



Fire and Ice Sermon Series

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A Practical Exposition Upon The Fifty-Third Chapter Of Isaiah.

by Thomas Manton

THE NINTH VERSE.

*And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death;
because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

THE prophet goeth on with the account of Christ's sufferings, and showeth that he should at length be humbled to the grave, and brought thither in a most ignominious manner. Yet, however, there was no cause why the Jews should stumble at it, and dash the foot of their faith against this rock, for God had made provision ample enough against this offence and scandal. Even his grave, that seemed to obscure his glory, did in some measure illustrate it: 'He made his grave with the wicked, and, with the rich in his death, because,' &c.

Here are in this verse, as in many of the former, two parts considerable:—

1. The Jews' scandal: *he made his grave with the wicked.*
2. The prophet's defence, which you have—

[1] By the circumstances which made for the glory of Christ: *and with the rich in his death.*

[2.] By asserting his innocency—

(1.) In respect of open and gross sins: *he hath done no violence.*

(2.) In respect of secret and hidden sins: *neither was any deceit found in his mouth.* All these parts will more plainly appear in the explication. There are no verses have been so severally expounded as this and the former. I should perplex your thoughts too much to give you the differences. Some distinct senses

there are: I shall only give you what I conceive to be the positive and plain sense, by going over the phrases.

And he made. There may be a question to whom this *he* must be referred, for the number being so often changed, we can have no relief from, the context. There are three persons spoken of in the chapter: God the Father, God the Son, and the Jews. If this *he* be applied to God the Father, then the sense is, he disposed and ordered it so by his providence that his grave should be appointed among the wicked; and so it points at the divine decrees, which implied that Christ should be executed as an offender, and be buried in an ignominious manner, as other offenders are, for aught could be discerned at first. This suiteth with the Seventy, who bring in God the Father speaking this clause, though they read the sentence a little otherwise than we do: *dsw touVponhrouV, &c.*, 'I will give the wicked for his grave.' Or it may be referred to God the Son, his patience, who submitted so, as it seemed to hold forth nothing but as if he were to have had the burial of an ordinary malefactor, he submitting to it till a further declaration of God's pleasure; a man could have guessed nothing else. Or, *he made*, may be referred to the people of the Jews; they did as much as in them lay that Christ should have the burial of a wicked man: 'He made,' that is, by their ordination. You may take either or all very commodiously. It followeth, 'and with the rich in his death.' There is a great deal ado about what is meant by rich. Some understand the term, as Calvin, equivalent with the wicked; because riches puff up men's minds and dispose them to injury and violence. Junius understands Pilate; others have different apprehensions of the place. I shall take liberty to recede from them; for by this phrase, 'the rich in his death,' I understand Joseph of Arimathea; and the meaning I conceive thus, that though at his crucifixion his grave was intended to be with ordinary malefactors, yet God ordered it so that he should be honourably interred by a rich person, Joseph of Arimathea: 'With the rich in his death,' that is, after his death. And my reasons for this interpretation are two:—

1. Because the word for rich, *aasir*, in the Hebrew, is in the singular number, and so noteth some eminent rich man that had to do about the grave and sepulchre of Christ; and that was Joseph of Arimathea.

2. Because the evangelist Matthew seemeth, as with a finger, to point to this place when he saith, Mat. 27:57, 'When the evening was come, there was a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple, and he went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus.' And besides, the place is most sweetly and without wresting opened. And, indeed, the following words yield us a twofold reason:—

[1.] Because God would right his innocency in the midst of calumnies and reproaches. God would not have an innocent buried among malefactors; and, therefore, by the care of Joseph and Nicodemus, he would have it testified to the world that there were some thought him innocent and worthy of an honourable burial.

[2.] It may well be to show the suitableness of it. He would have a new kind of man laid in a new grave, in which no man was ever laid. It could be said of no man but Christ that no iniquity and guile was found in him; and therefore he was put in a sepulchre in which no man was laid. For now God began to honour Christ because he had done no violence. In Peter, it is, 'Who did no sin;' for indeed the word must be taken so generally, *anomia*. It is meant, no gross fact could be charged upon him; neither was there deceit in his mouth; that is, he was guilty of no secret evil: for no guile in the mouth argueth there was none in the heart—there being a swift intercourse between the heart and the tongue: James 3:2, 'If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body.'

Thus for the phrases. The sum of all is this, that though the Messiah was taken away by a shameful death, and therefore likely to be looked upon as an eminent instance of divine wrath and vengeance, yet the Lord provided for his glory in the midst of this ignominy, by procuring such a sepulchre and burial for him as might set out not only his innocency but his honour; for he indeed was without fault and blame.

There is not much to be observed out of this verse, yet that which is, is very comfortable, and therefore in the general take these notes.

1. There is a sweet harmony and accord between the Old and New Testament; they agree in the least things. Isaiah saith, 'He made his grave with the rich;' and Matthew saith, 'a rich man of Arimathea came and begged his body.' So in other things you may observe there is an agreement in those things which a man would judge to be of least consequence.

Note 2. That every passage of Christ's life is considerable; as this concerning the account of his burial. — A man would have thought it had not been so worthy of observation, and yet the prophet speaketh of it as an eminent circumstance, and you shall see much use may be made of it by and by. So, for Christ's name, Mat. 1:23, 'They shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.' So the offering for him a pair of turtle-doves and two young pigeons. Man would easily overlook these things, yet the Holy Ghost thought them worthy the noting. Oh, study Christ's life more; there is no waste passage in it. But what benefit is there in the text? I shall not here

give you doctrines, as I did from the other verses, but direct you, for your comfort, to look upon Christ under a threefold notion, viz., as our surety, as a pattern of providence, and as a great example.

1. As a surety; so there are two clauses that afford comfort to believers:—

[1] That ‘he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.’ That expression, ‘He made his grave with the wicked,’ holdeth forth the payment of the debt, and full evidence of his satisfaction. Your surety suffered in your stead. ‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.’ And the Lord Christ was accursed to redeem us from the curse of the law. But I shall chiefly take notice of this circumstance, ‘And with the rich in his death.’ After Christ had once died, God began to honour him: full satisfaction being made to God, and the reproach and shame due to sins taken away; after death he had an honourable interment. Of all people, the Jews did most look to burials. It was a great threatening that they should die unburied Prov. 30:17, ‘The eye that mocketh at his father, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it;’ alluding to the shameful death and burial of the disobedient son. And again, Ps, 79:3, There should be ‘none to bury him: And Jer. 22:19, ‘He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.’ But now Christ had not only a decent but an honourable burial. Well, then, Christians, here is encouragement for your faith. Christ was honoured as soon as he died the work is ended—the last act of his humiliation was the first step to his exaltation, and there began his triumph and glory. Joseph and Nicodemus, two of his devout followers, they celebrate his funerals, and bury him with such solemnities as are due to persons of the greatest honour. Well, then, conclude in faith, that by Christ’s death, shame, and sufferings, sin is done away. Christians were wont to solemnise their funerals with psalms of thanksgiving. You may remember Christ’s funeral with rejoicing and giving of thanks: there you have the first intimation that the work was finished, sins were satisfied for, shame and reproach began to vanish. O you redeemed of the Lord, go forth and rejoice. God beginneth to take off the ignominy of Christ’s death, and thereby your ignominy and your shame. So that now, ‘In him we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him,’ Eph. 3:12; that is, you may freely have communion and social commerce with God, your shame being gone; God hath branded sin with shame. Adam hid himself; the captains and great men called to the mountains to cover them from the wrath of the Lamb, they could not endure the sight of God. Guilt maketh a fallen countenance, and causeth a shyness of God. Now you may lift up your heads, your shame is taken away.

[2.] From that clause, ‘Because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.’ Your surety was a pure person—he had no guilt of his own to satisfy for, and so it yieldeth not only an encouragement to faith, but an endearment of love to Christ. All these sufferings were for you, there is nothing that can argue a need for himself to do it. The scriptures everywhere urge and testify this: 1 John 3:5, ‘And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin.’ All his sufferings were for some cause there was nothing to occasion them in himself, it must therefore be for our sins: I Peter 3:18, ‘For Christ hath also once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.’ It was for sins he suffered, and therefore certainly for ours, for he had none of his own. Urge it then upon your hearts, both as an encouragement to faith and an endearment to love. It was a pure Christ that suffered, and therefore certainly for such an impure wretch as I am—the just for the unjust. Reason thus: Surely God is just; Christ undergoing so great sufferings, and yet possessed of great purity, certainly died for great sinners.

2. As a pattern of providence. God meant to copy out all dispensations in the life of Christ. Learn then:—

[1] That we must not always look upon the face of providence and eye present appearances. ‘He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.’ A man would have thought that Christ should have had an ignominious burial, and that none would have contributed to his glory; but the rich man begged his body from the cross, and God turns his grave into his glory. Oh, do not look to present appearance; you know not what a mercy may be couched under the frowns of providence. John 2:7, Christ calleth for waterpots when he meant to give them wine; and John 11:6, when he meant to restore Lazarus from the dead by a miracle, he would not vouchsafe to go and see him; he abode still two days in the same place. When God designed to honour Christ with a funeral, he meant to order it so that the Jews looked for nothing else but the burial of an ass. Thus God many times seems to hide himself, and when we seek for him, he is not to be found: Eccles. 11:4, ‘He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.’ If you look always upon the face of outward things, the heart will be discouraged with the frowning of Providence.

[2] Learn what reason you have to wait upon God when things are at the worst. There was no appearance for Christ till things came to the worst. Joseph begged his body when dead upon the cross: ‘He was with the rich in his death;’ Job 13:15, ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.’ God can of a sudden turn things, and disappoint the devices and counsels of wicked men, even when they think all is sure. Therefore wait upon God, and see what event he will give to

things. When the Jews thought every one would be ashamed of Christ, up start Joseph and Nicodemus, and boldly begged his body. There was death first before God would do him honour.

3. Look upon him as the great example; so there is benefit in the last clause: 'For he had done no violence, neither was there deceit in his mouth.' This is your pattern: 1 Peter 2:21,22, 'Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.' Oh that we could write after this fair copy that Christ hath set us, that we might be 'holy as he was holy in all manner of conversation,' 1 Peter 1:15, in every turning of our lives. I would not that you should lose the benefit of this instruction for want of making it particular. I shall set home this pattern by the two words of the text, *violence* and *deceit*. None of this was found in Christ.

[1.] *Violence*. Take heed of that. There is violence in the spirit, manifested by wrath, revenge, boisterousness of passion, affection. Oh, what an unbecoming thing is it for men to deliver themselves over to the sway of their own passions! James 1:20, 'The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.' The meaning is, such a heart is not fit to serve God; it will not reach righteousness. God must have always service proportionate. God, that is a spirit, must be served in spirit and in truth; the God of peace with peace, with a peaceable, calm spirit: 1 Tim. 2:8, 'Lifting up holy hands without wrath and

doubting.' Then there is violence in the tongue, showed in bitterness, reviling, reproaches. This was far from Christ; he did no violence. This becometh the sons of the world rather than the sons of God. Surely such wolfish dispositions do ill become them that are related to the Lamb, the Lamb slain for the sins of the world. Where is your warrant for this in the life of Christ? 9 Gal. 5:15, 'If ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not consumed one of another.' You learn it of the wolf or the old dragon, not of the Lamb. The apostle useth such a word as implieth such bitterness as is brutish. Then in practice, by oppression, invading of another's right and property. There was no such thing in Christ. He would not intrench upon the magistrate's office: John 8:11, 'Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more.' Not in respect of guilt, for he saith, 'Sin no more.' But the meaning is, he would not meddle with her punishment; it was none of his office, and therefore he would not in the least manner encroach upon another's right. Learn of Christ, who did no violence.

[2] There was no *deceit* found in his mouth. Take heed also of that. Be like Christ. It is said of Nathanael, John 1:47, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in

whom there is no guile.’ Why an Israelite indeed? Because, like old Israel, like old Jacob; for it is said of him, Gen. 25:27, ‘Jacob was a plain man, and dwelt in tents.’ So here; we are Christians indeed when without guile, when we are like Christ, for no deceit was found in him. There is deceit in heart, which the scripture calleth guile of spirit: Ps. 32:2, ‘Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.’ Take heed of this deceitful heart. We must take heed we drive not on a self-design in all our respects to God and men; and when we pretend to zeal in worship, that it is not to serve ourselves of it. Rev. 14:5, it is said of the Lamb’s followers, that ‘in their mouth was found no guile;’ they are without fault before the throne of God, Heb. 4:12, Wait upon the word, for that is ‘a divider between soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intention of the heart;’ that is, between fairness of pretences, and vileness of affection and baseness of intents. And there is deceit in the mouth when men dissemble for advantage. You did not learn this of Jesus Christ. As Doeg deceitfully flattered David, to tell Saul of it: Ps. 120:3, ‘What shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?’ Though he told the truth, yet he flattered with David, that he might observe his carriage, and relate it to Saul: Ps. 52:4, ‘Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.’ Then for practice, many give out specious pretences, as if they were what indeed they are not. Be what you would be accounted to be. It is hypocrisy that overacts to the world. We know counterfeit gold because it looketh so yellow: 2 Sam. 15:6, Absalom stole hearts of the men of Israel by flattery, and fair but false pretences. But we should eye our pattern. That is true religion, to imitate him whom we worship.

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