

“O, What Wondrous Love I See!”

John Isaac Edwards

The Golden Text says, “For God so **loved** the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...” (Jn. 3:16). Jesus declared, “Greater **love** hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn. 15:13). Paul wrote the Romans, “But God commendeth his **love** toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Ephesians 2:4 records, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great **love**, wherewith he **loved** us.” The Ephesians were instructed, “And walk in **love**, as Christ also hath **loved** us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour” (Eph. 5:2). John penned, “Hereby perceive we the **love** of God, because he laid down his life for us...” (1 Jn. 3:16). As I read the gospel accounts of the final moments of Jesus’ earth-life, “O, what wondrous love I see!”

1) **Sorrowful And Very Heavy.** Matthew 26 finds Jesus in a place called Gethsemane. “And he...began to be sorrowful and very heavy” (v. 37). He said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death...” (v. 38). Three times He prayed, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (vv. 39, 42,

44). Luke records, “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Lk. 22:44). The Hebrew writer reported of Jesus, “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears...” (Heb. 5:7).

2) **Betrayed.** At the Passover Jesus revealed, “...that one of you shall betray me” (Mt. 26:21). While He was weeping and praying, “...lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves...And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him....Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him” (Mt. 26:47-50).

3) **Forsaken.** Matthew 26:56 informs us, “....Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.”

4) **False Witnesses Did Rise Up.** The Psalmist wrote, “False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not” (Ps. 35:11). This well represents what would happen to the Lord as Mark 14:56 says, “For many bare false witness against him...”

5) **Spit Upon, Buffeted, And**

Smitten. As Jesus was before Caiaphas the high priest, “Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands” (Mt. 26:67). To be buffeted is to be given a blow with the fist! Isaiah prophesied, “I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting” (Is. 50:6).

6) **Denied.** Three times Jesus was publicly denied by Peter who said, “I do not know the man” (Mt. 26:70, 72, 74). Jesus had said this would happen (Mt 26:34).

7) **Scourged.** Matthew 27:26 says of Pilate, “...and when he had scourged Jesus...” It is easy to read over that and not see the anguish that He bore. The instrument used in scourging was a whip with several strands weighted with lead balls or pieces of bone. The victim was bound to a post or frame, stripped of his clothing, and beaten from the shoulders to the loins. The beating left the victim bloody and weak, in unimaginable pain, and near the point of death. One historian recounts with vivid, horrible detail a scourging scene: “For they say that the bystanders

were struck with amazement when they saw them lacerated with scourges even to the innermost veins and arteries, so that the hidden inward parts of the body, both their bowels and their members, were exposed to view.”

8) **Mocked.** “And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and led him away to crucify him” (Mt. 27:28-31).

9) **Crucified.** Matthew 27:35 says, “And they crucified him...” It’s easy to pass over this statement without realizing what Jesus suffered. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia describes death by crucifixion: “The suffering of death by crucifixion was intense, esp. in hot climates. Severe local inflammation, coupled with an insignificant bleeding of the jagged wounds, produced

traumatic fever, which was aggravated by the exposure to the heat of the sun, the strained position of the body and insufferable thirst. The wounds swelled about the rough nails and torn and lacerated tendons and nerves caused excruciating agony. The arteries of the head and stomach were surcharged with blood and a terrific throbbing headache ensued. The mind was confused and filled with anxiety and dread foreboding. The victim of the crucifixion literally died a thousand deaths. Tetanus not rarely supervened and the rigors of the attending convulsions would tear at the wounds and add to the burden of pain, till at last the bodily forces were exhausted and the victim sank to unconsciousness and death.”

10) **Reviled.** The crucifixion scene finds Jesus being criticized in an abusive or angrily insulting manner. “And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads...Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders... The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth” (Mt. 27:39-44). 1 Peter 2:23 says of Jesus, “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not

again...”

11) **Cried.** Have you heard the cries of Jesus from the cross? “...Jesus cried with a loud voice, ...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mt. 27:46; Ps. 22:1). “Woman, behold thy son! Behold thy mother!” (Jn. 19:26-27). “I thirst” (Jn. 19:28). “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34). “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Lk. 23:43). “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30). “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit...” (Lk. 23:46).

12) **Gave Up The Ghost.** “... he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost” (Jn. 19:30). He tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9).

13) **Pierced.** “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water” (Jn. 19:33-34). Thus was fulfilled Zechariah 12:10.

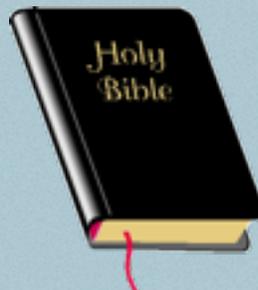
As the song, “In Gethsemane Alone” suggests, “O, what wondrous love I see Freely shown for you and me, By the One who did atone!”

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