

“The Death Of Death In The Resurrection Of Christ”

Matthew 27:51-28:8

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Teaching Aim: To explore the circumstances surrounding the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To realize, even the most powerful army in the world could not keep Jesus in the grave. To reflect on the role Jesus plays in our salvation and to understand the radical transformation that must take place in our bodies if we are to spend eternity in heaven with Him. To realize we will go to heaven only if we are *“in Christ!”*

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The burial of Jesus and the extraordinary security in place (Matt. 27:62-66)

1. According to **verse 51**, what occurred the moment Jesus died? How large was this veil? (Hint: Search online) What made the tearing of this veil such a powerful statement from God? According to **Heb. 10:19-22**, what did this tearing signify? What two-fold message did God send to the world through this act?
2. What supernatural events occurred at the giving of God’s Law on Mount Sinai to the Israelites? (See **Exod. 19:18**) What similar supernatural event took place the moment Jesus died on the cross thus fulfilling this very same law (**vs. 51**)? (See **Matt. 5:17-18**)
3. **Verses 52 & 53** are two of the most difficult verses in the Bible to understand. What two supernatural events took place in **verse 52**? This event is only recorded in Matthew’s gospel and nowhere else historically. According to Matthew’s account, which individuals were raised from the dead? Why do you think the New Testament so often refers to believers who have died as *“those who have fallen asleep?”* (See **1 Corinthians 15:18; 1 Thess. 4:13-18**) How does each human being act out the future resurrection of the body every night and day?
4. Although the earthquake in **verse 51** that opened the graves in **verse 52** occurred at the moment that Jesus died, when did the saints actually come out of their graves (**vs. 53**)? Why do you think no one was at the cemetery when the graves of these Old Testament saints were opened? (See **John 18:28-33, 40-42**)

5. According to **verse 53**, what did the resurrected saints do after they were raised from the dead? How many people saw them walking around Jerusalem? Do you think these individuals died again like Lazarus did, or do you think they received their glorified bodies and ascended to heaven to be with Jesus? (See **Dan. 12:1b-3; Eph. 4:8-10**) When will we know the answer to this question for sure?
6. What was a Roman centurion? What was the role of the centurion mentioned in this story (**vs. 54**)? What do we know about the kind of men who filled this position? If this centurion oversaw the men serving at the cross, what horrible acts had his soldiers previously done to Jesus? (See **Matt. 27:26-31**)
7. Is it possible that the change of heart we see in **verse 54** came as a result of hearing Jesus' prayer in **Luke 23:33-34**? At a time when the religious leaders had betrayed Jesus and all of His disciples had fled except John (See **John 19:26-27**), who humbly acknowledged that Jesus was the Son of God? Are there more Gentile believers today or Jewish believers? Which are you? According to **verses 55 & 56**, what group of believers did not abandon Jesus as He died on the cross? Which ladies remained at the scene of the cross? (See **John 19:25**) Why do you think women make up the vast majority of Christians in churches today?
10. In **verses 57-61**, we examined the events surrounding the burial of Jesus Christ. Joseph of Arimathea likely used his status as a prominent member of the Sanhedrin to approach Pontius Pilate and request the body of Jesus. Had he not done so, the body of Jesus would most likely have been thrown into the Valley of Hinnom (south of Jerusalem) to be burned or eaten by animals. Why would it have taken an extreme amount of courage for Joseph to go to Pontius Pilate and request the body of Jesus? (See **vv. 57-58; Mark 15:42-43; Luke 23:50-53**)
11. Who else assisted Joseph of Arimathea in the burial of Jesus? (See **John 19:39-42; 3:1-16**) Joseph and this individual hurried to prepare the body of Jesus and place it in Joseph's new tomb before sunset. Why? (See **Luke 23:53-56**) Who was watching as Joseph and Nicodemus hurriedly labored to bury Jesus (**vs. 61**)? What were the women planning? (See **Mark 16:1-3**) Did they expect to find Jesus alive or dead? Where were the disciples of Jesus at this time?

12. What was “*the Day of Preparation*?” When did it fall (**vs. 62**)? (See Commentaries) Instead of worshiping God on the Sabbath Day, what were the Jewish religious leaders doing? What was their request (**vs. 63**)? Did the Jewish religious leaders really believe Jesus would rise from the dead? What did they believe (**vs. 64**)? What two so-called “*deceptions*” were the Jewish religious leaders worried about?

13. Who should have been the first to believe that Jesus Christ would rise from the dead? Why? (See **Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19**) Why do you think the Jewish religious leaders were more concerned about this prophecy than Jesus’ own disciples (**vs. 63**)? Have you run into unbelievers today who know the Word of God better than you do but don’t believe or live it? What is the prerequisite to believing in Christ and living for Him? (See **Ezek. 36:25-27; John 3:3,5; Rom. 8:6-8**)

14. Why do some people claim to be Christians but have no desire to follow Christ? Can someone truly be a Christian who lives their life this way? (See **John 14:15,23-24; 2 Cor. 13:5**)

15. Which Roman official granted the Jews a guard for the tomb (**vs. 65**)? How many soldiers comprised a Roman guard? According to **verse 66**, what steps did the Roman soldiers take to secure the tomb? How did they seal the stone covering the door? (See Commentaries) What would happen if a person broke through the wax seal and entered the tomb? Note: Apparently the women had left Friday evening not knowing the Romans would seal the tomb or that a team of soldiers would be ordered to guard the tomb. How does this picture relate to another “*seal*” in **Eph. 2:13-14**? What makes the seal in **Eph. 2:13-14** so important to us today?

Part II: The resurrection of Jesus Christ and His appearance to the women at the tomb (Matt. 28:1-5)

1. What day is the first day of the week (**vs. 1**)? At what time of the day did the women arrive at the tomb? Which woman came? (See Commentaries) What seismic activity occurred at the tomb on the morning of the resurrection? (**vs. 2**)? Was this event confined to the area around the tomb or much bigger? Do you think this supernatural event took place during the night or as the women arrived at the tomb in the morning? What other earthquake had recently struck Jerusalem? (See **Matt. 27:51**) What did each earthquake signify?

3. According to **verse 3**, what did the angel look like? Today almost all angels in our society are portrayed as women. How many women angels are there in the Bible? Why do you think we so readily accept this distortion today? How did the hardened Roman soldiers respond to the circumstances surrounding the resurrection of Jesus Christ (**vs. 4**)? Does **verse 4** imply that they were so frightened that they passed out?

4. **Verse 5** says, "*the angel answered*," which seems to indicate he was first asked a question. What do you think the two Mary's may have asked him? How does the angel respond? Why do you think the two Mary's didn't pass out like the Roman soldiers did? In **verse 6** we find the greatest announcement ever proclaimed; what is it? What makes this pronouncement so special? How does the resurrection of Jesus Christ put Christians in a win/win situation today?

Part III: The angel sends the women on a mission (Matt. 28:6-8; 1 Cor. 15:50-58)

1. What two commandments did the angel give to the women in **verses 6 & 7**? Why do you think the angel instructed the disciples to go to Galilee? (See Commentaries) How did the women respond to the angel's command (**vs. 8**)? What do we know about the emotional state of the women as they left the scene of the empty tomb? Where were the women heading?

2. Why is it that "*flesh and blood*" cannot enter the kingdom of God (**vs. 50**)? (See **Exod. 33:20**) What must happen to the human body before a person can enter into the eternal state (**vs. 51**)?

3. What is the meaning of the word, "*mystery*" (**vs. 51**)? (See Dictionary) The mystery of **verse 51** was something that hadn't been communicated to the saints in the Old Testament. What did Paul mean when he said, "*We shall not all sleep*?" (See **John 11:11-14; 1 Cor. 11:27-31**) How is the word "*sleep*" used as a euphemism in the New Testament? What kind of "*change*" will take place to the physical body of believers (both dead and alive) at the sounding of the last trumpet (**51 & 52**)?

4. When do you think the last trumpet will sound and what is the significance of the blast (**vs. 52**)? (See **Exod. 19:16; Matt. 24:31; 1 Thess. 4:16-18; Rev. 11:15**) What promise is given in **verses 51 & 52** to every born-again believer in Christ who is alive at the moment of the rapture? How quickly will this radical transformation take place? What is the most rapidly moving visible part of the human body? How does this connect with the rapture?

5. What radical transformation takes place in **verse 53**? How will this transformation change the relationship between our human bodies and the perpetual enemy of death (**vs. 54**)? Does the thought of your impending death scare you? If so, why? Should death scare the born-again Christian (**54-57**)? Why or why not?

6. According to **verse 54**, "*death is swallowed up in victory.*" When will this victory ultimately take place? (See **Isa. 25:8-9**) Bees have a vicious sting but die shortly after delivering their stinger into a victim. Why is Paul's analogy of a bee's sting such a good analogy of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and His victory over sin, death and Satan? (**vv. 55**)? (See **Gen. 3:15 NIV**)

7. What is the sting of death according to **verses 56**? What does God use to reveal our sin? (See **Rom. 3:19-20**) Who does Paul thank for the victory we have through our Lord Jesus Christ (**vs. 57**)? How should this victory in Christ affect our everyday living today (**vs. 58**)?

MINER'S CORNER – *Manna to live by!*

- The resurrection of Jesus Christ gives every born-again believer a hope that cannot be taken away, from the moment of new birth, the Christian is in a win/win situation.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's stamp of approval upon the redemptive work of Christ; our debt has been paid in full and our sin is forgiven.
- After "*coming and seeing*," we should "*go quickly and tell*" others about "*the Good News*" of Jesus Christ and His resurrection. (See **John 3:16; 14:6**)
- The dead "*in Christ*" will rise at the moment of the rapture and receive their new glorified body prepared for eternity. (See **1 Thess. 4:16**)
- "*A double resurrection*" will occur in the future when the bodies of believers and unbelievers alike are raised physically from the dead to receive their due; "*some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.*" (See **Dan. 12:1-2**)
- Victory over sin and death come only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.