

# CHAPTER 19

## INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 19

**Ver. 1.** *Then Pilate therefore took Jesus*, etc.] Finding that the Jews would not agree to his release, but that Barabbas was the person they chose, and being very desirous, if possible, to save his life, thought of this method: he ordered Jesus to be taken by the proper officers,

*and scourged him*; that is, commanded him to be scourged by them; which was done by having him to a certain place, where being stripped naked, and fastened to a pillar, he was severely whipped: and this he did, hoping the Jews would be satisfied therewith, and agree to his release; but though he did this with such a view, yet it was a very unjust action in him to scourge a man that he himself could find no fault in: however, it was what was foretold by Christ himself, and was an emblem of those strokes and scourges of divine justice he endured, as the surety of his people, in his soul, in their stead; and his being scourged, though innocent, shows, that it was not for his own, but the sins of others; and expresses the vile nature of sin, the strictness of justice, and the grace, condescension, and patience of Christ: and this may teach us not to think it strange that any of the saints should endure scourgings, in a literal sense; and to bear patiently the scourgings and chastisements of our heavenly Father, and not to fear the overflowing scourge or wrath of God, since Christ has bore this in our room.

**Ver. 2.** *And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns*, etc.] This was an emblem of his being surrounded by wicked men, sons of Belial, comparable to thorns, whilst he hung suffering on the cross; and of the sins of his people compassing him about, which were as thorns, very grievous to him; and of his various troubles in life, and of his being made a curse for us at death; thorns being the produce of the curse upon the earth.

*And put it on his head*: not only by way of derision, as mocking at his character, the King of the Jews, but in order to afflict and distress him.

*And they put on him a purple robe*: Matthew calls it a scarlet robe; and the Arabic and Persic versions here, “a red” one: it very probably was one of

the soldiers' coats, which are usually red: this was still in derision of him as a king, and was an emblem of his being clothed with our purple and scarlet sins, and of the bloody sufferings of his human nature for them, and through which we come to have a purple covering, or to be justified by his blood, and even to be made truly kings, as well as priests, unto God.

**Ver. 3.** *And said, hail, King of the Jews!* etc.] Some copies before this clause read, "and they came unto him"; and so read the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, Coptic, and Ethiopic versions; that is, they came and prostrated themselves before him; bowed the knee unto him, and addressed him in a mock way, as if he was an earthly monarch just come to his crown, and whom they wished long to live; thus mocking at his kingly office, and despising him under that character, as many do now: some will not have him to reign over them, but reject him as King; and others, though in words they own him to be King, yet disregard his commands, and act no better part than these scoffing soldiers did:

*and they smote him with their hands:* upon his cheeks, as the Syriac version reads it. These, and many other affronts they gave him; in all which they were indulged by Pilate, and was a pleasing scene to the wicked Jews, whose relentless hearts were not in the least moved hereby, though Pilate hoped they would; and which was his view in allowing the soldiers to use such incivilities and indecencies to him.

**Ver. 4.** *Pilate therefore went forth again,* etc.] When all this was done to Jesus, Pilate went again out of the judgment hall, or however from the place where Jesus had been scourged, and ill used in the manner he was: he went a little before him unto the Jews that stood without,

*and saith unto them, behold I bring him forth unto you;* that is, he had ordered him to be brought forth by the soldiers, and they were just bringing him in the sad miserable condition in which he was, that the Jews might see, with their own eyes, how he had been used:

*that ye may know that I find no fault in him;* for by seeing what was done to him, how severely he had been scourged, and in what derision and contempt he had been had, and what barbarity had been exercised on him, they might know and believe, that if Pilate did all this, or allowed of it to be done to a man whom he judged innocent, purely to gratify the Jews; that had he found anything in him worthy of death, he would not have stopped here, but would have ordered the execution of him; of this they might

assure themselves by his present conduct. Pilate, by his own confession, in treating, or suffering to be treated in so cruel and ignominious a manner, one that he himself could find no fault in, or cause of accusation against, was guilty of great injustice.

**Ver. 5.** *Then came Jesus forth*, etc.] Out of the judgment hall, or place where he had been scourged, as soon as Pilate had said these words:

*wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe*; with his temples scratched and torn with the thorny crown, and the blood running down from thence, and his face and eyes swollen with the blows he had received from their closed fists, and all besmeared with his own blood, and the soldiers' spittle; his body appearing to be almost of the same colour with the purple or scarlet robe, through the stripes and lashes he had received, when that was thrown back.

*And Pilate saith unto them, behold the man*; not their king, that would have provoked them; though he did say so afterwards, when he found he could not prevail upon them to agree to his release; but the man, to move their compassion; signifying, that he was a man as they were, and that they ought to use him as such, and treat him with humanity and pity; and that he was a poor despicable man, as the condition he was in showed; and that it was a weak thing in them to fear anything with respect to any change of, or influence in, civil government from one that made such a figure; and therefore should be satisfied with what had been done to him, and dismiss him.

**Ver. 6.** *When the chief priests therefore, and officers, saw him*, etc.] In this piteous condition, in his mock dress, and having on him all the marks of cruel usage, enough to have moved an heart of stone: and though they were the principal men of the priesthood, and who made great pretensions to religion and piety, and the officers were their servants and attendants, and all of them used to sacred employments; which might have been thought would have at least influenced them to the exercise of humanity and compassion to fellow creatures; yet instead of being affected with this sight, and wrought upon by it, to have agreed to his release, as Pilate hoped,

*they cried out, saying, Crucify him, Crucify him*; which was done in a very noisy and clamorous way; and the repetition of their request shows their malignity, vehemence, and impatience; and remarkable it is, that they

should call for, and desire that kind of death the Scriptures had pointed out, that the Messiah should die, and which was predicted by Christ himself.

*Pilate saith unto them, take ye him, and crucify him, for I find no fault in him.* This was not leave to do it, as appears from the reason he gives, in which the innocence of Christ is again asserted; nor did the Jews take it in this light, as is evident from their reply; and it is clear, that after this Pilate thought he had a power either to release or crucify him; and he did afterwards seek to release him; and the Jews made a fresh request to crucify him; upon which he was delivered to be crucified: but this was said in a way of indignation, and as abhorring the action; and is an ironical concession, and a bitter sarcasm upon them, that men that professed so much religion and sanctity, could be guilty of such iniquity, as to desire the death of one that no fault could be found in; and therefore, if such were their consciences, for his part, he desired to have no concern in so unrighteous an action; but if they would, they must even do it themselves.

**Ver. 7.** *The Jews answered him,* etc.] Finding they could make nothing of the charge of sedition against him, and that Pilate could not be prevailed upon to condemn him to death upon that score, they try another method, and charge him with blasphemy; which, if the other had succeeded, they would have concealed; because this, if proved, according to their law, would not have brought on him the kind of death they were desirous of:

*we have a law;* meaning the law of Moses, which they had received by his hands from God:

*and by our law he ought to die;* referring either to the law concerning blasphemy in general, or concerning the false prophet, or to the having and asserting of other gods, and enticing to the worship of them; in either of which cases death by stoning was enjoined:

*because he made himself the Son of God;* the natural and essential Son of God; not by adoption, or on account of his incarnation and mediatorial office; but as being one with the Father, of the same nature with him, and equal to him in all his perfections and glory. This he had often asserted in his ministry, or what was equivalent to it, and which they so understood; and indeed had said that very morning, before the high priest in his palace, what amounted thereunto, and which he so interpreted; upon which he rent his garments, and charged him with blasphemy: for that God has a son, is

denied by the Jews, since Jesus asserted himself to be so, though formerly believed by them; nor was it now denied that there was a Son of God, or that he was expected; but the blasphemy with them was, that Jesus set up himself to be he: but now it is vehemently opposed by them, that God has a son; so from (<sup>2018</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:8) they endeavour to prove <sup>f695</sup>, that God has neither a brother, *ḥ b a l w*, “nor a son”; but, “hear, O Israel, they observe, the Lord our God is one Lord”. And elsewhere <sup>f696</sup>,

““there is one”; this is the holy blessed God; “and not a second”; for he has no partner or equal in his world; “yea, he hath neither child nor brother”; he hath no brother, nor hath he a son; but the holy blessed God loves Israel, and calls them his children, and his brethren.”

All which is opposed to the Christian doctrine, relating to the sonship of Christ. The conduct of these men, at this time, deserves notice, as their craft in imposing on Pilate’s ignorance of their laws; and the little regard that they themselves had to them, in calling for crucifixion instead of stoning; and their inconsistency with themselves, pretending before it was not lawful for them to put any man to death; and now they have a law, and by that law, in their judgment, he ought to die.

**Ver. 8.** *When Pilate therefore heard that saying*, etc.] That Jesus had asserted himself to be the Son of God, and that the Jews had a law to put such a person to death that was guilty of such blasphemy:

*he was the more afraid*; he was afraid to put him to death, or to consent to it before; partly on account of his wife’s message to him, and partly upon a conviction of the innocence of Christ, in his own conscience: and now he was more afraid, since here was a charge brought against him he did not well understand the meaning of; and a law of theirs pretended to be violated hereby, which should he pay no regard to, might occasion a tumult, since they were already become very clamorous and noisy; and he might be the more uneasy, test the thing they charged him with asserting, should be really fact; that he was one of the gods come down in the likeness of man; or that he was some demi-god at least, or so nearly related to deity, that it might be dangerous for him to have anything to do with him this way: and in this suspicion he might be strengthened, partly from the writings of the Heathens, which speak of such sort of beings; and partly from the miracles he might have heard were performed by Jesus; and also

by calling to mind what he had lately said to him, that his kingdom was not of this world, and that he was come into it to bear witness to the truth.

**Ver. 9.** *And went again into the judgment hall*, etc.] From whence he came out, taking Jesus along with him, in order to interrogate him alone upon this head:

*and saith unto Jesus, whence art thou?* meaning not of what country he was, for he knew he was of the nation of the Jews; nor in what place he was born, whether at Bethlehem or at Nazareth, for this was no concern of his; but from whence he sprung, who were his ancestors, and whether his descent was from the gods, or from men; and if from the former, from which of them; for as Pilate was an Heathen, he must be supposed to speak as such:

*but Jesus gave him no answer*; for his question was frivolous, and deserved none; and besides, he was not worthy of one, who had used him so ill, when he knew, in his own conscience, that he was innocent; nor was he capable of taking in an answer, or able to judge whether it was right or wrong; and since Christ was come to die for the salvation of his people, it was not proper he should say anything that might be a means of hindering it.

**Ver. 10.** *Then saith Pilate unto him*, etc.] Being angry with him, resenting his silence, and looking upon it as a contempt of him;

*speakest thou not unto me?* he wondered that he stood in no fear of him, who was the Roman governor, his judge; who had the power of life and death; and that he should make no answer to him, who was in so much dignity, and in so high and exalted a station.

*Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?* proudly boasting of his authority to do one or the other. The sudden change of the man from fear, to vain and proud boasting, is to be observed; just now he was afraid of the divine power of Christ, lest he should have any divinity in him; and now he boasts and brags of his own power, and menaces and threatens with his authority to punish with death, even the death of the cross; in which he discovers his wickedness, as a magistrate, to endeavour to terrify one that he himself believed to be innocent: and besides, his assertion is false; for he had no power, neither from God nor man, to crucify innocent men, and release criminals: and moreover, he himself must be self-condemned, who had a power, as he

says, of releasing him, and yet did not do it, though he had once and again declared he found no fault in him.

**Ver. 11.** *Jesus answered,* etc.] With great intrepidity and courage, with freedom and boldness, as being not at all dismayed with his threatenings, or affected with his proud boasts, and in order to expose the vanity of them:

*thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above:* meaning, not from the Jewish sanhedrim, whose court of judicature was in the temple, which was higher than the other part of the city; nor from the Roman emperor, or senate of Rome, the higher powers; by whom Pilate was made governor of Judea, and a judge in all causes relating to life and death; but reference is had to the place from whence he came, and to the decree and council of God above, and the agreement between the eternal three in heaven. Christ speaks of a power he had against him, that is, of taking away his life; he had no lawful power to do it at all; nor any power, right or wrong, had it not been given him by God: and which is to be ascribed, not merely to the general providence of God, without which nothing is done in this world; but to the determinate counsel of God, relating to this particular action of the crucifying of Christ; otherwise Christ, as God, could have struck Pilate his judge with death immediately, and without so doing could as easily have escaped out of his hands, as he had sometimes done out of the hands of the Jews; and, as man and Mediator, he could have prayed to his Father for, and have had, more than twelve legions of angels, which would soon have rescued him: but this was not to be; power was given to Pilate from heaven against him; not for any evil he himself had committed, or merely to gratify the envy and malice of the Jews, but for the salvation of God's elect, and for the glorifying of the divine perfections: and to this the Jews themselves agree in general,

“that all the things of this world depend on above; and when they agree above first, (they say <sup>f697</sup>.) they agree below; and that there is no power below, until that *al y[I atwnj l wç byhytad*, “power is given from above”; and the whole of that depends on this:”

*therefore he that delivered me unto thee, hath the greater sin; Æl yd ^m*, “than thine”, as the Syriac version adds; and to the same purpose the Persic. Pilate had been guilty of sin already in scourging Christ, and suffering the Roman soldiers to abuse him; and would be guilty of a greater in delivering him up to be crucified, who he knew was innocent: but the sin

of Judas in delivering him into the hands of the chief priests and elders, and of the chief priest and elders and people of the Jews, in delivering him to Pilate to crucify him, according to the Roman manner, were greater, inasmuch as theirs proceeded from malice and envy, and was done against greater light and knowledge; for by his works, miracles, and ministry, as well as by their own prophecies, they might, or must have known, that he was the Messiah, and Son of God: and it is to be observed, that as there is a difference in sin, and that all sins are not equal, the circumstances of things making an alteration; so that God's decree concerning the delivery of his Son into the hands of sinful men, does not excuse the sin of the betrayers of him.

**Ver. 12.** *And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him,* etc.] From the time that Christ spoke the above words; or, as the Syriac version renders it, *adh l wj m*, “because of this”, or on account of the words he had spoken; to which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: he sought by all means, and studied every way to bring the Jews to agree to his release: his reasons were, because of the consciousness of guilt, and the danger of contracting more; the sense he might have of a Divine Being, to whom he was accountable for the exercise of his power; his suspicion that Jesus was the Son of God, or that he was more than a man; for he perceived that power went along with his words, by the effect they had on him: but though he sought to release him, he did not do it, nor use the power he boasted he had; the reason in himself was, he was desirous, that the Jews would concur with him; the secret one in providence was, God would not have it so; and yet things must be carried to this pitch, that it might appear that Christ suffered not for his own sins, but ours, and that he suffered willingly:

*but the Jews cried out, saying, if thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend.* These were the chief priests, Scribes, and elders of the people, more especially, and by whom, the common people were stirred up to request his crucifixion: these still made a greater outcry, and in a more clamorous way urged, that should he be released, Pilate would show but little regard to Caesar, by whom he was raised to this dignity; who had put him into this trust; whom he represented, and in whose name he acted. This was a piece of craftiness in them, for nothing could more nearly affect Pilate, than an insinuation of want of friendship and fidelity to Tiberius, who was then Caesar, or emperor; and also, it was an instance of great hypocrisy in them, to pretend a regard to Caesar, when they scrupled



paying tribute to him, and would have been glad, at any rate, to have been free from his yoke and government; and is a very spiteful hint, and carries in it a sort of threatening to Pilate, as if they would bring a charge against him to Caesar, should he let Jesus go with his life, whom they in a contemptuous manner call “this man”: adding,

*whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Caesar*; returning to their former charge of sedition, finding that that of blasphemy had not its effect: their reasoning is very fallacious, and mere sophistry; for though it might be allowed that whoever set up himself as a temporal king in any of Caesar’s dominions, must be an enemy of his, a rebel against him; and such a declaration might be truly interpreted as high treason; yet Christ did not give out that he was such a king, but, on the contrary, that his kingdom was not of this world, and therefore did not assume to himself any part of Caesar’s dominions and government; and though the Jews would have took him by force, and made him a king, he refused it, and got out of their hands.

**Ver. 13.** *When Pilate therefore heard that saying*, etc.] Of the Jews, that a freeing of Jesus would show an unfriendliness to Caesar; and gave very broad hints that they would accuse him to Caesar of treachery and unfaithfulness, in letting go a man, that made pretensions to be a king in his territories; and knowing well the jealousies and suspicions of Tiberius, and fearing lest it would turn to his own disrepute and disadvantage, immediately

*he brought Jesus forth* out of the judgment hall, the place where he had been examined in; not to declare his innocence, nor to move their pity, nor to release him, but to pass sentence on him.

*And he sat down in the judgment seat*: for that purpose. He had sat but little all this while, but was continually going in and out to examine Jesus, and converse with the Jews; but he now takes his place, and sits down as a judge, in order to give the finishing stroke to this affair; and where he sat down, was

*in the place that is called the pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.* This place, in the Greek tongue, was called “Lithostrotos”; or “the pavement of stones”, as the Syriac version renders it: it is thought to be the room “Gazith”, in which the sanhedrim sat in the temple when they tried

capital causes<sup>f698</sup>; and it was so called, because it was paved with smooth, square, hewn stones:

“it was in the north part; half of it was holy, and half of it common; and it had two doors, one for that part which was holy, and another for that which was common; and in that half which was common the sanhedrim sat<sup>f699</sup>.”

So that into this part of it, and by this door, Pilate, though a Gentile, might enter. This place, in the language of the Jews, who at this time spoke Syriac, was “Gabbatha”, front its height, as it should seem; though the Syriac and Persic versions read “Gaphiphtha”, which signifies a fence, or an enclosure. Mention is made in the Talmud<sup>f700</sup> of the upper “Gab” in the mountain of the house; but whether the same with this “Gabbaths”, and whether this is the same with the chamber “Gazith”, is not certain. The Septuagint use the same word as John here does, and call by the same name the pavement of the temple on which the Israelites felt and worshipped God, (~~400B~~ 2 Chronicles 7:3).

**Ver. 14.** *And it was the preparation of the passover*, etc.] So the Jews<sup>f701</sup> say, that Jesus suffered on the eve of the passover; and the author of the blasphemous account of his life says<sup>f702</sup>, it was the eve both of the passover and the sabbath; which account so far agrees with the evangelic history; but then this preparation of the passover was not of the passover lamb, for that had been prepared and eaten the night before. Nor do I find that there was any particular day which was called “the preparation of the passover” in such sense, and much less that this day was the day before the eating of the passover. According to the law in (~~421B~~ Exodus 12:3-6) the lamb for the passover was to be separated from the rest of the flock on the tenth day of the month, and to be kept up till the fourteenth; but this is never called the preparation of the passover; and was it so called, it cannot be intended here; the preparing and making ready the passover the evangelists speak of, were on the same day it was eaten, and design the getting ready a place to eat it in, and things convenient for that purpose, and the killing the lamb, and dressing it, and the like, (~~4057~~ Matthew 26:17,19 ~~4142~~ Mark 14:12,15,16 ~~4218~~ Luke 22:8,9,12,13) there is what the Jews call *j sph swrp*, which was a space of fifteen days before the passover, and began at the middle of the thirty days before the feast, in which they used to ask questions, and explain the traditions concerning the passover<sup>f703</sup>: but this is never called the preparation of the passover: and on the night of the fourteenth month

they sought diligently, in every hole and corner of their houses, for leavened bread, in order to remove it <sup>f704</sup>; but this also never went by any such name: wherefore, if any respect is had to the preparation for the passover, it must either design the preparation of the “Chagigah”, which was a grand festival, commonly kept on the fifteenth day, and which was sometimes called the passover; or else the preparation for the whole feast all the remaining days of it; (see Gill on “~~4183~~ John 18:28”) but it seems best of all to understand it only of the preparation for the sabbath, which, because it was in the passover week, is called the passover preparation day: and it may be observed, that it is sometimes only called “the day of the preparation”, and “the preparation”, (~~4272~~ Matthew 27:62, ~~4254~~ Luke 23:54, ~~4181~~ John 19:31) and sometimes the “Jews’ preparation day”, (~~4192~~ John 19:42) and it is explained by the Evangelist (~~4152~~ Mark 15:42). “It was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath”; on which they both prepared themselves for the sabbath, and food to eat on that day; and this being the time of the passover likewise, the preparation was the greater: and therefore to distinguish this preparation day for the sabbath, from others, it is called the passover preparation; nor have I observed that any other day is called the preparation but that before the sabbath: the Jews dispute about preparing food for the sabbath on a feast day, as this was; they seem to forbid it, but afterwards soften their words, and allow it with some provisos: their canon runs thus <sup>f705</sup>;

“a feast day which falls on the eve of the sabbath, a man may not boil (anything) at the beginning of the feast day for the sabbath; but he may boil for the feast day; and if there is any left, it may be left for the sabbath; and he may make a boiling on the eve of a feast day, and depend on it for the sabbath: the house of Shamtoni say two boilings; and the house of Hillell say one boiling.”

Bartenora on the passage observes, that some say the reason of this boiling on the evening of a feast day, is for the honour of the sabbath; for because from the evening of the feast day, the sabbath is remembered, that which is best is chosen for the sabbath, that the sabbath may not be forgotten through the business of the feast day. The account Maimonides <sup>f706</sup> gives of this matter is,

“on a common day they “prepare” for the sabbath, and on a common day they prepare for a feast day; but they do not prepare

on a feast day for the sabbath, nor is the sabbath, hnykm, “a preparation” for a feast day.”

This seems to be contrary to the practice of the Jews in the time of Christ, as related by the evangelists, understanding by the preparation they speak of, a preparation of food for the sabbath; but what he afterwards says <sup>f707</sup> makes some allowance for it:

“a feast day, which happens to be on the eve of the sabbath, (Friday,) they neither bake nor boil, on a feast day what is eaten on the morrow, on the sabbath; and this prohibition is from the words of the Scribes, (not from the word of God,) that a man should not boil any thing on a feast day for a common day, and much less for the sabbath; but if he makes a boiling (or prepares food) on the evening of a feast day on which he depends and boils and bakes on a feast day for the sabbath, lo, this is lawful; and that on which he depends is called the mingling of food.”

And this food, so called, was a small portion of food prepared on a feast for the sabbath, though not less than the quantity of an olive, whether for one man or a thousand <sup>f708</sup>; by virtue of which, they depending on it for the sabbath, they might prepare whatever they would, after having asked a blessing over it, and saying <sup>f709</sup>,

“by this mixture it is free for me to bake and boil on a feast day what is for the morrow, the sabbath; and if a man prepares for others, he must say for me, and for such an one, and such an one; or for the men of the city, and then all of them may bake and boil on a feast day for the sabbath.”

*And about the sixth hour*; to which agrees the account in (<sup><4125></sup>Matthew 27:45), (<sup><4234></sup>Luke 23:44) but (<sup><4155></sup>Mark 15:25) says that “it was the third hour, and they crucified him”; and Beza says, he found it so written in one copy; and so read Peter of Alexandria, Beza’s ancient copy, and some others, and Nonnus: but the copies in general agree in, and confirm the common reading, and which is differently accounted for; some by the different computations of the Jews and Romans; others by observing that the day was divided into four parts, each part containing three hours, and were called the third, the sixth, the ninth, and the twelfth hours; and not only that time, when one of these hours came, was called by that name, but also from that all the space of the three hours, till the next came, was called

by the name of the former: for instance, all the space from nine o'clock till twelve was called "the third hour"; and all from twelve till three in the afternoon "the sixth hour": hence the time of Christ's crucifixion being supposed to be somewhat before, but yet near our twelve of the clock, it may be truly here said that it was about the sixth hour; and as truly by Mark the third hour; that space, which was called by the name of the third hour, being not yet passed, though it drew toward an end. This way go Godwin and Hammond, whose words I have expressed, and bids fair for the true solution of the difficulty: though it should be observed, that Mark agrees with the other evangelists about the darkness which was at the sixth hour, the time of Christ's crucifixion, (<sup>41533</sup>Mark 15:33,34) and it is to be remarked, that he does not say that it was the third hour "when" they crucified him, or that they crucified him at the third hour; but it was the third hour, "and" they crucified him, as Dr. Lightfoot observes. It was the time of day when they should have been at the daily sacrifice, and preparing for the solemnity of that day particularly, which was their Chagigah, or grand feast; but instead of this they were prosecuting his crucifixion, which they brought about by the sixth hour. And about this time Pilate said, and did the following things:

*and he saith unto the Jews, behold your king*; whom some of your people, it seems, have owned for their king, and you charge as setting up himself as one; see what a figure he makes; does he look like a king? this he said, in order to move upon their affections, that, if possible, they might agree to release him, and to shame them out of putting such a poor despicable creature to death; and as upbraiding them for their folly, in fearing anything from so mean and contemptible a man.

**Ver. 15.** *But they cried out, Away with him*, etc.] As a person hateful and loathsome to them, the sight of whom they could not bear; and this they said with great indignation and wrath, and with great vehemency, earnestness and importunacy, in a very clamorous way; repeating the words

*away with him*: they were impatient until he was ordered away for execution; and nothing would satisfy them but the crucifixion of him; and therefore they say,

*crucify him*; which is also repeated in the Syriac version; for this was what they thirsted after, and were so intent upon; this cry was made by the chief priests:

*Pilate saith unto them, shall I crucify your King?* This he said either seriously or jeeringly, and it may be with a view to draw out of them their sentiments concerning Caesar, as well as him; however it had this effect;

*the chief priests answered, we have no king but Caesar;* whereby they denied God to be their king, though they used to say, and still say in their prayers; “we have no king but God”<sup>f710</sup>: they rejected the government of the King Messiah, and tacitly confessed that the sceptre was departed from Judah; and what they now said, came quickly upon them, and still continues; for according to prophecy, (~~2004~~Hosea 3:4) they have been many days and years “without a king”: and this they said in spite to Jesus, and not in respect to Caesar, whose government they would have been glad to have had an opportunity to shake off. They could name no one as king but Jesus, or Caesar; the former they rejected, and were obliged to own the latter: it is a poor observation of the Jew<sup>f711</sup> upon this passage, that it

“shows that before the crucifixion of Jesus, the Roman Caesars ruled over Israel; and that this Caesar was Tiberius, who had set Pilate over Jerusalem, as is clear from (~~4001~~Luke 3:1). Wherefore here is an answer to the objection of the Nazarenes, who say that the Jews, for the sin of crucifying Jesus, lost their kingdom.”

To which may be replied, that this is not said by any of the writers of the New Testament, that the kingdom of the Jews was taken away from them for their sin of crucifying Jesus; and therefore this is no contradiction to anything said by them; this is only the assertion of some private persons, upon whom it lies to defend themselves; and what is asserted, is defensible, nor do the words of the text militate against it: for though before the crucifixion of Christ the Jews were tributary to the Roman Caesars, and Roman governors were sent to preside among them; yet the government was not utterly taken from them, or their kingdom lost; they indeed feared this would be the case, should Jesus succeed and prosper, as he did, saying, “the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation”, (~~6148~~John 11:48), which shows, that as yet this was not done; though for their disbelief and rejection of the Messiah, their destruction was hastening on apace; and after the crucifixion of him, all power was taken from them; the government was seized upon by the Romans entirely, and at last utterly destroyed; besides, the Jews did not own Caesar to be their king, though they said this now to serve a turn; and after this they had kings of the race of Herod over them, though placed there by the Roman emperor or senate.

**Ver. 16.** *Then delivered he him therefore*, etc.] Perceiving he could not by any means work upon them, and that nothing would satisfy them but his death; he therefore passed sentence on him, and gave him up to their will, *unto them to be crucified*; as they requested, and which was done in a judicial way, and all by divine appointment, according to the counsel and foreknowledge of God:

*and they took Jesus and led him away*; directly from the judgment hall, out of the city to the place of execution, whither he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, without opening his mouth against God or man; but behaved with the utmost patience, meekness, and resignation.

**Ver. 17.** *And he bearing his cross*, etc.] Which was usual for malefactors to do, as Lipsius<sup>f712</sup> shows out of Artemidorus, and Plutarch; the former says,

“the cross is like to death, and he that is to be fixed to it, first bears it;”

and the latter says,

“and everyone of the malefactors that are punished in body, “carries out his own cross”.”

So Christ, when he first went out to be crucified, carried his cross himself, until the Jews, meeting with Simon the Cyrenian, obliged him to bear it after him; that is, one part of it; for still Christ continued to bear a part himself: of this Isaac was a type, in carrying the wood on his shoulders for the burnt offering; and this showed that Christ was made sin, and a curse for us, and that our sins, and the punishment which belonged to us, were laid on him, and bore by him; and in this he has left us an example to go forth without the camp, bearing his reproach:

*went forth in a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha*: and signifies a man’s skull: it seems, that as they executed malefactors here, so they buried them here; and in process of time, their bones being dug up to make room for others, their skulls, with other bones, lay up and down in this place; from whence it had its name in the Syriac dialect, which the Jews then usually spake: here some say Adam’s skull was found, and that it had its name from thence. This was an ancient tradition, as has been observed in the notes on (see Gill on

“~~473~~ Matthew 27:33”), and (see Gill on “~~273~~ Luke 23:33”) the Syriac writers have it <sup>f713</sup>, who say,

“when Noah went out of the ark there was made a distribution of the bones of Adam; to Shem, his head was given, and the place in which he was buried is called “Karkaphta”: where likewise Christ was crucified;”

which word signifies a skull, as Golgotha does: and so likewise the Arabic writers <sup>f714</sup>; who affirm that Shem said these words to Melchizedek,

“Noah commanded that thou shouldst take the body of Adam, and bury it in the middle of the earth; therefore let us go, I and thou, and bury it; wherefore Shem and Melchizedek went to take the body of Adam, and the angel of the Lord appeared to them and went before them, till they came to the place Calvary, where they buried him, as the angel of the Lord commanded them:”

the same also had the ancient fathers of the Christian church; Cyprian <sup>f715</sup> says, that it is a tradition of the ancients, that Adam was buried in Calvary under the place where the cross of Christ was fixed; and Jerom makes mention of it more than once; so Paula and Eustochium, in an epistle supposed to be dictated by him, or in which he was assisting, say <sup>f716</sup>, in this city, meaning Jerusalem, yea in this place, Adam is said to dwell, and to die; from whence the place where our Lord was crucified is called Calvary, because there the skull of the ancient man was buried: and in another place he himself says <sup>f717</sup>, that he heard one disputing in the church and explaining, (~~454~~ Ephesians 5:14) of Adam buried in Calvary, where the Lord was crucified, and therefore was so called. Ambrose <sup>f718</sup> also takes notice of it; the place of the cross, says he, is either in the midst of the land, that it might be conspicuous to all, or over the grave of Adam, as the Hebrews dispute: others say that the hill itself was in the form of a man’s skull, and therefore was so called; it was situated, as Jerom says <sup>f719</sup>, on the north of Mount Zion, and is thought by some to be the same with the hill Gareb, in (~~2439~~ Jeremiah 31:39). It was usual to crucify on high hills, so Polycrates was crucified upon the highest top of Mount Mycale <sup>f720</sup>.

**Ver. 18.** *Where they crucified him*, etc.] Namely, at Golgotha, the same with Calvary; and so had what they were so desirous of:

*and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst*: these other two men were thieves, as the other evangelists declare; among whom



Christ was placed, being numbered and reckoned among transgressors: he was no transgressor of the law of God himself, but he was accounted as such by men, and was treated as if he had been one by the justice of God; he, as a surety, standing in the legal place, and stead of his people; hence he died in their room, and for their sins: this shows the low estate of Christ, the strictness of justice, the wisdom of God in salvation, and the grace and love of the Redeemer; who condescended to everything, and every circumstance, though ever so reproachful, which were necessary for the redemption of his people, and the glory of the divine perfections, and for the fulfilment of purposes, promises, and predictions.

**Ver. 19.** *And Pilate wrote a title*, etc.] Luke calls it a superscription, Mark, the superscription of his accusation, and Matthew, the accusation itself; it contained the substance of the charge against him, and was written upon a table or board, and nailed to the cross, as Nonnus suggests; to this is the allusion, (<sup>5124</sup>Colossians 2:14). The form of it was drawn up by Pilate, his judge, who ordered it to be transcribed upon a proper instrument, and placed over him:

*and put it on the cross*; not with his own hands, but by his servants, who did it at his command; for others are said to do it, (<sup>4175</sup>Matthew 27:37). It was put upon “the top of the cross”, as the Persic version reads it; “over him”, or “over his head”, as the other evangelists say; and may denote the rise of his kingdom, which is from above, the visibility of it, and the enlargement of it, through the cross:

*and the writing was*; the words written in the title were,

*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*: Jesus was his name, by which he was commonly called and known, and signifies a Saviour, as he is of all the elect of God; whom he saves from all their sins, by bearing them in his own body on the cross, and of whom he is the able and willing, the perfect and complete, the only and everlasting Saviour: he is said to be of Nazareth; this was the place of which he was an inhabitant; here Joseph and Mary lived before his conception; here he was conceived, though born in Bethlehem; where he did not abide long, but constantly in this place, till he was about thirty years of age; this title was sometimes given him as a term of reproach, though not always: “the King of the Jews”; which both expresses his accusation, and asserts him to be so.

**Ver. 20.** *This title then read many of the Jews,* etc.] Who were in great numbers, at the place of execution, rejoicing at his crucifixion, and insulting him as he hung on the cross:

*for the place where Jesus was crucified, was nigh unto the city;* Golgotha, the place of Christ's crucifixion, was not more than two furlongs, or a quarter of a mile from the city of Jerusalem: so that multitudes were continually going from thence to see this sight; the city also being then very full of people, by reason of the feast of the passover; to which may be added, that the cross stood by the wayside, where persons were continually passing to and fro, as appears from (<sup>4173</sup>Matthew 27:39, <sup>4159</sup>Mark 15:29) and where it was usual to erect crosses to make public examples or malefactors, and to deter others from committing the like crimes: so Alexander, the emperor, ordered an eunuch to be crucified by the wayside, in which his servants used commonly to go to his suburb <sup>f721</sup> or country house: Cicero says <sup>f722</sup> the Mamertines, according to their own usage and custom, crucified behind the city, in the Pompeian way; and Quinctilian observes <sup>f723</sup>, as often as we crucify criminals, the most noted ways are chosen, where most may behold, and most may be moved with fear: and now Christ being crucified by a public road side, the inscription on the cross was doubtless read by more than otherwise it would:

*and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin;* that it might be read by all, Jews, Greeks, and Romans; and to show that he is the Saviour of some of all nations; and that he is King over all. These words were written in Hebrew letters in the Syriac dialect, which was used by the Jews, and is called the Hebrew language, (<sup>4913</sup>John 19:13,17) and in which it is most likely Pilate should write these words, or order them to be written; and which, according to the Syriac version we now have, were thus put, *aydwhyd aki m ayrxn [wcy*; in Greek the words stood as in the original text, thus, *Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων*: and in the Latin tongue, as may be supposed, after this manner, "Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judaeorum". These three languages may be very well thought to be understood by Pilate; at least so much of them as to qualify him to write such an inscription as this. The Latin tongue was his mother tongue, which he must be supposed well to understand; and the Greek tongue was very much used by the Romans, since their conquest of the Grecian monarchy; and the emperors' edicts were generally published in Greek, which it was therefore necessary for Pilate to understand; and as he was a governor of Judea, and had been so for some time, he must have acquired some

knowledge of the Hebrew language; and these being the principal languages in the world, he chose to write this title in them, that persons coming from all quarters might be able to read it, and understand it in some one of them.

**Ver. 21.** *Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate*, etc.] Who were not only informed of this inscription, but might read it themselves, for they were present at the crucifying of Christ, and mocked at him as he hung on the tree; these, when they read the title, were greatly offended at it, partly because it was doing too great an honour to Jesus to call him the King of the Jews: and partly because it fixed a public brand of infamy upon their nation, that a king of theirs should be crucified: wherefore they went to Pilate and addressed him, saying,

*write not the King of the Jews*: because they did not own him for their king, which this title seemed to suggest, nor had he in their opinion any right to such a character; wherefore they desired that in the room of these words he would be pleased to put the following,

*but that he said, I am King of the Jews*; that so he might be thought to be a seditious person and a traitor; one that laid claim to the temporal crown and kingdom of Israel, and one that suffered justly for attempts of that kind.

**Ver. 22.** *Pilate answered, what I have written I have written*, etc.] He seems to say this, as one angry and displeased with them; either because they would not consent to release Jesus, which he was desirous of, but pressed him so very hard to crucify him; or at their insolence, in directing him in what form to put the superscription, which he determines shall stand unaltered, as he had wrote it. This he said, either because he could not alter it after it was written, for it is said <sup>f724</sup>, that

“a proconsul’s table is his sentence, which being once read, not one letter can either be increased or diminished; but as it is recited, so it is related in the instrument of the province;”

or if he could have altered it, he was not suffered by God to do it; but was so directed, and over ruled by divine providence, as to write, so to persist in, and abide by what he had wrote inviolably; which is the sense of his words. Dr. Lightfoot has given several instances out of the Talmud, showing that this is a common way of speaking with the Rabbins; and that words thus doubled signify that what is spoken of stands good, and is

irrevocable: so a widow taking any of the moveable goods of her husband deceased for her maintenance, it is said <sup>f725</sup>, **hspt hsptç hm**, “what she takes, she takes”; that is, she may lawfully do it, and retain it: it continues in her hands, and cannot be taken away from her; and so the gloss explains it, “they do not take it from her”; and in the same way Maimonides <sup>f726</sup> interprets it: so of a man that binds himself to offer an oblation one way, and he offers it another way, **aybh aybhç hm**, “what he has offered, he has offered <sup>f727</sup>”; what he has offered is right, it stands good, and is not to be rejected: and again, among the rites used by a deceased brother’s wife, towards him that refuses to marry her, if one thing is done before the other, it matters not, **ywç [ ywç [ ç hm**, “what is done, is done <sup>f728</sup>”; and is not to be undone, or done over again in another way; it stands firm and good, and not to be objected to: and the same writer observes, that this is a sort of prophecy of Pilate, and which should continue, and for ever obtain, that the Jews should have no other King Messiah than Jesus of Nazareth; nor have they had any other; all that have risen up have proved false Messiahs; nor will they have any other; nor indeed any king, until they seek the Lord their God, and David their king, (<sup><38B></sup>Hosea 3:5) that is, the son of David, as they will do in the latter day; when they shall be converted, and when they shall own him as their king, their ancestors at this time were ashamed of.

**Ver. 23.** *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus*, etc.] The crucifixion of Christ was at the request and solicitation of the Jews, was ordered by the Roman governor, and performed by the Roman soldiers; the sinful men into whose hands Christ was to be delivered:

*took his garments*; which they had stripped his body of, crucifying him naked; as what properly belonged to them, it being usual then, as now, for executioners to have the clothes of the persons they put to death; these were his inner garments:

*and made four parts, to every soldier a part*; for it seems there were four of them concerned in his execution, and who were set to watch him:

*and also his coat*; or upper garment;

*now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout*: in such an one the Jews say <sup>f729</sup> Moses ministered: and of this sort and make was the robe of the high priest, said to be of “woven work”, (<sup><28></sup>Exodus 28:32) upon which Jarchi remarks, **j j mb al w**, “and not with a needle”; it was all

woven, and without any seam: and so the Jews say<sup>f730</sup> in general of the garments of the priests:

“the garments of the priests are not made of needlework, but of woven work; as it is said, (~~Exod~~ Exodus 28:32). Abai says, it is not necessary (i.e. the use of the needle) but for their sleeves; according to the tradition, the sleeve of the garments of the priests is woven by itself, and is joined to the garment, and reaches to the palm of the hand.”

So that this was an entire woven garment from top to bottom, excepting the sleeves, which were wove separately and sewed to it; of this kind also was his coat, which Jacob Iehudah Leon says<sup>f731</sup>,

“was a stately woollen coat of a sky colour, wholly woven, all of one piece, without seam, without sleeves;”

such a garment Christ our great High Priest wore, which had no seam in it, but was a curious piece of texture from top to bottom. The very learned Braunius<sup>f732</sup> says, he has seen such garments in Holland, and has given fine cuts of them, and also of the frame in which they are wrought. What authority Nonnus had to call this coat a black one, or others for saying it was the work of the Virgin Mary, I know not.

**Ver. 24.** *They said therefore among themselves*, etc.] When they saw what a curious piece of work it was, and that it was pity to divide it into parts: and besides, that it would have been rendered entirely useless thereby: they moved it to each other, saying,

*let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be, that the Scripture might be fulfilled*: not that they knew anything of the Scripture, or had any intention of fulfilling it hereby, but they were so directed by the providence of God, to take such a step; whereby was literally accomplished the passage in (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 22:18)

*which saith, they parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots*. The whole psalm is to be understood of the Messiah, not of David, as some do<sup>f733</sup>; many passages in it cannot be applied to him, such as speak of the dislocation of his bones, the piercing of his hands and feet, and this of parting his garments, and casting lots for his vesture: all which had their literal accomplishment in Jesus: nor can it be understood of Esther, as it is by some Jewish<sup>f734</sup> interpreters; there is not one word in it

that agrees with her, and particularly, not the clause here cited; and there are some things in it which are manifestly spoken of a man, and not of a woman, as (<sup>49218</sup>Psalm 22:8,24) nor can the whole body of the Jewish nation, or the congregation of Israel be intended, as others say <sup>f735</sup>; since it is clear, that a single person is spoken of throughout the psalm, and who is distinguished from others, from his brethren, from the congregation, from the seed of Jacob and Israel, (<sup>49222</sup>Psalm 22:22,23) and indeed, no other than the Messiah can be meant; he is pointed at in the very title of it, Aijelet Shahaar, which words, in what way soever they are rendered, agree with him: if by “the morning daily sacrifice”, as they are by the Targum; he is the Lamb of God, who continually takes away the sins of the world; and very fitly is he so called in the title of a psalm, which speaks so much of his sufferings and death, which were a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of his people: or by the morning star, as others <sup>f736</sup> interpret them; Christ is the bright and morning star, the day spring from on high, the sun of righteousness, and light of the world: or by “the morning help”, as by the Septuagint; Christ had early help from God in the morning of his infancy, when Herod sought his life, and in the day of salvation of his people; and early in the morning was he raised from the dead, and had glory given him: or by “the morning hind”, which seems best of all, to which he may be compared, as to a roe or hart, in (<sup>21119</sup>Song of Solomon 2:9,17, 8:14) for his love and loveliness, and for his swiftness and readiness in appearing for the salvation of his people; and for his being hunted by Herod in the morning of his days; and being encompassed by those dogs, the Scribes and Pharisees, Judas and the band of soldiers; (see <sup>49216</sup>Psalm 22:16). The first words of the psalm were spoken by Jesus the true Messiah, when he hung upon the cross, and are truly applied to himself; his reproaches and sufferings endured by him there, are particularly and exactly described in it, and agree with no other; the benefits which the people of God were to enjoy, in consequence of his sufferings, and the conversion of the Gentiles spoken of in it, which is peculiar to the days of the Messiah, show to whom it belongs. The Jews “themselves” are obliged to interpret some parts of it concerning him; they sometimes say <sup>f737</sup>, that by Aijelet Shahaar is meant the Shekinah, a name that well suits with the Messiah Jesus, who tabernacled in our nature; the (<sup>49226</sup>Psalm 22:26) is applied by Jarchi to the time of the redemption, and the days of the Messiah; so that upon the whole, this passage is rightly cited with respect to the Messiah, and is truly said to be fulfilled by this circumstance, of the soldiers doing with his garments as they did:

*these things therefore the soldiers did*; because they were before determined and predicted that they should be done: and therefore they were disposed and directed by a superior influence, in perfect agreement with the freedom of their wills to do these things. The whole of this account may be spiritually applied. The Scriptures are the garments of Christ; or, as a prince of Anhalt said, the swaddling clothes in which the infant of Bethlehem was wrapped; these exhibit and show forth Christ in his glory, and by which he is known and bore witness to, and are pure and incorrupt, fragrant, and savory. Heretics are the soldiers that rend and tear the Scriptures in pieces, part them, add unto them, or detract from them; who corrupt, pervert, wrest, and misapply them; but truth is the seamless coat; it is all of a piece, is of God, there is nothing human in it; though it may be played with, betrayed, sold, or denied, it cannot be destroyed, but is, and will be preserved by divine providence: or the human nature of Christ is the vesture, with which his divine person was as it were covered, was put on and off, and on again as a garment; is of God, and not man; is pure and spotless; and though his soul and body were parted asunder for a while, this could never be parted from his divine person: or else the righteousness of Christ may be signified by this robe, which is often compared to one, because it is put on the saints, and they are clothed with it: it covers, keeps warm, protects, beautifies, and adorns them; this is seamless, and all of a piece, and has nothing of men's works and services tacked unto it; is enjoyed by a divine lot by some men, and not all, and even such as have been sinful and ungodly; it is pure, perfect and will last for ever.

**Ver. 25.** *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus*, etc.] So near as not only to see him, but to hear him speak:

*his mother*; the mother of Jesus, Mary; which showed her affection to Christ, and her constancy in abiding by him to the last; though it must be a cutting sight, and now was fulfilled Simeon's prophecy, (~~4025~~ Luke 2:35) to see her son in such agonies and sorrow, and jeered and insulted by the worst of men; and though she herself was exposed to danger, and liable to be abused by the outrageous multitude; and it also showed that she stood in need, as others, of a crucified Saviour; so far was she from being a co-partner with him in making satisfaction for sin, as the Papists wickedly say:

*and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas*. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions distinguish Mary the wife of Cleophas from his mother's

sister, by placing the copulative and between them, and so make two persons; whereas one and the same is intended, and who was the sister of Mary, the mother of Christ; not her own sister, for it is not likely that two sisters should be of the same name; but her husband Joseph's sister, and so her's; or else Cleophas was Joseph's brother, as Eusebius from Hegesippus says<sup>f738</sup>: and who was also not the daughter of Cleophas, as the Arabic version has here supplied it; much less the mother of him; but his wife, as is rightly put in our translation: for, according to the other evangelists, she was the mother of James and Joses, and who were the sons of Cleophas or Alphaeus; which are not the names of two persons, nor two names of one and the same person, but one and the same name differently pronounced; his true name in Hebrew was *ypl j* , or *yapl j* , or *ypl yj* , “Chelphi”, or “Chelphai”, or “Chilphi”, a name frequently to be met with in Talmudic and Rabbinic writings; and so a Jewish writer<sup>f739</sup> observes, that *apl ya awhw apl yj* , “Chilpha is the same as Ipha”; and in Greek may be pronounced either Cleophas, or Alphaeus, as it is both ways: ignorance of this has led interpreters to form different conjectures, as that either the husband of this Mary had two names; or that she was twice married to two different persons, once to Alphaeus, and after his death to Cleophas; or that Cleophas was her father, and Alphaeus her husband; for neither of which is there any foundation. She was no doubt a believer in Christ, and came and stood by his cross; not merely to keep her sister company, but out of affection to Jesus, and to testify her faith in him:

*and Mary Magdalene*; out of whom he had cast seven devils, and who had been a true penitent, a real believer in him, an hearty lover of him, was zealously attached to him, and followed him to the last. Three Marys are here mentioned as together; and it is observable, that the greater part of those that are taken notice of, as following Christ to the cross, and standing by it, were women, the weaker, and timorous sex, when all his disciples forsook him and fled; and none of them attended at the cross, as we read of, excepting John; no, not even Peter, who boasted so much of his attachment to him. These good women standing by the cross of Christ, may teach us to do, as they did, look upon a crucified Christ, view his sorrows, and his sufferings, and our sins laid upon him, and borne and taken away by him; we should look unto him for pardon, cleansing, and justification, and, in short, for the whole of salvation: we should also weep, as they did, whilst we look on him; shed even tears of affection for, and sympathy with him; of humiliation for sin, and of joy for a Saviour: and



likewise should abide by him as they did, by his persons, offices, and grace; by the doctrine of the cross, continuing steadfastly in it; and by the ordinances of Christ, constantly attending on them, and that notwithstanding all reproaches and sufferings we may undergo.

**Ver. 26.** *When Jesus therefore saw his mother*, etc.] Standing near him, within the reach of his voice, as well as sight, he took notice of her, and showed a concern for her temporal, as well as for her eternal good:

*and the disciple standing by*; either by his cross, his mother, or both:

*whom he loved*: meaning John, the writer of this Gospel, who for modesty's sake often describes himself in this manner; he being distinguished by Christ from the rest, by some peculiar marks of affection as man; though as God, and as the Redeemer, he loved his disciples alike, as he does all his true and faithful followers:

*he saith unto his mother, woman, behold thy son*; meaning not himself, but the disciple, who was her son, not by nature, nor adoption; but who would show himself as a son, by his filial affection for, care of, honour and respect unto her. Christ calls her not mother, but woman; not out of disrespect to her, or as ashamed of her; but partly that he might not raise, or add strength to her passions, by a tenderness of speaking; and partly to conceal her from the mob, and lest she should be exposed to their rude insults; as also to let her know that all natural relation was now ceasing between them; though this is a title he sometimes used to give her before.

**Ver. 27.** *Then saith he to the disciple*, etc.] The same disciple John:

*behold thy mother*; take care of her, and provide for her, as if she was thine own mother: this shows the meanness of Christ, who had nothing to leave her, though Lord of all; it is very probable that Joseph was dead, and Mary now a widow; and whereas Christ had taken care of her, and maintained her hitherto, he now, in his dying moments, commits her to the care of this disciple; which is an instance of his humanity, and of his regard to every duty; and this in particular, of honouring parents, and providing for them in distress, and old age:

*and how that disciple took her to his own home*: or house; so the Septuagint render **wtyb**, “to his house”, by **εις τα ιδια**, in (<sup><702></sup>Esther 6:12) the phrase here used, and in (<sup><612></sup>John 16:32). Some say she lived with John at Jerusalem, and there died; and others say, that she died in the

twelfth year after the resurrection of Christ, being 59 years of age, and was buried by John in the garden of Gethsemane: where his house was is not certain, whether at Jerusalem or in Galilee, nor how long she lived with him; but this is not to be doubted, that he took care of her, and provided for her, as if she was his own mother; and his doing this forthwith shows his great regard to Christ, his readiness and cheerfulness to comply with his orders and directions, and his unfeigned love unto him.

**Ver. 28.** *After this*, etc.] After he had committed his mother to the care of John, which was about the sixth hour, before the darkness came over the land: and three hours after this was the following circumstance, which was not without the previous knowledge of Christ:

*Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished*; or just upon being accomplished, were as good as finished; and as they were to be, would be in a very short time; even all things relating to his sufferings, and the circumstances of them, which were afore appointed by God, and foretold in prophecy, and of which he had perfect knowledge:

*that the Scripture might be fulfilled*: might appear to have its accomplishment, which predicted the great drought and thirst that should be on him, (<sup><49215></sup>Psalm 22:15) and that his enemies at such a time would give him vinegar to drink, (<sup><49321></sup>Psalm 69:21)

*saieth, I thirst*; which was literally true of him, and may be also understood spiritually of his great thirst and eager desire after the salvation of his people.

**Ver. 29.** *Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar*, etc.] In a place near at hand, as Nonnus observes; not on purpose, for the sake of them that were crucified, either to refresh their spirits, or stop a too great effusion of blood, that they might continue the longer in their misery; but for the use of the soldiers who crucified Christ, vinegar being part of the allowance of Roman soldiers <sup>f740</sup>, and what they used to drink: sometimes it was mixed with water; which mixed liquor they called “Posca” <sup>f741</sup>, and was what even their generals sometimes used; as Scipio, Metellus, Trajan, Adrian, and others: vinegar was also used by the Jews for drink, as appears from (<sup><48214></sup>Ruth 2:14) and “dip thy morsel in the vinegar”, which Boaz’s reapers had with them in the field; “because of heat”, as the commentators say <sup>f742</sup>; that being good to cool, and to extinguish thirst; for which reason the soldiers here offer it to Christ; though the Chaldee paraphrase of the above

place makes it to be a kind of sauce or pap boiled in vinegar; and such an “Embamma” made of vinegar the Romans had, in which they dipped their food <sup>f743</sup>; but this here seems to be pure vinegar, and to be different from that which the other evangelists speak of, which was mingled with gall, or was sour wine with myrrh, (<sup><4173></sup>Matthew 27:34, <sup><4153></sup>Mark 15:23). Vinegar indeed is good to revive the spirits, and hyssop, which is after mentioned, is an herb of a sweet smell; and if the reed, which the other evangelists make mention of, was the sweet calamus, as some have thought, they were all of them things of a refreshing nature: vinegar was also used for stopping blood <sup>f744</sup>, when it flowed from wounds in a large quantity; and of the same use were sponges; hence Tertullian <sup>f745</sup> mentions “spongiarum retiariorum”, the sponges of the fencers, which they had with them to stop any effusion of blood that should be made in their exercises; but then it can hardly be thought that these things should be in common prepared at crucifixions for such ends, on purpose to linger out a miserable life a little longer, which would be shocking barbarity; and especially such a provision would never be, made at this time, on such an account, since the Jews sabbath drew nigh, and they were in haste to have the executions over before that came on, that the bodies might not remain on the cross on that day; for which reason they would do nothing, at this time, however, to prolong the lives of the malefactors; wherefore it is most reasonable, that this vessel of vinegar was not set for any such purpose, but was for the use of the soldiers; and therefore this being at hand when Christ signified his thirst, they offered some of it in the following manner:

*and they filled a sponge with vinegar*; it being the nature of a sponge (which Nonnus here calls **βλαστημα ψλασσης**, “a branch of the sea”, because it grows there) to swallow up anything that is liquid, and which may be again squeezed and sucked out of it; hence the Jews say <sup>f746</sup> of it, **γῶψον [I bç gwps**, “the sponge which swallows up liquids”; and used it for such a purpose; “and put it upon hyssop”; meaning not the juice of hyssop, into which some have thought the sponge with vinegar was put, but the herb, and a stalk of it: the other evangelists say, it was put “upon a reed”; meaning either that the sponge with the hyssop were put about a reed, and so given him; or rather it was a stalk of hyssop, which was like a reed or cane; and in this country of Judea grew very large, sufficient for such a purpose. The hyssop with the Jews was not reckoned among herbs, but trees; (see <sup><1063></sup>1 Kings 4:33) and they speak <sup>f747</sup> of hyssop which they gather **μυξ[ I**, “for wood”; the stalks of which therefore must be of some

size; yea, they call <sup>f748</sup> a stalk which has a top to it, **hnq**, “a reed”, or cane; which observation seems to reconcile the other evangelists with this: and they distinguish their hyssop which was right for use from that which had an epithet joined to it; as, Roman hyssop, Grecian hyssop, wild and bastard hyssop <sup>f749</sup>; and some writers <sup>f750</sup> observe even of our common hyssop, that it has sometimes stalks of nine inches long, or longer, and hard and woody, nay, even a foot and a half; with one of which a man with his arms stretched out might possibly reach the mouth of a person on a cross: how high crosses usually were is not certain, nor was there any fixed measure for them; sometimes they were higher, and sometimes lower; the cross or gallows made by Haman for Mordecai was very high indeed, and the mouth of a person could not have been reached with an hyssop stalk; but such an one might, as was erected for Saul’s sons, whose bodies on it could be reached by the beasts of the field, (<sup>Q11</sup>2 Samuel 21:10) and so low was the cross on which Blandina the martyr suffered, as the church at Lyons relates <sup>f751</sup>, when on the cross she was exposed to beasts of prey, and became food for them: so that there is no need to suppose any fault in the text, and that instead of “hyssop” it should be read “hyssos”; which was a kind of javelin the Romans call “Pilum”, about five or six foot long, which, it is supposed, one of the soldiers might have, and on it put the hyssop with the sponge and vinegar; but this conjecture is not supported by any copy, or ancient version; the Syriac version, which is a very ancient one, reads “hyssop”. The Arabic and Persic versions render it, “a reed”, as in the other evangelists; and the Ethiopic version has both, “they filled a sponge with vinegar, and it was set round with hyssop, and they bound it upon a reed”; and so some have thought that a bunch of hyssop was stuck round about the sponge of vinegar, which was fastened to the top of a reed; and the words will bear to be rendered; “setting it about with hyssop”: this they might have out of the gardens, which were near this place, or it might grow upon the mountain itself; for we are told <sup>f752</sup>, it grew in great plenty upon the mountains about Jerusalem, and that its branches were almost a cubit long. Josephus <sup>f753</sup> makes mention of a village beyond Jordan called Bethezob, which, as he says, signifies the house of hyssop; perhaps so called from the large quantity of hyssop that grew near it:

*and put it to his mouth*; whether Christ drank of it or no is not certain; it seems by what follows as if he did; at least he took it, being offered to him: the Jews themselves say <sup>f754</sup>, that Jesus said, give me a little water to drink,

and they gave him **qzj** **tdwj** , “sharp vinegar”; which so far confirms the evangelic history.

**Ver. 30.** *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar*, etc.] Of the Roman soldiers, who offered it to him, either by way of reproach, or to quench his thirst; and he drank of it, as is very likely:

*he said, it is finished*; that is, the whole will of God; as that he should be incarnate, be exposed to shame and reproach, and suffer much, and die; the whole work his Father gave him to do, which was to preach the Gospel, work miracles, and obtain eternal salvation for his people, all which were now done, or as good as done; the whole righteousness of the law was fulfilled, an holy nature assumed, perfect obedience yielded to it, and the penalty of death endured; hence a perfect righteousness was finished agreeably to the law, which was magnified and made honourable by it, and redemption from its curse and condemnation secured; sin was made an end of, full atonement and satisfaction for it were given; complete pardon procured, peace made, and redemption from all iniquity obtained; all enemies were conquered; all types, promises, and prophecies were fulfilled, and his own course of life ended: the reason of his saying so was, because all this was near being done, just upon finishing, and was as good as done; and was sure and certain, and so complete, that nothing need, or could be added to it; and it was done entirely without the help of man, and cannot be undone; all which since has more clearly appeared by Christ’s resurrection from the dead, his entrance into heaven, his session at God’s right hand, the declaration of the Gospel, and the application of salvation to particular persons:

*and he bowed his head*; as one dying, and freely submitting to his Father’s will, and the stroke of death:

*and gave up the ghost*; his spirit or soul into the hands of his Father; freely laying down that precious life of his which no man could take away from him.

**Ver. 31.** *The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation*, etc.] That is, either of the passover, as in (<sup><4194></sup>John 19:14) which was the Chagigah or grand festival in which they offered their peace offerings and slew their oxen, and feasted together in great mirth and jollity; or of the sabbath, the evening of it, or day before it, as in (<sup><4152></sup>Mark 15:42)

*that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day*; which was now drawing near: according to the Jewish law, (<sup>f722</sup>Deuteronomy 21:22,23) the body of one that was hanged on a tree was not to remain all night, but to be taken down that day and buried; though this was not always observed; (see <sup>f723</sup>2 Samuel 21:9,10). What was the usage of the Jews at this time is not certain; according to the Roman laws, such bodies hung until they were putrefied, or eaten by birds of prey; wherefore that their land might not be defiled, and especially their sabbath, by their remaining on the cross, they desire to have them taken down:

*for that sabbath day was an high day*; it was not only a sabbath, and a sabbath in the passover week, but it was the day in which all the people appeared and presented themselves before the Lord in the temple, and the sheaf of the first fruits was offered up; all which solemnities meeting together made it a very celebrated day: it is in the original text, “it was the great day of the sabbath”; which is the language of the Talmudists, and who say <sup>f755</sup>,

“*l wdgh tbc arqn* “is called the great sabbath”, on account of the miracle or sign of the passover;”

and in the Jewish Liturgy <sup>f756</sup> there is a collect for the “great sabbath”: hence the Jews pretending a great concern lest that day should be polluted, though they made no conscience of shedding innocent blood,

*besought Pilate that their legs might be broken*; which was the manner of the Jews <sup>f757</sup>, partly to hasten death, since, according to their law, the body was to be taken down before night; and partly that it might be a clear point that the person was rightly executed; for this was not the Roman custom, with whom breaking of the legs, or rather thighs, was a distinct punishment, and was done by laying a man’s legs or thighs upon an anvil, and striking them with an hammer <sup>f758</sup>; which could not be the case here; this seems to have been done by striking the legs of those that were crucified, which were fastened to the cross, with a bar of iron, or some such instrument. Nonnus suggests that their legs were cut off with a saw or sword; but the former seems more reasonable:

*and that they might be taken away*; which it seems the Jews had not power to do, but must be done by the Roman soldiers, or by leave at least from the Roman governor; and therefore they make their request to him.

**Ver. 32.** *Then came the soldiers*, etc.] Pilate having granted the Jews what they desired; either the soldiers that crucified Christ, and the others with him, and watched their bodies, being ordered by Pilate, went from the place where they sat; or a fresh company, which were sent for this purpose, came from the city:

*and brake the legs of the first*; they came unto, which whether it was he that was crucified on his right hand, and was the penitent believer in him, as some have thought, is not certain:

*and of the other which was crucified with him*; who, if the former is true, must be he that reviled him; and was this their position, it was a lively emblem of the last day, when the sheep shall stand at the right, and the goats on the left hand of Christ.

**Ver. 33.** *But when they came to Jesus*, etc.] Whom they passed by before, and now returned to; this they did not out of tenderness to him, but that he might be the longer in his torture, and whom they reserved till last, that they might use him with the greater cruelty and barbarity:

*and saw that he was dead already*; as they might, from the bowing down of his head, the ghastliness of his countenance, the falling of his jaws, and other signs:

*they brake not his legs*; there being no occasion for it, nor would it have answered any end, were they ever so spiteful and malicious against him; though the true reason was, and which restrained them from it, divine providence would not suffer them to do it.

**Ver. 34.** *But one of the soldiers*, etc.] Whose name some pretend to say was Longinns, and so called from the spear with which he pierced Christ:

*with a spear pierced his side*; his left side, where the heart lies; though the painters make this wound on the right, and the Arabic version of Erpenius, as cited by Dr. Lightfoot, adds the word “right” to make the miracle the greater: this the soldier did, partly out of spite to Christ, and partly to know whether he was really dead; and which was so ordered by divine providence, that it might beyond all doubt appear that he really died, and was not taken down alive from the cross; so that there might be no room to call in question the truth of his resurrection, when he should appear alive again:

*and forthwith came there out blood and water*; this is accounted for in a natural way by the piercing of the “pericardium”, which contains a small quantity of water about the heart, and which being pierced, a person, if alive, must inevitably die; but it seems rather to be something supernatural, from the asseverations the evangelist makes. This water and blood some make to signify baptism and the Lord’s supper, which are both of Christ’s appointing, and spring from him, and refer to his sufferings and death; rather they signify the blessings of sanctification and justification, the grace of the one being represented by water, as it frequently is in the Old and New Testament, and the other by blood, and both from Christ: that Christ was the antitype of the rock in the wilderness, the apostle assures us, in (~~400~~1 Corinthians 10:4) and if the Jews are to be believed, he was so in this instance; Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his Targum on (~~401~~Numbers 20:11) says that

“Moses smote the rock twice, at the first time *amda tpyj a*, “blood dropped out”: and at the second time abundance of waters flowed out.”

The same is affirmed by others <sup>f759</sup> elsewhere in much the same words and order.

**Ver. 35.** *And he that saw it, bare record*, etc.] Meaning himself, John the evangelist, the writer of this Gospel, who, in his great modesty, frequently conceals himself, under one circumlocution or another; he was an eyewitness of this fact, not only of the piercing of his side with a spear, but of the blood and water flowing out of it; which he saw with his eyes, and bore record of to others, and by this writing; and was ready to attest it in any form it should be desired:

*and his record is true*; though it is not mentioned by any of the other evangelists, none of them but himself being present at that time:

*and he knoweth that he saith true*; meaning either God or Christ, who knew all things; and so it is a sort of appeal to God or Christ, for the truth of what he affirmed, as some think; or rather himself, who was fully assured that he was under no deception, and was far from telling an untruth; having seen the thing done with his eyes, and being led into the mystery of it by the Divine Spirit; (see ~~406~~1 John 5:6,8) wherefore he could, and did declare it with the strongest asseverations:



*that ye might believe*; the truth of the fact, and in Christ, both for the expiation of the guilt of sin, and cleansing from the filth of it; both for sanctifying and justifying grace, which the water and the blood were an emblem of.

**Ver. 36.** *For these things were done*, etc.] The not breaking his bones and piercing his side, and that not by chance, and without design; but,

*that the Scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken*; referring either to (<sup><3801></sup>Psalm 34:20) he keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken; which if to be understood of the righteous in general, had a very particular and remarkable accomplishment in Christ; though a certain single person seems to be designed; nor is it true in fact of every righteous man, some of whom have had their bones broken; and such a sense would lead to despair in case of broken bones; for whereas such a calamity befalls them, as well as wicked men, under such an affliction, they might be greatly distressed, and from hence be ready to conclude, that they are not righteous persons, and are not under the care and protection of God, or otherwise this promise would be made good: nor have the words any respect to the resurrection of the dead, as if the sense of it was, that none of the bones of the righteous shall be finally broken; and though they may be broken by men, and in their sight, yet the Lord will raise them again, and restore them whole and perfect at the general resurrection; for this will be true of the wicked, as well as of the righteous: and much less is the meaning of the words, one of his bones shall not be broken, namely, the bone “luz”, the Jews speak of; which, they say <sup>f760</sup>, remains uncorrupted in the grave, and is so hard that it cannot be softened by water, nor burnt in the fire, nor ground in the mill, nor broke with an hammer; by and from which God will raise the whole body at the last day: but the words are to be understood of Christ, he is the poor man that is particularly pointed at in (<sup><3845></sup>Psalm 34:6) who, was poor in his state of humiliation, and who cried unto the Lord, and he heard him, and saved him; and he is the righteous one, whose afflictions were many, and out of which the Lord delivered him, (<sup><3849></sup>Psalm 34:19) whose providential care of him was very particular and remarkable; he kept his bones from being broken, when others were; and by this incident this passage had its literal fulfilment in him: or else it may refer to the passover lamb, a type of Christ, (<sup><4137></sup>1 Corinthians 5:7) a bone of which was not to be broken, (<sup><1246></sup>Exodus 12:46, <sup><0492></sup>Numbers 9:12). The former of these passages is a command, in the second person, to the Israelites, concerning the paschal lamb, “neither shall ye break a bone

thereof”; and the latter is delivered in the third person, “nor shall they break any bone of it”; which may be rendered impersonally, “a bone of it, or of him, shall not be broken; or a bone shall not be broken in him”; and so the Syriac and Persic versions read the words here; and in some copies it is, “a bone shall not be broken from him”; and so read the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and he that violated this precept, according to the traditions of the Jews, was to be beaten. Maimonides<sup>f761</sup> says,

“he that breaks a bone in a pure passover, lo, he is to be beaten, as it is said, “and a bone ye shall not break in it”: and so it is said of the second passover, “and a bone ye shall not break in it”; but a passover which comes with uncleanness, if a man breaks a bone in it, he is not to be beaten: from the literal sense it may be learned, that a bone is not to be broken, whether in a pure or defiled passover: one that breaks a bone on the night of the fifteenth, or that breaks a bone in it within the day, or that breaks one after many days, lo, he is to be beaten; wherefore they burn the bones of the passover in general, with what is left of its flesh, that they may not come to damage: none are guilty but for the breaking of a bone on which there is flesh of the quantity of an olive, or in which there is marrow; but a bone in which there is no marrow, and on which there is no flesh of the quantity of an olive, a man is not guilty for breaking it; and if there is flesh upon it of such a quantity, and he breaks the bone in the place where there is no flesh, he is guilty, although the place which he breaks is quite bare of its flesh: he that breaks after (another) has broken, is to be beaten.”

And with these rules agree the following canons<sup>f762</sup>,

“the bones and sinews, and what is left, they burn on the sixteenth day, but if that falls on the sabbath, they burn them on the seventeenth, because these do not drive away the sabbath or a feast day.”

And so it fell out this year in which Christ suffered, for the sixteenth was the sabbath day: again,

“he that breaks a bone in a pure passover, lo, he is to be beaten with forty stripes; but he that leaves anything in a pure one, and breaks in an impure one, is not to be beaten with forty stripes;”

yea, they say<sup>f763</sup>, though

“it was a little kid and tender, and whose bones are tender, they may not eat them; for this is breaking of the bone, and if he eats he is to be beaten, for it is the same thing whether a hard or a tender bone be broken.”

Now in this as in many other respects the paschal lamb was a type of Christ, whose bones were none of them to be broken, to show that his life was not taken away by men, but was laid down freely by himself; and also the unbroken strength of Christ under the weight of sin, the curse of the law, and wrath of God, and conflict with Satan, when he obtained eternal redemption for us: and also this was on account of his resurrection from the dead, which was to be in a few days; though had his bones been broken he could easily have restored them, but it was the will of God it should be otherwise. Moreover, as none of the bones of his natural body were to be broken, so none that are members of him in a spiritual sense, who are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, shall ever be lost.

**Ver. 37.** *And again another Scripture saith*, etc.] (<sup><3820></sup>Zechariah 12:10) which as the former is referred to on account of the not breaking of his bones, this is cited as fulfilled by the piercing of his side:

*they shall look on him whom they pierced*; in the Hebrew text it is, “upon me whom they have pierced”; the reason of this difference is, because Christ, who is Jehovah, is there speaking prophetically of himself, here the evangelist cites it as fulfilled in him, that is, that part of it which regards the piercing of him; for that of the Jews looking upon him and mourning is yet to be fulfilled, and will be at the time of their conversion in the latter day, and at the day of judgment. And as the piercing of the Messiah has been literally fulfilled in Jesus, there is reason to believe, though the Jews are to this day hardened against him, that that part of the prophecy which concerns their looking to him, and mourning for him on account of his being pierced by them, will also, in God’s own time, be fulfilled. Nor is it any objection to the application of this prophecy to our Lord Jesus, that not the Jews, but the Roman soldiers pierced him, since what one does by another, he may be said to do himself: though it was a Roman soldier that pierced the side of Christ, the Jews might desire and urge him to do it; and however, they agreed to it, and were well pleased with it; and just so Christ is said to be crucified and slain by them; though this was done by the above soldiers, because they prevailed upon Pilate to pass the sentence of death upon him, and to deliver him to the soldiers to be crucified. From the

citation of this passage it appears, that the writers of the New Testament did not always follow the Greek version of the Old Testament, which here renders the words very differently, and very wrongly; but John cites them according to the Hebrew text, even which we now have, and which is an instance of the truth, purity, and integrity of the present Hebrew books of the Old Testament. The Jewish doctors <sup>f764</sup> themselves own that these words respect the Messiah, though they pretend that Messiah ben Joseph is meant, who shall be slain in the wars of Gog and Magog; for since their disappointment, and the blindness and hardness of heart which have followed it, they feign two Messiahs as expected by them; one Messiah ben David, who they suppose will be prosperous and victorious; and the other Messiah ben Joseph, who will suffer much, and at last be killed.

**Ver. 38.** *And after this*, etc.] That is, after Jesus had given up the ghost, when it was a clear case that he was dead; as it was before the soldiers came to break the legs of the crucified, and before one of them pierced the side of Jesus with his spear, though that confirmed it: but it seems to be before these last things were done, and yet after the death of Christ, that Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate, and desired leave to take down the body of Jesus. This Joseph was a counsellor, one of the Jewish sanhedrim; though he did not give his consent to the counsel of the court concerning Jesus: he is here described by the place of his birth, Arimathea. This place has been generally thought to be the same with Ramah or Ramathaim Zophim, the birth place of Samuel the prophet; and so I have taken it to be in the note (see Gill on “<sup><425></sup>Matthew 27:57”) but there seems to be some reason to doubt about it, since Ramathaim Zophim was in Mount Ephraim, or in the mountainous parts of that tribe, (<sup><900></sup>1 Samuel 1:1) whereas Arimathea is called a city of the Jews, (<sup><425></sup>Luke 23:51). But if it was in the tribe of Ephraim, it would rather, as Reland <sup>f765</sup> observes, be called a city of the Samaritans, to whom that part of the country belonged; besides, as the same learned writer shows from (<sup><4015></sup>Judges 4:5, <sup><490></sup>2 Chronicles 19:4) the mountainous parts of Ephraim were about Bethel, to the north of Jerusalem; whereas Arimathea is mentioned along with Lydda, which lay to the west of it, as it is by Jerom, and others: that ancient writer says <sup>f766</sup>, that not far from Lydda, now called Diospolis, famous for the raising of Dorcas from the dead, and the healing of Aeneas, is Arimathia, the little village of Joseph, who buried the Lord; though he makes this elsewhere <sup>f767</sup> to be the same with Ramathaim Zophim: his words are, Armatha Zophim, the city of Elkanah and Samuel, is in the region of Thamna by Diospolis, (or Lydda,)

from whence was Joseph, who, in the Gospels, is said to be of Arimathia; and so in Josephus<sup>f768</sup>, and in the Apocrypha: “Wherefore we have ratified unto them the borders of Judea, with the three governments of Apherema and Lydda and Ramathem, that are added unto Judea from the country of Samaria, and all things appertaining unto them, for all such as do sacrifice in Jerusalem, instead of the payments which the king received of them yearly aforetime out of the fruits of the earth and of trees.” (1 Maccabees 11:34)

Lydda and Ramatha, or, as in the latter, Ramathem, are mentioned together, as added unto Judea from the country of Samaria; which last clause, “from the country of Samaria”, seems to bid fair for a reconciliation of this matter, that those two are one and the same place: and as the birth place of Samuel the prophet is called, by the Septuagint, Armathaim, as has been observed *see Gill* “<sup><475></sup>Matthew 27:57” so it is likewise called, *atmr*, “Ramatha”, by the Targumist on (<sup><388></sup>Hosea 5:8) as it is also by Josephus<sup>f769</sup>. The city of this name, near Lydda, is now called Ramola, and is about thirty six or thirty seven miles from Jerusalem. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it, “who was of Rama”. Some take this Joseph to be the same with Joseph ben Gorion, the brother of Nicodemus ben Gorion, and who is supposed to be the same Nicodemus mentioned in the next verse. The character the Jews<sup>f770</sup> give of Joseph ben Gorion is, that he was a priest, and of the richest and most noble of the priests in Jerusalem; that he was a very wise, just, and upright man; and that three or four years before the destruction of Jerusalem, he was about sixty seven years of age.

*Being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews*; not one of the twelve, but a private hearer, who had sometimes secretly attended on the ministry of Christ, loved him, and believed in him as the Messiah, but had not courage enough to confess him, and declare for him, for fear of being put out of the synagogue and sanhedrim: but now being inspired with zeal and courage, “went in boldly”, as Mark says,

*and besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus*: from off the cross, that it might not be any more insulted by his enemies, and might not be thrown with the other bodies into the place where the bodies of malefactors were cast, but that it might be decently interred. This Pilate, the Roman governor, had the disposal of, and to him Joseph applies for it; which was a great instance of his affection for Christ, and was a declaring

openly for him, and must unavoidably expose him to the malice and resentment of the Jews:

*and Pilate gave him leave*; having first inquired of the centurion, whether he was dead; of which being satisfied, he readily granted it; not only in complaisance to Joseph, who was a man of note and figure, but on account of the innocence of Jesus, of which he was convinced, and therefore was very willing he should have an honourable burial:

*he came therefore*; to the cross, with proper servants with him,

*and took the body of Jesus*; down from the cross, and carried it away. The Alexandrian copy, different from all others, and in language uncommon, reads, “the body of God”.

**Ver. 39.** *And there came also Nicodemus*, etc.] To the cross, at the same time as Joseph did; who, whether they were brethren, as some conjecture, and met here by consent, since one prepared one thing, and another, for the interment of Christ, is not certain. This Nicodemus is thought to be the same with Nicodemus ben Gorion, the Talmudists speaks of, who, they say <sup>f771</sup>, was one of the three rich men in Jerusalem; as this appears to be a rich man, from the large quantity of myrrh and aloes he brought with him, and which must be very costly. Moreover, they say <sup>f772</sup>, that he had another name, which was Boni; and they themselves observe <sup>f773</sup>, that Boni was one of the disciples of Jesus, as this Nicodemus was, though a secret one, as Joseph: this is he

*which at the first came to Jesus by night*; who, when Christ first entered on his ministry, or when he first came unto him, came to him by night to discourse with him about his Messiahship, doctrine, and miracles, (~~John~~ John 3:1,2) for being one of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, and a Rabbi or master in Israel, he was ashamed or afraid to converse publicly with him; however, he went away a disciple; and though he did not openly profess him, he loved him, and believed in him, and now being dead showed his respect to him:

*and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight*: not himself, but by his servants. This mixture of myrrh and aloes together, and which was a very large quantity, and exceeding costly, was not designed the embalming of his body, and preserving it from putrefaction; for he was not embalmed, though myrrh and cassia and other odours were used in embalming <sup>f774</sup>; but for perfuming it, and in honour and

respect unto him: it was sweet smelling myrrh, and an aromatic spice called “aloe” he brought, and not the common aloe. Nonnus calls it the “Indian aloe”, which was of a sweet odour; for which reason it was brought. These are both reckoned with the chief spices, (<sup>2014</sup>Song of Solomon 4:14).

Myrrh was one of the principal spices in the anointing oil and holy perfume, (<sup>1913</sup>Exodus 30:23,34). It is a kind of gum or resin called “stacte”, that issues either by incision, or of its own accord, out of the body or branches of a tree of this name, which grows in Arabia and Egypt; and being of an agreeable smell, was used at funerals: hence those words of Martial <sup>f775</sup> “ — & olentem funera myrrham”; and so Nazianzen, speaking of his brother Caesarius, says <sup>f776</sup>,

“he lies dead, friendless, desolate, miserable, **σμυρνης ολιγης ηξιωμενος**, “favoured with a little myrrh”.”

And so the aloe was used to perfume, and to give a good scent, (<sup>1077</sup>Proverbs 7:17) and Christ’s garments are said to smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, (<sup>1918</sup>Psalms 45:8). Some have thought, that this was a mixture of the juice of myrrh, and of the juice of the aloe plant, and was a liquid into which the body of Christ was put: but this will not so well agree with the winding of the body in linen, with these in the next verse, where they are called spices. A Jew <sup>f777</sup> objects to this relation of the evangelist as unworthy of belief: he affirms, that this was enough for two hundred dead bodies, and that it could not be carried with less than the strength of a mule, and therefore not by Nicodemus. In answer to which, it is observed by Bishop Kidder <sup>f778</sup>, that we having nothing but the Jew’s own word for it, that this was enough for two hundred bodies, and a load for a mule; and that it should be told what was the weight of the **λιτρα**, or pound, mentioned by the evangelist, ere the force of the objection can be seen; and that it is a thing well known, that among the Jews the bodies of great men were buried with a great quantity of spices: it is said of Asa, that “they buried him in his own sepulchre which he had made for himself, in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours, and divers kinds of spices”, (<sup>1464</sup>2 Chronicles 16:14). To which may be added, what is before observed, that this was not brought by Nicodemus himself, but by his servants; and what they did by his orders, and he coming along with them, he may be said to do. Just as Joseph is said to take down the body of Jesus from the cross, wind it in linen, and carry it to his sepulchre, and there bury it; this being done by his servants, at his orders, or they at

least assisting in it; and as Pilate is said to put the title he wrote upon the cross, though it was done by others, at his command.

**Ver. 40.** *Then took they the body of Jesus*, etc.] It being taken down from the cross, and carried to the designed place of interment; they, Joseph and Nicodemus, either themselves, or by their servants, took the body;

*and wound it in linen clothes*; or “swathed”, or “wrapped it in linen”; rolled it about the body many times, as was the custom of the eastern nations to do; this was what Joseph prepared:

*with the spices*; which they either wrapped up with the linen, or strowed over the body when it was wound up; these Nicodemus brought;

*as the manner of the Jews is to bury*; both was usual with them; both to wind up the dead in linen; hence R. Jonathan, alluding to this custom, when R. Isai was taken, and others would have delivered him, said, **wnydsb tmh Ērky**, “let the dead be wrapped in his own linen <sup>f779</sup>”; and also to bury them with spices; hence we read of “the spices of the dead” in a Jewish canon <sup>f780</sup>:

“they do not say a blessing over a lamp, nor over the spices of idolaters; nor over a lamp, nor over **μytm l ç μymçbh**, “the spices of the dead”.”

the use of which, Bartenora on the place says, was to drive away an ungrateful smell. The wrapping up the body of Christ in a fine linen cloth, was a token of his purity and innocence; and significative of that pure and spotless righteousness he had now brought in: the strewing it with spices may denote the fragrancy of Christ’s death to Jehovah the Father, in whose sight it was precious, and whose sacrifice to him is of a sweet smelling savour; and also to all sensible sinners, to whom a crucified Christ is precious; since by his death sin is expiated, the law fulfilled, justice satisfied, reconciliation made, security from condemnation obtained, and death is abolished.

**Ver. 41.** *Now in the place where he was crucified*, etc.] Which takes in all that spot of ground that lay on that side of the city where he was crucified; or near to the place of his crucifixion, for it was not a garden in which he was crucified:



*there was a garden*; all gardens, except rose gardens, were without the city, as has been observed, (see Gill on “~~618~~ John 18:1”). This, it seems, belonged to Joseph: rich men used to have their gardens without the city for their convenience and pleasure:

*and in the garden a new sepulchre*; they might not bury within the city. Some chose to make their sepulchres in their gardens, to put them in mind of their mortality, when they took their walks there; so R. Dustai, R. Janhal, and R. Nehurai, were buried, *sdrpb*, “in a garden”, or orchard <sup>f781</sup>; and so were Manasseh and Amon, kings of Judah, (~~1218~~ 2 Kings 21:18,26). Here Joseph had one, hewn out in a rock, for himself and family, and was newly made. The Jews distinguish between an old, and a new sepulchre; they say <sup>f782</sup>,

“*çdj rbq*, “a new sepulchre” may be measured and sold, and divided, but an old one might not be measured, nor sold, nor divided.”

*Wherein was never man yet laid*; this is not improperly, nor impertinently added, though the evangelist had before said, that it was a new sepulchre; for that it might be, and yet bodies have been lain in it; for according to the Jewish canons <sup>f783</sup>,

“there is as a new sepulchre, which is an old one; and there is an old one, which is as a new one; an old sepulchre, in which lie ten dead bodies, which are not in the power of the owners, *çdj rbqk hzyrh*, “lo, this is as a new sepulchre”.”

Now Christ was laid in such an one, where no man had been laid, that it might appear certainly that it was he, and not another, that was risen from the dead.

**Ver. 42.** *There laid they Jesus therefore*, etc.] Because it was a new sepulchre, and no man had been ever laid there before; and some other reasons are added:

*because of the Jews’ preparation day*; either for the Chagigah, or the sabbath, which was just at hand; the Persic version reads, “the night of the sabbath”: for this reason, they could not dig a grave purposely for him; for it was forbidden on feast days; and therefore they put him into a tomb ready made: the canon runs <sup>f784</sup>,

“they may not dig pits, *twrbqw*, “nor graves”, on a solemn feast day.”

The former of these, the commentators say <sup>f785</sup>, are graves dug in the earth, and the latter edifices built over graves; and for the same reason, because it was such a day, they did not take his body to any of their houses, and embalm and anoint it, as they otherwise would have done; but this being a solemn day, and the sabbath drawing on apace, they hastened the interment, and took the most opportune place that offered:

*for the sepulchre was nigh at hand*; some say about an hundred and eight feet from the cross, and others an hundred and thirty feet, though some say but fifty or sixty, at furthest it was not far off.