

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW – THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS’ LIFE ON EARTH

Week 10 – Divine Explosion!

March 28, 2023

- Jesus’ body encased in spices laid in the tomb.
- Jesus’ soul was in “Paradise” (Luke 23:42-43). And, during this time, Jesus preached to the spirits in prison (I Pet. 3:18-19).
- He had been crucified two days before. When Jesus yielded up His spirit the veil of the temple had been torn from top to bottom...the veil that had separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.
- Now there was direct access to God the Father through the shed blood of God the Son, the Messiah/Redeemer Jesus!

In synagogues on the regular Sabbath, on Saturday following Passover...the day prior to Resurrection Sunday (in synagogues today and in Jesus’ day), the Song of Solomon/ the Song of Songs was and continues to be read. Jewish people call the Song of Solomon “the Holy of Holies”. WHAT had occurred on Passover at Jesus’ crucifixion? The Holy of Holies was exposed!

Consider what Solomon wrote in the Song of Solomon...

- Song of Solomon 4:6 – “Until the cool of the day, when the shadow flees away, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.”  
The Bridegroom was anointed for burial – to die for the bride.
- Song of Solomon 5:1 – “I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse. . . .” – which many interpret an invitation to his garden.
- Rabbinic/traditional Judaism - The Song of Songs talks of the love between husband and wife — an analogy for the passionate love between Gd, the supernal groom, and His beloved bride Israel. This "romance" began to bloom and flower when He descended to take His bride out of Egypt on Passover.
  - In Scripture, the first Passover in Egypt speaks of freedom, rescue, deliverance. It is fulfilled in the crucifixion of Jesus – the shedding of the blood of the ultimate sacrifice – the perfect Lamb of God!

Who is Jesus? Who is Jesus to you?

The Tomb is Empty. Many don’t know what to do with an empty tomb! Many don’t care about an empty tomb.

Matt. 28:6 – that the angel declared to the grieving women who came to the tomb...  
*He is not here; for He is risen, as He said*

What does resurrection mean?

The Greek word means “to stand or to rise up” – to raise from the dead.  
Resurrection means bringing someone back to life – from physical death!

What do we know about resurrection? We celebrate Jesus' resurrection. If asked, can we explain resurrection...His resurrection?

Did the children of Israel in Jesus' day know about resurrection?

2

LAZARUS was sick. The sisters sent word to Jesus.

*John 11:5-6 - Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was... Jesus then told the disciples, "Let us go to Judea. Lazarus is dead"*

Lazarus was in the tomb four days when Jesus arrived. According to Jewish tradition, a person's soul remained with his/her dead body for three days. After three days the soul departed. With Jesus' delay in arriving - no one could deny that Lazarus was INDEED dead and...no one could deny that Jesus INDEED raised Lazarus from the dead!

*Martha had met Jesus on His way and said, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' <sup>24</sup> Martha said to Him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die he shall live. <sup>26</sup> And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*

Resurrection is a truth from the pages of the OT. (Job 14:13-14; Job 19:26; Psa. 16:10; Psa. 22:19-21; Psa. 23; Psa. 24:7-10; Isa. 25:8; Isa. 26:19; Isa. 53:10-11; Eze. 37:1-14; Dan. 7:9-14; Dan. 12:2; Jonah 2:5; Hosea 5:15-Hosea 6:1-2)

Jesus gives life. He is life! Death has no power over Him and we who are Jesus followers share in His TRIUMPH over death – death has no power over us.

*I am the resurrection and the life...Jesus told Martha and then asked, Do you believe this?" GREAT QUESTION – we need to ask that question of people*

*<sup>27</sup> She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Anointed One, the MESSIAH, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."*

The Jewish people knew of resurrection. The Hebrew Scriptures speak of resurrection.

In Gen. 22 we read that when God told Abraham to offer up his only son, Isaac, whom he loved. God told Abraham to offer Isaac up as a burnt offering...a sacrifice. We're told that Abraham was convinced that God was able to raise Isaac up from the dead (Heb. 11:19). Abraham knew about resurrection. Abraham looked toward the future (i.e.

promise of a son). God had made promises to Abraham that had not been fulfilled in his life. In Heb. 11:10, we're told that Abraham *waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God* – the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9-21).

And, Job was thought to be a contemporary of Abraham's. What did Job believe?

Job 14:13-14 - Job, who suffered greatly and did NOT know why, said - *Oh, that You, God, would hide me in the grave. That You, God, would appoint me a set time, and remember me!* <sup>14</sup>*If a man dies shall he live again? ...I will wait, 'til my change comes.* . That change – resurrection.

And then Job assuredly declares in Job 19:26 - *And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God.* Job expressed the renewal, the restoration of the whole man after death. A glorified body! RESURRECTION!

3

In the OT we often read an expression re: when people physically died, they “slept with their fathers.” “Sleep” implies an awakening from sleep/from death. It speaks to resurrection!

The truth of resurrection continues to unfold in the Hebrew Scriptures.... We find Daniel stating (Dan. 12:2) - *And many of those who sleep* (those who have physically died)... *those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.* Everyone will live eternally. The question is – where will we live? With God or apart from God?

We find resurrection in the OT, but what was going through the minds of the Jewish people in the spring of 29 AD?

Mary Magdalene witnessed the crucifixion as recorded in three of the four gospels. Mary Magdalene witnessed Joseph of Arimathea placing Jesus in the tomb, so she knew where Jesus lay.

John 20:1-30 - *Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <sup>2</sup> Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.'* <sup>3</sup>*Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple (John) and were going to the tomb. <sup>4</sup> So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb (Peter barged in!); and he saw the linen cloths*

lying there, <sup>7</sup> and the handkerchief (face cloth) that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed (to place his trust in what he had seen)... <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. <sup>11</sup> But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. <sup>12</sup> And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. <sup>13</sup> Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.' Mary does not speak of Jesus' rising from the dead! Mary appears to have no thought re: resurrection. She's broken hearted over the ending of Jesus' life! <sup>14</sup> Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.' <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' (which is to say, Teacher). Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

4

#### Why is the resurrection of Jesus significant?

- The resurrection speaks of the immense power of God.
- The resurrection of Jesus validates Who Jesus claimed to be, God the Son, the Messiah, the Redeemer. His resurrection authenticated His ministry (Matt. 16:1-4). The resurrection of Jesus which was witnessed by over 500 people at one time (I Cor. 15:3-8) in addition to others provides irrefutable proof that He is the Savior of the world.
- The resurrection of Jesus proves His sinless character and divine nature. Psa. 16:10 – *You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption!*
- The resurrection of Jesus validates the OT prophecies that foretold of Jesus' suffering and resurrection (Act 17:2-3)
- If Jesus did not resurrect, we have no hope that we will resurrect either (I Cor. 15:14-19).
- Through Jesus Who said, *I am the resurrection and the life* (John 11:25) – we who are believers in Jesus share His triumph over death (I John 5:11-12)

#### When did Jesus rise from the dead?

God had told the children of Israel that within the celebration of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, they were to celebrate the Feast of First Fruits.

Lev. 23:9-11 – God told Moses to tell the children of Israel – during the Passover/ Unleavened Bread celebration – *When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. <sup>11</sup> He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.*

In I Cor. 15:20 – Paul declares *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.* Jesus’ resurrection guarantees the resurrection of believers in Him!

On that Feast of Firstfruits on the day following the Sabbath of Passover week (the regular Sabbath [on Sat.]) which was Sunday – 3 days after Jesus’ crucifixion – the barley harvest within Israel was celebrated. Jesus had told His people - *unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain* (John 12:24).

- A delegation of men from the Sanhedrin would go into the barley field across from the Kidron Valley. They would wait, while it was still dark, for the first pinpoint of light to come up on the back of the Mount of Olives (in the east). When they saw the first pinpoint of sunlight, they would ceremonially harvest the first stalks of grain. These were the firstfruits.
- All four Gospels tell us that the resurrection was at the very “crack of dawn” – while it was still dark (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). The very hour of the very day of the year when the first stalks of barley were being harvested and then brought into the temple...Jesus rose from the dead! I Cor. 15:20, 23 – Jesus is our firstfruits. His resurrection guarantees the resurrection of believers in Him.

What were other followers of Jesus thinking re: Jesus talk of His rising from the dead?

5

In Luke 24 we read of two men who were walking home to Emmaus. They were despondent, having left Jerusalem on the third day following Jesus’ crucifixion! In Matt. 16:21 Jesus had told them, *...I will rise on the third day.*

The two men talked together about the events that had happened. Jesus drew near. Scripture tells us that their eyes were restrained.

Luke 24:17-27 – Jesus asked, *What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?* <sup>18</sup> *Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, ‘Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?’* <sup>19</sup> *And He said to them, ‘What things?’* *So they said to Him, ‘The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in*

deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. <sup>21</sup> But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. <sup>22</sup> Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. <sup>23</sup> When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. <sup>24</sup> And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.’ <sup>25</sup> Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Jesus reprimanded them for not knowing the words the prophets had spoken! <sup>26</sup> Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” <sup>27</sup> And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them in ALL the Scriptures (the OT) the things concerning Himself.

As Jesus sat at the table with these two men, Jesus took bread, blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to them – and their eyes were opened and they knew Him!

The two returned to Jerusalem that evening, found the eleven and those who were with them gathering together, and said, “The Lord is risen indeed....”

Returning to John 20...after reading about Mary Magdalene...

<sup>19</sup> Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, (Sunday, the day following the regular Sabbath) when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ <sup>20</sup> When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.... <sup>24</sup> Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> The other disciples therefore said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ So he said to them, ‘Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ <sup>26</sup> And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ <sup>27</sup> Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ <sup>28</sup> And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’ Who are those who have not seen but believe? All who have come to faith after Jesus’ ascension to heaven.

The most powerful prophecy that was ever fulfilled is the empty tomb. The most literally explosive miracle, Jesus' bodily resurrection, offers eternal hope to mankind. Have you received that gift of hope?

What will we remember? What will we cling to from Scripture re: the last week of Jesus' life on earth?

Jesus and His friends, the 11 disciples, left the Upper Room after their last Passover Seder together. The final encounter with the enemy on this earth began. It was a battle. It was a battle. And, it began as they walked to Gethsemane. In Gethsemane...Jesus prayed alone. We need to know – and always remember – that in His final prayer, Jesus prayed for us. You and I were on His mind...in His thoughts...in His heart. (“I Was in His Mind” lyrics on page 7)

John 17:20-23 - He saw us in our garden of Gethsemane (oil press) when life is crushing us. Jesus prayed alone. He didn't want us to be alone. Jesus wants us to know that He identifies with us – then, now, every moment!

He asked His Father if the cup might pass from Him (Luke 23:42)...Jesus accepted God's loving answer – “No”!

At some moment during that night an angel came to minister to Him, to strengthen Him (Luke 22:43).

As you know, I've not traveled to Israel. I read a bit about the Church of the Holy Sepulcher... the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem is the final resting place of Jesus. The renovated Tomb is where Jesus is thought to be buried.

In 326 AD Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, came to Jerusalem in search of the hill on which Jesus was crucified. Helena demolished the pagan temple and built a chapel in its place – resulting in a hill of sacrifice hidden in ornateness.

Beneath an altar in what is now labeled as a “Cathedral” is a gold-plated hole in which the cross supposedly was lodged. Three crucified icons – art pieces with elongated faces hang on crosses behind the altar. Gold lanterns, Madonna statues (of Mary Jesus' mother), candles and dim lights take away any thought of being GRIPPED by entering what is thought to be the location of Jesus' tomb. Steps descend to the tomb. Long lines wait to look at the golden burial tomb. An elaborate sepulcher/burial chamber marks the traditional spot of Jesus' tomb with forty-three lamps hanging above the entrance. A candelabra sits in front of the tomb which is solid marble decorated with golden leaves.

I had heard that one tour guide took a small party behind all the gold, marble, and lights...through a nondescript entrance into a plain room. From that plain room there was a small opening into a rock-hewn tomb. The height was four

feet, the width – the same. Three steps across the rock floor brought you to the other side of the less than simple cave.

The tomb was dirty. It had not been cared for...it had been forgotten!

The visitors had to stoop and look inside. Their response – AMAZEMENT not uttered! The Light of the World was laid in a dark, claustrophobic room.

7

Joseph of Arimathea rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb...”and departed.” Such a heart wrenching description from Scripture (Matt. 27:59-60). And then the tomb was sealed shut by guards.

The silence among the tourists was deafening.

God put Himself in a tomb like this. God in a tomb!

Our Redeemer came humbly to this earth, making Himself of no reputation. How FAR He came, tho’, for you and for me! How far? It wouldn’t be a progression in life that we would readily choose.

From being placed in the manger/the feeding trough in the tower of the flock in Bethlehem Ephrathah where the lambs were kept that would be sacrificed in the temple...to His childhood and early adulthood days in Nazareth known as a germ of a town...Jesus accepted dying a criminal’s death on on a rough Roman execution cross which then led Him to be laid out in a dark, dank cave. God in a tomb.

We need to go beyond the gilded, the ornate to find the dark, dank tomb. And we need to stoop down and look. We need to look closely on the walls... where we very well may see the charred marks of a divine explosion!

### QUESTIONS

Who is Jesus to you?

### HOMEWORK

ENJOY the remainder of the spring and the summer, should Jesus tarry!

Fall Semester:

Where is Jesus Now? Why has Jesus sent the Holy Spirit?

I Was in His Mind

I was in His mind before the world was made  
I was in His mind before earth's frame was laid  
Because He knew me...because He loved me

I was in His thoughts the night He prayed for me.  
I was in His thoughts before Gethsemane  
Because He sought me...because He loved me

I was in His heart when Calvary's hill He climbed  
I was in His heart when He died for all mankind  
Because He loved me...because He sought me

I am in His mind, and soon He'll come for me  
I am in His mind...with Him in heaven I'll be  
Because He wants me...because He loves me  
Because He loves me

A possible harmony of the narratives of the resurrection of Christ and His post-resurrection appearances, in chronological order:

Jesus is buried, as several women watch (Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42).

The tomb is sealed and a guard is set (Matthew 27:62-66).

At least 3 women, including Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, prepare spices to go to the tomb (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1).

An angel descends from heaven, rolls the stone away, and sits on it. There is an earthquake, and the guards faint (Matthew 28:2-4).

The women arrive at the tomb and find it empty. Mary Magdalene leaves the other women there and runs to tell the disciples (John 20:1-2).

The women still at the tomb see two angels who tell them that Jesus is risen and who instruct them to tell the disciples to go to Galilee (Matthew 28:5-7; Mark 16:2-8; Luke 24:1-8).

The women leave to bring the news to the disciples (Matthew 28:8).

The guards, having roused themselves, report the empty tomb to the authorities, who bribe the guards to say the body was stolen (Matthew 28:11-15).

Mary the mother of James and the other women, on their way to find the disciples, see Jesus (Matthew 28:9-10).

The women relate what they have seen and heard to the disciples (Luke 24:9-11).

Peter and John run to the tomb, see that it is empty, and find the grave clothes (Luke 24:12; John 20:2-10).

Mary Magdalene returns to the tomb. She sees the angels, and then she sees Jesus (John 20:11-18).

Later the same day, Jesus appears to Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5).

Still on the same day, Jesus appears to Cleopas and another disciple on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32).

That evening, two disciples report the event to the Eleven in Jerusalem (Luke 24:32-35).

9

Jesus appears to ten disciples—Thomas is missing (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25).

Jesus appears to all eleven disciples—Thomas included (John 20:26-31).

Jesus appears to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-25) – who had returned to fishing - ????

Jesus was seen by over 500 brethren at once (1 Corinthians 15:6).

Jesus appears to His half-brother James (1 Corinthians 15:7).

Jesus commissions His disciples (Matthew 28:16-20).

Jesus teaches His disciples the Scriptures and promises to send the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:4-5).

Jesus ascends into heaven (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:6-12).