

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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Series:	Scripture Memory		Pastor/Teacher
Number:	68		Gary L.W. Johnson
Text:	Hebrews 2:9; Isaiah 52:13-53:12; John 19:17-30		
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GOD AT GOLGOTHA

Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680) was one of the great Puritan divines. He helped frame both The Westminster Confession and The Savoy Declaration. In his discussion on the Biblical doctrine of redemption, he made this important observation about the difference between Old Testament believers and New Testament believers: "It is true they were redeemed virtually, but the thing was not done. They did not see Christ; *they saw his day afar off* indeed, and he was *the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world*; but he had not yet done it; but we have it – Christ hath done it. We see Jesus, saith he, Heb. ii. 9, tasting of death for every man, and crowned with glory and honour. In Heb. ix. 15, you shall find there this expression, *For this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament.* Mark the expression: he was to die *for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament.* The meaning is this: that the world had gone upon the score with God, he received not one penny of money for all the fathers he had saved. They had been redeemed indeed; they had the fruit of that redemption that was afterward to be done; but as yet Jesus Christ had not paid his Father one penny of money. Now, then, he comes under the New Testament; and he is the Mediator, that by means of death he might be for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the Old Testament; that he might cancel all those bonds. You have the like expression in the 3d of the Romans. So that, my brethren, it is a help to your faith in comparison of them; they had redemption only in the promise; they saw it afar off. We have redemption in Christ; it is done, it is past. We see Jesus tasting death, see him hang upon the cross, by faith, and see him now he is in heaven *crowned with glory and honour*; so saith the Apostle in that place, Heb. ii. You have more help to believe than our forefathers had."¹

- I. **MESSIAH CRUCIFIED** (The High Priest prepares the sacrifice – note Jn. 18:19-23; 28, 29, 35)
 - A. O. T. types – the blood sacrifices
 - B. Outside the city – unclean
 - C. The thieves
- II. **MESSIAH IDENTIFIED** – v. 19:22
- III. **MESSIAH DISROBED**
 - A. The shame of sin
 - B. Gen. 2:25 comp. with 3:7 and 3:21
- IV. **MESSIAH AND HIS MOTHER** – vv. 25-27

V. **MESSIAH UNDER JUDGMENT** – vv. 29-30

A. *The suffering servant described in Isaiah 53.* The statement *He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*, expresses more fully what was mentioned in the preceding verse as to His being a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. It tells how the Lord bore in His own Person sufferings which were other than His own. Matthew quotes this in connection with His deeds of healing and deliverance (Matt. 8:16, 17). Yet that statement does not speak of His making a substitutionary atonement. *Verse 4* takes us directly to the Cross, for only to that could the statement apply, *yet did we esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*. In their blindness they looked upon His sufferings as the punishment of His own sins, which they must have regarded as especially great. But now, under the power of the revelation of the great facts, there comes an entire reversal of their opinions. This is marked in a special way by the series of emphatic personal pronouns in the plural in what follows. *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him* (v. 5). The words rendered “wounded” (or pierced) and “bruised” are the strongest terms to describe a violent and agonizing death. There is stress on the “our” in both statements. The chastisement which was administered to Him by God was that which makes for our peace (the word *shalom* is comprehensive and describes not simply a peaceful state, but well-being in general); *and with His stripes we are healed* – not the Roman scourging; the margin gives the literal rendering, “bruise” (so in the Septuagint, and see 1 Pet. 2:24, margin). The expression conveys in condensed form the stroke of Divine judgment inflicted upon Him. The healing, the spiritual soundness which we receive, is expressly set in direct contrast to the bruising or Divine stroke to which He submitted. Now comes the climax of conscience-stricken admission on the part of the penitent nation: *All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way*, and then the grateful realization and recognition of the tremendous fact, *and Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all* (v. 6). What the nation will hereafter acknowledge is true of the whole human race. Man has substituted his own will for God’s will. Being granted the power of self-determination, a feature which, among others, marks him as made in the image of God, he has used that power to go “his own way” and make himself ego-centric instead of God-centric. In this universal condition of guilt and misery the grace of God has interposed. Sending His own Son *in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin* (Rom. 8:3, RV). He made to meet upon Him the whole weight of our iniquity and the righteous wrath due to it. The third paragraph, verses 7 to 9, describes His sufferings, death and burial. *He was oppressed* [“treated unsparingly”], *yet He humbled Himself* [i.e., He suffered voluntarily] *and opened not His mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb; yea, He opened not His mouth*. This all expresses His voluntary endurance and is apparently set in striking antithesis to the straying away, in the first part of verse 6. The scene passes next to the unrighteous judicial verdict passed upon Him, and from thence direct to Calvary. *By oppression and judgment* [a hendiadys, i.e., one sentiment conveyed by two expressions, here signifying “by an oppressive judicial sentence”] *He was taken away* [Matt. 26:66; 27:22-31 and see Acts 8:33, which translates the Septuagint], *and as for His generation, who among them considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living? For the transgression of my people was He stricken*, or “was the stroke upon Him.” This is preferable to the RV margin “to whom the stroke was due.” The stress of the passage is what Christ endured. This section, which has described the character of His sufferings and the manner of His death, closes with a statement as to His burial: *And they* [RV; i.e., “His generation”] *made His grave with the wicked* [“with sinners”], *and with the rich* [“a rich man”] *in His death*. The first part of this would seem to refer to the intention of the rulers, who would have had Him ignominiously buried with the two robbers. The Roman authorities, however, granted the body to Joseph of Arimathaea, the “rich man” (Matt. 27:57). The Hebrew word rendered “death” is in the plural; this is expressive of the violent character, not to say the comprehensive nature, of His death. The

last section of the chapter gives a threefold testimony concerning the experiences of His soul. We are taken into the inner sanctuary of His Being. Again, verses 10 and 12 speak of the dealings of Jehovah with Him, judicially in respect of His death and compensatingly in respect of His reward. Verse 11 speaks of the outcome of His Sacrifice and His own satisfaction therein and the justifying grace He ministers to others. The statement *Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him* speaks of the determinate counsel of Jehovah in causing man's sin to be subservient to the actings of His grace, in the suffering inflicted upon His sinless Servant on the Cross. That He *put Him to grief* speaks of the extreme distress brought upon Him. What follows is probably rightly rendered as in the margin: *When His soul shall make an offering for sin*, i.e., a trespass offering, a sacrifice offered to God with the effect of clearing the sinner from his guilt. The sin offering was presented by the priest from the point of view of the offerer, but the trespass offering had especially in view the demands of God's justice. That is what is indicated here. This is the first of the three statements as to His soul. This voluntary act of surrendering His life (a life with which God was ineffably pleased) to meet God's righteous demands concerning man's guilt, is shown to have the following results (in vv. 10-12) relating to Christ Himself.²

NOTE: Man's salvation is not *amnesty*, but *redemption*. The throne of grace does not rest on the ruins of the throne of righteousness. The sinner is not saved by the penalty dispensed with, but the penalty endured *in his place*.

VI. *MESSIAH'S TRIUMPH* – v. 30

- A. Spiritual death precedes physical
- B. The manner of Christ's death

CONCLUSION: The willingness of Christ to submit to sufferings is all important. Their being cheerfully submitted to by Him was as necessary for salvation as their being appointed by God. It would have been unjust to inflict such suffering upon Christ against His will – and it was not mere suffering which could atone for the sin of man. The eternal sufferings of the wicked in hell will **never** satisfy justice -- never make atonement for one single sin. It **must** be sufferings readily submitted to by One who completely and personally never violated in the least the holy law of God – only such an one could have made atonement (Heb. 4:14-16; 10:11-14). Finally, Warfield declares that “it is worth while to pause to point out that the idea intended to be conveyed by the phrase *tasting of death* is a strong and not a weak one. Many, no doubt, when they read of our Lord's *tasting death*, take it as implying that He merely *had a taste of death*, as we say – passed through it with the minimum of conscious experience of its terror. Precisely the contrary is what is really meant. What the phrase signifies is that He was not a merely passive subject of death, of whom it is merely to be said that He died, and that is all of it: but that He drained this bitter cup to its dregs. It is the horror and the pains of death that are thrown up boldly for our contemplation by this phrase; and therefore it is used to take up again the preceding phrase – *the suffering of death*, a phrase which by an unexpected turn of expression itself emphasizes the sufferings of death. Jesus became a man not merely that He might suffer death, but that He might endure the sufferings of death. He was not merely the object on which death wrought; He in dying suffered, had strong agonies to endure. And now, our present clause adds that this dreadful cup of death was drunk by Him, for a high end – that by God's grace benefits might be secured for men.”³

ENDNOTES

¹ *The Works of Thomas Goodwin I* (rpt. Tanski Publications, 1996), p. 122.

² This section is taken from W. E. Vine, *Expository Commentary on Isaiah* (rpt. Nelson, 1997), pp. 147-149.

³ B. B. Warfield, *The Saviour of The World* (rpt. Banner of Truth, 1992), p. 172.