He Died Alone

(Kent Heaton)

Roman soldiers brought the condemned out of the city to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, “Place of a Skull.” A scene of carnage and smell of death welcomed all who came to this knoll outside Jerusalem. Death lingered long here as a place of execution. The curious and the religious gathered around to watch the execution of three men upon wooden instruments of Roman justice. Flickering in the eyes of the crowd two thieves were nailed to their crosses and between the two another was nailed. The men were suffering the justice of Caesar’s law upon those accused and found guilty. The crowd gathered to watch men die.

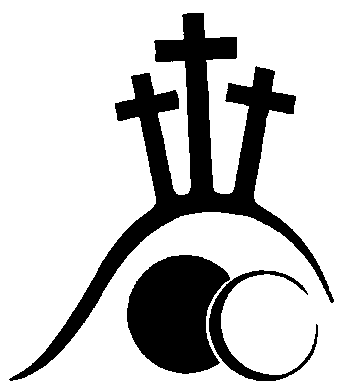
A mob of people sat and watched three men agonize in painful cries of misery and suffering. The two robbers reviled the one in the middle “who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:23). The religious zealots saw a criminal; the people saw the Son of God. Jesus of Nazareth, “a Man attested by God…by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him…delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, [was] taken by lawless hands…crucified, and put to death” (Acts 2:22-23). He died alone.

Roman soldiers took the sandals, girdle, outer robe, head-dress and garments of Jesus and cast lots among themselves for possession. The coat of Jesus was included in the casting of lots. It was without seam (as would be found in the tunic of a high priest; Josephus, Ant. iii.7.4) and was bundled away with the soldier who won the lot. They laughed, argued and gambled away the last earthly possessions of God’s Son while Jesus died alone.

The Jewish leaders came to watch Jesus die. Only a few moments earlier they had cried out to Pilate, “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!” (John 19:15). Standing in the stench of Golgotha the chief priests, rulers, scribes and elders of the Jews looked with hatred upon Jesus. They mocked Him with reviling words and insults while Jesus died alone.

Crowds of people passed by railing on Jesus and wagging their heads at Him in derision. The voices sounded loud and rang in the ears of God’s Son as He suffered a slow death. People murmured among themselves talking of what they saw and laughing and jeering and Jesus died alone.

Among those gathered were a great multitude of disciples mourning and lamenting what they witnessed (Luke 23:27). “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene” (John 19:25). John the apostle was there (John 19:26). But Jesus died alone.

Jesus died to bear “our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness” (1 Peter 2:24). He died alone in that scene of chaos on Golgotha because only He could bear that cross (Matthew 20:28). As Jesus died alone at Golgotha He was not left alone at Calvary. “Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me” (John 16:32). In His death Jesus has not left us alone (1 Corinthians 15:55-57). Our promise in life is that we do not have to die alone. [We can die in the Lord. (Revelation 14:13)]

**Is Television Harmless?**

(Selected)

Richard Nixon’s book, In The Arena, has an attention-grabbing paragraph on television: “Computer specialists have a saying – ‘Garbage in, garbage out’ – which they use when they want to make the point that a computer is only a mechanism for processing information, not creating it. The same principle applies to television. Young people used to learn their lessons from McGuffey’s Readers; the baby-boomers learned them from the Beaver and Gilligan. As the postwar generation came of age, it spawned a new generation of TV programmers, who in turn have put more triviality, sex, violence, and bad manners on the air than anyone ever thought possible. Trash TV could only have been created by people who were raised on the tube. ‘Garbage in, garbage out.’”

Fabricated “news” programs, “re-enactments,” peeping-tom journalism, heavy-metal rock music, slasher movies, and programs which glorify homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle can hardly be considered neutral as they relate to our culture. Soap operas are chock-full of unfaithfulness, vindictiveness, revenge, materialism and murder, while comedy gives way to lewd and suggestive material. Television has become more than a “vast wasteland” in recent years. It is a sinkhole of depravity with eroticism and occultism being fed to us on a daily basis.

It is certainly sub-Christian, and in many cases even sub-human. Harmless? Hardly! Dangerous? Certainly! Fatal? Possibly.

“For as he thinks within himself, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).