

Luke 23:44-24:12

Chapter 23

Verses 44-49: Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last.

So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!"

And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

--(44-45) Luke now introduces two miraculous events surrounding the cross of Christ. Both would have been wild claims to make if untrue at a time when there were still living eyewitnesses!

--First, Luke describes a darkness that lasts from noon (**the sixth hour**) until three (**the ninth hour**). Luke says that darkness was **over all the earth**—which could mean global, or it could mean *over all the land* as the Greek phrase is used in **Lk. 21:23**. Either way, what is happening is clearly supernatural.

--Luke says **the sun was darkened**. We know it could not have been a literal eclipse because Passover would mean a time of the full moon. Also, an eclipse wouldn't last three hours. Many commentators refer to this as some type of creation response to the murder of the Creator. I don't know, but Jesus did say the creation would respond if humans were quiet at His Triumphal entry (**Lk. 19:40: the stones would immediately cry out**).

Amos 8:9: "And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord GOD, "That I will make the sun go down at noon, And I will darken the earth in broad daylight;

--We know so little about that darkness. The longest and darkest three hours on the face of the earth. We do know that one cry echoes through the dark.

***Matthew 27:46: "My God, My God, Why have You forsaken Me?"**

--What we know, is that somewhere in that darkness, the ultimate spiritual transaction took place. His life became a ransom for many. He was forsaken so we could be accepted in the Beloved. *Never allow Satan to claim we are forsaken in our sin—Jesus was for us!*

--Luke mentions a second miraculous thing that happens somewhere in those three hours: **The veil of the temple was torn in two.**

--This was also clearly supernatural. The veil referenced was clearly the inner veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies in the Temple, as is explained in **Heb. 6:19; 9:3; 10:19-22**.

--What a claim to make! Every Jew would have known if this was true or false. That curtain was a double curtain over ninety feet high, and it was torn from top to bottom (**Mt. 27:51; Mk. 15:38**).

--God tearing the veil from top to bottom made two things clear: First, the temple was no longer the dwelling place of God Almighty (**Jn. 4:21-24**).

--Second, access into the presence of God was now open to all through the work of Jesus Christ (**Rom. 5:1-2; Heb. 10:19-22**).

--**(46)** Having walked through death for us, true death in all its facets (physical and spiritual), Jesus now gives up His spirit willingly.

--We saw already that Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, knows what it is to be forsaken of God. Something that you and I need never know. *We now only face the shadow of death!*

--But here, it is comforting to know that Jesus Christ, as the Son of Man, knows what it is to breathe a last breath in a human frame. He died physically.

--**(47)** Luke places this Centurion before us as the first-fruits of Gentile salvation! The rejected Jewish King is accepted by a Gentile. An impartial observer *saw what happened*. . . (no doubt, Luke is speaking of all the things that happened through the process of Jesus' crucifixion) and believed in the righteousness of the Son of Man.

--**(48)** The previously hostile crowd leaves troubled and grieved. They are stricken in conscience, and the seeds of the Spirit in their hearts likely become part of the harvest at Pentecost and the gospel's movement throughout the book of Acts.

--**(49)** We know some like John and Mary were closer (**Jn. 19:25**), but others stood back and watched. Not knowing what to do, but only knowing they shouldn't be far. How blessed would they be in a short while that they stayed close to Jesus even in His most difficult and confusing time?!

Verses 50-56: Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

And women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

--**(50-51)** Luke now introduces us to Joseph of Arimathea. The Scriptures describe him as a just and good man. He is also noted for having rejected the opinion of the religious leaders regarding Jesus, and for being someone who personally waited for the kingdom of God like Simeon and Anna.

--To this point, he has been a secret disciple of Jesus.

John 19:38: *After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews. . . *

--It is not love to Jesus that makes secret disciples. It is fear of man. Yet, something about this moment broke through Joseph's dominating fears. Maybe he just felt the Sanhedrin had gone too far and it was time to publicly separate with ***their decision and deed?*** Maybe it was something about the death of Christ? Maybe he couldn't even tell us if he was here? Whatever it was, the work of the Spirit is obvious as love begins to lead instead of fear.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15: *For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.*

--Graciously, and wonderfully, the Holy Spirit leaves out Joseph's past fears and focuses on his present courage and care for Jesus. ***Stop being a secret disciple if you are one!***

--**(52)** Joseph, along with Nicodemus (**Jn. 19:39-42**) goes before Pilate and asks for Jesus' body.

--**(53)** They remove the body from the cross, and care for it by following the typical burial customs of the day (**Jn. 19:40**).

--Once again (**22:37**), by being laid in Joseph's own tomb, Christ becomes a fulfillment of prophecy.

Isaiah 53:9: *And they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death,*

--This also becomes an important part of the witness of Jesus' resurrection. His body was not tossed in a mass grave or burned. It was placed in a tomb, alone, and that tomb became empty.

--**(54)** Though their preparation was loving, it seems to have been hasty so that it could be completed before the Sabbath. The women who watched from afar felt the need to finish the job of anointing Jesus' body.

--**(55-56)** Again, the Holy Spirit recognizes women loving and serving in the background. Likely, they kept their distance to respect Jesus' body and its preparation.

Chapter 24

Verses 1-12: *Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'"*

And they remembered His words. Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

--(1) **Now.** . . or *But* introduces us to something new. There is a change in the story. The most dramatic, significant, and unique change that ever took place on the face of this earth. Jesus Christ is risen out from among the dead!

--Each of the gospel writers recount unique details of the resurrection:

1) Matthew focuses on Jesus' Messianic claims and particularly zeros in on the authority and power of the risen Christ lying behind the Great Commission.

2) Mark, having focused on the activity of the Lord Jesus, ends by emphasizes His miraculous works continuing through His church as the gospel goes to every creature.

3) Luke establishes how the fact of the resurrection overcame unbelief through the word of Jesus Christ, which was also the basis of the apostolic gospel message.

4) John focuses on faith in the Son of God conquering the trials of unbelief in His own disciples—particularly Thomas and Peter.

--In this chapter, Luke is going to give us the resurrection in three scenes: morning, afternoon, and evening. Each carries similar themes of unbelief being challenged and overcome by faith in the Word of God.

--Morning **(1-12)**: The women forget the Word of Christ and must be reminded by angels.

--Afternoon **(13-35)**: The two men on the road to Emmaus forget all the prophets had spoken and need to be reminded by Jesus!

--Evening **(36-49)**: The disciples have doubting hearts and need to be reminded of the words Jesus spoke to them while He was still with them before He leaves them.

--Each in scene we see the Living Christ working supernaturally through the Living Word.

--***on the first day of the week.*** . . Which would be Sunday. *Meeting on Sunday morning became the custom of the early church: **Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Rev. 1:10.***

--***Very early in the morning.*** . . Piecing together the accounts, the women seem to have left for the tomb while it was still dark and arrived after sunrise (**Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:2; Jn. 20:1**).

--It seems they were unaware of the tomb being sealed and guarded by a Roman guard, but they were concerned about their ability to move the stone (**Mk. 16:3**).

--In the simplicity of these dear women, we see love without knowledge. God is patient with their love but not satisfied. He wants them to be filled with faith and understanding!

--**(2-3)** They arrive to find the tomb open and empty. The stone was moved, and the soldiers had fled due to an earthquake and angels (**Mt. 28:2-4**).

--The reference to the missing, risen Christ is the first time in the NT where He is called ***the Lord Jesus***. *All the authority and power of heaven is now His as the Son of God and the Son of Man.*

--(4) ***Greatly perplexed***. . . is probably something of an understatement. The Lord gives us supernatural help when we need it!

--(5-7) Heaven's perspective is so unique. To the angels, things are simple and clear. Heaven is focused on Jesus and His Word. When heaven speaks to earth, it reminds earth that the Lord Jesus had already prepared them for this very moment (**Lk. 9:21-22; 44; 18:31-34**)! *As His word still prepares us to be fully equipped for every good work!*

--The most powerful reason for their faith was the word of Jesus.

Romans 10:17: *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

--(8) They had heard this word, but they hadn't used it. How easily we forget and need to be reminded again and again! *We need faith in the word of God and reminders not merely to *believe*, but to *believe and live accordingly*!*

Hebrews 2:1: *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*

--Reminders should not always be tedious. They provide a measure of safety!

Philippians 3:1: *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.*

--We must be wary of getting overly dependent on "new" information. My Christian life grows through faith and obedience in the word of God, not merely by obtaining so-called new spiritual insights.

--(9-10) These women then do what they were told to do (**Mt. 28:7; Mk. 16:7**) and become witnesses of the Word to the apostles.

--(11) The apostolic unbelief is another testimony of the divine nature of the gospel and a witness of the resurrection. What else, but a living Christ, could have changed these men so drastically?

--(12) Peter is not satisfied with the testimony of another and needs to see for himself.