

But Jesus Was Saying ... (5)

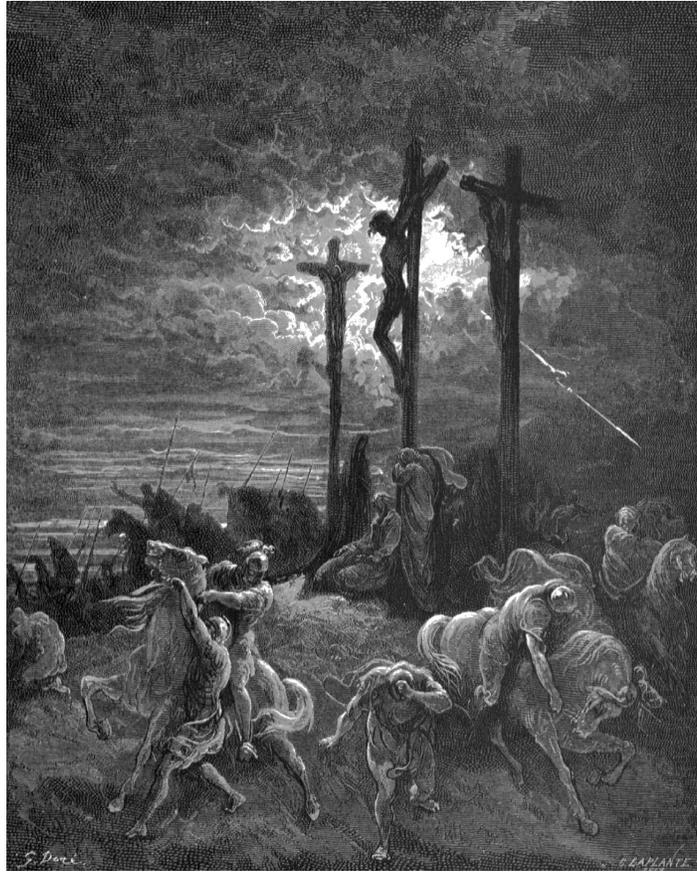
For the fifth time in this series, visit once again Jesus on the cross and the words He spoke, and reflect once again on the mind of our Lord. Also, once again, let us examine our own hearts and minds to discern our own attitudes and actions. Jesus—“God is salvation”—the One prophesied whose name was 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”* (**1 Peter 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 ...”

“I am thirsty” (**John 19:28**).

The Pain

It is often noted that this statement of Jesus helps us to understand the suffering He endured by becoming as we are—*“in the likeness of men.”* Certainly we can understand thirst, but perhaps never to the extent experienced by our Lord. The pain, both physical and emotional, would have contributed to dehydration. Beyond that, there would have been the tremendous loss of blood further removing moisture from the body. Remember, too, that at the outset, He had been agonizing in great sweat (**Luke 22:44**).



We know that Jesus was “*tempted in all things as we are*” (**Hebrews 4:15**). The experience of Jesus goes well past what we normally think of as temptations. His temptations by the devil are recorded for us (**Matthew 4:1-11**), but we must remember that He experienced the full range of our emotions and physical attributes. He knew the pain of disappointment (**Luke 13:34**). He knew the pain of sorrow (**John 11:33-36**). He knew the pain of the scourging from the Romans, of the thorns in His scalp, of the nails in His body. He knew pain down to the finest detail—even the pain of severe thirst when the tongue sticks inside the mouth. He knew it was coming. It was spoken of long before in a Psalm: “*My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And You lay me in the dust of death*” (**Psalms 22:15**).

The Plan

Jesus knew this was coming, not just because of a passage from a Psalm, but because it was all part of God’s plan for the redemption of man. Notice what John tells us before Jesus’ statement: “*After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished ...*” (**John 19:28**). What exactly is being accomplished by this suffering and death? It is the plan. Jesus knew it was for the benefit of man and the glory of God. “*This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do*” (**John 17:3-4**). He knew the things He accomplished throughout His time on earth would be testimony about the very power of God. “*The testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me*” (**John 5:36**). He knew that the plan had now reached its zenith, and He was willing to experience whatever pain was necessary to secure a means for our redemption. This is the very thing for which He had prayed in such agony only hours before: “*He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, ‘Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done’*” (**Luke 22:41-42**).

The Prophecy

The plan for the redeemed to be the ones found in the Son was established before the world was ever founded: “*you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God*” (**1 Peter 1:18-23**). In rebuking some of the Jews of His day, Jesus reminded them that Scripture had testified [prophesied] about Him—about the plan for the Messiah. “*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me*” (**John 5:39**).

More than three hundred statements of prophecy were made of the Messiah and fulfilled in Jesus. There were prophecies of His birth, His life, His death. Scripture is never a failure in its fulfillment. We noticed one thing John told us prior to Jesus’ statement. Now, we must look at the rest: “*to fulfill the Scripture*” Jesus said ... (**John 18:28**). Even in the most minute detail Scripture is

fulfilled. Continuing to look at the writing of John, we find, “*A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth*” (**John 19:29**). This also is directly correlated to a prophetic statement: “*They also gave me gall for my food And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink*” (**Psalm 69:21**).

The Peroration

Jesus, throughout all of the time here on earth, exemplified righteousness—no guile, no anger, no hostility, no sin—in all His actions and attitude. As noted, His very purpose was to do the will of God. He was hungry for the work that was planned (**John 4:32**). Ironically, the One who thirsted on the cross is our source for water (**John 4:10; 7:38**). How thirsty are we (**Matthew 5:6**)?

—S. Scott Richardson Sr.