CHAPTER FIFTEEN

BREAKING THE CRIMINALS’ LEGS AND PIERCING JESUS’ SIDE

Jn 19:36, 37

Texts

Jn 19:36, 37

ἐνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ: ὅστοιν οὐ συντριβήσεται αὐτοῖ. καὶ πάλιν ἑτέρα γραφὴ λέγει: δύσοντα εἰς ὅν ἐξεκέντησαν.

Rev 1:7

ὁψεται αὐτῶν πᾶς ὀφθαλμός καὶ οῖτινος αὐτῶν ἐξεκέντησαν, καὶ κόψονται ἐπ’ αὐτῶν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς.

Ex 12:10 (LXX B)

καὶ ὅστοιν οὐ συντρίφεται ἀπ’ αὐτοῖ.

Ex 12:46 (LXX B)

καὶ ὅστοιν οὗ συντρίφετε ἀπ’ αὐτοῖ.

Num 9:12 (LXX B)

καὶ ὅστοιν οὗ συντρίφουσαν ἀπ’ αὐτοῖ.

Ps 34:21 (LXX B)

ψυλάσει πάντα τὰ ὅστα αὐτῶν, ἐν ἑξ αὐτῶν οὐ συντριβήσεται.

Zech 12:10 (LXX B)

καὶ ἐπιβλέψονται πρὸς μὲ ἀνθ’ ὅν κατωρχήσαντο

Mt 24:30

κόψονται πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ δύσονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

Ex 12:46 (MT)

וּעַם לָא שֶׁבָּרָרָב

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וּעַם לָא שֶׁבָּרָרָב

Num 9:12 (MT)

וּעַם לָא שֶׁבָּרָרָב

Ps 34:21 (MT)

שָׁמַר כָּל-עָצֶמָתָיו

אַחַת מַהְמָה לָא נְשָׁרָה

Zech 12:10 (MT)

הָבֵרָׁשׁ אָלִי

אַח אָשֶׁר-דִּכְרֵי

The last two quotations in Jn’s gospel conclude his account of Jesus’ death on the cross. We shall treat them together since they are separated only by the formula of introduction for the second. In this respect this set of quotations is unique, but the two in 12:38-40 are separated also
only by the formula for the second plus a brief comment by the author. Cf. also the compound quotation in 7:42. Both quotations are in the words of the author and are found nowhere else in the N. T. The words from Zech 12:10 are alluded to in Rev 1:7. Cf. also Mt 24:30. For the formula introducing the first quotation see my comments under Jn 13:18; 15:25; and 19:24. Here a preceding εγένετο γὰρ τὰ ρήματα is inserted before ἦνα, etc. The formula for the second, καὶ πάλιν ἑτέρα γραφὴ λέγει, occurs nowhere else in the N. T. The closest ones to it are διότι καὶ ἐν ἑτέρω λέγει (Acts 13:35) and καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει (Heb 5:6). Cf. also Rom 15:9-12; 1 Cor 3:20; Mt 4:7; Heb 1:5-13; 4:5; 10:30. Schlatter gives two formulas from Rabbinic literature very similar to this one.1)

The sources usually given for the first quotation are Ex 12:46 (12:10 also, in LXX); Num 9:12; and Ps 34:21; cf. also Ps 22:17 f. The source of the second quotation is Zech 12:10. In both cases one cannot decide immediately whether the author is quoting from the Heb. or Gr. text.

With respect to the first quotation Burney says only that it is “a free reminiscence.”2) With respect to Zech 12:10 he says that some fifty Heb. mss. read νῦν, “on him,” and it is this text upon which Jn is dependent. Since νῦν νῦν (ἔληκα) is hardly possible as a Heb. construction, Jn may presuppose the more natural reading ἔληκα. The reading of the LXX is based on a reading νῦν, “they danced,” an erroneous transposition of the letters νῦν, “they pierced.” Burney mentions that several LXX mss., representing the recension of Lucian,3) read καὶ ἐπιβλέψων πρὸς µὲ ἑλκὲν ἐξεκέντρησαν, which is the reading of Th. “It is obvious that Jn. is independent of LXX, whose rendering destroys the point of the quotation.” He says the connection with Th. is “fortuitous merely,” and does not imply that Jn and Th. “were dependent upon an earlier non-Septuagintal rendering (as suggested by Swete, Introd. to the O. T. in Greek, p. 398).” Burney notes that ἐξεκεντρεῖω is the natural rendering of ἐξεκεντρίζω in the LXX, used in Jud 9:54; 1 Chr 10:4; Jer 44 (37):10; Lam 4:9 and Aq. and Sym. of Is 13:15.4) He rightly says,

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4) Also Th. of Is 13:15; and I might add that θατοροῖμαι occurs in the LXX only in Zech 12:10. On the other hand, ἐπιβλέπω is used in LXX for ἀπῆκοσι about 34 times while ἔπεικε is used for ὅπως only in Num 12:8; Job 6:19; Is 38:11.