

In the name of ✠ Jesus.

What Jesus had foretold in various ways about what would happen—indeed must happen if He were to accomplish the task for which He was given unto the world, for which He descended from His Father’s side in heaven—is here in this Passion text being fulfilled. “[Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed” (Mark 8:31); again, “[Jesus] began to tell [His disciples] what was to happen to him saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him” (Mark 10:32-34).

Those passion predictions come from Mark’s Gospel; but even in John’s Gospel, where we get our passion reading for tonight, Jesus foretold His passion and crucifixion. As we heard a few weeks ago, Jesus told Nicodemus, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:14-15), and we know He meant being lifted up on a pole the shape of a cross. It’s more subtle, but it’s there. In John 8, Jesus said to the Jews, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he” (John 8:28); again lifted unto death on a cross. And one more, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:23-24).

What is common to all of these predictions of His passion and death is Jesus’ self-designation as “the Son of Man.” For who could accomplish for mankind what Jesus had said is impossible with man (Matt. 19:25)? Who can save mankind? Pilate tells us who. “Behold, the man,” he said as he presented the abused Jesus to the Jewish mob. This man could do it. The Son of Man could do it, as we heard, as Jesus often foretold.

The Son of Man was Jesus’ way of referring to Himself, taking the title perhaps from this song of David: “what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet” (Ps. 8:4-6).

The writer to the Hebrews helps us identify this “son of man,” saying, “we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, **namely Jesus**, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone” (Heb. 2:9).

Thus, when Jesus uses this designation for Himself, He affirms why He came in the flesh. The Son of Man descended from heaven that He might be lifted up on a

cross and die (John 3:13-14), that He might be the perfect sacrifice, “*like that of a lamb without blemish or spot,*” offering up His own precious blood (1 Pet. 1:19), that He might be the universal sacrifice, “*the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).

Thus, behold this man, the Son of Man, who “*came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*” (Mark 10:45), that is, for all people, of every time and place, “*from every tribe and language and people and nation*” (Rev. 5:9). By using this title, Jesus takes all of humanity into Himself. He “*is humanity reduced to one*” (James Voelz, *Concordia Commentary: Mark 1:1–8:26*, p 197), such that He was the One on whom the sins of the world were placed; He was the One who endured the Father’s just wrath for the sins of the world; the consequence for all of humanity’s sins was borne by this Son of Man; “*the death he died he died to sin, once for all*” (Rom. 6:10); He was the One forsaken by God, “*a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people*” (Ps. 22:6).

Yes, this Son of Man, our Servant, was beaten and flogged, and mocked and rejected, scorned and crucified, so brutalized that He didn’t even look human. “*[H]is appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind.*” Men could not look upon Him; they hid their faces from this worm of a man, “*stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.*”

But let us look to Him, for the prophet Isaiah tells us: “*Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows*” — the Son of Man bore them for you ... not only for you, but for all of humanity; “*he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities*” — the Son of Man was, for all of us; “*the LORD has laid on him* — on the Son of Man, on “*humanity reduced to one*” — *the iniquity of us all*”; “*upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.*” The Son of Man “*bore the sin of many*”; He has made “*intercession for [us all, who by nature are] transgressors.*”

The One the prophet calls “*the righteous one, my servant*” is Jesus, and He has made “*many to be accounted righteous*”; He has born “*their iniquities.*” Or as St. Paul says it: “*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*” (2 Cor. 5:21).

For ultimately, Jesus did not do all this merely as a man. The mortal Son of Man was also the eternal Son of God. And the infinite worth of His blood shed on this Good Friday makes His blood the all-sufficient ransom price for the sins of the whole world. Truly, it is as Jesus said: “*It is finished!*” The salvation of the world has been accomplished by the Son of God and the Son of Man, Jesus the crucified.

Therefore, on this somber Good Friday evening, we rejoice in the promises of Jesus’ suffering and death accomplished for us in the Son of Man. We rejoice in the

promise fulfilled of what we know happened three days hence. And we rejoice in the fruit of these promises kept in the further promise of everlasting life that awaits all who call on Jesus. Until then, let us partake of the earnest of all His promises in the Holy Sacrament of His body and blood, given and shed for us for the forgiveness of our sins.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.