

Sunday, April 17, 2022

Palm Sunday Message

Today, **Palm Sunday**, is the traditional beginning of what is known as Passion Week or Holy Week in the Christian Calendar.

One Possible Scenario of the Events of Jesus' Final Week

SATURDAY - Day of Devotion –

Prequel to Passion Week. Mary Anoints Jesus

SUNDAY - Day of Declaration –

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem

MONDAY - Day of Denunciation –

Jesus curses a fig tree & cleanses the temple

TUESDAY - Day of Discussions –

Discussions concerning Fig Tree; Sanhedrin questions Jesus; Series of teachings & parables (Great Commandment); Seven woes to religious leaders; Widow's offering ; Jesus teaching on end times; additional parables; Judas arranges to betray Jesus to the Jewish authorities

WEDNESDAY - Day of Decisions –

Events uncertain. Greeks make decision to seek out Jesus ; Sanhedrin make a decision to set a plot to arrest Jesus; (Alternate time for where Mary anoints Jesus option here); Judas decides to betray Jesus.

THURSDAY - Day of Demonstration –

Preparation for Passover Meal; Passover meal; Washes feet of Disciples; Identifies betrayer; Jesus institutes the Memorial Supper; Farewell teaching; Jesus' prayer for Disciples.

FRIDAY - Day of Destiny –

Jesus' agonizing prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (early am); Jesus betrayed by Judas and delivered to His enemies; Trial of Jesus before the Jewish Sanhedrin; Peter's denial of Jesus; Trial of Jesus - Roman officials Pilate and Herod; Crucifixion and death of Jesus, Jesus' burial.

SATURDAY - Day of Despair –

Jesus's body lies in His tomb; His followers huddle in the homes in fear and despair.

SUNDAY - Day of Deliverance & Discovery –

Jesus is glorious resurrected from the grave and appears to His followers.

The following is adapted from "5 Miracles of Calvary" April 19, 2019

| Ray Pritchard

<https://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/5-miracles-of-calvary/>

Today for the next several minutes before we partake of the Lord's Supper/Communion. I want to focus on the events that followed the Thursday night Last Supper and the actual event that took place from which we now remember and partake of Communion. The crucifixion of Jesus on that Friday.

The Miracles of Calvary – Luke 23 & Matthew 27

Miracle #1: Life from Death

Luke 23:39-43...³⁹ *One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”*⁴⁰ *But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? ”*⁴¹ *We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”*⁴² *Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom”*⁴³ *Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

The 1st miracle as well as the last miracle focus on life change of individuals. We see here a man’s eternal destination of spiritual death is miraculously changed to eternal life.

Miracle # 2: Darkness Falls

“From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over the whole land” (v. 45).

“It happened suddenly and without warning. One moment the sun was overhead; the next moment it disappeared. It was darkness itself, thick, inky-black

darkness that fell like a shroud over the land. It was darkness without any hint of light. No one moved. No one spoke. For once even the profane soldiers stopped their swearing. Not a sound broke the dark silence over Skull Hill. Something eerie was going on. The darkness lasted for three long hours:

The familiar words of Isaac Watts describe what this first miracle means:

*Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glories in,
When Christ, the mighty Maker died,
For man the creature’s sin.*

Miracle #3: Veil Torn

“Suddenly, the curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom” (v. 51a).

Everything about the Jewish temple taught people to keep their distance. But there was yet a place even more sacred than the Holy Place called the Most Holy Place, or the Holy of Holies. The heart of Jewish worship took place in that small area. If you read Leviticus 16, you can find the details spelled out. But we can summarize them this way:

Only one man could enter the Most Holy Place: the High Priest.
He could only enter the Most Holy Place one day

each year: the Day of Atonement.
He must wear special garments.
He must bring with him the blood of a goat.
He must sprinkle the blood on the golden Mercy Seat.

If anyone else besides the High Priest ever entered the Most Holy Place, he would be struck down. If the High Priest entered on any day other than the Day of Atonement, he would be struck down. If the High Priest came without the blood of a goat, he would be struck down. Everything about the system screamed, “Stay away,” “Don’t come near,” “You are not qualified to come on your own.” It was as if the temple itself was a giant roadblock, making sure that no one could come into God’s presence uninvited.

If the Jews were tempted to forget about the prohibitions, if they decided to take matters into their own hands, God had ordered that a thick curtain be hung between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. That’s why Matthew tells us the curtain was torn “from top to bottom,” signifying God had done what only God could do.

The law that condemned us has come to an end, having been put to death in the death of Christ. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who believe in Jesus. The road to heaven is open to anyone, anytime, anywhere. We know that we have eternal life.

There is a message for you from the torn curtain in the temple:

Fear not. Don’t let your sins keep you away.
God has opened the door to heaven.

The cross reveals the great heart of God, and that heart is filled with love. When Jesus died, the Father preached a sermon without words when he tore the curtain in two from the top to the bottom. It was God’s way of saying, “You are welcome in my family. Let nothing keep you away.” (Pritchard)

Miracle #4: Earthquake Shatters

“The earth quaked, and the rocks were split” (v. 51b).

There are earthquakes all around the world at unpredictable times. The miracle is in the timing of the earthquake. God shook the earth the moment his Son died. An earthquake shook Mt. Sinai when the law was given by God (Exodus 19:18). Now there is an earthquake when Christ dies, signifying the end of the law once and for all.

Anytime you have an earthquake, business as usual comes to an end. An earthquake stops us in our tracks and reminds us we are not in control. When an earthquake comes, we run for cover as the earth beneath us begins to give way. Perhaps this

earthquake was God's way of saying to a wayward world, "Stop! Look! Listen! This is my Son who died for you. Run to the cross and be saved."

Miracle #5: Saints Raised

"The tombs were also opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And they came out of the tombs after his resurrection, entered the holy city, and appeared to many" (vv. 52-53).

"We don't fully understand what happened here.

This much is clear. The earthquake split the rocks around Jerusalem, opening many tombs. Many of the saints (a term that always refers to believers) were raised from the dead. Evidently Matthew means the tombs were opened on Friday, but the saints were raised after Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday morning.

Christ rose first. Then the saints were raised.

Those saints went into the holy city (Jerusalem) and gave testimony to the death-destroying, life-giving power of the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot say with certainty how many were raised, or how long they stayed in Jerusalem, or even what happened to them later. Evidently it doesn't matter, or we would have been told those things.

What does it mean? The graves were opened at 3 PM on Friday when Christ died. They remained open for all to see on Friday night and on the Sabbath. *It was a sign from heaven that death has been plundered.* John Owens spoke about the death of death in the death of Christ. Death died when Christ died because he went into the realm of death and came out holding the keys to death and Hades in his hand (Revelation 1:18)". (Pritchard(

Miracle #6: Life Changed/Centurion Testifies

"When the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they were terrified and said, 'Truly this man was the Son of God!'" (Matt. 27:54).

This last miracle is a bookend to the 1st miracle. Not only is our Eternal Destination changed from Eternal Death into Eternal Life, we have the chance to live here and now as a witness and to testify of God's miraculous power to change lives.

"This may be the greatest miracle of all. The centurion played a crucial role in the death of Christ. As the leader of a Roman "century" of 100 men, he was an officer held in high esteem. He had to be a man of good character, with a proven military record, who knew how to carry out orders promptly. He had

to be an expert with the sword and with all other weapons.

This means the centurion wasn't just any soldier. He was a proven leader of men.

Did he know the centurion whose servant Jesus healed (Luke 7:1-10)? It's entirely possible because Roman officers in a small region like Galilee and Judea would no doubt cross paths. If they knew each other, then this centurion would already have a favorable impression of Jesus. Certainly he would know that Pilate had three times declared Jesus innocent of any crimes, and he would wonder why he was being crucified. He must have heard Jesus say, ***"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."*** He heard him promise heaven to the penitent thief. He witnessed the darkness that fell on the earth, and he heard Jesus cry out, ***"It is finished!"*** More than that, unlike the usual criminals who died in agony, screaming bitter oaths, Jesus died quietly as he yielded his spirit to his Father in heaven. Mark 15:39 tells us he stood facing Jesus and saw *how* Jesus died. All of that must have made a huge impression on the centurion. Finally, he felt the earthquake that split the rocks in two. That led to his amazing statement of faith: ***"Truly this man was the Son of God!"***

The centurion got it right

Think about these miracles for a moment:

Jesus has authority over life and death.

Jesus has authority over the sun, and darkness came n the land.

Jesus has authority over the temple, and the veil was torn.

Jesus has authority over the earth, and the rocks split apart.

Jesus has authority over the graves, and the saints were raised?

Jesus has authority to change a skeptics life.

The four middle miracles are meant to lead us to the outcomes of the 1st and the 6th miracle. *That's the greatest miracle of all because it's the miracle of a changed heart.* It's a miracle that happens whenever anyone comes to Jesus. It's a miracle that can happen to you at this very moment. What Jesus did for the centurion, he can do for you.

Do you know him? May God give us grace to take our stand with the centurion and say, ***"Truly this man was the Son of God!"***

Jesus Paid it All

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