



JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

Monday

John 2:16; Mark 11:17; Isaiah 56:7; 1 Corinthians 3:16 - 17; Psalm 51; 2 Timothy 2:21

Oh the beautiful Temple of God! The place where we envision worship, songs of praise, and prayer. Where the principles and precepts of God's Word are taught and forgiveness, repentance, and offerings of sacrifice are found. The Temple - a place to experience the ultimate fellowship with the Holy God.

But on this day in Jerusalem those entering the Temple were met with utter chaos. They were dodging frightened flying doves, sidestepping to avoid being trampled by escaping oxen, tripping over fleeing, bleating sheep, and sliding through coins that had been flung across the floor. An angry man, flailing a whip, was driving out people and animals! Imagine the shouting and confusion. This is not quite what we would expect to find in the house of God, nor in the behavior of the man, Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior of the world.

When Jesus came into the Temple, he found “those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money.

We probably picture Jesus acting in the heat of the moment as His extreme displeasure drove Him to rush into action. But John 2:15 states that He took the time to weave small cords together to make a scourge. He apparently gave it some thought before He released His energy against them shouting:

Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. ***John 2:16***

And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Mark 11:17

Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. ***Isaiah 56:7***

In these verses we see the passion of Jesus over the desecration of the earthly Temple in Jerusalem.

Remember how He wept as He looked over the city of Jerusalem and thought of its future destruction. He spoke of how He would have "gathered thy children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

We also witness the passion He has for our lost souls and the souls of the very men who were crucifying Him. He prayed for them, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Jesus suffered the pain of stripes on His back, nails in His hands, the unendurable pressure of hanging on the cross for the redemption of our souls. Then He washed us clean with His blood, filled our hearts with His Spirit, and we become a Temple of the Lord.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

1 Corinthians 3:16 - 17

Think about how Jesus feels when we let the cares of our daily life smother out the spiritual life He has given us.

Does envy and hatred push out our joy and love?

Is fear stealing our faith?

Do strife and bitterness consume our
peace and goodness?

Do the desires of the flesh destroy our temperance?

Do our desires take time and dedication
we should be giving to God?

Are our good works done in humility and meekness
or for our own vain glory?

The business being done in the Temple provided a necessary service, but it was done in the wrong place and in the wrong way.

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him

that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10: 28-31

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Corinthians 7:1

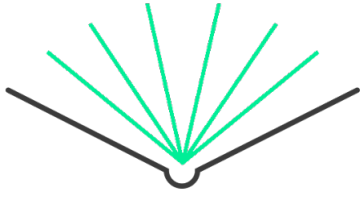
Let us pray with David from Psalm 51:

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ... wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow ... blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

2 Timothy 2:21

Written by Sis. Judy Robinson



JESUS TEACHES IN THE TEMPLE

Tuesday

Matthew 23:24-33; Psalm 51

The teaching of Jesus in the scripture reference is very plain. His denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees leaves no doubt of His displeasure. Three times He says, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees." He refers to them as blind and hypocritical. He calls them serpents and a generation of vipers who are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

What were the scribes and Pharisees guilty of in these scriptures? They made clean the outside but left the inside dirty. They made themselves appear as whited sepulchers which are beautiful to look at, but remained full of uncleanness. It must have grieved the Lord so much for His teaching to have been so passionate.

It makes my soul cry out, "O Lord, open my eyes that I might see myself as You see me."

I pray as David - a man after God's own heart - did in Psalm 51. This is a Psalm of true repentance, a prayer that I can pray to help me to "die daily."

I ask Him to wash me and cleanse me:

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

Psalm 51:2-3

What does He desire of me? He desires truth in my inward parts.

Behold, thou desires truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Psalm 51:6

I ask that He purge me with hyssop, a cleansing, healing herb:

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: was me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Psalm 51:7

I have prayed verse ten of Psalm 51 for my children and grandchildren many times:

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. ***Psalm 51:10***

But today I pray, "Create in Vicki a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit in Vicki."

When I have a clean heart and right spirit, the joy of His salvation is restored to me. His praise shall continually be in my heart and on my lips.

I have often struggled with the thoughts of what can I do for Him? Of course we realize we can never out-love God, but how can I best show my love?

He desires my faithfulness to His teachings,
but isn't that my reasonable service?
Is that all He desires of me?

I reap benefits from faithfulness, my worship,
paying tithes, and living right.

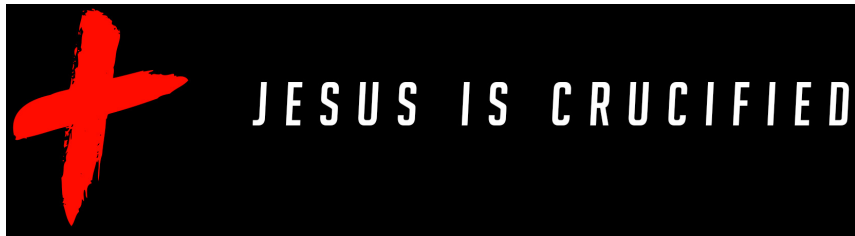
Then I go to Psalm 51:13:

Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

After I have been purged, washed and made whiter than snow, and have a clean heart and a right spirit, I stand ready to fulfill my purpose for Him. I am now ready to teach transgressors His ways and sinners shall be converted. What joy it is to watch someone pulled from the fire and begin to feel the Spirit that only God can give.

Again I pray, open my eyes, cleanse me, restore daily my joy that I may have a part in leading someone to Him. It is not His desire that any should perish, for all should come to Him. This same desire dwells in us who are of a clean heart and right spirit.

Written by Sis. Vicki Dean



Wednesday

Isaiah 53:5; Mark 15:22 - 25; Exodus 12:22

Arthur W. Pitt describes it this way, "With bleeding back, carrying His cross under the heat of the now almost midday sun, He {Jesus} journeyed up the rugged heights of Golgotha. Reaching the appointed place of execution, His hands and feet were nailed to the tree. For three hours He hung there with the pitiless rays of the sun beating down on His thorn-crowned head. This was followed by the three hours of darkness, now over. That night and day were hours into which an eternity was compressed."

He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
Isaiah 53:5

The greatest event in the history of the world was in action.

The soldiers were no doubt hardened to the task before them. They did it so well. The Romans perfected the method of execution which caused maximum pain and suffering over a period of time. Jesus was offered wine mixed with myrrh to help deaden the pain, but he did not take it.

And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. Mark 15:23

This was not the cup He was to drink.

It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. (Mark 15:25) The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS

Jesus' words to the soldiers were, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He forgives as His pain grows.

The second drink, which Jesus accepts moments before His death was given on the "stalk of a hyssop plant."

During the feast of the Passover, hyssop was used to apply the blood of the Passover Lamb to the wooden doorposts of the Jews.

And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the food that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason.

Exodus 12:22

What a beautiful connection. The spotless Lamb's blood was being applied once again.

It was a darkness no science could explain. Perhaps it was nature's protest against the crucifixion of Jesus. The one who had spoken, "Let there be light" and there was light now hung suspended between earth and heaven. He was paying our debt and giving us hope. Jesus was lonely and separated from God the Father so that we would never have to be. He put one arm around the pillar of death and another arm around sin and cried with a loud voice, "It is finished."

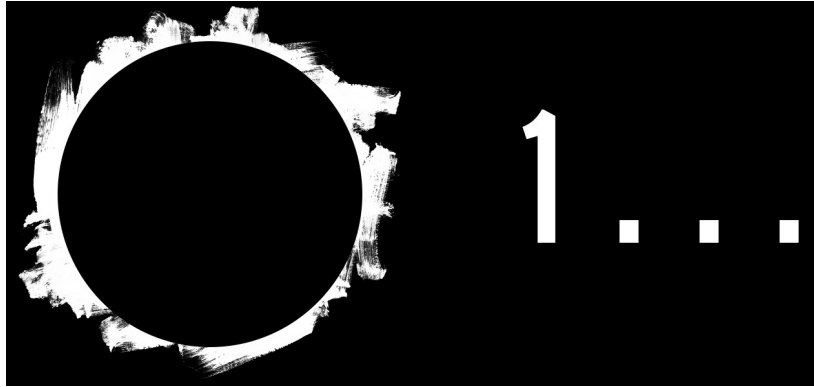
At that instant when He hung His head and died, the earth trembled and split. The veil in the Temple that covered the Holiest of Holies tore from top to bottom.

The barrier between God and man was gone. Now everyone could come boldly to the throne of grace and kneel in His holy presence.

The crucifixion of Jesus was part of God's plan from the very beginning. The sin of mankind would require a sacrifice. The sinless life of Jesus was lived and given so that man could receive salvation and eternal life in heaven.

What have we done with the gift He has given us? May I always consider the cost of the cross and apply it to my own life.

Written by Sis. Teresa Brewer



Thursday

John 13:31; Exodus 12:17; 1 Peter 1:18-19

Jesus of Nazareth is dead, last night they buried Him in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. What the emotions of His disciples must have been like and all of those that were affected by his ministry. Think of each and every one that was touched by Jesus, they saw the life and hope in his eyes. Yet now he lay in a tomb. How could this be? Word has come from His disciples that He will return, yet that seems like a distant and cruel delusion.

Passover Feast Of Unleavened Bread

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day).
John 13:31

The evening following Jesus' death on the cross was the first day of 'The feast of unleavened bread.' This particular feast was celebrated by eating no leaven for the seven-day celebration, it was to signify the first thirty days that the children of Israel had left the bondage of Egypt (God gives this instruction to the children of Israel in Exodus 12:17). This was also celebrated by the first day of the fast being an annual 'High-day' also called 'Annual Sabbath.' This High-Sabbath commencing the festival was 'The Passover Memorial.'

Our Passover Lamb

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

1 Peter 1:18-19

Jesus came into the World that He created. He took the weight and burden of the sin of the world upon His back. He came that the ransom for sin would be paid; paid for you, for me and for all that the Lord our God may call.
(Acts 2:39)

Jesus Christ came to minister, He came to touch lives, He came to correct, He came to give hope to a hopeless world. His ultimate destination, however, was that he would be The Passover Lamb for all the world, now and forever!

Today is the anniversary of Jesus Christ our Passover Lamb spending his first of three days in the tomb. Today, do not mourn the death of the Lamb, but rejoice in His resurrection. Likewise today, do not mourn your current situation, rather rejoice in the power of Jesus' name over it!

For further study, follow the scripture guide below:

- Luke 22:7
- Genesis 22:8
- 1 Corinthians 5:7
- Isaiah 53:7
- Matthew 26:26
- Matthew 16:11-12
- Mark 16:1
- Luke 23:56

Written by Pastor Dylan Hirsch



Friday

1 Peter 3:18-20; 2 Peter 2:4; Isaiah 14:13; Revelation 20:10; Luke 16:26; Ephesians 4:8

There is an interesting, and puzzling, passage in 1 Peter:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

1 Peter 3:18-20

There are many who contribute their opinion as to just what this means concerning Christ preaching to the spirits in prison, and their opinions vary greatly.

I chose one comment from Dr. John MacArthur who wrote:

“Between Jesus’ death on Calvary and His resurrection in the garden tomb, He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit. He was physically dead but spiritually alive. During the three days He was in that state He also defended and made proclamation (kerusso) to the spirits in prison. This does not refer to preaching the gospel (euangelizo) but to making a triumphant announcement - in this case, Christ’s announcement of His victory over the demons even while they tried to hold Him in death.”

The Greek word kerusso means
to herald or proclaim.

The Greek word euaggelizo means
to announce good news.

So, our conclusion: If indeed our Lord did descend during the time His body was in the tomb to preach to the spirits in prison, then it would appear that the spirits in prison would be those angels which Peter speaks of in 2 Peter - the spirits which are kept in prison awaiting their judgment.

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. 2 Peter 2:4

And if He did speak to them, it was not an offer of salvation, but rather a message of triumph which He delivered to those who He had created to share with Him the glories and heaven and eternity - the glory they forfeited when yielding to their desires.

If that is what our Lord did during the three days His body rested in Joseph's tomb, how appropriate that He would elect to proclaim the victory that Calvary had wrought through His death and resurrection.

Quite possibly Lucifer had promised them that he would indeed have a throne exalted above the stars.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how are thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. ***Isaiah 14:12-14***

Now, instead of sharing in the eternal future of Christ and His angels in that glorious tomorrow, they will join the one they followed - Lucifer - as they are all cast into the Lake of Fire.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. ***Revelation 20:10***

While our Lord's body was in Joseph's sepulcher for three days and nights, the Lord was certainly not there with His body. He was busy in the spirit world.

Imagine the reaction of the Old Testament saints who were in hades, separated by a great gulf from the lost

(Luke 16:26), as He pronounced to them Victory! Those saints who would be taken from hades to Paradise.

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Ephesians 4:8

Written by Bishop Muncia Walls



Saturday

Luke 24:5-6

The sun rose on that third morning, shining warmth and light to the mourning world. The first day of a new week had come. The earth had quaked and torn into pieces with sorrow just two days earlier when the Savior had been crucified. The cold grave accepted His body. But this glorious morning, everything changed.

Heaven, assured of His victory the whole time, can now share the Good News to the world. I imagine the angels' songs of worship were louder and more jubilant that day. I imagine the angels tasked with rolling away the stone were eagerly bowing at the Throne of Heaven, anticipating God's victorious command to "Go! Roll away the stone! Victory has forever been won!"

Shining as bright and piercing as lightning, the angels of the Lord descended from Heaven. The Light had come. He had risen! Death had been conquered.

The stone charged with sealing the grave and containing His body, rolled away in victory.

The earth erupted in praise with another great earthquake. No longer enveloped in darkness, concealing the broken body of the Savior, the earth felt the change, the warmth of that great Light, before anyone else did.

The women had come that morning to the tomb in their last act of devotion to anoint the body of Jesus, but found instead an empty grave and a rolled stone and two triumphant angels.

Even the very rocks had cried out in victory, but the women were so entrenched in their sorrow they couldn't comprehend the miracle that had taken place.

As they were searching the tomb, the angels came to them and said,

Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but He is risen. ***Luke 24:5 - 6***

These words started a fire in the hearts of those women that is still blazing in our hearts today. He's risen! The darkness has been exchanged with light! Emptiness has been replaced with wholeness. Beauty has come from ashes. Hope from despair. Life from death.

On the first day of creation, God spoke "let there be light." Now on this first day after the darkest week, the Light of the World has risen victoriously and forever put darkness in its place.

Now we have a Source for all we need. No longer do we need to search for the living among the dead. Joy, peace, hope, salvation, healing, redemption - none of these can be found in this world. Nothing this world has to offer will last. No longer will dead sacrifices at the temple atone for our sins, but the Living Lamb has secured our atonement and redemption forevermore. Death and darkness can never triumph over us. The Light has come. He is risen!

Written by Sis. Whitney Gothra