

Week 38

Suffering Servant

John 19:35

All that we have been studying about Jesus trial and crucifixion was seen by John is the testimony of an eyewitness. Why is it important for you to know this? So that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God and believing have eternal life. John 20:30-31 This has been John's purpose for writing his book, which we have stated from the beginning.

John 19:36-37

Our eyewitness, John tells us the soldiers fulfilled 2 prophecies regarding the death of Jesus:

- 1) Not one of His bones would be broken Exodus 12:46
- 2) They shall look on Him whom they pierced. Zechariah 12:10.

John 19:38-42

Matthew and Mark give us more information about this Joseph; he was wealthy and he was a prominent citizen. Luke told us he was a good and upright man who did not agree with the decision of the Jewish leaders to crucify Jesus. He did not have the power to stop them but he did what he could, he came and boldly asked for Jesus' body so he could give Him a proper burial. You have to admire his faith and courage. He had to ask Pilate because the Romans usually just left the bodies decompose on the crosses. Just think, this total stranger came to give Jesus a proper burial because all His friends had run away.

The second man, Nicodemus we have met before. Remember he was the one in chapter 3 of John's gospel who came to Jesus, early in His ministry. He came a night, probably so he wouldn't be seen. But also he stood up for Jesus among the Pharisees and the chief priests in John 7:50. The embalming spices he brought, was a huge offering and very expensive.

These two men were no doubt afraid but they acted courageously in the end.

Jewish burial customs did not include embalming; instead; they washed the body, then wrapped it in a cloth soaked with aromatic oils and spices-myrrh and aloes.

According to Matthew 27:60 this tomb was Joseph's own tomb which he gave to Jesus. These rock-hewn tombs were expensive and only the wealthy could afford them, remember, Joseph did not expect to get this tomb returned to him. As you know, people who are buried stay that way. This also was prophesied; Isaiah 53:9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death. Jesus had to be buried quickly because it was almost the Sabbath when no work could be done. If Jesus died at 3:00 PM then there was only 3 hours to accomplish the burial until the official day's end at 6:00PM. For the Jewish time reckoning, the new day began at 6:01 PM and that would have been the Sabbath.

Scorners have said that that Jesus did not die, He fainted. I am sure those hardened Roman soldiers knew a dead man when they saw him. How can anyone explain the actions of Joseph and Nicodemus and the burial of Jesus if He did not die?

Matthew's gospel tells us that after Joseph and Nicodemus had buried Jesus the chief priests and the Pharisees went again to Pilate and requested the tomb be secured by guards and sealed. They told Pilate that Jesus had said He would rise from the dead and they reasoned the disciples would steal the

body and say He had risen. They didn't know the disciples were hiding at that moment. I think the Pharisees were afraid Jesus would rise again, what they didn't know is that no seal or guard could keep the Son of God in that tomb.

The truth of Christianity rests on the Resurrection. If Jesus rose, who saw Him? Were these witnesses trustworthy? Those who saw Jesus went on to turn the world upside down. Most of the disciples were martyred. Who would die for a lie? These men saw Jesus and they died for Him. Our 4 gospels give information about the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection for the 40 days He remained on earth. Friends, our hope rests on this truth; He is risen. There were many eyewitnesses to the fact that Jesus is alive and John's gospel records several of them. Remember, John chose these events to convince you and me that Jesus is the Messiah and believing has eternal life.

John 20: 1-2

Mary Magdalene, the last at the cross and the first at the tomb. How is your love for Jesus? We live our lives in the knowledge that because of Jesus great love for us He died and rose for our benefit, to provide the new and living way to heaven. This knowledge of His love puts reins on our thinking, our behavior and ultimately our lives. When you know you are so greatly loved, your life should be lived in gratitude.

Mary and the other women had waited to see where Jesus was buried according to Matthew 27:61.

Mark tells us that other women went with Mary Magdalene to the tomb and they were wondering who would roll away the stone so they could anoint Jesus body. When they saw the stone had been removed they assumed someone had stolen the body. The other gospel accounts tell when they entered the tomb to look for Jesus they saw a young man. Luke said there were two angels who reprimanded them and asked why they were looking for someone who was alive in a tomb. The angels said, "He is not dead, but He has risen. Remember what He said when He was in Galilee, the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, be crucified and on the third day rise again. Then the angels said, "Go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead".

John's gospel records events from the perspective of Mary Magdalene and perhaps she simply arrived first having planned to meet the other women there. These are courageous ladies, the disciples are still hiding, and the women are at the tomb.

John 20:3-5

John got there first, he was younger and faster but he didn't go into the tomb he just looked in, he was not thinking that Jesus had risen.

John 20:6-7

So clearly there had not been grave robbers, since the linen body wraps were still there, neatly folded. It appeared Jesus had just passed through them.

John 20:8-9

John went in, he saw there was no body and he believed, here is an eyewitness account to the resurrection of Jesus. John saw, believed, but he did not comprehend. Imagine yourself in this situation; you saw Him suffer and die. You knew he was buried 3 days ago, how could he be alive? And yet He is.

Just think, after 3 years with Him, hearing Him say He would die and be resurrected, they did not know/believe it. He staked the truth of being the Messiah on this; His rising from the dead

John 20:10

Evidently they didn't know what to do so they just went home and locked the doors.

John 20:11-12

Mary must have been overwhelmed by all she has seen over the past few days, and the disappearance of Jesus was the last straw, what else could you do but cry?

Apparently these angels were not in the tomb when John and Peter looked in but here they were when Mary looked.

John 20:13

I suppose anyone standing at a tomb of a loved one would be weeping, especially if the body had mysteriously disappeared. I don't think this was a rebuke from the angels but they thought the empty tomb should make her happy, after all Jesus had said many times He would die and then arise. It just never seemed to make any sense to her; she didn't understand He was alive.

This is often the case with the Word of God. There it is in black and white but it doesn't seem to make sense from the human perspective so we try to spiritualize it or look for some hidden meaning. Please remember, the bible, the Word of God means what it says. If it doesn't make sense from your human perspective; keep in mind God has said His ways are not our ways, go to Him in faith with the intention of obedience and ask Him to help you understand.

John 20:13-15

Why didn't Jesus go to the temple, announce he was alive and kick the door down and throw out all the wicked leaders? As you know, that is not how He operates. He meets the ones who look, and wait and desire His Presence.

For some reason Mary did not immediately recognize Jesus, either because she was not looking at Him, or more likely she didn't expect to see Him again.

John 20:16-17

Mary's natural reaction was to try to take hold of Jesus, He forbid this. I have read many commentaries on this statement by Jesus and none are in agreement. Suffice it to say Jesus was telling Mary to not cling to Him but go and tell that He is alive.

Prior to the His death Jesus called the disciples His friends, now after His Resurrection He calls them His brothers, a new level of relationship. For the first time we can understand now that Jesus' Father is our Father.

Even though they had deserted Him, He was calling them His brothers and saying His God was theirs, His Father was their Father. Notice how He is restoring the relationship.

John 20:18

And so Mary runs to tell His disciples that He is alive. What a great message to have the honor of telling. Jesus is alive, I feel privileged to tell you this good news. Can't you imagine the reaction of the disciples to this announcement of Mary, I am sure they were stunned and disbelieving.

John 20:19

John again documents the time and it is still the same day, the first day of the week, Mary had seen Jesus that morning. The disciples were still hiding in a locked room and no doubt discussing what the women had told them and what Peter and John saw at the tomb. It must have been very confusing.

Suddenly Jesus was there, standing before them in their locked room. He was in a new glorified body altered from His physical body to where He could transcend physical barriers.

His greeting "shalom", peace be with you, is a standard Hebrew greeting.

John 20:20

Of course the disciples were startled; Luke told us that they thought they saw a ghost. He wanted to convince them it was He, that He did have a body; it evidently still had the marks of the crucifixion.

John 20:21-23

Again Jesus said "Shalom", and then He commissioned them to go to the world and tell them He is alive. As the Father sent the Son, so Jesus sends His followers; will you go?

Before the disciples could carry out the mission they needed the power of the Holy Spirit. This verse reminds me of the creation where the bible tells us that God breathed the breath of life into man, making him different from the plants and animals. Through the breath of Jesus God gave them eternal, spiritual life.

So Jesus gave the disciples their Spirit powered and Spirit guided mission-to preach the Good News about Him so that people's sin might be forgiven. The disciples did not have the personal power to forgive sin, only God can do this, but they had the privilege of telling new believers that their sins have been forgiven. You and I can also share this good news with others; if they recognize they are sinners, and repent-that is turn and go the other way-God will forgive them.

Do you know there are more than 20 scriptures telling about Jesus post resurrection appearances to more than 500 people? Jesus is alive.