

71. The death Conqueror

March 11, 2012

Some people are plain scared to death of dying. They are so scared of death, they are willing to do anything and everything to avoid it. Obviously they didn't hear of the two inescapable facts: death and taxes. But unlike taxes, death doesn't get worse every time President Obama opens his mouth.

Have you ever heard a word "Cryonics"? Do you know what it means? The people who are into this cryonics insist that they can supposedly freeze human bodies at death deeply enough for preservation and possible resuscitation in the future.

Some people who have cancers or other terminal illness think that they can have these cryonics scientists freeze their bodies long enough and bring them back alive after the cures for those diseases are developed. Or they just want to live longer.

The people who are into cryonics insist that a person's entire body will be frozen in liquid nitrogen. Later they will thaw out that person. Maybe in a microwave oven?

But the cost ain't cheap. On average, whole body cryopreservation costs about \$150,000. Some companies also charge an annual membership fee while you're still alive. These fees average around \$500/year. Additionally, you may pay an additional premium of up to \$10,000 for a "standby team" that is by your side as you die who quickly get your brain in a state that has the best probability of being resuscitated intact in the future.

But if you die mysteriously or you become a auto crash victim or are murdered, it's a game over. Because medical examiner will keep your body too long for them to do anything.

However, one very important thing these cryonics people do not consider: a person's spirit. Without the spirit of a person, a human body is nothing more than meat and bone. It is humanly impossible to resuscitate a dead person to life once that person kicks the bucket for a period of time. Cryonics is nothing more than a wishful wild imagination from Hollywood.

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment

But there is one Person who came back to life without this silly and impossible idea from cryonics – His name is Jesus, the Son of the Living God. He is the death Conqueror. He is risen from the dead and sitting at the right hand of God the Father in heaven.

A. 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.

Psalm 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 even His death?

One sign of death is the quick separation of dark red corpuscles from the thin and whitish 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, whitish serum and dark red corpuscles came out. This proves that Jesus was surely dead.

B. 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 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 His 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. That 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.

They only had three hours before the sundown that would start the Passover. In this case, it was a high Sabbath which means a Passover a day before the regular Sabbath. 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 in the edge of the Garden Tomb and see Golgotha. It is less than 10 minute walking distance.

C. THE REALITY OF JESUS' RESURRECTION

John 20:1-2 Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. 2 She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where they have put him!"

Every single biography of people concludes with death and burial of that person. To the Jewish religious rulers, it was a great thing to be happy, because they finally eliminated that pain-in-the-neck Jesus of Nazareth. So they thought. But to the disciples of Jesus, the whole thing was a total nightmare and utter confusion. They were wondering, "If we wasted three years of our life on this lunatic? Or was He the real Messiah? If so, why did He die? Is this the end of everything?"

None of them realized that the empty cross and the empty tomb are God the Father's receipts to tell us that the debt of our guilt and sins has been paid in full.

According to Mark and Luke, Mary the mother of James, Joanna, and Salome, along with a few other unnamed women, accompanied Mary Magdalene that morning. They walked through the quiet predawn darkness toward the tomb, carrying the spices with which they hoped to anoint the body of Jesus and finish the proper burial. They had no idea how they were going to move the circular stone that blocked the entrance of the grave and its weight was over 2000 pounds. But their love for Jesus ignored their logic. Maybe some of these women were burly biker chicks.

These women had never imagined any possibility of the resurrection of Jesus. That is why Mary Magdalene thought that someone stole the dead body of Jesus.

It is significant that the first witnesses of the resurrection of Christ were believing women. Some commentators say that God chose women over men for this assignment, because He knew that the words of the empty tomb would get around faster.

John 20:3-10 Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb to see. 4 The other disciple outran Peter and got there first. 5 He stooped and looked in and saw the linen cloth lying there, but he didn't go in. 6 Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, 7 while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying to the side. 8 Then the other disciple also went in, and he saw and believed -- 9 for until then they hadn't realized that the Scriptures said he would rise from the dead. 10 Then they went home.

Can you tell that there was a little bit of rivalry between apostle John and Peter. John made sure that we understand that he was the better and faster runner than Peter. Though Peter got there later than John, he impulsively went inside of the tomb only to find that it was empty as Mary reported.

They saw the neat and orderly arrangement of the grave clothes which showed that this was not a typical grave robbery and that something absolutely unique had happened in that now-empty tomb.

In v5, apostle John used the Greek word "blepo" to describe how he gazed at the stuff inside of the tomb. Then in v6, he used another Greek word "theoreo" to describe how Peter saw the same content. "Theoreo" means "to view attentively." We get our English word 'theory' from this Greek word. But in v8, John used a different Greek word "eido" which means "to understand, to perceive the significance of" and then he believed the resurrection of his Lord Jesus.

What kind of faith did Peter and John have at that stage in their spiritual experience? They had faith based on evidence. They could see the grave clothes; they knew that the body of Jesus was not there. However, as good as evidence is to convince the mind, it can never change the life. Those of us who live in the 21st Century cannot examine the evidence, because the material evidence, such as the tomb, the grave clothes, and other stuff is no longer there for us to examine.

But we have the record in the Word of God, the Bible and the Bible is unshakably true. In fact, it is faith in the Word that the Lord really wanted to cultivate in His disciples. It is not seeing is believing; rather believing is seeing in the spiritual world.

The people who do not believe the deity of Jesus Christ or His resurrection snort and talk down to Christians, "Do you actually believe that unscientific and ancient book,

the Bible?" But they are more than willing to believe the evolution theory even though it is totally hoax and illogical. They cannot even come up with enough numbers to make the possible probability of evolution that supposedly goes from a single molecule with one simple DNA to a modern complex human body which has about 10 trillion cells and each cell has 3 billion DNA base pairs.

Did I lose you? If you are lost with these numbers, please give a call to President Obama at 202-456-1414. He can explain it to you. He probably even try to match those numbers with our national debts.

It is easier for them to ignore the Creator than accepting the fact that they have to be accountable to Him for their ungodly and carnal life. They somehow wish that if they continuously ignore God, He would go away. They forget that God is immortal, but they are mortal. One day every single unbeliever who is not a born-again Christian must face the Ultimate Judge.

There will be only one question from the Risen Savior Jesus who will be that Ultimate Judge to them: "Did you receive Me into your heart as your Savior and Lord?" There will not be any loop-hole to dodge or technicality to hide behind. Christening, baptism, attending church, or any religious work, or being a good person will not be counted.

D. APPLICATIONS

- 1) Once we get to heaven, we will not have the same kind of ministry opportunities to serve the Lord and His church. Serve Him and His church while you have time on earth.
- 2) The fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ stands regardless of individual belief. We will be the ones who get benefits by believing in Him.