

All through this section of Jesus the Lamb we have seen that Jesus was not a hapless victim. Rather, He voluntarily submitted Himself to the arresting officers, and allowed the illegal trial. Pilate realized there was something different with this accused prisoner and sought release but the Jews would hear nothing of it. He literally painted himself in the corner of deception and debate – the Jews had won the debate with lies and without a heart of convictions and courage, he turned Jesus over to the Roman guards to prepare Jesus for the crucifixion. I recommend reading Towns regarding this lesson.<sup>1</sup> He has some good organizational ideas.

**<sup>16</sup>Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. <sup>17</sup>Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). <sup>18</sup>Here they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.** NIV,<sup>2</sup> John 19:16 - 18.

Pilate did not literally hand Jesus over to the Sanhedrin – the Roman guard took Jesus. Towns points out this handing was used in each of the sequences leading up to this final transferring of Jesus from one group to the other. In handing Jesus over to the Sanhedrin Pilate is giving in to the Jews' demands that Jesus be crucified. There is more detail to be found in the synoptics – John is developing Jesus' meeting the various folks and His contact with them.

Here we find Jesus being delivered over to the Roman soldiers – a cruel disciplined lot who were skilled in the business of executing the judged via crucifixion. Jesus would suffer much from the hands of the Roman soldiers. See [Matt 27:27-31](#) for this. Eventually, the these soldiers would confess that Jesus was “a son of God” ([Matt 27:54](#)) admittedly and uninformed and tainted view of Jesus' true nature, but certainly some insight to the effect that Jesus in His death was having on them. Luke sheds some more light in his gospel ([Luke 23:47](#)) when he praised God and said that Jesus was certainly an innocent man.

My whole point in this section of Jesus, the Lamb of God was that it was He that drove the events that led up to His death – not those – the Jews, the Roman government, the military – all those who were literally drawn along inexorably by redemption's command that Jesus be lifted up so that He could draw all men to Himself.<sup>3</sup>

### **Jesus is Identified with the “Others.”**

The next drama we see in this account is found in verse 18 – He was hung between two “others.” John puts it differently than the synoptics and I think this has some significance. Luke adds more contrast by a combination of “others” and adding a description of criminals (evil doers) to the other men. Paul sheds some light on this use

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<sup>1</sup> [THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, LIVE AND BELIEVE](#), Elmer Towns, pages 192 – 197.

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<sup>3</sup> [John 12:32](#).

of evil doers by identifying himself in his former condition as an evil doer. In this case, the sentence for these crimes was death – the most painful of executions.

Here's my point regarding John's emphasis: by eliminating the contrast Jesus was completely identified with the two others who were dying with Him. Isaiah said **that "... he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."**<sup>4</sup> At the beginning both were yelling at Him in their defiance. Later on one of them realized that Jesus was not only innocent but realized just Who He was and became a child of God. This is how Jesus affects all men whom He meets. Either they curse Him and die or they, after cursing Him, respond to His Call and live. There is, after all, no difference between what went on in this experience on the cross and all of manner of life in this world. **One could say that this one point in history is a macrocosm of redemptive history** – the only history that matters. The whole purpose of the existence of men and history itself is that they are presented with the opportunity to meet Jesus and to have the opportunity to answer the question "what think ye of Jesus?" This is all that matters. The fact that one of the criminals' decision for Christ was not duplicated does not in any way dilute the event. In fact it serves to strengthen redemptive history. Some men will reject the call of Christ and some will receive the Call. It's entirely up to the recipient of the Call – yes or no – it's up to each man. It is important only to note here that John removed the descriptive term "criminal" and thus made the identification of Jesus with the "others" all the more intense.

#### **More Prophecy Fulfilled - the Casting of Lots for Jesus' Seamless garment.**

**<sup>23</sup>When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. <sup>24</sup>"Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did.**

The quote is from Psalm 22:18. I would like to make a comment from the context ([17-19](#)). Two words come to mind here – the **shame** that Jesus had on the cross but even in this **shame**, Jesus relies on the **strength** in His LORD. Psalm 22 is the heartbeat of Jesus' crucifixion and in darkest of moments He is relying completely on the strength that He gets from the LORD. Please note that even the scream – "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me..." that Jesus made in His agony is a direct quote from Psalm 22. Jesus had not "lost it." The screaming was not an accusation against the Father. No. He was reaffirming that He was receiving **strength** from the Word that He had received from the Father – this was His strength – the very Word of the Father as found in Psalm, in this case. It was from this word from the Father that also predicted that the seamless garment would not be torn but would be given to one of the soldiers by the casting of lots. Once more giving evidence that this whole historical event was driven by the Lord – not by evil men.

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<sup>4</sup> [Isaiah 53:12](#).

**A Tender Moment Between Jesus and His Mother and John –  
Jesus Cares, Even in His Agony on the Cross.**

**<sup>25</sup>Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup>When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," <sup>27</sup>and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.**

This is the tenderest of moments. Jesus was the elder son of the family and as such was responsible for the care and welfare of His mother (Joseph had apparently died by now). The interchange is charged with love both for His mother and for His beloved disciple. It was a natural act of Jesus to make this provision for both His mother and for John. John had a mom and Mary had a son. In saying these words we must remember the POWER of the word of Jesus. Whatever was necessary for this word to be so was provided by the omnipotence of the Son of God – even in this apparent moment of helplessness.

May I make application from this narrative? If Jesus can be so thoughtful in His provision for His mother and John what must be His thoughtfulness toward all believers? The writer of Hebrews says that He is able to make intercession for us because He has experienced the bad and the ugly.<sup>5</sup> He has not diluted His thoughtfulness toward us, indeed, He ever lives to make intercession for all believers, implying the eternity of His intercession. Distance is not an issue. In the darkest prison one can find this intercession – indeed in the deepest of shame the child can find the intercession and care of Jesus.

**It is Finished!**

**<sup>30</sup>When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.**

What was finished? All of redemptive history hinges on this moment in time when the sins of the world were completely purged and mankind entered into a new relationship with the Creator. The writer of Hebrews gives this historical perspective proper emphasis when he places redemptive history on a par with the very creation and sustaining of the universe.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, this is all that matters with creation, time, events, governments – all of mankind's endeavors, aspirations and very existence – that each man is born and is wooed to the call of the Gospel which turns on the axil of the finished work of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. The sin of mankind – of Adam – is no longer the issue. John has expressed it eloquently:

**<sup>36</sup>Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."**

What think Ye of Christ. Amen!

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<sup>5</sup> [Heb 4:14 - 16](#).

<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 1:3 [NIV](#), [AMP](#), [TM](#), [NASB](#), [YLT](#). YLT is the best translation here.