

Prophecies Fulfilled at Calvary

Scripture: John 19:16–30

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Let's go back to the nineteenth chapter of John, and we just need to pick it up where we left off a number of weeks ago, and that was in verse fifteen of the nineteenth chapter. Our last lesson on a Sunday morning was the people crying, "Away with Him, away with Him!" and Pilate saying, "Shall I crucify your King?" in a statement of sarcasm. And the chief priests answered with a hypocritical lie, "We have no king but Caesar." And we closed off with verse 16, "So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified."

We come now, then, to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. For those of us who are believers, those of us who know and love the Lord, the crucifixion is everything. It is familiar to us. It is the heart of our gospel message, that's why we focus on it in all the songs we sing, and the sermons we preach, and the books we read. All of those things that have to do with Christianity ultimately have to focus on the cross and the subsequent resurrection of Christ. So as we come to familiar reality of the crucifixion of Christ I'm not here to introduce anything new to you, but I do want to sum up the significance of the crucifixion by way of introduction.

John has a purpose, and it's an explicitly stated purpose in chapter 20, verse 31. He tells us why he wrote the gospel, and also why Matthew wrote Matthew; Mark, Mark; and Luke, Luke. "These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." They're written to give evidence of the deity of Christ. That evidence is then to lead the saving faith by which we can receive eternal life. This is the highest and noblest of all purposes. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John give us the accounts of Jesus "so that we might believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God; and that in believing we might have eternal life in His name."

All the writers of the gospels focus on the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ because, obviously, these are the very culmination of redemptive purpose. The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus is the climax of redemptive history. It is the focal point of the plan of salvation. It is because God loved us that He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Jesus Christ went to the cross, because God chose Him to be the Lamb who would be the atoning sacrifice for the sins of all His people throughout all of history. "Jesus came," he tells us, "to pour out His life as an offering to God, a sacrifice for sin." We understand the divine purpose in the death of Christ. He died as a substitute for those who believe in Him. He took our punishment, our judgment, the full penalty for our sins so that now we can be forgiven, since the penalty is paid and God is satisfied. We can be forgiven, granted eternal life to live forever with God in the bliss and the joy of heaven. And that's why we sing about the cross, and celebrate the cross, and love the cross, and wear the cross. That's why there's a cross behind me even as I speak now.

But we also understand the ugliness of the cross. How could we miss that? While the cross is the supreme expression of God's redeeming love, it is also the ultimate manifestation of man's wretchedness. It is the most egregious sin against divine light, divine love, divine grace.

Jesus "endured such hostility by sinners against Himself," Hebrews 12 says. And why? Well, first of all, He was God incarnate; and just being God created hostility, because as the apostle Paul tells us in Romans 8, "The mind of the flesh is hostile toward God." The fact that He was God literally launched the hostility, because that is a universal reality: all sinners are hostile toward God.

You not only have the hostility of fallen man, but you have the hostility of hell. This was the serpent bruising the heel of the Son of God, as Genesis 3:15 said He would do. But it wasn't just Satan's hour; it was God's hour. In the book of Isaiah, chapter 53, verse 10, it says that "it pleased God to crush [the Lord Jesus Christ], to put Him to grief."

So with even the hatred of hell and the hatred of fallen men - that's not enough to define the cross. It's not just the result of the hatred of men and the hatred of hell, it's also the result and primarily the result of the love of God who overrules human hate and demonic hate to accomplish His purpose. God uses the evil schemes of men throughout redemptive history - we see it in the Bible - to accomplish His own purposes. And He used the worst thing that men ever did to accomplish the greatest thing He ever did - the salvation of His own people. God did this because He's rich in mercy, and He loved us with an everlasting love. So while the cross is evidence of human hate and demonic hate, in a more transcendent way, it is proof of divine love. That's why He did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. Why? Because of the great love with which God loves us.

The cross is the heart of Christianity. The theme of the cross then runs through all four gospels. They're all moving toward their conclusion, which is at the cross, and followed by the resurrection. The rest of the epistles of the New Testament describe the theology of the cross. The book of Acts chronicles the preaching of the cross. The book of Revelation ends the New Testament with the triumph of the Crucified One as He comes to establish His kingdom on earth, and then everlastingly in the new heaven and the new earth.

So we're not surprised that John is consumed with the cross. The theme of the cross runs through his gospel. And wherever you have the theme of the cross, you have the reality that is behind the cross, which is not just the sovereignty of God, but the sin of man. John's gospel is concerned with sin and death - not just physical death, but spiritual death and eternal death. John's gospel is concerned with judgment, eternal judgment, and eternal resurrection unto judgment in a body not like this body, but a body fitted for everlasting punishment in hell.

John makes sure we know that Jesus said this: "Unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins, and where I go you'll never come." John wants to be sure we hear this: "On the other hand, he who believes in the Son has eternal life. He who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." John wants us to know that we're all sinners and that there is no hope for the sinner apart from Christ. He is the only atoning sacrifice, and without the shedding of His blood there is no forgiveness and no salvation.

Our Lord wants us to know that He had to be "lifted up in order to draw all men to Himself," a reference to His being lifted up on a cross. All the gospel writers and all the epistle writers want us to

know that we have to look to Christ in saving faith to be rescued from condemnation, from slavery to sin, from eternal judgment, to be forgiven and receive eternal life. There is no other Savior but Christ. Salvation comes only through believing in Him, and that is why again John makes his purpose clear: "These" - that is all the gospels, including his - "have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing may have eternal life in His name." So when we come to the cross - and we're going to be looking specifically at the event, the actual scene of the cross - we have to keep the theology of the cross in view.

Now one other thing to say: John does not enter into any of the physical suffering. He doesn't give us a description of the things that Jesus suffered at the cross. He doesn't lay that out for us. The other gospel writers give us a little more of that, but none of the gospel writers really major on the details of the suffering of Christ, the physical suffering of Christ, because that's really not the primary issue. Tens of thousands of people were crucified, and they were crucified back during the Persian era.

The Persians invented crucifixion. They passed it down to the Phoenicians, the coastal people in the land of Palestine. They picked up crucifixion as a means of punishing criminals and rebels and traitors. It was passed to the Carthaginians in North Africa; they did it. But it was perfected by the Romans. Through all of that there were tens of thousands - if not hundreds of thousands - of people crucified, and they all essentially suffered to one degree or another the same physical pain, the same physical difficulties.

But what the New Testament wants us to understand is not the physical suffering of Christ, but the spiritual suffering of Christ, that He was suffering for sin in our place under the wrath of God. That's the issue. And so when we come to the New Testament we are always going to be led with a glimpse at the physical suffering directly to the spiritual suffering of Christ so we understand the theology of the cross.

Having said that, I do need to say there's no more terrible death than death by crucifixion. That has been the verdict of many others. The Romans regarded it with a shudder and terror. Cicero, the Roman writer, declared it was the most cruel and horrifying death possible. Tacitus called it despicable. It was certainly the most shameful way to die, because you were basically stripped naked and suspended by nails along a road to be gawked at and picked at - gawked at by people, picked at by birds and animals.

It was a death reserved for slaves and bandits and prisoners of war and rebels. And there was a law in Rome, and that law extended across the Roman Empire, that no Roman citizen could be crucified except by personal order of Caesar himself, because if you were a Roman citizen you were protected from that most horrible of all indignities - the shame of crucifixion. It was a slow death; not only hours, but days sometimes. Eventually you succumb to blood loss, exhaustion, dehydration, heat prostration, shock, and finally suffocation.

John doesn't look into that at all. John simply says, in verse 16, "So he then" - Pilate - "handed Him" - Jesus - "over to them" - the Roman soldiers - "to be crucified." And in verse 18 all he says is, "they crucified Him, and with Him two other men." What John wants us to understand is not the physical part of this, but the spiritual part. What is going on here? Jesus is fulfilling Old Testament prophecy.

You could look at this and say, "Well, how can John fulfill his purpose here? If John's purpose is to

give us evidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, where is the evidence here? This looks like the opposite of that. If He is the Christ, the Anointed One, the chosen King sent by God, if He is God in human flesh, if He is the One in whom we are to believe, where do we find any glory in this scene?"

Well, we do find it there; you have to look a little bit closely. But it shouldn't surprise you that John wants us to understand the glory of the cross in the sense that it is *the* specific fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Look at verse 24, middle of the verse: "this was to fulfill the Scripture." Down to verse 28: "all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture."

The first thing that we see in the crucifixion of Christ in John's account is that everything that is happening fulfills Scripture. This is massive evidence, because the ones who are doing all of this to Jesus are pagans with no connection to Scripture. They don't know anything about the Scripture, these Roman soldiers. There's no effort on their part to fulfill anything. They're just doing what they normally do. They're doing what they always do at a crucifixion.

There are apparently four Roman soldiers who had the job of actually crucifying Jesus. This is routine stuff for them, and for all the other soldiers stationed in Fort Antonius, who already have made a mockery of Jesus in treating Him the way they treated Him with the flogging, spitting on Him, punching Him in the face, hitting Him with a stick. They have absolutely no idea who He is. They have no knowledge of anything in the Old Testament or any purposes of God whatsoever. And, certainly, they are equally ignorant of the words that Jesus taught in the three years of His ministry as well. But nonetheless, in fact, because of their ignorance, they witlessly, godlessly, stupidly fulfill Scripture, because it's all under the control of the sovereign God, who controls every single detail.

Now I'm going to show you in this passage, I think four separate features that show the glory of Christ, even in this horrible scene of His crucifixion. But I just want to begin with the first one, which is Scripture fulfillment, Scripture fulfillment. You go back into the Old Testament and you have statements made. You have statements made about the death of Christ. Christ isn't to come for centuries – hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years. And yet there are details predicted, prophesied, and pictured that are fulfilled explicitly at the most minute level.

I think it was Canon Liddon years ago who said that there are about 330 specific prophecies regarding Christ in His first coming. Somebody did some mathematical calculation and said, "For all 330 to happen by chance would be 1 in 84, with a hundred zeros, chance." It's not possible.

Here John's just going to give us a handful of these details that are stunning. So let's go back to verse 16 and read again that they "handed Him over...to be crucified." He's now in the hands of the Roman soldiers.

At this point it says, "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. There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between." All simple, matter-of-fact, straightforward. Here's the beaten, shattered Jesus - bleeding everywhere from what He had endured. "And," it says, "He went out," "He went out."

Matthew, Mark, and Luke say it a different way. They said "He was led out." If you read Matthew,

Mark, and Luke's account, "He was led out"; "He was led out, carrying His own cross, and crucified between two other men." We know from the other writers that these men were - What? - criminals, malefactors.

There is panic in this scene, but the panic isn't in Jesus. The panic is in Pilate. Pilate has been essentially blackmailed, as we saw back in verse 12. The Jews reminded him that if he released Jesus - and he had declared Him not guilty six separate times - if he released Him then he was no friend of Caesar. And everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar. They threatened him with more blackmail. They would tell Caesar that he had failed again - and they had done that on a number of occasions, and Pilate knew he couldn't possibly survive another report from the Jewish leaders to Caesar. If he was going to survive in his job he couldn't anger the Jews again. He's the one who's panicked; he's the one who's frightened; he's the one who's terrified; and so he delivers Jesus over to be crucified.

Mock trials are over, and now it's time for execution. Just that statement in verse 16, "he handed Him over"; "he handed Him over," is kind of a technical term. It means "to be delivered to punishment." But that's essentially what God did, according to Romans 8:32, "He spared not His own Son, but handed Him over for us all." Same term: He was handed over for our offenses. Pilate was the human instrument, but God was the divine cause. Man has his sinful purposes, and God has His holy ones - and they intersect on this occasion. Sinful men never can restrict God's program at all.

So Christ was handed over to execution by Pilate so that He might be handed over to death by God for us. Just look a little closer at details. It says in verse 17 that "He went out." Matthew, Mark, and Luke say "He was led away." Some of your translations may say the same thing.

According to history - this is a very interesting thing, because from what we know - typical crucifixion victims were terrified, terrified beyond comprehension. They would develop a kind of insanity, realizing what was coming. And they were familiar with it, because there were people being crucified all around them in the Roman Empire. And they saw it as they walked the main highways. They were always crucified on the highways outside the city. And the victims before a crucifixion would also have been bloodied and beaten.

They were so terrified. Frequently historians tell us that they had to be driven like wild animals. Somebody had to get behind them, very often with some kind of a prod or a whip. They probably would take a group of soldiers. On some occasions they would literally tie them up and drag them. The horror of the whole thing created a frenzy.

But what we read about Jesus was "they led Him away," "they led Him away," which is to say "He followed them." By then they had torn the faded purple robe off of Him that some soldier had thrown over Him in the celebration of the comedy of the mock king. They took that off and they put back His own bloody garments - what might have been left of them - and they led Him to His own execution. No panic, no struggle, no dragging, no prodding - "they led Him."

Not surprising that Isaiah said, in chapter 53, verse 7, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter." Just that simple detail: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter." You drive cattle; you lead sheep.

I've seen sheep follow the shepherd right into the death machine. Saw some fascinating things in

New Zealand with how they deal with sheep. Sheep will follow their shepherd right into their own execution. Sheep follow. "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter."

Only about two-and-a-half hours had passed since Jesus first stood before Pilate, and now He's on His way to Golgotha. The Jews lost no time, by the way. The Jews were supposed to wait days before the execution of one they found guilty by their own law; and the Romans, they had a law that required two days between a sentence and an execution. But in the case of the Lord Jesus, He went right from judgment to execution, straight from Gabbatha, the Pavement, to Golgotha, the place of execution. He went from prison and judgment to execution.

Isaiah 53:8 says this: "He was taken from prison and from judgment" - speaking of His death. That's exactly what happened. No interval. Even by Jewish law there should have been days. Roman law, there should have been days, days for somebody to bring evidence, make a case, provide a defense. He went from prison and sentencing immediately to execution. The very specific words: "He was taken from prison and from judgment to death." That's exactly what happened. Every step, every move, every act accurately predicted in the Old Testament. This is not a victim. This is a planned, designed death set in motion by God. It violates all the laws of justice among the Jews, and even the Romans.

And then, in verse 17, it says He was "bearing His own cross." Literally the Greek is "He was carrying the cross Himself." I don't know how much it weighed. Some estimate 200 to 300 pounds, dragging that in the condition that He was in all the way up the hill to Golgotha. Before Him, as He went through the city, there was an officer with a sign upon which was written the crime for which He was to die. So He was literally led through the streets with as long a possible public exposure as they could set to warn people that crimes against Rome don't pay. But also, theoretically, the Romans did this to allow for somebody to pop up along the way with more evidence - it might stop the execution. Well that never happened. Somebody did come along toward the end, named Simon of Cyrene, to help Him carry the cross. But He was bearing His own cross as He was being led to slaughter.

There's a beautiful picture of this back in the book of Genesis. You remember when Abraham went up to Mount Moriah God told him to offer his son Isaac. And then verse 6 of Genesis 22 it says, "Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. The two of them walked on together." You always see in that picture Isaac carrying the wood of his own execution pyre on his own back. Isaac is a picture of Christ, is he not, who is taken to be offered. And then another picture of Christ appears: the ram caught in the thicket who becomes the substitute. It just always has seemed to me that the note about him carrying the wood for his own execution was a kind of foreshadow of Christ carrying His own cross.

By the way, verse 17, "He went out." "He went out," again indicating out of Jerusalem. He was outside the city. That is crystal clear in this text. It comes up later in the text that the sign is visible for everyone to see, verse 20: He was crucified "near the city" - not in the city, but "near the city." "He went out."

There's another Old Testament pattern being revealed here. If you go back to Exodus 29 - you don't need to do that. I'll just kind of point a couple of things out to you that I think are fascinating along this line. But in the twenty-ninth chapter of Exodus, there is a command by God with regard to an offering, and this is what it says: "the flesh of the bull and its hide and its refuse, you shall burn with fire outside the camp; it is a sin offering. Burn it outside the camp."

Later on in Leviticus, chapter 4, you have another offering: “Burn it outside the camp.” Later in Leviticus 16 you had the Day of Atonement: “Take the sacrifice, burn it outside the camp.” The sin offering was to be outside. And here God makes sure that the ultimate and only true offering for sin is outside the camp, outside the city. The Jews had tried to stone Jesus *in* the city. But that would never happen, because He was the sin offering and He had to be offered *outside* the city, as all of those offerings had to be.

Listen to chapter 13 of Hebrews, verse 11: “For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore also Jesus, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.” Another amazing detail.

With regard to His crucifixion, He was executed outside the gate. Roman law required it. It was not lawful to crucify a man within the boundaries of a city. Jesus went out fulfilling yet another specific detail, bruised and bleeding, His flesh torn to ribbons by the scourging, bearing His cross until He was relieved by Simon. He went outside the city. It says in verse 17 “to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.” “Skull” is the Hebrew word *golgotha*. The Latin word is *calvarias*. That’s where we get “Calvary.” It’s Latin for “skull.”

Why is this “called the Place of a Skull”? Well, there have been crazy suggestions like “this is where the Jews put skulls.” Well, the Jews didn’t collect skulls; we don’t have any evidence of that. Why would they do that?

A better explanation, one that makes a lot more sense, is that this is a hill shaped like a skull. And there is such a hill. If you were to go there today you would see it. It’s right above the bus station. Below it are myriads of buses going in every direction. But it is northeast of the Damascus Gate, outside the city. And very near it is a tomb that has been identified as the Garden Tomb.

There are many who believe that that’s the Hill of the Skull, and very near to there is the place where Jesus may well have been buried. It looks like a skull. It has a highway nearby. They always crucified people along the highway. And there’s a tomb nearby; it’s outside the gate, close to the city, near Fort Antonia. That’s why years ago a man named Gordon sort of dubbed that as the very likely place where Christ was crucified – every detail outside the city.

Verse 18: “There they crucified Him.” “There they crucified Him.” Now this is not how the Jews executed people. The Old Testament said this would happen.

Back in Numbers, chapter 21, snakes were biting the children of Israel. Remember? – serpents. And they came to Moses and they said, “Look, we’re all going to die. You’ve got to do something.” And so Moses put up a pole, and he put a brazen serpent on it, and he said, “For anybody who looks at that serpent as a symbol really of repentance and calling out to God, you’ll be healed.”

That is a picture of Christ. You say, “How can that be a picture of Christ?” Well listen to what he said in John 3:14, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.” The Jews didn’t lift somebody up when they executed them.

Jewish scholar Alfred Edersheim says that there was a place in Jerusalem that was known as Beth-has-sekilah. It was a place of execution. The Jews used it to execute people; it was an eleven-foot-deep precipice. The first witness against someone who'd been determined to be guilty pushed the person over the edge, down eleven feet to rocks below. If they didn't die by that, the second witness picked up the first rock and tried to drop it on their heart or their head. If the victim was not yet dead, then the rest of the people gathered there would keep throwing stones until his life or her life was snuffed out.

That is not being lifted up. The Jews killed people by throwing them down. In fact, even in the Old Testament it said, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." But here Jesus is lifted up, and Jesus says back in the third chapter of John that "I will be lifted up in the way that Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness."

That is not a Jewish form of execution, but that's what happened to Him. He makes much of this throughout the gospel of John in the eighth chapter of John. You probably remember that He said this was to be expected, verse 28 I think it is. "So Jesus said, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, you will know that I am He.'"

Chapter 12, again, verse 32, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." What did He mean by that? Next verse. "He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die" – "the kind of death," being lifted up.

And we saw in the eighteenth chapter of John, Pilate said to the Jews, "Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law." The Jews said to him, 'We're not permitted to put anyone to death.'" They refused to kill Him. Why? Verse 32, "to fulfill the word of Jesus, which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die."

If the Jews had said, "Okay, we'll kill Him," they would have stoned Him, and He wouldn't be the Messiah, and God wouldn't be God, and you couldn't believe the Bible. It's what kind of implication. They said, "No, we're not going to execute Him," so that they would fulfill the words of Jesus which were connected to the words of Moses. He was "lifted up" by crucifixion.

Crucifixion itself is described, Psalm 22. In Psalm 22 we could pick it up at verse 14. This is a picture of, in a messianic psalm, of Christ on the cross. How do you know this is the cross? Verse 1: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?" Where did that come from? It's what He said on the cross.

So we're at the cross in Psalm 22, and verse 14 describes crucifixion: "I'm poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint." That's what happens at crucifixion. "My heart is like wax; it's melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd," - that's a dry piece of pottery – "my tongue cleaves to my jaws; You lay me in the dust of death. Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers have encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me."

And this, verse 18: "They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." Detailed description of the crucifixion. He is elevated with four great wounds in His hands and feet,

and that cross is dropped into the socket in the ground. He hangs there suspended to die of hunger, thirst, exposure, suffocation. Horrible picture. That's exactly what God wanted, and it is fulfilled as God designed it.

By the way, Psalm 22:18 is quoted directly down in verse 24: "They divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." That shows you that Psalm 22 is a picture of crucifixion, not just verse 18, but the rest that I read you - every detail.

Go back to verse 18 for a moment: "They crucified with Him two other men." The other gospel writers describe them as thieves, rebels, insurrectionists. That too is a fulfillment of prophecy.

In Isaiah 53, Isaiah - painting the picture of the death of the Messiah to come - says, "He was numbered with the transgressors." "He was numbered with the transgressors." There was Christ, and then there was two other thieves - crucified like a common criminal with others who were common criminals. And, by the way, how wonderfully has God used that. One of those thieves was the first trophy of His all-sufficient grace, and that was with Him in paradise. He was crucified with thieves. That's what Isaiah said, and that's exactly what the Romans did. You might have thought that they would have crucified Him alone because He was such a significant figure. But it needed to be the way God said it would be.

And then, beyond that, drop down to verses 23-24, we'll wrap it up for today there. "The soldiers, when they had crucified Him, took His outer garments, made four parts, a part to every soldier." There were four executioners, and people had four garments basically. These were the basic clothes that anybody had: sandals, belt, headpiece, and outer cloak; sandals, belt, headpiece, and outer cloak. And according to the Roman tradition, the executioners got to keep whatever was left, and so the four men divided it up.

But there was an extra garment, an extra garment. There was "the tunic," verse 23 said, and "the tunic was seamless," which is to say they couldn't rip it up. It was woven in one piece; it was without seam. Just a little footnote there. There is someone in the Old Testament who had a garment without seam - it was the high priest; he had a seamless garment. Just a lovely note by the Holy Spirit to remind us that here is the true High Priest. This is the precise description of the linen tunic which the high priest wore; it was seamless.

Do you understand the word "priest"? I mean, in English we sort of leave it at that and lose the sense. The Latin might help you. The Latin for "priest" is *pontifex*. If you're a Catholic you've heard *Pontifex Maximus*, which is the pope, who is supposed to be the maximum priest. But *pontifex* actually means "bridge builder." We have an English word *pontoon*.

Pontifex is "bridge builder." The function of a priest was to build a bridge between God and man. Jesus here wears the seamless garment as did the high priest, because He is the true bridge builder. He is God's perfect High Priest. Every way you look at this scene, every way you view it, you see the glory of Christ in the fulfillment of these specific pictures in Scripture and prophecies.

And then it comes to verse 24. What are they going to do with a seamless garment? "So they said... 'Let's not tear it; let's cast lots; let's gamble; let's roll the dice to decide whose it shall be'; this was to fulfill the Scripture." Wow, they had no idea what they were doing, but they were fulfilling

Psalm 22:18, "They divide my outer garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. [For my inner garment they cast lots]." It's exactly what they did.

Verse 25 says, "Therefore the soldiers did these things." Everything the soldiers did was fulfilling prophecy, fulfilling Scripture. Herein lies the glory of Christ in this scene of horror. It's one fulfillment after another, after another, after another, down to the most minute detail. God is unfolding His purpose in Christ with magnificence. Much more to come as the deity of our Lord is demonstrated in other ways. And we'll look at those next time. Let's bow in prayer.

We always are in awe of Your Word, O God. We always are led to the reaffirmation of the conviction that it is absolutely true; and, therefore, we are in awe of the revelation of the Incarnate Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You for the Bible. We thank You for Your written Word. We thank You for the Incarnate Word, the living Christ. We thank You that this is a trustworthy testimony to Him, and He is a trustworthy One. These things are written that we "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing we might have eternal life in His name."

What good does it do to believe these things if we don't cry out and ask Him to give us eternal life? May that be the cry of every heart, the prayer of every person. May there be no one here who's not willing to turn from sin and judgment, and cry out, "I believe You are the Christ, the Son of God. I desire to be rescued and delivered from sin and judgment, and given eternal life."

We know that when we ask, You respond. No one has ever cried out to You and not been heard. "Seek Me," You say, "with all your heart; you'll find Me." We thank You for the testimony of our wonderful Christ, even in the darkness of this crucifixion hour.

Lord, we ask that You will give us a greater love for Your Word, love for Your Son, and love for You as well - greater devotion to the proclamation of gospel truth, both in how we live and what we say. We ask You to make of us all that we should be for Your glory and honor, in Christ's name. Amen.

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