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THE CROWD AT CALVARY

BY: C. D. COLE

"And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, they parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; and set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." Matthew 27:35-37.

In our thoughts let us go back to a little hill called Calvary. Calvary is the name of the place outside Jerusalem where the Lord Jesus was crucified. It is the focal point of all history. For 4,000 years longing hearts looked hopefully, through type and shadow, for the real Lamb of God to be slain. For 2,000 years heavy hearts with a sense of sin have looked back to Calvary and found peace. Calvary stands alone as the one and only place where a righteous God will sheath his sword and spare a sinner. He can in justice spare the sinner because at Calvary he did not spare his only Son. Calvary is the only place where sin has ever been adequately dealt with. It is Calvary or Hell for every sinner.

We sing the song, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" Were you there? Or rather are you there even now? For Calvary stands in the midst of the swarming multitudes today. It seems that God so arranged it that every sort of person is represented in the different classes that watched him die. There is a sense in which you are at Calvary now, and your condition is declared, your salvation is decided, your destiny is determined, by the attitude you take toward the cross of Christ, and

the Christ of the cross.

Let us study the groups that gathered at Calvary and see if we cannot find your crowd there. There was a person or group of persons there that day with whom you belong and whose fate you will share.

The Soldiers

Look at them and their conduct. They clad him in a mock robe of royalty, they spat in his face, pressed a crown of thorns upon his brow, and they nailed him to the tree. But back and beyond all that was your sins and mine. In the deep mystery of providence, it was you and I who spat in his face, etc. We had a part in it for he was wounded for our transgressions. This crowd we belonged to by nature. But grace has wrought in us and we no longer crucify him afresh. You today who refuse to trust him as your only hope are crucifying him afresh. Do not put all the blame on the soldiers of that day. They were but administering the wounds that our sins had caused.

They sat down and watched him there. And you today sit and watch him as you read this message of God. And some of you do not seem to care. What proof of human depravity that men can read the Gospel in sermon and yet politely go away as though it made no difference to them.

They also gambled for his seamless robe. Bad enough to watch him unmoved, but they gambled for his robe. The world plays its game today at the foot of the cross. If you are not a soldier of the cross you are a soldier at the cross, gambling away your opportunity to be saved.

Those Who Passed By Wagging Their Heads

They did not crucify him, only passed by, reviling him. It is fashionable today to pass by Calvary. From the blasphemer to the indifferent soul, men pass by the cross today. The Bible records three things of these passers-by:

1. They misquoted his claims. *"Thou that destroyest this temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself." Matthew 27:40. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John 2:19. "But he spake of the temple of his body." John 2:21.*

2. They minimized his death. *"Save thyself, If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Matthew 27:40. They saw no necessity in his death. Modern critics see no need of Calvary, no atonement in his blood, and decry it as butcher-house religion.*

3. They mocked his deity. *"If thou be the Son of God." Matthew 27:40. Modernists today doubt his deity and talk about the perils of worshipping Jesus. They see in him a great teacher, an idealist, the crystal Christ, but not the Calvary Christ.*

The Chief Priests, Scribes and Elders

These were religious groups. You would expect them to be quiet and dignified, but they behaved very badly.

The General Crowd:
Termed Simply, The People

"And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned." Luke 23:48. They looked but did nothing. Most people belong to this group. They look but neglect salvation. It is one thing to look at Calvary and another to look unto Christ on Calvary. "Smote their breasts and returned." They were impressed by what they saw; that awful scene of death and darkness made them smite their breasts, humbled by the solemnity.

The Centurion

He feared greatly. "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God." Matthew 27:54.

He said that certainly this was a righteous man; he called Christ the Son of God; he glorified God. "Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man." Luke 23:47.

The Dying Thief

Here is one case of deathbed repentance. "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke 23:39-43.

(a) He took the place of a sinner.

(b) He called Jesus "Lord".

(c) He trusted him for salvation saying "remember me."

Can you see more clearly today where you stand? Be sure on one thing...you are there. You are part of the crowd at Calvary.

FOR WHAT DID CHRIST DIE?

BY: C. D. COLE

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures," I Corinthians 15:3.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed," I Peter 2:24.

Consider the question: "For whom did Christ die?" We see that Christ died for persons, considered: (1) as sinners: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:7,8; (2) as sheep: "...I lay down my life for the sheep..." John 10:15,16; (3) as the elect: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Romans 8:33; (4) as the church: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Ephesians 5:25b. He died as a substitute for persons considered in these various conditions and relationships.

We are now to consider: "For what did Christ die?" What was it about these persons that He died for? What did He die to save them from? He died to deliver them from something: What was it?

NEGATIVELY CONSIDERED:

He did not die for their sicknesses. The death of Christ was substitutionary and these for whom He died cannot suffer with that for which He died to deliver them. If Christ died to prevent our being sick, and we are sick nevertheless, then what was the value of His death. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Matthew 8:17. This means that He bare our sicknesses sympathetically; not on the cross, but while alive as He went about doing good and healing all manner of sickness.

He did not die for their poverty. Christ died for poor men, but He died for them considered as sinners and not as poor. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" James 2:5.

He did not die to prevent their physical death. Death will be the common experience of saints until the coming of the Lord. Medical science has done and may do much more, in the providence of God, to alleviate

human suffering and pain, but it will never conquer death.

POSITIVELY CONSIDERED:

He died for our sins. I Corinthians 15:3. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21; I Peter 2:24. "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Hebrews 9:26. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5.

Sin is rebellion against God and merits retribution. Christ died for us to prevent our being punished for our sins. If Christ's death was a punishment for our sins, then we will not and have not been punished for our sins. The law pronounced a curse upon us as sinners; Christ died to keep that curse from being executed. He was made a curse for us. He was cursed that we might not be cursed. He was punished so that we would not have to be punished. He was condemned that we might be justified. He was cursed so that we might be blessed. He died before God so that we might live before God. There can be no just punishment of a justified person.

The death of Christ converts temporal afflictions into eternal blessings. Sickness, poverty, death are the effects of sin. Sin brought sickness, poverty, death. There would have been none of these things if sin had not entered. The death of Christ has not removed these effects of sin but it has changed their nature and purpose. They have been turned into blessings. The Psalmist said: "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy word." Psalm 119:67. See also Psalm 119:71 and II Corinthians 4:17.

Sickness, poverty, death, these things are evil in themselves considered, but for the saint have been turned through the death of Christ into blessings. They are not administered by an angry judge but by a loving Father. They may be corrective but not retributive.

"Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." I Corinthians 3:22. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32. "And we know that all things work together for

SUFFERINGS AND GLORY TO FOLLOW

BY: C. D. COLE

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." II Thessalonians 1:7-10.

"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." I Peter 1:9-13.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:1-2.

INTRODUCTION:

Sufferings and glory has been the experience of Christ the Captain of our salvation. *"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"* Luke 24:26. And the same order applies to His people. Sufferings and glory! We see and experience suffering. Who is not acquainted with the language of tears? Suffering is self-evident; no arguments are needed to convince us that this is a suffering world. The world suffers natural retribution, but the more the man of the world sins the less he suffers. The Bible talks about people being past feeling, that is, they have no grief over their sins. Let a man start on a career of vice, and he will suffer more at the first than at the last.

Sufferings Of The Saints

Why do the saints suffer? And for what do they suffer? They suffer under the process of being glorified. Why has God made me like this? He has not yet made you; you are only in the making. The saints suffers along with the world in the common sorrows of life: the loss of health, the loss of loved ones, the loss in crushed hopes and shattered ambitions. But the saint also suffers as a mourner over his sinful nature and for his actual sins. It is not so much what I do that makes me mourn; it is the discovery of the awful nature I have within me.

The saint also has cause for comfort. As one who is hungering and thirsting after righteousness he has the promise that he shall be filled. As a mourner over his sin he has the promise of comfort.

The same blessed Saviour who creates the thirst will satisfy it. The same Saviour who creates the attitude of mourning over sin will comfort the mourner with the comfort of perfection.

Whatever our suffering is we can say, *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."* II Corinthians 4:17. Or *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."* Romans 8:18.

The saints know a lot about suffering but we know little about glory. All present glory is a passing glory. There is the glory of success in business or profession; there is glory of being chosen to office or position of honour but these are transient things.

The Glory

The glory designed for the saints is a different glory, it is the glory of perfection. *"Whom he justified, them he also glorified."* Romans 8:30. This glory is something we have come short of and to which we shall be restored. *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* Romans 3:23. But as saints we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. The glory of God in us is a state of sinlessness, just as coming short of that glory is sinfulness. In coming short of the glory of God we lost moral likeness to God, in realizing the glory of God we are conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

This glory is not a human attainment, but a divine production. Whom He justified them he also glorified.

Jesus Christ is now enjoying a hidden glory with the Father. *"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."* John 17:4-5. Jesus Christ *"became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name*

which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:8-11. Paul traces His descent from glory to shame, the shame of the cross, and also His ascent back to glory with the Father.

Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth, coming back to glorify his saints and to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired by his saints.

Our glory shall await His coming when we appear with Him in glory. And our glory will be His revealed glory, He is to be glorified in His saints.

What He makes out of us will be His glory. He will have the glory for what we are. You see, if salvation were by works He would not have the glory. If perfection is our own attainment then He could not point to us and say, "Behold, my handiwork."

In every realm of endeavor, the skill and ability of the workman is in what he produces. On the wall to the entrance to Saint Paul's Cathedral, there is a plaque which says, "If you want to see a monument to the skill of the architect, look around you." That marvelous building was the glory of Sir Christopher Wren, the architect. The glory of the physician and surgeon is in the people they have healed. The glory of Shakespeare was the plays he wrote. The glory of Beethoven was the music he composed and rendered.

And so the glory of Jesus Christ will be the saints he makes. And no saint is yet completely made, but when he comes and we wake up in His likeness, then we will be satisfied, and it will appear what a Mighty Saviour He is.

Beloved, as penitent believers in Jesus Christ we are going to be somebody one of these

days. And when He has finished chiseling and polishing and washing of us we will be without blemish and without spot, there will be no moral defects.

Our glory will be commensurate with His skill and grace. His love and power will go to make us what He wants us to be to His glory.

Beloved, if I might change the figure, we are still on His loom of Providence. His shuttles are not yet empty. He thrusts in a white, a blue, or a black thread. There is the white thread of joy, the scarlet thread of suffering, the blue thread of heavenly peace, the gray thread of sorrow, the purple thread of duties, the black thread of temptation, and the golden thread of grace, all thrust in and out at the clanking of the loom.

We cannot judge His design by one thrust of the shuttle. We have to wait until he has emptied all his shuttles.