

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 323

Series: St. John's Passion - Gospel of John chapters 12-21

Verses: John 19:1-5

Topic: Behold The Man!

Date: 31st August 2004

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John 19:1-5 MKJV Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and flogged *Him*. (2) And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and put *it* on His head. And they put a purple robe on Him, (3) and said, Hail, King of the Jews! And they struck Him with their hands. (4) Then Pilate went out again and said to them, Behold, I bring him out to you so that you may know that I find no fault in him. (5) Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And *Pilate* said to them, Behold the man!

As far as I can make out verse five has been completely mistranslated in most modern translations and the word "Pilate" inserted. Here it is in the Literal Version and Young's Literal translation:

John 19:5 LITV Then Jesus came outside, wearing the thorny wreath and the purple mantle. And he said to them, Behold, the Man!

Joh 19:5 YLT Jesus, therefore, came forth without, bearing the thorny crown and the purple garment; and he saith to them, `Lo, the man!

Jesus is clearly the one saying "Behold the Man!" and it completely changes the meaning of the whole verse. Instead of Pilate commending Jesus and sympathizing with Him it becomes a wry comment of Jesus to the howling mob in the nature of "Look at what you have done."

There is simply no warrant for adding "Pilate", it is not there in any Greek manuscript that I could consult, or the Textus Receptus or even in the Vulgate and there is no similar comment in the Synoptic gospels. As far as I can make out the literal translations are correct and the standard translations are flawed in this respect. Jesus is the subject of the sentence and it is He who says "Behold the Man!"

Staring down from the balcony, crown of thorns on his head, with a royal robe Jesus says to them "Behold the Man"! It is both a rebuke and an invitation to salvation at the same time. He still offers them salvation – through the beholding of the wounds of Christ. Yet He makes it as plain as day that they are crucifying an innocent man, their King and the Son of God. Jesus is making them aware and responsible. He is saying "Look at what you have done".

Jesus refers to Himself in the third person as "the Man" in a similar way to the way He refers to Himself in the third person as "the Son of Man" e.g. John 13:31 MKJV Then when he (Judas) had left, Jesus said, Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him.

Jesus is also inviting us to behold Him in His humanity - to in fact behold the humanity of the Son of God. Behold I am human – I bleed, I am whipped and scorned, I am not an impervious immortal, I am not a bullet-proof Superman, I am wounded. I am human like you and I will suffer like you do and I will die as a man.

The Greek word used here for “man” is “anthropos” – human - and it is a word used for a category like “arthropods” or “monotremes”. Its root meaning is “human-faced” humanity as a category of being separate from angels and animals. “Behold the Man” is perhaps best translated in this case as “Behold the Human”. Here is Thayer’s definition from E-Sword:

Thayer Definition - Anthropos:

- 1) a human being, whether male or female
 - 1a) generically, to include all human individuals
 - 1b) to distinguish man from beings of a different order
 - 1b1) of animals and plants
 - 1b2) of from God and Christ
 - 1b3) of the angels
 - 1c) with the added notion of weakness, by which man is led into a mistake or prompted to sin
 - 1d) with the adjunct notion of contempt or disdainful pity
- 1e) with reference to two fold nature of man, body and soul

In the bleeding whipped and wounded Christ we find God made vulnerable. God taking on humanity not just when it was convenient (like the Greek gods did who took the form of a man to fight a battle or seduce a woman) - but taking on humanity fully and completely until death.

When Jesus says “behold the human” He is clearly maintaining that He is a part of the normal human race - and this refutes the later Docetic heresy that maintained that He just appeared to be human.

Finally it is good spiritual advice to behold the humanity and the wounds of Christ. There is enormous saving power in beholding the wounds of Christ “for by His stripes we are healed.” The early Moravian missionaries that turned the world upside down were given two simple instructions “Preach the wounds of Christ” and “Tell the story of the Lamb.” We need to spend time mediating on the cross of Christ and on the wounds of Christ. If you would like some help in this go to: <http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/messiah/> and you will find a number of articles.

Lastly Jesus was not only wounded – He was arrayed in purple. Even the soldiers said” Hail, King of the Jews! (though in mockery). Pilate knew Jesus was different, that He was true royalty and so let the precious purple robe be put on His blood-soaked back. Jesus was human and He was the best of humans, our crowning glory and our King!

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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