

## **FINAL EASTER THOUGHTS 2020**

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### **THE HOUR OF DARKNESS**

It's important never to describe Jesus as a victim. He was in full control of events leading to His death and at the time of His death. See for example how each gospel writer describes how Jesus died

- (a) **Matt 27:50** “**And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit**”
- (b) **Mark 15:37** “**And Jesus cried out with a loud voice and breathed His last**”
- (c) **Luke 23:46** “**And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice He said “Father into Your hands I commit My spirit**
- (d) **John 19: 30** “**and bowing His head He gave up His spirit**” Handed it over same word used when Judas handed Jesus over to soldiers

He had said earlier in **John 10:17-18** “**Therefore My Father loves Me because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father**”

The gospels make no reference to the gory details of Jesus' crucifixion. They are silent. Listen for example to Mark 15:25 “**Now it was the third hour and they crucified Him**” The film the passion of the Christ, directed by Mel Gibson, concentrates heavily on the physical suffering of Jesus, but any true depiction of the cross would be three hours long completely silent and dark and no one would want to watch it. A word was coined to describe the physical suffering of the cross namely “excruciating” meaning “of the cross” but the physical suffering of the cross was an experience known to many men, including those who were crucified at each side of Jesus. No the suffering of Christ was shrouded in darkness for who could plumb those awful depths.

#### **Jesus speaks on the cross**

For 3 hours Jesus hangs there, not a word of cursing, swearing, profanity or self- pity. Far from thinking of Himself see what were the first three things He says

**1. Father “forgive them they do not know what they do”**

- Please note the word Father which is how He addressed his father normally. For example
- (a) Luke 12:27 **“Now My soul is troubled and what shall I say Father save Me from this hour but for this purpose I came to this hour Father glorify your name (no thought of Himself)”**
- (b) John 17 **“Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said Father the hour has come glorify Your son that Your son may also glorify You”**
- (c) In John 17 we see Jesus repeatedly says **“Father”** This great eternal relationship
- (d) Gethsemane **“Father if it be possible let this cup pass from Me but not My will but Yours be done” (Matt 26:39:**

**2. To the dying repentant thief “Assuredly I say to you today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43)**

**3. To His mother and beloved John “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” <sup>27</sup> Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home” (John 19:26-27)**

**Jesus’s Baptism**

I spent a number of weeks tracing the subject of baptism in the scriptures and how Jesus Himself said He would undergo a baptism. He said Luke 12:50 **“I have a baptism to be baptised with and how distressed I am till it is accomplished”** He also said this to his disciples in Matt 20:22 **“Are you able to drink the cup that I drink and be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with”** Incredibly they replied (surely not knowing what He meant, how could they) said **“yes we are able”** Jesus replied **“you will indeed drink of the cup that I drink and with the baptism I am baptised with you will be baptised”**

The ancient Greeks used the word baptism to describe a ship which had been overwhelmed by storms, deluged and sunk without hope of survival

## **Bapto and Baptizo**

The word for baptism which Jesus uses is the Greek word “baptizo” not to be confused with another word “bapto” The clearest example that shows the meaning of baptizo is a text from a Greek poet and physician Nicander who lived about 200 years before Christ. It’s a recipe for making pickles and helps us because the recipe includes both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle the vegetable should first be “dipped” (bapto) into boiling water (we should probably now call this blanching) Then the vegetables should be “baptised” (baptizo) in the vinegar solution (we should probably now call this marinating). Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution, the first is temporary, but the second is permanent and produces a permanent change. When used in the New Testament, this word more often refers to our union and identification with Christ than to our water baptism. E.g. Mark 16:16. **‘He that believes and is baptised shall be saved’**. Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle

Listen again to the words of Jesus. **“I have a baptism (baptizo) to be baptised with”** Jesus was to be baptised into the full and desperate miserable condition of the human race. He was baptised into all the human race had become in its rebellion and hatred against God. **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor 5:21)**

Jesus is alone. Lifted up between heaven and earth, rejected by one and forsaken by the other

## **Darkness for 3 hours**

Then at 12 midday, at the time of the celebration of the Passover, which was the time of full moon so no eclipse, darkness covered the earth. What is happening at this “hour”? He is becoming the sin bearer taking unto Himself the sin of the world.

## **Jesus cries “My God why have you forsaken Me”**

Here He does not address His father as father: why can only be speculation, Perhaps He had reached a point that he had now so stepped into our shoes that He spoke on our behalf, for God had to forsake us, but chose to do so in the person of His beloved son.

God bless you all

Steve