

13:25b *John Unworthy to Untie Jesus' Sandals*

BEING WORTHY TO UNTIE JESUS' SANDALS.

ORIGEN: If the passage about the sandals has a mystic meaning we should not reject an investigation of it. Now I consider that the full humanization, when the Son of God assumes flesh and bones, is seen in one of his shoes. The other humbling is the descent to Hades, whatever that Hades might be, and the journey with the Spirit to the prison. As to the descent into Hades, we read in the sixteenth psalm, "You will not abandon my soul to Hades." ⁷ As for the journey in prison with the Spirit, we read in Peter in his Catholic epistle, "Put to death," he says, "in the flesh but quickened in the Spirit, in which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, which at one time were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God once waited in the days of Noah while the ark was in preparation." ⁸ He, then, who is able worthily to set forth the meaning of these two journeys is able to untie the strap of the sandals of Jesus. Such a one is whoever bends down in his mind and goes with Jesus as he goes down into hades, and whoever descends from heaven and the mysteries of Christ's divinity to the advent that he had to spend with us when he took on humanity (as his sandals). Now he who put on humanity also put on the dead, since "for this end Jesus both died and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living." ⁹ This is why he put on both the living and the dead, that is, the inhabitants of the earth and those of hades, that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. Who, then, is able to stoop down and untie the latchet of such sandals, and having untied them not to let them drop, but by the second faculty he has received ¹⁰ to take them up and bear them, by bearing the meaning of them in his memory? COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 6.18.11

13:26 *The Message of This Salvation*

THEY MAY SEVER THEMSELVES FROM THOSE WHO CRUCIFIED CHRIST.

CHRYSOSTOM: Here the words "to you" do not mean "to the Jews," and he himself gave them a right to separate themselves from those who committed the murder. What follows makes this clear, "for those who live in Jerusalem," he says, "because they did not recognize him." HOMILIES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 29.2

13:30 *God Raised Jesus from the Dead* ³

THE SON RAISED HIMSELF.

SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH: Do not be troubled by the fact that Jesus is said to have been raised by God. Indeed, if Jesus is none other than the incarnate Word, he is also the power of the Father through whom everything occurs. This is according to the words, “Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.” ⁶ He himself will be considered to have raised himself while he is also said to have been raised by the Father to whom all things are referred as the eternal source and cause. Christ himself, in fact, says, ⁷ “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” CATENA ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 13.30-31.⁸

13:31 *For Many Days He Appeared*

PAGAN MYTHS COMPARED WITH THE GOSPEL WITNESS.

ORIGEN: By comparing what the prophetic Scriptures tell us of Jesus with what his history tells us, we find nothing dissolute about him recorded. For even those who conspired against him and looked for false witnesses to aid them did not find any plausible grounds for advancing a false charge of licentiousness against him. His death was indeed the result of a conspiracy and bore no resemblance to the death of Asclepius by lightning. ⁹ And what is venerable about the madman Dionysus, clothed in female garments, that he should be worshiped as a god? If those who defend such beings resort to allegorical interpretations, we must examine each individual allegory to ascertain whether it is well founded and whether those beings who were torn down by the Titans ¹⁰ and cast from their heavenly throne ¹¹ can have a real existence and deserve respect and worship. But when our Jesus “appeared to the members of his own troop”—for I will take the word that Celsus employs—he really did appear. But Celsus makes a false accusation against the gospel, saying that what appeared was a shadow. Let their histories and that of Jesus be carefully compared. Will Celsus hold that the former are true, but the latter are inventions, even though the histories of Jesus were recorded by eyewitnesses who showed that they clearly understood the nature of what they had seen by their actions and who manifested their state of mind by what they cheerfully underwent for the sake of his gospel? Now who, desiring to act in conformity with right reason, would yield assent at random to what is related in their histories and without examination refuse to believe what is recorded of Jesus? Again, when it is said of Asclepius that a great multitude both of Greeks and Barbarians acknowledge that they have frequently seen and still see no mere phantom but Asclepius himself healing and doing good and foretelling the future, Celsus expects us to believe this; and

he finds no fault with believers in Jesus, when they express their belief in such stories. But when we give our assent to the disciples who were eyewitnesses of the miracles of Jesus and who clearly manifested the honesty of their convictions (because we see their guilelessness, as far as it is possible to see the conscience revealed in writing), we are called by him a set of “silly” individuals. AGAINST CELSUS 3.23-24.¹²

13:32b *What God Promised*

THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL NOT FRAUDS.

ORIGEN: Let Celsus, and those who agree with him, tell us whether it is at all like “an ass’s shadow” that the Jewish prophets predicted the birth place of him who became the ruler of those who had lived righteous lives and are called the “heritage” of God, ¹³ that Emmanuel was conceived by a virgin, that such signs and wonders were performed by him who was the subject of prophecy, that his word spread so speedily that the voice of his apostles went forth into all the earth, that he suffered after his condemnation by the Jews, and that he rose again from the dead. ¹⁴ For was it by chance that the prophets made these announcements with no conviction of the truth in their minds, moving them not only to speak but to believe their announcements should be committed to writing? And did so great a nation as that of the Jews, who had long ago received a country of their own to dwell in, recognize certain men as prophets and reject others as false prophets, without any conviction of the soundness of the distinction? And was there no motive that induced them to class the words of those persons who were later deemed to be prophets with the books of Moses, which were held as sacred? And can those who charge the Jews and Christians with folly show us how the Jewish nation could have continued to exist had there not been among them a promise of the knowledge of future events? And how, while each of the surrounding nations believed in agreement with their ancient institutions that they received oracles and predictions from those whom they accounted gods, this people alone—who were taught to view with contempt all those who were considered gods by the heathen as not being gods, but demons, according to the declaration of the prophets, “For all the gods of the nations are demons” ¹⁵—had among them no one who professed to be a prophet and who could dissuade those with a desire to know the future from deserting to the demons of other nations? Judge, then, whether it was necessary that the whole nation that had been taught to despise the deities of other lands should have an abundance of prophets, who made known events that were of far greater importance in themselves and that surpassed the oracles of all other countries. AGAINST CELSUS 3.2.¹⁶

13:33 *Fulfilled to Us Their Children*

THEY RECEIVE THE REALITY BEHIND THE PROMISE.

CHRYSOSTOM: But let us look back to what was said. The promise then, he says, was what the fathers received, but you the reality. . . . And notice how nowhere does he mention their right deeds but only benefits on God's part: "he chose, he exalted, he bore with them." These words are not praises of them. "They asked, he gave." But David he does praise, and him alone, because it is from him that Christ was to come. HOMILIES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 29. 17

YOU ARE MY SON.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: The only one who knows the Father and who is only known by the Father as his Wisdom and Word and as "the Angel of great counsel" according to the prophet, 18 perfectly explains to us the mystery of the incarnation. Since he was Son by nature and by truth and had shone forth from the very essence of God the Father, he was made flesh, that is, man, according to John. 19 He desired to be called the brother of those who are in the world and to be born according to flesh like us. However, he was before time and sat with his parent even though he was made flesh. The Father knew him also as Son and said to him, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you." 20 Observe the explicit confession, nay rather, the proclamation! Indeed, he said, "you are" in order to point out that he existed before time. Actually, he was never in time but was always the same, to be sure, the Son. And he added, "today I have begotten you," in order to indicate his final generation according to the flesh that he voluntarily underwent in the womb of the holy Virgin so that he was also called "begotten of God." 21 CATENA ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 13.33.22