

# 115. Not “The End”, but “To Be Continued”

March 25, 2018

We’ve been at the scene of our Lord’s crucifixion three Sundays in a row. Last Sunday, we saw Jesus gave up His spirit and died. Then what? There are so many things happening at the crucifixion site within next 3 hours before the official Passover starts, so we need to pay attention.

## A. AFTER THE DEATH OF THE KING

*Matthew 27:50-53 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and 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, 52 and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.*

I want all of you to notice 3 things that happened right after Jesus died on the cross:

### 1) The veil of the temple

The veil is what separated the holy place from the Holy of holies in the temple. It was a vivid demonstration of the separation between God and man. This veil was massive: 60 feet high, 30 feet wide, and 10 inches thick. It was made of 72 braids, each consisting of 24 cords. The veil was so heavy that it took 300 priests to hang it. Please note that the veil was torn from top to bottom, and it was God who did the tearing and He was giving all of us access to the Throne of Grace directly without any human assistance. When a born-again Christian prays, you have a complete access to the Lord without any help of the Virgin Mary, the saints, priests, or pastors.

The moment Jesus died with the proclamation, “It is finished,” the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom and it was the same time a priest who was located on the top of the temple blew a ram’s horn to declare that the sacrifice had been accepted by God.

### 2) The earthquake opened many graves

The earthquake reminds us of what happened at Mount Sinai when God gave the Law to Moses. The earthquake at Golgotha signified that the demands of the Law had been met and the curse of the Law forever abolished.

### 3) Dead men walking

If I am understanding correctly, these verses between v52 and v53, there were three days and three nights gap. What were these resuscitated saints doing who were raised from death? Sitting inside of their stench filled tombs and reading comic books and popping ‘Bon Bons’? Or just laying around and staring at the ceilings and listening to the ‘Sound of Silence’? We don’t know.

The Bible tells us that these saints were resuscitated immediately and came out of their tombs, but that they did not visit in Jerusalem until after Jesus had been raised from the dead. It is not likely that many Jews would be in the cemetery on Passover, since they might be defiled by the dead.

## B. THE SURETY OF JESUS’ PROPHECIES

*John 19:31-37 Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they*

might be taken away. 32 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. 35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. 36 For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." 37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

It was not unusual for victims of Roman crucifixion to remain on the cross in a lingering death. Customarily, the bodies of crucified criminals were left on their crosses to rot or be eaten by wild animals. But the Jews wanted no such horror displayed during the Passover season, and Romans were known to grant the corpses of executed men to friends or relatives for proper burial. It was one less thing for Roman soldiers to take care of.

Here are a couple of incredible fulfillments of the prophecies regarding Jesus's death:

**1) None of Jesus' bones was broken.**

*Exodus 12:46 In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones.*

*Psalms 34:20 He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken.*

**2) Jesus' side was pierced.**

*Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

It is remarkable that the Roman soldiers did not do what they were commanded to do – breaking the victims' legs, but they did what they were not told to do – piercing the Savior's side. In both matters, without them knowing they fulfilled the very Word of God. The bones of the Passover lamb were not to be broken according to Exodus 12:46 and Psalm 34:20. Jesus' side was pierced according to Zechariah 12:10. Can you tell that our Lord Jesus was in total control of even His execution?

One sure sign of death is the quick separation of dark red corpuscles from the thin and clear serum of the blood which can be seen as water. This only happens within the chambers of the heart of a dead person because it is filled with uncirculated blood and it is the only blood container in the human body. When the Roman soldier's spear pierced Jesus' heart, clear serum and dark red corpuscles came out. This proves that Jesus was surely dead.

**C. THE CERTAINTY OF JESUS' DEATH**

*John 19:38-42 After this, 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 gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. 39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing 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. 42 So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.*

Today, we leave the care of the dead to the undertaker from the funeral home, but in Jesus' time, family and friends were responsible for preparing the body for burial.

The custom of the Jews was to wrap the entire body in strips of cloth, sprinkling a mixture of pulverized myrrh and aloe between the layers to glue them together and stifle the smell of dead body's decay. Joseph and Nicodemus were followers of Jesus. Had there been the faintest pulse of life in Jesus' limp body, wouldn't they have made every effort to resuscitate Him? Of course. But they prepared Him for burial according to Jewish custom.

Let's meet Joseph of Arimathea. From other Gospels of Jesus, we can learn that he was rich, a prominent member of the Sanhedrin which was the highest Jewish Council, a good and righteous man who had not consented to what the council did against Jesus. Apostle John tells us that he was a follower of Jesus secretly because of other Jewish religious rulers' persecution.

And we already met Nicodemus in our study of John chapter 3. He was the teacher of Israel and a prominent Sanhedrin member as well. He also was a secret follower of Jesus until now. These two men didn't want to hide their love for Jesus anymore. It meant that they would lose everything they had politically, religiously, socially, and financially. But through the Scriptures, they searched, they realized that Jesus was the Messiah.

When these two men came and touched the dead body of Jesus, they knew that they defiled themselves according to the Mosaic Law and could not participate in Passover. But it didn't matter to them, because they found the true Lamb of God.

Joseph and Nicodemus served Jesus too late. But not too late to fulfill prophecy, not too late to be of tender service to Jesus. But too late to satisfy their own timid hearts; too late to escape the painful regret of what they might have been and what they might have done for Jesus. May we never wait to give ourselves fully to Jesus.

*Isaiah 53:9a And they made His grave with the wicked- But with the rich at His death*

They only had three hours before the sundown that would start the Passover. They could not give Jesus' body the full ministry of washing and anointing that was traditional, but they did the best they could. It was important to get the body safely away from the Romans and the Jewish religious rulers.

It was a good thing that Joseph's new tomb for himself was near by Golgotha. Actually, you can stand on the edge of the Garden Tomb and see Golgotha. It is less than 10 minutes walking distance.

#### **D. MAKING SURE JESUS STAYED BURIED**

*Matt 27:62-66 On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, 63 saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' 64 Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." 65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." 66 So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.*

Contrary to the popular belief, Jesus died on Thursday, not on Friday. He told us that He would be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. This was not just any Sabbath, but it was the Passover Sabbath, a.k.a. "High Sabbath" which means that Friday and Saturday were Sabbath.

*John 19:31a Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day)*

In other words, "Good Friday" is incorrect, but rather it should be "Good Thursday." Ignore the tradition of the church, but stick with the truth of the Bible.

The Jewish religious leaders were without any excuses. They had witnessed what happened at Golgotha, followed by the veil of the temple torn from top to bottom. They should have connected these things that all points to the true identity of Jesus, the Messiah. Yet they refused to believe Jesus Christ was the Messiah. They refused the truth. They refused to believe that they needed the Savior.

Some of you are like them. While you are listening to this sermon, you are refusing to accept the truth with your illogical idea. And you are refusing to find the truth of the Savior Jesus Christ. Why? What is holding you back? Come to Jesus today.

Satan and his puppets, the Jewish religious leaders shut the tomb of Jesus and put a Roman seal on it. We will see that the table is going to be turned in the future.

*Revelation 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.*

The seal of the imperial sign of Rome was embedded in wax upon the rope in front of the stone. Anyone who tampered with the rope or touched the stone would be executed. The stone was sealed. The guards were set. This gives us the best proof that Jesus was dead and buried and humanly no one could take His body away without getting caught.

The biggest mistake of satan was killing Jesus on the cross; the biggest mistake of the disciples of Jesus was thinking that Jesus died on the cross in vain; the biggest victory of God was done on the cross.

Think with me:

- Jesus came the first time for a crucifixion. But He will come a second time for a coronation.
- Jesus came the first time to a tree. But He will come a second time to a throne.
- Jesus came the first time in humility as a baby in a manger. But He will come a second time in glory as the King of kings.
- Jesus came the first time and was judged by men. But He will come a second time to judge all men.
- Jesus came the first time and stood before Pilate. But He will come a second time and Pilate will stand before Jesus.

You see, when Jesus died on the cross, the world thought that it was "THE END," but God says, "TO BE CONTINUED."

## **E. QUESTIONS**

### **1) What will you do with Jesus?**

You have to make the decision. Will you receive Him or reject Him? Will you submit to Him or rebel against Him? It is the ultimate question of everyone's life.

### **2) If everything will be taken away from you because of your faith in Christ, will you still believe in Him and follow Him?**

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus risked everything to take care of the dead body of Jesus whom they loved. They knew that everything they had would be gone from that moment politically, socially, financially, and personally. Yet, they did, because they loved Jesus and believed in Him, though He was dead. Will you do the same?