

Introduction: In these verses we read the conclusion of our Lord Jesus Christ's passion. After six hours of agonizing suffering, he became obedient even unto death and "yielded up the ghost." Three points in the narrative demand a special notice: to them let us confine our attention.

I. **"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me!"**

There is a deep mystery in these words which no mortal man can fathom. JC Ryle explains that there is no doubt that these words did not come as a result of mere bodily pain: such an explanation is utterly unsatisfactory, and dishonorable to our blessed Savior. They were meant to express the real pressure on his soul of the enormous burden of the sins of all the world throughout history.

- A. Isaiah 53:10. "yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt..." fulfilled by the Servant as the Lamb of God (Isa. 53:6; John 1:29) Christ is the Christian Passover (1 Cor. 5:7) Isa.:12;" because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sins of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors. "Why hast thou forsaken me!" It is a cry that should stir us up to hate sin, and encourage us to trust in Christ.
- B. Bishop Hall; "Our Lord said this under a deep sense of his father's wrath unto mankind, in whose stead he now underwent that which was due for the sins of the whole world. When he said," Why Hast thou forsaken me? "He implied that God had for the time withdrawn from him the sense and vision of his comfortable presence. Though the servant did not deserve to die, it was the Lord's will for him to do so: Matt.26:39 "let this cup pass from me"; Luke 22:42 "Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."; John 12:27 "But for this purpose I have come to this hour".
- C. This was the plan of God The Father for our benefit. Acts 2:23,24; "this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, losing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it." Matthew Henry summarizes the work of God; "Christ was imprisoned for our debt, was thrown into the hands of death; but, divine justice being satisfied, it was not possible he should be detained there, either by right or by force; for he had life in himself, and in his own power, and had conquered the prince of death."
- D. Isa. 53:4-6. "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we were healed. All we like sheep have

gone astray; we have turned -every one- to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” The apostle Peter declared that Christ died for sins, once for all in 1 Peter 3:18 “ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit“. Paul observed that Christ died for our sins as written in 1Cor. 15:3-10; ” Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. We all have sinned, Romans 3:23-26; “ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.“ Our consequence would be death (Rom. 6:23). We are all headed for judgment, condemnation, and eternal death, unless God himself intervened. And God did intervene, that is how we are to understand the coming of Jesus into this world and his death on the cross.

II. “He yielded up the Ghost”

There never was a last breath drawn of such deep importance as this one. There was never any event on which so much depended for the eternal salvation of man.

- A. The death of our lord Jesus discharged in full the mighty debt which sinners owed to God and threw open the door of life to every believer.
 1. His death satisfied the righteous claims of God's holy law; a. Romans 10:4; “ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.“
 - b. Romans 3:21; “But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it- the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.”
 - c. Rom. 3:25; “ whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood to be received by faith.
 2. Jesus sacrificed allowed God to be “ just, and be the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”(Rom. 3:26).
 3. This sacrifice was a complete atonement and propitiation for men’s sin, affecting the condition and prospects of all mankind; “Behold the Lamb of God” (Jn. 1:29).
 4. Jesus, the lamb, solved the most difficult problem, how God could be perfectly holy, and yet perfectly merciful;”Behold the Lamb of God”; John (Jn. 1:36).
 5. His death and resurrection was a complete victory over Satan and spoiled him openly; it finished the transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness (Dan.4:24; Rom. 6:23-24).

6. No wonder that the earth quaked when Jesus died in our stead on the accursed tree: the solid frame of the world might well tremble and be amazed, when the soul of Christ was made “an offering for sin.” (Isa.53:10).
7. He refused the “strong drink”(Myrrh, a narcotic) ;Ps. 69:21 “they gave me sour wine to drink”. M. Henry: “ He would have nothing like an opiate to lessen the pain, for he would die so as to feel himself die, because he had so much work to do as our High Priest in his suffering work.” MacArther notes that Jesus knew he had work yet to do and needed a clear mind to minister the Gospel to the thief on the cross.

III. “The veil of the temple was rent in twain.” The curtain which separated the holy of holies from the rest of the temple, and through which the high priest alone might pass, was suddenly split from top to bottom.

- A. Of all the wonderful signs which accompanied our Lord’s death, none was more significant than this. The midday darkness, for three hours, must have been a startling event;The earthquake, which rent the rocks, must have been a tremendous shock: but there was a meaning in the sudden rending of the veil from top to bottom which must have got the attention of any intelligent Jew of that day. (Matt. 27:51)
- B. That rending of the veil proclaimed the termination in passing away of the ceremonial law. The old dispensation of sacrifices and ordinances was no longer needed: it’s work was done it’s occupation was gone, from the moment that Christ died there was no more need of: a. an earthly high priest. b. a mercy seat and a sprinkling of blood. c. An offering up of incense. d. A day of atonement. That rendering of the veil proclaimed the opening of the way of salvation to all mankind. The way into the presence of God was unknown to the gentile and only seen dimly by the Jew until Christ died; but Christ having now offered up a perfect sacrifice, and obtained eternal redemption, the darkness in mystery was to pass away. The gospel was the revelation of a mystery, which had been hidden for ages: to clothe religion now with mystery, is to mistake the grand characteristic of Christianity. Let us praise God for the view it gives us of the love of the father in heaven. He that spared not his own son, but delivered Him up for us all, will surely with Him, graciously give us all things.(Rom.. 8:32).
- C. Application: Think of what our Lord did with his power of providential control. „Men who were very trustworthy soldiers were asked to watch over this event. Matthew Henry comments upon the situation; “They now sat down, and watched him “(vs 36).The chief priests were careful, no doubt, in setting this guard, lest the people, whom they still stood in awe of, should rise, and rescue Him . But God’s Providence so ordered it, that those who were appointed to watch Him, thereby became the perfect witnesses for Him; Having the opportunity to see and hear that which extorted from them that noble confession in verse 54, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

God's Providential Work Continues

These verses contain the history of our Lord Jesus Christ burial. There was yet one thing needful, in order to make it certain that our redeemer accomplish that great work for redemption which he undertook. That holy body, in which he bore our sins on the cross, must actually be laid in the grave and rise again. His resurrection was to be the seal and head- stone of all the work.

I. The infinite wisdom of God foresaw the objections of unbelievers and provided against them.

- A. Did the son of God really die? Did he really rise again? Might there not have been some delusion as to the reality of his death? Might there not have been in position or deception, as to the reality of his resurrection? All of these and many more objections would doubtless have been raised, if opportunity had been given. But he who knows the end from the beginning prevented the possibility of such objections being made: by his overruling providence he ordered things so that the death and burial of Jesus were placed beyond a doubt.
- B. Pilot gives consent to his burial: a loving disciple wraps the body in linen and lays it in a new unused tomb made out of rock. The chief priests themselves city guard over the place where his body was deposited. Jews and Gentiles, friends and enemies, testify to the great fact that Christ did really and actually die and was laid in a grave.

II. Our Lord Jesus Christ had friends of whom little is known.

We cannot have a more striking example of this truth than we see in the passage now before us. A man named Joseph, of Arimathea, comes forward when our Lord was dead, and asks permission to bury him.

- A. We have never heard of this man at any former period of our Lord's earthly ministry: we never hear of him again.
- B. We know nothing, but that he was a disciple who loved Christ, and did him honor. At a time when it was a dangerous thing to profess regard for him, at a time when there seem to be no earthly advantage to be gained by confessing his discipleship, at a time as this, Joseph comes forward boldly and begs for the body of Jesus, and lays it in his own new tomb (Matt. 27:57-60).
- C. This fact is full of comfort and encouragement. It shows us that there are some quiet, retiring souls on earth, who know the Lord and the Lord knows them, and yet they are a little known by the church. There are a diversity of gifts among Christ people: there were some who glorify Christ passively in some who glorify him actively, there are some who

is vocation it is to build the church and fill a public place and there are some who only come forward like Joseph, in times of special need. But each and all are led by one spirit and each and all glorify God in their various ways.

- D. These things teach us to be more hopeful. Let us believe that as we are told in Matthew 8:11, “many shall yet come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”

III. God can make the devices of wicked men work round to his own glory.

Ryle makes a strong case for the providence of God using first Corinthians 3:19 to undergird his point: “The wisdom of this world is faulty with God. For it is written, ‘he catches the wise in their craftiness,’ and again, ‘the Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.’” In all their efforts to “make the sepulcher sure”; Pilate ordered a Roman guard on the tomb and placed a seal upon the entry stone. Their own devices became instruments to show forth God’s glory (Matt. 27; 62-66). The history of the church of Christ is full of examples of a similar kind. The very things that have seemed most unfavorable to God’s people have often turned out to be for their good (Rom. 8;28).

- What harm did the persecution of Stephen do to the church of Christ? They that were scattered went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 7:4).
- What harm did imprisonment do to Saint Paul? It gave him time to write many Epistles which are now read all over the world.
- What harm did the persecution of bloody Mary do to the cause of the English reformation? The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church.
- What harm does persecution do to the people of God at this very day? It only drives them nearer to Christ: it only makes them cling more closely to the throne of grace, the Bible, and prayer.
- Let all true Christians take these things to heart, and take courage. We live in a world where all things are ordered by a hand of perfect wisdom, and where all things are working together continually for the good of the body of Christ. The powers of this world are only tools in the hand of God: He is ever using them for his own purposes, however little they may be aware of it. They are the instruments by which he is ever squaring and polishing the living stones of his spiritual temple, and all their schemes and plans will only turn to His praise. Let us be patient in days of trouble and darkness, and look forward. The very things which now seem against us are all working together for God’s glory. We see but half now: yet a little, we shall see all; and we shall then discover that all the persecution we now endure was, like “the seal “ and “ the guard” tending to God’s glory. God can make “the wrath of man praise Him. “ (Psalm 77:10)
We praise God when we in faith, thank Him for His perfect Providence in our life. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusts in Thee” (Isa. 26:3).