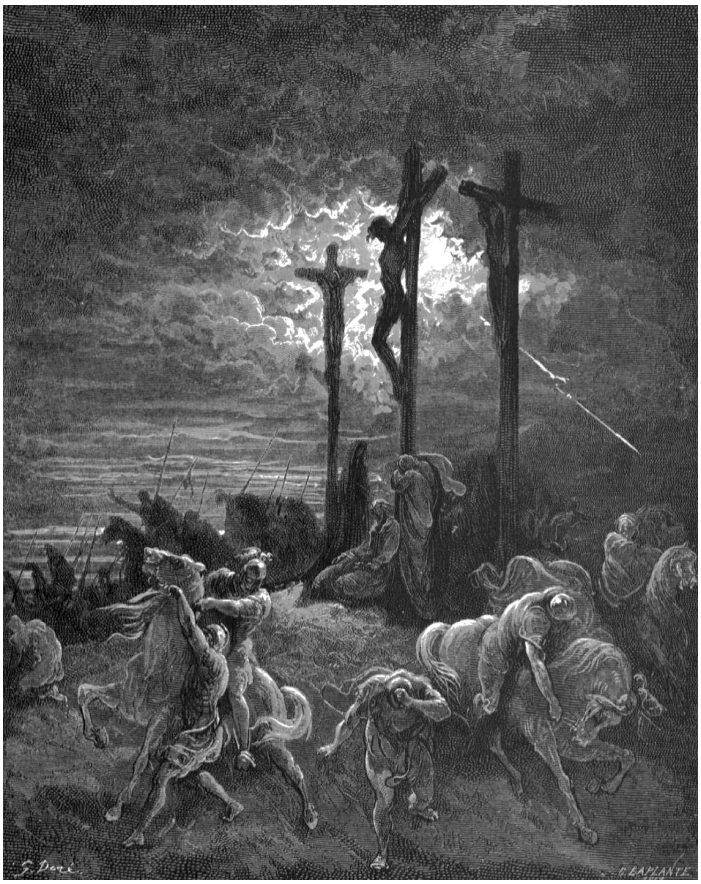
But Jesus Was Saying … (3)



For the third time in this series, visit once again Jesus on the cross and the words He spoke, and reflect once again on the mind of our Lord. Also, once again, let us examine our own hearts and minds to discern our own attitudes and actions. Jesus—"God is salvation"—the One prophesied whose name was proclaimed Immanuel, "with us is God" (**Isaiah 7:14**), gave Himself for you and me. Not only did He give Himself willingly to die in my place, He did it with a most amazing attitude, with a most excellent example, and most worthy words. He *"emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross"* (**Philippians 2:7-8**). This is the attitude we must have (**Philippians 2:5**). We must turn our eyes from all else and fix *"our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart"* (**Hebrews 12:2-3**). This is the example we must follow. *"For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps"* (**1Peter 2:21**). We are often reminded of His attitude and example at the cross, but how often do we reflect on the powerful messages of His words in His hours of suffering? Jesus' mind is reflected in His words. In situations not so harsh, our words might tend to be different, "But Jesus was saying …"

"Woman, behold, your son! … "Behold, your mother!" (**John 19:26-27**).

The Falsity

We have here a very touching scene from the crucifixion. There are women, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the "disciple whom Jesus loved"—John. Jesus spoke these words to His mother and to John as they watched Him dying on the cross. There are some religious people who take these words of Jesus from the cross to further their own man-derived traditions. Rather than examine exactly what Jesus said and why, it becomes to them a justification for Mary being sinless and being the Mother of the Church. When reading the text, it is clear that any sin attributed to

Mary, or lack thereof, is not at all mentioned. Neither is there any mention, even allegorically, of the church. So, what then is the context of Jesus' statement?

The Family

Jesus' statement is simply based on the familial relationship that He had with His mother. Jesus was the Son of God, but he was also *"born of a woman, born under the Law"* (**Galatians 4:4**). Jesus was Mary's firstborn. Jesus also had siblings. The people of His hometown certainly recognized Him as having family: *"'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?' And they took offense at Him"* (**Mark 6:3**). We also know that Jesus had interaction with His brothers during His ministry (**John 7:1-13**).

Jesus taught men to have a different type of familial relationship than we might expect. He emphasized that God came first in a scene played out between Himself, His family, and a crowd of people. *"While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. "Someone said to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.' But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, 'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother'"* (**Matthew 12:46-50**). This is not to say that Jesus did not care for His family—He did. Moreover, He fully understood the Law under which He was born.

The Framework

The framework of the Law given through Moses for Israel consistently held family in high regard. On of the main tenets was, *"Honor your father and your mother"* (**Exodus 20:12**). It is repeated throughout Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Jesus reminded some Pharisees of this very thing as He condemned them for their transgression of the Law: *"God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.' But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, 'Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,' he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition"* (**Matthew 15:4-6**).

Scripture seems to imply that Joseph was deceased by the time of Jesus' ministry. If this be the case, then Jesus would certainly have understood His responsibility as the oldest son in regard to His mother. That is, He truly understood the concept of "honoring" His mother. However, there is a deeper message that the responsibility of children toward parents.

The Future

This message was not just for John and Mary—it is for everyone who would be His disciple. Remember those of whom Jesus spoke of as His family? It is the one who *"does the will of My Father."* If Jesus, as He dies on the cross demonstrates His care for His physical mother, how much more so the care He has for those who are obedient to the word! What an exaltation of obedience! What a show of love for those who do obey! Too, if Jesus, from the cross, can care for His mother, just think of what He can provide for us since He has been raised and exalted.

Jesus could have requested anyone, certainly other physical brothers, to care for His mother. However, He singled out John—one of His very own. One who was obedient. Isn't that the very thing that the Lord expects of those who are is? When we are in His body, His church, what a family we have! *"Jesus said, 'Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life'"* (**Mark 10:29-30**).