

Chapter 41: The Death of Jesus

John 19:28–42

Through the entirety of the Gospel of John up to this point, Jesus has endured ever-deeper humiliation, shame, degradation, and suffering. The entire purpose of Jesus' birth and entrance into the world was not to receive the praise, love, and adoration of the world, but rather to bear witness faithfully to the truth (John 18:37)—even though bearing witness to the truth would bring suffering upon him. Nevertheless, Jesus obeys his Father's will by taking one faithful step after another, accomplishing everything that his Father set out for him from before the foundations of the world were laid. So far, each of those steps have brought Jesus increasingly lower into his estate of humiliation, which now includes even the agony of his suffering on the cross. But in John 19:28–42 as Jesus actually gives up his life and dies, we see a remarkable change in the tone of John's Gospel. Here, the emphasis shifts from all that Jesus must still do to all that Jesus has now accomplished in full. The death of Jesus is a monumental event in salvation history. *At his death, Jesus finishes his work in order to become the firstfruits of a new creation.*

Jesus Finishes His Work (John 19:28–30)

Because Jesus has endured nearly everything necessary for our salvation, he now enters the very final moments of his life and mission. John describes this point in time, writing, “After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), ‘I thirst’” (John 19:28). This verse raises two important questions: (1) What exactly did Jesus know? and (2) What Scripture did Jesus fulfill by saying, “I thirst”? The first question is easy to answer, since the entire Gospel of John has been preparing for the moment when Jesus would finish his work at the cross. R. C. H. Lenski puts this well:

What is it that Jesus now knows? This, that all things have now been finished or brought to a close in order that the Scriptures might be accomplished or brought to their goal. The keystone had been placed into the arch; that was the last act, and that act completed everything. This last act consisted of the bitter agony during the three hours of darkness when Jesus, covered with our guilt, experienced that even God turned his face from him. When that was over, the final act was finished, and by that final act all was accomplished that the Scripture had foretold concerning the earthly work of Jesus. Nothing more was needed, and thus nothing more had been foretold. Now Jesus could lie down to rest in death.¹

Jesus' glorious work is finally coming to an end, and his rest is drawing near.

Fulfilling Scripture (Part 1)

So, what Scripture does Jesus fulfill when he declares his thirst from the cross? This question is a bit more difficult to answer than the first, since there are several passages that John may have in mind.² Possibly John refers to Psalm 22:15: “my tongue sticks to my jaws”—that is, in great, dry thirst. This verse is a strong candidate, since the entirety of Psalm 22 deals with the innocent suffering of the Lord’s anointed king, even opening with the line that Jesus quotes from the cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Ps. 22:1; cf. Mark 15:34). Another strong possibility is from Psalm 69:21: “for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.” Not only does this psalm line up by identifying the kind of drink that Jesus receives to slake his thirst, but John cites Psalm 69 twice in this Gospel: John 2:17 (“Zeal for your house will consume me”; Ps. 69:9) and John 15:25 (“They hated me without a cause”; Ps. 69:4). Less likely are the suggestions of Psalm 42:2 and 63:1, “My soul thirsts for God,” since Jesus is speaking of his acute physical thirst, not his spiritual thirst.

Probably we should recognize a general sense in the Old Testament that the suffering of God’s Messiah must include terrible thirst, but rather than receiving something to quench that physical agony, he would instead receive sour wine—that is, vinegar. For David, the references in these psalms to thirst would most likely have been figurative, or, perhaps a reference to some parched thirst that he endured while running for his life from his enemies. What David experienced as a dim shadow, Jesus now experiences fully in the physical torment of excruciating thirst.³ Indeed, as D. A. Carson writes, “a man scourged, bleeding, and hanging on a cross under the Near-Eastern sun would be so desperately dehydrated that thirst would be part of the torture.”

Thirst and the Finished Work of Jesus

In the context of the Gospel of John, however, this idea of thirst and drinking has a broader significance than just the physical sufferings of Jesus. One of the first things we see Jesus doing in the Gospel of John is asking a Samaritan woman for a drink (John 4:7), and then promising to give that same Samaritan woman living water living water to drink from so that she will never be thirsty again (John 4:10, 13–14). There, as Jesus enters deeper into his conversation with the Samaritan woman, he seems to forget about his thirst altogether, since we never read that he gets the drink he requested. Furthermore, when his disciples return with food and urge him to eat, Jesus refuses, saying, “I have food to eat that you do not know about....My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish [or, “finish”; *teleiōsō*] his work” (John 4:32, 34). There in Samaria, Jesus willingly forsakes food and drink because there is much work left to finish (John 4:35–38). But now, at the cross, as Jesus knows that “all was now finished [or, “accomplished”; *tetelestai*]” (John 19:28), he not only declares his thirst, but he even takes the drink of sour wine given to him (John 19:30).⁵

John places a double emphasis on the connection between Jesus’ thirst and his finished work in John 19:30. He not only uses the verb *teleiōō* to speak of the way that “all was now finished [*tetelestai*],” but also to describe Jesus’ fulfillment [*teleiōthē*] of the Scripture when he says, “I thirst.” The normal word that John uses to speak of fulfilling Scripture is instead *plēroō*, but here John wants to speak not just of fulfilling Scripture, but of finishing (or accomplishing) every last bit of the work that his Father had both given him and foretold about him in the Scriptures. Later, Jesus will make a final, victorious announcement of his finished work when he uses the same verb (*teleiōō*) again to declare

“It is finished [*tetelestai*]” (John 19:30) before he dies.⁶ Here, “the entire Scriptures in all that they present concerning the earthly work of Jesus have now been turned into actuality, the work mapped out by Scripture is now a work actually accomplished.”⁷

Sour Wine on a Hyssop Branch

After hearing Jesus’ request, some unnamed people give him sour wine to drink: “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” (John 19:29). Earlier in the crucifixion chronology, Jesus refused to drink “wine mixed with myrrh” (Mark 15:23), since that mixture “was a sedative designed to dull the agony,” for Jesus “was fully resolved to drink, instead, the cup of suffering the Father had assigned him.” Jesus refuses the wine mixed with myrrh because he will do nothing to reduce the full measure of suffering given to him. This sour wine, however, does not dull his suffering, so Jesus drinks it to fulfill what has been prophesied about him in Psalm 69:21.

John alone tells us that these people give Jesus the sour wine by filling a sponge with it, and affixing the sponge onto a hyssop branch that they raise up to his mouth. Many commentators see this as nothing more than an eyewitness description of what truly took place, and certainly the use of hyssop is not less than that.⁸ Nevertheless, it is likely that John intends for us to see a deeper reality through this detail. Jesus dies during the Passover feast, and hyssop had a very significant role in Passover. These are the original instructions that Moses gives to the Israelites about what to do with the blood of the Passover lambs:

“Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.” (Ex. 12:22–23)

The Lord does not pass over the Israelites because of the hyssop, but rather because of the sacrificial blood of the Passover lambs—and ultimately, the Lord did not pass over the Israelites because of the lamb’s blood, since the blood of animals could never atone for sins in themselves (cf. Heb. 10:4). Instead, the Lord passed over the Israelites during that first Passover because the blood of the Passover lambs pointed forward to the atoning blood of Jesus Christ at the cross. Here, at the ultimate Passover feast, the Lamb of God bleeds and dies to take away not only the sins of the Israelites, but also the sins of the whole world (John 1:29). As the people lift a hyssop branch up to Jesus’ face, they dipped that branch into the blood that poured down his head from the crown of thorns. Just as at the first Passover, a hyssop branch is dipped into the blood of God’s Passover Lamb—the blood that will cause God’s wrath to pass safely over his people.¹⁰

“It is finished”

And with that, our Savior dies: “When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, ‘It is finished,’ and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit” (John 19:30). From the way John links Jesus’ reception of the sour wine with his final words, it is possible that one of the reasons Jesus asked for something to drink was to wet his tongue and throat just enough to make his triumphant cry of “It is finished.”¹¹

This statement is of the utmost importance, so Jesus takes a drink in order to clarify his message for the world to hear it. In this pronouncement, Jesus declares that he has accomplished the entirety of our salvation.¹² No longer will God require his people to offer endless sacrifices, for Jesus offers the true, final, once-for-all sacrifice to which all those sacrifices pointed forward. No longer will God's people wait by faith for the Lord's coming salvation, for here the Messiah gives up his life for the salvation of the world. Jesus has accomplished all of it over the course of his birth, life, sufferings, and, now, death, and *it*—the full scope of his work—is *finished*.

Throughout the Gospel of John up to this point, Jesus has spoken of all the remaining work that he must accomplish in the will of his Father. Now, here, at his death, the narrative seems to stand still. The Son of Man who had no place throughout his life to *lay down* [*klinē*] his head (Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58) now *bows* [*klinas*] his head (John 19:30) and dies, so that Leon Morris observes, “That resting place for his head that he did not have on earth he found on the cross.”¹³ His work is done, completed, and accomplished, with nothing left unfinished. Only now can our weary Savior finally stop for a drink and rest his head as he gives up his life and dies.

Additionally, we should not overlook the way that Jesus controls the moment of his own death here. No one takes his life away from him, but he willingly lays it down (John 10:17–18), and so John says that Jesus “gave up his spirit” (John 19:30). Perhaps the worst part of the agonies of crucifixion was the way that victims did not usually die quickly, but over a period of several days, which is why the Jews will ask Pilate to speed up the deaths of these men by breaking their legs (John 19:31).¹⁴ Certainly, Jesus dies from the crucifixion he endures, but even at the end, his life is not wrested from him by his torturers; rather, when the time is right, Jesus willingly gives up his spirit in death, so that the “voluntary character of this deed cannot be emphasized too strongly” in the Gospel of John.¹⁵ When he has accomplished the entirety of the work his Father has given him for the salvation of the world, Jesus willingly gives up his life; *no one* takes his life away from him.

Jesus Fulfills God's Redemptive Plan (John 19:31–37)

Jesus has completed his work, but the story of redemption continues:

[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. (John 19:31–34)

As mentioned above, crucifixion sometimes took several days to bring about death. Often, animals such as vultures to end the lives of the victims, and also to mangle and disfigure their bodies for display many days afterward.¹⁶ In general, the Romans wanted to extend the terror of crucifixion for as long as possible. Who would dare oppose Rome after seeing such a grisly warning against treason?

The Approaching Sabbath

But for the Jews, leaving hanged bodies on display was explicitly forbidden in the Mosaic law: “[a hanged man’s] body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance” (Deut. 21:23). This law would apply to any execution, but the stakes are higher with a Sabbath approaching—and all the more serious since the coming Sabbath is “a high day” because of the Passover (John 19:31).¹⁷ So, the Jews request that Pilate order the soldiers to break the legs of the crucifixion victims with an iron mallet.¹⁸ Under this procedure, the victims would not only go into shock and lose a significant amount of blood, but they could no longer push themselves up with their legs, as was necessary to open their chest cavity to breathe, leading them to die quickly from asphyxiation.¹⁹ It was one more brutal act of violence in crucifixion, and yet dying quicker was perhaps better than suffering the lingering torture of crucifixion’s normal course.

Just as he did with the description of the Jews’ refusal to enter Pilate’s headquarters for fear of defiling themselves on the Passover (John 18:28), John tells us about the Jews’ scrupulous keeping of the ceremonial law with no small hint of irony: “for, in order to a strict observance of their Sabbath, they are careful to avoid outward pollution; and yet they do not consider how shocking a crime it is to take away the life of an innocent man...while the whole country was polluted by their wickedness.”²⁰ In fact, this is the last action of “the Jews” that John records in this Gospel, so our final impression of the Jews is that they “did not want their land defiled by the dead, but they were not concerned that they themselves were defiled by their deed.”²¹ Jesus came to his own, and his own did not receive him (John 1:11).

Blood and Water

While the Roman soldiers do break the legs of the two other criminals, they realize that Jesus has already died, so they refrain from breaking his legs (John 19:32–33). Instead, one of the soldiers pierces Jesus’ side with a spear, and immediately, blood and water poured out from Jesus’ side (John 19:34). Why does John record this incident for us, and what does it mean? To begin, the water and blood pouring out of the side of Jesus demonstrates definitively that Jesus is a human being, and not some god who merely *seemed* to be human. According to the ancients, human beings consisted physically of a balance of blood and water, which distinguished them from the gods.²² To take this idea one step further, the fact that John witnessed both blood and water pour from the side of Jesus tells us not only that he is a human being, but that he is here a *dead* human being. This eyewitness testimony directly contradicted the false teaching of an early sect of Gnostics called Docetists who taught that Jesus only *seemed* to be human, or that he only *seemed* to die. On the contrary, Jesus was a real human being who died a real death.²³

Clearly, John believes that the combination of blood and water is important, although he does not interpret their symbolic or theological significance for us. Most likely, John sees the blood and the water pouring out of the side of Jesus as a fulfillment of the sacrifices (blood) and washings (water) required by the law.²⁴ In the blood pouring out of Jesus’ side, we have a perfect, atoning sacrifice for our justification and forgiveness of sins. In the water pouring out of Jesus’ side, we have a perfect, cleansing wash for our sanctification and purification. Jesus himself came by water and the blood to fulfill everything that the Law required, and at his death both blood and water poured out

from his side as the fulfillment of everything symbolized in the types and shadows of the old covenant. This is so important that John reminds us of this combination again in his First Letter: “This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood” (1 John 5:6). In that passage, however, John is probably speaking about how Jesus himself “came” by *both* water at his baptism (for our purification) and by blood at his crucifixion (for our atonement). The blood and water pouring from Jesus’ side demonstrate that Jesus’ ultimate work of cleansing and atonement happens at his death at the cross.²⁵

Streams of Living Water

Still, there is more significance to water the comes from Jesus’ side, since the water—and *not* the blood—is the surprising element coming from Jesus’ side. A moment ago, Jesus declared his thirst (just as in his conversation with the Samaritan woman; John 4:7), but now a stream of living water pours forth from his side (just as he promised to the Samaritan woman; John 4:10, 13–14).²⁶ Along these lines, many commentators have seen a possible connection between the water that flows from Jesus’ side and the water that flows from the side of the rock for the Israelites in the wilderness: “... and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink” (Ex. 17:6).²⁷ The Apostle Paul may be alluding to this connection when he writes, “For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4).

Still, in the broader context of the Gospel of John, there is much more to explore from this stream of living water flowing from the side of the crucified Jesus. Craig Keener writes this:

Given John’s water motif (1:31, 33; 2:6; 3:5; 4:14; 5:2; 9:7; 13:5) and especially its primary theological exposition (7:37–39), the water has immense symbolic value. Granted, a substance that appears like water could flow from the pericardial sac around the heart along with blood, and this could explain the source of John’s tradition. But he specifically records the event for theological reasons (cf. 20:30–31; 21:25), reasons clarified in his water motif, which climaxes here. Now that Jesus has been glorified (7:39), the water of the Spirit of life flows from him as the foundation stone of God’s eschatological temple.... Just as Revelation speaks of a river of water flowing from the throne of God and of the lamb in the world to come (Rev 22:1), a Johannine Christian who emphasized the realized aspect of early Christian eschatology could drink freely from that river in the present (Rev 22:17). As Jesus was enthroned by humans as “King of the Jews” (John 19:19–22) and crowned with thorns (19:2, 5), the river of the Spirit began to flow in a symbolic sense from his throne.²⁸

When God departed from Solomon’s temple (Eze. 10:1–22; 11:22), he foretold the day when he would give to his people a new temple, and that out of that temple would flow living waters that would heal creation, even turning deadly salt water into life-giving fresh water (Eze. 47:1–12). Jesus is now glorified on the cross, so the living waters finally flow from the new, true temple of his body (cf. John 2:21)! These living waters will bring about the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:1–2).

The Witness

John continues by insisting on the truth the importance of his testimony: “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” (John 19:35). The theme of testimony and witness for the purpose of bringing about faith has filled the Gospel of John. From the prologue, the Apostle John not only identified John the Baptist as a witness to the light (John 1:6–8), but the Apostle John further testified that “we have seen his glory” (John 1:14), a glory that Jesus reveals to the world most vividly at the cross.²⁹ Alongside the many witnesses that Jesus names in John 5:31–47, John tells us here that he was an eyewitness to the glory of Jesus at the cross, and that the testimony he has borne us is true. Furthermore, because this testimony is true, John urges us to believe on Jesus. Indeed, the entire purpose of the Gospel of John is to bring about our faith in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God (cf. John 20:30–31).

Fulfilling Scripture (Part 2)

After this word affirming his eyewitness testimony, John appeals to the witness of the Old Testament Scriptures (cf. John 5:39–47) by citing two passages that are fulfilled in the crucifixion and death of Jesus:

[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.” (John 19:36–37)

The first fulfilled Scripture probably has in view both the law about Passover that specifies that no bone of the Passover lamb may be broken (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12), and also Psalm 34:20: “He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.”³⁰ The Passover passages are important as one more illustration that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Passover, the true Passover lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Psalm 34:20, on the other hand, is important to signify that even the sufferings of Jesus had an appointed limit. That is, while Jesus suffered under the infinite weight of the wrath of God against human sin, the Father nevertheless intervened to keep Jesus from *some* kinds of suffering that he might have otherwise endured, such as having his bones broken. Just as Jesus willingly laid down his own life, so also he entrusted himself to the providential care of his Father, even when the Father forsook Jesus in the course of his sacrifice.

The second Scripture refers to Zechariah 12:10, where Yahweh laments how his people have pierced him to the heart: “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.” In the original context, it sounds as though the people will repent for the way in which they have offended God, having (figuratively) pierced his heart. John, however, brings out the deeper meaning of the prophecy by pointing out that the soldiers truly did pierce the heart of God by the stab of the spear into Jesus’ side to pour forth both blood and water.³¹ D. A. Carson also notes that the next chapter of Zechariah opens with the words, “On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness (Zech. 13:1): “it would be hard for them not to reflect on the flow of blood and water from Jesus’ side, the promise of the Spirit (7:37–39) and the cleansing and life that issue from these new covenant promises (3:3, 5).”³²

Jesus Becomes the Firstfruits of a New Creation (John 19:38–42)

As the other Gospel writers relate, Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus but also a respected member of the Sanhedrin (Mark 15:43), makes arrangements to take away the body of Jesus for burial: “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” (John 19:38). Although Joseph has kept his discipleship secret “for fear of the Jews,” Joseph now seeks openly to care for the body of Jesus. R. C. H. Lenski points out just how surprising this move is: “This man now does an astounding thing: he suddenly casts his fear and cowardice to the winds, boldly goes in to Pilate, and asks to be permitted to take and to bury the body of Jesus. And this bold and courageous confession of his is now made after Jesus has died on the cross of shame!”³³ Joseph (and Nicodemus, whom we see next) are the first representatives of true Israel to step forward and honor Jesus in his death by burying him.³⁴

Nicodemus

John, however, relates to us something that none of the other Gospel writers mention, that Nicodemus assists Joseph of Arimathea in the burial of Jesus:

[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. (John 19:39–40)

John notes that Nicodemus brings with him a mixture of myrrh and aloes, which the Jews used to cover over the stench of decaying corpses for as long as possible: “Myrrh is a fragrant resin, often used by Egyptians in embalming, but by Jews rendered into powdered form; so also aloes are a powdered aromatic sandalwood.”³⁵ Moreover, Nicodemus did not bring a small amount of these costly elements, but nearly seventy-five pounds of them—enough for burying a king! Lenski snidely remarks, “Judas should have been there to estimate the price.”³⁶ Completing the burial custom of the Jews, Joseph and Nicodemus bind Jesus in linen cloths, “but in contrast to Lazarus at his resuscitation (11:44), Jesus would require no one to loose him at his resurrection (20:6–7).”³⁷

The Burial of the King

While Jesus had to endure the most extraordinary kinds of poverty, shame, and humiliation throughout the course of his birth, life, and death, Jesus’ burial is a different story. Jesus has completed his work and entered into his rest—indeed, he has entered into the Sabbath rest before the Sabbath day actually dawns.³⁸ The transition from Jesus’ estate of humiliation to Jesus’ estate of exaltation begins. The costly myrrh and aloes are the beginning of the honor that Jesus receives in his burial, but we see even more honor given to Jesus in his tomb:³⁹

[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. (John 19:41–42)

Part of the reason that Jesus is buried in this particular tomb is for convenience since the Sabbath was approaching, but John conveys much more about the theological significance of Jesus' burial.⁴⁰ On the one hand, Jesus' burial is a "necessary element in his humiliation," since by "means of it he sanctified the grave for all his followers"; however, on the other hand, the tomb also foreshadows Jesus' resurrection and exaltation, since this is a new tomb in which no dead body has ever entered.⁴¹ Furthermore, this tomb is in a garden (John 19:41), a crucial detail that only John provides: "In a garden man lost life, in a garden life would be restored to man, life and immortality."⁴²

But also, as we have already observed a few times, John seems to draw specific connections between the death of Jesus and his birth (cf. John 18:37), and here we see three additional possible connections between this passage and the story of the nativity of Jesus. First, remember that Jesus earlier called Nicodemus a "teacher of Israel" (John 3:10). Intriguingly, then, John tells us that it is this *wise man* (Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel) who brings *myrrh* to Jesus' burial, just like the wise men from the east (cf. Matt. 2:9–11). Second, we read here that Jesus is bound in linen cloths for his burial, just as Jesus was wrapped in swaddling cloths at his birth (Luke 2:7). Third, this tomb is just as much a borrowed bed as the manger (Luke 2:7). These connections are significant in that they draw a stark contrast between the nativity of Jesus and his burial. At the beginning of Jesus' life at his birth, he has the entirety of his humiliation before him, so Jesus is surrounded by poverty, humiliation, and suffering—but yet some Gentiles recognize his kingly status and bring him gifts. Now, at Jesus' death, he has finished the entirety of his estate of humiliation, with only one final element: his burial. Nevertheless, Jesus receives a burial fit for a king. Jesus' birth marked the transition from glory to humiliation, and Jesus' burial now marks his transition from humiliation to exaltation. At his death, Jesus finishes his work in order to become the firstfruits of a new creation.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the physical reasons that Jesus must ask for a drink before he dies? What are the prophetic, symbolic, spiritual, and theological reasons that Jesus must ask for a drink before he dies? Why are both necessary as Jesus finishes his work? Why does John tie Jesus' last drink to the completion of Jesus' work? What do these things mean for thirsty people like you and me?
2. How does the suffering of Jesus during the course of his life contrast with the rest that Jesus enters into at his death? How does Jesus' entering into death for us remove death's sting from harming us? How should the death of Jesus shape the way that we look at the death that awaits all of us?
3. Why does John insist that not only blood, but also water flowed from Jesus' side? How does this event fulfill the promises that streams of living water would flow from Jesus? What do these things mean for thirsty people like you and me?
4. How does the royal burial of Jesus contrast with his impoverished birth, life, and death? Why does Jesus now receive honor, when he received humiliation throughout the entirety of his life? Why is it important for us, practically speaking, that Jesus has finished his estate of humiliation and that he has now entered into his estate of exaltation?

Notes

1. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1302.
2. The following suggestions come from Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 619.
3. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 234–35. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.ix.vii.html>>
4. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 619.
5. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 2, 1146.
6. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 620.
7. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1302–03.
8. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 620.
9. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 352.
10. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 2, 1147.
11. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1304–06.
12. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 235–36. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.ix.vii.html>>
13. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 721.
14. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 2, 1150.
15. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 440.
16. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 353.
17. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 436.
18. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 353.
19. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 622.
20. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 238. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.ix.viii.html>>
21. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 723.
22. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 356–57.
23. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1317.
24. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 240. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.ix.viii.html>>
25. See Gerber, *That You May Know*, 109–13.
26. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 2, 1146.
27. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 624.
28. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 2, 1153.
29. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 626.
30. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 627.
31. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1321.
32. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 628.
33. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1324.
34. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 625.
35. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 353. Beasley-Murray also notes the connection of these two elements in other places in Scripture: “We read of them together in the OT, e.g., in Ps 45:8 ‘Your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and powder of aloes’; in Prov 7:17 a prostitute spreads her bed and night clothes with them: in Cant 4:14 the cheeks of the loved one are like ‘myrrh and aloes with all the choicest spices.’”

36. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1328.

37. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 2, 1163.

38. "It is hard to say whether the Evangelist, in this repeated reference to the approaching sabbath, has in mind a divine providence giving rest to Jesus after he had completed his task on the sixth day. It is clear in any case that the time between Jesus' death and his resurrection is in the Fourth Gospel a transitional period. The descent of the Son of man reaches its lowest point in a human tomb, but also finds there its passage and transition to his ascent to glory, though the signs that point out this transition in Jesus' entombment only become visible in the light that is still to come, 'on the first day of the week,' the first words of the next chapter." (Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 628.)

39. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 245. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.ix.ix.html>>

40. Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 246–47. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom35.ix.ix.html>>

41. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. II, 444–45.

42. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John's Gospel*, 1330.