

The warning of Jesus to Judas at the Passover supper, "What thou doest, do quickly" (Jn. 13:27) forced Judas to do immediately what he had not planned to do until after the feast was over. Judas may have taken the warning to mean that Jesus would leave the city the next day. We do not know the movements of Judas after he left the upper room but Samuel J. Andrews in "The Life Of Our Lord Upon The Earth" gives a good resume of what probably happened. "Going immediately to Caiaphas, or to some other leading member of the Sanhedrin, he informs him where Jesus is, and announces that he is ready to fulfill his compact and at once to make the arrest. It was not, as we have seen, the intention to arrest Him during the feast lest there should be a popular tumult (Matt. 26:5); but now that an opportunity offered of seizing Him secretly at dead of night when all were asleep or engaged at the paschal meal, and therefore without danger of interference or uproar, His enemies could not hesitate. Once in their hands, the rest was easy. A hasty trial, a prejudged condemnation, an immediate execution, and the hated Prophet of Galilee was forever removed out of their way. All, perhaps, might be done by the hour of morning prayer and sacrifice. With great despatch all the necessary arrangements are made. Some soldiers the Sanhedrin had under its own direction, the guards of the temple commanded by 'the captains of the temple,' or, as translated by Campbell, 'officers of the temple guard;' and to these they added some of their own servants armed with staves. But they must be attended by Roman soldiers in case a disturbance should arise; and to this end Pilate was persuaded to place at their command the cohort, or a part of it, under its captain, that during the feast was stationed at Fort Antonia for the preservation of order. Some of the chief priests and elders were also themselves to be present, to direct the proceedings, and if necessary to control the people. The soldiers, or some portion of them were to be provided with lanterns and torches, probably to search the garden if any attempt was made to escape. That at this time the moon was full presents no objection. They would need lanterns and torches, even in a clear night and under a brilliant moon, because the western side of Olivet abounds in deserted tombs and caves. It is possible that they thought to surprise Him asleep. It was agreed that Judas should precede the others, and, approaching Him in a friendly way, kiss Him, and thus make Him known. This indicates that no resistance was anticipated."

Judas knew exactly where Jesus would be. It may be that Judas had taken the soldiers first to the upper room and finding Jesus and the disciples gone led the authorities directly to the garden because he

knew this is where Jesus would go. Judas had often been to this garden with Jesus and the other disciples.

But they did not surprise Jesus! Jesus knew at all times exactly what was happening. He knew the unspoken thoughts of Judas' heart. Seeing the many flickering torches and lanterns borne by the multitude of soldiers as they came across the Kedron toward the garden, Jesus knew exactly their purpose. As they approached, Jesus strode forward to meet them, coming out of the darkened shelter of the olive trees.

He takes command of the situation immediately by asking, "Whom are you seeking?" Their answer was, "Jesus of Nazareth." Judas had not yet given his sign and was still standing in front of the crowd. Jesus must have taken another step or two forward leaving the disciples behind Him when He said, "I am he!" The complete calm, determined resolution, sublime majesty and commanding manner in both voice and demeanor surprised and startled those in the front of the crowd so that they stumbled backward over each other and some fell to the ground. There is no indication that Jesus did anything miraculous here to cause these soldiers to fall to the ground. There are many indications scattered through the Gospels that there was something extraordinarily subduing in the aspect and voice of Christ (when He cleansed the temple; when He had steadfastly set His face toward Jerusalem; when He walked through their midst unharmed; when they returned empty handed saying never a man so spake, etc.). Lenski thinks it was altogether miraculous and that the entire multitude fell backwards to the ground. Hendriksen says both the demeanor of Jesus and a miraculous sign both must account for the falling back of the soldiers. What Jesus did was completely unexpected! They expected Him to flee or at least hide. Barnes says, ". . . to suppose that there was (miraculous power—physical force) greatly detracts from the moral sublimity of the scene." The truth is, they were caught, instead of catching Him. Theirs was a mean, treacherous errand. They were employing a traitor as their guide. They were to surprise Him but He surprised them! He brought all their nefarious scheming into the open and put them to shame. The Lord rebuked them and uncovered for them their cowardice when He said to them, as the synoptics record, "Are you come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves to seize me? When I was among you daily in the temple, you made no move to arrest me—but *this is your hour and the power of darkness.*"

After they had recovered somewhat from their surprise Jesus asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" and they replied a second time, "Jesus of Nazareth." "As I told you before," He replies, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, and if you are seeking me, let these other men behind me

go their way unharmed. Verse 9 seems to be John's own parenthetical insertion into the narrative here as John is writing the account years later to show that what Jesus had prophesied 6:39; 10:28 and 17:12 was in part fulfilled in this very incident.

Now Judas had already made a pact with the leaders. Judas had arranged to embrace His Master and this would be the signal for them to take Jesus by physical force and take Him away "safely" (said Judas). Judas probably feared some miraculous judgment or escape by Jesus. So Judas stepped forth and embraced Jesus with fervency, saying, "Hail, Teacher!" Jesus replied with deep pathos, no doubt, "Friend, do what you have purposed in your heart to do—but must you betray the Son of man with a hypocritical embrace?" At the signal the soldiers stepped forward and grasped Jesus' arms roughly and as they were about to take Him away Simon Peter and another disciple rushed forward, their short dagger-type swords drawn, shouting, "Lord shall we smite them with the sword?" Impulsive Peter did not hesitate or wait for a reply but swung his sword at one of the servants of the high priest, Malchus by name. It is worthy of note in passing that this record, which not only gives the name of the servant but tells that it was his *right* ear which was severed by Peter, certainly is *the record of one who was an eyewitness* and not the record of someone in the second century church making up silly little subjective myths about a mythical Jesus!

Jesus turned to Peter with a firm rebuke and a stern command to put the sword into its sheath. The reasons for this command and Jesus' refusal of the courageous act of Peter and the others are summarized by Hendriksen: (a) The cup which the Father had given Him, He must drink and Peter's deed is at variance with this determination of His to do so; (b) Jesus must be able to say to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world . . ." and if He allows them to fight with carnal weapons He cannot so answer; (c) If Jesus had wished to defend Himself He could have called legions of supernatural beings to His aid—Peter's act was unnecessary and uncalled for; (d) Finally, all they that take the sword will perish with the sword. This last one needs a bit of amplification. Certain rulers, magistrates and law enforcers are to wield the sword at the command of God (cf. Rom. 13:1-7; I Pet. 2:13-17; Titus 3:1, etc.). Those who wield the sword without just reason, and without receiving the orders of competent authority, are themselves liable to give life for life. National laws and governments are ordained by God and citizens of those national boundaries are to be subject to those governments as long as they do not demand that the individual violate the expressed will of God.

We have discussed before the boldness and courage of the disciples. Especially do we see it here! These men are not cowards. We do not believe that the record of them leaving Jesus and fleeing should be interpreted to mean they were cringing cowards (Matt. 26:56). We believe that Peter and John's boldness later as they entered into the very courtyard of the high priest as they followed Jesus indicates they may have felt the best thing they could do in the garden was to make good their escape in order to fight for their Master at a later, more opportune, time. Then when it finally came home to them that Jesus was not going to resist at all—that He was going to willingly submit to death—they were disillusioned and despondent but not cringing in fear. Their hopes for a powerful, reigning, temporal Messiah had vanished. They were more ashamed than afraid.

This type of attitude toward the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom did not die with the disciples. Many people today still insist that the King and the Kingdom must maintain a worldly prestige. They will boldly and courageously battle for such prestige. But when it comes to being treated in the humiliating, despicable way the Saviour was treated, they all leave Him and flee.

A couple of incidents recorded by the Synoptics and omitted by John are worthy of notice here. First, Jesus said (Matt. 26:56) that the events then happening were fulfillments of prophecies made by the Old Testament prophets. His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver is prophesied by Zechariah and His sufferings are prophesied by Isaiah. There are over 300 prophecies concerning the birth, life and passion of Christ in the O.T. prophets.

Second, the Synoptics record that a young man (Mk. 14:51-52) followed clad only in a linen cloth. He undoubtedly awoke in the middle of the night, having heard the noise of the multitude of soldiers, and being a follower of Jesus wrapped himself hurriedly and followed the throng out of the city into the garden. There he was discovered as a follower of Jesus and the soldiers grappled with him to arrest him also, but he fled leaving them holding the linen cloth (bed clothing?) with which he had wrapped himself. Some say this lad was John Mark but we cannot be sure.

### *Quiz*

1. What does the word "Gethsemane" mean and where was it located?
2. Where is the brook Kedron? Describe it.
3. Describe what you believe transpired between Judas' leaving the upper room and his leading the arresting party.
4. Why did they "fall to the ground" when Jesus spoke to them?
5. Why did Jesus say, "... let these go their way."?

6. Why did Jesus command Peter to put away his sword?
7. Did the disciples leave Him and flee because they were cowards?  
Explain your answer.

## TRIAL BY THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES

*Text: 18:12-27*

- 12 So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him,
- 13 and led him to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.
- 14 Now Caiaphas was he that gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.
- 15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest;
- 16 but Peter was standing at the door without. So the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.
- 17 The maid therefore that kept the door saith unto Peter, Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.
- 18 Now the servants and officers were standing there, having made a fire of coals; for it was cold; and they were warming themselves: and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.
- 19 The high priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his teaching.
- 20 Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spake I nothing.
- 21 Why askest thou me? ask them that have heard me, what I spake unto them: behold, these know the things which I said.
- 22 And when he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?
- 23 Jesus answered him, if I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?
- 24 Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.
- 25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore unto him, Art thou also one of his disciples? He denied, and said, I am not.
- 26 One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?
- 27 Peter therefore denied again: and straightway the cock crew.

*Queries*

- a. Why did they take Jesus to Annas first?
- b. Why did Peter gain entrance into the court of the high priest's palace and then deny that he knew Jesus?
- c. Why did Annas ask Jesus concerning His disciples and His teaching?

*Paraphrase (Harmony)*

So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him, and led him to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Now Caiaphas was he that gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest; but Peter was standing at the door without. So the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. The maid therefore that kept the door saith unto Peter, Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. Now the servants and the officers were standing there, having made a fire of coals; for it was cold; and they were warming themselves: and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The high priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his teaching. Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; I even taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spake I nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them that have heard me, what I spake unto them: behold, these know the things which I said. And when he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

And they that had taken Jesus led him away to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. And Peter had followed him afar off, even within, into the court of the high priest; and sat with the officers to see the end. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the court, and had sat down together, Peter sat in the midst of them, warming himself in the light of the fire.

Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death; and they found it not, though many false witnesses came. For many bare false witness against

him, and their witness agreed not together. But afterward came two, and said, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands, And not even so did their witness agree together. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing.

And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God. And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. And the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, He hath spoken blasphemy: What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be worthy of death. And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and beat him. Then did they spit in his face and buffet him, cover his face. And some smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, prophesy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee? And the officers received him with blows of their hands. And many other things spake they against him, reviling him.

And as Peter was beneath in the court, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest; and seeing Peter warming himself, as he sat in the light of the fire, and looking steadfastly upon him, said, Thou also wast with the Nazarene, even Jesus. But he denied, before them all saying, woman I know him not I neither know, nor understand what thou sayest: and he went out into the porch, and the cock crew. One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? And the maid saw him, and began again to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. But he again denied it. And after a little while again they that stood by said to Peter, Of a truth thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean, for thy speech maketh thee known. But he began to curse, and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak. and straightway the second time the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow twice this day thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Now when morning was come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: and they led him away into their council, saying, If thou art the Christ, tell us. But he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I ask you, ye will not answer. But from henceforth shall the Son of man be

seated at the right hand of the power of God. And they all said, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What further need have we of witness? for we ourselves have heard from his own mouth.

Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? See thou to it. And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, It is not lawful to put them in the treasury, since it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price; and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

### *Summary*

By cruel and evil men Jesus is tried illegally, coerced, mocked, brutalized and condemned without proof or cause. The Jewish authorities had already condemned Him before trial. At the same trials, His most steadfast disciple denies Him.

### *Comment*

Jesus is led first to the palace of the high priest which was probably in, or at least very near, the temple courts. Here He was subjected to a sort of preliminary questioning by Annas, father-in-law of the present high priest Caiaphas. Ever since the Romans had occupied Palestine the high priests no longer held office for life as the O.T. Law legislated. Jewish high priests were now appointed by the Romans as they saw fit. According to history Annas had been high priest and had ruled from 7-14 A.D. when he was deposed by the Roman procurator, Gratus, and Caiaphas, his son-in-law, was appointed and ruled from 18-36 A.D. Five sons of Annas ruled as high priest during this final period of Jewish national life. Just why Jesus was taken to Annas first we do not know. Conjecturally speaking we would guess that it had something to do with the pride and vain glory of Annas himself that would cause him to demand Jesus be brought to him first. Perhaps Annas really "pulled all the strings" in the office and his son-in-law Caiaphas was merely the puppet high priest (cf. Lk. 3:2; Acts 4:6).

It seems highly probable that Annas and Caiaphas would both reside in the palace of the high priest. Therefore just as soon as Annas was



through with his questioning they took Jesus immediately into the quarters of Caiaphas. From there He was taken into the council chambers of the Sanhedrin. The harmonized account of all the Jewish trials indicates that they all transpired in one place for Peter did not leave the same courtyard. The palace would be built on the same order as most expensive homes in Jerusalem, around an open court. The rooms were in the rectangle opening into the inside court. The hall leading from the front door to this court was called the "porch." The gallery connecting these rooms surrounded the court and was a little higher than the court, although not like a second story.

John does not give us any information on the trial before Caiaphas and the one before the Sanhedrin. He supplies what the Synoptics do not—the questioning before Annas. John seems to be that "other disciple" of v. 16 and he was an eyewitness to the questioning by Annas. Some think this "other" disciple was not John but one who dwelt at Jerusalem and who, not being a Galilean, could enter the palace without suspicion. But John states that "the other disciple" was known to the high priest and his servants and was therefore allowed certain liberties others were not allowed. We might guess that John, being the son of a well-to-do fisherman, would have been patronized by the high priest. The authorities would want the influence of the well-to-do businessmen.

Hendriksen says of Annas that "He was very proud, exceedingly ambitious, and fabulously wealthy. His family was notorious for its greed. The main source of his wealth seems to have been a goodly share of the proceeds from the price of sacrificial animals, which were sold in the Court of the Gentiles. By him the house of prayer had been turned into a den of robbers. Even the Talmud declares: 'Woe to the family of Annas! Woe to the serpent-like hisses! (probably the whisperings of Annas and the members of his family, seeking to bribe and influence the judges).'"

The reason that John makes the parenthetical notice concerning Caiaphas in verse 14 is because of the significance of his statement that it was expedient for one man to die for the whole nation (cf. our comments on Jn. 11:49-52). He had been planning the death of Christ for a long time and he and his father-in-law were two of a kind.

The discerning reader will notice right away the differences in reporting the denials of Peter in the Synoptics and in John's gospel. There can be no doubt that all four writers expect three denials. Hendriksen offers the following solution to the differences in the four accounts: ". . . he (John) also reports on three denials, but counts differently, splitting up into two denials that which by the others is

considered the third denial. In the latter case, what by the others is presented as the third denial is by John counted as the second and the third." That would harmonize as follows:

1st denial—Matt. 26:69-70 Mk. 14:66-68 Lk. 22:56-57 Jn. 18:15-18

2nd denial—Matt. 26:71-72 Mk. 14:69-70a Lk. 22:58 Jn. 18:25

3rd denial—Matt. 26:73-74 Mk. 14:70b-72 Lk. 22:59-60 Jn. 18:26-27

R. C. Foster, in his syllabus on the Life of Christ, explains the challenges and denials in this way: "The accounts are agreed as to the first challenge. Mark says the same maid gave the second; Matthew says another woman; Luke, a man; John, a group. Evidently when the portress saw Peter out in the hall leading to the front door, she left her post and challenged him again. Another maid joined her in it; then a man servant. Peter retreated before this attack to the campfire and there a whole group added their accusation to those of the three trailing him. The second and third denials represent a succession of attacks. Peter, assailed on all sides, repeatedly denied. Mark indicates this by the very graphic and exact imperfect tense, 'He kept on denying.' In the third denial, Matthew and Mark say a group; Luke, another man; John, a kinsman of Malchus—here again a succession of accusations and denials occurred."

Why was Peter in there? Why, after having entered, did He deny Jesus? We cannot be sure. It does not seem reasonable, however, to think of Peter's denials as expressions of cowardice when he bravely entered, so to speak, the "lion's den." If Peter was a coward, why did he walk right into the midst of the arresting officers? And why, if he was a coward, did he not bolt and run when challenged the first time—why did he stay on? We believe the exact opposite of cowardice may have moved Peter to get into the palace of the high priest to courageously spy out the possibilities of counter-attack. He may even have had ideas of fighting to free Jesus there in the palace. We must remember that Peter was a rough and rugged fisherman. He was used to danger of life and limb. His denials were probably to conceal his association with Jesus until he could spy out the information needed to carry out a rescue later or until an opportune time afforded itself when he could effect a rescue there in the courtyard. Whatever his reason for denying that he knew Jesus the denial was wrong. If he denied to gain information to use in a struggle of force later it was wrong for as Jesus told Pilate later, and had told Peter earlier, His kingdom was not one of carnal warfare. The sword was not to be used. Christ must suffer. He must drink the cup the Father had given Him. Remember that once before when Jesus told the impetuous Peter He must suffer and be killed, Peter boldly said he would fight to the death for

his Master. It was then that Jesus called Peter, Satan, because Peter did not realize the nature of the Messiah or the Messianic kingdom. We believe the gospel records indicates these men would have fought to the death for the worldly type of Messiah and Messianic kingdom they had envisioned, but when they saw that their Master was submitting to humiliation and death like a "sheep led to the slaughter," they had no other recourse but to go away in despondency. The transformation that came in the lives of the disciples after the resurrection of Christ is another story.

Now the trials of Jesus have been divided into two sections: (a) the ecclesiastical trials—before Annas; before Caiaphas and the elders; and before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin; and (b) the civil trials—before Pilate; before Herod; and back to Pilate.

John omits all but a brief notice of the two trials before Caiaphas and concerns himself with the preliminary questioning before Annas and the trials before Pilate. We shall comment only on the trials recorded by John.

There are many illegal aspects of the arrest and trial of Jesus Christ. We recommend for a more detailed study of the subject a book entitled "The Trial of Jesus Christ," by Frank J. Powell, an English Magistrate, published by Eerdmans. For a devotional study of the arrest, trials and crucifixion we recommend a book entitled, "The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ," by James Stalker, pub. Zondervan.

Jesus was tried illegally at night; His arrest came by bribery; He was forced to testify against Himself; He was sentenced the very same night which was illegal; He was coerced and beaten during the trial but the most atrocious part of the trial was the prejudice, bigotry and malice aforethought of the judges. As Hendriksen says, it was not a trial, but a plot to murder Jesus.

Annas (v. 19) asks Jesus concerning his disciples, and of his teaching. Exactly what Annas asked is not certain, but it appears that he wanted some preliminary confession that Jesus by his teaching and his disciples was inciting the public to treason. Annas could use such a confession when he takes the Nazarene before Pilate. After all, had not the Nazarene taught that He was King of the Jews and that He was about to establish a kingdom. His disciples taught the same thing.

There were times when Jesus taught His disciples privately but what He taught them then He had already taught publicly. He taught in the temple courts and in the synagogues. He taught in the streets and in the fields. He taught on the mountain sides and on the sea shores. There were always plenty of Pharisees or other authorities present when Jesus taught His doctrines of the kingdom and the Messiah.

They could not trap Him this way. They were really wanting Him to incriminate Himself with some confession of wrong.

But Jesus turns the tables. He demands that they produce witnesses to testify. He has no secrets to conceal. These judges knew that they had no evidence to present against Him. The demand of Jesus that they bring witnesses to testify brings their lack of evidence into the open.

The Lord had no more than finished the words when one of the officers of the temple guard struck Him across the mouth with his open hand. Either this officer took it upon himself to strike the prisoner or he was encouraged by the high priest to do so. The *real* High Priest was scornfully rebuked with, "Answerest thou the high priest so?"

Jesus shows the utter disregard of His judges for fairness, legality, mercy or truth when He answers, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" He demands again that valid testimony be brought into the trial and that He shall not be judged and coerced with violence before some evidence is heard. The authorities had no evidence. They were not interested in evidence anyway. They had already made up their minds to kill Him regardless of the evidence. They would later bribe witnesses to testify, but even the bribed witnesses could not agree in their testimony!

While Peter was in the midst of denying Jesus with oaths and curses he suddenly saw the eyes of his tormentors turned away from him toward the gallery of the palace. They were looking at Jesus, who was now being led, amidst blows and curses, across the courtyard to either Caiaphas' quarters or a guard-room where He was to be kept for a few hours until a later questioning by the Sanhedrin. As Jesus stepped out of Annas' quarters onto the gallery His ear had caught the oaths and curses of Peter and hurt deep in His heart He turned around in the direction of Peter—at the same moment the cock crowed and Peter turned—and they looked one another full in the face. Soul looked into soul. What was in that look of the Master to the one who had denied Him? There may be a world in a look. A look may be more eloquent than a whole volume of words. It may reveal more than the lips can ever utter. One writer has commented that the following may have been in the look of the Master:

- (a) His look was a talisman dissolving the spell in which Peter was then held. Peter was so engrossed in his scheming to rescue Jesus that he needed to be brought to himself again.
- (b) The look of Christ was a mirror in which Peter saw himself. He saw what Christ thought of him. His past confessions and professions of courage and "I will fight to the death with you" came

rushing back upon his mind.

- (c) It was a rescuing look. Had it been an angry look he saw on Christ's face when their eyes met, Peter's fate might have been the same as Judas'. In that look of an instant Peter saw forgiveness and unutterable love.

We are not sure that Peter saw all this in that one look. But what he did see was enough to cause him to go out and weep bitterly. It may be that Peter's compassion for Christ in His torture and humiliation had something to do with his bitter weeping. No doubt Peter read disappointment in the eyes of Jesus as He looked. No doubt Peter was ashamed of himself when Jesus looked at him. The same Word of God pierces our very souls today in the same manner if we will allow it to do so.

Between this section of the eighteenth chapter (v. 12-27) and the next section (v. 28-40) the trials before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin occur. John does not record these trials and when we take up our comments again at verse 28 it will be where Jesus is led before Pilate for the first time.

### Quiz

1. Who was Annas and what sort of a person was he?
2. Who was Caiaphas and what sort of a person was he?
3. Where would these two have had their residence and what type of a residence would it be?
4. How was John able to get into the palace?
5. Why was Peter in the courtyard?
6. Name some ways in which the trials of Jesus are illegal?
7. Of what significance was the look Jesus gave to Peter?

### TRIED BY PILATE, THE ROMAN AUTHORITY

#### *Text: 18:28-40*

- 28 They lead Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover.
- 29 Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man?
- 30 They answered and said unto him, if this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee.
- 31 Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:
- 32 that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die.

33 Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of Jews?

34 Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what has thou done?

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find no crime in him.

39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

40 They cried out therefore again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

### *Queries*

- a. Why could the Jews not put Jesus to death?
- b. By what manner of death should Jesus die?
- c. What did Pilate mean when he said, "What is truth?"

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

And straightway in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him up to Pilate.

They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover. Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up to thee. And they began to accuse him, saying, We would this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king. Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death; that the word of Jesus

might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die.

Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?

And when he had said this, he went out again unto the chief priests and the multitudes, and saith unto them, I find no crime in him. And Pilate again asked him, saying, Answerest thou nothing? Behold how many things they accuse thee of. But Jesus no more answered anything; insomuch that Pilate marvelled greatly.

But they were the more urgent, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place. But when Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man were a Galilean.

And when he knew that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him unto Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem in these days.

Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was of a long time desirous to see him, because he had heard concerning him; and he hoped to see some miracle done by him. And he questioned him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes stood vehemently accusing him. And Herod with his soldiers set him at nought, and mocked him, and arraying him in gorgeous apparel sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

And Pilate called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said unto them, Ye brought unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod: for he sent him back unto us; and behold, nothing worthy of death hath been done by him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

Now at the feast he used to release unto them one prisoner, whom

they asked of him. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas, lying bound with them, that had made insurrection, men who in the insurrection had committed murder.

When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up. And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

They cried out therefore again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas.

### Summary

Jesus, having been tortured and subjected to questioning all night, is condemned to death early in the morning by the Sanhedrin, but they cannot execute their sentence. They must have permission from the Roman governor. So Jesus is taken before Pilate. Pilate finds nothing in Jesus worthy of death and wants to release Him.

### Comment

Just where the "Praetorium" was located is not certain. Andrews thinks the procurator's "pavement" or judgment stones were carried with him to different places. Andrews further believes that Pilate judged Jesus in the open paved space before the palace of Herod the Great which was situated on the north side of Mount Zion. Others think the judgment hall of Pilate was in the Tower of Antonia which may have been connected to Herod's palace.

Verse 28 has been abused by destructive critics to prove that the Fourth Gospel contradicts the Synoptics. The Synoptics all say that Jesus ate the passover on Thursday and was crucified on Friday. Verse 28, at first glance, would make one think that the Passover had not yet been celebrated. But there are two possible answers. First, however, it must be seen that John and the Synoptics do not disagree in the light of so much evidence to their perfect harmony. On the one hand these Jews who feared to enter the Praetorium may have feared defilement for the *remainder* of the passover feast. The actual festivities of the passover lasted a full week. There were other feasts besides the pass-over lamb on the 14th of Nisan such as the *Chagigah* which followed the day after the Passover Supper. On the other hand these Jews may have been so busy with arresting and trying Jesus that they postponed their Passover Supper and planned to eat it after the matter of Jesus' death was taken care of. These men were not above violating the law of Moses to serve their own ends.



If they should enter any place where the Roman eagle was on its standard they would have been, according to their tradition, ceremonially unclean.

They would not come in so Pilate went out to meet them. We believe Pilate must have known some of the rumblings that were going on there in the city during that passover. After all, that is what he was there for—to keep down rioting and insurrection. He had no doubt heard of the great triumphal entry of Jesus into the city on the first day of the week. He no doubt had informers keeping him informed of the arrest and trial of this Jesus by His own Sanhedrin. He was probably not too worried about this Jesus since he had no doubt heard of His meekness and His "philosophical teachings." We believe Pilate was persuaded that Jesus was just another Jewish philosopher or rabbi. Jesus' followers were not organized and were unarmed. But it seems it was also plain to Pilate that these Jewish rulers were trying to embroil him in their religious wranglings. It is plain by his question in v. 29 that he was not intending to become a mere tool in the hands of the priests and elders to execute their revengeful plans.

Pilate was a politician, first last and always. He seems to have been superstitious as most Romans were. His sense of justice went only to the point where it might cost him his official position. He later was accused of mismanagement of his procuratorship and called to Rome to answer the charges. Before he could defend himself the emperor died and tradition has it that he committed the honorable Roman suicide.

Pilate and the Jews had no love for one another. Once he caused soldiers who were under his command to bring with them ensigns with their images of the emperor. To the Jew this was sacrilege. When he threatened with death those who had come to petition him for the removal of these idolatrous standards, they called his bluff, and he yielded. At another time he used the temple-treasure to pay for an aqueduct. When a crowd complained and rioted, he ordered his soldiers to club them into submission. He felt the Jews were always causing him trouble and every opportunity he had to trouble them he enjoyed.

Here they had come to cause him some more trouble. If he became involved in a local religious dispute things might get out of hand and he would lose his position. Furthermore, he might use this opportunity to vex his enemies.

That they were vexed by his refusal to go along with their murderous scheme is evident from their impudent, sarcastic answer, "If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto

thee." There may even have been the hint of a threat in their answer. In fact, later they do threaten Pilate (Jn. 19:12).

Pilate is at a loss to know why these Jewish rulers would bring one of their rabbis who had fallen into disrepute because of something the rulers felt was heresy. Let these Jews take care of their own religious squabbings. But then, the Jews (Luke 23:2) came up with the accusation that Jesus was "perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king." Such treasonable acts were worthy of death and the Jews were forbidden by their Roman conquerors to execute the sentence of death upon any one.

Now the lawful method of execution for the Jew was death by stoning. Any other death was accursed by the law (Deut. 21:23). At this time, however, the Jews were not allowed to put anyone to death. Jesus had predicted that he would be crucified (Jn. 3:14; Matt. 20:19). His death to atone for man's sin and remove the curse of the law was predicted as one which would come by hanging Him "on a tree," (cf. Gal. 3:13). And so when the Romans were forced to crucify Him on "a tree," it fulfilled prophecy.

Upon hearing the accusation of the Jews Pilate thought it wise to make a thorough examination in case this religious teacher might be planning an insurrection. So, leaving the Jews outside, Pilate entered into the Praetorium and called for Jesus to be brought before him for questioning. The accusations of the Jews were utterly false. Jesus was not perverting the nation but trying to raise its moral standards; He actually taught that tribute was to be paid to Caesar; He refused to be crowned the temporal king of Israel. But Pilate had no knowledge of this.

Hendriksen thinks the emphasis in Pilate's question (v. 33) should be upon "*thou*." In other words, "Are *you* the King of the Jews?" It was inconceivable to Pilate that such an unassuming individual as this could be a king! The Roman concept of king and ruler was one of power, dignity and pride.

Jesus answers Pilate's question with a question of His own, "Are you saying this of your own accord, or have others said it to you about me?" In other words, "Why are you asking concerning my kingship—is it because you also have the concept of it which these Jews have given you or is it because you really want to know for yourself?"

With a note of contempt in his voice for the Jews Pilate answers, "No, I do not see in you any such king as the Jews see or any such danger of insurrection as they see—No, I am not a Jew, am I? But your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me for some reason which they evidently believe is a crime. What have you

done?" We think Pilate knew that the envy of the Jewish rulers over the following this Jesus had gained was part of the reason for His arrest, but he was not sure this was all the prisoner was guilty of.

In His answer, Jesus not only answers all the charges but He witnesses to this Gentile ruler. First He allays Pilate's concern over the political situation when He says, "My kingship is not of this world. If my kingship were of this world my attendants would have been fighting in order to keep me from being handed over to the Jews, but now my kingship does not spring from that source." Jesus makes it plain that He does not seek a kingdom or kingship of the world at all. He seeks no overthrow of the political structure, either Roman or Jewish. In fact, He infers that the Jewish rulers are His enemies as much as any other political group so He is not the king of the Jews as they would think of it. Furthermore, His followers were not allowed to use force to rescue Him. He had no temporal throne, no temporal army and no temporal province. The implication is evident to Pilate that Jesus claims to be some kind of a king. So Pilate's question, "So you are a king?"

Now Jesus has opportunity to witness to Pilate. "Yes," Jesus replies, "you are saying correctly that I am a king, for this royal purpose was I born." But His kingship is His rule in the hearts of men by truth. He, Himself, is the embodiment of the truth which He came to witness. He brought divine truth—supernatural truth—from realms beyond this world. He had brought to this world that which every man needs and most men long for—supernatural truth and supernatural wisdom. And men may live in this truth by listening to His doctrine . . . His doctrine as He taught it and as the apostles taught it later (cf. I Jn. 4:1-6).

Pilate had nothing but contempt and skepticism for such high idealism. "What is truth?" he scoffs. To a Roman politician of his day truth was relative. Their view of what was good and truthful was cynical pragmatism. In other words, whatever worked for their personal benefit or promotion was perfectly justifiable. One has but to study the case histories of some of the Roman Caesars to see this (Nero, Caligula, etc.).

Pilate could plainly see that this Jewish rabbi was just another religious fanatic and He was simply stirring up His own religious leaders to jealousy, but as far as committing any crime worthy of death, He was not guilty. So Pilate went out on the porch to where the Jews were waiting and pronounced Jesus innocent. But the Jews would not hear of it! They began a clamor for His death. The rulers incited the crowd to clamoring also. Meanwhile, Pilate's wife came to him with

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 discernor 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 reproved." 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 themselves 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 *paraskewe* (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 *paraskewe* 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 *chalonk* 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. 23:46)

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 superceded. 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 Arimathaea, 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*.



Pilate made two tries to release Him and saw that politics demanded His death so he washed his hands of the whole matter. WHAT WAS ONE MORE DEAD JEW?? AFTER ALL PEOPLE DIE EVERY DAY. He had many responsibilities of more importance than the squabbles of the Jews. HE JUST HAD OTHER THINGS TO DO MORE IMPORTANT THAN LISTENING TO THIS NAZARENE'S CLAIMS OR BEING TOUCHED BY HIS INNOCENCE. Notice the calloused indifference of the soldiers who methodically nailed him to the cross and then sat down to gamble over his garments. There are multitudes today who look at the Crucified One through eyes of indifference. THEY COULDN'T CARE LESS THAT A MAN DIED SOME 2000 YEARS AGO. THEY ARE TOO BUSY WITH MORE IMPORTANT THINGS SUCH AS POLITICS, PTA, KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES. THEY HAVE SO CALLOUSED THEIR HEARTS AND THEIR EMOTIONS THAT THEY ARE NO LONGER TOUCHED WITH THE LOVE SHOWN IN THE CROSS.

They thought they saw *Weakness*. Pilate said, "Don't you know I have the power of life and death over you . . . and still you say nothing in your own defense?" This Nazarene had even taught the doctrines of weaklings according to them. WHO EVER HEARD OF TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK? GOING THE SECOND MILE? RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL? BUT A LOOK AT ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES SHOWS THIS TO BE THE GREATEST ACT OF COURAGE HISTORY HAS EVER WITNESSED. MY LORD WAS NO WEAKLING NOR COWARD! HE WAS A MAN OF ALL MEN. THOSE WHO STOOD WATCHING HIM WERE THE WEAK, SPINELESS, GROVELING COWARDS. THESE WERE AFRAID TO FACE UP TO THE DEMANDS AND CONSEQUENCES OF HIS TEACHINGS. THE WEAKLINGS CANNOT TURN THE OTHER CHEEK, AND WILL NOT GO THE OTHER MILE.

They thought they saw *Foolishness*. He claimed to be a King, but where was His kingdom? They scoffed at Him as a religious crackpot. He had claimed to be a God . . . but none of their gods had ever acted like He did—HOW FOOLISH! WITH THEIR GODS IT WAS OPPOSITE—MEN DIED FOR THEIR GODS. He claimed to be dying in the place of men. This the wise heathen philosophers could not accept as sensible. The Greek philosophers at Athens scoffed at Paul's preaching the gospel of the cross and resurrection. (Acts 17).

HEAR WHAT MODERN UNBELIEVERS HAVE TO SAY . . . Dressed in the pious robes of ecclesiastical finery, giving the unsuspecting world the impression he is a follower of Christ, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, former head of the World Council of Churches says, "We hear much of the substitutionary theory of the atonement. This theory to me is immoral. If Jesus paid it all or if He is the substitute for me, or if He is the sacrifice for all the sin of the world, then why discuss forgiveness? The books are closed. Another has paid the debt, borne the penalty, I owe nothing. I am absolved. I cannot see forgiveness as predicted upon the act of someone else. It is my sin. I must atone."

The theologians today do not see Jesus dying for our sins. They see him merely dying a tragic death for his misguided conviction that he had a special mission. **IT WAS NO ACCIDENT IT WAS PLANNED BY GOD—READ THE PROPHETS, AND SEE HOW GOD MOVES IN AND THOUGH ALL OF HIS-TORY!**

"If a prince or a king, passing by an execution, should take the condemned man's place and suffer in his place the deed would ring through all history, and be quoted as an amazing instance of heroic pity; and well deserved would be all the words of praise and admiration which would record and eulogize it. Yet, our Lord Jesus did this, and infinitely more for those who were not merely criminals, but enemies to His own throne and person. This is a wonder of wonders. But it meets with small praise. The most of men around us have heard of it, and treated it as of little import; as an idle tale; as a pious legend; as a venerable fable; as an unpractical myth. Even those who know, believe and admire are cold in their emotions with regard to the story of the atonement. Herein is love which ought to set our hearts on fire, and yet we scarcely maintain a smoldering spark of enthusiasm." So said Spurgeon.

"We preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling block and unto Gentiles foolishness . . ." "For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness . . ." **DO YOU STAND WITH THE GENTILES AS YOU BEHOLD THE CROSS ? ? ?**

- II. **WHAT DID THE JEWS SEE AS THEY BEHELD HIM?** To them His crucifixion was a *stumbling block*. What did they cry as they circled the cross? "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross . . . He saved others, himself he cannot save . . ." **THEY STUMBLED AT THE IDEA OF A CRUCIFIED AND HUMILIATED JEWISH MESSIAH.** They had made up their

minds ages ago just what type of Saviour they would accept. THEY WANTED A SOCIAL REFORMER, A POLITICAL LIBERATOR WHO WOULD LEAVE THE RELIGIOUS STATUS QUO ALONE. NEEDLESS TO SAY THERE ARE MULTITUDES OF PEOPLE TODAY WHO STUMBLE AT THE SAME THING. THEY LOOK AT THE CHURCH AS A FAILURE! THEY HAVE TRIED TO USE AND ABUSE THE CHURCH AS A SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENT, TO LIBERATE AND CONTROL POLITICS, BUT THEY WON'T HAVE IT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE SOULS OF MEN!

They stumbled at His *claims to be divine*. I believe Jesus could have gotten by and perhaps even have been honored if He had claimed to be just another prophet. Many would allow Him this much today. But when He claimed to: forgive sins, come before Abraham, be the Messiah, and demanded rule over their hearts THEY CRIED BLASPHEMY . . . THEY COULD NOT ACCEPT ANY TEACHING THAT ASSOCIATED HIM WITH GOD.

MODERN THEOLOGIANs REBEL AT THE IDEA THAT GOD HAS ASSOCIATED HIMSELF WITH MAN OR HAS COME INTO THE REALM OF HISTORY. THEY SAY HE MUST BE WHOLLY TRANSCENDENT—"WHOLLY OTHER." THEY SAY WE LIMIT GOD'S POWER AND HOLINESS WHEN WE SAY THAT HE CAME IN THE FORM OF FLESH. TO THE CONTRARY, TO RELEGATE GOD ONLY TO THE REALM OF THE "WHOLLY OTHER" LIMITS HIS POWER AND HOLINESS. HOW COULD A GOD WHO HAD NO DESIRE TO BE TOUCHED WITH OUR INFIRMITIES, TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO US IN HISTORY, BE RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY AND LOVING ? ? ?

They felt *they were rid of One whose righteousness they could not stand*. As long as He was alive, they could not live with themselves, their consciences cried out against them, AND MEN AND WOMEN TODAY REJECT JESUS IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY BE ABLE TO DO AS THEY PLEASE, HAVING PUT BLINDERS UPON THEIR OWN CONSCIENCES. NO ONE WANTS TO MEASURE HIMSELF BY THE PERFECT STANDARD . . . JESUS CHRIST. WHEN HIS PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS SHOWS US OUR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, WE TRY TO HIDE OURSELVES IN SOME WAY OR AN-

OTHER. USUALLY BY "COMPARING OURSELVES WITH OURSELVES."

They saw in the *Crucified One their scapegoat*. Their High Priest had said, "It is expedient that one should die for the nation, lest the Romans come and take away our nation and our place." IS HE NOT BEING USED AS A SCAPEGOAT TODAY? SOME HAVE ACCEPTED CHRIST BUT, UPON FINDING THEY CAN'T HAVE HIM AND THE WORLD TOO, THEY FALL AWAY AND "CRUCIFY AFRESH THE SON OF GOD, BY COUNTING THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHEREWITH THEY WERE SANCTIFIED AN UNHOLY THING." cf. also Heb. 6:1-6. AND THEN WHAT DO THEY DO? THEY USE HIS CHURCH AND HIS SAINTS AS THEIR EXCUSE FOR BACKSLIDING. THEY HARP ON THE HYPOCRITES . . . OR THEY HARP ON THE IDEA THAT CHRISTIANS ARE TOO UNCOMPROMISING, TOO INTOLERANT, FORGETTING JESUS HIMSELF SAID THERE ARE ONLY TWO WAYS—TWO CLASSES OF HUMANITY, SAVED AND LOST. WHERE DO YOU STAND TODAY AND BEHOLD THE CRUCIFIED ONE? ARE YOU WITH THE JEWS? IF YOU ARE A BACKSLIDER, YOU ARE WITH THEM.

- III. WHAT DO BELIEVERS BEHOLD? One of the thieves beheld the Son of God and in faith and trust committed His soul to Him. We see *sin condemned in the flesh*. Jesus came in the flesh and lived a sinless life in the flesh, tempted in all points like as we are and WON THE VICTORY OVER SIN AND BECAME THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE FOR OUR SINS! He fulfilled the requirements of the law of God, even the sentence and penalty of the law which says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die . . ."

*We see there the propitiation for our sin.* WE BEHOLD JESUS AS HE SUFFERED THE AGONY OF THE SECOND DEATH FOR US. AND THEN WE READ AS HE HIMSELF REVEALS FROM HEAVEN TO JOHN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION—THAT SUCH AS ARE BELIEVERS, OVER THEM THE SECOND DEATH HATH NO POWER.

We see God manifesting Himself as being *Just and the Justifier*. God decreed in His law that sin *must* be punished. If He went back on His word, He would be a powerless, unjust God. BUT HOW CAN HE HAVE LOVE AND SAVE MEN AND STILL PUNISH SIN? HE ACCOMPLISHED IT ALL IN THE CROSS OF

CALVARY WHERE HE PUNISHED SIN AND SAVED MAN THROUGH JESUS CHRIST!

*We see sin as it was never shown before* in all of its evilness. As a sinner man is a slave who must be redeemed, an enemy who must be reconciled, a dead corpse which must be resurrected and given new life, a captive whose powerful oppressors must be overthrown and a criminal who must be justified. WE SEE THE HOLY AND PERFECT HATE WHICH GOD HAS FOR SIN IN THE GIVING OF THE LIFE OF HIS SON.

*We see the love and power of God manifested.* The word of the cross may be foolishness to some. "BUT TO THOSE WHO ARE BEING SAVED IT IS BOTH THE POWER AND THE WISDOM OF GOD . . ." GOD'S INFINITE WISDOM KNEW THAT THE CROSS WOULD BE THE ONLY WAY TO DRAW MEN UNTO HIM IN SINCERE FAITH. "And I, if I will be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friend." "For the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts . . . for while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly . . ." A man may decide many things in this life simply by human reason and knowledge. BUT WHEN IT COMES TO THE SALVATION OF HIS SOUL, HE MUST HAVE A POWER THAT IS BEYOND HUMAN REASON. THAT POWER IS PROVIDED IN THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. IT IS GOD'S DIVINE SEAL. GOD, DESIRING TO SWEAR WITH AN OATH, COULD SWEAR BY NONE GREATER THAN HIMSELF, SO HE SEALED HIS PROMISE BY SIGNING HIS OATH IN HIS OWN BLOOD . . . THE BLOOD OF HIS SON UPON THE CROSS . . .

#### *Conclusion*

YOU SAY, I WANT SOME ASSURANCE . . . I WANT SOME AUTHORITY . . . I WANT SOME POWER BEHIND ANY PROMISES OF SALVATION. THERE IT IS IN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. His death was sufficient for your sins. His resurrection is power for your new life. The entire New Testament says it is so. YOU MAY BECOME A NEW CREATURE . . . YOU MAY HAVE YOUR SINS BLOTTED OUT. YOU MAY HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT COME AND LIVE WITH YOU.

HOW DO YOU CONTACT THIS DEATH? By faith? YES, BUT MORE! For contacting His death comprehends all of our obedience. By simply repenting? YES, BUT MORE! By prayer? YES,

BUT MORE! By making public confession of faith? YES, BUT MORE. IT IS FULL AND COMPLETE OBEDIENCE. Rom. 6 . . . "We are baptized *into his death*; planted together with Him . . ." Col. 2 . . . "We are buried with Him in baptism." IT IS HERE THAT THE FINAL ACT IN OUR CONTACTING THE DEATH TAKES PLACE.

HOW DO YOU LOOK UPON THE CRUCIFIED ONE THIS EVENING? I pray with all my soul that you look with faith trusting and seeking to obey Him in all things. "He has become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Remember what He told Nicodemus. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life." John 3:13

YOU KNOW THE ACCOUNT OF THE ISRAELITES AND THE SERPENT OF BRONZE ON THE STAFF . . . THOSE BITTEN OF THE FIERY SERPENTS WERE CURED WHEN THEY LOOKED, IN FAITH AND OBEDIENCE, UPON THE BRONZE SERPENT LIFTED UP THERE IN THE WILDERNESS. BUT IF THEY DELAYED . . . PROCRASTINATED IN UNBELIEF, THEY DIED!

There was an old man converted at the age of 68. One day he sat crying as the minister was preaching on the text, "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Later, with tears streaming down his cheeks, he approached the preacher. The preacher asked him what was the matter . . . "Oh, sir that text—it is true!" he replied.

"I did not know the Lord until I was 68. I stopped at my son's home this morning and said, 'Come on son, and go with me to church this morning . . . and he laughed as he replied, 'No, Dad, I've got plenty of time; I'll wait until I am 68 to get religion, like you did.'"

"I walked on down the street until I came upon my grandchildren playing and said, 'Come on kids, let's go down to Bible School this morning.' "No, they replied, we are busy, Grandpa; we will wait until we are old to start going to Sunday School and church like you did."

"Sir, he said to the preacher, I would give my right arm if I could live my life over."

Napoleon, the little general, paced the floor of his tent. Half of his troops had been destroyed and the battle yet raged. A messenger rushed in with the shout, "Tidings, sire, You have won the victory."

"Yes, replied Napoleon quietly, I have won the victory but another such victory would cost me my kingdom." YOU MAY HAVE WON THE VICTORY OVER THE SERMON: YOU MAY HAVE WON THE VICTORY OVER CONSCIENCE, OVER PRAYERS OF

MOTHER, OVER PLEADINGS OF YOUR WIFE, BUT ANOTHER SUCH "VICTORY" MAY COST YOU YOUR ETERNAL SOUL!

### CHAPTER TWENTY

"My Lord and my God!" This might well be the theme of this chapter. It records the climactic "sign" of a book filled with records of lesser "signs." And, as John adds in his postscript, Jesus did many other "signs" in the presence of His followers but John and the other gospel writers have witnessed and recorded enough supernatural signs to lead men to believe in His deity (cf. Jn. 20:30-31). The physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead, as He Himself foretold, was the apex of all His signs. This is the *one* event in the life of Jesus Christ which gives credence, meaning and relevance to all else He said or did! One is tempted to wax eloquent for page upon page concerning this event but we believe Dr. Merrill C. Tenney, Dean of the Graduate School, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, has summarized it so well we prefer to quote from his book, "The Reality of the Resurrection" here:

"... the resurrection of Christ . . . marks the intersection of the temporal and eternal worlds, of material existence and spiritual life. Because the event is supernatural, it expresses the essence of God's revelation; because it is historical, it is a genuine part of human experience. The resurrection is a permanent witness to the love, power, holiness, and redemptive purpose of God and is also a fact which must be accepted as part of history. It cannot be dismissed as a speculative venture of the intellect which is possibly, but not necessarily, true.

For this reason the resurrection is perpetually relevant to the intellectual and spiritual problems of the world. The event provides a foundation for faith; its imagery contains the framework for a new life . . . By this one great fact all theology can be integrated. Revelation, incarnation, redemption, sanctification, and eschatology reach their fullest development in the demonstration of the divine triumph over death."

We feel compelled to repeat here some quotations by famous men showing their convictions concerning the resurrection of Jesus.

Warfield said, "The resurrection of Christ is a fact, an external occurrence within the cognizance of man, to be established by other testimonies and yet which is the cardinal doctrine of our system: on it all other doctrines hang."

Lyndhurst (famous British jurist) said, "I know pretty well what evidence is; and, I tell you, such evidence as that for the Resurrection has never broken down yet."

William Lyon Phelps (Yale) said, "Our faith in God, in Christ, in life itself, is based on the resurrection; for as Paul said, if Christ be not risen from the dead then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

Theodosius Harnack said, "Where you stand with regard to the fact of the Resurrection is in my eyes no longer Christian theology. To me Christianity stands or falls with the Resurrection."

Tenney said, "The resurrection demands the attention of those who contemplate the basic problems of death and life, for it has thrust into them a new factor which must be included in evaluating the whole of human experience. Any attempt to explain the process of history will be incomplete without it. The resurrection is permanently relevant to any scheme of thought."

John omits some of the appearances of the resurrected Jesus. Even the Synoptics do not include them all. Acts and the epistles (esp. I Corinthians 15) include a few of the appearances omitted by the gospels. In fact, Acts 1:3 informs us that He "also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God:" by which we realize many of the appearances Jesus made to His disciples may not be recorded at all!

Generally speaking the Gospels record the *fact* of His resurrection; the Epistles show the *theological* and *experiential* implications of it; and Acts records the *results* or fruits of it.

We have included at the end of this chapter a topical sermon and a special study on the resurrection of Christ. We would like to offer here a short bibliography of material helpful in a study of the resurrection of Christ.

1. The Certainty and Importance of the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, by R. A. Torrey, mimeographed essay available from O.B.C. Bookstore
2. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ—Its Proof and Significance, by A. Dale Crain, mimeographed essay available from O.B.C. Bookstore
3. The Reality of The Resurrection, by Merrill C. Tenney, pub. Harper & Row
4. Therefore Stand, by Wilbur Smith (Chapter 8), pub. W. A. Wilde Co.
5. The Basis of Christian Faith, by Floyd E. Hamilton (Chapter 17), pub. Harper & Row.

We are now prepared to continue our presentation of the outline 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

3. The Victorious Resurrection, 20:1-31

a. The Empty Tomb, 20:1-10

b. The Appearance to Mary, 20:11-18

c. The Appearance to Ten Disciples, 20:19-25

d. The Appearance to Thomas, 20:26-29

e. The Aim of the Gospel, 20:30-31

We have chosen to continue presenting a harmony of all the gospel accounts rather than a paraphrase. We have followed a harmony of the Appearances prepared by Russell B. Watts, a former student at Ozark Bible College, who referred to works by J. W. McGarvey, R.C. Foster, H. H. Halley, S. J. Andrews and A. C. Wieand.

### THE EMPTY TOMB

*Text:* 20:1-10

1 Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb.

2 She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb.

4 And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb;

5 and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in.

6 Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying,

7 and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself.

8 Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

### *Queries*

- a. Why did Mary think someone had taken the body of Jesus?
- b. What did the disciple "believe" (v. 8)?
- c. Why did the disciples go to their own home?

*Paraphrase (Harmony)*

Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early while it was yet dark, on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when the sun was risen, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they were saying among themselves, who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb?

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And looking up, they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great. And they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, while they were perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel: and as they were affrighted and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

And he saith, Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold, the place where they laid him! He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out, and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them: and they said nothing to anyone; for they were afraid.

Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She runneth therefore and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen clothes lying; yet entered he not in. Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin,

that was upon his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but rolled up in a place by itself. Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

### *Summary*

Several of the devout women followers of Jesus come to anoint His body with spices. They witness the rolling away of the stone by the angel and enter the tomb to find the body of Jesus gone. They all flee in fear and trembling and only Mary Magdalene has the presence of mind to go and tell Peter and John who in turn run to the tomb and find the burial cloths but the body of Jesus gone. Although perplexed and unable to fathom the meaning of the empty tomb there seems to be a spark of faith ignited in the breast of John.

### *Comment*

On the sabbath day following the crucifixion of Jesus and after the burial of His body by Joseph and Nicodemus, the Pharisees and chief priests petition Pilate to make sure that nothing shall happen to cause the disappearance of the body of Jesus. They remembered His teaching that He would rise from the dead. Pilate commanded the official seal of the Roman government to be put across the stone door of the tomb and a guard of Roman soldiers to be placed before the tomb and to watch until after the third day at least, (cf. Matt. 27:62-66). In spite of all the miracles Jesus had performed, including raising the dead Lazarus from the tomb, of which these Pharisees and priests had knowledge still they thought they had at last defeated the Nazarene. If, as the text in Matthew seems to indicate, these rulers went to Pilate on Saturday morning they violated the sanctity of the Sabbath—one of the very charges they brought against Jesus!

The followers of Jesus would not desecrate the Sabbath and waited therefore until early in the morning of the third day to come to the tomb. The women began their journey to the tomb in the first hours of the morning of the first day of the week just when the midnight darkness of night is beginning to fade away and the dawn is beginning to break—even before the sun is visible (S. J. Andrews places the time at about 4:45-5:00 a.m.).

Whether the women were present when the angel rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb is not certain. They were concerned as they made their journey toward the tomb as to how they were going to gain entrance to anoint His body since the stone door was far too heavy for them to roll away.

The women then entered the tomb and seeing the body gone they were puzzled and distraught. The angel gave them the first "glad tidings;" "He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said . . . go tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee."

Mary Magdalene either did not hear the angel's message or she did not even stay to enter the tomb with the other women but ran to tell Peter and John immediately upon seeing the stone rolled away. She was there with the other women for she uses the pronoun *we* when telling the news to Peter and John (20:2). Mary sobs out the dreadful picture as she has surmised it from just seeing the tomb's entrance violated—"They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him." Peter and John do not wait for another word but bolt out of the house on a dead run for the garden and the tomb. Meanwhile, wild with joy and awesome fear the other women flee the tomb to tell the disciples the message of the angels. Why they do not meet Peter and John we are not told. McGarvey harmonizes: "They have scarcely left the spot, when the swift-footed John bounds up to the open door, stoops down and looks with eagerness into the vacant tomb. The impetuous Peter follows hard after, rushes past his companion into the sepulchre, and gazes around. They both for a moment look thoughtfully at the napkin lying here and the linen clothes lying yonder, then they solemnly walk away."

Mary evidently did not hear what the other women heard from the angels. Considering the hateful viciousness of the enemies of Jesus she may have surmized that these enemies had stolen the body in order to desecrate it even more or to use it to capture His followers.

Peter, an older and larger man than John was not able to run as fast as the younger John, so John outran him to the tomb. But John hesitated at the entrance to the tomb while Peter rushed on into the tomb. The fact that the grave clothes were so orderly laid aside was a sign of lack of haste. The very fact that the linen bandages were there at all infers that the body was not taken by grave robbers in haste for they would have little need to lay aside the cloths in such a manner.

What did the disciple John believe after entering the tomb and observing the neatly placed grave cloths. Did what he saw there satisfy him entirely? Was he so credulous a person that in this moment he wanted so desperately to believe he was able from the empty tomb and the linen cloths to come to a "resurrection faith" without any further evidence? We know this is not so for the disciples were incredulous—they would not believe at first. They were hard-headed men who refused to believe that He was raised from the dead, except on more

evidence than the report of the women (cf. Luke 24:11, 41). Thomas was more stubborn than all the rest requiring to see the nail prints in the Master's hands before believing. There does seem, however, to be a spark of faith ignited in the heart of John here. Westcott puts it this way, "The use of the word (believed) . . . points to the calm patient acceptance of a mystery as yet in part inexplicable with full confidence in the divine love . . . indicating something still to be more fully shown, and the apostle waited in trustful expectation for the interpretation."

Whatever the faint glimmer of hope within the apostle's breast it was not built upon any knowledge of the Old Testament prophecies and promises concerning the resurrection of the Messiah (20:9) or any evidence other than the empty tomb. It seems strange that the disciples did not remember all the many prophecies Jesus Himself had made concerning His resurrection! The women believed on this basis (cf. Luke 24:1-11). Perhaps the disciples were too busy with seeking places in the kingdom when Jesus made His prophecies to remember them or their Jewish prejudices as to the nature of the Messiah caused them to misunderstand or count His prophecies of no significance.

There may have been hope (cf. Luke 24:19-21) but they would not believe until they had actual concrete evidence. The talk of the women seemed to them an "idle tale" (Lk. 24:11). So, with the body of the Master gone they could hope but they could do little else by remaining at the empty tomb so they returned to their dwelling in Jerusalem.

While we are thinking about the empty tomb let us consider some of the attempts of the skeptics to supply an answer to the fact of the empty tomb. One thing is certain, the tomb was empty. The record states that even the enemies of Jesus testified to His certain death and the empty tomb. As Wilbur Smith puts it, "Something happened to the body of Jesus when it was taken down from the cross. The New Testament testifies that it was placed in a tomb . . . On Sunday morning, for one reason or another, that tomb was empty, as everyone admits—Christian, unbeliever, disciple, scoffer, Jew and Gentile, conservative, and modernist." Notice here what the historical record witnesses as to the empty tomb: (a) The women testify to it being empty; (b) Peter and John found the tomb empty; (c) The guards appointed to watch the tomb came and reported the tomb was empty; (d) The Sanhedrin did not even so much as question the story of the soldiers or go and see for themselves but concocted a lie that the soldiers were to repeat in order to offer an explanation for the empty tomb!

Consider this first attempt by the enemies of Christ to explain the

absence of His body from the tomb: (a) It was a story spread by bribery; (b) It was ridiculous—how could the soldiers *know* what happened to the body if they were asleep! (c) The disciples would not steal the body—they would not want to risk further antagonism of the Roman soldiers and other authorities and they had absolutely no reason for stealing the body and furthermore their subsequent lives makes such an allegedly diabolical plot unthinkable!

In considering the other attempts to explain the empty tomb we have borrowed from both A. Dale Crain's essay and "Therefore Stand," by Wilbur Smith. There is a theory that the body of Jesus was stolen by His friends (Joseph, Nicodemus and the disciples). There is positively no evidence that this was done. If His friends did remove the body, why did the Sanhedrin have to bribe the soldiers to tell it. Another skeptical theory is that the enemies of Jesus stole the body. But what is the motive for this?! Certainly there could be no greater help to the cause of His enemies than to keep the body *in* the tomb! Furthermore, if they had removed it and hidden it, why did they not produce His body when the apostles began to preach His resurrection in the very courts of the temple?! That would have stopped Christianity for good!

There is a theory that the women went to the wrong tomb. Could anyone forget within a few short hours where a precious loved one had been buried? If the women went to the wrong tomb then the angels were in the wrong tomb and Peter and John went to the wrong tomb! Furthermore, this was not one tomb among many in a public burial ground but was in a garden, belonging to a rich man, hewn out of solid rock, near the place of His crucifixion, with guards and a Roman seal upon it! And the women didn't know which one it was—or forgot?? This is so ridiculous a theory that even many skeptics ridicule it! Another theory is called the "Swoon Theory." According to this theory Jesus did not actually die, but merely fainted away and was revived by the coolness of the damp tomb and rose up and rolled away the stone Himself. How could anyone who had endured physically what Jesus had endured revive Himself in some seventy-two hours enough to roll away a stone which possibly five women could not move?! He had been beaten to the point of fainting with the Roman scourge; He had not had rest for two nights; He had been crucified and left to hang for six hours; His side had been pierced and a great amount of His blood had flowed from the gaping wound; He had been wrapped and bound in grave cloths. This theory makes the record a complete and deliberate contradiction and lie for the record says that even Pilate was satisfied that Jesus was dead. If Christ did merely swoon then the apostles are liars and Christ is the greatest fraud the world has ever

known. There is a theory called the "Vision Theory" which explains the resurrection as a supernatural but ephemeral vision given to the apostles and women and others. If the appearances of Christ were not bodily appearances why do the gospel writers make it so plain that Christ showed the nail prints in His hands and the wound in His side—why did He eat with the disciples?! There is the "Optical Illusion" theory which says that a ghost-like appearance of Jesus was produced in some natural way. This would not explain the empty tomb at all. Furthermore, Jesus made enough appearances, both night and day, to enough people, in such close proximity to the subjects that it would be impossible to defraud all those to whom He appeared! Finally, there is the "Hallucination" theory which relegates the claimed appearances to the realm of subjective apparitions of the imagination. Still, we have the record of the empty tomb—was that a hallucination too!? St. Paul claims that He appeared to over five hundred people at once—are we then to suppose over five hundred identical, individual, subjective hallucinations? Besides the Lord made varied appearances over a period of forty days in many widely separated places to all types of people (even to one of His enemies, Saul of Tarsus). The empty tomb makes the hallucination theory an absurdity.

The factual and historical evidence for the empty tomb is so overwhelming that skeptical scholars are baffled as to how to explain this phenomenon. One skeptic has said, "The empty tomb must be thought out on doctrinal, not historical or critical grounds." The relevance of the resurrection and its meaning may be theological, but the facts surrounding the resurrection such as the empty tomb and the appearances of Jesus are strictly historical matters. The people are real people; the places are geographically definite, the enemies were not mythical beings.

### *Quiz*

1. What happened after the burial of the body of Jesus by Joseph and Nicodemus?
2. When did the women come to the tomb? Day and time?
3. Why, when the angel told the women Christ had risen, did Mary Magdalene say to the disciples, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb"?
4. What did John "believe" (v. 8)? What is the meaning of v. 9?
5. Refute the story explaining the empty tomb spread by the soldiers.
6. Give five other theories of the skeptics and refute them.
7. The meaning of the resurrection is theological but what of the facts surrounding the account of the resurrection?

## THE APPEARANCE TO MARY

*Text: 20:11-18*

11 But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb;

12 and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher.

17 Jesus saith to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.

18 Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and that he had said these things unto her.

*Queries*

- a. Why did Mary not recognize Jesus when she saw Him?
- b. How did she recognize Him at His calling her name?
- c. Why did Jesus say, "Touch me not"?

*Paraphrase (Harmony)*

But Mary stood just outside the entrance to the tomb weeping alone in the garden. And while she was continuing to weep she stooped and peered into the tomb and there she saw two angels sitting where the body of Jesus had lain—one at the head and one at the foot. The angels spoke unto her saying, woman, Why are you weeping? She replied, Because they have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have placed His body. Then she turned and, without realizing that it was Jesus, noticed him standing near-by. Jesus asked her, Woman, why are you weeping—whom are you seeking? Supposing him to be the gardener, she plead with him, Sir, if you have taken him from the tomb, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus called her name gently, Mary! Startled, she turned and spoke to him in Hebrew, saying, Rabboni! Teacher! Jesus restrained her, saying,



Do not hold on to me now. I have not gone up to the Father yet. Go and tell my brethren that I am soon going to return to my Father and your Father, my God and your God. And so Mary Magdalene told the disciples, I have seen the Lord and she told them what Jesus had said to her.

### *Summary*

Jesus appears to the weeping Mary Magdalene. Overcome with joy she makes a move as if to fall at His feet and cling to Him. He cautions her that He has not made His final return to their midst but must soon ascend to the Father and that she is to go and witness to His resurrection.

### *Comment*

Peter and John have left the garden. Mary Magdalene has returned to the garden tomb alone. She evidently did not meet the other women and hear from them what the angels have said concerning His resurrection. Now that she has time to contemplate the awfulness of her suspicions she bursts into tears. "They" have taken his body. Just who she suspects we do not know—perhaps she thinks the Jews have taken His body. She stoops and looks in the tomb to confirm her suspicions. For the first time she sees the angels and they begin to converse with her about her sorrow. Mary is still persuaded that the body of Jesus has been taken. As she is answering the angels there is perhaps a sound in the garden which causes her to turn and see the figure of a man approaching. The light was still dim and there may have been an early morning fog and Mary's eyes were blurred with tears. She did not recognize the man. He began to ask her her reason for being in the garden. He wanted to know the reason for her sorrow. What other man would be there at that hour and be questioning her as to her presence except the gardener. Supposing him to be the gardener she assumed he would know if the body had been removed and so she questions him.

Jesus spoke her name. It would be in that gentle but firm tone which she knew so well. Startled and surprised with joy and relief, she immediately recognizes Him and cries out, "Rabboni!" The word means "Teacher," or "Great Teacher." It is a title of profound respect among the Hebrews. Only seven great leaders of the Jews have ever been given the title (among whom were Gamaliel I and Gamaliel II). As she cried out "Great Teacher," she made a movement as if to fall at His feet and cling to Him. The Greek word *baptesthai* is used of that clinging to the knees or feet which was adopted by suppliants.

Jesus forbade her doing so saying, "Do not hold to me." Why did Jesus forbid her to do so? Not because it was indecent; nor because

she wanted to test the reality of His resurrection for He did not forbid Thomas such a test; nor because her doing so would in some mystic way disturb the process of glorification; but because He wanted Mary (and the other disciples later) to understand that this was not His permanent return to visible fellowship with His disciples. He had promised His disciples to "return in a little while" (Jn. 16:16) and perhaps Mary felt that the little while was over and He was now to be visibly with them forevermore. Hendriksen paraphrases thusly, "Do not think, Mary, that by grasping hold of me so firmly you can keep me always with you. That uninterrupted fellowship for which you yearn must wait until I have ascended to be forever with the Father." Before the visible fellowship is restored Jesus must ascend to the Father for His Highpriestly work ("the little while") (cf. also Acts 3:19-26).

Then Jesus commissions Mary Magdalene to go and tell the disciples, not specifically of His resurrection as the angels commissioned the other women, but Mary is to tell them that Jesus is ascending (present tense) unto the Father. Although He will yet appear for forty days He is in the act of ascending to the Father.

Jesus now calls the disciples by a new name. He has called them "children," "sheep," "disciples," "friends," "branches," and other names but now He calls them "brothers!" This new relationship has a significant bearing on His commission to Mary. She is to tell the "brothers" that Jesus, the elder brother, is going up to be with *His* Father and *their* Father, *His* God and *their* God! (cf. Heb. 2:5-18).

And so Mary, went with all speed, to tell the disciples as they mourned and wept (cf. Mk. 16:10-11) just what Jesus had told her to tell. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her they would not believe it. The words seemed as an idle tale to them (cf. Lk. 24:9-11).

### Quiz

1. Why did Mary think Jesus was the gardener?
2. What does the word "Rabboni" mean?
3. Did Jesus say, "Touch me not?" What did He actually say?
4. Why did Jesus forbid Mary to cling to His feet?
5. What new relationship between Jesus and the disciples is emphasized?
6. What did Mary Magdalene have to tell the disciples that was different from the message of the other women?

### THE APPEARANCE TO TEN DISCIPLES

#### *Text: 20:19-25*

19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were,

for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

20 And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord.

21 Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit:

23 whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

### *Queries*

- a. Why did Jesus show them His hands and His side?
- b. What is the significance of the commission by Jesus in v. 21?
- c. Does v. 23 teach that the apostles were the successors to the sacerdotal authority of Jesus in right to forgive men their sins?

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city, and told unto the chief priests all the things that were come to pass. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave much money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continueth until this day.

And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was threescore furlongs from Jerusalem. And they communed with each other of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk? And they stood still, looking sad. And one of them, named Cleopas, answering said unto him, Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he who would redeem Israel. Yea and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having

been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go further. And they constrained him, saying; Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in to abide with them. And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread and blessed; and breaking it he gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Was our not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread, and that he appeared to Cephas.

When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto the, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having.

And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit; whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it, and ate before them.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them

when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

### *Summary*

The Lord, after appearing to Mary Magdalene and the other women, chooses to manifest His resurrected glory to two of His disciples on the way to Emmaus. Overjoyed with their experience they return to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples. Jesus then appears before all the disciples except Thomas, commissions them, empowers them and eats with them.

### *Comment*

Between the appearance to the women and the appearance to the ten disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem, Jesus appeared to two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus. These two disciples were despondent at the death of Jesus because all their glorious Messianic hopes had died, they thought, with Him there on Golgotha's brow. They had heard rumors that He was alive—His tomb was empty—but they had not seen Him. Perhaps these disciples were going to Emmaus to rest, get away from all the uproar in Jerusalem, and to think over the events of the last few days. Emmaus was probably only 7 or 8 miles from Jerusalem. Jesus met them or overtook them and walked on with them to Emmaus but they did not recognize Him . . . "their eyes were holden." Barnes notes that it was not some miraculous veiling of their own eyes that occurred but that He appeared to them in a form they were not used to seeing (cf. Mark 16:12) and they were not expecting to see Him anyway and they simply did not recognize Him as He walked and talked with them. As He began to remind them of the Old Testament Messianic prophecies and apply them to Himself, their hearts began to "burn within them." And then, as they were eating with Him, the familiarity of it all opened their eyes and they recognized Him. And they arose that very hour and hurried back to Jerusalem to report to the rest of that little band of despondent disciples. Just who these two disciples are we are not certain. One was Cleopas and the other seems to be most probably, Peter. There are some commentators who believe the second disciple was Luke because of the fact that only Luke records the event and his record has the flavor of that of an eyewitness. Just how Jesus vanished out of their sight is not certain either. The account seems to indicate that it was a miraculous "vanishing." This would be in keeping with His miraculous entrance into a room which had the doors shut to outsiders.

In John 20:19 we notice a special emphasis on "the first day of the

week." John might just as well have said, "Now when it was the evening of the first day." But he emphasizes by saying, "Now when it was evening of *that* day, the first of the week." The first day of the week, being the day of Christ's resurrection, is the chief of days, the day of Christian worship (cf. Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:2; Lk. 24:1; Jn. 20:1; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10).

There was something about the sudden appearance of Jesus in their midst where they were gathered on that evening that must have been beyond natural for the disciples were "terrified and affrighted." John seems to record that the doors were "fastened" to show some significant difference regarding the properties of the risen body of Jesus. The idiom of the Greek indicates that the Lord's appearance in their midst was with breath taking suddenness and completely unexpected. They had "fastened" the doors on account of their fear of the Jews. Their Master had been slain and there may have been word rumored that the Sanhedrin was looking now for the disciples of the Nazarene to condemn them also.

Jesus was suddenly in their midst, speaking in a calm and soothing manner, "Peace be unto you." It was a familiar phrase for He had used it often in addressing His disciples. The disciples were terrified believing they were beholding one who had returned from the unseen realm of the dead—a spirit, Luke tells us. But immediately Jesus held forth His hands and showed His feet which were pierced with the prints of the nails. He commands, "handle me, and see!" To dispel their doubts and fears He bids them prove to themselves beyond any doubt that the One in their midst is the same One with whom they walked and talked the last three years.

This is one of the unique features of the revelation of Jehovah-God, whether that revelation be in the Old Testament, in the Incarnate Word, or in that revelation given by the apostles—the invitation, yea, the command, to test and prove the credibility and authenticity and divine nature of such a revelation. No other religion has ever been so insistent, *that its claims be tested and verified and none has ever offered* such undisputable evidence, for such verification. The disciples were not asked to place their trust in some mystic philosophy, nor in imaginative man-made gods—they were given empirically verifiable evidence for the supernaturalness of Christ. The resurrection of Christ was not only His spirit but His body also.

But how, if Christ was resurrected in a body, was He able to be suddenly in their midst if the doors were "fastened." We like the conclusion given by Hendriksen, "Scripture gives no answer. Some day we'll understand."

Our text here in John does not say whether they "handled" Him or not. Luke (Lk. 24:41) seems to indicate that they did not but "still disbelieved for joy, and wondered" until He ate the broiled fish with them. Then they were glad and rejoiced.

So Jesus said again, Peace be unto you. Then He gives them their commission: "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." There is more than a command here—there is also a warning and a promise. Just as the great Apostle, Jesus, was sent to preach the will of God and to be persecuted and suffer for His glory, even so the apostles were sent to preach and be persecuted for His glory. They were to "fellowship His sufferings" (Phil. 3:10). There is also the promise of victory. They would also know "the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10). They were to receive a divine commission and they were to be given divine credentials through the power to work miracles (cf. Heb. 2:4).

"So send I you, to labor unrewarded

To serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown,

To bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing,

So send I you, to toil for me alone

Verse 23 has long been a problem. The Roman Catholic Church has used this verse to teach that the so-called successors of the apostles (the popes and priests) have the authority to forgive men of their sins. Such a doctrine is technically called "absolution." Not even the apostles themselves had any authority of their own to grant absolution—the forgiveness of sins. One need only to turn to Acts 8:14-24 to find one example of an apostle being asked to grant absolution in the case of a man confessing his sin. The answer of the apostle Peter is, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." This passage in John 20:23 does not grant the apostles the power of absolution. The verbs *apheontai* (they are forgiven) and *kekratentai* (they are retained) of this verse are in the perfect tense in the Greek. Now the perfect tense means "an action having been completed in past time with a continuing result." Literally translated verse 23 would read, "whose soever sins ye forgive, they have already been forgiven them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they have already been retained." It is very interesting indeed that in the other two instances where Jesus similarly commissioned the disciples (Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:18) the verbs are also in the perfect tense! There the verbs are *dedemena* (has already been bound) and *lelumena* (has already been loosed).

In founding the church, declaring the will of God and preaching the gospel of repentance and remission of sins by the blood of Christ and men's obedience to the gospel, the apostles merely declared on

what terms, and to what people God extended forgiveness of sins. What ever they preached on earth had already been decided in heaven. Only God can forgive sins. The apostles and all who have preached since are merely heralds of the covenant which has already been ratified, once for all, in heaven.

The apostles were given here by Jesus a symbolic prophecy of the special baptism of the Holy Spirit when He "breathed." The literal baptism of the Spirit would come upon them on the day of Pentecost and would empower them with miraculous power in order to confirm the already-ratified message which they were to preach afterward. The Holy Spirit did not give them any inherent authority to grant absolution of sin.

### *Quiz*

1. How does John put emphasis on the "first day of the week?"
2. How did Jesus get into the room of the doors were "fastened?"
3. What, according to Luke, did Jesus say when He showed them His hands and His feet?
4. What all did Jesus mean when He said, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you?"
5. Show how verse 23 does not give the apostles or any other mortals the right to forgive men their sins.

### THE APPEARANCE TO THOMAS

*Text: 20:26-29*

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28 Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

### *Queries*

- a. Why did Jesus think it necessary to make a special appearance for Thomas' sake?
- b. Why are they who have not seen and yet have believed said to be "blessed?"

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hard-



ness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou has believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

### Summary

Thomas, who was absent at the Lord's first appearance to the disciples, was told of His appearance insists upon more proof. The Lord Himself appears especially for Thomas. All Thomas' doubts flee.

### Comment

Thomas, the twin, was absent at the first meeting together of the disciples. Why he was absent we are not told. Perhaps he was investigating further the reports of the women about the empty tomb. Immediately after the Lord's appearance to the "Twelve" (ten disciples in all) that first Sunday night, they went as a body and found Thomas and told him excitedly, "We have seen the Lord!" (v. 24). But for some reason, known only to Thomas, he could not satisfy the despondent longing of his own heart with just their testimony—*he had to see for himself!* If it is fair to characterize Thomas from two previous statements of his (Jn. 11:16; 14:5), we may think of him as one who tends to be pessimistic—to see the dark side. It was not that Thomas was a confirmed agnostic or skeptic—he believed readily enough when there was enough evidence to sweep away his natural inclination to despondency. Actually, Thomas was no more a "doubter" than the other ten disciples—he was just not at the right place at the right time. The other ten disciples were filled with the same despondent doubt (even though they had the testimony of the women and the two back from Emmaus) until Jesus appeared to them that first Sunday evening. Thomas simply demands the same evidence which was necessary for the other ten to overcome their doubts. Foster says, "The gradual development of their faith and the fact that fear, doubt, misunderstanding, and the obstinate insistence upon absolutely indubitable evidence caused them to be slow to believe but it adds to the power of their testimony as witnesses."

The disciples have not left Jerusalem and gone into Galilee as the resurrected Lord has commanded them through the women (cf. Lk.

24:3-8; Mk. 16:2-8) and another week has elapsed according to 20:26. As Hendriksen points out John is "employing the inclusive method of time-computation." Thus "after eight days" would be the next Sunday evening when the disciples had gathered together again—probably in the same place as on the previous Sunday evening. Again the doors were "fastened." But again Jesus appeared suddenly and stood in the midst of them. Again He calmed their beating hearts with, "Peace be unto you."

It is worthy of note that Jesus has, in all His appearances at this time, appeared only on the first day of the week. There can be little doubt that He did it to especially consecrate and dedicate this day in the minds of the apostles. We notice also that the disciples have not yet come to that boldness and courageousness of faith which they later knew (Acts 4:13; 4:19-20; 5:29). They still have the doors "shut" for fear of the Jews.

Jesus does not waste any time but gets immediately to the point of this appearance. He commands Thomas to come forward and "touch and see and believe." The question is always asked, "Did Thomas actually touch His hands?" In all probability he did! (cf. Lk. 24:39; I Jn. 1:1-4). There is no possibility of hallucination or extreme credulity here! Either Thomas actually saw and "handled" the resurrected body of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth (as well as the women and the other disciples) or the writers of the gospel accounts are the most dastardly deceivers and frauds the world has even known. There are just two alternatives: either the evidence is overwhelmingly sufficient to call forth faith and surrender to the divine, omnipotent, omniscient, resurrected Lord Jesus—or—the gospel writers deliberately lied and duped millions of their contemporaries and the gospels then are not morally worthy of consideration for they are lies. Only two alternatives are worthy of honest men: let us hear no more that the gospels are untrustworthy historically speaking but may form the basis for morality and social action—this is neither reasonable nor morally upright.

There was no question lingering in the mind of Thomas. He was of an "honest and good heart." Once the evidence was sufficient he surrendered his mind and heart to the demands of the fact. It is as Alexander Campbell has written, *facts are moral*, they demand a decision. Facts are the basis of faith and faith is the motivating force of feeling. The facts caused Thomas to trust (have faith) and thus leading to the emotion of his heart and soul poured out in, "My Lord and my God!"

There must be no doubters among the men upon whom Jesus is to thrust the responsibility of establishing the church and preaching the

gospel in the face of a whole world against it. There must not be the slightest hesitancy, question, or problem about His victory over death and Satan. There must be absolute and abiding conviction on the part of each one commissioned to this great task. Furthermore, Jesus appeared to Thomas out of His love for Thomas. God desires to give every man enough opportunity to know of Christ's victory over death and Satan, but now the responsibility to present the facts to every man is upon those who are His disciples. Jesus will not appear to men again until He comes to judge the world. Then those who pierced Him will see Him—but then it will be too late!

R. C. Foster notes, "John opens his gospel with a profound statement concerning Jesus as the incarnation of God. He closes his gospel with this great declaration of Thomas which is a result of actual experience and association. Thomas sums up in one dramatic explanation the message of the entire gospel. The disciple who doubted the most gives at last the final statement of his faith. Thomas hails Jesus as God and Jesus accepts the identification as Thomas worshipped Him."

Why does Jesus pronounce this last "beatitude" of blessing upon those who believe without having seen? Faith which results from seeing is good; but faith which results from hearing is more excellent. If men had to verify every basis of life or every statement of history to their own senses before they acted, virtually nothing would ever be accomplished! We could not all personally and minutely verify everything we accept as fact and allow as motivating principles in our lives. The faith of multitudes through the centuries has rested, not upon their own personal sensory perceptions, but upon the testimony of competent witnesses. We do not accept the fact that Washington was the first President of the United States of America on the basis of our own sight, but of the testimony of accredited witnesses.

Another matter to be considered here is the weight of the accumulation of testimony over against the possibilities of our own senses being deceived. It is no wonder Jesus said, "blessed are they who, though not seeing, are yet believing."

### Quiz

1. Why did Thomas refuse to accept the word of the other apostles?
2. Was Thomas any worse than the rest of the apostles in his doubt?
3. What day did Jesus appear to the eleven, Thomas being present?
4. What two alternatives are left for those who read of the gospel account of Thomas' experience?
5. Why are those who believe without having seen blessed above those whose faith needs to see?

## THE AIM OF THE GOSPEL

*Text: 20:30-31*

30 Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.

*Queries*

- a. What are the "other signs" of verse 30?
- b. May belief in Jesus' deity be attained in any way except through the gospel record?

*Paraphrase*

Jesus did indeed perform many other signs in the presence of His disciples which have not been recorded in this book. The signs of Jesus which are recorded in this book have been written in order that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Anointed One, the Son of God, and that continuing to believe you may have life eternal in His name.

*Summary*

The purpose of the recorded gospel is to engender faith in the deity of Christ resulting in eternal life.

*Comment*

This is the climax of the Fourth Gospel—not the conclusion, but the climax. Chapter Twenty-one is the conclusion in the form of an epilogue.

It is quite clear from John's statement here in vv. 30-31 and from just a cursory reading of the other gospel accounts that none of the gospels ever set out to give, nor claimed to give, a full account of the life of Jesus. What they have recorded, however, is historically and factually accurate. The brevity of the accounts in no way denies their historicity!

But why are the gospel records so brief? Would it not be to our advantage to know every detail of Jesus' life as a youngster and a growing man? It is also quite clear that the gospels are not intended to be complete biographies of Jesus' life. We like the statement of R. C. Foster in his *Life of Christ Syllabus*: "The narratives of the life of Christ are condensed in order to be the more effective. They are sufficient for the purpose of presenting adequate evidence, extensive enough to challenge a life-time of study, and yet not so voluminous as to overwhelm the reader with a mass of unnecessary records. The brevity

of the scriptures is one of the foremost proofs of their divine inspiration. Contrast the gospel narratives with any biography in print, whether of Napoleon, Lincoln, or any other famous person!"

The purpose of John has been all along to show that Jesus of Nazareth is the Incarnate Word—the Very Son of God, co-equal with the Father—indeed Immanuel, God with us! This was John's stated purpose in his Prologue (1:1-18). These climactic verses 30-31 show us that from start to finish the Fourth Gospel is a book of signs that Jesus is the Son of God. This is the first purpose of the book.

If the deity of Christ be established and told in a vivid and captivating way then men will be led to believe in Him and gain eternal life. This is the stated second purpose of the gospel record: to bring men to faith and salvation in obedience to the will of Christ (i.e., in His name). The purpose of the gospel record has just been vividly portrayed in the experience of Thomas: he has been brought to a complete faith in the deity of Jesus and commits his life unto Him. "The Fourth Gospel began with the unfolding of the mystery of life which has its source in the Word. It closes with the offer of life to all who will accept Jesus.

It is worthy of note that John uses the present tense of the verb *pisteno* (believe) and so literally it means to believe and keep on believing. Hendriksen says, "Note: continue to believe. Remember Cerinthus, who was trying to undermine the faith of the Church in the deity of Christ! That faith must be strengthened. The enemy must be repulsed."

It may be that John had in mind, writing his gospel toward the end of the first century, a refutation and defense against Gnosticism. But the use of *pisteno* in the present tense is so common an idiom of the New Testament writers simply to state the nature of saving faith that it seems beside the point to connect it with a refutation of Gnosticism.

Whatever the case, John climaxes his gospel with his version of the good confession. But, as Foster suggests, it now includes the profounder meaning of the crucified and risen Christ, and of the Son of God who has given final proof of His claims.

### Quiz

1. Did the gospel writers intend to give a full account or biography of the life of Jesus? How do you know?
2. Why is the brevity of the gospel records more to our advantage?
3. What are the two purposes of the gospel record?
4. How do these two verses tie in with and climax the entire Fourth Gospel from start to finish?

## SERMON NO. NINETEEN

(TOPICAL)

## IMPERATIVES OF THE EMPTY TOMB

Mark 16:1-7 I Cor. 15:57-58

Michaelangelo, the immortal artist, stood in company with his fellow artists one day contemplating a masterful painting of the crucifixion of Christ. He was heard to say, "Why do we fill our churches and art galleries with portrayals of the His crucifixion, as if it all ended there? He is risen, He is alive."

## I. YES, CHRIST IS RISEN

## A. Credible witnesses

1. Testimony of others is accepted as an indispensable source of knowing the truth of much of what we know
  - a. IN FACT A GREAT DEAL OF WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE TRUE IS ACCEPTED ON THE TESTIMONY OF OTHERS BECAUSE WE DID NOT OURSELVES SEE IT!
  - b. The essential matter is to test and verify the credibility of the witnesses who testify
2. Competency
  - a. Were they eyewitnesses? YES
  - b. Were they credulous? NO
    - (1) Thomas; Peter & John
    - (2) even wrote of themselves that they did not believe He would rise from the dead!
3. Honesty
  - a. NOTHING TO GAIN & EVERYTHING TO LOSE BY THUS TESTIFYING TO HIS RESURRECTION (life, fortune, etc.)
  - b. No witnesses ever had more motive for denying what they saw with their own eyes, yet "... we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."
4. Number of witnesses
  - a. apostles, women, 500 brethren who saw Jesus all at once ... alive when Paul wrote I Cor.
  - b. There is a point reached where calling more eyewitnesses becomes ludicrous ... WELL OVER 500 EYEWITNESSES SHOULD ESTABLISH THE FACT BEYOND ANY REASONABLE DOUBT!

To doubt the resurrection of Christ is unreasonable and irrational in the light of the evidence for it.

## B. Conversion of enemies

1. A great company of the Hebrew priests became obedient to the faith (Acts 5)
  - a. THESE MEN WOULD HAVE CHECKED ALL THE EVIDENCE BEFORE THEY BECAME FOLLOWERS OF THE NAZARENE!
2. Saul of Tarsus
  - a. If there was ever a man in the first century who knew all arguments against the resurrection of Christ which the Jewish Sanhedrin could ever draw up, that man was the Apostle Paul, and yet in spite of all this he believed and preached it as his central theme in the face of persecution etc.
  - b. Two great unbelieving scholars set out to disprove Christianity . . . one the resurrection, the other the conversion of Saul of Tarsus . . . both met again as Christians
  - c. Also Governor Lew Wallace (author of Ben Hur) and Sir William Ramsay (converted archeologist, etc.)
3. Paul says that some even of Caesar's own household became followers of the Way!

## C. Contemporary history

1. Josephus (says He arose and appeared to His disciples); Tacitus (80 A.D.) Pliny; Suetonius (90 A.D.)
2. These and many other historians confirm the following facts concerning early Christianity of the 1st century
  - a. Christ was a real historic person and founder of Christianity
  - b. He was worshipped as one divine
  - c. Christians met on the 1st day of the week to celebrate the resurrection of their Christ
  - d. They were pure morally and were very influential in society
  - e. Christianity spread with astonishing rapidity
  - f. The church was terribly persecuted but the Christians, by their hope in a resurrection, withstood the persecutions

## D. The Empty Tomb

1. Stands in overwhelming emptiness and silence as one of the most unanswerable points of evidence
2. Even unbelievers admit 3 things about Jesus
  - a. He lived as a historic personage
  - b. He was crucified and buried
  - c. His tomb was empty!

3. Many are the theories as to how it became empty
  - a. Disciples stole body (when heavily guarded by soldiers—would they then die for their own lie!)
  - b. Enemies stole body—why didn't they produce the body later !!!
  - c. Jesus did not die but swooned and rolled back the stone—nearly dead from beating then hanged on the cross for 6 hours
4. The answer given by those there and best qualified to know . .
  - a. Jewish authorities admitted tomb was empty
  - b. Then they bribed soldiers to tell a lie (if were not bribed and was not a lie why did not someone successfully refute the gospel accounts when they were published in the 1st century?)
  - c. Not even a good lie at that . . . "DISCIPLE STOLE THE BODY WHILE WE WERE ASLEEP!" HOW COULD THEY KNOW IF THEY WERE ASLEEP! IMAGINE SOMEONE TESTIFYING LIKE THIS ON THE WITNESS STAND IN OUR COURTS!

UNBELIEVERS SAY CHRIST WAS NOT RAISED FROM THE DEAD . . . I SAY PROVE IT!

THERE STANDS THE EMPTY TOMB IN PALESTINE TODAY!

IN THE N.T. THERE IS HISTORIC EVIDENCE WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY ANY COURT TODAY!

LET THE UNBELIEVER PRODUCE SOME EVIDENCE . . .

THE QUESTION IS NOT COULD IT—OR COULD IT NOT HAPPEN . . . THE QUESTION IS ONE OF FACT AND EVIDENCE . . . THE QUESTION IS DID IT . . . OR DID IT NOT HAPPEN

THE EVIDENCE SAYS YES IT DID HAPPEN AND THERE IS NO FACTUAL EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY !!!

E. The Existence of the Church and its institutions or ordinances

1. The church, the 1st day of the week of the Lord's supper, baptism are all here . . . WHAT IS THE CAUSE BEHIND THESE MONUMENTS
2. If one should doubt that George Washington ever existed and did the mighty feats recorded of him . . . we would not only refer to historical testimony, but to the effects of his life and to the monuments erected in his memory!

DENY THE CREDIBILITY OF THE SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY CONCERNING JESUS, HIS DEATH AND RESUR-



RECTION AND YOU HAVE AN EFFECT (THE CHURCH), WITHOUT AN ADEQUATE CAUSE (THE RESURRECTION).

3. The church of the 1st century and ever afterward accepted the doctrine of the resurrection and practiced the ordinances NOW THE PEOPLE OF THAT TIME WERE FULLY CAPABLE OF CHECKING THE TESTIMONIES OF THE APOSTLES AND OTHER PREACHERS . . . BUT THEY COULD NOT AND DID NOT REFUTE THEIR PREACHING AS BEING LIES!

4. No other truth could have so completely transformed the lives of so many millions through the ages

a. Indeed no other truth has . . . no other religion has!  
YES, CHRIST IS ACTUALLY, FACTUALLY, HISTORICALLY RISEN FROM THE DEAD . . . SEEN BY EYEWITNESSES IF THE EVIDENCE IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO PROVE THE HISTORICITY OF THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST . . . THEN EVIDENCE FROM HISTORY AND EYEWITNESSES IS OF NO VALUE AT ALL TO PROVE ANYTHING IN THIS WORLD! TESTIMONY IS COMPLETELY UNRELIABLE IF IT IS UNRELIABLE IN THIS CASE THERE IS BETTER EVIDENCE, OF MORE CONVINCING CERTAINTY FOR THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS THAN ANY OTHER FACT OF HISTORY WHICH IS BEYOND OUR IMMEDIATE SENSORY PERCEPTIONS MOST EVERONE BELIEVES THAT LEE HARVEY OSWALD MURDERED PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY . . . BUT THERE IS NOT NEARLY AS MUCH EVIDENCE FOR IT AS FOR THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

## II. IMPERATIVES OF THE EMPTY TOMB

### A. The Bible is God's Word!

1. The Creator of the universe has expressed His nature, His will, His purpose for man.
2. He has demonstrated the unsearchable richness of His love
3. He has demonstrated that He will keep all His promises
4. He has demonstrated that there is POWER for the believer in this Word of His

### B. Heaven is as real as the resurrection

1. He has gone to prepare a place of eternal rest and peace for us
2. There will be no tears, no death, no sin, no separation, no war there

3. A real place so glorious that human language is not adequate to fully describe it.
- C. Hell is as real as the resurrection
  1. There is no rest there day or night
  2. The smoke of their torment goeth up forever and ever
  3. It is the dwelling place of all that is false, ugly, evil
  4. It is a place of conscious remembrance and eternal regret
  3. One in practice
  4. In obedience to truth revealed, unity . . . in opinion, liberty . . . in all things love
  5. Christ purchased the church with His blood . . . you must be saved by His blood . . . you must be a member of His church . . . to do so you must obey His plan of salvation
- G. One Way of Salvation
  1. He, His person, His accomplishment, His atonement, His commands . . . this is the one Way of salvation
  2. No man has ever been given authority to add to or take away from His Word (Gal. 1:8-12)
  3. Hear, Believe, Repent, Confess, Be Immersed
  4. Be faithful unto death  
(cf. Luke 16:19-31)
  5. A real place so terrible that human language is not adequate to fully describe it
- D. Man's immortal spirit is as real as the resurrection
  1. Man is not just flesh and bone and blood
  2. He is a living soul, created in the spiritual image of God, his Maker
  3. Man is morally free and responsible to make a choice between salvation or condemnation as it is offered to him by God's grace
- E. Christ is coming again just as surely as He came forth alive from the tomb
  1. He is coming in time and in history (not in thought or feeling)
  2. He comes with His angels to judge and render vengeance
  3. No one knows the day nor the hour, but everyone will know when He does come, for every eye will see Him
- F. There is only one church, the universal body of Christ, and that is the one which conforms in belief and practice to the church described in the New Testament
  1. One in name
  2. One in doctrine

*Conclusion*

- I. THERE IS DIVINE POWER IN THE RESURRECTION (Phil. 3:9-10)
- A. The power of Christianity is not in the esthetic value of great cathedrals—nor in somber ritual and tradition—nor in emotional singing or heart-rending sermon illustrations
  - 1. THE POWER IS IN THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE TOMB . . . IN TIME AND IN HISTORY
  - B. It gives a hope that is alive (I Peter 1:3)
  - C. It brings joy unspeakable and full of glory (I Jn. 1:1-4)
  - D. It sanctifies or purifies (I Jn. 3—Acts 17:32)
  - E. It gives power to our witness for God (Acts 4:33)
  - F. It gives us a power to be steadfast and to labor (I Cor. 15:58)
- II. AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE RESURRECTION
- A. If Christ be not raised then preaching is foolishness, vain and useless
  - B. If Christ be not raised then faith and hope and love are senseless, vain and silly . . . if there be no life after death, let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die!
- III. YOU MUST MAKE A CHOICE, YOU WILL MAKE A CHOICE, YOU HAVE MADE A CHOICE
- A. Our only hope is in Christ and His resurrection
  - B. Gandhi, Joseph Smith, Martin Luther . . . their bones and their tombs are with us to this day . . . there is no hope in them
  - C. Philosophy, science and all the other schemes of men are helpless and hopeless
  - D. Let the so-called scientists and philosophers talk about "pre-historic" this and that all they want—  
AS FOR ME, I WANT MY LIFE HERE AND HERE-AFTER  
FOUNDED ON HISTORIC CERTAINITIES  
I WILL TAKE THE HISTORICAL, EYEWITNESSED RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST OVER "PRE-HISTORIC" GUESSES ANY DAY  
HOW ABOUT YOU?

**CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE**

An epilogue is defined: "A concluding section, as of a novel, serving to complete the plan of the work." The twenty-first chapter of John's gospel is his epilogue. It is parallel to the closing verses of the Synoptic Gospels which give the different instances of the "Great Com-

mission." This is John's "Great Commission." Merrill C. Tenney calls the epilogue, "The Responsibilities of Belief."

Lenski, Foster and others refer to this chapter as a "Supplement." Most commentators feel that John formally closed his gospel record with the end of chapter twenty and that this chapter is an appendix to it. Westcott says, "The general scope of the contents of this chapter is distinct from the development of the plan which is declared to be completed in chapter twenty." We believe the contents of chapter twenty-one are *not* altogether distinct from the development of the plan of the rest of the Fourth Gospel. It was the plan of the Fourth Gospel to record the revelation of and Incarnation of the pre-existent Word. Chapter twenty-one is the commission of the Incarnate Word to His disciples to preach and teach His Word.

We have chosen to accept this twenty-first chapter as a part of the continuity of the whole plan of the Fourth Gospel and yet standing in relationship to the whole as an epilogue. We outline it thusly:

#### IV Epilogue: "Feed My Sheep" 21:1-25

A. Omnipotent Lord, 21:1-14

B. Obedient Love, 21:15-23

C. Overwhelming Evidence, 21:24-25

It is questioned by those with liberal presuppositions that John is the author of this last chapter. Foster says that chapter 21 is the hub of internal evidence that John the apostle wrote the whole book. The strange omission of the name of John in the whole book leads one to believe the "beloved disciple" is John the Apostle. Chapter 21 makes quite definite this identification and clearly affirms he is the author of the entire book. Besides, there are no extant copies of the Fourth Gospel which give any indication that this 21st chapter was other than a definite part of the Fourth Gospel. The style of chapter 21 is identical with the Johannine style throughout the book. All the evidence, both internal and external, is on the side of Johannine authorship for the last chapter.

There are a number of interesting and edifying things to be learned in Chapter Twenty-one. We will notice the reactions of Peter. We will learn about the love which Peter confesses for his Master. We will hear Jesus' commission for the disciples. We will discover what Jesus thinks about the curiosity of his followers concerning their future.

### *Omnipotent Lord*

*Text: 21:1-14*

1 After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and he manifested himself on this wise.

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee. They went forth, and entered into the boat; and that night they took nothing.

4 But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach: yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5 Jesus therefore saith unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea.

8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net full of fishes.

9 So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken.

11 Simon Peter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who are thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

### *Queries*

- a. Why did Peter and the others go fishing?
- b. Why did Peter jump into the sea?
- c. Why did none of them ask, "Who art thou?"

### *Paraphrase*

Now Jesus had commanded His disciples to go to Galilee and wait for Him there. After His appearances to them in Jerusalem He mani-

fested Himself to seven of them who had gone to Galilee, to the sea of Tiberias. These were the seven disciples of Jesus who were together there on the sea of Galilee; Simon Peter, and Thomas called Twin, and Nathanael who was from Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee—James and John, and two other disciples. Simon Peter said to the others, I need to return to my fishing business while I await the Lord's coming to Galilee. The other disciples said, We must provide for ourselves while we are waiting and we will return to our fishing also. So they embarked in a large fishing boat and sailed forth onto the sea. They fished all night and yet they did not catch one fish. In the semi-darkness of the early dawn Jesus stood on the beach a great distance away from the fishermen and the disciples did not know that it was Jesus there on the beach. Jesus called out to them, Lads, you haven't anything to eat, have you? They called back, No, we haven't. Jesus called back, Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will catch fish. The disciples, supposing that the man on the beach was familiar with the best places for fishing, threw their net over into the sea on the right side of the boat. There were so many fish caught in the net that the disciples in the large boat were unable to draw it into the boat. John, the beloved, said to Peter, It is the Lord! Peter, realizing it must be the Lord, wrapped himself in the outer clothing he had taken off (for he had stripped down to his underclothing to facilitate his fishing), and jumped into the shallow sea and began making for the beach. The other disciples who had come alongside the large boat to help with the weighted net came on to the shore dragging the net full of fishes rather than hoisting the net into the boat for they were only some one hundred yards offshore. And when the disciples all got out of their boats onto the beach they saw that a fire had been burning for some time and cooking in the fire was fish and bread. Jesus beckoned, Come, bring some of the fish which you have caught. Simon Peter hurried back to the boat and hauled in the net. There were one hundred fifty-three great fish in the net and all the fishermen were astonished that the net had not torn with such a tremendous catch. Jesus invited them, Come, let us have breakfast. All of the disciples stood still in reverent awe and none felt obliged now to question who He was for they all knew that He was their Lord. Jesus then came to the fire and taking the bread and the fish, gave some to each of the disciples. This was the third time Jesus appeared to the apostles in a body after He was risen from the dead.

### *Summary*

Jesus shows himself alive a third time to the apostles and offers

again empirical proof of His Lordship in order that He may later charge them, "Feed my sheep!"

### *Comment*

Jesus "showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God" according to Acts 1:3. Here in Galilee is one of those occasions. He had commanded the disciples through the women (Matt. 28:7, 10; Mk. 16:7), to go into Galilee. They did not go immediately and Jesus appears to them in company twice in Jerusalem over a seven day period (cf. Jn. 20). Now they have arrived in Galilee and have resumed their former occupations as they wait for the Lord's promised appearance here.

John's use of the name "sea of Tiberias" is another indication that he intended his gospel account to be read by readers all over the Roman world. "Tiberias" is the Roman name for the sea of Galilee.

Why did Peter and these other six disciples go fishing? Some say they had lost faith and interest in continuing as disciples of Jesus and simply had returned to their former occupations. Those who make this interpretation generally base it on a questionable exegesis of the question Jesus asked Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these?" (Jn. 21:15). We prefer the view that the disciples were merely occupying the time while they waited for the Lord in plying their trade as fishermen. Some of them (Peter at least) would need to provide some sort of financial support for their families. Men of the sea, active, hard-working, industrious men could not remain inactive while they waited for Jesus to come.

"Jesus did not condemn them for going fishing, but directed them to a miraculous catch. Peter is no more to be condemned for seeking food by this accustomed trade than Paul for supporting himself by tent-making while he preached as opportunity offered. Peter and the rest were here in Galilee in obedience to the express, repeated command of Jesus. Having come to Galilee, they could do nothing for their Master except wait His coming and further commands. To supply themselves with food by a means that was honorable and available was simple common-sense." R. C. Foster.

Fishermen had an honorable place in society. They supplied one of the most important items in the ordinary diet. They also had the reputation of being unusually pious. There were those who used hooks to fish in the days of Jesus for archeologists have found copper, brass and iron hooks of that period. But most of the commercial fishing was done with nets. The first type of net was the "throwing" type, a round one

of perhaps twelve feet in diameter, with leads all around the edge, and it was designed to catch fish by dropping over them. The second type was the "seine" type which was much like our seine-nets today. One end of this net was held by a man on shore while others in a boat played the long net out in a large semi-circle winding up with the other end of the net on the same shore. Then the men on both ends drag the net to shore bringing in their catch. The disciples probably used both types of nets. But it would seem they were using the seine type net this night.

The fishing trade required large investments to commence. The nets were expensive and needed a great deal of maintenance. The boats would be even more expensive and need even more maintenance.

When the fish were caught they had to be separated. Some fish were worth more than others on the market. Also for the Jewish fishermen there would be the unclean fish they were not allowed to sell—those without scales and fins.

"The fisherman's life strengthens his character: it is work that insists upon courage and firmness, as well as patience; and it is clear that those fresh-water sailors, the fishermen of the Sea of Galilee stood out from all the other workers who are mentioned in the Gospel. They seem to have been men of strong and ardent minds, open, hearty, enthusiastic spirits—'Sons of thunder,' as Christ called two of them . . . Even today one may see the Galilean fishermen skipping for joy at a good catch; and under the fierce sun they may be heard chanting at the top of their voices. It is understandable that for the work He meant to undertake, Christ should have called upon these strong, brave, spirited men and their loyalty. He said to them, 'Come and follow me; I will make you into fishers of men.' And Simon and Andrew and then James and John, left their nets on the ground." Henri Daniel-Rops "Daily Life in The Time of Jesus."

They fished all night and caught nothing. It was a big sea. They had probably put their net into the sea over and over again in many different places. They were tired and they had spent a frustrating day and night. In the darkness of the early dawn they looked toward the shore and saw a man standing there. The darkness, the distance and a probable mist arising from the surface of the sea kept them from recognizing Jesus.

Jesus then called out from the shore, "Lads, you don't have anything to eat do you?" The Greek word *paidia* may be translated "lads, boys, children." Jesus stated the question as if He expected a "No" answer. He wanted to focus their attention on the fruitlessness of their night's



labor in order to emphasize the more the miraculous nature of what was about to happen. This He did to build their faith in Him and to demonstrate the divine assistance they would have during their labors in His name.

So Jesus instructed them, "Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will catch fish." Still not recognizing Him as their Master, thinking perhaps He was one of the local fishermen with a knowledge of where the fishing was currently the best, they followed His instructions. To their wonderment the net became so full of fish they were unable to haul it into the boat and eventually the net, which seemed ready to burst at any moment, was towed to shore behind the boat.

John, the beloved disciple (cf. 13:23), then recognized Jesus and told Peter, "It is the Lord!" Perhaps John began to recognize Him when He called out from the shore and then at the miraculous draught of fishes could restrain himself no longer and forgot the fish and pointed toward shore and cried out to Peter.

Impetuous Peter was not about to wait until the boat reached the shore. He grabbed his outer tunic (he had probably taken off all his clothing but his undergarments), wrapped it around himself and jumped into the sea and started making for the shore. Whether he swam or whether it was shallow enough for him to wade ashore we do not know. The disciples were only about 100 yards off shore in the boat. R. C. Foster notes that the Greek language here indicates Peter fastened the "girdle" and tucked the tunic up into his girdle before leaping into the water. This may indicate he was intending to wade ashore without getting all his clothing wet. Peter may have been impetuous but his impetuosity at this particular instance is an example we all might well follow. Would that all His disciples were so eager to be near Him and to come to Him.

Practically all the commentators show the interesting parallels between this experience on the sea of Galilee and the one some three years before as recorded in Matt. 4:18-22; Mk. 1:16-20; Lk. 5:1-11. In both instances they toiled all night and caught nothing; in each case they had gone fishing of their own volition; in both they were commanded by Jesus to make another effort; in the first the nets broke; in this one the net seemed ready to break momentarily; in both Peter exhibited his impetuosity; in both Jesus gives them a solemn commission to evangelize.

Why did Peter act so impulsively? Who knows? It was just his nature, it seems, to act this way. What would you have done considering

all his recent experiences if you had been Peter? Perhaps you too would have leaped into the water and hurried to meet the resurrected Lord. These disciples were real men—not robots or the idealistic characters of fiction. Some of them were as different in personality and temperament as some of us today!

Now in verse eight we find an example of the Greek idiom which is not altogether familiar to the English language. We find John shifting from the regular noun to the diminutive form using both forms to describe the same thing. In 21:6 he speaks of the *ploion* (boat) and in 21:8 he speaks of the same boat only this time it is *ploiaron* (little boat). John does the same thing in 6:17-20 and 6:22. Peter went wading on ahead. The other disciples came slowly in the boat hauling the catch of fish which were still very precariously enclosed within the overtaxed net.

To their amazement, when they stepped out on shore they found the Master had a fire going, was broiling fish and preparing bread for a morning meal. How the fish were obtained by Jesus we are not told. We are neither told that He obtained them in a supernatural way or a natural way. Most commentators believe He supplied them supernaturally. The recent events and the excitement of the present hour would lead one to think this also must have come about in some supernatural way.

In their excitement and haste to meet the Lord they had forgotten their net full of fish straining on the tow rope still tied to the side of the boat and being lashed about by the waves of the surf. Jesus directed them, Bring of the fish which you have now taken. Perhaps Jesus had another reason for such directions than His concern that the miraculous catch might be lost by neglect. Perhaps He wanted to re-emphasize the magnitude of the miracle. This we believe is all the significance there is to the number—153—of fish caught. The number is given simply to signify the marvelousness of it all. They had fished all night and caught nothing. Jesus merely said, Cast your net on the right side of the boat, and in one cast they caught one hundred fifty-three *large* fish. So many the net was about to break. Many commentators, both ancient and modern, are, we believe, too taken up with allegorizing, symbolizing and spiritualizing numbers. For example Cyril of Alexandria said the 100 represents the "fulness of the Gentiles"; the 50 stands for the remnant of Israel which will be saved; 3 stands for the Trinity to whose glory all things are done. Augustine, according to Barclay, explains it this way: 10 is the number for the Law (10 commandments); 7 is the number of grace (7 gifts of the Spirit); 7 plus 10 equals 17; 153 is

the sum of all the figures, 1 plus 2 plus 3 plus 4 . . . and up to 17. Thus 153 stands for all those who either by Law or by grace have been moved to come to Jesus Christ.

Whether the number has a mystical meaning or not, it most certainly points out that the one who wrote the Fourth Gospel was an eye-witness for he knew every detail even to the number and size of the fish that morning. The amazing thing to the fishermen was that such an enormous catch could be contained in the net without the net breaking.

Jesus bids them, "Come, have breakfast." So overwhelmed with His majesty and awed with His omnipotence now not one of them dared interrogate Him. They all knew! There were no doubts, no questionings in their minds and hearts now. Perhaps the events of the night had so awed them that they stood off in reverential fear. None dared to say, Is it really you, Lord?

In fact, the indication is that they did not even dare to come close to the fire and feed themselves at His invitation. It seems that Jesus had to take the bread and the fish and "come" toward them and give it to them.

The main point to get from this section is exactly the point the disciples got and the one Jesus intended: a dramatic and awe-inspiring demonstration of the omnipotence and omniscience of Jesus Christ, the resurrected Lord of heaven and earth.

Verse 14 must, of course, be understood as denominating the third appearance to the disciples (apostles) being gathered together in a body. He appeared at least a third time to other disciples (both women and men) before this but this is His third appearance to His specially called disciples—apostles.

### *Quiz*

1. Why were these men in Galilee?
2. Why did they go fishing? Did the Lord approve or disapprove?
3. Tell something about the fishing trade; the tools, the men, etc.
4. Why did they not recognize Jesus on the shore?
5. Why was Peter so impetuous? Is impetuosity always wrong?
6. What is the significance of John's recording of the exact number of fish?
7. What is the main point of the experience of the disciples here?

### *Obedient Love*

*Text: 21:15-23*

15 So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto

him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

19 Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

20 Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; who also leaned back on his breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter therefore seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

23 This saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

### *Queries*

- a. What did Jesus mean by, "more than these?"
- b. What is the significance of Peter's replies, "thou knowest."
- c. What is the meaning of Jesus' reply to the curiosity of Peter concerning John in verses 20-22?

### *Paraphrase*

So when they had finished their breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you really love me with more devotion than these others. Peter answered Him, Yes Lord! You know that I have a deep personal love for you. Jesus said to Peter, Then feed and nurture the young and tender "lambs" of my flock. Jesus said again, Simon, son of John, do you love, reverence and respect Me with mind as well as heart? Peter replied a second time, Yes Lord! You know that I love you as my Lord and Saviour and dearest Friend. Jesus said to Peter,

Then care for and protect my sheep. For the third time Jesus said, Simon, son of John, do you, in your own words, really have a deep personal affection for Me. Peter was pricked in his conscience when the Lord asked him a third time, using his own words, Do you have a deep personal affection for Me? So Peter answered, Lord, you know all things and you are able to look upon my heart; you know I love you so. Jesus said, Feed my sheep.

Jesus continued, I say to you most solemnly, Peter, when you were young with vitality and freedom you bound yourself with your belt and went just about wherever you wished to go; but instead of that liberty which you enjoyed in your youth, you shall, in your old age, be a prisoner for you shall be bound and taken where you would not wish to go. Jesus said this to signify the way Peter would die and how it would glorify God. And as He was saying these things He also said to Peter, Follow Me. As Peter followed Jesus aside from the rest, he turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved also following (this is the same disciple who had leaned back on Jesus' bosom at the Passover supper—the one who said, Lord, who is he that is betraying you?). And when Peter saw this disciple coming aside to Jesus he said, Lord, what is going to happen to this one? Jesus replied, If it is my will that he remain even until I come, what concern is it of yours? You follow Me! After hearing this some of the brethren began to spread this saying among themselves, that Jesus had said this disciple would not die. Jesus, of course, did not say, He will not die; He simply said, If it is my will that he remain even until I come, what concern is it of yours?

### *Summary*

Jesus emphasizes that He expects total commitment from His disciples and this commitment is to be based on intelligent, spiritual, personal love.

### *Comment*

At some time near the end of the meal of fish and bread that morning (or after the meal was concluded) Jesus turned to Peter and startled him with this question, "Simon, son of John, do you really love me more than these others?" The pronoun (these) in the Greek is *tonton* and may be either masculine or neuter. The succeeding context shows beyond doubt that the masculine (these other disciples) was intended. We remember the proud boast Peter made (Matt. 26:31-33; Mk. 14:27-29; Lk. 22:31-33; Jn. 13:37) the night of the last supper, "If all these leave you, I'll never leave you, even if I must go to my death with you Lord!" It was at that very moment Jesus prophesied "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." Now, in the

light of Peter's downfall Jesus wants to know if Peter is still so sure of himself! Foster lists three reasons why he believes Jesus means "do you love Me more than these other disciples," instead of "things — i.e., things representing your worldly vocation such as nets and boats and fish." (a) There was nothing wrong with fishing *per se*, that is, Jesus did not condemn Peter for fishing and accuse him of loving Him less for fishing; (b) The three-fold question parallels the three-fold denial; (c) If Peter had understood Jesus to mean he was questioning whether he planned to desert his Master and go back to his old fishing trade, it seems incredible that Peter would not have answered immediately and precisely, "You know that I love you more than these *things*." It is more in keeping with the humility Peter must have felt when asked that he did not even so much as say, "You know that I love you more than these *other men*." He had fallen into that prideful trap before.

Two Greek verbs are used in an interesting interplay upon the word *love* in this section: Jesus uses the verb *agapao* in His first two inquiries and the verb *phileo* in the third question. Peter replies with *phileo* in all three answers. There are some commentators who are dogmatic in their assertions that *agapao* always means the "higher, spiritual devotion, not an impulse from the feelings, but more intellectually oriented love" while *phileo* always refers to the lower type of love "intimate, personal affection among human beings, brotherly love." This is not borne out by the New Testament usage of the two words.

- a. Both words are used of God's love for man (*agapao*: Jn. 3:16; 14:23; 17:23; I Jn. 14:10-19) (*phileo*: Jn. 16:27; Rev. 3:19)
- b. Both words are used of God's love for the Son (*agapao*: Jn. 3:35; 10:17; 15:9; 17:23-26) (*phileo*: Jn. 5:20).
- c. Both verbs are used of the love of men for Jesus (*agapao*: Jn. 8:42; 14:15, 21, 23, 24, 28; 21:15-16) (*phileo*: Jn. 16:27; 21:15-16; Matt. 10:37; I Cor. 16:22).
- d. Both verbs are used of the love of men for other men (*agapao*: Jn. 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; I Jn. 2:10; 3:10; 4:7, 20) (*phileo*: Jn. 15:19).

The text now under consideration seems to indicate that the words were, as the Arndt and Gingrich Lexicon says, "used interchangeably." There is also the frequent interchange of other synonyms within this very chapter (e.g., *boskein*—*poimainei* = *feed*; *arnia*—*probatia* = *sheep*; *elkuein*—*surein* = *haul*), which indicates John's fondness of the use of interchangeable synonyms.

Yet there also seems to be a certain distinction of meaning between the two which the English language is unable to convey. R. C. Trench,

in his "Synonyms of the New Testament" puts it this way:

" . . . there is often a difference between them, well worthy to have noted and reproduced, if this had lain within the compass of our language; being very nearly equivalent to that between 'diligere' and 'amare' in the Latin . . . In that threefold 'Lovest thou Me?' which the risen Lord addresses to Peter, He asks him first, *agapas me*; at this moment, when all the pulses in the heart of the now penitent Apostle are beating with a passionate affection toward his Lord, this word on that Lord's lips sounds far too cold; . . . he therefore in his answer substitutes for the *agapas* of Christ the word of a more personal love, *phileo se*."

Foster says "it is clear there is some difference and the use of both words in John 21 would indicate there is some different shade of meaning indicated. The fact that when we are commanded to love our enemies *agapao* is used, suggests the shade of meaning that we are not commanded to make a confidante or an intimate personal friend of an enemy—this might not be possible. But we are to treat all, even our enemies, with kindness and generous regard."

We will make Peter say something he certainly did not intend to say if we insist on a decisive and immutable distinction between the two words. We would have Peter replying to the Lord, "You know I love you Lord, but I do not love you with the highest devotion which man should have toward God (*agapao*); I only love you as a close personal friend (*phileo*), with a lower type of love." For Peter this was the right word. It expressed the deep, warm, heartfelt affection of this impetuous man. There does seem to be a decisive difference in the two words, but not as pronounced a difference as some commentators insist upon.

Why did Jesus use *agapao* when asking the first two questions, "Lovest thou me?" and then use *phileo* when He asked the third time? Most commentators believe Jesus was mildly rebuking Peter by questioning whether Peter even had the lowest type of love for Him. But Peter, by using *phileo* in each of his answers was using a word by which he meant to affirm both his lofty devotion toward God whom he revered but had never seen, and his personal love for Jesus whom he has seen and recognizes as God's Son, just as Thomas had (Jn. 20:28). As we quoted Dr. Trench above, for Peter the word *agapao* just did not fully describe his feelings so he used *phileo* and the Master simply used Peter's own word of feeling as the basis for His final challenge.

We feel it would be profitable to quote here a few excerpts from

Wm. Barclay's book, "More New Testament Words," an excellent work on word studies of New Testament Greek. In his chapter on Agape, Mr. Barclay says:

"The commonest words for love in Greek are the noun *philia* and the verb *philein*. There is a lovely warmth about these words. They mean to look on someone with affectionate regard . . . *Philia* and *philein* are beautiful words to express a beautiful relationship.

"It would not be true to say that the NT never uses anything else but *agape* and *agapan* to express the Christian love. Some few times *philein* is used . . . *Philia* was a lovely word, but it was definitely a word of warmth and closeness and affection; it could only be properly used of the near and dear, and Christianity needed a much more inclusive word than that. Christian thought fastened on this word *agape* because it was the only word capable of being filled with the content which was required . . . This *agape* . . . is a deliberate principle of the mind, and a deliberate conquest and achievement of the will. It is in fact the power to love the unlovable, to love people whom we do not like. Christianity does not ask us to love our enemies and to love men at large in the same way as we love our nearest and our dearest and those who are closest to us; that would be at one and the same time impossible and wrong. But it does demand that we should have at all times a certain attitude of the mind and a certain direction of the will towards all men, no matter who they are."

Now it should not be too difficult to see why Peter used the word *phileo*. His love for Christ was more than an "at large" love—it was a love of "warmth and closeness and affection."

We believe there is some relationship between the charge Jesus made to Peter ("Feed my sheep") and the question He asked ("Lovest thou me?"). If Peter loves the Master, Peter will feed the Master's lambs. Whatever is done for the lambs is done for the Master (cf. Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 9:1-6). Is this not why Jesus used the word *agapao*—as if to say, "Peter, do you love me?" "You say you love me, then love my lambs and feed them." Peter's personal, warm and affectionate love for Jesus is well and good, but this love for Jesus must be directed toward His flock "at large" as well or it isn't even *phileo* love for Jesus (and this is why Jesus changed to Peter's terminology in the last challenge).

Jesus did not doubt Peter's love for Him—He was challenging, preparing and commissioning Peter to go and love the Master's lambs. This was not simply a reconciliation between Master and disciple for this had already occurred in the first appearance of Jesus to Peter in



Luke 24:34. It was not to restore Peter to his apostleship among the select eleven for as Foster says, "the angel made it plain in the first message after the resurrection that Jesus did not consider that Peter had forfeited his apostleship (Mark 16:7). It was to challenge Peter, to strengthen him (to make him firmer in his love by reminding him of the humiliation of denial three times), to instruct him that loving Christ means to feed His sheep, and to confirm his place of leadership among the eleven. Jesus also elicited these confessions of love from Peter to prepare him for the prophecy of his death about to be made.

There certainly are great principles for all followers of Christ to learn from this private intercourse between Jesus and Peter. Those who have dedicated themselves to "feed the flock" (whether evangelists or elders) must love Christ above all else and before all others. Love for Christ, deep, personal affection is the only force that will motivate and fortify His servants against the many disappointments and dangers in "feeding the flock." We may also learn that love is expressed by obedient service (cf. II Cor. 8:5-8; 8:24; 9:13). Love is not just desire; love is the desire to give—to spend and be spent for another.

There is an interesting play of synonyms for "feed" in this context. In verses 15 and 17 Jesus used the word *boske* which means "feed; do the part of a herdsman and provide the flock food." In verse 16 He used the word *poimaine* which means "shepherd the flock, protect, care for, lead the flock." This is the commission of the Chief Shepherd to the under-shepherds to give themselves to the ministry of feeding, protecting, guiding and leading the flock of God (cf. Jn. 10; Acts 20:18-38; I Pet. 5:1-11, etc.). The important food for the flock is the spiritual food. Peter was called and charged to carry out this great task and he eventually laid down his life for the sheep.

It is also interesting to note the way Jesus used synonyms for sheep and lambs. In verse 16 and 17 the word *probatia* (sheep) is used. In verse 15 He used the word *arnia* which is a diminutive meaning "little lambs." The "little lambs" are mentioned first. The unsophisticated ones, the weak ones, the young ones must be tenderly nurtured. The older ones, even the experienced ones, must also be cared for and fed. We must all grow up together in stature into the full measure of godliness in Christ (cf. Eph. 4:11-17).

In verse 18 Jesus culminates his charge to Peter to "feed the lambs" with the revelation that Peter shall lay down his life for the flock. The figure of speech used by Jesus was vivid. The Jews, in walking or running, gathered up (girded) the long folds of their outer garments and fashioned them about their waists like belts, that their progress might

not be impeded. The figure then expresses the freedom to go as one pleases unimpeded and unfettered. In fact Peter had just so "girded" himself and made his way to Jesus on the shore unfettered and unrestrained. But in his later years it shall not be so. Solemnly Jesus told him that he would stretch forth his hands to be fettered and bound and he would be led according to the will of another.

Most commentators believe this "stretching forth of the hands" indicates Peter was told he would die by crucifixion. This is highly probable since Peter's Master was put to death in this way and it was a common form of Roman execution administered upon non-citizen "malefactors." Works by Eusebius and Tertullian relate the traditional manner of Peter's death to be crucifixion head downward. Whatever the manner of death it was to glorify God. Peter was to be among the first martyrs (from the Greek *marturos*). *Marturia* means to "testify or bear witness." Peter's life and death in faith bore witness to the glory of God. Just as the death of the first recorded Christian martyr, Stephen (Acts 7:54ff), glorified God and was instrumental to some degree in the conversion of the great apostle Paul, the death of Peter for the sake of Christ and the church was undoubtedly a great testimony to the power of the word of God and instrumental in the conversion of many other people. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psa. 116:15; cf. also Rev. 14:13).

Now after speaking this Jesus admonished again, "Follow me." One commentator thinks Jesus began after this admonition to draw apart from the disciples to vanish from their company until His next appearance, and that Peter may have taken Jesus literally and began to withdraw from the group and walk after Jesus. This seems the most probable explanation for Peter turning to see another disciple "following."

There can be no doubt that this other disciple who followed was John the beloved (cf. our notes on Jn. 13:23). Both Peter and John (and James) were of the "inner circle" three, and Peter was involved in the incident at the supper where the "other" disciple is described in the same way.

Foster says, "Follow me—in the light of the preceding context seems to mean 'follow me in my example of dying on a cross.' But the succeeding context seems to indicate that Jesus was leading Peter off to a little distance from the group and that John followed—or perhaps He was leading all of the disciples hence." It may be that both the spiritual and the literal are meant to be understood by the apostles.

The main point is Peter's question about the "other" disciple and the

Lord's answer to Peter. Peter, having been challenged, commissioned and having had his destiny revealed to him, said, "Lord what about him?" Peter had missed the mark again! He had allowed his natural mind to take over again. He was out of focus. He was not focused on what Jesus had sought to emphasize. He was worrying about "times and seasons." Jesus replied, as He had before to His own mother, and as He would to the disciples later, "It is none of your business to know this . . . if it is My will that John remain alive even until I come again in contrast to your death before I come, it is My affair and not yours. The destiny of this other disciple is minor; the major task for you is to follow me," (cf. our notes on Jn. 2:1-5; also cf. Acts 1:6-8). If a man is going to be a soldier, he must have a soldier's training. Sighing after happiness; brooding over the life we've missed—these are out of place with the Christian soldier. Men are not coddled and indulged when they are trained as soldiers. Orders are given and no questions are solicited. Immediate and implicit obedience is called for. The Lord will tell us all we have need to know. We are His friends. What would be detrimental to us He will withhold (cf. our notes on Jn. 15:12-16). We are not to know times or seasons, but to go to the ends of the earth witnessing.

Some disciples misunderstood the point of Jesus' reply to Peter. The word was spread among the brethren that Jesus had said John would not die. Barnes points out that first, the words of Jesus might easily be misunderstood and second, the false rumor might gain credence when it was seen that John survived all the other apostles. So John, writing this gospel record in the twilight of life, deemed it necessary to correct this rumor and so said simply, "Jesus did not say that the 'other' disciple would not die—Jesus said, 'If it is my will that the other disciple remain until I come, it is none of your affair, Peter'." We believe it is significant that John repeated precisely what Jesus said and offered no interpretation. John learned the lesson Jesus intended. His disciples need not know all—but all they need to know is revealed. The primary thing the disciples of Jesus need to do is to love and live the revealed teachings of their Master, leaving times and seasons to the wisdom and will of a loving Father. There are many Christians who need to be, as Hendriksen says, turned from curiosity to their calling. It seems there were many brethren in John's day in the same curious frame of mind. They were majoring in minors. We like the conclusion given by Mr. Barclay:

"Some would say that John was the great one, for his flights of thought went higher than those of any other man. Some would say that

Paul was the great one for he fared to the ends of the earth for Christ. But this chapter says that Peter, too, had his place . . . To each Jesus had given his function. It was Peter's function to shepherd the sheep of Christ, and in the end to die for Christ. It was John's function to witness to the story of Christ, and to live to a great old age and to come to the end in peace. That did not make them rivals and competitors in honor and prestige; that did not make the one greater or less than the other; it made them both servants of Christ. Let a man serve Christ where Christ has set him. As Jesus said to Peter: 'Never mind the task that is given to someone else. Your job is to follow me.' And that is what He still says to each one of us. Our glory is never in comparison with men; our glory is the service of Christ in whatever capacity has been allotted to us."

### Quiz

1. What did Jesus have in mind by more than "*these*"?
2. Discuss the difference and similarities in the two Greek words for *love* used in this context.
3. Why did Jesus use the same word Peter was using in His third question to Peter?
4. Why did Jesus ask these questions of Peter? Was it to restore Peter's apostleship?
5. What two words are used for *food* and what is indicated by each?
6. What two words are used for *sheep* and what is indicated by each?
7. What is the lesson Jesus intended for all disciples in His reply to Peter's question about the "other" disciple?

### Overwhelming Evidence

*Text: 21:24-25*

24 This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true.

25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.

### Queries

- a. Which disciple wrote these things?
- b. Why were the "many other things which Jesus did" not recorded?

### Paraphrase

The same disciple of whom it was rumored, He will not die, is the one that is hereby giving his testimony to these things in the life of

Jesus Christ and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is reliable for it is eyewitness testimony. Of course, there are many other deeds and words of Jesus, and I suppose that if each one were written down in detail, there would not be room in the whole world for all the books required to contain the record.

### *Summary*

John ends his record of Jesus' life with an affirmation as to the reliability of his testimony and an apology that it was impossible for any one to have written a complete record of Jesus' deeds and words.

### *Comment*

We hesitate to comment on these last two verses inasmuch as there is good manuscript evidence to show that it was not a part of the original. The Sinaiticus manuscript (c. 350 A.D.—otherwise known as Aleph), gives evidence that verses 24 and 25 were added and the original Aleph manuscript was subjected to inspection by ultra-violet process and it was found that these verses were not included in the Sinaiticus codex when it was first written but were added later. The Bodmer II Papyrus (P<sup>66</sup>) omits these two verses (Bodmer II dates about 250 A.D.). It is reported that one of the best manuscripts of John found just recently, designated P<sup>75</sup>, also omits these two verses (this manuscript also dates sometime between 200-300 A.D.). The latest revision of the Greek text by Nestle in its critical apparatus notes that Aleph omits verse 25. Perhaps more manuscript evidence will be forthcoming soon to establish either the omission or the inclusion of these verses. Until then we will make comments, with the reservations stated above, on these two verses.

Foster thinks that the elders of the church at Ephesus, where John probably resided when he wrote the Fourth Gospel, added verses 24 and 25. Hendricksen is of the same opinion and so is Westcott. Their argument is based upon the change of person which they say indicates a change of authorship. Macknight, however, in his "Harmony of The Gospels," says it is agreeable to John's manner (cf. Jn. 19:35) to speak of himself in the third person (cf. also I Jn. 5:18 and III Jn. 12). Macknight then believes John himself to be the author of these two concluding verses. Whoever authored them they are a strong affirmation of the reliability of his record. If it is by the Ephesian elders they probably were endowed with the supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit to "discern the spirits" and were adding their verification to the record for the benefit of the churches in which the record would be read.

Verse 25 is hyperbolic. It is a common figure of speech of the people of that area. One has only to read the Prophets to see this. This exaggeration serves to express the great magnitude and importance of the words and deeds of Jesus which *were* recorded.

Scripture itself testifies that there were things said and done by Jesus not recorded in the books about His life (the Gospels). In Acts 1:1-4 we are told that Jesus appeared to the disciples and spoke concerning the kingdom of God over a period of 40 days. Some of these things are recorded, some are not. In Acts 20:35 we have recorded a statement of Jesus not to be found in any of the Gospel accounts.

There are many spurious apocryphal gospels and other accounts which purport to be records of deeds and sayings of Jesus. They are so utterly out of harmony with the tenor of the inspired accounts and the historical evidence is so definitely against their canonicity that they are completely unreliable.

The main point is that John has recorded enough that men might come to believe and love Jesus Christ and become heirs of salvation in His name (Jn. 20:30-31). If men will not believe on the basis of what has been written, they will not believe even if someone would rise from the dead (cf. Lk. 16:31). John has written enough. The omnipotence, omniscience, compassion, love and glory of Jesus Christ has been recounted with factuality, emotion and a moral penetration that is able to capture the volition of man. Anything less would be insufficient—anything more would be redundant. Let us remember the admonition of this same apostle when he wrote the Revelation he received on Patmos (Rev. 22:18-20). We say, "Amen" to Lenski when he closes his commentary with, "Soli Deo Gloria"—Glory to God alone is our prayer for this commentary.

Turn right now, without letting another moment go by, and reread the Prologue, John 1:1-18. After these hours of soul-gripping study of John's Gospel can you not say with all that is in you, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth!"

### Quiz

1. What manuscript evidence is against verses 24 and 25 being a part of the original?
2. Who wrote these verses (if they are a part of the text)?
3. Prove that Jesus did and said things which are not recorded in the gospel accounts.
4. Is the brevity of the gospel record detrimental?

*Special Study No. Four — Outline Notes*

By Russell Watts

## Introductory Notes:

The number of the Lord's appearances during the forty days following the resurrection, before His ascension, is generally said to be nine. Of these, five were on the day of the resurrection, one on the Sunday following, two at some later period, and one when He ascended. As to place, five were in Jerusalem, one in Emmaus, two in Galilee, and one perhaps on the Mount of Olives. If to these we add the appearance to James (mentioned only by the apostle Paul in I Cor. 15:7), which probably was at Jerusalem; then add also the appearance to Paul mentioned in I Cor. 15:8, we have eleven appearances. Most writers come to this conclusion, differing only on some fine points concerning some of the appearances.

However, we do not need to say that these recorded and stated appearances were the only actual ones. Acts 1:3 "To whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." It is quite possible that there were other unrecorded appearances during this period of forty days.

## I. The appearances on the day of the resurrection. (5)

## A. To Mary Magdalene, at the Tomb, just outside Jerusalem.

## 1. Problem of when was this, at what time in the morning?

- a. How to harmonize Matt. 28:1 with Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1 and John 20:1.

The first part of the verse must be interpreted by the added specification of what is added in the last part of the verse.

## b. When did the women arrive at the tomb?

1. Luke says, "Very early in the morning."
2. John says, "early, while it was yet dark."
3. Mark says, "and very early on the first day of the week"
4. Matt. says, "as it began to dawn, toward the first day of the week."

## c. We must consider where they came from.

Probably from Bethany about two miles away.

## d. The time was probably about 5 A.M. for at this time of the year the sun would rise about 5:30 A.M. Objects would be discernible one-half hour before sunrise very likely.

2. Problem: did Mary come alone or with others and perhaps run on ahead so that she was first at the tomb?  
She undoubtedly came with the rest. Then, seeing the stone rolled away, she ran immediately to tell John and Peter before even going to the tomb.
  - a. When telling Peter and John, Mary used the pronoun *we* signifying that she was not alone.
  - b. After telling Peter and John she returned to the tomb, probably following Peter and John. Then while she was alone outside the tomb the Lord appeared to her.
3. John writes of this appearance in detail, John 20:11-18.
  - a. The account is personal to Mary.
  - b. She alone acknowledged the questions of Jesus.
  - c. Jesus addressed her in the singular.
- B. The other women, soon after appearing to Mary; while they are on their way to tell the message of the angels. (Matt. 28:9, 10)
  1. Who were these other women? How many were there? (Lk. 24:9-11)
    - a. Mark 15:41, says that many other women came up to Jerusalem.
    - b. These names are mentioned: Mary Magdalene, Mary, mother of James, Salome, Joanna, Susanna and "many others."
      1. John mentions only Mary Magdalene.
      2. Matt. mentions Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary." Matt. 28:1.
      3. Mark mentions Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome.
      4. Luke mentions Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the "other women."

Thus we see there are five, and possible others.
  2. Many variations of order are given for this account, due to our not being able to tell whether these women arrived at the tomb in one or two groups.
- C. Jesus appears to Peter. (I Cor. 15:5; Luke 24:33, 34)
  1. McGarvey places this before the appearances to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and at Emmaus.
  2. R. C. Foster writing in *Standard Bible Teacher*, Vol. 38, No. 2; Apr.-May-June 1936, article "The Risen Christ in Galilee," places this appearance after the Emmaus appearance.



3. Wieand Harmony places the appearance to Peter first.
  4. Lightfoot supposes one of the two at Emmaus to have been Peter.
    - a. Since there are not actual details given, it is hard to harmonize the accounts.
    - b. From Luke 24:34, it seems as if Jesus did appear to Simon (if the Simon talked of is Peter) before He did to the two disciples at Emmaus. McGarvey harmonized this verse with I Cor. 15:5.
- D. Jesus appears to the two Disciples going to Emmaus. Mark 16:12, 13; Luke 24:13-35.
1. Who were these two disciples? One was Cleopas, of whom nothing further is known. (Luke 24:18)
    - a. Some say the other was Luke, for he writes almost like one that might have been present during this experience.
    - b. Lightfoot (mentioned above) supposes him to be Peter.
  2. About Emmaus and its location from Jerusalem.
    - a. Luke 24:13, "village named Emmaus which was three score furlongs from Jerusalem."
      1. How far is this? If the ruins called el Kukeibeh is the ancient city of Emmaus, then it would be a distance of seven and thirteen-sixteenths of a mile from Jerusalem. The village has not yet been identified beyond dispute.
  3. Time of this meeting. Probably leaving Jerusalem about noon, and allowing for a slow walk, they would arrive in Emmaus a good while before sundown.
  4. Although the Lord met these two while on their way, their eyes were holden until the meal was being eaten. Luke gives the cause in Luke 24:31, "And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight." Mark gives the affect or their reaction in Mark 16:13, "And they went away and told it unto the rest: neither believed they them."
- E. Jesus appears to the ten. Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25.
1. Thomas is absent at this time.
  2. Place and time?
    - a. Place — In Jerusalem. In all probability, they were gathered in the same room in which they had eaten the paschal supper.

- b. Time — In the evening, for the two disciples who went to Emmaus arrived back in time to tell them of their experience.
  - 3. The actual appearance of Jesus in the room.
    - a. John writes that when they saw Jesus they were glad.
    - b. Luke writes that they were terrified and affrighted.
    - c. Why the apparent difference?
      - 1. Luke tells the immediate reaction as Jesus stands in the midst of them. How did he get here? They knew nothing of the possibilities of a resurrected body.
      - 2. John tells their attitude after they had been satisfied this was not a ghost, but their Lord!
- II. Jesus appears to the eleven, Thomas being present this time. Mark 16:14; John 20:26-31; I Cor. 15:5.
  - A. When and Where? In Jerusalem, probably the same place as where Jesus appeared to the ten. When? The following first day of the week. (Jn. 20:26).
  - B. Main object of thought. Getting Thomas to believe.
    - 1. While so doing, this was also reassuring proof for the others.
    - 2. Thomas asked to place his hand into Jesus' side.
      - a. Thomas' answer, "My Lord and my God!" (Jn. 20:28).
- III. Jesus appears to the Seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee. John 21:1-25. Only John records this incident.
  - A. Time — Some suggest the next Lord's Day; the day is actually unknown.
  - B. The seven disciples: Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, and two other disciples.
  - C. Order of events that happened:
    - 1. Peter and the others probably gathered in Peter's home in Capernaum.
    - 2. This waiting made then impatient. Thinking of an honest means of getting food, Peter said "I am off to fish tonight." The rest join in, "We are going with you."
    - 3. With all the old enthusiasm, they go fishing, but luck was against them that night, remindful of an experience three years earlier.
    - 4. At early morning someone appeared on the beach and asked, "Lads, have you anything to eat?" Their answer was, "No!"
      - a. Advice from the man on the shore. "Cast on the right side of the boat."

- b. The results; 153 fishes were caught in the net.
  - c. John at this, turned to Peter and said, "It is the Lord."
  - d. Peter immediately started swimming for the shore.
  - e. They all had fish for breakfast.
- 5. Jesus turned to Simon Peter and probed the recesses of Peter's heart to secure for him the humility necessary for service.
- 6. Peter asks about John.
  - a. Jesus' answer: John 21:22, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."
- IV. Jesus appears to the five hundred in Galilee. Matt. 28:16-20; I Cor. 15:6.
  - A. Problem: Some would separate this appearance, and make two appearances here, one to the eleven separately, then to the eleven as counted with the five hundred.
    - a. If Jesus gave the Great Commission at this time, would he give it to the eleven gathered together with so large a group?
    - b. But in Matt. 28:17, "some doubted," could be evidence that the groups were together.
    - c. Solution, if we separate these two appearances it eliminates this problem.
  - B. Where is this mountain that is spoken of in Matt. 28:16?
    - 1. Some possible places:
      - The Place of the Sermon on the Mount
      - The Mount of Transfiguration
      - The place where He choose the twelve
      - The place on the east side of the lake where Jesus fed the 5,000.
- V. Jesus appears to James. I Cor. 15:7.
  - A. No details given of this appearance.
  - B. Who is this James?
    - 1. Possibly one of Jesus' half-brothers, who had been converted after the resurrection.
    - 2. Later served as pastor of the Church at Jerusalem.
- VI. Jesus appears to the eleven in Jerusalem and leads them to the place of Ascension. Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:2-12.
  - A. Luke, who also wrote Acts, gives us the account of this in both of his writings, one a continuation of the other.
  - B. What Jesus told them at this time.
    - 1. Charged them not to depart from Jerusalem.

2. They were to wait for the promise of the Father.
3. Jesus told them they would be baptised in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.
4. They questioned Him about restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time. He answered, "It is not for you to know times nor seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority."
5. Jesus charged them to be witnesses for Him in all places, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth.
6. Jesus ascends into heaven.

VII. "And last of all, as to a child untimely born, he appeared to me also." I Cor. 15:8. This is the last appearance, which is to the Apostle Paul, and is recorded for us by Luke in Acts 9:3-9.

A. Paul says he saw the Lord.

Summary:

The forty days, or five weeks and five days, beginning on the day of the Resurrection which was from Sunday, April 9th, (17th Nisan) to Thursday, May 18th, may be divided into three periods. (1) That in Judea from Resurrection day to the departure into Galilee, (About twelve days). (2) That in Galilee, (About twenty-three days). (3) That after the return to Jerusalem to the Ascension, (About five days).

During the first period, from Resurrection Sunday to the Sunday following inclusive, there were six appearances, five on Resurrection Sunday: (a) to Mary Magdalene; (b) to the other women, 5?; (c) to the two at Emmaus; (d) to Peter; (e) to the Ten; on the next Sunday (f) to the Eleven.

During the second period, after the arrival in Galilee, there were three recorded appearances: (a) to the seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee; (b) to the five hundred, the eleven being with them or separately just before them; (c) to James.

During the third period, after the return to Jerusalem to the ascension, there were two appearances actually counted as one; (a) to the apostles first assembling somewhere in the city; (b) to them in the city to lead them out to Bethany.

Last of all, time and place, A.D. 37 on the Damascus Road He appeared to Saul, later called Paul.

Some reasons or purposes for the Lord's appearances:

1. To convince the disciples that He was indeed risen. The appearances are proof of the resurrection, the empty tomb, grave clothes, testimony of the angels, were proof and the disciples continued to doubt.

2. For continuity and the progressive nature of the Lord's redemption work. (Not only in seeing the Lord in His resurrected body, but most important, hearing what He taught after His resurrection.)

## EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. TWENTY

### EPILOGUE

*John 21:1-25*

#### *Introduction*

- I. RECALL THE PROLOGUE IN OUTLINE
- II. RECALL THE MAIN BODY OF THE GOSPEL IN OUTLINE
- III. NOW LOOK AT THE EPILOGUE

An epilogue is not an afterthought but a restatement *in condensed form* of the whole drama. It is a recapitulation; a summation; a conclusion.

There are two main subjects treated in this epilogue which sum up the basic message of the fourth gospel; the revelation of the Incarnate Word and the response and commission of the disciples.

#### *Discussion*

- I. OMNIPOTENT LORD 21:1-14
  - A. Disciples in Galilee at His command to meet with Him there
  - B. Disciples fishing to support their discipleship
    1. They had not renounced their discipleship and reverted to worldly ways
    2. Jesus did not condemn them for fishing, but helped them
  - C. Christ reveals His glory
    1. By supernatural omniscience in knowing where to cast the net (and probably by commanding the fish to be there)
    2. By eating breakfast with them and showing the reality of His resurrection in the body
  - D. This last miracle recorded by John serves to recap the very theme of the whole drama recorded in his gospel—The Word Become Flesh and Demonstrating His Glory.
    1. His supernatural deeds and words and personality is the very bed-rock basis of our faith in Him
    2. The demonstration of His omnipotent majesty *had* caused the disciples to say:
      - a. "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life."
      - b. "My Lord and my God!"
    3. The gospel was written by eyewitnesses to bring us to the same faith and trust in the person of Jesus Christ.

4. It is not intended that we should have a reckless faith—our faith is founded on historical fact—but such a faith ought to cause reckless and wholehearted devotion such as Peter demonstrated in jumping into the sea and rushing to the Master's presence.

## II. OBEDIENT LOVE 21:15-23

- A. Christ always gives a basis for our loving Him and trusting Him
  1. His power and deity
  2. His compassion and concern
  3. His sacrificial love (We love Him because He first loved us)
  4. This generates faith and love and obedience on our part
- B. Peter challenged to love and obedience
  1. Christ challenged Peter to a stronger love by asking him three times. This pricked the conscience of Peter who had so boastfully declared "Even if all these deny thee, I will never deny thee" and then denied Him three times.
    - a. This was not to reconcile Peter to Jesus for this had already been done at the first appearance of Jesus to Peter
    - b. It was not to reinstate Peter as an apostle
    - c. It was to develop Peter's love and obedience and to show to the other disciples his place of leadership
  2. Jesus used both the Greek words, *agapae* and *phile* for love
    - a. *agapae* is a love of faith—including the intellect and the will and less of the purely emotional
    - b. *phile* is a love of personal warmth more from emotion than any other element.
    - c. A combination of both is the only type of love worthy of being given to Christ (see our comments on this section)
  3. Out of such love will grow service
    - a. Jesus challenged Peter to feed (*boske*) His "little lambs."
    - b. Jesus challenged Peter to tend (*poimaine*) His sheep.
    - c. Peter is commissioned to be a shepherd for the sheep—in fact he is told that he will lay down his life for the sheep just as the Good Shepherd had done.
  4. Peter was not to worry about another—to know times and seasons
- C. There is a great lesson here for us
  1. If we love Him we will keep His commandments

2. If we love Him we will feed His sheep and lambs
3. If we love Him we will be willing to lay down our lives for His church
4. We are not to compare ourselves with others (II Cor. 10:13-18). We ought not be concerned with the lot of others; we dare not be jealous; we need not be anxious over times and seasons; **WE ARE SIMPLY TO FOLLOW THE LEADING OF JESUS AS HE COMMANDS IN HIS WORD AND LEADS US BY HIS PROVIDENCE!**

### III. OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE 21:24-25

- A. John was an eyewitness and his testimony is true
  1. There are abundant extant manuscripts of this Fourth Gospel—some which were written within 50-100 years after the death of the apostle himself.
  2. History of the early church fathers tell us that John was an eyewitness to these events.
  3. His gospel agrees with but also supplements the other records.
- B. There were so many sayings of Jesus and so many deeds that it would have been impractical, if not impossible, to have recorded them all.
  1. The records we have are more than sufficient to bring all who will to faith in Christ and to regeneration
  2. We have the faith once for all delivered—let no man add to or take away.

### EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 19, 20 and 21

#### *Identify These*

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Gabbatha    | 4. The Pavement    |
| 2. Golgotha    | 5. sea of Tiberias |
| 3. Preparation | 6. Praetorium      |

#### *Describe These*

- |                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Nicodemus           | 3. Mary Magdalene |
| 2. Joseph of Arimathea | 4. Thomas         |

#### *Questions for Discussion*

1. Discuss the political implications and pressure brought to bear upon Pilate and his resultant decision to crucify Jesus.
2. Discuss the day and time of Christ's crucifixion and its bearing upon the harmony of all the accounts of His passion.
3. Discuss the way in which the gospel records recount the factuality of His death and its bearing upon the factuality of the resurrection.

4. Discuss the death of Christ as an atonement for our sins.
5. Discuss the meaning of the resurrection.
6. Discuss the purpose of the Fourth Gospel.
7. Discuss the relationship of Jesus' miracles to faith and faith to love and love to obedience.

### *List*

1. Ten prophecies fulfilled in connection with His crucifixion
2. Ten people mentioned in these three chapters
3. Five theories of the skeptics as to the empty tomb and resurrection and refute each one
4. Ten appearances of the risen Lord

## IN SUMMATION

There is so much we would like to say in summation. It has been a glorious experience. We are deeply grateful for editor Don DeWelt's patience. We hope this work, insufficient as it is, may be some reward for his kindness. We have chosen to quote from Dr. Merrill C. Tenney's, "New Testament Survey," as a summation to this whole work.

## JOHN: THE GOSPEL OF BELIEF

"The structure of John's Gospel is so plain that its reader can hardly miss it. From beginning to end the theme of belief is followed consistently. Moreover, the Gospel is not an attempt to super-impose an artificial organization upon existing facts. The inspired writer has selected certain episodes and teachings which represent the character and progress of the revelation of God in Christ (1:10), and has arranged them in such a way as to sweep his reader along in the tide of spiritual movement toward an active confessional faith in Christ.

"The Prologue (1:1-18) begins by using the term *word* (Greek *logos*) to introduce the person of Christ. This term differs from those used in the other Gospels, for it does not connote any particular religious background. *Christ* is Jewish; *Lord* is Gentile; *Jesus* is human; but *Word* or *Logos* is philosophical. John thus makes the subject of his Gospel a universal figure, the incarnation of the Eternal Reason who is God, who came from God, and who reveals God as a son reveals a father. He is to be apprehended by those who receive Him (1:12), and the conflict between those who receive Him and those who do not is likened to the conflict between light and darkness.

"The Period of Consideration (1:19—4:54) presents the person of the Word made flesh as He appeared to His contemporaries and as He was received by them. First He is proclaimed in the witness of His forerunner, John, and in His dealing with John's disciples. His essential mission, "the Lamb of God (1:29)," and His method of appealing



to the needs and desires of His would-be followers connects Him with preceding history and revelation. He utilized both the preaching of John and the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament to establish His position. In the works which He performed He demonstrated His inherent power over things, over men, and over institutions (2:1-22). The interviews that followed were fuller manifestations of His sufficiency for all men. The learned and gentlemanly Jewish teacher, Nicodemus, the sharp-tongued and cynical Samaritan woman, and the importunate nobleman of Galilee, probably a Gentile, were all directed to faith in Jesus by different arguments and by different methods.

"From Jesus' public presentation of Himself arose controversy, for when He appealed to men to believe in Him, many refused. He did not ask for a blind or unreasoning faith, but He took care always to appeal to facts and to define clearly the issues at stake in belief and in unbelief.

"The healing of the man at the pool precipitated the Period of Controversy (5:1—6:71), because the miracle was performed on the Sabbath. Jesus indicated that His action was a sample of what His Father was continually doing, and thus tacitly claimed deity as His prerogative. In the discussion that followed (5:19-47) He argued for belief in Himself on the basis of five witnesses: Himself, the forerunner, the Father, the works which He had performed, and the Scripture. The miracles and the discourses that followed are bound closely together, for the discourse is only the amplification of the truth enacted in the miracles. The appeal for belief is very strong in this section, as if Jesus were desirous of having the disciples commit themselves to Him before the heat of controversy might alienate them from Him.

"The Period of Conflict (7:1—11:53) carries the trends of the Period of Controversy to their logical crisis. The growing through hesitant faith of the disciples is contrasted with the stark cynicism of Jesus' brethren, with the wavering allegiance of the bewildered multitude, and with the venomous opposition of the Jewish hierarchy. Jesus' own evaluation of the conflict appears in the history of the blind man, where He expressed the necessity of doing the works of God while He still had opportunity, and also in the raising of Lazarus, which He regarded as a supreme test of faith and as the climactic proof of His power. The discourse material which is included between these two miracles in the tenth chapter is Jesus' last extended public statement of His mission. It declares the purpose of His death as clearly as did His utterance to the disciples at Caesarea Philippi which is recorded in the Synoptics. The outcome of the conflict is predicted in His words; "I lay down my life, that I may take it again" (10:17).

"In the Period of Crisis (11:54—12:36a) appear the various tensions which the conflict has created. Jesus retired from Jerusalem and its environs to Ephraim in order that He might be out of the storm center. The feeling of His friends was openly declared by the family of Bethany, who gave a dinner in His honor (12:1-2). The pilgrim multitude, who was present in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, hailed Him enthusiastically (12:20-21). Jesus Himself realized that the die was cast, and removed Himself from public contacts (12:36). Divine destiny, not popular vote, was the deciding factor in His life.

"Up to this point Jesus' ministry was public; from here on it was private. The Period of Conference (12:36b—17:26) comprises the final instruction to the disciples after the Last Supper and also His prayer to the Father. The preparation of the disciples for the shock of the cross and the report to the Father that He had finished His work concluded the earthly ministry of Jesus.

"The Period of Consummation (18:1—20:31) brings the fulfillment of the two clashing principles of belief and of unbelief. In the betrayal and crucifixion unbelief was unmasked. The weakness of Peter, the treachery of Judas, the jealous malice of the priests, and the cowardice of Pilate show how unbelief reaches its ultimate end. On the other hand, the constancy of the beloved disciple and the women and the generous action of Joseph and of Nicodemus show how even an imperfect and uninstructed faith can maintain loyalty in spite of bewilderment and danger. The resurrection, of course, was the final justification of belief as well as the final vindication of the revelation through Jesus the Son of God."

Amen