



## **“Ecce Homo” - Look at This Man!** ( A Good Friday Reflection )

Good Friday is the Greatest and most widely celebrated Memorial Day in history. It is the memorial day in honour of the sacrificial death of Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. It is the day on which Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor of Palestine handed over Lord Jesus Christ back to the Jewish Leaders, condemned to be executed by crucifixion for no valid reason except for the arrogant insistence of the Jewish leaders to crucify him, and thus shut his mouth and banish him from the face of the earth. Pilate, knowing that it was out of jealousy and his criticism of some burdensome religious observances, punished him like a minor criminal with 39 lashes by the soldiers and then brought him back to the Jewish people gathered in his Courtyard, saying **“Ecce Homo” - look at this poor man, I find no fault in him deserving death by crucifixion!** That was the honest judgment of Pontius Pilate. But the Jewish priests insisted: “Crucify him, crucify him. We have a law; according to which he must be crucified.” Pilate in spite of the warning from his wife, submits to pressure from Jewish Leaders and their supporters and condemns Jesus to be crucified by Roman soldiers, washing his hand against his own judgement in front of them. The soldiers, too, in their turn, to please the Jewish Priests ill-treated Jesus, mocking him as the “King of the Jews”, crowing with a crown of thorns and led him to Golgotha for execution placing his cross on his shoulders to carry along. As per orders, they led him to Golgotha, the place of the skulls, and brutally nailed him to the cross with a caption, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” along with two other criminals, one on his right and the other on his left, **“Ecce Homo” - look at this poor man”**.

Jesus, on his part submitted himself to his executioners without resistance and prayed for his enemies, “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”, and he surrendered his spirit into God’s hands, “Father into your hands I commend my spirit”, and breathed his last. A soldier on duty pierced his side with a lance and “there flowed blood and water”, a sign that he was really dead.

However, Jesus knew before coming to Jerusalem that he was walking into the mouth of death. On the way to Jerusalem he told his disciples that he was going to Jerusalem to die:

*“See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised.” (Matthew 20:18-19)*

At his Last Supper with his disciples at Jerusalem he told his disciples that he was about to offer his body and blood for the forgiveness of the sins of many:

*“While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Mathew 26:26-28)*

He had already told them, “I have not come to be served but to serve and give my life as a ransom for many”. Jesus had come to offer his life as sacrifice to atone for the sins of humanity. His purpose was being carried out unknowingly by the Jewish priests and the Roman Governor. According to St. Paul, Jesus surrendered himself to the Roman Governor’s order not because of any crime from his part, but to do the will of God, to sacrifice his life as atonement for the sins of all men. He was obedient to God unto death on a cross.

Then his body was taken down from the cross and handed over to his Mother and disciples, but his enemies got his grave sealed and even arranged guards to safe-guard his body in the grave lest anyone would make a false claim that he has risen from the dead, and disappeared. A perfect security was arranged for his dead body, too.

**But to the surprise of all, he rose from the dead on the third day and showed himself really alive again.** He appeared to Mary Magdalene who went his tomb to anoint his body with Mary the mother of James, and Salome early in the Sunday morning and then to his disciples several times for a period of forty days, appearing to several of them in different places and at different times. He spoke with them, ate and drank with them, mixed and mingled with them confirming their faith in him as truly risen from the dead. He even appeared to his doubting disciple, Thomas, in the presence of the others and sweetly challenged him to touch his wounds of the nails. He said to him, “Do not doubt, but believe..... And on the fortieth day, in the presence of his disciples he ascended to heaven.

Those who experienced these events of his unjust condemnation, cruel crucifixion, death and resurrection, got convinced and confirmed in what he did. In accordance with his instruction, they prayed and waited for the empowerment by the Holy Spirit ten days after his ascension. On the fiftieth day after the resurrection, on the Pentecost the disciples of Jesus spoke and witnessed to his death and resurrection. Then they began to proclaim that he is the man “Ecce Homo”, the Messiah for whom the Jewish people and the whole world has been awaiting for.

They became the bold witness of his resurrection and accepted his claims and beheld him as the “Ecce Homo” of power and glory, the long awaited Massiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world. They went around the whole world proclaiming the Risen Lord Jesus as Saviour of Mankind. He has won from God forgiveness of their sins, reconciliation with God and adopted sonship from God and eternal life. God has approved his sacrificial death and raised him and has glorified him as the judge of mankind, sitting at His right hand in heaven. The very disciple who doubted about his resurrection and then finding him face to face and confessed him as “My Lord and my

God” came to our Land and was murdered at Mylapore, Tamil Nadu. Yet Christianity lives on in India, nay, it is growing in India with a living dynamism, sharing God’s compassion and love and giving faith and hope to a people who have been living in darkness and shadow of death. This has happened all over the world. Christianity has become the world religion transforming all strata of human society and Jesus Christ is shining as the super star of humanity today. He is accepted by all people as Son of God and Saviour, or as the great prophet or as “Mahapurusha” or as the greatest of all teachers. Today Jesus is accepted as the true man, “Ecce Homo” of humanity. It is the wonderful plan of God. St. Paul has aptly described Jesus Christ in this way – a prophetic description - being fulfilled in our day”.



*Thought he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited but emptied himself. Taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form. He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:6-11)*

His life and teaching of repentance and return to God and doing God’s will in our lives have become our rule of life to win eternal life in God’s kingdom. His teaching of love, forgiveness, compassion and the brotherhood of the whole human family, has ever since been transforming the world. Jesus has made a transvaluation of our values. **Here is the man, Ecce Homo” whom we can emulate and reach our ultimate destiny, God Himself.** Know Jesus and follow Jesus, the real Man, “Ecce Homo”. You will lose nothing except your sins. His question to you and me today is, “Who do you say that I am?”

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