

The Divine Veto!

John 19: 38-20:31—“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. ³⁹Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. ⁴⁰So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹Now 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. ⁴²So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. **Chapter 20**—¹Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ... ¹¹but Mary stood outside the tomb crying... ¹⁴At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there... ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).”

John 19: 38-20:10—³⁸**After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews,**

- Whatever his former reservations, he now sets them aside.
- According to Roman law the body belonged to Rome
 - They would usually throw it in a common ditch; however in Jerusalem they could do such things
- Even though Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin it is probable that he was not present at the trial of Jesus

asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. ³⁹Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. ⁴⁰So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

- It was the Jewish custom to wrap the bodies of the dead in linen clothes and to put sweet spices between the folds of the linen.
 - Nicodemus brought enough spices (75 lbs.) for the burial of a king
- 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.**
- It would have consisted of a cave hewn out of rock, with shelves in the side walls to accommodate the corpses. This one was unused
 - **Is. 53:9** “He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.”
 - Who was to blame for Jesus’ death? Back when “The Passion of the Christ” came out there was a good deal of public debate as to who was responsible for the death of Jesus. People accused Gibson of being anti-Semitic for portraying the Jews as those responsible. Others argued that it was the Romans who were to blame. Still others sought to pin the guilt on Jesus himself.
 - **Chuck Colson:** ““Who killed Jesus?” ...was it the Romans or the Jews, the venality of Pontius Pilate or the passion of the mob? It was both and neither. The Jews didn’t cause the death of Jesus, nor did the Romans. They were merely instruments carrying

out what God had decreed. He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross so that the sins of mankind might be forgiven. And those who take Scripture seriously have always known who killed Jesus: ***You and I*** and all other sinful human beings did so. Mel Gibson understands this. In his movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, the hand holding the spike being nailed through Christ's wrist is Gibson's. Who killed Jesus? Mel Gibson knows. And he made the very point with his own hand that he was responsible, not the Jews... My advice to Christians is that you ***make it abundantly clear to your friends and neighbors that we are the ones responsible...***¹

John Newton

In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopp'd my wild career:

I saw One hanging on a Tree
In agonies and blood,
Who fix'd His languid eyes on me.
As near His Cross I stood.

And never till my dying breath,
Will I forget that look:
It seem'd to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke:

My conscience felt and own'd the guilt,
And plunged me in despair:
I saw my sins His Blood had spilt,
And help'd to nail Him there.

Alas! I knew not what I did!
But now my tears are vain:
Where shall my trembling soul be hid?
For I the Lord have slain!

--A second look He gave, which said,
"I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid;
I die that thou may'st live."

Thus, while His death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,

¹ Chuck Colson,

http://www.pfm.org/BPtemplate.cfm?Section=BreakPoint_Commentaries1&CONTENTID=11629&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm.

Such is the mystery of grace,
It seals my pardon too.

With pleasing grief, and mournful joy,
My spirit now is fill'd,
That I should such a life destroy,
Yet live by Him I kill'd!

⁴²**So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.**

- This would have been Friday afternoon.
- Sabbath began at Sundown
- Three days?
 - The Jews counted any part of a day as a full day. So...
 - Day one: The end of Friday
 - Day two: Saturday
 - Day three: very early on Sunday morning
- A Sabbath day's walk was only about $\frac{3}{4}$ miles.
 - The tomb was further than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile so they did not come to visit the tomb on Saturday

Chapter 20—¹Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark,

- Tradition has always thought of Mary as a scarlet sinner but there is no evidence in the text.
 - One of the few things that Dan Brown got right in *The Da Vinci Code*.
- Probably between 3 AM and 6 AM.

and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

- Expensive tombs like Joseph's would have been sealed with a disc-like stone which was rolled down a sloping groove across the door.
 - So it would have been relatively easy to close but difficult to open.
 - Note: The stone was not merely turned away, but actually removed (lifted out of its groove), so that I was lying flat on the ground!²
- Mary would have naturally thought grave robbers were responsible (common in the ancient world)
 - Because of the problem, Emperor Claudius decreed that grave robbery was punishable by death.

²**So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved,**

- Why did Mary go to Peter? Peter was still very much a leader.
- What was the first step in Peter's restoration?
 - **Answer: Luke 22: 31-34**—"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But *I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail.* And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." ³³But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." ³⁴Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."
- According to legend, malicious people would imitate the crow of the rooster when Peter would pass by.

² William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary*, 12 volumes (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 4: II, 448.

- What kind of a Gospel can change a person so much that they can stand in the face of that kind of ridicule?

and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ...¹¹but Mary stood outside the tomb crying...¹⁴At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there...¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher)."

What Makes This Cross Unique?

1. After the death of Herod the Great there were riots in the areas ruled by his son Archelaus,
2. Archelaus' troops were unable to cope with these men, and
3. General Varus had to intervene with three legions of soldiers.
4. 2,000 people crucified³
5. Years later in 70 AD, Titus III, crucified so many fugitives from the city of Jerusalem that there could be found "neither space...for the crosses, nor crosses for the bodies."⁴
6. Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BC) crucified 800 in one encounter.
7. Emperor Hadrian (117-138), 500 a day
8. Alexander the Great (4th century BC) crucified 2000 Tyrians.
9. Augustus crucified 600 Sicilians.
10. When we talk about the cross, what makes the cross of Christ so special?
11. It is the theological meaning that the biblical authors tell us.
 - They are saying, in affect, this was not simply just another crucifixion. This crucifixion was altogether unique!
 - **Question:** What does the resurrection teach us?
 - **Answer:** A great deal. Theology distinguishes between two stages of Jesus' life.
 - Christ's resurrection was more than simply coming back from the dead.
 - He was "the first fruits" (1 Cor. 15:20, 23). That is, he entered into a new level of human existence.
 - **Grudem:** "A new kind of human life, a life in which his body was made perfect, no longer subject to weakness, aging, or death, but able to live eternally."⁵
 - **Question:** So is it important for us—today?
 - **Answer:** Yes! It ensures our justification.
 - **Romans 4: 24-25**—"God will credit righteousness to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."
 - **Briefly:** a double exchange
 - **1 Corinthians 15: 12-17**—"12But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, then

³ Josephus, *Antiquities* xvii.10.10

⁴ Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.451.

⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 608-609.

Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”

- The question in Paul’s mind was **not** *if* the resurrection actually, literally happened (he was utterly convinced that it had), but do you believe it. In other words, if you don’t believe Christ has been raised...”your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”
- The resurrection was God’s VETO of humanity’s charge. He overturned the entire ruling! It was Christ’s vindication!

Christmas, Easter And The Cross

Christmas day, when Christ was born;
 And Easter, resurrection morn.
 Each is such a special day;
 Important steps along the way.
 Between those very sacred days,
 Jesus died, God’s wrath assuaged.
 The finished story, would need three days,
 Then Christ would rise, our ransom paid.

Remember this, and don't forget,
 The Cross is most important yet.
 Jesus died, upon that tree,
 To give to us, salvation free.
 Jesus only, Christ alone,
 The gift of God, sins did atone.
 To try and add, one single thing,
 The Gospel dies, and death it brings.

Christ and the Cross, stand all alone;
 One of a kind, there is no clone.
 If we add a single act,
 The Gospel is no longer fact.
 Grace alone, completes God's plan,
 Of Him redeeming, sinful man.

Christ’s resurrection, the highest spot,
 Achieved for us, God’s greatest thought.
 His righteousness, to us imputed,
 Has conquered death, sin now is muted.
 A whole new era, of life is gained,
 Through Christ’s resurrection fame.
 So on this Easter, set your attention,
 On Christ’s Cross, and Resurrection.

Application

1. **Do you own the death of Christ?** Do you see yourself as responsible? If you don’t own his death you cannot own his resurrection,

My conscience felt and own'd the guilt,
And plunged me in despair:
I saw my sins His Blood had spilt,
And help'd to nail Him there.

- Remember: His resurrection is the basis of our justification.
2. **Some of you need to hear he words that Jesus spoke to Peter.** Jesus knows exactly when and how you have failed him in the past and when and how you will do it in the future. But in spite of your sins and failures, and some of them so overwhelming you are afraid to believe this, Jesus' message is the same: "Jeffrey, Jeffrey, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (*Luke 22: 31*). Before you even fall Christ knows exactly what you will do in every excruciating detail. Yet with this full knowledge he willingly calls you to himself and gives you His righteousness.
 3. **Justification**—Easter is all about justification. The righteousness of Jesus given over to you. The final verdict of Judgment day is delivered today for those who make Christ their greatest prize. But does this have any practical relevance? Yes (see point three).
 4. **Do you believe the Gospel like Peter did?** So much so that it creates an inner strength inside of you that can stand in the very face of accusation without wavering in the slightest?