

When God writes what he writes in the Bible, he does it with specific purposes in mind. He is not doing it just to tell a story. He is not doing it just to make us feel a certain way. When God writes the Scriptures, he always has some goal. And every word has a purpose. Every sentence has a meaning. Every book of the Bible has a main point. And when we know that main point, it becomes easier to understand everything that has been written in that book. We don't always know what that main point is. Sometimes it's too hard to figure out. But in a book like John, he tells us the main point of his book when he says in chapter 19 verse 35: "He who saw it has borne witness--his testimony is true and he knows that he is telling the truth--that you also may believe." And, as John also says later in the same book in chapter 20, "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in his name." So the purpose of the gospel of John is to help us to see that Jesus is the Christ, and when we know that he is the Christ, we will have faith in him unto everlasting life.

So every detail in this gospel points to that reality, that Jesus is in fact the Christ who has come into the world. And we only need to look for those little hints that point towards this truth, because when we know what to look for, then we will see what John is doing. If Jesus is the Christ, we would expect him to say that he is the Son of God. And he does that very early in the passion story, because when he is at Gethsemane coming out to the soldiers who are looking for him, he says something we might overlook what is in fact quite important. He says "I am he," or perhaps a little bit better, "I am." "I am" is the name of God that comes from the book of Exodus chapter 3. And so is it any wonder then that the soldiers who have come to him fall back to the ground, because Jesus reveals himself in this seemingly insignificant detail to be the very son of God.

And if Jesus is in fact the Christ, we would expect him to come as the Savior for all men, to offer that offer of salvation to all, regardless of who they are. And we see that happen as well when Jesus is confronting Pilate. Pilate, who is a weak, vacillating, sniveling kind of man, Pilate who doesn't have a bone in his body, but is doing the things that he does simply to please or to antagonize the Jews, even to this man who was a pagan Jesus offers salvation when he says that "Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." Offering to him in that moment the opportunity for repentance, because that is what Jesus has come to do.

And if Jesus is in fact the Christ, we would expect him to be a king and to be presented as a king. And we see that happen also in the Gospel of John when the soldiers who come to him mock him mercilessly, putting a crown of thorns upon his head and saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They do these things out of mockery, but they speak the truth which they do not even recognize. Jesus is in fact the king, the son of David who has come into the world to be the king of Israel.

And if Jesus is in fact the Christ, we would expect him to fulfill Scripture as well. And we see that happen throughout this account, but especially with that small detail of the soldiers who are gambling for his clothes. Because these soldiers, as brutish and as nasty as they were, who are really only interested in it for themselves, are unwittingly fulfilling the very words of God, so that every prophecy, no matter how small, no matter how seemingly insignificant, finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who has come on this day as the Christ who has come into the world.

And if Jesus is the Christ, we would expect him to be the one who fulfills all things, the one who brings the promises of God to their completion. And he does just that in that moment that we all know by heart. "It is finished!" He cries out on the cross. All that has needed to be done has been done. All that Jesus needs to do is now complete. God has fulfilled every one of his promises in Jesus Christ, and Jesus brings that to completion in himself on this Good Friday.

So Christians, these things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is in fact the Christ, the promised son of David, the promised king of Israel. And everything that we see in this Gospel, no matter how seemingly small, no matter how seemingly insignificant, has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ on this day. So cling to him, Christians. Cling to him and believe the words that he has spoken, for he comes to you to give you forgiveness and life eternal.

To him be the glory, now and forever. Amen.