

The Passion Of The Lord Christ En Route To Calvary

Introduction

There are few sights more somber than that of a stately funeral, and yet none could compare with the walk of our Lord from Pilate's Judgment Hall to Calvary. Despite the morning hour, the news evidently spread, Jesus is condemned to death and they are going to crucify Him today. Whatever the procession was, there would have been no lightness of heart except for those who wanted Him killed. One can see the sight, women with children in tow weeping as they watch the sight. Three men walking to their death. To the natural understanding, each taking the last steps they would ever take on earth. Then the place of a skull rose up before them. This was real, perhaps somewhat surreal, but each step took each of them nearer to the place where numbers had assembled to see the gruesome sight.

Pilate had pronounce the awful words: "Ibis ad crucem", and Christ was delivered to that which was, by Cicero, known as: "the most cruel and horrifying death". Christ was "delivered".

- a) He had been delivered (paradidomi) by the Jews to the Gentiles (Matt. 20:19)
- b) Judas had betrayed (paradidomi) Him to the chief priests (Matt. 20:18)
- c) Pilate delivered (paradidomi) Him (Matt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15; Lk. 23:25; Jn. 19:16).
- d) When about to enter death the Lord "gave up" (paradidomi) the ghost (Jn. 19:30). The word indicates "to commit, give over to".
- e) He was "led away" (Lk. 23:26). It is a simple statement, but one hears echoes from the Old Testament: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter" (Acts 8:32; Isa. 53:7).

Having been "delivered" to the Jewish leaders officially and the sentence being passed, the Lord is "Led away" (Matt. 27:31). What a sight that was, three men walking to their death with one person walking in the front carrying the board with the crime written on it, whilst shouting aloud: "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS". Following him was the condemned in the midst of four soldiers, and possibly the centurion riding on horseback. The longest route would be taken, which in itself was an act of humiliation and mercy. As the condemned walked the busy, and at times, narrow streets, they were the spectacle of shame, especially to one who was not a hardened criminal. For instance, if I was in a shopping mall and by mistaken identity was handcuffed and walked by police on either side through the mall, how would I feel? At the same time this was an act of mercy so that if anyone could give just cause why the condemned not be put to death, the procession would be stopped and there would be a retrial. It is amazing that despite the thousands who had known and been partakers of the miracle of the bread and fishes, despite the possible hundreds who were healed, and those who were raised from the dead, not a single one stepped forward. Not one individual stepped forward in His defence. How utterly lonely He must have felt.

They had taken the crimson robe off Him and put His own raiment on Him. Interestingly we never read of them taking the crown of thorns off Him. What a sight this was, that bruised, raw, and bloodied face with a crown of thorns, and carrying the cross beam of the cross (Jn. 19:17).

Only Luke records the spoken words of our Lord when en route to Calvary. A great number of people, and women, followed him bewailing and lamenting Him (Lk. 23:27). Since they were following, He either had to stop or walk backwards while addressing them. The depths of sorrow that burdened His heart at that moment must have been intensified as He spoke of that which lay ahead for them and the populace of the place He loved. This was the city He had wept over (Lk. 19:41-44). Who could console Him as he wept those plaintive words: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37). Now walking along the Via Delorosa He speaks again.

- a) He had spoken the last words to Judas (Jn. 13:27-29), and with what tenderness they were spoken.
- b) After Judas had gone out (Jn. 13:30) He spoke the last words to the disciples, and how full of comforting compassion they were (Jn. 13:31-33).
- c) He had spoken the last words to Pilate (Jn. 19:11).
- d) The last words concerning a religious building (Matt. 24:1-2).
- e) And now the last words to the populous following Him:

- i) His loveliness of His tender hearted thoughtfulness of others. It is very hard to feel sympathy for others when one is about to experience pain and desolation which is indescribable, yet that is what the Lord did. When one is despised, to find one comforting face is a help. Paul was so grateful when Onesiphorus sought him out “very diligently” when he was in bonds in Rome (2 Tim. 1:16-17). Who can tell the encouragement it was to Jeremiah when Ebedmelech let the rags down, telling Jeremiah how to use them so that he could be pulled out of the pit with as little discomfort as possible (Jer. 38:11-12). This was almost the last glimmer of comfort the Lord would get until the thief on the cross asked the Lord to remember Him. Yet, in this hour of personal affliction and pain, He knew that which was going to occur in a few brief years, and that some who followed that day would know unspeakable grief. Once again, Rachel would be mourning for her children (Matt. 2:18). For a Jewish woman not to have a child was possibly an indication of some indiscretion, yet in that day when the fury of God would come upon Jerusalem, they would be the blessed. In that day such would be the slaughtering by the Romans that the inhabitants would long for the rocks and hills to cover them. Demented is the mind when one longs for death through a catastrophe.
- ii) His tender salutation: “Daughters of Jerusalem” (Lk. 23:28)
- iii) He redirects their sorrow to themselves and their children. Surely He appreciated their feelings of sorrow, but why was there such sorrow? That we cannot know:
 1. Was this sorrow because of that which they would lose, for the Lord would no longer be with them to heal their sick or raise their dead. In other words, was it self centering?
 2. Was this sorrow because of the tragedy of such a lovely caring human being about to be put to death?
 3. Luke uses three words to describe their lamentations, they “bewailed Him”, that is, they beat the breast. There have been times when intensity of grief overflows the heart and the individual “wings their hands”, “falls to the ground”, “burying ones head in their hands”. These are readily recognized expressions of deep sorrow. These people also “lamented”, and the word indicates a dirge, which is a somber piece of music or song for a funeral. Finally, they “wept”, which means “to wail”. Today when we see some of the carnage in African countries, etc., and hear the wailings of the people and see their actions, we can understand something of what it was like as the Lord went to the cross. It was a somber walking but certainly not quiet.

I want to think of some who watched that procession, the like of which is unequalled in the annals of time or eternity. As that lowly man walked that pathway the questions become:

- a) What did the people see?
 - i) The people all saw a man on His way to be crucified. Many assumed they saw a man who was guilty of blasphemy on his way to be executed for blasphemy. But, they failed to see that the Lord was going to the Cross as the God appointed Lamb to suffer for their transgressions.
- b) What did the Satanic world see?
 - i) The Satanic world failed to see that His going to the cross was to lead to their eternal defeat and the liberation of untold millions of their captives.
- c) What did the celestial world see?
 - i) The angels saw He, whom they knew was God, being mocked and humiliated, and must have stood or bowed in utter wonder.
- d) What did God see?
 - i) God saw a man who was His beloved Son demonstrating the fulness of His love for the Father.

- e) What did the religious leaders see?
- i) They saw themselves as superlatively righteous, despite their actions being illegal and driven by envy, but they failed to see they were fulfilling the purposes of God and the prophecies of the scriptures.

Why Simon was made to carry His cross is unknown, but there was no honour more rich placed on any man. The Lord had spoken earlier: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me". (Matt. 16:24)

They took Jesus, and led him away. (Jn. 19:16)

- a) It is very easy to miss the significance of this.
 - i) The unwitting glory.
 - (1) These men at this time failed to see the glory that was theirs, for never was there ever an escort more glorious. They could have escorted the puppet kings or the Roman emperor, but they were all only men. Here they escort the Lord of glory, the King of peace, the King of Kings, to His cross.

Through Old Jerusalem's Street They Walked

Through Old Jerusalem's streets they walked, in deep solemnity
Before My Lord the shameful cross, and the accursed tree.
The crowd was hushed, a solemn sight, three men were soon to die
And then a mother's cry was heard, and then another's sigh.

Before too long the wailing loud, re-echoed far and wide
The blessed Lord, he stops to speak, to those on either side.
"Weep not for me" in tender tones, how deep His heart was stirred
For grief that many there would know, severe and multilayer.

Jerusalem would be overthrown, her sons would then be slain
The Roman's armies they would come and mothers wail again.
Then up to dark Golgotha's Hill, the stream of people flowed
A very sordid sight to see, so gruesome to behold.

The Blessed Son of God was laid upon the rugged tree
The piercing of His hands and feet, to suffer there for me.
Yet as they nailed his hands, His feet, a prayer came strong and true
"Oh Father, do forgive" He cried, "They know not what they do".

The motley crowd stood all around, they then began to cry
"Come down, come down, thou son of God, why stay up there to die?"
But never could they read His heart, or why He suffered so
Nor why that deep and anguished cry, they did, they did not know.

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**May God grant us good understanding as He, by his Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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