

Exposition of the Gospel of John CHAPTER 65

CHRIST CONDEMNED TO DEATH

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Transcript

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John 19:12-24

The following is an Analysis of the passage which is to be before us:— 1. Pilate's effort foiled, verse 12. 2. Pilate on the Bench, verse 12. 3. The Jews' rejection of their Messiah, verse 15. 4. Christ delivered to the Jews, verse 16. 5. Christ crucified, verses 17-18. 6. The inscription of the Cross, verses 19-22. 7. The soldiers and Christ's garments, verses 23-24. The death of Christ may be viewed from five main viewpoints. From the standpoint of God the Cross was a propitiation (Rom. 3:25-26), where full satisfaction was made to His holiness and justice. From the standpoint of the Savior, it was a sacrifice (Eph. 5:2), an offering (Heb. 9:14), an act of obedience (Phil. 2:8). From the standpoint of believers, it was a substitution, the Just suffering for the unjust (1 Pet. 3:18). From the standpoint of Satan it was a triumph and a defeat: a triumph, in that he bruised the heel of the woman's Seed (Gen. 3:15); a defeat, in that through His death Christ destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil (Heb. 2: 14). From the standpoint of the world it was a brutal murder (Acts 3:15). It is with this last-mentioned aspect of the death of Christ that our present passage principally treats. The ones who (from the human side) took the initiative in the slaying of the Lamb of God, were the Jews; the one who was judicially responsible was Pilate. In the introduction to our last chapter we pointed out two things: first, that God had ordained Pilate should pass sentence upon His Son; second, that Pilate was, nevertheless, morally guilty in so doing. We shall not review the ground already covered, but would supplement our previous remarks by a few words upon Pilate's final actions. From the very first move made by the Jews for Pilate to sentence their Messiah, it is evident that he had no relish for the part which they wished and urged him to play; and the more he saw of Christ for himself, the more his reluctance increased. This is apparent from his restless journeying back and forth from the judgment-hall; evidenced by his repeated protestations of Christ's innocence; evidenced by the compromises he offered them; evidenced by the appeals he made to them. If, then, he was unwilling to pass the death-sentence, how comes it that he, the Roman governor, was finally prevailed upon to do so? In seeking to answer this question we shall now confine ourselves to the human side of things. In the first place, the Jews had charged Christ with perverting the nation, stirring up

the people, teaching them to refuse to pay tribute, and claiming Himself to be the king of the Jews (Luke 23:2-5). These were charges which Pilate could not afford to ignore. It is true the preferring of such charges was one thing, and the proving of them quite another; but the Governor was too much of a politician not to know how easy it was to manufacture evidence and to hire false witnesses. In the second place, Pilate had himself incurred the hatred of the Jews by mingling the blood of certain Galileans with their sacrifices (Luke 13:1)—a thing not only morally wrong, but legally reprehensible. In the third place, when Pilate showed signs of weakening, the Jews told him that if he did let Jesus go, he was no friend of Caesar (John 19:12). Pilate was quick to perceive that if he released his Prisoner, complaint would at once be made to the Emperor, and under a charge of conspiracy and treason, he was likely not only to lose the governorship, but his head as well. Here, then, was the issue which Pilate had to pass on: on the one hand he knew that Christ was innocent, that He was a unique Man, possibly more than man; on the other hand, he was threatened by the Sanhedrin with exposure before Caesar. In its final analysis, Pilate had to choose between Christ and the world. When the issue was clearly defined, he did not hesitate; he decided to please the people and win their applause, rather than intensify their already fierce hatred against him and condemn him to Caesar. "Here is the anticipative result of Pilate's vacillation. When a man begins to temporize with his conscience, to trifle with sin—be it the love of applause, the fear of man, or whatsoever thing is contrary to sound doctrine and plain morality—it is easy to predict what is sure to follow. Sin is at the first like a tiny spark. Tread it out at once—that is your duty. But indulge, foster, toy with it, and it will kindle and spread, and lay waste in a fearful conflagration the very temple of the soul. So here with this unhappy Pilate, trying to join together what God hath forever put asunder—his carnal inclination and his duty; hoping all in vain to harmonize equity and injustice; to comply with the voice of wicked men without, and yet not offend the voice of God within him; thinking to serve two masters—God and mammon. Miserable, impossible compromise" (Mr. Geo. Brown). "And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him" (John 19:12). The time-mark here is significant. Following the Jews' accusation that Christ had "made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7), Pilate, thoroughly uneasy, had retired within the judgment-hall, and asked the Savior, "Whence art thou?" (John 19:9). But the Lord returned him no answer. Thereupon Pilate said, "Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" To this Christ made reply, "Thou couldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." That Pilate was deeply impressed, both by his Prisoner's demeanor and words, we cannot doubt. Previously unwilling to condemn an innocent Man, he now resolves to make a real effort to save Him. Leaving Christ behind in the judgment-hall, Pilate returned once more to the Jews. What he now said to them John has not told us: all we know is that he must have made an earnest appeal to the Savior's enemies, which they as decisively rejected. "But the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar" (John 19:12). The Jews knew their man, for hypocrites are usually the quickest to detect hypocrisy in others. They had reserved their strongest card for the last: with diabolic cunning they insinuated that no matter what the Governor's personal feelings might be, no matter how unwilling he was to please them, he could not afford to displease the Emperor. For him this was a clinching argument. From this moment his hopes of escaping from his unhappy situation were dashed to the ground. It is hard to decide which was the more despicable: the duplicity of the Jews in feigning to care for Caesar's interests, or the cowardice and wickedness of Pilate in conniving at a foul murder. On the one hand we see the descendants of Abraham, the most favored of all people, professing to be eagerly awaiting the appearing of the promised Messiah, now clamouring for His crucifixion. On the other hand, we behold a judge of one of the high courts of Rome, defying conscience and trampling upon justice. Never did human nature make such a contemptible exhibition. Never was sin

more heinously displayed. "When Pilate, therefore, heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha" (John 19:13). "'Pilate's playing with the situation,' observes Lange, 'is now passed; now the situation plays with him!' First he said, not asked, What is truth! Now his frightened heart, to which the Emperor's favor is the supreme law of life, says, What is justice! He takes his place on the judgment-seat, therefore, and with what seems something between a taunt and a faint, final plea, says to the Jews, 'Behold your King!'" (Numerical Bible.) Pilate dared no longer oppose the bloody demands of the Jews. There remained nothing now but for him to take his seat publicly on the bench and pronounce sentence. It is striking to note that the trial of Christ before Pilate was in seven stages. This is seen by noting carefully the following scriptures, which speak of the Governor passing in and out of the judgment-hall. The First stage was on the outside: John 18:28-32. The Second on the inside: John 18:33-37. Third, on the outside: John 18:38-40. Fourth, inside: John 19:1-3. Fifth, outside: John 19:4-7. Sixth, inside: John 19:8-11. Seventh, outside: John 19:12-16. "When Pilate, therefore, heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha." Here, as everywhere in Scripture, if only we have eyes to see, there is a deep significance to the proper noun. The word for "Pavement" is found nowhere else in the New Testament, but its Hebrew equivalent occurs just once in the Old Testament, and it is evident that the Holy Spirit would have us link the two passages together. In 2 Kings 16:17 we read, "King Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones." In Ahaz's case, his act was the conclusive token of his surrender to abject apostasy. So here of Pilate coming down to the level of the apostate Jews. In the former case it was a Jewish ruler dominated by a Gentile idolator; in the latter, a Gentile idolator dominated by Jews who had rejected their Messiah! "And it was the preparation of the passover" (John 19:14). There has been an almost endless controversy concerning this. The Lord and His disciples had eaten the passover together on the previous night (Luke 22:15), and yet we read here of the "preparation of the passover." Sir R. Anderson wrote much that was illuminating on the point. We can only give a brief selection: "These writers one and all confound the Passover-supper with the feast which followed it, and to which it lent its name. The supper was a memorial of the redemption of the firstborn of Israel on the night before the Exodus; the feast was the anniversary of their actual deliverance from the house of bondage. The supper was not a part of the feast; it was morally the basis on which the feast was founded, just as the Feast of Tabernacles was based on the great sin-offering of the Day of Expiation which preceded it. But in the same way that the Feast of Weeks can now be commonly designated Pentecost, so the Feast of Unleavened Bread was popularly called the Passover (Luke 22:1). That title was common to the supper and the feast, including both; but the intelligent Jew never confounded the two. No words can possibly express more clearly this distinction than those afforded by the Pentateuch in the final promulgation of the Law: 'In the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the Lord, and in the fifteenth day of this same month is the Feast' (Num. 28:16-17)." But to what does "the preparation of the passover" refer? "Among the Jews 'the preparation' was the common name for the day before the sabbath, and it is so used by all the Evangelists. Bearing this in mind, let the reader compare with John 19:14, verses 31-42, and he will have no difficulty in rendering the words in question, 'it was Passover Friday.'" (Sir Robert Anderson.) Let the reader also compare Mark 15:42, which is even more conclusive. "And about the sixth hour" (John 19:14). This expression has also occasioned much difficulty to many. It is supposed to conflict with Mark 15:25. "and it was the third hour, and they crucified Him." But there is no discrepancy here whatsoever. Mark gives the hour when our Lord was crucified; John is speaking of the Passover Friday, i.e., the day when preparations were made for the sabbath (which began at Friday sunset) preparing food, etc., so that none

would have to be cooked on the sabbath. It was about the sixth hour after this "preparation" had commenced. This is the view which was taken by Augustine and Dr. Lightfoot. We believe the Holy Spirit has recorded this detail for the purpose of pointing a comparison and a contrast. For six hours the Jews had been working in preparation for the approaching sabbath; during the next "six hours" (compare Mark 15:25, 33-37), Christ finished His great work, which brings His people into that eternal rest of which the sabbath was the emblem! "And he said unto the Jews, Behold your king!" (John 19:14). This was evidently spoken in irony and contempt. "But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him" (John 19:15). As on the previous occasions of Pilate's private appeals, so now this final and public appeal of his had no effect upon the Jews. Once more they raised their fierce, relentless cry, demanding the Prisoner's death by crucifixion. Nothing but His blood would satisfy them. He must die: so had God decreed; so they demanded. The decree of the One was from love; the insistence of the other, was from hatred. The design of the One, was mercy unto poor sinners; the aim of the others, barbarous cruelty to Him who was sinless. This rejection of their Messiah by Israel fulfilled two prophecies: "We hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isa. 53:3); "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth" (Isa. 49:7). "Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king?" (John 19:15). As one has said, "Pilate speaks here with a mixture of compassionate feeling and mockery. For the last time the Roman governor put the decisive question to the Jews, giving them a final chance to relent, throwing the emphasis, we believe, on the word 'crucify.' It was a frightful mode of execution, reserved for slaves and the most abandoned criminals. "The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). "They are entirely infidel, throwing off all allegiance to any but Caesar, and cry that they had no other king. It is purely of the Jews, the whole transaction, for they consign to the most cruel death Him whom the Roman governor would have let go. This is man's religion, and it will, in the end, enthrone 'the Wilful One' and bow to his image" (Rev. 13). (Mr. M. Taylor). "The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar." God took them at their word: they have been under their own verdict ever since. History repeated itself, though with a tragic addition. In the days of Samuel, Israel said, "Make us a king to judge us like all nations" (1 Sam. 8:5), and Jehovah's response was, "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." So it was here with their rebellious descendants, when they rejected Christ the king. In consequence of their fatal decision, Israel has abode "many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice" (Hos. 3:4). Bitter indeed have been the consequences. Jotham's parable has received its tragic fulfillment: "And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon" (Judg. 9:15, and see verses 7-16). "The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar." "It was not the verdict of the Jews alone, and they have not suffered alone. The whole world has been lying under the yoke which they have preferred to the easy yoke of Christ. They have got very tired of Caesar—true; and, as we see by their fitful movements every now and then, would feign be rid of him. They are always crying, 'Give us better government'; but all they can do is, with doubtful betterment, to divide him up into many little Caesars; better as they think, because weaker, and with divided interests, so that the balance of power may secure the even weights of justice. That is still an experiment some think; but this chronic war is never peace, nor can be; and the reason is, men have refused the Prince of Peace. Modify it, rename it, disguise it as you please, the reign of Caesar is the only alternative" (Numerical Bible). "Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified" (John 19:16). Between John 19:15 and 16 comes in what is recorded in Matthew 27:24-25. Seeing that the Jews would not be turned from their purpose, and afraid to defy them, he took water and washed his hands before them (cf. Deuteronomy 21:1-6; Psalm 26:6), saying, "I am

innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." Thus did this cowardly, world-loving Roman betray his trust. Never was a name more justly handed down to the world's scorn than Pilate's. By his act he sought to cast the entire onus upon the Jews. Their terrible response was, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Then, we are told, "Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required... He delivered Jesus to their will" (Luke 23:24-25). Thus the Lord's execution was now in Jewish hands (Acts 2:23), the centurion and his quaternion of soldiers merely carrying out the decision of the chief priests. "Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified." Our Lord's own estimate of Pilate's act is recorded by the Spirit of prophecy through the Psalmist: "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with that which frameth mischief by a law? They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood" (Ps. 94:20, 21)! Let us not forget, however, that behind the governor of Judea, who delivered the Lord Jesus unto the Jews, was the Governor of the Universe, who "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32). And why? Because He was "delivered for our offenses" (Rom. 4:25). Christ was delivered to death, that we might be delivered from death. "And they took Jesus and led him away" (John 19:16). Observe the word "led" again. How often has the Holy Spirit repeated it! Christ was neither driven nor dragged, for He made no resistance. As prophecy had foretold long before, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter" (Isa. 53:7). "And he, bearing his cross, went forth unto a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha" (John 19:17). The Jews lost no time: Christ was taken straight from Gabbatha to Golgotha; from judgment to execution. The Savior "bearing his cross," had been marvelously foreshadowed of old when "Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son" (Gen. 22:6). "He, bearing his cross, went forth." That is, out of Jerusalem, or as Hebrews 13:12 puts it, "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without [outside] the gate." This, too, fulfilled an Old Testament type—every detail of the Passion fulfilled some prophecy or type. In Leviticus 16:27 we read, "And the bullock for the sin-offering, and the goat for the sin-offering; whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place shall one carry forth without the camp." "Little did the blinded Jews imagine that when they madly hounded on the Romans to crucify Jesus outside the gates, that they were unconsciously perfecting the mightiest sin-offering of all!" (Bishop Ryle). At this point the other Gospels supply a detail which John, for some reason, was guided to omit. In Matthew 27:32 we are told. "As they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; him they compelled to bear his cross." Almost all of the commentators, both ancient and modern, draw the conclusion that Simon was compelled to bear the Savior's cross because He was staggering and sinking beneath its weight. But there is not a word in the New Testament to support such a conjecture, and everything recorded about Christ after He was nailed to the tree decidedly conflicts with it. That Simon was "compelled" to bear His cross, shows there was not one in all that crowd with sufficient compassion and courage to volunteer to carry it for Him! "Went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha." "The place of a skull—the place of the kingdom of death. This is plainly what the world is, because of sin—death being the stamp of the government of God upon it. For this the Lord sought it; here His love to men brought Him; only He could lift this burden from them, and for this He must come under it" (Numerical Bible). "Which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha." This expression—used twice in connection with the Savior's crucifixion (John 19:13, 17)—is found elsewhere only in John 5:2: "Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-gate a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda." What a contrast; there at Bethesda, we see His mercy; here at Golgotha, their brutality! Luke gives us the Gentile name, "Calvary" (Luke 23:33); John the Hebrew, "Golgotha," of the place where our Savior was crucified. Compare the same double name of the place of Pilate's judgment-seat (John 19:13). "May it be that in these instances of double meaning that God is giving His in the words which He used with His people, and man is giving his in the language of the world? Moreover,

this Death was for both Jews and Gentiles! There is a reason for every word which the Holy Spirit records" (Mr. M. Taylor). "Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst" (John 19:18). This one verse records the fulfillment of at least three Old Testament prophecies. First, the manner in which the Savior was to die had been clearly foretold. A thousand years before this He had cried, by the Spirit of prophecy, "they pierced my hands and my feet" (Ps. 22:16); this is indeed most striking. The Jewish form of capital punishment was stoning. But no word of God can fall to the ground, therefore did Pilate give orders that Christ should be crucified, which was the Roman form of execution, reserved only for the vilest criminals. Second, Isaiah had declared, "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12). The Jews' object was to add a final indignity and insult to the Lord; it was a public declaration that He was counted no better than the scum of the earth. Little did they realize that this expression of their malice was but a means for the carrying out of Messianic prediction! Third, it had been written that He should be "with the wicked at his death" (Isa. 53:9—literal translation). But why did God permit His Beloved to be so outrageously treated? To show us the place which His Son had taken. It was the place which was due us because of our sins—the place of shame, condemnation, punishment. Moreover, the Lord crucified between the two malefactors, gave Him the opportunity to work one more miracle ere He laid down His life—a miracle of sovereign grace. Let the reader at this point carefully ponder Luke 23:39-43, and there he will find that the One on the central cross clearly demonstrated that He was the Redeemer by snatching a brand from the burning, and translating from the brink of the Pit into Paradise, one of these very thieves as the first trophy of His all-sufficient sacrifice. "And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews" (John 19:19). "He comes thus into death as King—'King of the Jews,' indeed, but which in its full rendering implies so much. It faces the Jew, the Greek, the Roman, affirming to each in his own language, with a positiveness which His enemies vainly strive to set aside, a meaning for each one. Here is indeed God's King—King in death as in life—here in a peculiar way affirmed; His Cross henceforth to be the very sign of His power, the scepter under which they bow, in adoring homage" (Numerical Bible). Pilate's reason for placing such a description of our Lord over His cross is not easy to determine; probably it was so worded in anger, and with the aim of annoying and insulting the Jews. Whatever his motive, it was clearly overruled by God. It is well known that the words of the four Evangelists vary in their several descriptions of this title. Enemies of the truth have pointed to this as a "contradiction." But all difficulty is removed if we bear in mind that we are told Pilate wrote the inscription in three different languages—most probably not wording them alike. The Holy Spirit moved Matthew to translate one (most likely the Hebrew) and Luke another (most likely the Greek); Mark only quoting a part of what John had given us—most likely from the Latin. There is, therefore, no discrepancy at all, and nothing for an impartial reader to stumble over. "This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city" (verse 20). No one could fail to see who it was that hung upon the central Cross. Even in death God saw to the guarding of His Son's glory. Before He was born, the angel announced to Mary His "kingdom" (Luke 1:32, 33). In His infancy, wise men from the east heralded Him as "king" (Matthew 2:2). At the beginning of the Passion week, the multitudes had cried, "Blessed is the king of Israel" (John 12:13). Before Pilate, He Himself bore witness to His "kingdom" (John 18:36-37). And now His royal title was affixed to His very gibbet. "And it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin" (John 19:20). Note that the Holy Spirit has placed "Hebrew" first! Hebrew was the language of the Jews; Greek of the educated world; Latin of the Romans; hence all who were gathered around the cross could read the title in his own language. Remember that the confusion of tongues was the sign of Babel's curse (Gen. 11). Significantly are we reminded of this here, when Christ was being made a curse for us! Hebrew was the language of religion; Greek of science, culture and philosophy; Latin of law. In each of these realms Christ is "king." In the religious, He is the final

revelation of the true God (Heb. 1:2; John 14:9). In science, He is the Force behind all things. "By him all things consist" (Col. 1:17). "Upholding all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1:3); so, too, in Him are hid "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). In jurisprudence, He is supreme; the Law-giver and Law-administrator (1 Cor. 9:21). "Then said the chief priests of the Jews to pilate, Write not, The king of the Jews; but that He said, I am king of the Jews" (John 19:21). It is noteworthy that this is the first and only time that they are termed "the chief priests of the Jews," the Holy Spirit thereby intimating that God no longer owned them as His priests: having rejected their Messiah, Judaism was set aside, and therefore its official leaders are regarded as serving the Jews, but not Jehovah. The words of the priests here show that they resented Pilate's insult. It was most humbling to their pride that this crucified criminal should be publicly designated their "king." They desired the Governor to alter the wording of the inscription so that it might appear Christ was nothing more than an empty-boasting imposter. "Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written" (John 19:22). Pilate could be firm when it suited him. The haughty, imperious character of the Roman comes out plainly here. His decisive reply evidences his contempt for the Jews: Trouble me no further; what I have written must stand; I shall not alter it to please you. "It, therefore, stands written forever. Caiaphas, as representative of the Jews proclaimed the Lord as Savior of the world; Pilate fastens upon the Jews the hated name of the Nazarene as their King" (Companion Bible). The truth is that God would not allow Pilate to change what he had written. Unknown to himself he was the amanuensis of Heaven. This was part of the Word of God—the Scriptures, the Writings, and not a jot of it shall ever pass away. And wondrously was it manifested that very day that what Pilate had written was the Word of God. This was the text used by the Spirit of Truth to bring about the regeneration and conversion of the repentant thief. His "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," shows that his faith rested on that which the Roman governor had written and placed on the cross, and which his Spirit—opened eyes read and believed! "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part" (John 19:23). "The soldiers having now finished their bloody work, having nailed our Lord to the cross, put the title over His head, and reared the cross on end, proceeded to do what they probably always did—to divide the clothes of the criminal among themselves. In most countries the clothes of a person put to death by the law are the perquisite of the executioner. So it was with our Lord's clothes. They had most likely stripped our Lord naked before nailing His hands and feet to the cross, and had laid His clothes on one side till after they had finished their work. They now turned to the clothes, and, as they had done many a time on such occasions, proceeded to divide them" (Bishop Ryle). There were four soldiers; some think this emblemizes the four quarters of the Gentiles' world. It seems clear that they ripped His several garments to pieces, so as to divide them in equal parts. How this, once more, makes manifest the depths of humiliation into which the Son of God descended! "And also his coat; now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be" (John 19:23, 24). The deeper significance of this is not difficult to perceive. Garments in Scripture, speak of conduct, as a display of character—cf. Psalm 109:18; 1 Peter 5:5, etc. Now, the Savior's "coat," His outer garment, was of one piece—intimating the unity, the unbroken perfection of His ways. Unlike our "garments," which are, at best, so much patchwork, His robe was "without seam." Moreover, it was "woven from the top throughout"—the mind of Him above controlled His every action! This "coat" or "robe" was a costly one, so owned even by the soldiers, for they declined to tear it to pieces. It spoke of the righteousness of Christ, the "robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10), the "best robe" (Luke 15) with which the Father clothes each prodigal son. For this "robe" the soldiers cast lots, and we are told in Proverbs 16:33 that "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Thus the action of these soldiers declares that the "best robe" is not left to the caprice of man's will, but the Lord Himself has determined whose it shall be! Note another

contrast; the sinful first Adam was clothed by God; the sinless last Adam was unclothed by wicked men. "That the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did" (John 19:24). Three things come out plainly: First, that God Himself was master of this whole situation, directing every detail of it to the outworking of His eternal counsels. Second, that no word of God's can fail. A thousand years before hand it had been predicted that these soldiers should both divide the Savior's raiment among them, and also cast lots for His vesture or coat. Literally was this fulfilled to the very letter. Third, that the One who hung there on the Tree was, beyond a shadow of doubt, the Messiah of Israel, the One of whom all the prophets had written. Below are the questions on the closing section of John 19:— 1. Why "woman," verse 26? 2. What perfections of Christ are seen in verse 28? 3. What was "finished," verse 30? 4. Why "bowed His head," verse 30? 5. What is the spiritual meaning of "blood and water," verse 34? 6. What prophecy was accomplished in verse 38? 7. What type was fulfilled in verses 41, 42?

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