

## The Gospel of John 19:17-37

### I Tested in God's Sovereignty By Death

- A. In verse 17 we have the cross as a sign. Many Christians think that the cross is primarily a matter of suffering. According to their understanding, to bear the cross is to suffer. Some of us may still hold to this traditional thought. However, according to the facts of history, it was not the purpose of the cross to cause suffering; instead, the cross was for terminating people. When someone was put on the cross, the purpose was to terminate him. This is clearly the meaning of the cross in John 19. We need to realize that the special significance of the cross in this chapter is that the cross terminates the old creation. It terminates the things, the matters, and the people of the old creation, all of which are contrary to God's purpose. Anything that is against the purpose of God needs to be terminated. In God's economy this termination is accomplished by the death of the cross.
- B. In John 19:18 we have the sign of the two crucified with Christ, one on each side of Him. John's intention was to show the separation of life and death. The crucified Christ is a dividing factor of death and life. On one side of Him there was death; on the other side there was life. Whether we are in death or in life depends on our relation to this crucified One.
- C. What Pilate wrote (v.22) was not of himself, but was of God's sovereignty. The title written by Pilate declared the fact that the Lord Jesus is the King of the Jews. It is also significant that this title was written in three languages: Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Hebrew represents Hebrew religion, Latin represents Roman politics, and Greek represents Greek culture. These three together represent the entire world, all of mankind. This signifies that the Lord Jesus was killed by and for all mankind. Not long after the Lord's death certain Jews, Romans, and Greeks were saved. The Lord Jesus was put to death for the entire human race as represented by these three languages.
- D. In His crucifixion, the Lord's right to be clothed (vv. 23-24) and to drink (vv.28-30) was stripped from Him, along with His life. In Luke 23:43 the Lord said to one of the two thieves crucified with Him, "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise." That word was in regard to salvation, since Luke's Gospel proves that the Lord is the sinner's Savior. Here, in vv. 26-27, the Lord said to His mother, "Behold, your mother." These words indicate a life-union, since this Gospel testifies that the Lord is life imparted into His believers. It is by this life that His beloved disciple could be one with Him and become the son of His mother, and that she could become the mother of His beloved disciple.
- E. Thirst is a taste of death (Luke 16:24; Rev.21:8). The Lord Jesus suffered this for us on the cross (Heb.2:9). In His crucifixion the Lord was still working, and through His crucifixion He finished the work of His all-inclusive death, by which He accomplished redemption, terminated the old creation, and released His resurrection life to bring forth the new creation to fulfill God's purpose. In the process of death He proved to His opposers and His believers, by the way He behaved, that He was life. The dreadful environment of death did not frighten Him in the least; rather, it provided a contrast that proved strongly that He as life was versus death and could not be affected by death in any way. Therefore, the work that the Lord finished here included the accomplishing of redemption, the terminating of the old creation, the releasing of His resurrection life, and the displaying of Himself as the life that cannot be affected by death.

### II Issuing in Blood and Water

- A. Two substances came out of the Lord's pierced side: blood and water. Blood is for redemption; it deals with sins (1:29; Heb.9:22) and is for the purchasing of the assembly (Acts 20:28). Water is for imparting life; it deals with death (12:24; 3:14-15) and is for the producing of the assembly (Eph.5:29-31). The Lord's death, on the negative side, takes away our sins, and on the positive side, imparts life into us. Hence, it has two aspects: the redemptive aspect and the life-imparting aspect. The redemptive aspect is for the life-imparting aspect. The record of the other three Gospels portrays only the redemptive aspect of the Lord's death: John's record portrays not only the redemptive aspect but also the life-imparting aspect.
- B. In Matt. 27:45, 51, Mark 15:33, and Luke 23:44-45, darkness, a symbol of sin, appeared, and the veil of the temple, which separated man from God, was rent. These signs are related to the redemptive aspect of the Lord's death. The words spoken by the Lord on the cross in Luke 23:34, "Father, forgive them, and in Matt.27:46, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (because He bore our sin at that time), also depict the redemptive aspect of His death. But the flowing water and the unbroken bone mentioned by John in vv.34 and 36 are signs that relate to the life-imparting aspect of the Lord's death (see note on 19:26).
- C. This death that imparts life released the Lord's divine life from within Him for the producing of the assembly, which is composed of all his believers, into whom His divine life has been imparted. This life-imparting death of the Lord is typified by Adam's sleep, out from which Eve was produced (Gen.2:21-23), and is signified by the death of the one grain of wheat that fell into the ground for the bringing forth of many grains (12:24) to make the loaf—the Body of Christ (1Cor. 10:17). Hence, it is also the life-propagating, life-multiplying death, the generating and reproducing death.
- D. The Lord's pierced side was prefigured by Adam's opened side, out from which Eve was produced (Gen. 2:21:23). The blood was typified by the blood of the Passover lamb (Exo.12:7, 22; Rev. 12:11), and the water was typified by the water that flowed out of the smitten rock (Exo. 17:6; 1Cor. 10:4). The blood formed a fountain for the washing away of sin (Zech.13:1), and the water became the fountain of Life (Psa. 36:9; Rev. 21:6).