

Good Friday - Narrative 6

THE ROMAN TRIAL, THE CRUCIFIXION AND THE BURIAL

Chapters 81, 82 and 83 of The Gospel of the Holy Twelve

They led Jesus from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment, to Pontius Pilate, the Governor; and it was early, and they themselves did not go into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled, but so they might keep the feast. Pilate therefore went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered and said to him, "If he were not an evil one, we would not have delivered him up to you. We have a law and by our law he ought to die because he would change the customs and rites which Moses delivered to us; yes, he made himself the Son of God."

Then Pilate said to them, "Take him and judge him according to your law." For he knew that they had delivered him due to envy. The Jews therefore said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." So the saying of Jesus which he spoke was fulfilled, signifying what death he should die. They further accused him saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King."

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered him, "Do you say this thing yourself, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from here."

Pilate therefore said to him, "Are you a King then?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am, yes, a King I am. To this end was I born and for this cause did I come into the world that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" Jesus said, "Truth is from heaven." Pilate said, "Then truth is not on earth." Jesus said to Pilate, "Believe that truth is on earth among those who receive and obey it. They are of the truth who judge righteously."

When he had heard this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find in him no fault at all." When he was accused by the chief priests and elders he answered them nothing. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear, how many things they witness against you?" He answered him never a word, insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly, and again he said to them, "I find no fault in this man." They waxed the more fierce saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place."

When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. As soon as he knew that he belonged in Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod who himself was in Jerusalem at the time. When Herod saw Jesus he was very glad, for he had wanted to see him for a long time because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by him. Then he questioned him in many words, but Jesus did not answer him.

The chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him, and many false witnesses rose up against him and blamed him for things that he did not know. Herod with his men of war mocked him and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe and sent him again to Pilate. The same

day Pilate and Herod became friends, for before they had been enemies. Pilate went again into the Judgment Hall and said to Jesus, "Where do you come from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to crucify you and have power to release you?" Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against me unless it were given you from above; therefore he that delivered me to you has the greater sin." Then Pilate sought to release him; but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend; whosoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."

Pilate called together the chief priests and rulers of the people. When he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent a message to him saying, "Have nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." Pilate said to them, "You have brought this man to me, as one that corrupts the people, and behold I have examined him before you and have found no fault in this man regarding those things of which you accuse him. No, nor even Herod, for I sent you to him and look! Nothing worthy of death was found in him. But you have a custom that I should release to you one at the Passover; will you therefore that I release to you the King of the Jews?"

Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber and, for insurrection in the city and for murder, was cast into prison. Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spoke again to them. "Which of the two do you want me to release to you; Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus which is called the Christ?" They said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus which is called the Christ?" They all said to him, "Let him be crucified." The Governor said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they cried out all the more saying, "Crucify him. Crucify him."

Pilate therefore went forth again and said to him, "Behold, again I bring him forth to you, that you may know that I find no fault in him." Again they cried out, "Crucify him. Crucify him." Pilate said to them, the third time, "Why? What evil has he done? I have found no cause of death in him. I will therefore chastise him and let him go." They instantly raised loud voices, requiring that he be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

When Pilate saw that he could not prevail, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see you to it." Then answered all the people, and said, "His blood be on us and on our children." Pilate issued the sentence that it should be as they required. And he delivered Jesus to their will.

The Crucifixion

He released Barabbas to them; and when he had whipped Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus to the common hall and gathered the whole band of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put on him a purple robe. When they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head and a reed in his right hand, and they bowed on their knees before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then Jesus came forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" When the chief priests and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify him. Crucify him." Pilate said to them, "Take him and crucify him, for I find no

fault in him.” They spit upon him and took the reed and struck him on the head. After they had mocked him, they took the robe off him and put his own clothing on him and led him away to crucify him. As they led him away, they captured a certain man named Simon from Cyrene, coming out of the country, and they laid on him the cross so that he might carry it after Jesus.

A great company of people and of women followed him which also wailed and lamented him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days are coming in which they shall say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore children and the breasts which were never nursed.’ Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry.”

There were also two other criminals led with him to be put to death. When they had come to a place called Calvary and Golgotha, that is to say a place of a skull, there they crucified him; and the criminals, one on the right hand, and other on the left. It was the third hour when they crucified him, and they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall; and when he had tasted it, he would not drink. Jesus said, “Abba Amma, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his clothing and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his robe. Now the robe was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be.” That the scripture might be fulfilled which said, “They divided my clothing among them, and for my robe they did cast lots.” These things therefore the soldiers did.

And sitting down they watched him there. An inscription was also written over him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, “This is the King of the Jews.” Many of the Jews then read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Write not, ‘The King of the Jews’, but that, he said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’” Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

And one of the criminals which were hanged denounced him, saying, “If you are Christ, save yourself and us.” But the other answering rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, seeing you are likewise condemned? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” He said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus said to him, “Verily, I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise.”

They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads and saying, “You that would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself. If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” The chief priests also mocked him, while the scribes and elders said, “He saved a lamb; himself he cannot save. If he is the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let Him deliver him now if He will have him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

The merchants and the dealers in beasts and birds also spoke similar things in his face, saying, “You who drive the traders in oxen and sheep and doves from the temple, are yourself

but a sheep that is sacrificed.” Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour, and some standing around, lit their torches, for the darkness was very great. About the sixth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lame sabachthani?” That is to say, “My God, My God, Why has Thou forsaken me?”

Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, “This man calls for Elias”; others said, “He calls on the Sun.” The rest said, “Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.” There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold your son!” And he said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her into his own home.

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I am thirsty.” They filled a sponge with vinegar from a vessel and put it on a branch of hyssop and put it to his mouth. Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Abba Amma, into Thy hand I commend my spirit.” When Jesus had received the vinegar, he cried aloud, “It is finished”; and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. And it was the ninth hour. And behold there was great thunder and lightning, and the partition wall of the Holy place from which hung the veil fell down and was torn in two; and the earth did quake, and the rocks also were split.

Now when the centurion and those with him watching Jesus saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was a Son of God.” There were also many women there who had followed from Galilee, ministering to them, and among them were Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children and they lamented, saying, “The light of the world is hidden from our eyes, the Lord, our Love is crucified.”

Then the Jews, because it was Preparation Day and the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath (the next day), for that was a Paschal Sabbath, asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two who were crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one of the soldiers pierced his heart with a spear and immediately there came out blood and water.

He that saw it made a record of it and his record is true, and he knows that he said truly, that you might believe. For these things were done so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled – “...a bone of him shall not be broken...” and again – “...in the midst of the week the Messiah shall be cut off.”

The Burial of Jesus

When evening had come, Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable councillor, who also waited for the Kingdom of God, came and went boldly in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. (He was a good man and just and had not consented to the council and deed of the others) Pilate marvelled that he was already dead; and calling the centurion to him, he asked him whether he had been dead awhile. When he knew about it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. Nicodemus also came, who had first come to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about hundred weight. They took the body of Jesus and wound it with the spices in linen clothes, as is the burial custom of the Jews. There was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden was a new tomb where no man had yet been laid.

There they laid Jesus, and it was about the beginning of the second watch when they buried him due to the preparation day of the Jews, for the tomb was nearby. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was laid. They kept watch there at the tomb for three days and three nights. Also the women who came with him from Galilee followed after bearing lamps in their hands and saw the tomb and how his body was laid, and they grieved over him. They returned and rested the next day, it being a high day, and on the day following they bought and prepared spices and ointments and waited for the end of the Sabbath.

The next day that followed, the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember what that deceiver said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command therefore that the tomb be made secure until the third day has passed, in case his disciples should come by night and steal him away, and say to the people, 'He is risen from the dead', so the last error shall be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a watch, go your way, make it as secure as you can." So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting a watch until the third day should have passed.