

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 328

Series: St. John's Passion - Gospel of John chapters 12-21

Verses: John 19:23-27

Topic: At The Foot Of The Cross

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Write To The Author: John Edmiston – johned@aibi.ph

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John 19:23-27 MKJV Then when they had crucified Jesus, the soldiers took His garments and made four parts, one part to each soldier; and also His tunic. And the tunic was without seam, woven from the top throughout. (24) Therefore they said among themselves, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to find whose it shall be (that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says, "They parted my garments among them, and for my garment they cast lots"). Therefore the soldiers did these things. (25) And His mother stood by the cross of Jesus, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. (26) Then when Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, Woman, behold your son! (27) Then He said to the disciple, Behold your mother! And from that hour that disciple took her into his own home.

There are three women named Mary in this passage: first there is Mary the mother of Jesus, the second Mary is the wife of Clopas, the father of the apostles James the Less and Joses (Matthew 10:3, 27:56, Mark 15:40). Clopas was, according to Eusebius, the brother of Joseph, the father of Jesus and so James the Less and Joses were thus cousins of Jesus. [Later on James the brother of Jesus also becomes an apostle meaning that many of the senior apostles were either brothers or cousins of Jesus.] The third woman called Mary is of course Mary Magdalene.

Even though a number of the apostles may have been relatives of Jesus along various family lines, this is never played on much in Scripture. They seem to lay no claim to it, which is perfectly in line with yesterday's passage about "recognizing Jesus according to the flesh".

2 Corinthians 5:16 MKJV (16) So as we now know no one according to flesh, but even if we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we no longer know Him so.

How we are born in this world is of no consequence, even if we are physically related to Jesus Christ – it is of no consequence, we must be born again. You may be aware of some of the recent mysticism surrounding the Merovingian bloodline who became Kings of France from the 5th to 8th century AD and who are supposed to be the heirs of Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene. Apart from the blasphemy involved – it is of no consequence! It is NOT any sort of physical descent or bloodline or Grail inheritance that matters – but being born-again and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Paul specifically warns folk not to get caught up in such Jewish fables and genealogies.

1 Timothy 1:3-7 MKJV Even as I begged you to remain at Ephesus, when I was going to Macedonia, that you might charge some that they teach no other doctrine, (4) nor to give heed to fables and endless genealogies (which provide doubts rather than *the* nurture of God in faith). (5) But the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, (6) from which some, having swerved, have turned aside to foolish talking, (7) desiring to be teachers of the law, neither understanding what they say nor that which they affirm.

Putting that to one side, let us press on. The soldiers cast lots for the seamless robe of Jesus in fulfillment of an ancient prophecy in Psalm 22:18. Psalm 22 was probably written sometime around 1000 AD and forecasts the cross, in detail, a thousand years in advance. The foreknowledge of God reaches far into the future to predict a seemingly trivial event - soldiers casting lots for a robe. It is an act of callousness towards God, a seeking personal gain in the midst of the death of God's Son. The action reeks of grubby self-interest and a certain hardness towards suffering.

In contrast with this callousness is Jesus' consideration for His mother. "Then when Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, Woman, behold your son! (27) Then He said to the disciple, Behold your mother! And from that hour that disciple took her into his own home." It is interesting that Jesus always calls Mary "woman" (see also John 2:4) and never "mother". In fact He seems to go to some lengths to minimize this relationship.

Matthew 12:46-50 MKJV But while He yet talked with the people, behold, *His* mother and His brothers stood outside, desiring to speak with Him. (47) Then one said to Him, Behold, Your mother and Your brothers stand outside, desiring to speak with You. (48) And He answered and said to him who told Him, Who is My mother? And who are My brothers? (49) And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, Behold, My mother and My brothers! (50) For whoever shall do the will of My Father in Heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother.

For someone as loving as Jesus, who truly cared for His mother and her welfare, this term "woman" is very unusual, especially in His last words to her from the cross. This brings us back to our point about the physical relationship to Christ - even a relationship as close as that of His mother. She was just a woman, another believer who did the will of God. It is almost as if the Holy Spirit, knowing ahead of time the problems that would come with Mary worship, made sure that the Scriptures painted the very opposite picture.

Christianity is a spiritual Kingdom not a physical lineage. God's Kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36) and is not inherited by flesh and blood (1 Corinthians 15:50). I do not care that George Bush and Dan Quayle are supposed to be of the Merovingian line and descendants of Jesus. That is utter codswallop! In God's eyes all that matters is the spiritual birth, being born from above, by the Holy Spirit - for God is impartial and is no respecter of persons.

Acts 10:34-35 KJV Then Peter opened *[his]* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: (35) But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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