

# John 19:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

## Analysis

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**But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs** (ἐπὶ δὲ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐλθόντες, ὡς εἶδον ἤδη αὐτὸν τεθνηκότα, οὐ κατέαξαν αὐτοῦ τὰ σκέλη, *epi de ton Iēsoun elthontes, hōs eidon ēdē auton tethnēkota, ou kateaxan autou ta skelē*)—The soldiers' observation (εἶδον, *eidon*, 'they saw') that Jesus was τεθνηκότα (*tethnēkota*, 'already dead') prevented them from breaking His legs. This was unexpected; crucifixion victims rarely died within six hours (Jesus was crucified at 9am and died at 3pm, Mark 15:25, 34). His rapid death may have resulted from the physical trauma of scourging, emotional agony in Gethsemane (Luke 22:44), and voluntarily yielding His spirit (John 19:30).

Providence guided this seemingly random military decision. The soldiers had no theological knowledge, yet their pragmatic choice fulfilled prophecy (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20)—the Paschal Lamb's bones remained unbroken. God sovereignly orchestrates even minute details to accomplish His redemptive purposes.

## Historical Context

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Roman soldiers were experienced executioners who could determine death reliably. Jesus's unusually rapid death surprised even Pilate (Mark 15:44). Medical theories suggest cardiac rupture, hemopericardium, or hypovolemic shock from scourging and crucifixion. Regardless of physiological mechanism, Jesus voluntarily dismissed His spirit (John 10:18).

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does Jesus's rapid, voluntary death demonstrate His sovereign control even during crucifixion?
2. What does the fulfillment of detailed prophecy about unbroken bones teach about Scripture's inspiration and God's sovereign control?
3. How should believers trust God's providence when circumstances seem random or meaningless?

## Interlinear Text

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ἐπὶ	δὲ	τὸν	Ἰησοῦν	ἐλθόντες	ὥς	εἶδον	αὐτοῦ	ἤδη
to	But	G3588	Jesus	they came	when	and saw	his	already
G1909	G1161		G2424	G2064	G5613	G1492	G846	G2235
τεθνηκότα	οὐ	κατέαξαν	αὐτοῦ	τὰ	σκέλη			
was dead	not	they brake	his	G3588	legs			
G2348	G3756	G2608	G846		G4628			

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