

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW – THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS’ LIFE ON EARTH
Week 9 – “...Jesus died for our sins and was buried according to the Scriptures...”
March 21, 2023

Following the three hours of darkness during which time we do not hear Jesus speaking from the cross nor anyone speaking from the area around the cross...when the three hours of darkness were lifted SUPERNATURALLY...

Matt. 27:50-51 - *Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, (His victory cry from the cross – supernatural as crucifixion victims often die from asphyxiation) and HE yielded up His spirit. ⁵¹ Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split.*

GOD tore the veil! To whom and of what was the veil a constant reminder? The children of Israel knew that the veil separated the Holy Place in the temple from the Holy of Holies where the presence of God dwelled until the glory of God departed (Eze. 8-11) before Solomon’s temple was destroyed in 586 BC.

The children of Israel offered sacrifices in the Tabernacle courtyard and in the Great Courtyard of the Temple outside the Holy Place, day after day, multiple times a day esp. on feast days, for approx. 1500 years! The only human given the task of going behind the veil into the Holy of Holies was the High Priest on the Day of Atonement/Yom Kippur.

The veil was a vivid demonstration of the separation between God and man. Upon Jesus yielding up His spirit on the cross, it was God the Father Who tore the veil demonstrating the access to Him through the shed blood of Jesus! (John 14:6)

Of what did the veil remind the people? That the same animal sacrifices offered continually could never make the one offering the sacrifice perfect. The blood of bulls and goats could never remove sin. What did John the Immerser proclaim when Jesus came to the Jordan River? *Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

Jesus sacrifice of Himself through shedding His precious blood accomplished redemption. Redemption means purchasing out of the marketplace. Slaves were bought and sold in the marketplace. Slaves are those in BONDAGE! In Isa. 61 and in Luke 4 we read that Jesus came to preach good tidings, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. Jesus paid the price for our freedom from bondage to sin!

The sacrifices about which we read in the OT atoned for sin. Atonement means to “cover” sin by blood being shed (Lev. 17:11) when offered in faith (Hab. 2:4). It was indeed God’s mercy and it was a foreshadowing of the need for the ultimate sacrifice – the Messiah!

The temporary covering in the OT was redeemed for full payment at the cross.

The veil was torn in two from top to bottom...the earth quaked, and the rocks were split... and

Matt. 27:54-56 - ...when the centurion and those with him (the Roman Centurion – the commander over 100 Roman soldiers!!) who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of

2

God!' Nature itself was shaken by the death of the Son of God. And, lives that had been enemies of this One Who had been brutally flogged and crucified, perhaps carrying out the execution were changed for all eternity only through the power of God! Imagine the heavy conviction from God - conviction that worked transformation in their lives which allowed the proclamation of their belief in God the Son! What humility!!!

Matt. 27:52-53 - After Jesus gave up His spirit - ...the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints (OT saints) who had fallen asleep (who had died) were raised; ⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city (Jerusalem) and appeared to many. Jesus is our firstfruits (I Cor. 15:20). Because He rose from the dead; because He was resurrected, His followers are guaranteed resurrection. These OT saints are the first installment of the harvest to eternal life – following Jesus' resurrection (since Jesus must resurrect first!).

Matt. 27:55 - And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, What emotions are on display among these “many women”? They were bold as they remained at the scene of the crucifixion...close enough to be arrested. Was there disbelief on their part? “How could this have happened.” I’m seeing great love and compassion for their Lord!

John 19:31 - Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day (before the Sabbath), that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day) (2 Sabbaths in this crucifixion week; Friday [High Sabbath] and Saturday [regular Sabbath]; Jesus, I’m suggesting, was crucified on Thursday [see the Week 6 lesson]), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

BUT legs broken? WAIT! According to Ex. 12 we read of Passover regulations that God required at the first Passover in Egypt...the regulations which foreshadowed the fulfillment of the Passover – Jesus’ crucifixion. And what do we read about breaking the bones of the lambs? Ex. 12:46 - *...not one bone shall be broken.* Jesus MUST NOT have any bones broken!!! (Also read Num. 9:12 re: the directives at the second Passover)

John 19:32-37 - When the Jews asked Pilate that the legs of the crucified victims might be broken so they could be removed from the crosses, *Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him.* ³³ *But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.* ³⁴ *But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.*

Matt. 27:57 - *Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.* Joseph was from the Judean town of Arimathea. He was a student of Jesus’!

Luke 23:50 - *Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man.* Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body in Israel. He was a just man – God had declared him righteous.

Luke 23:51 - *He had not consented to their decision and deed* (the decision and deed arrived at the Sanhedrin re: Jesus’ crucifixion).

John 19:38 - *...Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate*

3

gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. The crucified bodies belonged to the Roman government to do with what they desired. But if a family

3

member requested the body, it was given to that family member. Joseph was not a family member according to physical lineage. And Pilate, the Roman Governor, had washed his hands re: condemning Jesus to death (Matt. 27:24). GOD interceded!

Matt. 27:19 - *While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, ‘Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.’*

Matt. 27:58 – *Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.* Joseph, being Jewish, knew of the ceremonial defilement in approaching Pilate, a Gentile, during the feast, the holy day on the Jewish calendar – given to the Jewish people to celebrate by GOD!

Mark 15:44-45 - *Pilate marveled that He (Jesus) was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵ So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Yes, Jesus died. People have debated concerning the death of Jesus. ...Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him (Joseph).*

What would happen to the bodies of those crucified and not claimed? Because Rome used crucifixion as a means of deterring crime, the bodies of crucified criminals were often left on their crosses to rot or to be eaten by wild animals. And then the remains would be thrown in a common grave. But, because it was the Preparation Day before the Sabbath (and this Sabbath was a High Sabbath), the Jewish leaders requested that Rome hasten the death of those crucified as the bodies were not to remain on the crosses on the high Sabbath day – the next day. GOD interceded!

Mark 15:45-46 – *Pilate granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶ Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.*

And he took Him down. Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, a member of the Sanhedrin (an oxymoron? But God interceded), Joseph took the body of Jesus down from the cross. Three words – *took Him down*. What did taking Jesus down from the cross entail? Think of the selfless love that Joseph had for his Lord...to risk his life in going into Pilate. And Joseph was going to touch a dead body? (Num. 19:11 ff)

Joseph *took Jesus down* from the cross. Joseph gently and lovingly removed the nails from Jesus' wrists and from His heels. Joseph removed the crown of thorns – the thorns that had been embedded in our Savior's head.

We need to put ourselves in Joseph's place in this privilege that God had given him.

John 19:39-40 - *Nicodemus, ...brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰ Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. ⁴¹ Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. There was a garden...in the place of the skull – GOLGOTHA – where Jesus was crucified.*

In Genesis there was the garden of Eden (pleasure; root: delight). Sin entered when man rebelled against God. BUT God interceded, of course, and immediately in the

garden God promised SALVATION! Because God promised to restore His original plan...Jesus' tomb in which He, the Seed of the woman, the resolution for sin, was laid... was in a garden.

A new tomb – Joseph’s tomb was a new tomb. So?? Many tombs generally had two chambers. There was an outer chamber where the body could be laid out to be prepared for burial. A second chamber provided a place for the burial itself. Many tombs had several shelves, or niches, cut into the rock. Over time, several people from the same family would be placed in the same ossuary (a container or room in which the bones of dead people are placed making room for more dead to be laid out and occupy the niches cut into the rock).

A new tomb meant that there was no corruption...no decay! No remains had previously occupied that tomb that would have defiled that burial place! No “body” had ever been set in Joseph’s tomb, so that when a body came forth and the tomb was empty, there was no possible confusion as to which body came forth. If Jesus came forth from that new tomb – no one could claim that someone else had risen. And...Jesus’ body lying in that new tomb was not corrupted. His body didn’t come into contact with another dead body. Of the Messiah King David wrote, *You shall not allow Your Holy One to see corruption* (Psa. 16:10).

Jesus would not remain in the tomb. DID JESUS DIE? YES! Yet, there are those who teach the swoon theory which is based on Jesus’ swooning on the cross...His passing out on the cross! In this theory, Jesus woke up after having been encased in approx. 100 lbs. of spices and bandages (John 19:40). And, He woke up in a tomb that had been sealed, therefore, no air had been circulating in that tomb! Plus Jesus had moved that stone that weighed more than 2,000 lbs. after have been flogged to the point of near death and crucified. Jesus died. He had to die according to God’s plan!

Isa. 53:8-9 – (written 700-800 years before Jesus’ crucifixion) *He was cut off from the land of the living; (“Cut off” meant death) ⁹ And they made His grave with the wicked* (Jesus died a criminal’s death – between two thieves) *But with the rich at His death,* (Jesus was buried in a rich man’s tomb) Jesus DIED!

Where was Jesus between His death and resurrection? Jesus’ physical body was in the tomb. “The place of the dead” in OT – sheol...in NT...hades. Both are known as “the grave.” The OT taught life after death and that everyone who departed from this life went to a place of conscious existence – the grave. In both sheol and in hades there seem to be two divisions – a place of blessing and a place of judgment. We know this from Luke 16:19-31.

The abode of the saved is called “Abraham’s bosom” (Luke 16:22) and “paradise” in Luke 23:43. The place of the saved and the lost are separated by a “great chasm” (Luke 16:26).

The souls of the unbelieving dead go to the torture side of the grave to await the final judgment. The souls of the believing dead go to the blessed side of the grave to await the resurrection.

During the time between Jesus' death and resurrection, we're told in I Pet. 3:18-19 that by His spirit Jesus preached to the spirits in prison – the fallen angels about which we read in Genesis 6. II Pet. 2:4-5 and Jude vv. 6-7 give support for the view concerning fallen angels having sexual relations with human women. Scripture tells us that these specific fallen angels who engaged in such heinous sin are now in chains bound until the day of judgment. We know that demons are not in chains. They are active in the world.

Many Bible teachers believe that Jesus, during this time between His death and resurrection, aside from preaching of His triumph to the fallen angels in chains, also took all of the OT saints who were held “captive” (Isa. 61; Luke 4) in the grave – but in Abraham's Bosom/Paradise – and brought them – their souls - to heaven – taking captivity captive (Eph. 4:8-10). Prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus, the righteous dead/the OT saints were saved but since their sins had not yet been redeemed, they were not in heaven (II Cor. 5:8 – after Jesus' resurrection)

Can Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection be separated?

Paul wrote, *For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ **and Him crucified*** (1 Corinthians 2:2). The crucifixion helps us see that Jesus had power over death. He died on the cross, and three days later He defeated death and rose from the grave (Hebrews 2:14-15). If Jesus didn't really die on the cross, then He could not rise from the grave.

We cannot separate Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

John 17:1-5 - In the garden of Gethsemane, *Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, ² as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴ I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. ⁵ And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*

WE PRAISE YOU, JESUS, FOR YOUR FINISHED WORK!

QUESTIONS

What was new to you?

What was difficult to understand?

Has this lesson impacted you? HOW?

With whom will you share these truths – esp. as we move toward Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 9 with the Bible references.

Continue to write in your journal.

Prior to the week before “Lamb Selection Day,” Passover, Jesus’ crucifixion, and Resurrection Sunday, journal about how God has further transformed your life through reading and studying His word!

Share what Jesus did for us with at least one person.

Read Week 10’s handout when you receive it.