

John 19:25-42
Zechariah 12-13
Psalm 69

“Crucified, Dead, and Buried”

November 8, 2020

Zechariah speaks of the Day of the LORD –
the day on which God would restore the fortunes of his people –
the day when a fountain would be opened for the house of David –
to cleanse God’s people from their sin and uncleanness.

But Zechariah says this in the midst of some pretty strange and difficult sayings!
It sure sounds like the coming day of the LORD will be a painful day –
and not just painful for his enemies!!

It sounds a lot like the Cross.

Remember that – when you are going through painful situations!
If you do evil and you suffer for it –
don't call that “suffering for Jesus!”
but if you do good – if you suffer unjustly –
this is a *gracious thing* in the sight of God.

And it is in those times that we can join our voices with our Lord Jesus
and sing Psalm 69...

Sing Psalm 69
Read John 19:23-42

1. Jesus and His Mother (v25-27)
a. Jesus Has Nothing Left (v23-24)

²³ *When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic.^[d] But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom,* ²⁴ *so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, “They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”*

Last time we heard Pilate declare: “Behold, the Man”
Look at Jesus – and though Pilate may have intended it ironically,
we behold the Man – the second Adam.

Last time we heard Pilate declare: “Behold your King”
And we behold the Son of David – the one who will rule the nations with a rod of iron.

And yet what do we see?

We see the King with a crown of thorns.
We see the Man stripped of his raiment.

The first Adam was created naked and unashamed.
He was clothed to cover the shame of his sin.
The second Adam walked through life clothed.
He was unclothed to uncover the shame of his sin-bearing.
The shame that Adam bore for his sin,
is now revealed openly in Jesus – the Man.

God himself gave clothing to Adam as a gift.
The first God-given clothing consisted of animal skins,
and through the shedding of blood, man was protected from his own sin.
But now the second Adam is left unprotected.
God's gift is stripped away.

And his clothes are divided among the soldiers.
All of his worldly possessions are gone—even the clothes off his back.
He who was rich beyond all measure, now, for our sakes became poor.

And as the soldiers divide his clothing,
Jesus – the Man – the King –
now speaks.

Pilate had said “Behold” twice.
So will Jesus.

b. “Behold, Your Mother!” – The Son Provides (v25-27)

So the soldiers did these things, ²⁵ but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

Because standing there at the cross was Jesus's mother, Mary,
along with Mary the wife of Clopas
and Mary Magdalene.

Matthew and Luke place the Marys at a distance,
watching from afar.
John brings them to the foot of the cross.
They are here not for their own sake,
but for his.

Jesus is seen here at the cross to be ever-faithful to his Father.
God had commanded him “honor your father and your mother,”
and yet now he would be leaving his mother destitute and helpless.

The chief priests and leaders of the Jews had cried out “We have a law!”

And then they ran roughshod over that law in order to send Jesus to the cross.

But Jesus, remembering God’s law even in the agony of his hour,
gives to his mother the honor that is her due.

“Woman, behold, your son.”

“John, behold, your mother.”

Even as he endures the pains of hell for our sakes,
he does not turn aside from God’s law.

But when Jesus speaks these words to Mary,
then comes to pass the prophecy that Simeon had spoken to Mary in the temple:
“A sword will pierce through your soul also.” (Luke 2:35)
“The mother must now give up her own son;
for His sake she has been called blessed among women.” (Schilder, 3.347)
Now for his sake she must surrender him.

John must be a son to her, for Jesus can no longer fill that role.
Jesus cannot provide for a mother the way that a son should –
and yet, he *does* – because he commissions John.
John must serve as Jesus’ substitute in caring for his mother.

Think for a moment about the relationship between Eve and Mary.
“Both mothers stand at the beginning of a new epoch of time.”
When Eve’s Cain slew Abel, Abel was replaced by Seth.
“Seth is the substitute, the successor;”
and the name which Eve gave him makes that clear.
But Mary’s is not simply “a” son, but “the” Son.
“She has given birth to the great Son, to the “man” child who was
“to rule all nations with a rod of iron.” (Rev. 12).” (Schilder 3.352).
But yet on the cross this mighty son has become impotent.
He will rule the nations, but now he cannot even care for his mother.
He is a worm—and not a man at all. (Psalm 22)

He therefore addresses her as “woman” –
the same term he used at the wedding at Cana.

He’s not being rude.
But she cannot be mother to him any longer.

The sword must pierce her soul—not merely in her private grief,
but in her public standing.

“Woman, behold your son.”
I cannot be your son any longer.

In Acts 1, Mary is present with the faithful,
but she is not seated with the apostles.
She is seated with the women, and with Jesus’ siblings.
From there she fades into the background.
She did not seek honor and glory.
She accepts the place of a disciple at her son’s feet.
And takes John as her son.
She passed the test.
She diminished and therefore remains worthy of honor,
not as the Queen of Heaven,
but as the faithful mother of our Lord.

But he is now utterly alone.
Abandoned by his disciples—denied by Peter—he now sends away even his mother.
No one can follow him here, even if they would wish to.

2. The Glorification of Jesus in the Cross (v28-37)

a. “I Thirst” (v28-29)

²⁸ *After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.”*

²⁹ *A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.*

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished (to fulfill the scripture), said
“I thirst”

Before he was crucified, he refused the wine mixed with myrrh. (Mark 15)

But now he calls for this sour wine—this vinegar.

Why?

Because he is thirsty!

He has endured now three hours of darkness on the cross.

And knowing that all was now finished,

knowing that his hour had come to go to the Father,
he said, “I thirst.”

Why not just die?

What is so important about his thirst?

We could point to Psalm 22:15

“My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and tongue sticks to my jaws;
you have brought me into the dust of death.”

And we can see the same point in Psalm 69:21

“They gave me gall for my food,
and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”

But it is not as though Jesus is mechanically trying to fulfill individual prophecies—
besides, there is nothing in Psalm 22 or 69 that required a future fulfillment!
It is rather that the whole of Jesus’ suffering and obedience was to fulfill the scriptures.
He is fulfilling the pattern of the scriptures.

As the deer pants for the water, so his soul pants for God.

“He would drink something, for he would satisfy the thirst
of all those who are to stand around the Father’s throne.”

And for him to do this, death cannot seize him,
he must surrender himself to death.

And so he summons his last strength and calls for his final drink,
resembling Jonathan, the son of Saul,

who tasted honey to strengthen himself in battle.

Jesus calls for the vinegar so that he might keep his wits until the last!

“As he does so He sings the psalms of David (“all the scriptures”).”

Psalms 22 and 69 do speak of him,
because he is the mocked and humiliated one.

Or to put it another way,
at the cross, the river of living water has dried up.

He had said in John 7 that from *his heart* would flow streams of living water.

But on the cross, that stream has run dry.

b. “It Is Finished” (v30)

³⁰ *When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

And when he had received the sour wine, he said,

“It is finished.”

And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

It is finished.

All the scripture has been fulfilled.

It is finished.

His cup of suffering has been drained to the dregs.

It is finished.

Jesus has completed all that his Father had sent him to do.

Now we must be careful.
Not everything is finished.

He has not finished his Messianic work until he is raised to the right hand of the Father.
He has not satisfied the justice of God until he presents his sacrifice to the Father.
Even his humiliation is not finished in one sense, because he must still be buried.

But his work as the suffering servant is finished.

There are three places in scripture that use this idea.
The first is in Genesis 2:1—"The heavens and the earth were finished."
The last is in Revelation 16:17—"it is done."

History begins and ends with God's declaration, "it is finished."

The beginning of the world and the end of the world are bound together
by this cry from the middle of history.

Because all that God had promised to Israel that he would do at the end of history
for the salvation of his people,

He has done in Jesus Christ in the middle of history.

The final judgment has fallen upon Jesus in the middle of history,
and Jesus has withstood it.

The Father has poured out his wrath upon his Son,
and the Son has endured it.

Therefore this cry, "It is finished" in all of its pain and agony,
is nonetheless a cry of joy!

It is the cry of one who has withstood every temptation, every trial,
and has emerged victorious.

It is, properly speaking, the justification—or the vindication—of the Son of God.

Of course, Jesus does not need justification in the sense that we do.

He has no sin.

But he who knew no sin, has been made sin for us.

"He has been condemned by the justice of God,
and must by that same justice be restored to favor." (Schilder, 3.460)

That divine decree, "NOT GUILTY!!" will be proclaimed in three days,
when God rends the heavens on Sunday morning,
and proclaims the justification of the Christ by raising him from the dead.

Here, in the middle of history, the eschatological justification of Israel takes place.

Therefore, if you would stand in the final judgment,
then you must stand here and see the glory of Jesus as he was lifted up.

Because he gave up his spirit.

It was not taken from him.

He did not die witless and unmanned.

Death did not seize him,
he surrendered full willing.

c. “Blood and Water” Flowed (v31-37)

³¹ Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. ³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. ³⁵ He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. ³⁶ For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” ³⁷ And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”

With Jesus’s dead body hanging there on the cross,
John now draws our eyes back to the Jews.
The Roman custom was to leave the dead body there until it rotted away,
but this was unacceptable to the Jews.
God had declared in Dt 21:23 that no dead body was to be left on a tree after nightfall,
else the land would be defiled.

So the Jews insisted that all crucified persons be buried the same day.
Crucifixion was a long enough process, that many people would not die so soon,
but if their legs were broken, they could no longer push themselves up,
and they would suffocate and die.
But when the soldiers came to break Jesus’ legs,
they discovered that he was already dead.

Just to make sure, though, one soldier thrust his spear into Jesus’ side.
“And at once there came out blood and water.”
Some have said that this is normal at death,
but if it is so common, why does John insist that his testimony is true?

John seems to recognize that there is something important about the blood and water.
He has been hinting at it all throughout his gospel.
Jesus has said that he is the source of living water (John 4).
He insisted that for those who believe, he will be a spring of water,
overflowing to eternal life:
“Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38).
That river had been dried up in his thirst,
but now in his death, that river is unleashed.

Ezekiel had spoken of the heavenly temple that would have a river of life flowing
deeper and wider throughout the nations.

Zechariah 13:1 says that on that day there shall be a fountain opened
for the house of David.

Now in Jesus, the true temple, we see that river,
we behold that fountain.

“Let the water and the blood, from thy riven side which flowed, be of sin the double cure,
cleanse me from its guilt and power.”

And John says that these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled:

Not one of his bones will be broken. (Psalm 34)

Psalm 34:20 identifies the righteous as the afflicted one whose bones are kept unbroken
God will preserve his righteous one and maintain his integrity.

There is perhaps also an echo of Ex 12:46, which stated that
the Passover lamb is not to have any broken bones.

The sacrifice must be perfect.

The righteous one must be perfect.

And in Jesus the righteous one becomes the sacrifice.

But while his bones remain unbroken,
they will look on him whom they have pierced.

This is from Zechariah 12:10, when God says,

“they shall look on me, on him whom they have pierced.”

Perhaps even Zechariah had no idea how true this would be.

God himself would be pierced—literally—for the sake of his people.

3. The Burial of Jesus by Joseph and Nicodemus (v38-42)

³⁸ After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. ³⁹ Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus^[e] by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds^[l] in weight. ⁴⁰ So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴² So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus.

He and Nicodemus—both highly ranked members of the Sanhedrin--
had become disciples of Jesus.

They had no idea what had just happened,
but they were constrained by love for Jesus.

And perhaps by guilt.

Joseph and Nicodemus, after all, did not stand up for Jesus in the Sanhedrin.

Probably they didn't even attend the trial.

They were no better than Peter—they too had denied him.

But they had to act quickly,
for it was late in the afternoon, and Jesus had to be buried before sundown.
So they took him to Joseph of Arimathea's tomb,
and with 75 pounds of spices and a linen cloth,
they quickly wrapped Jesus' body and laid it in the grave.
And as the evening of the sixth day fell, the body of our Lord was laid to rest.

Some have said that the burial of Jesus proves that he was dead.

That is true.

But it says so much more!

The first Adam was created from the dust of the ground on the sixth day.

The last Adam was returned to the dust of the ground on the sixth day.

The grave was a part of the humiliation of Christ.

Until now he could explain the meaning of what was happening to him.

He had told his disciples that the Christ must die and be raised from the dead,
but they don't get it!

Here, however, he is mute.

There is no greater testimony to the power of the resurrection than this moment.

Even these few faithful disciples who gather to bury Jesus
do not *really* believe in him.

They had hoped that he was the one who would redeem Israel.

They had thought that he would restore the kingdom of God.

But they were wrong.

But even in the midst of the confusion and sorrow,

as the sun sets over the western hills,

you can see the embers of faith glowing very faintly in the darkness.

Joseph and Nicodemus cannot see through the deepening night,

but neither can they escape the call of Christ.

They know that there is a light somewhere in this darkness,

and they know that the light lived in Jesus.

Nicodemus had come to Jesus at night.

Neither he nor Joseph had been willing to identify openly with Jesus.

Now it is night once more,

and in this darkest of nights, only these two old men can be found at Jesus' side.

They are still confused and afraid,

but they are there.

In his life they would not walk with Jesus,

but in his death they are forced to take their stand for him.

Such is the power of the cross.

If I am lifted up, I will draw all people to myself.

These two old men had withstood the call of the Teacher,
but they could not escape the call of Christ exalted on the cross.

And now he calls *you*