

Three Days in Jerusalem

Esther 4:1-17; Matthew 16:21-28 / Psalm 49:1-20

I. Jesus Predicted His Passion

A. Jesus outlined the price of the substitutionary atonement. From that time forth *began Jesus to shew* unto his disciples, *how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things* of the elders and chief priests and scribes, *and be killed*, and be *raised again the third day*. (MATTHEW 16:21) The chief priests (the Sadducean spiritual nobility), the (Pharisaic) teachers and the elders (the worldly aristocracy) are the three groups comprising the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish authority of Roman times.

B. Jesus taught; the doctrines of CRUCIFIXION and RESURRECTION were not allusions or inferences developed by grieving followers after the cross. And *he began to teach them*, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. (MARK 8:31)

C. The ATONEMENT was public knowledge before the events; the enemies of grace understood well enough to attempt to kill Him and still prevent the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies. Saying, Sir, *we remember that that deceiver said*, while he was yet alive, *After three days I will rise again*. (MATTHEW 27:63)

II. The Passion Was Too Counterintuitive for the Disciples

A. Peter could not accept the inevitable. Then *Peter* took him, and *began to rebuke* him, saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee*. (MATTHEW 16:22)

B. Doubting the statements of God has a bad root. Now *the serpent was more subtle* than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, *Yea, hath God said*, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (GENESIS 3:1)

C. Jesus drew the obvious reference to Satan and original sin. But he turned, and said unto Peter, *Get thee behind me, Satan*: thou art an offence unto me: for *thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men*. (MATTHEW 16:23)

D. Sadly, the world's religious leaders commonly seem virtuous and wise but sin brings deadly consequences. Therefore *it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works*. (2 CORINTHIANS 11:15)

E. A spiritual mind can understand, but a mind trapped in worldly thinking cannot grasp the reality of the atonement. For *they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit*. For *to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace*. (ROMANS 8:5-6)

F. Live by spiritual priorities. *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth*. (COLOSSIANS 3:2)

G. The great stories of Scripture often turn on willingness to enter into the opportunities of Providence when the evidence which matters to the world point elsewhere. Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and *so will I go in unto the king*, which *is not according to the law*: and *if I perish*, I perish. (ESTHER 4:16)

III. Jesus Made His Suffering Personal for Believers

A. Grace never comes cheap. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me*. (MATTHEW 16:24)

B. The biblical way of success is the opposite of the way the world thinks. For *whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.* (MATTHEW 16:25)

C. What is genuinely valuable? For *what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* (MATTHEW 16:26)

D. When the accounting comes, everyone will understand what was actually valuable in life. For *the Son of man shall come* in the glory of his Father with his angels; and *then he shall reward every man according to his works.* (MATTHEW 16:27)

E. Remembering Jesus' prediction, the church fled Jerusalem as the Roman army destroyed Israel in 70 AD and no Christian died in that horrible siege. Verily I say unto you, *There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* (MATTHEW 16:28)

F. What was strange and frightening has become the core of the Christian message to a dying and hopeless world. For *I delivered unto you* first of all that which I also received, *how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures*; And that he was buried, *and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures*: (1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-4)

G. The story had been God's message all along. Surely *he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* But he was *wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities*: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for *he was cut off out of the land of the living*: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was *any* deceit in his mouth. Yet *it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin*, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.* (ISAIAH 53:4-11)