

her superstitions connected to a dream she had had concerning this Jesus (cf. Matt. 27:19-21). Pilate must be careful! Every move must be weighed! He does not want to become involved in the nasty trial and condemnation of an innocent man. But neither does he want to incur the political disfavor of the Jewish rulers. So he offers to release the prisoner Jesus according to the Roman custom of releasing a prisoner at passover time. Now there was another Jewish prisoner held by the Romans, one Barabbas, a robber and one who had in fact incited a seditious riot. But the Jews would not hear of it! They cried out, "Not this man but Barabbas . . . this man stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place."

Aha! Pilate ponders the thought! This Jesus was a Galilean. Herod was ruler of that province. Pilate and Herod had been at odds with one another over some political squabble for quite a while. Here was an opportunity to "kill two birds with one stone." He would be rid of the responsibility of condemning an innocent man while placating Herod at the same time. Herod was placated but the innocent Jesus was returned to Pilate for final responsibility. John leaves all this out of his account. It may be studied in the Synoptics.

Quiz

1. Where was Pilate's judgment hall and the Praetorium?
2. What is meant when it is said that the Jews were afraid of defilement should they enter Pilate's judgment hall?
3. What type of a man was Pilate and what did he probably know about Jesus?
4. Why must the Romans put Jesus to death?
5. How did Jesus answer the charges against Him and witness to Pilate at the same time?
6. What did Pilate mean when he said, "What is truth?"
7. How did Pilate think he had solved his dilemma of not wanting to sentence an innocent man and yet not wanting to displease the Jews?

SERMON NO. SEVENTEEN MANKIND ON TRIAL

Mark 14:53-65; John 18:33-38

Introduction

WHY WAS JESUS ON TRIAL? Because of the claims He made to be the Son of God, Messiah, Forgiver of sins. Because of what He did: He broke the traditions of the Pharisees and loved sinners. Because of what He was: He was righteous, sinless and condemned the evil of the rulers.

BUT WAS THE SON OF GOD REALLY ON TRIAL? Actually, those before whom He stood were on trial. These murderous judges and officials were at this moment being weighed in the balances of God. They were under the heart-searching gaze of the One who is the Judge of all the earth.

IT WAS REALLY THE MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR THOSE JUDGES. He is not a prisoner—because He is powerless, but because He wills it to be so. He made His claims, performed His deeds and lived His life, and substantiated it all by great miracles which were done openly and before His enemies.

THIS SEEMS TO BE THE ATTITUDE OF MEN FACED WITH JESUS CHRIST TODAY . . . THEY DEMAND THAT HE STAND TRIAL BEFORE THEIR PERSONAL COURT. If He conforms to their desires or ideals He can go free . . . IF HE DOESN'T BOTHER THEM TOO MUCH. But men and women must awake to the fact Jesus has made such tremendous claims to deity, with such undeniable testimony and evidence to back them up, that THEY ARE ON TRIAL.

"For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:12. HIS WORD WILL JUDGE MEN AND DOES JUDGE MEN NOW. Jn. 12:48.

Discussion

I. RULERS OF THE JEWS. It is near midnight, and Annas is questioning Jesus about disciples and teachings. After this Jesus is taken to the Sanhedrin gathered at night and is condemned to death on charge of blasphemy (the whole trial was illegal). Dignified religious leaders then act like hoodlums as they spit upon Him, strike Him, mock Him. To make the trial appear legal, they call the Sanhedrin together again after daybreak and try Him again. THE TRIAL WAS ILLEGAL IN MANY RESPECTS. IT WAS AFTER DARK, CONDUCTED WITH BRIBED WITNESSES, FORCE WAS USED, THE ACCUSED WAS MADE TO TESTIFY AGAINST SELF, THE WITNESSES COULD NOT AGREE, THE JUDGES HAD DETERMINED HIS GUILT AND SENTENCE BEFORE COURT WAS HELD.

Truth mattered little to these evil men. These rulers did not want a Messiah. Jesus stood before them condemned because He was upsetting their "apple carts". He cleansed the temple and publicly ex-

posed and condemned their graft which ran in the millions annually. He openly taught the multitudes of people and exposed the unbelief and greed of the rulers: **IT WAS FOR ENVY AND JEALOUSY AND GREED THAT THEY DECIDED TO KILL JESUS—EVEN PILATE KNEW THIS.** It was because He was hurting their pocket-books that they were trying Him. **IF HE HAD NOT BOTHERED THEM OR THEIR BUSINESS, HE COULD HAVE PREACHED ALL HE WANTED TO.**

Jesus was the prisoner bound in chains, but the judges were on trial! There are those today who think they have Jesus where they want Him. He has been tried in the courts of their hearts and found guilty of being too righteous. **THEY WILL NOT HAVE JESUS CHRIST TO RULE OVER THEM BECAUSE HIS RIGHTEOUS TEACHING AND SINLESS LIFE EXPOSES AND CONDEMNS THEIR EVIL.** "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil: For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light lest his works should be reprov'd." Jn. 3:19-20. "But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God." Jn. 3:21. Men may try to hide and dress up their evil deeds all they want but the light of God's truth exposes them for what they really are. **THEY MAY CRY BIGOT AND FANATIC ALL THEY WANT AND HOLD COURT IN THEIR HEART UPON GOD'S WORD AND HIS PEOPLE, BUT THEY ARE REALLY THE ONES ON TRIAL!**

And so it is with people who will not give up their sinful lives and evil habits today. They *demand* the *right* to *do as they please*. If God's Word says different, they hold court, try God as a narrow-minded bigot and condemn Him.

Jesus stood before men, some of whom had seen with their own eyes evidence that He was the Son of God. One of their number, Nicodemus, admitted it. They simply brushed aside any facts or any truth. They tried to make it appear that Jesus was guilty instead of admitting the truth and repenting and bringing their lives into conformity to His teaching.

IT WAS NOT THE SON OF GOD ON TRIAL THAT NIGHT, BUT MEN BLIND IN UNBELIEF AND GREED AND ENVY. THEIR CHARGES WERE TOO RIDICULOUS TO ANSWER . . . THEIR PURPOSE WAS EVIDENT TO ALL, MURDER. BEFORE THEM STOOD ONE WHO HAD MADE CLAIM TO BE GOD AND HAD SUBSTANTIATED IT WITH GREAT MIRACLES WHICH SOME OF THEM HAD SEEN. THEY COULD NOT

DISPROVE HIS CLAIMS, SO THEY KILLED HIM! I ASK YOU, WHO WAS BEING TRIED THAT NIGHT? PERHAPS YOU ARE IN THE SAME POSITION THIS EVENING. YOU KNOW HIS CLAIM TO BE RULER OF THE HEARTS OF MEN—YOU KNOW THAT THE EVIDENCE TO BACK HIM UP IS OVERWHELMING! YOU CAN'T DISPROVE HIM! WHY WILL YOU STAND THERE WITH THE EVIL SANHEDRIN AND CONDEMN HIM, MOCK HIM?

II. HEROD. Actually Jesus was sent to Pilate first who then sent Him to Herod. Herod had been anxious to see the Galilean. He had heard about His miracles and wanted to see Him work one (like a magic show).

Herod was a man who had let his sensual appetites take possession of him. Everything was a lark to him. He loved only to eat, drink, be merry and luxuriate in pleasure and revelry. Even that which was from God he thought to make into a show for his amusement and diversion.

There are people judging Jesus and Christianity like this today. They are interested only in eating, drinking and merry-making. If religion will thrill them or indulge in their revelry and pleasure then they will play church and join the "Sunday club." They mock and laugh at any pretension of righteousness. JESUS IN ALL HIS PURE, SINLESS DIGNITY, SPOKE NOT A WORD IN ANSWER TO THE ANIMAL HEROD . . . IT WOULD BE LIKE CASTING YOUR PEARLS BEFORE THE SWINE. Jesus was not on trial before Herod—Herod simply showed his debased nature and judged himself. So the Son of God is not on trial by the debauched and those who delight in sin today! THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE TODAY WHO SEEM TO DELIGHT IN MAKING MOCKERY OF ANYTHING THAT IS PURE AND HOLY AND SACRED WITH THEIR FILTHY MINDS AND FILTHY MOUTHS. THESE PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY BEEN GIVEN UP BY GOD! READ ROMANS 1st chapter! and II Thess. 2:8-12. Those who take pleasure in unrighteousness and will not love the truth, God sends them a strong delusion, so that they will believe a lie! They are like Belshazzar who was weighed and found wanting in the balances of God!

III. PILATE. He was intelligent enough to see that there was no valid reason for Jesus to be on trial. HE EVEN PRONOUNCED JESUS INNOCENT AND WOULD HAVE LET HIM GO. But Pilate was a coward for He knew what was right but he would not stand for it. He allowed worldly pressures to rule him. He allowed the fear of what men would think and do cause him to do something he knew to be wrong. HE BETRAYED HIMSELF WHEN HE SAID

"WHAT IS TRUTH?" HE WAS A MAN LIKE SO MANY MEN TODAY WHO SAY THE SAME! THEY MAKE TRUTH A RELATIVE THING! SOMETHING IS TRUE ONLY AS LONG AS IT WORKS! IF IT DOESN'T WORK FOR ME OR FOR SOCIETY, IT ISN'T TRUE. TRUTH IS TRUTH WHEREVER IT IS FOUND AND WHETHER IT WORKS FOR MAN'S PHYSICAL DESIRES OR NOT! SO MANY PUT THE SON OF GOD ON TRIAL TODAY BY THIS VERY SAME TOKEN! HE CLAIMED TO BE THE PRINCE OF PEACE AND THERE IS NO PEACE SO CHRISTIANITY IS UNTRUE. Jesus never claimed to give the world peace from war as men think of peace. God's word is true, whether you believe it or not, whether you like it or not, and whether it works for your desires or not. IT IS NOT HIS WORD THAT IS IN COURT, BUT HIS WORD IS THE COURT AND YOU ARE ON TRIAL!

Pilate then tried to rid himself of guilt by washing his hands and crying . . . "I'm neutral . . . Take him yourself and crucify him . . ." AND ARE THERE NOT MEN AND WOMEN TODAY WHO STAND ALONG SIDE PILATE, SAYING . . . "NO, I WILL NOT PUT THE SON OF GOD ON TRIAL, I WILL NOT BE FOR HIM OR AGAINST HIM . . .?" "I MAY BE A LOT OF THINGS, BUT I'M NOT AGAINST RELIGION!" My friend, you may not put the Son of God on trial, BUT YOU ARE ON TRIAL, JUST THE SAME! It is impossible to be neutral with the Lord Jesus Christ! "He that is not with me is against me . . . and he that gathereth not scattereth . . ."

NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS. BUT EVERY MAN SERVES ONE MASTER OR THE OTHER. IF YOU ARE NOT FOR JESUS BY SERVING HIM WITH YOUR LIFE, YOUR TIME AND YOUR MONEY . . . THEN YOU ARE AGAINST HIM AND SERVING THE DEVIL WITH YOUR LIFE, TIME AND MONEY! BY SERVING SELF WE SERVE THE DEVIL . . . FOR IF HE CAN GET US TO SERVE OURSELVES AND DENY CHRIST, WE HAVE BECOME HIS SLAVE AND WE HAVE SOLD OUR SOULS TO HIM! ELIJAH SAID, "HOW LONG GO YE LIMPING BETWEEN THE TWO,—IF BAAL BE GOD SERVE HIM . . . IF JEHOVAH BE GOD SERVE HIM".

Conclusion

And so, the Jesus revealed to you in the Gospels stands before the court of your heart this evening. He stands before you this evening as the God-man of Nazareth—the One who was as truly a man as if He had been altogether man—the One who is as surely God as if he had been altogether God—like a man, like God!

Like a man, the 12 year old tarried behind in the temple—like a God he confused the teachers with his understanding. Like a man He came to Jordan to be baptized of John—like a God He was acclaimed by the Father. Like a man He was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil—like a God He said "NO!" Like a man He fell asleep in the little boat after a hard day's work—like a God He stood forth, and with His voice "peace be still" calmed the tempest. Like a man He wept before the tomb of His dead friend—like a God he called, "Lazarus, come forth!" and was obeyed. Like a man He permitted that perfect body to be spiked to the Roman cross—like a God He died forgiving. Like a man He was placed in the tomb—like a God He came forth triumphant, the living reigning King. Here He stands before the court of your heart. **BUT HE IS NOT ON TRIAL, YOU ARE ON TRIAL!** I know you want to acknowledge His Lordship over your heart and life this evening if you have not done so. You believe in Him with all your heart . . . I know you do! Then step out this evening and come down front and say, "Lord, be my King, rule over me . . . I want to obey you in all that you have commanded . . . I want to be immersed and baptized in water for the forgiveness of my sin . . ."

When Paul stood before Felix, it was Felix on trial not Paul. When Paul stood before Agrippa, it was Agrippa on trial not Paul. **WHERE DO YOU STAND . . . DON'T BE A PILATE!**

EVER SINCE GOD SENT HIS WORD MEN HAVE BEEN ON TRIAL, YOU CANNOT ESCAPE THIS FACT! YOU MUST DECIDE—YOU WILL DECIDE—YOU ARE DECIDING—OH, I PRAY, I HAVE PRAYED THAT YOUR DECISION WILL BE FOR JESUS!

In 1829 George Wilson, in Pennsylvania, was sentenced by the U.S. Court to be hanged for robbing the mails, and murder. President Andrew Jackson pardoned him, but the pardon was refused. Wilson insisted that he was not pardoned unless he accepted it. That was a point of law never raised before and the President called on the Supreme Court to decide. Chief Justice John Marshall gave the following decision: "A pardon" is a paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the person implicated. If it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged." And he was hanged although potentially he had been pardoned . . . he refused it by rejecting its provisions.

Potentially the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to the whole world. All men and women mature enough to make a choice, have been potentially pardoned by the New Covenant in Jesus'

blood. But, there are provisions of accepting this pardon and if we do not meet these provisions we must suffer the sentence and penalty which God has pronounced upon us for our sins . . . the sentence: DEATH . . . ETERNAL DEATH, the pardon: LIFE . . . ETERNAL LIFE.

FACE TO FACE WITH CHRIST YOUR SAVIOR, WHAT WILL IT BE? WHEN THE ROLL IS CALLED UP YONDER WILL YOU BE THERE? TO HIM THAT KNOWETH TO DO GOOD AND DOETH IT NOT, IT IS SIN . . . YOU KNOW BROTHER YOU CANNOT GO AWAY TONIGHT AND NOT KNOW.

EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 16, 17 and 18

Interpret These Enigmatic Sayings

1. "It is expedient for you that I go away;"
2. "A little while and ye behold me not; and again a little while, and ye shall see me;"
3. ". . . ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice;"
4. "not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."
5. ". . . expedient that one man should die for the people."
6. ". . . My kingdom is not of this world:"

*Identify the Following and
Tell of Their Character*

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. Annas | 4. Pilate |
| 2. Malchus | 5. Barabbas |
| 3. Caiaphas | 6. The Comforter |

Who said This and Why?

1. "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no dark saying."
2. "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth."
3. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me."
4. "Art thou also one of this man's disciples?"
5. "Answerest thou the high priest so?"
6. "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."
7. "What is truth?"

Fill in the Blanks

1. "And he, when he is come, will _____ the world in respect of _____, and of _____, and of _____:"
2. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of _____, is come, he shall _____ you into all the _____:"

3. "And this is life _____, that they should _____
_____ thee, the only _____ God, and _____
_____ whom thou didst _____, even Jesus
Christ."
4. "And for their sakes I _____ myself, that they them-
selves also may be _____ in _____."
5. "I have spoken _____ to the world; I ever taught in
_____ and in the temple, where all the Jews come
together; and in _____ spake I nothing."
6. "If I have spoken evil, _____
of the evil: but if well, why _____ thou me?"
7. "Thou sayest that I am a _____. To this end have I
been _____, and to this end am I _____
into the world, that I should bear _____ unto the
_____. Every one that is of the _____
heareth my voice."

Questions for Thought

1. Why did Jesus tell the disciples of such dark and foreboding future persecutions? (chapter 16)
2. Why did Jesus emphasize the "word" and "truth" so much in His prayer? (chapter 17)
3. Why did Peter and John make a point to follow Jesus into the courtyard of the home of the High Priest?

CHAPTER NINETEEN

This is John's account of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Here again the Fourth Gospel shows its supplementary nature. John omits even some of the incidents of the crucifixion which are recorded by the Synoptics (especially the words of the two thieves and the taunts of the hecklers around the cross). But John supplies some of the more tender and personal scenes and words which occurred at the foot of the cross that day.

The account of John is very evidently the account of an eyewitness, for it records even the words Jesus spoke to His mother. John alone records that it was Pilate who wrote the inscription "King of the Jews" and placed it upon His cross. Only John records that His legs were not broken but that the soldiers pierced His side with a spear and water and blood came gushing forth.

The nineteenth chapter really begins with the final examination by Pilate and tells of Pilate's final attempt to release Him. But the Jewish rulers are determined to put this enemy to their popularity to death and they bring great political pressure to bear on Pilate.

John's account of the crucifixion also supplies us with a list of prophecies which were fulfilled there on Golgotha's brow.

We now continue our presentation of the Spectacle of His Passion.

III. The Word Manifested to the Disciples and Their Acceptance of Him, 13:1—20:31

B. Public Spectacle of His Passion, 18:1—20:31

2. The Crucifixion and Burial, 19:1-42

a. Pronounced Innocent, 19:1-11

b. Condemned and Crucified, 19:12-22

c. Those Around the Cross, 19:23-27

d. It is Finished, 19:28-37

e. The Entombment, 19:38-42

PRONOUNCED INNOCENT

Text: 19:1-11

1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

2 And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple garment;

3 and they came unto him, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they struck him with their hands.

4 And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him.

5 Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold, the man!

6 When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

8 When Pilate therefore heard this saying he was the more afraid; 9 and he entered into the Praetorium again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Pilate therefore saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?

11 Jesus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin.

Queries

- a. Why did Pilate not release Jesus immediately after "finding no crime in him?"
- b. Why did the Jews not take Jesus themselves and crucify Him as

Pilate had invited them to do?

c. Why did Jesus not answer Pilate's question? (v. 9)

Paraphrase (Harmony)

And Pilate again answered and said unto them, What then shall I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him. And Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, Crucify him. And he said unto them a third time, Why, what evil hath this man done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him and release him. But they were urgent with loud voices, asking that he might be crucified. And their voices prevailed.

And Pilate, wishing to content the multitude, gave sentence that what they asked for should be done. And he released Barabbas, him that for insurrection and murder had been cast into prison, whom they asked for; but Jesus he scourged and delivered up to their will to be crucified. And the soldiers of the governor took Jesus, led him away within the court, which is the Praetorium; and they call together the whole band. And they stripped him, and clothed him with purple and put on him a scarlet robe. And they plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head, and bowing their knees, worshipped him.

And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him. Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold, the man! When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee? Jesus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin.

Summary

The theme of this section is the repeated pronouncements of Pilate that Jesus is innocent and his repeated efforts to release Jesus. Pilate,

due to his political cautiousness and religious superstitions, is afraid to exonerate Jesus and free Him completely.

Comment

When Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate attired in the royal robes of mockery it was a sign to Pilate that "Herod, who from his position must have known Jesus' history, had no knowledge of any seditious practices in Galilee, and regarded Him as a harmless man, whose Messianic pretensions were rather to be ridiculed than severely punished."

Pilate was convinced that, politically speaking, the Nazarene himself was harmless to Caesar's throne. In fact, as one reads the account of Pilate's efforts in this section one is aware that Pilate's conscience is telling him to release Jesus. Pilate pronounces Jesus innocent of the charges. To Pilate the Galilean is a philosopher concerned with the "kingdom of truth" and not with Caesar's kingdom.

But the Jews are not to be satisfied until the Nazarene is put to death! Pilate takes Jesus and orders Him to be scourged. Scourging was a Roman method of extracting from condemned criminals confession of guilt or secrets. The scourge, or whip, consisted of a short wooden handle to which several leather thongs were attached. Fastened on the ends of these leather thongs were pieces of lead or brass or sharp pointed pieces of bone. The victim was usually tied to a post (Acts 22:25) and the blows were applied to the back and loins, sometimes even to the face and the bowels. The body was at times torn and lacerated to such an extent that the inner flesh was exposed and made to look like the raw meat of a butchered animal. At times even the entrails and inner organs of the victim were exposed. So hideous was the punishment that the victim usually fainted and sometimes died from it. It is no wonder that after such torture, lack of rest and agony of the soul this night that another (Simon of Cyrene) was forced to carry the Nazarene's cross (Lk. 23:26) when He stumbled under its weight. The soldiers added insult to injury. They made a crown of thorns and jammed it down upon His head and began to mock Him and strike Him. The soldiers are permitted to array Him in mock robes of a king.

Pilate's purpose was basically one of political expediency. His conscience told him this was an innocent man. Especially would the courageous, unreviling manner in which Jesus bore this punishment increase his conviction that He was innocent. Yet his precarious position as governor must be guarded. He had already fallen into ill-repute with the "powers that be" in Rome over mismanagement of a previous position. He must satisfy the blood-thirst of these influential Jews. After having scourged Jesus, Pilate brings Him out for the bloodthirsty

mob to behold. Pilate hoped they would see that he "cross-examined" the Nazarene by the "scourge" and that under the whip He did not confess guilt. Perhaps Pilate also felt sure that the sight of this One so severely tortured would satisfy the mob and would be the expedient to solve the whole problem. Pilate would not have to kill an innocent man and he would appease the Jews all with one stroke. Thus Pilate displayed Jesus, "Ecce homo!"

It seems as if the mere sight of the tortured Jesus enraged the mob all the more. His patience and composure was unexpected. The malignant envy and jealousy that had engulfed their reason and their feeling led them to cry even more hatefully, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Death was the only expedient the Jewish rulers would tolerate. Death was the only alternative—it was either His death or their positions and purses.

Pilate repeats, time after time, that the "man" is innocent (cf. 18:38; 19:4; 19:6 and parallels, Matt. 27:23; 27:24; Mk. 15:14; Lk. 23:4; 23:13-15; 23:22). But Pilate will not follow the light of his conscience. He allows his conscience to be seared with the hot iron of expediency. Some are wont to say, "Let us not condemn Pilate—he did the best he could. How was Pilate to know who this Jesus was. Hind-sight is better than foresight. We who have the advantage of looking back on history should not sit in judgment upon Pilate." Some of this attitude is true but most of it is not. Pilate did not do the best he could! He knew enough about Jesus to know He was not guilty and that He should not be put to death. Pilate will be judged by the "law of conscience" (cf. Romans, chapters 1 and 2, and I Jn. 3:19-21). This was the critical moment. The Jews had accused Jesus of sedition and solicited Pilate for authority to have Him executed (the Jews could not execute anyone according to Roman law). But Pilate had investigated, questioned and "cross-examined" (scourged) Jesus and pronounced Him, "Not guilty!" Pilate was about to release Him. Pilate was not really sentencing Jesus here but was taunting the Jewish rulers. The Jews had troubled him, they had pressured him and were trying to get him to execute an innocent man. This would get him into more difficulty with Rome. Pilate, assured of the Nazarene's innocence, taunts them back. Pilate knows full well that the rulers know they have no authority to put anyone to death. So Pilate sarcastically says, "Behold, the man. I find no crime in him. If you are so bent on spilling innocent blood do not trick me into doing your 'dirty-work' for you. Here he is, I will release him—take him yourselves, and crucify him."

The reason, therefore, that the Jews do not take Jesus immediately and crucify Him is that they could not. They must force Pilate, the

Roman governor, the only one with sufficient authority, to pronounce the death sentence and execute Jesus.

The first ruse did not work! Jesus was acquitted of the first charge of treason. It was not the real charge which the Jewish rulers had charged Jesus with anyway. They had charged Him in their tribunals with blasphemy. They probably did not mention blasphemy to Pilate first for fear that Pilate would simply dismiss the whole affair as a religious squabble. But now it is the only recourse left to them.

Perhaps the Jews felt that Pilate was obligated to administer the full extent of the Jewish law since the Roman government had taken away the right of the Jews themselves to enforce their own laws. If this is true then the rulers of the Jews were asking Pilate to execute Jesus on the basis of the sentence of the Jewish law upon blasphemy.

When the Jews mentioned Jesus' claims to be the Son of God it struck a note of superstitious fear in the heart of Pilate. His wife had already come to him speaking of dreams and omens concerning this man. The pagan Romans had adopted practically all the heathen religions under the sun. Many of these heathen religions taught that the gods often manifested themselves to men in the form of man. Perhaps Pilate began to be fearful that this Galilean might indeed be one of the gods and that the vengeance of the gods might come upon him if he allowed this god to be put to death. If Jesus had, at that moment, performed a miracle in the presence of Pilate, Pilate would have released Him immediately. But Pilate's response would have been motivated by a belief that Jesus was a pagan god and not from his sense of justice and Jesus' innocence. Jesus did not so much as answer Pilate's question, "Whence art thou?" (v. 9). Barnes gives four reasons why Jesus deemed it expedient not to answer: (1) Jesus had already told Pilate the nature of His kingdom (18:36-37); (2) Jesus had already said enough to satisfy Pilate of His innocence and Pilate was convinced; (3) It is not probable that Pilate would have understood Him if He had declared to him the truth about His origin and about His being the Son of God; (4) After what Pilate had already done—showing his susceptibility to political pressure by scourging Jesus—Jesus had no reason to expect justice at his hands, and therefore properly declined to make any further defense.

One of the most common reactions against fear is boasting and bullying. This was exactly the tack taken by Pilate. Pilate's question to Jesus in verse 10 would be literally translated, "To *me* you do not speak?" As Hendriksen puts it, "Hence, in order to conceal his fear he begins to boast!" Pilate means to say, "You cannot scare me with your

claim to be one of the gods for you are my prisoner and I have the power of life and death over you."

The arrogance and presumptuousness of this mortal must be corrected and so Jesus speaks. Pilate is informed that even the small amount of power he exercises over men in this world did not originate with him or with his emperor. All mortal power is ordained from above. And all men in position of authority and power on this earth are responsible to the One God who grants such authority. Would that all men in authority in all the governments of the world might recognize and surrender to this revealed truth (cf. Rom. 13:1ff).

The "therefore" of verse 11 refers to the guilt of Pilate's sin. Pilate had been granted authority to rule and make decisions by God and was therefore responsible to God. Pilate is making his decision about God's Son and will be held accountable for his decision. But Pilate's position, and as a consequence his ability to know about Jesus, is not as privileged as the position of the Jewish rulers. The Jewish rulers have been entrusted with the oracles of God and have been given the privileged position to really know the Messiah—therefore they have the greater sin. Unto whom much is given, from him much will be required! (cf. Romans 2).

Quiz

1. What did Pilate learn from the way Herod had treated Jesus?
2. Describe the Roman method of "scourging."
3. What was Pilate's purpose in ordering Jesus to be scourged?
4. Why does Pilate say, "Take him yourselves, and crucify him:"?
5. Why did Jesus not answer Pilate's question, "Whence art thou?"
6. Why did Jesus inform Pilate of the origin of his authority?
7. How does Pilate's God-given position have a bearing upon his sin in connection with Jesus?

CONDEMNED AND CRUCIFIED

Text: 19:12-22

12 Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend; every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

13 When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment-seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

14 Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King!

15 They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

16 Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.

17 They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha:

18 where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

19 And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title therefore read many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek.

21 The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, write not, The King of the Jews; but, that he said, I am King of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

Queries

- a. What is the "Preparation" of the passover?
- b. Why did the Jews claim no king but Caesar?
- c. Why did Pilate insist (v. 21-22) that his title for Jesus not be changed?

Paraphrase (Harmony)

Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment-seat at a place called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King! They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify the King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it. And all the people answered and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified. And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the purple and the robe, and put on him his garments, and led him away to crucify him.

They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, And when they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, passing by, Simon by name: coming from the country, the father of Alex-

ander and Rufus, him they compelled to go with them, and laid on him the cross, to bear it after Jesus.

And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? And there were also two others, malefactors led with him to be put to death.

And when they came unto the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha: they offered him wine to drink mingled with gall: and Myrrh: but when he had tasted it, he would not drink. And it was the third hour, and there they crucified him, and with him the malefactors, two robbers; one on his right hand, and the other on the left. And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And Pilate wrote a title also, the superscription of his accusation and put it up over his head on the cross. And there was written, This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. This title therefore read many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek. The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, the King of the Jews; but, that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

Summary

The Jewish rulers, seeing their "pigeon" about to escape, intimidate Pilate with subtle inferences concerning the procurator's patriotism and loyalty to Caesar. This is enough to sway the vacillating Pilate. He sentences Jesus to be crucified against the urgings of his own conscience.

Comment

The subtleness of the accusation brought by the Jews (v. 12) did not cause Pilate to miss its import! They are not merely accusing Pilate here in Jerusalem, but infer that they will accuse him before Caesar in Rome. The charge will be that Pilate is incompetent to punish those convicted of treason. The Jews were sure that even such a rumor reaching the ears of Caesar would do Pilate no good. Pilate had found the Nazarene innocent of any attempt to cause sedition. But a good part of political maneuvering was then, as now, based upon rumor and public opinion. Pilate could not afford even the rumor to drift back to Rome that he let a possible rebel go.

This ended the matter with Pilate. A decision had to be made. He must listen to his conscience and release a man not guilty of anything more than what he deemed proclaiming a religious philosophy, or, he must, for expediency's sake, sentence this Nazarene, accused of seditious talk lest these influential Jews spread rumors about his incompetency which would reach the ears of Caesar causing him to forfeit his position, perhaps even his life. He quickly chose the latter. He brought Jesus out of his quarters inside the Tower of Antonia unto the public place of judgment called "The Pavement." The Tower of Antonia was a sort of a tower-castle connected with the Jewish temple on the northwest corner probably built by Herod the Great and named by him in honor of Mark Anthony. A Roman legion was stationed in the castle to guard against sedition and revolt which would be more apt to originate in the temple courts and at the great festivals of the Jews. The Roman procurator of Palestine came there often (especially at passover time) to supervise military operations at critical times. For the location of "The Pavement" see our comments on 18:28. Most probably the judgment-seat was an elevated dias like those uncovered by archaeologists in the Grecian cities of the apostle Paul's time. If so, it was open to the public. The crowd could gather around and witness the sentencing.

In verse 14 we have another of John's notations of time. The "Preparation" of the passover was Friday. It is plain that *Preparation* is the word then used to mean the sixth day of the week, Friday, when one compares Matthew 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54 with John 19:14. It is also very evident that Jesus was crucified on Friday, not on Wednesday or Thursday. *Preparation* was the day designated for preparation for the Sabbath. The entire week of passover celebration was designated simply, "passover." Thus this "Preparation of the passover" was the Friday which fell within that particular passover week (cf. Special Study No. Three at the end of this chapter entitled, "Was Jesus Crucified on Friday?").

Arndt and Gingrich's Greek lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature has this to say on the word *paraskeue* (Preparation): ". . . acc. to Jewish usage (Josephus, Antiquities, 16, 163; Synesius, Ep. 4 p. 161D) it was Friday, on which day everything had to be prepared for the Sabbath, when no work was permitted . . . for the Christians as well *paraskeue* served to designate the sixth day of the week, Friday . . ."

The next note of time in this fourteenth verse has caused some critics of the Bible to claim a contradiction. If the reader will check Mark 15:25 he will find Mark stating that Jesus was crucified at the "third

hour." Yet John says here in verse 14 that Pilate did not sentence Jesus until the "sixth hour." We have said before that John undoubtedly uses the Roman method of computing time (cf. our comments on 1:39; 4:6; 4:52, etc.). If this be so then John's "sixth hour" would be *about six o'clock a.m.* whereas Mark's "third hour" would be *nine o'clock a.m.* There would be no contradiction here. There is only a supposed problem of *about* three hours (which could actually be about two and one-half hours) between Pilate's sentencing and the actual crucifixion. Considering the fact that Jesus had to carry His cross part of the way and considering the narrow streets and the crowds thronging the way from the Praetorium to Golgotha and considering the stops that were no doubt made along the way it could easily have taken two and one-half hours. Pilate, wishing to torment his opponents, brought the humiliated, mutilated Nazarene out to the mob and cried, "Behold, your King!" with the emphasis on "*King!*"

The answer of the Jews, "We have no king but Caesar," is pregnant with inference and ambiguity! They are inferring that Pilate has not been altogether loyal to Caesar by seeking to release this Nazarene whom they have pronounced seditious. They are saying, "We have no king but Caesar—what about you Pilate?" With their lips they pledge allegiance to Rome but their hearts are far from it. In the past they have followed false deliverers and saviours. Even now if one would come and raise up an earthly army and claim a temporal throne they would recant their allegiance to Rome and side with the revolt. They are shrewd politicians (as well as being crafty priests) and are wise enough to pledge allegiance to Caesar as long as Caesar is the most powerful.

Pilate, though he conscientiously believed Jesus innocent and though he would like nothing better than to do injury to his tormentors, by releasing Jesus, surrenders to expediency and delivers Jesus to his subordinates to be crucified.

Golgotha means, in Hebrew, *skull*. Calvary comes from the Latin language and also means *skull*. The exact location of Golgotha is a moot question. Some locate it about 250 yards northeast of the Damascus gate on a hill shaped like a skull—this is "Gordon's Calvary." Most locate it where the Church of the Holy Sepulcher stands today in Jerusalem (which is inside the walls of modern Jerusalem). There is strong inference that Jesus was crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem in Hebrews 13:12 . . . "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate." This, however, may be a figure of speech indicating that He suffered "outside the camp" of Judaism having been excommunicated for blasphemy.

None of the four gospels indicate specifically that the place of crucifixion was outside the city walls. John says, 19:41, that near Golgotha was a garden in which was the tomb where they buried Jesus. Some have supposed this had to be outside the city walls. We like what Andrews, "Life of Our Lord . . ." says; "Fortunately, here, as often, it is of little importance whether the traditional site be or be not the true one. The fact of the Lord's resurrection is a vital one, but not whether He arose from a tomb in the valley of Jehosaphat, or on the side of Acra . . . The little value attached by the apostles to the holy places appears from the brevity with which they speak of them when they allude to them at all. Not to the places of His birth and of His burial would they turn the eyes of the early Christians, but to Himself—the ever-living One, and now the great High Priest at the right hand of God."

We do not know which place is correct. Golgotha was outside the city walls (cf. v. 20—"for the place where Jesus was crucified was *nigh* to the city;"). Where the walls were in the days of Jesus is not absolutely certain.

Death by crucifixion was the most dreaded death in all the ancient world. It was the type of death reserved for slaves and criminals. Death by this method usually followed the same routine. We quote here from Wm. Barclay: "When the case had been heard, and the criminal had been condemned, the judge uttered the fateful sentence: 'Ibis ad crucem,' 'You will go to the cross.' The verdict was carried out there and then. The criminal was placed in the center of a quaternion, a company of four Roman soldiers. His own cross was placed upon his shoulders. It is to be remembered that scourging always preceded crucifixion, and it is to be remembered how terrible scourging was. Often the criminal had to be lashed and goaded along the road, to keep him on his feet, as he staggered to the place of crucifixion. Before him there walked an officer with a placard on which was written the crime for which he was to die. He was led through as many streets as possible on the way to the place of execution. There was a double reason for that. There was the grim reason that as many as possible should see it, and should realize that crime does not pay, and should take warning from such a fate. But there was a merciful reason. The placard was carried before the condemned man, and the long route was chosen, so that if anyone could still bear witness in his favor, he might come forward and do so . . . By Roman law a criminal must hang upon his cross until he died from hunger and thirst and exposure, a torture which sometimes lasted for days. But by Jewish law the bodies must be taken down and buried by nightfall. In Roman law the criminal's body was not buried, but

was simply thrown away for the vultures and the crows and the pariah dogs to dispose of:"

Such was the tortuous death to which the Son of God was subjected. In "hanging on a tree" at Calvary He bore the curse of the law for all men (cf. Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13). In being crucified as a criminal, between two criminals, He fulfilled the prophecy of Isa. 53:12, "He was numbered with the transgressors." He was made to be sin on our behalf (cf. II Cor. 5:14-19).

The "superscription, accusation, title" placed on the cross above the head of Jesus read, "THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." This was the full title and was written in Hebrew, the language of the Jews; in Roman, the official language of the occupation government; in Greek, the international language of the day. Some have found a contradiction in the gospel records because of this inscription. Matthew (27:37) records, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Mark records, "The King of the Jews," (Mark 15:26). Luke (23:38) records, "This is the King of the Jews." John records, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews," (Jn. 19:19). Hendriksen has an excellent answer to this: "Where, just where, is the discrepancy? Is a person who has witnessed an accident a liar because he does not report *everything* that occurred? . . . It certainly was not necessary for each Gospel writer to write down *all* of the words . . . Each gives the gist, as he sees it."

Now when the chief priests saw this superscription they were enraged. They certainly did not want the world to see such an inscription over one being crucified as a common criminal. Especially this meek and humble Nazarene. The cross has always been a stumbling block to the Jews (cf. I Cor. 1:22-25). They do not to this day accept the idea of a Suffering Servant Messiah (cf. Isa. 53). He was not their king!

Pilate has conceded all he is going to! He will not give in to his agitators. In fact he is determined to have the last word. He will make the last rapier thrust—throw the last dart. All the populace in and around Jerusalem during this great passover time will see what the powerful Roman empire thinks of the Jews and their "king!" He will have his way and so what he has written will stand. Perhaps, as Hendriksen suggests, God's providence directed the hand of Pilate as he wrote the title. Surely Jesus was the King of the Jews. He was the One of whom all the O.T. prophets wrote (cf. Isa. 2; 9; 11; etc.). The title, as such, was indeed true.

Quiz

1. What did the Jews mean to accomplish by crying out to Pilate, "If

- thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend . . ."??
2. What is the "Preparation" of the passover? Was Jesus crucified on Friday?
 3. How do we reconcile the alleged discrepancy between Mark and John as they report the time of Jesus' crucifixion?
 4. Why did the Jews insist, "We have no king but Caesar"? Was their statement true?
 5. Where is Golgotha located relative to the city of Jerusalem?
 6. What significance is there in the fact that Jesus was crucified between two criminals?
 7. Why did the Jews plead with Pilate to change the title upon the cross of Jesus?

THOSE AROUND THE CROSS

Text: 19:23-27

23 The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was made without seam, woven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

25 These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

Queries

- a. What is the significance of the seamless coat?
- b. Why were the women there at the cross?
- c. What is the meaning of Jesus' words to his mother and to John (v. 26-27)?

Paraphrase (Harmony)

The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another; let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith,

They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

These things therefore the soldiers did. And they sat and watched him there. And the people stood beholding. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and the rulers also scoffed at him, saying, Ha, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking him among themselves with the scribes and the elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself. And one of the malefactors that was crucified with him railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us. But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

Summary

There were many different attitudes expressed by those gathered around the cross of Christ. Indifference of the soldiers; the hate of the Jews; the love of the women and John.

Comment

It was evidently a common practice then for the Roman soldiers to take the immediate belongings of executed persons for themselves. These the soldiers either kept or sold. Just what the four garments (besides the seamless coat) were we are not sure. Some have suggested headgear, sandals, belt and cloak (outer garment), as the four items. We quote here from "Daily Life In The Time of Jesus," by Henri Daniel-Rops, pub. Mentor-Omega Books, pp. 211-212, "The coat or tunic or *chalouk* must have been very like the *chiton* of the Greeks, but longer; it came down well below the knees, and the rabbi's coat

had necessarily to appear for a good hand's-breadth below the cloak. The ritual tassels, which were usually a very deep blue, hung from the bottom. For ceremonies, the coat was made of embroidered silk or decorated with colored stripes. Most coats were cut out and then sewn together, but there were some made of woven wool that were all in one piece, and these were very much esteemed—it was such a coat the soldiers took from Christ, the coat for which they drew lots, so that it should not be torn. The coat was kept on for work, but at night, in going to bed, it was taken off.

"The cloak, the *talith*, took the place both of our suit and of our overcoat. It was so necessary a garment that the Law required a creditor who had seized his debtor's cloak as a pledge to give it up at night-fall. It was also a dignifying garment, without which it would have been improper to appear at the Temple or before a superior. Nevertheless, it was used for all kinds of purposes—a blanket, even a bed if one had to sleep in the open, a saddle-cloth and even as a carpet to welcome great men, as we see in the account of Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. It is by no means sure how these cloaks were made. Perhaps some were a simple piece of cloth with a hole for the head and others two blankets sewn together; but there must also have been some of a better cut, with separate sleeves, probably not unlike our barristers' and graduates' robes."

Archæologists have found dice which date from the Roman period and they are exactly the same as are used today. One was found to be so irregular that it might even be called "loaded." Plutarch says that when soldiers were not on duty they often played at dice. Those who drew lots for the coat of Jesus must have carried their dice with them.

The prophecy referred to by John here is Psalms 22:18. Psalm 22 is a Messianic psalm. Many of the very words which the crucified Messiah would utter from the cross are there prophesied. See our comments on John 13:18 for notes on the fulfillment of prophecy.

There were a number of differently motivated groups of people who "stood beholding" this particular crucifixion. See the *Paraphrase (Harmony)* for this section and the Sermon at the end of chapter nineteen.

Lenski thinks only three women were present. Both Hendriksen and R. C. Foster have harmonized the three gospel accounts of the women present (Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25) and believe four women were present. Mary, the mother of Jesus; Mary, the mother of James the Less and of Joses and wife of Clopas; Salome, the sister of Jesus' mother; and Mary Magdalene. These were some of the women who had followed with Jesus from Galilee (cf. Luke 23:49; Matt. 27:56). It is very doubtful that Mary, wife of Clopas, was the

sister of Mary, mother of Jesus, since that would make two women in the same family with the name, Mary. Mary Magdalene was definitely not the sister of Mary, Jesus' mother, therefore it would seem that Salome, mother of James and John, was the "sister" referred to in John 19:25.

Verses 26 and 27 constitute, together, one of the seven sayings from the cross. These seven sayings are here given in their chronological order:

- (1) "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34)
- (2) "Verily I say unto thee, Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (Lk. 23:43)
- (3) "Woman, behold thy son." "Behold, thy mother." (Jn. 19:26-27)
- (4) "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34)
- (5) "I Thirst" (Jn. 19:28)
- (6) "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30)
- (7) "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. 25:46)

But why did Jesus, in His extreme agony and with the weight of all the problems of eternity upon His soul, take time to speak to His mother and the beloved disciple? Why does Jesus say, "Woman" instead of "mother"? The answer to the first question is obvious. Jesus is providing someone to care for His bereaved mother. She is probably a widow now—we do not hear anything of Joseph, her husband, since Jesus was twelve years of age. The other children were unsympathetic with Jesus' way of life and would give her little consolation. John, probably Jesus', cousin, a disciple whom He loved and trusted, is chosen to care for her. "And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home." There may be a number of reasons Jesus used the term "woman" when He spoke to her. Perhaps He did not use "mother" in order to spare her an increased awareness of her maternal relationship to the One in extreme agony. But ever since He reminded her in the Temple, when He was twelve, of His unique relationship with God, He has taught her that He is much more than her son. He taught her that He was her Lord and Saviour (cf. Jn. 2:4; Matt. 12:46-50). The use of "woman" here from the cross follows His other teaching on the subject. And what of the reaction of this mother to whom He spoke? The gospel writers did not deem it of importance to record for us these details. We know she wept, as any mother would. We can only imagine the agony of her soul as she beheld the spectacle. As Lenski says, it is probably that "she who had all along understood understands now."

The Roman Catholic Church has wrested these words from Jesus to His mother and John and by decree of Pius IX has made Mary "the patroness of all Christians who are here represented by the disciple John." Another of the same church says, "in the person of John Mary receives all Christians as her children. And this capacity of Mary entitles us to the right and the trust, that we place all our interest in her hands." But it is not John nor Jesus who needs the help here—it is Mary. Mary is not receiving John—John is the patron.

Quiz

1. What part of Jesus' clothing was the seamless coat?
2. How did the soldiers decide who was to get this coat?
3. What prophecy did their actions fulfill?
4. Why did Jesus commend His mother to John's keeping?

IT IS FINISHED

Text: 19:28-37

28 After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst.

29 There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

32 The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him:

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

34 howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there came out blood and water.

35 And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe.

36 For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken

37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

Queries

- a. What did Jesus mean, "It is finished?"
- b. Why ask that His legs be broken?
- c. What is the significance of the "blood and water?"

Paraphrase (Harmony)

And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun's light failing: And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it said, Behold, he calleth Elijah; After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scriptures might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of vinegar; so straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth, and gave him to drink. And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save him. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he cried with a loud voice, It is finished: and he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many.

Now the centurion, who stood by over against him, and they that were with him watching Jesus, that he gave up the ghost; when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, and glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. Truly this was the Son of God.

And all the multitudes that came together to this sight when they beheld the things that were done, returned smiting their breasts. And all his acquaintance, and many women were there beholding from afar: among whom were both Mary Magdalene, and Mary the Mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; the mother of the sons of Zebedee, who when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him; and many other women that came up with him unto Jerusalem.

The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him: but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there came out blood and water.

And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe. For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look upon him whom they pierced.

Summary

The awful chasm of sin separating God and man now bridged by His perfect sacrifice, Jesus gives up His spirit as the body is put to death. The soldiers pierce His side so there can be no question about His death. All this fulfills what was prophesied concerning the Messiah by the prophets.

Comment

The Synoptics include many incidental words and scenes of the crucifixion which John has seen fit to omit. John omits the following:

- a. Jesus' cry "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and the reaction of the bystanders (cf. Matt. 27:46-47; Mk. 15:34-35)
- b. The words of Jesus, "Into thy hands I commit my spirit." (cf. Lk. 23:46)
- c. The rending of the veil of the Temple and the resurrected dead walking in Jerusalem. (cf. Matt. 27:51-53; Mk. 14:38)
- d. The words of the Roman centurion. (cf. Matt. 27:54; Mk. 14:39; Lk. 23:47)
- e. The multitudes returning to Jerusalem smiting their breasts. (cf. Lk. 23:48)

John, however, is the only gospel writer who includes the account of the breaking of the legs of the two thieves and the soldier piercing the side of the dead body of Jesus. There is a disputed variation which would cause Matt. 27:49 to read, "And another took a spear and pierced his side, and there came out water and blood." But the manuscript evidence is so scant and insignificant that the translators of the K.J.V. and the A.S.V. and the R.S.V. have all omitted the reading from the text.

In verse 28 we are informed that even on the cross and at the very apex of His suffering that which was uppermost in His mind was the fulfillment of all that the scriptures had prophesied concerning Him! When Jesus knew, "that all things are now finished," He looked forward, in omniscience, to the complete work of redemption which would include even the burial and resurrection and ascension, (cf. Jn. 1:42, 47, 48; 2:24, 25; 5:6; 6:64; 16:30; 21:17).

The entire ministry of Jesus and the work of redemption from His incarnation to the sufferings, death, burial, resurrection and establishment of the church and preaching the gospel to the Gentiles is all

prophecied in the Old Testament (cf. Lk. 24:43-49 and Acts 13:29). For any reader who desires more information on the prophecies fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus we recommend *The Bible Handbook*, by Halley, published by Zondervan.

When Jesus said, "I thirst," verse 28 seems to imply that in the very speaking of the words the scriptures which prophesied His redemptive work were being fulfilled. This being true it would seem that there was a deeper significance to His words than merely desiring to slake a physical thirst. Jesus suffered physically upon the cross and there is no denying that! But His real agony was the agony of the "second death!" "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21). The second death (eternal death) in Hell is eternal separation from God the Father—Jesus suffered and experienced that on the cross and cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The second death includes torment and thirst (cf. Luke 16:23-24)—Jesus suffered the torments of evil men and thirst upon the cross. The second death includes darkness ("the outer darkness") and there was darkness over the whole land when Jesus was crucified.

When Jesus died upon the cross the penalty and sentence of the Law was paid and thus the Law was nailed to the cross (cf. Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 2:8-15). When Jesus died upon the cross and came forth from the tomb and sent forth the Spirit to proclaim the way of salvation all the promises of the covenant made to the patriarchs and reiterated in the Law and the prophets reached their climax (cf. Gal. 3:15-29; Acts 3:11-26) thus the Old Testament (covenant) has been fulfilled, abrogated (in its entirety II Cor. 3) and superseded. This is why Jesus said, "It is finished!"

The "vessel full of vinegar" was probably a sour wine which the soldiers were in the habit of drinking. The soldiers had offered Him a mixture (probably as an anesthetic) of wine and myrrh just before they nailed Him to His cross (Matt. 27:34). This vinegar was touched to His lips and then He bowed His head and gave up His spirit, crying, "It is finished!" and, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" Note the emphasis on His death as a voluntary act. He *gave up* His spirit!

The Jews were meticulously careful that the Law should not be broken by allowing a body to hang "upon a tree" overnight (cf. Deut. 21:23). And it would be even worse for such a violation to occur on the Sabbath (the day of "Preparation" being Friday). This was Friday evening and the sun was about to "set"—when the sun "went down" it would be the Sabbath. It would also be a very special sabbath

since it occurred within the Passover week. They were extremely scrupulous about this detail while they blatantly violated the weightier matters of the law such as justice, mercy and faith (cf. Matt. 23:23). There was not one ounce of justice or mercy or faith in them when they criminally attacked Jesus and tried Him illegally and sentenced Him on the basis of bribed witnesses.

The Romans employed a very grim method to put to death those who lingered too long after having been crucified—they smashed their limbs (legs) with an iron mallet until they died. One contemporary doctor has said, "The shock attending such cruel injury to bones can be the coup de grace causing death." This was applied to the two malefactors crucified with Jesus but the soldiers, seeing that Jesus was already dead, did not break His legs. This also fulfilled a prophecy made in Numbers 9:12 and Exodus 12:46.

The emphasis John wishes to make when he records his eyewitness account that the legs of Jesus were not broken and the piercing of His side and the blood and water flowing is the actual death of Jesus. Jesus did not swoon—He died a physical death. What caused His death is not of primary importance to John. He is not interested in the medical diagnosis or autopsy. Of primary importance is the eyewitnessed, historically verified fact that He did die.

There is one theory as to the medical cause of His death—this is the theory of death due to a "broken" or "ruptured" heart. This theory is discussed in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia article entitled "Blood and Water," in Hendriksen's commentary on John's gospel, in an article by R. C. Foster in the Christian Standard, April 10, 1965. This is the theory that Jesus died from a ruptured heart in consequence of great mental agony and sorrow. Hendriksen says, "Such a death would be almost instantaneous, and the blood flowing into the pericardium (the sac or membrane surrounding the heart) would coagulate into the red clot (blood) and the limpid serum (water). This blood and water would then be released by the spear-thrust." But to quote R. C. Foster, "We should rejoice that the physical cause of Jesus' death is not a matter of faith. At the center of the gospel is the historic fact, 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures' (I Corinthians 15:3)."

There are some commentators who believe that the blood and water which flowed from His side are to be connected symbolically to the "three witnesses" of I John 5:6-8. We believe, however that the "three witnesses" of John's first epistle concern baptism (Jesus was baptized and gave baptism as a command to be obeyed by all who desire salvation), the Lord's Supper (which is a remembrance of the blood of

Christ shed for our sins) and the Word of God (which is the Word of the Spirit bearing witness here on earth). The testimony of John in verse 35 is simply a re-emphasis that he, John, was an eyewitness to the actuality of the death of Jesus. The significance of the blood and water is to show that there was no possibility of any life remaining in the One who had been pierced.

In a tract entitled, "A Study in Prophecy," published by Hermon House, 56 Second Ave., New York 3, N. Y., there are listed all the prophecies fulfilled in the ministry of Christ. We list here only those prophecies which were fulfilled specifically at the crucifixion:

- a. Nailed to the cross (Psa. 22:16; Jn. 19:18; 20:25).
- b. Forsaken by God (Psa. 22:1; Matt. 27:46)
- c. Mocked (Psa. 22:7-8; Matt. 27:39-44)
- d. Gall and Vinegar given Him to drink (Psa. 69:21; Matt. 27:34)
- e. Garments parted and lots cast (Psa. 22:18; Matt. 27:35)
- f. Numbered with transgressors (Isa. 53:12; Mk. 15:27-28)
- g. Intercession for His murderers (Isa. 53:12; Lk. 23:34)
- h. His expiration (Isa. 53:12; Matt. 27:50)
- i. Not a bone of Him Broken (Ex. 12:46; Psa. 34:20; Jn. 19:33-36)
- j. Pierced (Zech. 12:10; Jn. 19:34-37)
- k. Buried with the rich (Isa. 53:9; Matt. 27:57-60).

The two points of emphasis made in this section (19:28-37) are: (a) the physical death of Jesus was actual and complete; (b) His death was voluntary and according to foreknowledge and plan of God and fulfilled a number of prophecies made hundreds of years before.

Quiz

1. Name some of the words and scenes of the crucifixion omitted by John.
2. What did Jesus mean when He said, "I thirst?" Was it physical altogether?
3. Did Jesus suffer anything beyond the physical pain upon the cross? Explain.
4. What did He mean when He said, "It is finished?"
5. Why were the Jews so concerned about Jesus hanging on the cross overnight?
6. Is it possible that Jesus died of a "broken heart?" explain!
7. What are the two major points of emphasis in this section?

THE ENTOMBMENT

Text: 19:38-42

38 And after these things Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He

came therefore, and took away his body.

39 And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

40 So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid.

42 There then because of the Jews' Preparation (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus.

Queries

- a. Why the sudden bravery of Joseph and Nicodemus now?
- b. Of what significance is the "hundred pounds" of spices?
- c. Where was the tomb located?

Paraphrase (Harmony)

And when even was now come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, there came a rich man named Joseph, who was a councilor, of honorable estate a good and righteous man (he had not consented to their counsel and deed), a man of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave.

And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been anywhile dead. And when he learned it of the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And Joseph brought a linen cloth, and came therefore and, taking him down took away his body.

And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid. And Joseph took the body; wrapped in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock, and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, the mother of Joses sitting over against the sepulchre, And it was the day of the Preparation and the sabbath drew on. And the women, who had come with him out of Galilee, followed after and beheld the tomb, and now his body was laid. And they returned, and

prepared spices and ointments. And on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Summary

Friends of Jesus ask for His body and give it a tender and careful burial. His body is prepared in a kingly fashion and is buried in a rich man's tomb.

Comment

Here, for the first time, Joseph of Arimathaea come on the stage of gospel history. Hendriksen says, "The Arimathaea from which he came was probably the ancient Ramathaim-zophim . . . fifteen miles straight east from Joppa." The Synoptics tell us a great deal about this man. Matthew 27:57 tells us that he was a rich man; Mark 15:43 states that he was a respected member of the council (Sanhedrin) and that he was "looking for the kingdom of God" (in other words, he was a devout man who believed the Old Testament prophets and was eagerly looking forward to the coming Messianic kingdom); Luke 23:50-51 informs us that he was a good and righteous man and one who had not consented with the rest of the council to their evil purposes and deeds respecting Jesus.

It is evident that Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin for Luke records that he could have given consent with them to the death of Jesus but he did not. Why he did not we are not told. It is probable that he deliberately absented himself from the midnight quorum called by Caiaphas to condemn Jesus. Up until now Joseph, like Nicodemus, was a secret disciple of Jesus. He believed but not enough to confess Christ openly and take the consequences. Why the "boldness" now? First, there would not be nearly as much danger from the opposition now that Jesus was dead and their blood-thirstiness had been satisfied. Second, Luke gives us the hint that this man's righteous indignation had been stirred up at the unjust and inhumane treatment the council had unleashed upon Jesus. Stalker, in his book, "The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ," puts it this way, "It was the excess of wickedness in his fellow-councillors, who at length went to a stage of violence and injustice which allowed him to hesitate no longer." We find it hard to agree with Hendriksen and Lenski that Joseph's boldness is a result of his knowledge of the "atoning" death of Jesus for him. It is inconceivable that Joseph, without the resurrection of Christ, should have such a grasp of the atoning efficiency of the death of Christ when even the disciples who had companied with Jesus for over three years did not then comprehend it!

Pilate, after assuring himself by the word of one of the soldiers that Jesus was dead, consented to allow Joseph and Nicodemus to take the

body for burial. The boldness of Joseph had a contagion which was caught by Nicodemus. He brought a hundred pounds (about seventy-two pounds in our weights today) of burial spices. This was enough spices to bury a king. The spices were sprinkled profusely upon each strip of the linen bandaging as the body was wrapped limb by limb. The Jews did not embalm as the Egyptians. These spices would not hide the sickening odor of decaying flesh long. The body of Lazarus began to "stink" in four days (cf. Jn. 11:39). Because this was Friday evening and the Sabbath would begin at sunset, most of the usual customs of Jewish burial were foregone. The dead body would not be carried to the "upper chamber" of a house where his relatives and neighbors could come and mourn and say good-bye for the last time. The dead body would not be carried to the tomb on the litter-type funeral bier. There would be no hired mourners or funeral procession; no hired flutists and no rending of the garments.

According to Henri Daniel-Rops, in his book "Daily Life In The Time Of Jesus," the typical tomb was "a kind of cave or excavation, a vault cut into a rock cliff, with a little vestibule before it. One had to bow one's head to go into the vault itself. Sometimes the same entrance would lead to several vaults: as many as eight have been found together. The body was laid upon a bench specially cut in the rock, and no doubt surrounded and covered with aromatic herbs, often a great many of them. The tombs of the poorer people were closed by being walled-up, but the grander tombs had a more solid kind of gate, which is still to be seen in Palestine: it is a great round, like millstone, set in a deep groove and held open by a wooden wedge; as soon as the wedge is taken away the heavy stone sinks into its place and guards the entrance from all comers, thieves or hyenas."

Just such a tomb became the burial place of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was located in the immediate area of His crucifixion, Calvary. It was a new tomb (no one else had ever been placed in it for burial); it belonged to a rich man and had been hewn out of solid rock located in a lovely garden. The tomb chamber was so low the women had to stoop to look in (Jn. 20:11) and the stone rolled before the door was exceedingly heavy (Mk. 16:4). For a discussion of the place of the crucifixion see our comments on Jn. 19:12-22.

There are two important points to emphasize in the burial of Jesus. First, His burial in a rich man's tomb was a fulfillment of prophecy (cf. Isa. 53:9). Second, Pilate and his soldiers were certain that Jesus was dead—He had not swooned or fainted. Blood and water gushed from His side, He had stopped breathing—He was dead and now Joseph and Nicodemus may take Him and bury Him.

Quiz

1. Where was Arimathea probably located in Palestine?
2. Name four things about the character of Joseph of Arimathea which are related to us by the gospel writers.
3. Since Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin how could he have kept from voting at the sentencing of Jesus?
4. Why was Joseph, formerly a secret disciple of Jesus, now so bold as to ask for His body for burial?
5. What did Nicodemus contribute to the burial?
6. Why would the usual customs of Jewish burial be foregone?
7. What are two important points of emphasis connected with the burial of Jesus?

SPECIAL STUDY NO. THREE
WAS JESUS CRUCIFIED ON FRIDAY?

by SETH WILSON

When the question, Was Jesus crucified on Friday? is raised, it may be hard for you to find a clear and definite statement about it in the Bible. Good Christians may think He had to be in the tomb longer than the time from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning because of the expression "three days and three nights" in Matthew 12:40.

It doesn't matter too much on what day Jesus was crucified; but it does matter much how people use the Scriptures and how they trouble the church over such questions. Any view that denies that Jesus ate the Passover meal at the regular time is in direct conflict with plain statements of fact in three inspired books of the New Testament. Yet such a view is often taken by people who think that they are upholding the strict accuracy of Jesus' words against centuries of false tradition.

This is merely a question of historic fact, not affecting our obedience to the commands of the Lord, and not essential to our reverent appreciation of Him. It should not be made a "test of fellowship" or source of contention. But as a matter of fact it makes all the better example for a study of how to get the truth of God's Word by considering all the facts and letting the passages which are definite and clear in meaning determine the interpretation of those which are not so sure.

What Does The Bible Say?

This is a Bible study. Get your Bible and read the passages cited. Space will not permit quoting them.

All the Gospels say that Jesus was crucified and buried on the day called the *Preparation*. Read Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14, 31, 42; and Matthew 27:60-62. The word translated *Preparation* was used as a name for the day which we call *Friday* in modern Greek.

John 19:14 says, "It was the preparation of the passover." Some have thought that this means the day on which the Passover lamb was prepared; but it can mean simply "Friday of Passover week." Comparison with all the facts will show that this is what it does mean. Beginning with the Passover sacrifice and supper, seven days of unleavened bread were observed; and the entire week was called the Passover (See Luke 22:1; John 2:23; 18:39). Mark 15:42 explicitly states, "It was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath." The same meaning is shown in John 19:31. The regular weekly Sabbath was Saturday.

But Which Sabbath?

The first day of unleavened bread might be called a Sabbath, because it was a day of rest according to the law (Leviticus 23:7, 8), and so was the seventh, or last, day. Some suggest that the Sabbath immediately following Jesus' death was not Saturday, but the first day of unleavened bread, which could fall on any day of the week.

In the law (Leviticus 23:4, 6), the seven days of unleavened bread were counted after the Passover meal, beginning Nisan 15. But all leaven was put out on the day the Passover was prepared, Nisan 14; so the day that the lamb was killed came in time to be called the first day of unleavened bread. (See Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7.)

But if either of these days—the one just preceding the supper, or the one following it—was actually called a Sabbath, still *neither of them could be the Sabbath day that followed the burial of Jesus. For Matthew 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-17 and Luke 22:7-16 all state with absolutely unmistakable clarity that Jesus was alive and eating the Passover supper in the evening following the first day of unleavened bread when the lamb was sacrificed. If the day following the supper was the day of rest (or special Sabbath) it was still not the day after Jesus was buried, because it was the day of crucifixion.*

Therefore, we see that, if there was in that week any day called a Sabbath other than Saturday, it had to be one that was past by the time Jesus was buried, and not the day following His burial. The day of preparation, then, on which He was crucified, could not be any day other than the day before the regular weekly Sabbath which we call Saturday.

One good brother has suggested that the *seventh* day of unleavened bread was the Sabbath which "drew on" as Jesus was buried. That would mean that Jesus was subjected to six or seven days of trials, mockings, and delays between the time He was arrested and the day of crucifixion. The Gospels do not show any intention of indicating that. The trials before the priests and the Sanhedrin were at night and

dawn (Luke 22:66); that before Pilate was early (John 18:28); all happened in quick succession.

Moreover, no account gives any hint of more than one Sabbath between the burial of Christ and His resurrection on the first day of the week. Just turn and read how clearly Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are recorded in Luke 23:54 to 24:1. "And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. And the women also . . . beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre." The word Sabbath here is singular.

Properly Read, John Agrees

John's account agrees completely with these statements. John 13:1 does not say that the last supper was before the Passover, but that Jesus knew before the Passover that He must depart at this time. John 13:29 does not prove that the Passover meal was to come later. The disciples who supposed that Judas was sent to buy something for the feast may have had in mind the seven-day festival. Or if it was possible at that hour to buy provisions they might have been for the meal now beginning. (In John 13:2 the Greek does not say "supper being ended," but "supper being come.")

John 18:28 does not prove that the Pharisees had not eaten the Passover meal, because they called all seven days connected with it "the Passover." Anyway, the Passover meal was eaten at night, and such defilement as they feared in Pilate's hall would end at sunset.

John 19:31 shows plainly that the preparation was the day before the Sabbath. Calling that Sabbath "a high day" does not make it other than a Saturday Sabbath. It only means that it was considered especially sacred because it came in Passover week.

"Three Days And Three Nights"

Since the history states so plainly the fact that Jesus was crucified on Friday, it is necessary to take the prophetic figure of speech about the sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:40) as an *inexact* expression intended to agree with the statement which is made a dozen times, that Jesus arose "on the third day." (See Matthew 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:63, 64; Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 21, 46; Acts 10:40; I Corinthians 15:4; and Mark 9:31; 10:34 in K. J. V.) "After three days" is used in Mark 8:31 (9:31 and 10:34 in A.S.V.) to mean the same as "on the third day." While those do not seem the same to us, it is evident that they did mean the same to the Jews. (See also 2 Chronicles 10:5 and 12;

Esther 4:16 and 5:1; Matthew 27:63, 64.) "Three days and three nights" is just a fuller form for saying "after three days"; and both could mean in popular speech the same as "on the third day." Any expression means just what it is used to mean. The facts of the record show with what meaning the expression was used by Jesus. We must not put into it a meaning that will deny or disregard the facts; but the facts must control our interpretation.

SERMON NO. EIGHTEEN
BEHOLDING THE CRUCIFIED ONE

Luke 23:33-35a

Introduction

I. SPECTACLE OF THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST. After the betrayal and arrest come the trials. He was shamed by His own (high priest). Herod plays with Him like a cat would a mouse. He mocks Him and allows Him to be smitten in the mouth. Then Jesus is returned to Pilate a second time. Pilate has Him scourged with a whip made of leather and bone until His back is a bleeding mass of raw flesh. Pilate wants to release Him. But the Jews cry "Crucify Him, his blood be upon us and upon our children . . ." Release unto us Barabbas the murderer. And, for political reasons, Pilate releases Him to be crucified.

And so the humiliated, tortured, betrayed, exhausted Son of God goes out bearing a 300 pound cross of wood. Through the streets of the city He goes, stumbling, dragging this cross along as the throngs cast stones and spit upon him. Up the long hill of Golgotha. There He is grabbed roughly by the soldiers and laid down upon the cross, BUT HE OFFERS NO RESISTANCE. The steel spikes are brutally driven into the quivering flesh of His hands and then His feet. The excruciating pain is relayed from the nerves to His brain. And what comes from his mouth? Agony and screams? NO! Hate and curses? NO! Wonder of wonders, His lips part to speak a blessing—"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

II. "AND THE PEOPLE STOOD BEHOLDING . . ." What did they behold in the crucified One? What did those around the cross see? They saw much the same thing as men and women see in the Crucifixion today. THE CRUCIFIXION WAS NECESSARY. IT WAS IN GOD'S PLAN FOR JESUS CONTINUALLY TAUGHT "I MUST DIE . . ." IT WAS A SPECTACLE OF LOVE FOR MAN TO BEHOLD. IT WAS A PLANNED SPECTACLE FOR IT WAS PROPHECIED. Lk. 2.

Discussion

I. THE ROMANS. They beheld Him through eyes of *Indifference*.