

THREE DAYS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Opening Heaven's Gates

Friday – The Cross

John 13 – 14

THREE DAYS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD!

Last week we considered THURSDAY NIGHT, which from God's perspective was the evening time that began Friday, because God created the days to be evening and morning, one day.

So during the evening that led to Friday, Jesus ate the Last Supper with His disciples, making His final preparations with these men He had called to follow Him, emphasizing again the kind of changes that would take place in their own lives as they trusted and followed Him as their Lord and Savior.

Then, in the climax of that meal, Jesus told them how He was going to accomplish this dramatic change. He said His body would be broken for them for the remission of their sins. His blood would be shed to provide forgiveness and open the New Covenant for them so that they and others could know God personally.

After that, they worshipped God together by singing, and Jesus led them to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. There among the old growth Olive Trees, Jesus cried out to the Father, and then surrendered the human will that had been a part of Him since the miracle of His conception in the womb of a virgin, and the eternal Second Person of the Triune Godhead became the God-Man.

- **Jesus was as fully God as if never man.**
- **Jesus was as fully man as if never God.**

100 % God, 100% Man

So picture with me, Jesus has just prayed to the Father, "Not My will, but Yours be done." He tells His disciples it is time to go because the one who will betray Him is very close. While He was still speaking, Judas leads the soldiers to Jesus, identifies Him with a kiss on the cheek, and Jesus surrenders

- to those who will take Him,
- to those who will beat Him,

- to those who will nail Him to the cross.

The Son of God, by whom and for whom all things were created

- allowed men made in His own image to lay hands upon Him and take Him where He did not want to go.

The Commander of the Lord's Army, who appeared before Joshua and received his worship,

The One who sent a single angel soldier against 185,000 Assyrian soldiers and killed them all,

- let mere mortals escort Him to a series of mock trials,
- permitted brutal beast-like men to tear the flesh from His back with vicious whips,
- allowed a man to drive a spike through each wrist and through His feet while he cried out in excruciating agony.

WHY? **WHY WOULD JESUS SO WILLINGLY GO TO THE CROSS?**

Because on the cross, Jesus would accomplish the very purpose for which He entered the world.

As Jesus told Zacchaeus,

Luke 19:9-10 NKJV And Jesus said to him, "... for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

My friend, on the cross, Jesus prevented billions upon billions of helpless sinners from being cast into indescribable suffering in Hell and in the Lake of Fire.

- **Jesus did this by living the life no other person could ever live.**

Hebrews 4:15 NKJV For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

- The Passover lamb whose blood was put on the door posts and the lintel had to be spotless and without blemish.
- The sacrifice whose blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat on the Day of Atonement had to also be perfect and without defect of any kind.

John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for Jesus, and John introduced the Savior saying,

John 1:29 NKJV ... "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Had Jesus not lived up to that title,

- If when He was hungry in the dessert, having fasted for 40 days, had He listened to the devil's temptation to turn the stones into bread and eat,
- Jesus would not have been a qualified sacrifice in the eyes of the Father.
- And the shedding of His blood would have been without effect.

But Jesus was qualified! He was the perfect Lamb of God.

- He alone kept the Law of God without breaking a single commandment.
- He spoke every word the Father told Him to speak, and
- Did every deed the Father showed Him to do.

And the Father said of Jesus,

Matthew 3:17 NKJV ... "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

By means of the cross, Jesus made salvation available to sinners by bearing the sin and iniquity of every man and woman ever born on this earth.

Not only in His life as He walked the dusty roads of Galilee and Judea, but most especially in His death upon the cross, Jesus proved Himself to be the Messiah, the promised Savior sent by the Father.

Isaiah wrote of this Messiah who would bring salvation by His own suffering and death. Listen to the words of God's prophet.

Isaiah 53:2 ... He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.
6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
12 ... He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.
8 ... For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken
12 ... He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

By His atoning death upon the cross, Jesus not only paid the penalty for sins, **Jesus opened the Gates of Heaven to all who will trust in Him as their Savior and Lord.**

As Jesus approached death, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, sharing with us the testimony of eye witnesses, all report that Jesus cried out with a loud voice.

John alone was close enough to the cross itself to understand what Jesus said. **Jesus cried out "It is finished!"**

Tetélestai in Greek - "the debt is paid" or "Paid in Full."

In the days in which Jesus lived, when a person borrowed money from a lender, he signed a document, much like our promissory notes, acknowledging the debt and promising to repay it.

When the money was returned, the lender would write across the face of the paper "Tetélestai, the debt is paid in full," and would nail it to the door of the former debtor.

Thus far, our consideration of what happened on the cross has been limited to the vicinity of Jerusalem and outside Jerusalem's gate on Mt. Calvary.

But let us give some thought to what happened in Heaven when the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son was spilled to pay the sin debt of all mankind.

God, who is holy, holy, holy, had given sinful man only very limited access to Himself after the sin of Adam and Eve. The first place God allowed this was in the Tabernacle, which was an elaborate, but portable tent that Israel could carry on its journey to the Promised Land.

God allowed Israel to replace the Tabernacle with the Temple, a permanent building, larger and more elaborate than the Tabernacle but still consisting of two primary rooms.

- The Holy Place where priests could enter daily.
- The Holy of Holies, in which the Ark of the Covenant resided.
- These two rooms were separated by a huge curtain which hung from ceiling to floor called the Veil.
- The Veil in the Temple was woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread with golden cherubim woven artistically into the beautiful piece. It was 60 feet high and 30 feet wide. The historian Josephus records that it was the width of a man's palm in thickness, and it took 300 priests to lift it as it was replaced every year.
- Priests could enter the Holy Place on a daily basis, but only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, going behind the Veil, and then only one day a year, on the Day of Atonement.
 - On that day, the High Priest would enter once, carrying the blood of a bull and would sprinkle it upon the Ark of the Covenant once and on the ground seven times to make atonement for his own sins.
 - He would come back a second time with the blood of a goat and sprinkle it upon the Ark of the Covenant and upon the ground to make atonement for the sins of Israel.
- The important thing we need to note here is that **the veil represented the separation between God and man that had been caused by sin.**
 - **Only the High Priest could go beyond the veil.**
 - **He could only go in offering blood in order to make atonement for sinners.**

Now listen to the testimony of Mark, remembering that John says the loud cry was Tetélestai! The debt is paid in full!

Mark 15:37–38 NKJV 37 And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. 38 Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

The veil was torn from top to bottom!

- Josephus said that not even two great stallions tied to each side of the veil would be able to pull it apart.

- Only God could rend the veil!
- That was why it was torn from top to bottom.

Now, that is interesting to be sure, but what does it mean.

It means that **with Jesus' death through the shedding of His blood on the cross, the gates to Heaven were opened!**

Hebrews 9:11–12 NKJV 11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

CONCLUSION: I have called this series of messages, THREE DAYS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD.

Right now we are still just approaching the end of Day One.

- It began at sundown and will end at the next sundown on Friday afternoon.
- By the time the sun sets, Jesus' body will be in the tomb of Joseph of Arimethea.
- So, Day One of THREE DAYS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD, and oh what changes have already been made.
- "Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin." Now the blood of the Lamb of God, the perfect sacrifice, has been shed, and the penalty for sin forever pain in full – all in one day, at the cross.
- Since Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden no sinful man could abide in God's presence, now the Gates of Heaven have been opened wide to receive any who put their trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

HAVE YOU ALLOWED WHAT JESUS DID ON THE CROSS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE?

Will you go to heaven or hell when you die?

Does what Jesus did on the cross effect your life day to day?