

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

THE
FIRST PORTION OF
LIFE'S PROCESS FOR
MULTIPLICATION —
DEATH

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Living Stream Ministry

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The Gospel of John [chapters eighteen and nineteen](#) tell us about the Lord's betrayal, judgment, crucifixion, and burial. By reading the account of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus in the four Gospels, we discover that the first three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are records along the same line. But the record of the Gospel of John is absolutely different. For example, in the first three Gospels the record of the Lord's crucifixion and death on the cross is accompanied by many signs. For instance, the sky became dark, and the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom ([Matt. 27:45, 51](#)). Also, the Lord's cry from the cross, "My God, My God, why did You forsake Me?" is another sign in these Gospels that cannot be found in the Gospel of John. However, John's record contains that which cannot be found in the first three Gospels, such as the soldiers' mocking of the Lord ([19:2-3](#)) and the blood and water pouring out from the Lord's

side (19:34). Therefore, these records are along two different lines. We must know the purpose behind these two lines.

According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the main purpose of the Lord's death was to redeem us. He died for us and for our sins that He might accomplish the work of redemption. The Lord cried, "My God, My God, why did You forsake Me?" because it was at that very moment that God put all our sins upon Him and the Lord became the sin-bearer, becoming a sinner in our stead to bear our sins. Therefore, God forsook Him. Luke especially notes that the Lord was the Redeemer to redeem us from our sins, for he tells us that the Lord died with two sinners, two thieves, one who was saved and one who perished (Luke 23:32, 39-43). Such a record cannot be found in the Gospel of John. What then is the purpose of John's record? Since the Gospel of John is the Gospel of life, his record of the death of Christ follows the line of life. John's purpose was to show that the Lord Jesus is the expression of God as our life and that He died on the cross for the purpose of releasing Himself to us as life. His death on the cross was for the purpose of imparting His divine life into us.

DELIVERING HIMSELF IN VOLUNTARY BOLDNESS TO BE PROCESSED

The Lord delivered Himself in voluntary boldness to be processed ([John 18:1-11](#)). This means that He went into death willingly. In [John 10](#) He told us that He would purposely give up His life for us. He is the Lord of life, and He is life. He has authority to die, and He has the authority to be resurrected. Of His own accord He went into death, and He came out of it. He does not have the problem of death; hence, it was unnecessary for Him to die. It was His prerogative whether He would die or not. He could will to die or will not to die. To us, however, death is not a matter of choice. When death comes to visit us, we cannot say, “Death, I am not ready. Please come again another day.” We have neither the power nor the authority to reject death. When death comes, everyone must be subdued by it. But this was not so with the Lord, because He is the Lord of life and also life itself. If He did not prefer to die, He had the power and authority to reject death and not die. He had the authority to send death away. Although He was not forced or compelled to die, He was willing to die because He had come

to impart Himself to us as life. He knew that it was only through death that He could release Himself into us as life. In fact, He had already said that He was the one grain of wheat that was to fall into the ground and die (12:24). If a grain of wheat is unwilling to die, how can it release its life to bring forth many grains? In John 18 and 19 we see clearly that the Lord Jesus was very willing to die.

GOING TO THE GARDEN

The first proof of the Lord's willingness to die was that He went to the garden (18:1). This means that He went to a place where He could be captured. In His long message recorded in John 14 through 16, He made the process so clear. Then, in chapter seventeen, He prayed for the process. After He prayed, He went to the garden. According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the Lord went to the garden to pray. These three Gospels reveal that the Lord was the sin-bearer who was under the burden of bearing our sins. Thus, He had to go to the Father and pray. But there is no such record in the Gospel of John. John's record shows that He went to the garden not to pray but to present Himself to the process. He went there to be captured, to be arrested, to

be presented to death. This means that He voluntarily delivered Himself.

BETRAYED BY THE FALSE DISCIPLE

The Lord knew that Judas would betray Him (13:11, 21-27). He did not avoid it. This also proves that He voluntarily delivered Himself to be processed. Satan utilized the false disciple of the Lord to put Him to death, not knowing that by doing this he afforded the Lord the opportunity to be processed. The Lord took this as an opportunity to be glorified (13:31-32), that is, to be multiplied through death and resurrection.

THE “I AM” WILLING TO BE ARRESTED

Another indication of the Lord's willingness to die was that the people did not discover Him but that He came to them. Judas, the false disciple, came with two kinds of people—the political and the religious. The soldiers were the political ones, and the deputies from the chief priests and Pharisees were the religious ones. The religious circle worked with the political circle to put the Lord of life to death. However, they did not find the Lord; the Lord came to them. The soldiers did not come to the Lord and capture Him while He was praying. No, Jesus

went forth to meet them and said, “Whom are you seeking?” (18:4). They answered, “Jesus the Nazarene.” Then the Lord said to them, “I am” (18:5). When they heard this word, “they drew back and fell to the ground” (18:6). They were frightened at this word “I am,” which is the meaning of the name “Jehovah.” This indicates that the One they came to arrest was Jehovah God. The Lord did not take this opportunity to flee but asked them a second time, “Whom are you seeking?” Thus, it was not they who arrested the Lord; it was the Lord who handed Himself over to them.

If He had been unwilling to die, no one could have captured Him, for He could have frightened everyone and caused them to fall to the ground. All He had to do was speak one word and His captors would have been dead. How could they have seized Him if He were unwilling to be captured? This proves that the purpose of John’s Gospel is to show that the Lord is the Lord of life and that He was willing to die in order to release Himself as life.

TAKING CARE OF THE DISCIPLES IN AN EASY MANNER

While the Lord was handing Himself over

to the people, He took good care of His disciples in a very easy manner. In 18:8 Jesus said, “I told you that I am; if therefore you are seeking Me, let these go away.” This was the fulfillment of the Lord’s word in 17:12, where He said, “Of those whom You have given Me, I have not lost one” (18:9). This reveals His easy manner in passing through the process of death. He was not at all frightened by the environment of death.

WITHOUT ANY RESISTANCE

His willingness to die was also proved by the incident of Peter’s cutting off the right ear of Malchus, the slave of the high priest (18:10-11). Peter, a very rough brother, did not know the purpose of the Lord. Although he intended to help the Lord, he only caused trouble. The Lord Jesus said to him, “Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?” The Lord told him to sheath his sword because He had come to fulfill the purpose of the Father, which was to give Himself as life to others. The Lord willingly took the cup from the Father; He was not forced to take it. Therefore, the Lord was not forced to die; He willingly delivered Himself to death so that He could release His life to bring forth much fruit.

He was going into death to prove that He is life. How can we know that the Lord is life? It is by His going into death and not being subdued by it. The Lord was not frightened, troubled, controlled, or governed by death. As we read these two chapters, we discover that when the Lord went into death, He conquered and subdued it.

The Lord's life was a life that could subdue and conquer death. He went into death by crucifixion and came out of it by resurrection. What better proof can there be than this that He is the life that death cannot influence, subdue, or conquer? He conquered death because He is the resurrection life (11:25). [John 18 and 19](#) show how strong and powerful the Lord was when He went into death. When death was threatening, He was strong, powerful, and not subdued by its influence. He could go into death and come out of it without being hurt by it or held by it. What a proof that He is life!

THE PASSOVER LAMB EXAMINED

The Lord was examined in His dignity by mankind ([18:11—19:16](#)), being examined as the Passover lamb was examined ([Exo. 12:2-6](#)). The Lord Jesus was crucified on the Passover as the Passover lamb. According to the type, before

the Passover lamb was killed, it had to be examined to determine whether or not it had any blemish. The examination of Christ by mankind was the fulfillment of this type. After Pilate examined Him, he declared, “I find no fault whatever in him” ([John 18:38](#); [19:4, 6](#)). There was no blemish in this Passover lamb; He was fully qualified to be the Lamb for God’s people.

EXAMINED BY THE JEWS ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF GOD IN THEIR RELIGION

The Lord was examined by the Jews according to the law of God in their religion ([18:12-27](#)). This examination was a very unpleasant thing. The Lord even suffered it in front of the denial of one of the closest disciples ([18:17-18](#); [25-27](#)). While He was being examined, Peter denied Him three times. Would you have been able to suffer this? If this had happened to us, we would certainly have rebuked Peter. But the Lord did not say a word.

While the high priest was examining and judging the Lord, the high priest was being judged by the Lord in His dignity ([18:19-21](#)). The Lord was fearless and spoke to the high priest in a very dignified way. While the Passover lamb was being

examined, the examiner was being examined by Him, and the blemishes of the examiner were exposed.

EXAMINED BY THE GENTILES ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF MAN IN THEIR POLITICS

The Lord was examined by the Gentiles according to the law of the Roman Empire (18:28-38a). He was examined according to the Jewish law for execution. Then He was examined by the Roman politics, by the law of the earthly power. The Jewish law for execution was to stone the criminal to death (18:31; Lev. 24:16). If that method of execution had been available at the time, the Lord Jesus might have been stoned to death. But that would not have fulfilled the prophecy spoken by the Lord when He said that He would be lifted up as the brass serpent was lifted up by Moses in the wilderness (John 3:14).

Many years ago I read an article describing how the Jews slew the lamb during the Passover. The article said that the Jews took two wooden bars and formed a cross. They put the lamb on the cross, tying two of the lamb's legs to the foot of the cross and fastening the outstretched legs to the crossbar. Then they slew the lamb so that

all its blood was shed. Thus, the killing of the Passover lamb was a portrait of the crucifixion of Christ. Not long before the crucifixion of Christ, the Roman government adopted crucifixion as the method of executing criminals. This was decided under God's sovereignty that the prophecies regarding Christ's crucifixion might be fulfilled (18:31-32; 12:32-33).

While Pilate was judging the Lord Jesus, he himself was judged by the Lord in His dignity (18:33-38a). Pilate, as a governor of the Roman Empire, was very timid. Although he knew what was right and what was wrong, he, like all politicians, was afraid of the people. Pilate found no fault in the Lord Jesus; he knew that the Lord had done nothing wrong. But the voices of the people subdued him, and he was not honest, genuine, nor faithful.

Because of his fear of the Jews, he condemned the Lord and sentenced Him to death. This was unfair and unrighteous. When the Lord told Pilate that He had come into the world to "testify to the truth" and that "Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (18:37), Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" (18:38). This indicates that the Lord judged Pilate. In effect, the Lord said, "You are such a high administrator and yet

you do not know what truth is. Then you are a false person. You are not true.” After this, Pilate was exposed and put to shame, and stopped judging the Lord. Here we see the darkness of politics.

SENTENCED IN MAN’S INJUSTICE

After the Lord Jesus was examined, He, the perfect One, was sentenced in man’s injustice (18:38b-19:16). This unjust sentence exposed the blindness of religion and the darkness of politics (18:38b-39; 19:1, 4-5, 8-14, 16). The Jewish religionists rejected the most just One and chose a robber (18:39-40; 19:6-7, 12, 15). How blind they were! They were veiled by their religion and with their hatred. The Gentile politician, Pilate, knew and declared that the Lord Jesus had no fault, yet he still sentenced Him to death in order to please the Jewish people (18:38a-39; 19:1, 4-5, 8-14, 16). How political he was! Religion and politics worked together to pronounce the unjust sentence upon Christ. Politics did not take the initiative; it was religion which took the initiative, utilizing the power of dark politics.

CRUCIFIED AT GOLGOTHA

In the process for multiplication, the Lord

Jesus was tested in God's sovereignty by death (19:17-30). After being sentenced unjustly, He was crucified at Golgotha (19:17), which, in Latin, is Calvary and means the Place of the Skull. The meaning of the place where He was crucified indicates insult and shame. He suffered death in insult and shame.

“NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS”

At Golgotha, “they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on this side and one on that, and Jesus in the middle” (John 19:18). This was the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 53:12, which said that the Messiah would be “numbered with the transgressors.” He was dealt with as one of the transgressors.

KILLED BY MANKIND

According to God's sovereignty, the Lord was killed by mankind represented by Hebrew religion, Roman politics, and Greek culture (19:19-22). John 19:19 says, “Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross. And it was written, JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS.” This title was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek (19:20). The Hebrew represented

Hebrew religion, the Latin represented Roman politics, and the Greek represented Greek culture. When added together, these three represent the entire world of mankind, signifying that the Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God was killed by and for all mankind. When the chief priest of the Jews asked Pilate to change what he had written, Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written” (19:22). What Pilate wrote was not of him; it was under the sovereign hand of God, and he could not change it.

THE SOLDIERS PARTAKING HIS GARMENTS

Religion was blind, politics was dark, the governor was false, and the soldiers were greedy. When they had crucified Jesus, they took His garments and made a part for each soldier. Since His tunic was seamless, they cast lots to see whose it would be (19:23-24). This was not of the soldiers, but of God’s sovereignty. It happened that the prophecy in [Psalm 22:18](#) might be fulfilled. By this we see that the Lord’s death was sovereignly planned. If God had not planned it, no one could have put the Lord of life to death.

TAKING CARE OF HIS MOTHER BY IMPARTING HIS LIFE TO HIS DISCIPLE

Probably most Christians know that when the Lord was on the cross He spoke seven words. These seven words from the cross are quite famous. The first word the Lord spoke was, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” ([Luke 23:34](#)); the second was, “Today you shall be with Me in Paradise” ([Luke 23:43](#)); and the third was, “Woman, behold your son...Behold, your mother” ([John 19:26-27](#)). These three words were spoken during the first three hours of the Lord’s crucifixion. The Lord was on the cross for six hours—from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. This is recorded very clearly in the four Gospels. During the first three hours, everything that was done to Him was done by man. The people persecuted, mocked, and crucified Him. But during the final three hours, everything that happened to Him was done by God. God looked upon Him as the sinner and as the substitute for sin, and judged Him. During the second period of three hours, He spoke four other words. In [Matthew 27:46](#) the Lord Jesus said, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” This was the

fourth word spoken from the cross. The fifth word was, “I thirst” (19:28); the sixth was, “It is finished” (19:30); and the seventh was, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit” (Luke 23:46).

Luke’s account proves that the Lord is the sinner’s Savior. The word, “Father, forgive them,” is a prayer for sinners. Likewise, the word, “Today you shall be with Me in Paradise,” is a gospel promise to saved sinners. But, in John 19:26-27, the Lord said to His mother, “Behold, your son,” and to His disciple, “Behold, your mother.” These words indicate the union of life, because John’s Gospel testifies that the Lord is life imparted into His believers. It is by this life that His loved disciple could be one with Him and become the son of His mother, and she could become the mother of His loved disciple. According to John’s record, Jesus was crucified for the transfer of life, for the imparting of His life into His disciples. Through this transfer of life, one of His disciples could be His mother’s son, and His mother could be this disciple’s mother. This does not indicate salvation but the transfer of life. Hence, the Gospel of John is not a gospel of salvation but a gospel of life that is transferred into all His believers.

In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the Lord died to redeem sinners from the curse of sin. Although

we may be as sinful as the thief, we too can be redeemed from the curse and go immediately to be with the Lord in Paradise. But in John the Lord Jesus died to release and impart Himself as life into the disciples, thus making all the disciples identified with Him. Consequently, all the disciples are sons to His mother.

MOCKED BY BEING OFFERED VINEGAR

[John 19:28 and 29](#) continue, “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had now been accomplished that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst. A vessel full of vinegar was lying there; so they put a sponge full of vinegar on hyssop and brought it to His mouth.” Thirst is a taste of death ([Luke 16:24](#); [Rev. 21:8](#)). The Lord Jesus suffered it for us on the cross ([Heb. 2:9](#)). The hyssop here should be the “reed” in [Matthew 27:29](#) and [Mark 15:19](#), which was a hyssop reed. At the beginning of His crucifixion, the wine mingled with gall and myrrh ([Matt. 27:34](#); [Mark 15:23](#)) was offered to the Lord as a stupefying draught, which He would not drink. But at the end of His crucifixion, when He was thirsty, vinegar was offered to Him in a mocking way ([Luke 23:36](#)). In His crucifixion, the Lord’s rights of clothing and drink were robbed along with His life.

THE WORK OF HIS ALL-INCLUSIVE DEATH FINISHED

[John 19:30](#) says, “When Jesus then had taken the vinegar, He said, It is finished! And He bowed His head and gave up the spirit.” The Lord worked continually until He was put on the cross ([John 5:17](#)). But even in His crucifixion the Lord was still working. How do we know that He was still working on the cross? Because before He died He said, “It is finished!” While He was being crucified, He was still working for the redemption of sinners, for the destruction of the serpent, for the release of the divine life, and for the accomplishment of God’s eternal purpose. At the last minute, after everything had been accomplished, He declared to the whole universe, “It is finished!” Then He died and entered into rest. Praise the Lord Jesus! Only He could do this. Through His crucifixion, He finished the work of His all-inclusive death by which He accomplished redemption, terminated the old creation, and released His resurrection life to bring forth the new creation to fulfill God’s purpose. In the process of death, He proved to His opposers and His believers by the way He behaved that He was life. The dreadful environment of death did not

frighten Him in the least. Rather, it provided a contrast which proved strongly that He was life versus death, a life which could not be affected by death in any way.

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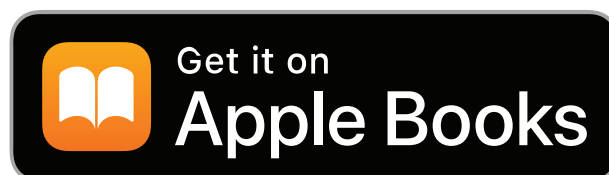
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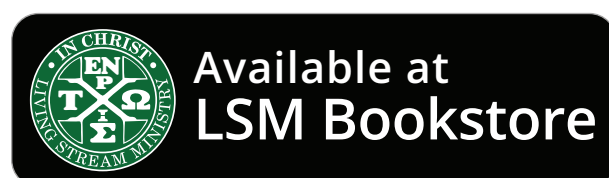
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