

Much has been written on the account of our Saviors last moments on earth and His ignominious death that purchased our salvation Isaiah 53. We take time to explore briefly the account. The events started probably our Tuesday evening (beginning of Jewish Wednesday). The Passover began on our Thursday evening (beginning of Jewish Friday). After two days (meta duo hēmeras) is just the familiar popular mode of speech. The Passover came technically on the second day from this time. He is delivered up (paradidotai). The same form occurs in verse Mt 26:24. Thus Jesus sets a definite date for the coming crucifixion which he has been predicting for six months.

This was in the house of Simon the leper (en oikiâi Simônos tou leproû); evidently a man who had been healed of his leprosy by Jesus who gave the feast in honour of Jesus. All sorts of fantastic theories have arisen about it. Some even identify this Simon with the one in Lu 7:36ff., but Simon was a very common name and the details are very different. Some hold that it was Martha's house because she served (Joh 12:2) and that Simon was either the father or husband of Martha. But Martha loved to serve and that proves nothing. John (Joh 12:1) apparently locates the feast six days before the Passover, while Mark (Mr 14:3) and Matthew (Mt 26:6) seem to place it on the Tuesday evening (Jewish Wednesday) just two days before the Passover meal. This seeming contradiction is removed when you consider that John is speaking of the day Jesus entered Bethany and not necessarily the day the Passover took place while Mark and Matthew speaks precisely of the day the feast took place. According to the order of Mark and Matthew, this feast took place at the very time that the Sanhedrin was plotting about the death of Jesus (Mr 14:1f.).

Mt 26:7 reports there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat; an alabaster cruse of exceeding precious ointment (alabastron murou barutimou). The flask was of alabaster, a carbonate of lime or sulphate of lime, white or yellow stone, named alabaster from the town in Egypt where it was chiefly found. It was used for a phial employed for precious ointments in ancient writers, inscriptions and papyri just as we speak of a glass for the vessel made of glass. It had a cylindrical form at the top, as a rule, like a closed rosebud (Pliny). Matthew does not say what the ointment (murou) was, only saying that it was "exceeding precious" (barutimou), of weighty value, selling at a great price. Here only in the N.T. "An alabaster of nard (murou) was a present for a king" (Bruce). It was one of five presents sent by Cambyses to the King of Ethiopia (Herodotus, iii. 20). She proceeded to pour it upon his head (katecheen epi tês kephalês autou); so Mark (Mr 14:3), while John (Joh 12:3) says that she "anointed the feet of Jesus." Why not both? The verb katecheen is literally to pour down. It is the first aorist active indicative, unusual form. This was an act of preparing her body for burial (Mark 14:8) something Jesus new it would get His disciples offguard because they were slow of mind comprehending His predictions of death cause they were blinded with the setting of an earthy Kingdom.

But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, to what purpose is this waste? This waste (hê apôleia hautê). Dead loss (apôleia) they considered it, nothing but sentimental aroma. It was a cruel shock to Mary of Bethany to hear this comment. Matthew does not tell as John does (Joh 12:4) that it was Judas who made the point which the rest endorsed. Mark explains that they mentioned "three hundred pence," while Matthew (Mt 26:9) only says "for much" (pollou). This is normal with folks who don't understand the meanings of circumstances nor see any value in anything that does not go to them directly.

When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me; wWhy trouble ye the woman? (ti kopous parechete têi gunaiki?) A phrase not common in Greek writers, though two examples occur in the papyri for giving trouble - kopos is from koptô, to beat, smite, cut. It is a beating, trouble, and often work, toil. Jesus champions Mary's act with this striking phrase. It is so hard for some people to allow others liberty for their own personalities to express themselves. It is easy to raise small objections to what we do not like and do not understand. It was a good work upon Jesus (ergon kalon eis eme), a beautiful deed

upon Jesus himself. He reminds them as if they never knew it, For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always (Matth 26:11). Mary alone had understood what Jesus had repeatedly said about his approaching death. The disciples were so wrapped up in their own notions of a political kingdom that they failed utterly to sympathize with Jesus as he faced the cross. But Mary with the woman's fine intuitions did begin to understand and this was her way of expressing her high emotions and loyalty. Jesus had removed seven demons from her (Luke 8:2) and now in appreciation, she does what a woman would at best, give all her wages for the anointing of burying her Master and Savior, an act that would be spoken of forever. The word here is the same used in Joh 19:40 about what Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus did for the body of Jesus before burial with the addition of pros to showing the purpose of Mary (the infinitive of purpose). Mary was vindicated by Jesus and her noble deed has become a "memorial of her" (eis mnêmosumon autês) as well as of Jesus (Mark 14:9).

Many consultations had been held against the life of Christ but this plot was laid deeper than any yet, for the grandees were all engaged in it. The chief priests, who presided in ecclesiastical affairs; the elders, who were judges in civil matters, and the scribes, who, as doctors of the law, were directors to both--these composed the Sanhedrim, or great council that governed the nation, and these were confederate against Christ. Observe; -

"The place where they met?; In the palace of the high priest, who was the centre of their unity in this wicked project."

"The plot itself; to take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him; nothing less than his blood, his life-blood, would serve their turn, so cruel and bloody have been the designs of Christ's and his church's enemies."

"The policy of the plotters?; Not on the feast-day. Why not? Was it in regard to the holiness of the time, or because they would not be disturbed in the religious services of the day? No, but lest there should be an uproar among the people. They knew Christ had a great interest in the common people, of whom there was a great concourse on the feast-day, and they would be in danger of taking up arms against their rulers, if they should offer to lay violent hands on Christ, whom all held for a prophet. They were awed, not by the fear of God, but by the fear of the people; all their concern was for their own safety, not God's honour. They would have it done at the feast; for it was a tradition of the Jews, that malefactors should be put to death at one of the three feasts, especially rebels and impostors, that all Israel might see and fear; but not on the feast-day."

Judas Iscariot allowing to be used by Satan went to the chief priests and said, what will ye give me? Mt 26:15. They did not send for him, nor make the proposal to him; they could not have thought that one of Christ's own disciples should be false to him. Note,

"There are those, even among Christ's followers, that are worse than anyone can imagine them to be, and want nothing but opportunity to show it."

"It is a very wicked thing to seek opportunity to sin, and to devise mischief; for it argues the heart fully set in men to do evil, and a malice prepense."

"It troubled them more to hear that one of them should do it. It would be a reproach to the fraternity, for an apostle to prove a traitor, and this grieved them; gracious souls grieve for the sins of others, especially of those that have made a more than ordinary profession of religion. 2 Co 11:29."

I love Judas Iscariot, I feel for him but that's how far I can go. No one can doubt the sincerity of his love for the Master. Being used to miracles, he thought this would be an occasion for a

similitude one and for him to gain subtly with the proceedings of cash and the Sanhedrin to lose by Jesus freeing himself from them. When it did not work, he repented, not for the sins of his soul like Peter did, but the guilt and reproach, and the only better solution to him was double account of murder; firstly, his suicide and secondly, the death of Jesus. Some have proposed that Judas Iscariot will be in heaven but reader be it know to thee that "Thou shall not murder" stands on the name of Judas.

Reclining at the table as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it (eulogêsas eklasen) and gave it to the disciples, and said, take, eat; this is my body. What a special "Grace" in the middle of the Passover meal, "as they were eating," for the institution of the Supper. The type was meeting the antitype and the Jewish economy was coming to an end. Jesus broke one of the Passover wafers or cakes that each might have a piece, not as a symbol of the breaking of his body as the Textus Receptus has it in 1Co 11:24. The correct text there has only to huper humôn without klômenon. As a matter of fact the body of Jesus was not "broken" (Joh 19:33) as John expressly states. This is my body (touto estin to sôma mou) He told them emphatically. Bruce observes:

"The bread as a symbol represents the body of Jesus offered for us, "a beautifully simple, pathetic, and poetic symbol of his death. But some have made it "run into fetish worship". Jesus, of course, does not mean that the bread actually becomes his body and is to be worshipped. The purpose of the memorial is to remind us of his death for our sins."

After the bread, Jesus took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; the Covenant (tês diathêkês). The adjective kainês in Textus Receptus is not genuine. The covenant is an agreement or contract between two (dia, duo, thêke, from tithêmi). It is used also for will (Latin, testamentum) which becomes operative at death (Heb 9:15-17) hence our New Testament. Either covenant or will makes sense here. Covenant is the idea in Heb 7:22; 8:8 and often. In the Hebrew to make a covenant was to cut up the sacrifice and so ratify the agreement (Ge 15:9-18). Lightfoot argues that the word diathêke means covenant in the N.T. except in Heb 9:15-17. Jesus here uses the solemn words of Ex 24:8 "the blood of the covenant" at Sinai. "My blood of the covenant" is in contrast with that. This is the New Covenant of Jer 31:1ff. Heb 8:1ff which is shed for many (to peri pollôn ekchunnomenon). He had the definite conception of his death on the cross as the basis of forgiveness of sin. The purpose of the shedding of his blood of the New Covenant was precisely to remove (forgive) sins.

The event so solemn and still vivid on disciples mind as they thought what this really meant, Jesus he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee] That is, James and John; the same persons who had beheld his transfiguration on the mount-that they might contemplate this agony in the light of that glory which they had there seen; and so be kept from being stumbled by a view of his present humiliation. My soul is exceeding sorrowful, (or, is surrounded with exceeding sorrow,) even unto death.] This latter word explains the two former: My soul is so dissolved in sorrow, my spirit is filled with such agony and anguish, that, if speedy succour be not given to my body, death must be the speedy consequence. Such were the overwhelming times in the life of our Savior in front of his three disciples and all they could do was to sleep. One comments:

"The Son of God went away the second time, and prayed, saying: "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." And again He came to His disciples and found them sleeping. Their eyes were heavy. By these sleeping disciples is represented a sleeping church, when the day of God's visitation is nigh. It is a time of clouds and thick darkness, when to be found asleep is most perilous. {2T 205.1}"

Now, the grand expiatory sacrifice begins to be offered: in this garden Jesus enters fully into the sacerdotal office; and now, on the altar of his immaculate divinity, begins to offer his own body-his own life-a lamb without spot, for the sin of the world. St. Luke observes, Lu 22:43,44, that

"There appeared unto him an angel from heaven strengthening him; and that, being in an agony, his sweat was like great drops of blood falling to the ground."

How exquisite must this anguish have been, when it forced the very blood through the coats of the veins, and enlarged the pores in such a preternatural manner as to cause them to empty it out in large successive drops!" The principal part of the redemption price was paid in this unprecedented and indescribable agony. Bloody sweats are mentioned by many authors; but none was ever such as this-where a person in perfect health, (having never had any predisposing sickness to induce a debility of the system,) and in the full vigour of life, about thirty-three years of age, suddenly, through mental pressure, without any fear of death, sweat great drops of blood; and these continued, during his wrestling with God to fall to the ground.

To say that all this was occasioned by the fear he had of the ignominious death which he was about to die confutes itself-for this would not only rob him of his divinity, for which purpose it is brought, but it deprives him of all excellency, and even of manhood itself. The prospect of death could not cause him to suffer thus, when he knew that in less than three days he was to be restored to life, and be brought into an eternity of blessedness. His agony and distress can receive no consistent explication but on this ground-He SUFFERED, the JUST for the UNJUST, that he might BRING us to GOD. O glorious truth! O infinitely meritorious suffering! And O! above all, the eternal love, that caused him to undergo such sufferings for the sake of SINNERS!

Christ soon answered this question; Thou hast said, that is, It is as thou hast said. This is not spoken out so plainly as Nathan's Thou art the man; but it was enough to convict him. Beware when there is still tenderness calling of the Spirit because there comes a time when it will have to pronounce a judgment and not a reprove.

The place where he prayed; He went a little further, withdrew from them, that the scripture might be fulfilled, I have trod the wine-press alone; he retired for prayer; a troubled soul finds most ease when it is alone with God, who understands the broken language of sighs and groans. Calvin's devout remark upon this is worth transcribing,

"Utile est seorsim orare, tunc enim magis familiariter sese denudat fidelis animus, et simplicius sua vota, gemitus, curas, pavores, spes, et gaudia in Dei sinum exonerat--It is useful to pray apart; for then the faithful soul develops itself more familiarly, and with greater simplicity pours forth its petitions, groans, cares, fears, hopes and joys, into the bosom of God."

Our Lord Jesus Christ was really perfect in His ways that when I look at myself I see just a wretched being. He calls Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane friend. If he had called him villain, and traitor, raca, thou fool, and child of the devil, he had not mis-called him; but he would teach us under the greatest provocation to forbear bitterness and evil speaking, and to show all meekness. Friend, for a friend he had been, and should have been, and seemed to be. Thus he upbraids him, as Abraham, when he called the rich man in hell, son. Indeed this is one of the greatest mysteries about Jesus Christ.

"Let God's word and will take place, let his law be magnified and made honourable, whatever becomes of us."

About Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord our Savior, they delivered him to Pontius Pilate; according to that which Christ had often said, that he should be delivered to the Gentiles. Both Jews and Gentiles were obnoxious to the judgment of God, and concluded under sin, and Christ was to be the Saviour both of Jews and Gentiles; and therefore Christ was brought into the judgment both of Jews and Gentiles, and both had a hand in his death. See how these corrupt church-rulers

abused the civil magistrate, making use of him to execute their unrighteous decrees, and inflict the grievance which they had prescribed, Isa 10:1. Thus have the kings of the earth been wretchedly imposed upon by the PAPAL POWERS, and condemned to the drudgery of extirpating with the sword of war, as well as that of justice, those whom they have marked for heretics, right or wrong, to the great prejudice of their own interests.

John 19:8, Pilate was certainly to be pitied: he saw what was right, and he wished to do it; but he had not sufficient firmness of mind. He did not attend to that important maxim. Let justice be done, though the heavens should be dissolved. Even by washing his hands, Pilate is never exonerated and he is lumped in the murderous group pending repentance and forgiveness or eternal damnation. Its pure nonsense for men to protest against a thing, and yet to practise it, is only to proclaim that they sin against their consciences. Though Pilate professed his innocency by washing his hands in the crucifixion of the Messiah, God charges him with guilt, Ac 4:26-28.. [Whence art thou?] This certainly does not mean, from what country art thou? For Pilate knew this well enough; but it appears he made this inquiry to know who were the parents of Christ; what were his pretensions, and whether he really were a demigod, such as the heathens believed in. To this question we find our Lord gave no answer. He had already told him that his kingdom was not of this world; and that he came to erect a spiritual kingdom, not a temporal one: John 18:36, 37. This answer he deemed sufficient; and he did not choose to satisfy a criminal curiosity, nor to enter then into any debate concerning the absurdity of the heathen worship.

When hearts of men are bent on mischief, poison tastes sweeter than honey on their tongues. They did not just reject our Lord and Savior but accepted Barabbas. He was not only a person who lived by plunder, but shed the blood of many of those whom he and his gang robbed, and rose up against the Roman government, as we learn from Lu 23:19. There never existed a more perfidious, cruel, and murderous people than these Jews; and no wonder they preferred a murderer to the Prince of Peace. Christ himself had said, if ye were of the world, the world would love its own. Like cleaves to like: hence we need not be surprised to find the vilest things still preferred to Christ, his kingdom, and his salvation; which Kingdom reader do you belong?

Seeing that the plan was not in accordance with his expectations, Judas repented himself (metamelêtheis). Probably Judas saw Jesus led away to Pilate and thus knew that the condemnation had taken place. This verb (first aorist passive participle of metamelomai) really means to be sorry afterwards like the English word repent from the Latin reponitit, to have pain again or afterwards. See the same verb metamelêtheis in Mt 21:30 of the boy who became sorry and changed to obedience. The word does not have an evil sense in itself. Paul uses it of his sorrow for his sharp letter to the Corinthians, a sorrow that ceased when good came of the letter (2Co 7:8). But mere sorrow avails nothing unless it leads to change of mind and life (metanoia), the sorrow according to God (2Co 7:9). This sorrow Peter had when he wept bitterly. It led Peter back to Christ. But Judas had only remorse that led to suicide. What kind of repentance have you made? See here how Judas repented: not like Peter, who repented, believed, and was pardoned: no, he repented, despaired, and was ruined.

“Sin will soon change its taste. Though it be rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel, in the bowels it will be turned into the gall of asps (Job 20:12-14). There are those who betray Christ, and yet justify themselves in it, and so come short of Judas.”

See here how we carelessly speak of betraying of Christ. Judas had told them that the blood of Christ was innocent blood; and they said, What is that to us? Was it nothing to them that they had thirsted after this blood, and hired Judas to betray it, and had now condemned it to be shed unjustly? Is this nothing to them? Does it give no check to the violence of their prosecution, no warning to take heed what they do to this just man?

“Thus do fools make a mock at sin, as if no harm were done, no hazard run, by the commission of the greatest wickedness. Thus light do many make of Christ crucified; what is it to them, that he suffered such things? And when we forget about what Jesus went through and sin again crucifying him on the cross again, is it nothing to us? It is folly for us to think that the sins of others are nothing to us, especially those sins that we are any way accessory to, or partakers in. Is it nothing to us, that God is dishonoured, souls wounded, Satan gratified and his interests served, and that we have aided and abetted it? If the elders of Jezreel, to please Jezebel, murder Naboth, is that nothing to Ahab? Yes, he has killed, for he has taken possession, 1Ki 21:19.”

Judas went, and hanged himself. First, He retired; he withdrew into some solitary place, like the possessed man that was drawn by the devil into the wilderness, Lu 8:29. It is worthy to quote what Adam Clarke has to say on this point:

“Woe to him that is in despair, and is alone. If Judas had gone to Christ, or to some of the disciples, perhaps he might have had relief, bad as the case was. Let us think as bad as we can of sin, provided we do not think it unpardonable; let us despair of help in ourselves, but not of help in God. He that thinks to ease his conscience by destroying his life, doth, in effect, dare God Almighty to do his worst. And self-murder, though prescribed by some of the heathen moralists, is certainly a remedy worse than the disease, how bad soever the disease may be.”

When he was condemned, he ought to have had some time allowed him to prepare for death. There was a law made by the Roman senate, in Tiberius's time, perhaps upon complaint of this and the like precipitation, that the execution of criminals should be deferred at least ten days after sentence. Sueton in Tiber. cap. 25. But there were scarcely allowed so many minutes to our Lord Jesus; nor had he any breathing-time during those minutes; it was a crisis, and there were no lucid intervals allowed him; deep called unto deep, and the storm continued without any intermission. A planned sin is like an un-reversible bomb waiting unless Christ meets the heart of the exploder.

VIOLATION OF EVERY LAW DONE TO JESUS:

“As if religious services needed a license, Jesus was interrogated of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Ridiculously, what Jesus had been preaching for the last three years was not a secret to the questioner. He was asked by what authority, or in virtue of what right, he collected disciples, formed a different sect, preached a new doctrine, and set himself up for a public reformer! As religion was interested in these things, the high priest was considered as being the proper judge. But all this, with what follows, was transacted by night, and this was contrary to established laws. Criminal processes can neither commence nor terminate, but during the course of the day. If the person be acquitted, the sentence may be pronounced during that day; but, if he be condemned, the sentence cannot be pronounced till the next day. But no kind of judgment is to be executed, either on the eve of the Sabbath, or the eve of any festival. Nevertheless, to the lasting infamy of this people, Christ was judicially interrogated and condemned during the night; and on the night too of the Passover, or, according to others, on the eve of that feast. Thus, all the forms of justice were insulted and outraged in the case of our Lord. In this his humiliation his judgment was taken away. See Ac 8:33. Furthermore, it is an argument of a base, servile, sordid spirit, to insult over those that are in misery, and to make the calamities of any matter of sport and merriment.”

Pilate was catching at straws or seeking any loophole to escape condemning a harmless lunatic or exponent of a superstitious cult such as he deemed Jesus to be, certainly in no political sense a rival of Caesar. The Jews interpreted "Christ" for Pilate to be a claim to be King of the Jews in

opposition to Caesar, "a most unprincipled proceeding" (Bruce). So he bethought him of the time-honoured custom at the Passover of releasing to the people "a prisoner whom they wished" (desmion hon êthelon). No parallel case has been found, but Josephus mentions the custom (Ant. xx. 9,3). On this occasion "the robbers of thy people" as Daniel puts it (Dan 11:14), the Jews accepted Barabbas or Jesus which is called Christ (Barabbân ê Iêsoun ton legomenon Christon:). Barabbas was for some reason a popular hero, a notable (episêmon), if not notorious, prisoner, leader of an insurrection or revolution (Mr 15:7) probably against Rome, and so guilty of the very crime that they tried to fasten on Jesus who only claimed to be king in the spiritual sense of the spiritual kingdom. So Pilate unwittingly pitted against each other two prisoners who represented the antagonistic forces of all time. It is an elliptical structure in the question, "whom do you wish that I release?" (tina thelete apolusô:), either two questions in one (asyndeton) or the ellipse of hina before apolusô. See the same idiom in verse Mt 27:21. But Pilate's question tested the Jews as well as himself. It tests all men today. Some manuscripts add the name Jesus to Barabbas and that makes it all the sharper: Jesus Barabbas or Jesus Christ? Clarke adds:

"This was done in the common hall. The governor's house, which should have been a shelter to the wronged and abused, is made the theatre of this barbarity. I wonder that the governor, who was so desirous to acquit himself from the blood of this just person, would suffer this to be done in his house. Perhaps he did not order it to be done, but he connived at it; and those in authority will be accountable, not only for the wickedness which they do, or appoint, but for that which they do not restrain, when it is in the power of their hands. Masters of families should not suffer their houses to be places of abuse to any, nor their servants to make sport with the sins, or miseries, or religion, of others."

While the events were at their pick, Pilate's wife intervened Matthew 27:19 but her plea fell on deaf ears and only adds more guilt to the act of Pilate. Poor Pilate was getting more entangled every moment as he hesitated to set Jesus free whom he knew to be free of any crime against Caesar. Just at the moment when he was trying to enlist the people in behalf of Jesus against the schemes of the Jewish leaders, his wife sent a message about her dream concerning Jesus. She calls Jesus "that righteous man" (tôi dikaiôi ekeinôi) and her psychical sufferings increased Pilate's superstitious fears. Tradition names her Procla and even calls her a Christian. But it was enough to unnerve the weak Pilate as he sat on the judgment-seat (epi tou bêmatos) up over the pavement.

In John 18:31, It is not lawful for the Jews to put any man to death. They might have judged Jesus according to their law, as Pilate bade them do; but they could only excommunicate or scourge him. They might have voted him worthy of death; but they could not put him to death, if any thing of a secular nature were charged against him. The power of life and death was in all probability taken from the Jews when Archelaus, king of Judea, was banished to Vienna, and Judea was made a Roman province; and this happened more than fifty years before the destruction of Jerusalem. But the Romans suffered Herod, mentioned Ac 12:1, &c., to exercise the power of life and death during his reign. Hence, though they assert that he should die according to their law, because he made himself the Son of God, Joh 19:7, yet they lay peculiar stress on his being an enemy to the Roman government; and, when they found Pilate disposed to let him go, they asserted that if he did he was not Caesar's friend, Joh 18:12. It was this that intimidated Pilate, and induced him to give him up, that they might crucify him. Matthew Henry asserts:

"In pretense of mercy, they gave Simon of Cyrene his cross to carry for him. Why? In fear that he may die before they could put nails in his body hence one feign of empathy a plot for more heinous brutality. What pretenses of mercy have you in store for Jesus today! Pilate made five several attempts to release our Lord; as we may learn from Lu 23:4, 15, 20, 22; John 19:4, 12, 13. A hundred times more than the present Christians will attempt to do. That just shows how Pilate could plead innocence and prove just how bad the present generation is."

Thou art not Caesar's friend]. Such was the intimidation that Pilate received. He was as if were told, thou dost not act like a person who has the interest of the emperor at heart. Ambassadors, prefects, counsellors, &c., were generally termed the friends of the emperor. This insinuation determined Pilate to make no longer resistance: he was afraid of being accused, and he knew Tiberius was one of the most jealous and distrustful princes in the world. During his reign, accusations of conspiracies were much in fashion; they were founded on the silliest pretenses, and punished with excessive rigour. Pilate took water, and washed his hands thus signifying his innocence. It was a custom among the Hebrews, Greeks, and Latins, to wash the hands in token of innocence, and to show that they were pure from any imputed guilt. In case of an undiscovered murder, the elders of that city which was nearest to the place where the dead body was found, were required by the law, De 21:1-10, to wash their hands over the victim which was offered to expiate the crime, and thus make public protestation of their own innocence. David says, I will wash my hands in innocence, so shall I compass thine altar, Ps 26:6. As Pilate knew Christ was innocent, he should have prevented his death: he had the armed force at his command, and should have dispersed this infamous mob. Had he been charged with countenancing a seditious person, he could have easily cleared himself, had the matter been brought before the emperor. He, therefore, was inexcusable. Matthew Henry laments the crucifixion thus:

“It was an additional reproach, that he was crucified in the midst, between them, as if he had been the worst of the three, the principal malefactor; for among three the middle is the place for the chief. Every circumstance was contrived to his dishonour, as if the great Saviour were of all others the greatest sinner. They derided Him to come down from the cross. Many people would like the King of Israel well enough, if he would but come down from the cross, if they could have his kingdom without the tribulation through which they must enter into it. But the matter is settled; if no cross, then no Christ, no crown. Those that would reign with him must be willing to suffer with him, for Christ and his cross are nailed together in this world.”

Critics differ widely concerning the time of our Lord's crucifixion; and John 19:14 is variously understood. Some think it signifies merely the preparation of the Sabbath; and that it is called the preparation of the Passover, because the preparation of the Sabbath happened that year on the eve of the Passover. Others think that the preparation of the Sabbath is distinctly spoken of in Joh 19:31, and was different from what is here mentioned. **Contending nations may be more easily reconciled than contending theologians.** See:

Ex 12:5, 6:

*“Your lamb shall be **without blemish**, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall **kill it in the evening**”*

In the evening] "between the two evenings" The Jews divided the day into morning and evening: till the sun passed the meridian all was morning or fore-noon; after that, all was afternoon or evening. Their first evening began just after twelve o'clock, and continued till sunset; their second evening began at sunset and continued till night, i.e., during the whole time of twilight; between twelve o'clock, therefore, and the termination of twilight, the Passover was to be offered.

The day among the Jews had twelve hours, Joh 11:9. Their first hour was about six o'clock in the morning with us. Their sixth hour was our noon. Their ninth hour answered to our three o'clock in the afternoon. By this we may understand that the time in which Christ was crucified began at the third hour, that is, at nine o'clock in the morning, the ordinary time for the daily morning sacrifice, and ended at the ninth hour, that is, three o'clock in

the afternoon, the time of the evening sacrifice, Mr 15:25,33,34,37. Wherefore their ninth hour was their hour of prayer, when they used to go into the temple at the daily evening sacrifice, Ac 3:1; and this was the ordinary time for the Passover. It is worthy of remark that God sets no particular hour for the killing of the Passover: any time between the two evenings, i.e., between twelve o'clock in the day and the termination of twilight, was lawful. The daily sacrifice (see Ex 29:38,39) was killed at half past the eighth hour, that is, half an hour BEFORE three in the afternoon; and it was offered up at half past the ninth hour, that is, half an hour AFTER three. In the evening of the Passover it was killed at half past the seventh hour, and offered at half past the eighth, that is, half an hour BEFORE three: and if the evening of the Passover fell on the evening of the Sabbath, it was killed at half past the SIXTH hour, and offered at half past the SEVENTH, that is, half an hour BEFORE two in the afternoon. The reason of this was, they were first obliged to kill the daily sacrifice, and then to kill and roast the paschal lamb, and also to rest the evening before the Passover. Agreeably to this Maimonides says 'the killing of the Passover is after mid-day, and if they kill it before it is not lawful; and they do not kill it till after the daily evening sacrifice, and burning of incense: and after they have trimmed the lamps they begin to kill the paschal lambs until the end of the day.' By this time of the day God foreshowed the sufferings of Christ in the evening of times or in the last days, Heb 1:2; 1Pe 1:19,20: and about the same time of the day, when the paschal lamb ordinarily died, HE died also, viz., at the ninth hour: Mt 27:46-50." See Ainsworth.

"On the fourteenth day of the month, at even, the Passover was celebrated, its solemn, impressive ceremonies commemorating the deliverance from bondage in Egypt, and pointing forward to the sacrifice that should deliver from the bondage of sin. When the Saviour yielded up His life on Calvary, the significance of the Passover ceased, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was instituted as a memorial of the same event of which the Passover had been a type." — Patriarchs & Prophets, p. 539.3 – EGW

Finally but late, Pilate could hold to his conviction on a lesser matter because the weightier matter had been to weightier for him to handle. He could not lose his seat for defending an alleged Criminal. He says, John 19:22, what I have written, I have written.] That is, I will not alter what I have written. The Roman laws forbade the sentence to be altered when once pronounced; and as this inscription was considered as the sentence pronounced against our Lord, therefore, it could not be changed: but this form of speech is common in the Jewish writings, and means simply, what is done shall continue. Quoting Matthew Henry:

"Pilate speaks prophetically and he being an unbeliever yet proves to be more inspired more than the whole Sanhedrin. HE ASSERTS: "This is the king of the Jews: they shall have no other Messiah for ever". When people professing to be Christians fail in their duties, murderers become more moral than them."

Our savior even in His most trying moments still had a word of comfort to His mother. John 19:26, Woman, behold thy son!] This is a remarkable expression, and has been much misunderstood. It conveys no idea of disrespect, nor of unconcern, as has been commonly supposed. In the way of compellation, man! And woman! Were titles of as much respect among the Hebrews as sir! And madam! Are among us; but why does not Jesus call her mother? Probably because he wished to spare her feelings; he would not mention a name, the very sound of which must have wrung her heart with additional sorrow. On this account he says, Behold thy son! This was the language of pure natural affection: "Consider this crucified man no longer at present as any relative of thine; but take that disciple whom my power shall preserve from evil for thy son; and, while he considers thee as his mother, account him for thy child." It is probable that it was because the keeping of Mary, now, was entrusted to him that he was the only disciple of our Lord who died a natural death, God having preserved him for the sake of the person whom he gave him in charge. Many children are not only preserved alive, but abundantly prospered in temporal

things, for the sake of the desolate parents whom God had cast upon their care. It is very likely that Joseph was dead previously to this; and that this was the reason why the mother was about to be bereaved mother, that's Mary, is committed to the care of the beloved disciple.

The manner how he breathed his last (Mt 27:50); between the third and the sixth hour, that is, between nine and twelve o'clock, as we reckon, he was nailed to the cross, and soon after the ninth hour, that is, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, he died. That was the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, and the time when the paschal lamb was killed; and Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us and offered himself in the evening of the world a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour. It was at that time of the day, that the angel Gabriel delivered to Daniel that glorious prediction of the Messiah Daniel 9:21. The veil of the temple was rent] That is, the veil which separated the holy place, where the priests ministered, from the holy of holies, into which the high priest only entered, and that once a year, to make a general expiation for the sins of the people. This rending of the veil was emblematical;

1. *What was prefigured with the temple service was coming to an end, the type was meeting the antitype and*
2. *It pointed out that the separation between Jews and Gentiles was now abolished, and that the privilege of the high priest was now communicated to all mankind: ALL might henceforth have access to the throne of grace, through the one great atonement and mediator, the Lord Jesus. See this beautifully illustrated in Heb 10:19-22.*

And from the sixth hour to the ninth hour, darkness engulfed the land. Never were there three such hours since the day that God created man upon the earth, never such a dark and awful scene; the crisis of that great affair of man's redemption and salvation.

The graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, the tombs were opened (ta mnêmeia aneôichthêsan). The splitting of the rocks by the earthquake and the opening of tombs can be due to the earthquake. But the raising of the bodies of the dead after the resurrection of Jesus which appeared to many in the holy city puzzles many today who admit the actual bodily resurrection of Jesus. Some would brand all these portents as legends since they appear in Matthew alone. Others would say that "after his resurrection" should read "after their resurrection," but that would make it conflict with Paul's description of Christ as the first fruits of them that sleep (1Co 15:20). Some say that Jesus released these spirits after his descent into Hades. So it goes. We come back to miracles connected with the birth of Jesus, God's Son coming into the world. If we grant the possibility of such manifestations of God's power, there is little to disturb one here in the story of the death of God's Son. That's how powerful was the resurrection of Christ that every saint could have resurrected but that has been preserved for the right time.

Truly this was the Son of God (alêthôs theou huïos ên houtos). There is no article with God or Son in the Greek so that it means "God's Son," either "the Son of God" or "a Son of God." Evidently the centurion (hekatontarchos here, ruler of a hundred, Latin word kenturiôn in Mr 15:39) was deeply moved by the portents which he had witnessed. He had heard the several flings at Jesus for claiming to be the Son of God and may even have heard of his claim before the Sanhedrin and Pilate. How much he meant by his words we do not know, but probably he meant more than merely "a righteous man" (Lu 23:47). Petronius is the name given this centurion by tradition. If he was won now to trust in Christ, he came as a pagan and, like the robber who believed, was saved as Jesus hung upon the Cross. All who are ever saved in truth are saved because of the death of Jesus on the Cross. So the Cross began to do its work at once.

Truly this was the Son of God.] An innocent, holy, and Divine person; and God thus shows his disapprobation of this bloody tragedy. It is not likely that this centurion had any knowledge of the expectation of the Jews relative to the Messiah, and did not use the words in this sense. A

son of God, as the Romans used the term, would signify no more than a very eminent or Divine person; a hero.

Matthew 27:57 records, when even was come (opsias de genomenês). It was the Preparation (paraskeuê), the day before the sabbath (Mr 15:42; Lu 23:54). Paraskeuê is the name in modern Greek today for Friday. The Jews were anxious that these bodies should be taken down before the sabbath began at sunset. The request of Joseph of Arimathea for the body of Jesus was a relief to Pilate and to the Jews also. We know little about this member of the Sanhedrin save his name Joseph, his town Arimathea, that he was rich, a secret disciple, and had not agreed to the death of Jesus. Probably he now wished that he had made an open profession. But he has courage now when others are cowardly and asked for the personal privilege (êitêsato, middle voice, asked for himself) of placing the body of Jesus in his new tomb. Some today identify this tomb with one of the rock tombs now visible under Gordon's Calvary. It was a mournful privilege and dignity that came to Joseph and Nicodemus (Joh 19:39-41) as they wrapped the body of Jesus in clean linen cloth and with proper spices placed it in this fresh (kainôi) tomb in which no body had yet been placed. It was cut in the rock (elatomêsen) for his own body, but now it was for Jesus. But now (verse Mt 27:60) he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and departed. That was for safety. But two women had watched the sad and lonely ceremony, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (mother of James and Joseph). They were sitting opposite and looking in silence.

On next day (The Sabbath – Mathew 27:62-66), the chief priests and Pharisees, when they should have been at their devotions, asking pardon for the sins of the week past, were dealing with Pilate about securing and sealing permanently the sepulchre, and so adding rebellion to their sin. I don't know how stealing the body of Jesus could have benefited the disciples cause on the third day Jesus had to appear alive to prove that he was risen from the dead. Hence the thoughts of these Pharisees really revealed how deep their conscience was seared. Adam Clarke's Commentary on Matthew 28:13:

“His disciples came by night] This was as absurd as it was false. On one hand, the terror of the disciples, the smallness of their number (only eleven;) and their almost total want of faith; on the other, the great danger of such a bold enterprise, the number of armed men who guarded the tomb, the authority of Pilate and of the Sanhedrin, must render such an imposture as this utterly devoid of credit.

Stole him away while we slept.] Here is a whole heap of absurdities. 1st. Is it likely that so many men would all fall asleep, in the open air, at once? 2dly. Is it at all probable that a Roman guard should be found off their watch, much less asleep, when it was instant death, according to the Roman military laws, to be found in this state? 3dly. Could they be so sound asleep as not to awake with all the noise which must be necessarily made by removing the great stone, and taking away the body? 4thly. Is it at all likely that these disciples could have had time sufficient to do all this, and to come and return, without being perceived by any person? And 5thly. If they were asleep, how could they possibly know that it was the disciples that stole him, or indeed that any person or persons stole him?—for, being asleep, they could see no person. From their own testimony, therefore, the resurrection may be as fully proved as the theft.”

To make a spectacle and a mock of their plot, when the matter is reported to Pilate in Mathew 27:65, he answers “ye have a watch, make it sure, as sure as you can” meaning; “Do your worst, try your wit and strength to the utmost; but if he be of God, he will rise, in spite of you and all your guards”. Can you really keep Jesus a prisoner!

The resurrection itself was emphatic one. John 20:12, the angels came, one at the head, and the other at the feet] so were the cherubim placed at each end of the mercy-seat: Ex 25:18, 19. Robertson's NT Word Pictures on Matthew 28:2:

“There was a great earthquake (seismos egeneto megas). Clearly not the earthquake of Mt 27:51. The precise time of this earthquake is not given. It was before sunrise on the first day of the week when the women made the next visit. Matthew alone relates the coming of the angel of the Lord who rolled away the stone and was sitting upon it (apekulise ton lithon kai ekathêto epanô autou). If one is querulous about these supernatural phenomena, he should reflect that the Resurrection of Jesus is one of the great supernatural events of all time. Cornelius à Lapede dares to say: “The earth, which trembled with sorrow at the Death of Christ as it were leaped for joy at His Resurrection.” The Angel of the Lord announced the birth of the Son of God and also His Resurrection from the grave. There are seeming inconsistencies in the various narratives of the Resurrection and the appearances of the Risen Christ. We do not know enough of the details to be able to reconcile them. But the very variations strengthen the independent witness to the essential fact that Jesus rose from the grave. Let each writer give his own account in his own way. The stone was rolled away not to let the Lord out, but to let the women in to prove the fact of the empty tomb (McNeile).”

Mary afterwards came to anoint the body of Christ after the Sabbath but lo! He was nowhere, she requested His body; **John 20:15, And I will take him away]. How true is the proverb, Love feels no load! Jesus was in the prime of life when he was crucified, and had a hundred pounds weight of spices added to his body; and yet Mary thinks of nothing less than carrying him away with her, if she can but find where he is laid! Reader, if they took Christ to a place not known to you, what will be your first statement!** In the process, Jesus appeared: John 20:16, Mary.] This word was no doubt spoken with uncommon emphasis; and the usual sound of Christ's voice accompanied it, so as immediately to prove that it must be Jesus. What transports of joy must have filled this woman's heart! Let it be remarked that Mary Magdalene sought Jesus more fervently, and continued more affectionately attached to him than any of the rest: therefore to her first, Jesus is pleased to show himself, and she is made the first herald of the Gospel of a risen Saviour.

He bid her to go and report the matter to the disciples. The disciples of Christ must first be told the news; note,

“Go, tell the chief priests and the Pharisees, that they may be confounded; but, tell the disciples, that they may be comforted. God anticipates the joy of his friends more than the shame of his enemies, though the perfection of both is reserved for hereafter.”

Jesus did appear to the disciples in Galilee on two notable occasions (by the beloved lake, Joh 21:1ff., and on the mountain, Mt 28:16-20). Probably before the women were permitted to tell this story in full to the disciples who scouted as idle talk their first accounts, Jesus appeared to various disciples in Jerusalem on this first great Sunday. Jesus did not say that he would not see any of them in Jerusalem. He merely made a definite appointment in Galilee which he kept. Why is it that it was the women to go and bear the message that Christ has risen? Because a woman in the Bible represents a church and so as a church we have a message to bear to the whole earth: that Christ rose from the dead, intercedes for us and soon he is coming to judge the world. Those that are sent on God's errand must not loiter, or lose time; where the heart is enlarged with the glad tidings of the gospel, the feet will run the way of God's commandments.

in John 20:28, Thomas was the first who gave the title of God to Jesus; and, by this glorious confession, made some amends for his former obstinate incredulity. It is worthy of remark, that from this time forward the whole of the disciples treated our Lord with the most supreme respect, never using that familiarity towards him which they had often used before. The resurrection from the dead gave them the fullest proof of the Divinity of Christ. And this, indeed, is the use which St. John makes of this manifestation of Christ. See John 20:30, 31. Observe that Thomas calls

Jesus his God, and that Jesus does not reprove him for it, though probably it was the first time he was called so.

They had doted on Christ's bodily presence, and hung upon that, and built all their joys and hopes upon that; but now Christ discharges them from further attendance on his person, and sends them abroad about other work. As an eagle stirs up her nest, flutters over her young, to excite them to fly (De 32:11), so Christ stirs up his disciples, to disperse themselves over the entire world. It is time to come out of those comforts and test what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus (Mathew 28:20). How often we baptize people without teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever Jesus commanded is beyond me. That's why we are always infants breastfeeding and the church is filled with backsliding. There is a law of faith, and we are said to be under the law to Christ; we are by baptism bound, and must obey.

And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world: what blessed assurance! I am with you, to bear you up, to plead your cause; with you in all your services, in all your sufferings, to bring you through them with comfort and honour. When you go through the fire or water, I will be with you. In the pulpit, in the prison, lo, I am with you.

John 21:14; THE MANIFESTATIONS OF JESUS CHRIST AFTER HIS RESURRECTION: This is now the third time] That is, this was the third time he appeared unto the apostles, when all or most of them were together. He appeared to ten of them, Joh 20:19; again to eleven of them, John 20:26; and at this time to seven of them, John 21:2. But, when the other evangelists are collated, we shall find that this was the seventh time in which he had manifested himself after he arose from the dead. 1st. He appeared to Mary of Magdala, Mr 16:9; Joh 20:15, 16. 2ndly, To the holy women who came from the tomb. Mt 28:9. 3dly, To the two disciples who went to Emmaus, Lu 24:13, &c. 4thly, To St. Peter alone, Lu 24:34. 5thly, To the ten, in the absence of Thomas, John 20:19. 6thly, Eight days after to the eleven, Thomas being present; John 20:26. 7thly, To the seven, mentioned in John 21:2; which was between the eighth and fortieth day after his resurrection. Besides these seven appearances, he showed himself, 8thly, To the disciples on a certain mountain in Galilee, Mt 28:16. If the appearance mentioned by St. Paul, 1Co 15:6, to upwards of 500 brethren at once-if this be not the same with his appearance on a mountain in Galilee, it must be considered the ninth. According to the same apostle, he was seen of James, 1Co 15:7, which may have been the tenth appearance. And, after this, to all the apostles, when, at Bethany, he ascended to heaven in their presence see Mark 16:19, 20; Lu 24:50-53; Ac 1:3-12; 1Co 15:7. This appears to have been the eleventh time in which he distinctly manifested himself after his resurrection. But there might have been many other manifestations, which the evangelists have not thought proper to enumerate, as not being connected with any thing of singular weight or importance.

The few words of the Gospel are enough to show us that though it was the purpose of this Evangelists to record chiefly the outward and palpable facts of our Lord's public life, they recognized in Him, in common with the manuscripts of prophesy, the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father. When you walk and work daily, do these things engross your mind and move you closer to Christ or are they just historical events like any other history and meaning to you? He came the first time to die for us; soon He is coming the second time to take His own.

MARANATHA.