son God.

May we by His grace, in light of fulfilled prophecy and knowing that He is in fact the Christ the Son of the living God, commit ourselves daily to live for Him who dies for us.