

John 19:23-24

(John 19:23) Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

(John 19:24) They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

Here is set forth the baseness of man. The soldiers had no qualms about rending Christ's body (for His body was *broken*, 1CO 11:24) but they would not rend His coat/vesture. The *seamlessness* of the cloth was more valuable to them than the *sinlessness* of its wearer. There was never a more poignant example of men having more respect for *godly apparel* (JAM 2:2-3) than for a *godly man*. Let believers by this be sharply reminded to not look on others according to the *outward appearance* (1SAM 16:7; 2CO 10:7) but to "...judge righteous judgment" (JOH 7:24).

It may be observed here that wicked men had an interest in Christ but it was only to the extent that something associated with Him had commercial value. There is tangent value to the wicked from true religion. One could, for example, ply a good trade by *building the tombs of the prophets and garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous* (MAT 23:29). Suffice it to say that wicked men continue to turn *Christ* into a *craft* for wealth's sake as readily as the heathen silversmiths of Ephesus did in their "zeal" for Diana (ACT 19:23-25). Those who follow in Christ's *faith* may well follow also this *fate*: "...through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you..." (2PE 2:3). Truly, "...the love of money is the root of all evil..." (1TI 6:10) and the most zealous hatred of Bible-believers often comes from the most zealous professors of carnal Christianity. Hypocrites do not like being exposed as having turned the *golden calf of Israel* into the *golden cow of carnal Christianity*. Rather than *mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts* (COL 3:5-9 c/w GAL 5:24), they will mortify Christ and His disciples. The hypocrite's interest in Christ is only to the degree that it caters to his carnal instincts: he will *put Christ on a cross* before he will *put Christ on* in submissive practice. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (ROM 13:14 c/w GAL 3:27).

The soldiers apparently found Christ crucified an entertaining spectacle, for "...sitting down they watched him there" (MAT 27:36) and those who follow Christ closely should not be surprised if they also are, like His apostles, "...made a spectacle unto the world..." (1CO 4:9), a "...gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions..." (HEB 10:33). Perhaps the soldiers were amused by his misery or were waiting to see if something miraculous might happen with this person, as did Herod (LUK 23:8) or others there at Golgotha, "...Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him" (MAT 27:49). To this day the carnal throng enjoys being close to Christ as long as He entertains them without actively disrupting their lusts. But there were some there at the cross who, seeing Jesus die, confessed that He was *truly the Son of God and righteous* (MAT 27:54; MAR 15:39; LUK 23:47). The polarized images of the *broken* Savior and the *unbroken* vesture were not lost on them.

Wicked men took Christ's vesture but not His righteousness and for the spotless abundance of the latter, He has a replacement for the former: "...a vesture dipped in blood" (REV 19:13) on which is written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (REV 19:16). In the day of His coming in

power, the blood on His vesture will not be His own (as may well have been the case with Calvary's vesture) but of wicked men as He treads *the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God* (REV 19:15), "...and THEIR blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment" (ISA 63:3). NOTE: Though His garments be *sprinkled* with blood in the day of His vengeance (ISA 63:4), yet His vesture is properly described as *dipped* in blood (REV 19:13). The blood of the winepress of wrath shall be "...even unto the horse bridles..." (REV 14:20), a depth which certainly allows for dipping while staining also by sprinkling. *Sprinkling* is not the same as *dipping*, as any Bible-believing Baptist ought to know.

Christ's crucifixion apparel is said to have been both *purple* and *scarlet* (MAT 27:28; JOH 19:2) the very colors of the Harlot religion which John saw, "...in purple and scarlet colour...drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (REV 17:3-6). Faithful martyrs are thus true to their colors, true to Christ's colors. That one gospel says "scarlet" while the other says "purple" is no contradiction since the color *purple* is, by definition, "Anciently, that of the dye obtained from species of gastropod mollusks...commonly called Tyrian purple, which was actually a crimson. In the middle ages applied vaguely to many shades of red; now applied to mixtures of red and blue in various proportions..." (Oxford English Dictionary). These colors are significant in that they were then (and are now) colors of royalty (as Christ's tormentors were mockingly insinuating). They were also appropriate to His sufferings, being "*bruised* for our iniquities" (purple), and "with his *stripes* we are healed" (scarlet), per ISA 53:5. And it was through those colors of suffering that He became King, "...for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (HEB 2:9). The colors, in a sense, "...testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1PE 1:11).

Christ hanging on the cross was the "lifting up" of which He spoke in JOH 3:14; JOH 8:28; JOH 12:32. In the verses following JOH 12:32, the Holy Spirit sets forth a "lifting up" of the Lord Jesus which Isaiah had seen (JOH 12:37-41 c/w ISA 6:1-8). Isaiah was beholding His glory (JOH 12:41), not His humiliation, but that glorious accession to the heavenly throne was through the cross. Christ returned to the glory which He had always had as the Word (JOH 17:5) but now as the God-man and King over all (EPH 1:20-21).

Wicked men and wicked spirits had done their best to prevent Jesus' coronation, even from His birth (MAT 2:1-16; PSA 2:1-3) but God used Christ's sufferings to *set His king upon His holy hill of Zion*, i.e., *the heavenly Zion* (PSA 2:4-7 c/w ACT 2:30-36 c/w HEB 12:22-24). Their blind ambition and hatred of the sinless Savior had only made His transition from humility to exaltation, like the coat those soldiers gambled for, *seamless*.