

THE SIGHTS OF GOOD FRIDAY

Text: Matthew 27:32-54

Key Word: Beholding

Key Thought: Where Should Our Eyes Be Focussed Upon this Good Friday?

Always Been With Me

** The woman's husband had been slipping in and out of a coma for several months, yet she had stayed by his bedside every single day. One day, when he came to, he motioned for her to come nearer.

As she sat by him, he whispered, eyes full of tears, *"You know what? You have been with me all through the bad times. When I got fired, you were there to support me. When my business failed, you were there. When I got shot, you were by my side. When we lost the house, you stayed right here. When my health started failing, you were still by my side . . . You know what?"*

"What dear?" She gently asked, smiling as her heart began to fill with warmth.

"I think you're bad luck."

**

Hank Ridley

We are told that what we see and how we see things are important in life. I agree. As I was reading the events that took place around the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord I noticed a certain focus that escaped my view before this time. I not only recognized what I was seeing but also what was hidden from the views I've created in my mind.

These I suppose are some of the mysteries that the Apostle's wrote about thousands of years ago. It often takes a series of events to solidify certain truths into our memory bank. When it comes to the climatic ending of our Lord's earthly ministry, we need to study the Scriptures with intensity so we don't miss any important details. Let me share with you some of the insights that were unveiled on Good Friday.

What Was Seen (And Not Seen) on the Day of Christ's Crucifixion?

I. WHAT THE CROWD SAW

II. WHAT THE CLERGYMEN SAW

III. WHAT THE CENTURION SAW

I. WHAT THE CROWD SAW

A. One Who Couldn't Carry His Own Cross (Matthew 27:32)

Jesus had been up all night. He had spent the earlier part of it in a time of intense prayer that even caused His blood vessels to break open (Luke 22:44). He was seized and arrested and made to stand before a Jewish court of mockery and then repeatedly assaulted (Matthew 26:50-68).

In a state of sleep deprivation He was led to the Governors quarters. There Pilate interrogated Him knowing that He was an innocent man. Another misuse of justice took place as a known murderer was released and Jesus was brutally flogged (Matthew 27:11-26).

Pilate then handed Jesus over to his bloodthirsty soldiers who led Him into the Praetorium to surround him in a gang-like brutality. Here He is stripped, beaten; a crown of thorns thrust into His head, spit upon, and beaten on His head time and time again. Just as His blood was allowed to coagulate to his clothes, they once again ripped them away from His body (Matthew 27:27-31). They then led Him out to carry His cross to Golgotha.

All the crowds saw was a man who couldn't carry His own cross. What a weakling some must have said in their gestures of mockery. Is this the One who could lift the weight of the world upon His shoulders? Could He truly be the Son of God who spoke the world into its existence? Was it not one of His angels who slew 185,000 Assyrians in one night to bring deliverance to king Hezekiah (II Kings 19:35)?

Jesus didn't fail to carry His own cross. He never asked for someone else to lift this unbearable load after draining most of His strength. He kept on carrying it until the accumulated punishment of His body reached its climax. It seems that the Roman soldiers recognized that they were pushing the line of punishment too far. In their thirst for blood they chose another to carry the cross in order that Jesus would make it to the place of cruel crucifixion. Jesus didn't fail to carry His cross. He was not defeated in His approach to Calvary.

“Defeat is not the worst of failures. Not to have tried is the true failure.”

B.E. Woodberry
<http://www.bible.org/illus/d/d-21.htm>

I. WHAT THE CROWD SAW

B. One Who Couldn't Bury His Own Loss (Matthew 27:39,40,57-61)

Others found it hard to believe that anyone could kill the Son of God. If Jesus was God, how could anyone kill Him? God is eternal - isn't He? He has no beginning **and no end**. But this **God who was also fully man** had to die in order to fulfill the full payment for our sins. He was fully God and fully man in one person.

It's so unbelievable that if the Scriptures didn't declare it, we would find it impossible to accept. No one before or since in the history of the world has been declared as God in the flesh. There is always a purpose behind everything that God does. This was such an amazing event in history that it required this miracle of the incarnation to bring it about.

*"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is the devil –
15. And free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."*

Hebrews 2:14,15

The prophet Isaiah declared that Jesus would be buried not in a king's tomb or a place of dignity but rather alongside those who had died in their sins. He was also though buried among the rich of Jerusalem's society.

"He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth."

Isaiah 53:9

Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man who was a member of the Sanhedrin. Scholars believe that he prepared this tomb for Jesus's body so he and Nicodemus could carry the Lord's body from Golgotha. Joseph would not have prepared it for himself because it was too close to this place of execution.

By removing the dead body of Jesus from the cross both Joseph and Nicodemus would have defiled themselves. **They were not allowed to partake in the Passover meal.** It didn't seem to concern them because they had found the precious Lamb of God!

II. WHAT THE CLERGYMEN SAW

A. One Who Could Not Save Himself (Matthew 27:41-43)

We find it difficult to imagine that the chief priest, teachers of the law and elders had such animosities toward Jesus. How could anyone not find at least a little sympathy for someone who is dying such an excruciating death? Their hearts must have been as cold as ice.

“‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘but he can’t save himself! He’s the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.’”

Matthew 27:42

These clergymen were missing the whole point of His death. He never intended to save Himself. He came to save sinners. He was offering His life as a ransom for sinners. Since their hearts were so hard they couldn’t see that they were as sinful as others who needed to come to a saving knowledge of God.

By staying on the cross He was proving He was the King of Israel. The King that Israel was waiting for was one who could offer salvation. If He came off the cross, He would prove that He wasn’t the Messiah. By staying nailed to the cross He proved He was the Son of God. Isn’t it amazing that the Jewish leaders couldn’t see what the Romans even declared (Matthew 27:37).

“It is precisely that He wouldn’t come down that we believe in him.”

General Booth

B. One Who Could Save Multitudes (Matthew 27:51,52 cf. vs 45)

The Bible states that from the sixth hour (noon) to the ninth hour that darkness came upon the earth (Matthew 27:45). During the ninth hour (or 3:00 p.m.) the priests were just beginning their final preparations for the evening sacrifice. At this time Jesus surrendered His Spirit to His heavenly Father. A remarkable event took place.

Let me paint the picture for you. The temple was filled with priests going about their normal duties. It was a day just like every other day in their minds. But something happened that shook their line of thinking.

II. WHAT THE CLERGYMEN SAW (Contd.)

B. One Who Could Save Multitudes (Matthew 27:51,52 cf. vs 45) (Contd.)

In a moment of time these priests were able to look into the Holy of holies and yet not die. The veil that no man or priest except the high priest could enter by had been ripped from the top to the bottom. **These priests were ushered into the presence of the hidden love of God when up to that point it had been barred.**

At the same moment the tombs of godly people were opened to allow their resurrected bodies to appear. **The tomb had lost its power; death had lost its grip; and the grave was no longer a terror. It was swallowed up in victory. Because He died, we can live forever.** This is how the Bible states this happened.

“At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.

52. The tombs were broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.

53. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus’s resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.”

Matthew 27:51

III. WHAT THE CENTURION SAW

A. One Who Could Live Up to His Name (Matthew 27:50-54)

The Unveiling of our Lord’s identity began to unfold for those who had eyes to see from noon to 3:00 p.m. (Matthew 27:50). **Isn’t it interesting that what is blinding to some becomes almost unbearable in radiant light to others?**

1. The Darkness - After Jesus had been hanging for three hours on the cross, an eerie darkness covered the land for the next three hours. It was NOT an eclipse since they occur for just a few minutes. The sun was darkened at the time when it normally reached its zenith of light-giving. **The rest of God’s natural order in the universe was left undisturbed.**

“Despite the seeming discordance in the natural order caused the miracle, not one aspect of the vast symphony of creation was strained, and not a note in the tune of creation went flat.”

William R. Nicholson
“*The Six Miracles of Calvary*”
Discovery House Publishers, Originally 1927; Edited 2001, p. 19

III. WHAT THE CENTURION SAW

A. One Who Could Live Up to His Name (Matthew 27:50-54) (Contd.)

2. The Earthquake - When the earth starts shaking from under your feet you begin to realize just how helpless you really are. Not only were the centurion's eyes opened but also his senses and especially his heart.

“When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

Matthew 27:54

Jesus made the centurion the first Roman fruit that came as a result of the cross. The thief (who was probably not a Roman since few Romans were crucified) was the other one who was drawn by the power of the cross.

*“But I. When I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.
33. He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.”*

John 12:32,33

The Centurion was drawn to the Son of God. The sign above the Lord's head (John 19:19) stated that He was from Nazareth and that He was the KING OF THE JEWS. It was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek to encompass the main languages of the day.

What Are You Focussing upon this Good Friday?

Don't Follow the Crowd

Don't Turn Toward Religion

Do Humble Yourself and Acknowledge and Accept the Son of God

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Date: Apr 15/22 (Good Friday)

Place: FCA

Time: 10:00 Am

Song: Jesus, Lover of my Soul (Jesus I Will Never Let You go) - G

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B. One Who Couldn't Bury His Own Loss (Matthew 27:39,40,57-61) - *Hebrews 2:14,15; Isaiah 53:9*

II. WHAT THE CLERGYMEN SAW

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B. One Who Could Save Multitudes (Matthew 27:51,52 cf. vs 45) - *Matthew 27:45*

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A. One Who Could Live Up to His Name (Matthew 27:50-54)

1. The Darkness -

2. The Earthquake - *John 12:32,33; John 19:19*

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