

## ***“Jesus is Led Out to be Crucified”***

Pilate finds Jesus to be not guilty – but hands Him over to the Roman soldiers who work Him over – and then, “they led Him out to crucify Him.” We can point our fingers at the Romans, or at the people of Israel for their hand in all this – but we are all guilty of this Man’s death, because He dies for our sin. But what we must not overlook, is the hand of God in all of this.

As Acts 4 says, Herod and Pontius Pilate and the Gentiles and the people of Israel were all part of God’s plan. In other words – it is God the Father who leads His Son out to be crucified.

This plan of God is not new – nor was it unknown. Three times Jesus had told His disciples that He would be “delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and He will be raised on the third day.” (Matt. 20:18-19)

Those disciples, of course, are now nowhere to be seen. But all of Israel had been told – for God’s plan of salvation is woven throughout the Old Testament Scriptures.

One of the clearest pictures comes in Genesis 22 when the Lord commands Abraham to take his son Isaac – his beloved son – and sacrifice him on the mountain that the Lord will show him.

Isaac carries the wood, even as Jesus carries His cross. Isaac is bound and laid on the altar prepared by his father – even as Jesus is nailed to the cross prepared by His Father. The mountain that Isaac was led to was Mt. Moriah – which is Jerusalem! Of course, Isaac is spared – because only Jesus can be sacrificed for the sin of the world.

A similar thing takes place in 2 Samuel 11 when Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba – carries his own death sentence – the letter from King David to Commander Joab, telling him to sacrifice Uriah in the battle. The innocent, honorable, faithful Uriah – is put to death to cover the sins of the guilty one. (verse 14ff)

In Genesis 37, we have the story of Joseph – another type of the Christ who was to come. He is his father's beloved son. He is despised by his brothers. He is thrown into the waterless pit (mentioned in Zechariah 9 in reference to the Messiah). His colorful coat is stripped from him and soaked in blood.

In Joseph is foreshadowed the Father's beloved Son – despised, stripped of His purple cloak, and soaking His own clothes with His own blood. There are many other comparisons to the Christ that we could make with Joseph (like his resurrection from the dark prison-hole) – but Joseph is not the Christ – but he reveals, and points us to the Christ.

Jesus is led out to be killed – like Cain who led Abel into the field in order to kill him. Whether it be the people of Israel or the Romans – sin was crouching at their door, and it overcame them. God's plan for taking care of Cain's sin, and the sin of the whole world – was to lead our brother Jesus, out to be killed. So also, the offering of Jesus' life is pleasing to the Lord. (Genesis 4)

All of the sacrifices of the Old Testament foreshadow the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God – the one and only sacrifice that atones for sin. However, of all the sacrifices, the one described in Leviticus 16 best shows forth the Father's plan of salvation.

Once a year on the Day of Atonement, two goats were brought to the Temple. One would be sacrificed – its blood shed – and be given as an offering to the Lord. The priest would take the other goat, known as the scapegoat – place his hands on the head of that goat, thereby transferring all the sin of Israel to that animal – and send it out into the wilderness.

This goat, the scapegoat, was designated for Azazel – that is, sent to hell – which is exactly what the Lord does with the sin that Jesus bears on behalf of the whole world. Notice, Jesus is both the goat offered to God – and the scapegoat, who takes sin away from God's people.

Hebrews 13 also makes this connection for us. “For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So, Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own blood.”

In Genesis 3 we are told of our first parents who were driven out of Paradise – driven away from the presence of God – which is part of the curse associated with sin. So, Jesus is driven out in order to redeem us from the curse of sin – for as Galatians 3:13 says – He became a curse for us, “for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.’”

Jesus bears the sin of the world as He hangs from the tree of the cross – and as THE CURSE, He is forsaken by God – cut off from the face of the Lord, His Father turning His back on Him – because He has become SIN for us.

We are familiar with the language of Isaiah 9 where the Messiah is revealed to us: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder ...” The “government,” that is, His “kingdom” – His rule and reign is on His shoulders, as Jesus bears His cross to Calvary.

This is truly God’s reign on earth – for Jesus, the King, rules and reigns over all sin and death by His suffering and death. In so doing, as Isaiah 9 also says, Jesus breaks the yoke of our burden. Or, as Jesus says in St. Matthew 11.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Along comes Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and the soldiers force him to carry the cross of Jesus. Some speculate that the soldiers were afraid Jesus would die on them before they got Him crucified – and they had their orders. Indeed, Jesus has suffered much, even before He gets to Golgotha.

Jesus had previously said to His disciples: “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” (Matt. 16:24) Simon takes up the cross of Jesus – for as we learn in 2 Corinthians 1 – “we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings.”

Simon indeed suffers with and for Christ – but Jesus alone will suffer and die upon that cross – because salvation is found in no one else – only in this one named Jesus, so named because He “will save His people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:21)

The Father’s hand is in ALL of this. He leads His Son to be sacrificed on the cross of Calvary in the place of the whole world. His Son is falsely accused, mocked, beaten, bloodied, sentenced to death, burdened, suffers thirst and suffers great pain. The Father gives His Son to die in your place – and in so doing – He gives up the Spirit.

From this crucified One, God the Holy Spirit proceeds, so that the good news of God’s salvation might resound in your ears. In faith He leads you out to this Jesus who bears all your sin, so that you may hear Him declare in no uncertain terms – “it is finished.” Your salvation, your redemption – it is complete, in Jesus, your Savior.

Dearly beloved, the Holy Spirit gathers us to the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ so that we might receive the Gospel – that ALL of this the Father has done because of His great love “for you.”

In Jesus, your guilt and burden is lifted. In Jesus, your fear is put to death. In Jesus, you see the Father’s hand – giving you rest – now and eternally.

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.