

# Behold The Man

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Date: 15 April 2022

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[ 0 : 00 ] Father, we pray that prayer. World depart. Let Jesus in. God, as we come now to hear another reading from your word, would you help us to grasp with fresh eyes and a humble heart the reality of Jesus, your Son, our King.

We pray this in his name and by your Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen. So our next scripture reading comes from John 19, verses 1 through 16. Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him saying, Hail, King of the Jews, and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again and said to them, See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him. So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, Behold the man. When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, Crucify him, crucify him.

[ 1 : 26 ] Pilate said to them, Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and according to that law, he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God.

When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He answered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, Where are you from? But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to him, You will not speak to me?

Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you? Jesus answered him, You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore, he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin. From then on, Pilate sought to release him. But the Jews cried out, If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar. So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Stone Pavement and an Aramaic Gabbatha.

[ 2 : 34 ] Now it was the day of preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, Behold your king. They cried out, Away with him.

Away with him. Crucify him. Pilate said to them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. Well, consider with me tonight Pilate's words in verse 5.

Behold the man. What sort of man, I wonder, do you see? Do you behold when you behold the crucified Jesus?

At this moment in the Passion narrative, in John 19, the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem have arrested Jesus, questioned and condemned him, and then drug him before Pilate, the Roman governor.

[ 3 : 38 ] These authorities behold in Jesus a threat, a blasphemer, to be gotten rid of. Pilate, for his part, not seeing in Jesus any real danger, has him flogged and mocked, and then drug out before the crowd again, saying, Behold the man.

Pilate's words, of course, are dripping with sarcasm and with scorn. Don't you hear it? He's saying there, So here's the man you find so dangerous, so threatening.

Look at how I've beaten him. Look at how he wears his crown of thorns. Look at his purple robe. Can't you see he's harmless, even ridiculous?

Behold the man. But you know, in John's gospel, again and again, the characters often speak better than they know.

There's a deeper irony and meaning in Pilate's words. Behold the man. On Pilate's lips, they're mocking words. But in the sweep of John's gospel, they ring out with a deeper truth.

[ 4 : 50 ] For as John's gospel shows us, Jesus is the true incarnate man. God become flesh, dwelling among us.

Behold the man. So as we behold the man, Jesus, what are we meant to see?

Especially at this moment, on the verge of crucifixion, standing condemned. Well, it would seem that we're meant to see at least two things. First, we see here that Jesus is a real man.

In becoming flesh, Jesus hasn't just taken sort of a little sip of our humanity, but he's drunk it down to the very bottom. He has experienced the depths of being human, and especially, he has entered completely into our human sufferings.

friends tonight, do you know physical suffering? So does he. Behold him, beaten, bruised.

[ 6 : 00 ] Do you know relational suffering? So does he. Behold him there, his own people, rejecting him, his friends having abandoned him, and denied him.

Do you know emotional suffering? So does he. Think of the shame and humiliation of this moment. Behold him as he stands there mocked and scorned. Jesus knows our human suffering. Listen again to the prophet Isaiah's words written hundreds of years before, but perfectly fulfilled in the incarnate and crucified Jesus.

Isaiah writes, he had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteem him not.

You know, in our suffering, we can often feel like God is very far away, but tonight, behold the man. in your suffering, God is not far away.

[ 7 : 17 ] In fact, Jesus is closer to you there perhaps than ever before, like the friend that sticks closer than a brother or sister. So did you bring any sorrow with you tonight?

How heavy does it weigh upon you? The gnawing ache of being alone or being forgotten by friends, the shame of public humiliation or wrongful accusations, the physical pain of old age or perhaps chronic illness when you should still feel so young.

Do you bring any sorrow with you tonight? If so, behold the man. Do you see in the crucified Jesus a God who can indeed sympathize with all your weaknesses and who willingly came down to be with you not just in your joys but even in your sorrows?

There's comfort here for the afflicted, a God who not only sees but who shares our suffering. So can you see in his wounds your own?

And will you draw near to him tonight to find his presence in the midst of it? Johnny Erickson Tata was paralyzed at the age of 17 in a diving accident and she recounts in her autobiography how she wrestled in those early years with anger and depression and even suicidal thoughts and religious doubts.

[ 8 : 49 ] But she also writes this. She says, I discovered that the Lord Jesus Christ could indeed empathize with my situation on the cross for those agonizing horrible hours waiting for death.

Jesus was immobilized, helpless, paralyzed. Jesus did know what it was like not to be able to move, not to be able to scratch your nose, shift your weight, wipe your eyes.

He was paralyzed on the cross. Christ knew exactly how I felt. Same is true for you, friend. If you will behold Jesus long enough, you will see that he has shared your suffering too and that will give you strength and comfort even in the darkest moments.

But there's more to see here. As we behold Jesus, the crucified one, we see that he is not just a real man sharing the sorrows of our humanness, but Jesus is also the representative man, the truly human one.

who can stand in the place not just of suffering humans like you and me, but of sinful humans like you and me. Consider the charges being leveled at Jesus here as we've read this passage.

[ 10 : 13 ] On the one hand, he's being charged with blasphemy. He's made himself the son of God, they say. And on the other hand, he's being charged with political treason.

He claims to be a king, but we have no king but Caesar. What a sad moment in the gospel narratives. Of course, Jesus is guilty of none of these things.

He is the son of God and he is the world's rightful king. So what's going on here in this moment? Is this just some tragic accident? Is this just simply a miscarriage of justice before a kangaroo court?

No. At a much deeper level, Jesus here is stepping under the sentence, the condemnation, not that he deserves, but that we deserve.

Because consider, consider these charges of blasphemy and treason. Have we not all in our own way put ourselves in the place of God and committed cosmic treason as we seek to live our own way, ignoring the God who made us in the world that God has made?

[ 11 : 32 ] And in this, are we not following in the steps of Adam, the first human? Remember what we read earlier from the book of Romans? Just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, so death spread to all men, to all people, because all sinned.

And one man, Adam, all humanity fell and none could right the wrong. We all stood condemned until Jesus, the second Adam, the new human, the second Adam who would undo the first Adam's sin, the righteous one who would pay the penalty for the unrighteous.

Again, as Romans 5 says, if many died through one man's trespass, how much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. Behold, the man. As Tyler mentioned, this is why we call this day Good Friday. Because on this day, our King released us from the guilt of sin and the sentence of death.

So friend, do you bring not just sorrows with you tonight, but do you bring your sins? Do you bring the guilt of having fallen short of your own standards, of God's standard?

[ 13 : 02 ] Do you bring with you that weight of a heavy conscience? Not just because you've hurt the people around you, but because you know you've broken fellowship with your God.

If so, friend, then hear the good news that Jesus has released us from the guilt of sin and the sentence of death. And how did he do it? Not by ignoring or making light of our blasphemy and our treason.

Not by minimizing the holiness and goodness of God. No, he lifts this sentence by taking it in our place. By representing us and by representing all who would ever trust in him.

The King dies so that we might live. So when you behold Jesus tonight, what do you see? Tonight, will you look at him with fresh eyes, with eyes of faith, with eyes of trust?

You know, perhaps like Pilate, perhaps like Pilate, you haven't really given much thought to Jesus. Maybe just another religious leader, just another teacher. What's the big deal? But tonight, would you behold him differently?

[ 14 : 20 ] See in his wounds your wounds. See in his death your death. See in this man the God who made you, who loves you, and who took on flesh to redeem you from sin and death and to give you new life.

We're going to sing a song together called, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross. And the last verse says this, Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small.

Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. make those words your prayer tonight.

Give to Jesus your soul, your life, your all. Let's pray together. Father, help us to behold in Jesus not just the one who shares our sufferings, but the one whose sacrifice forgives our sins and makes peace.

and may we live tonight and going forward in the peace, joy, and righteousness that Jesus gives through the Holy Spirit.

[ 15 : 36 ] Amen.