

## **JESUS IS THE CENTER OF SALVATION PROPHECY**

Our sermon for Good Friday evening is formed by these translated Words:

*For these things happened that the scripture might be fulfilled, "His bones were not broken," and again (a) different scripture says, "They will look upon the One whom they pierced."<sup>1</sup>*

**Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

In time, in history, in the year we date AD 33, as the first Good Friday transitioned into evening and Holy Saturday began, Jesus, having died, had His Body laid to rest. At the end of His mortal life, the Son of God had just before His second rest declared that all things were "finished."

Millennia before that day, He had taken another Sabbath. That was at the beginning of time, in the midst of His eternal life. Then, after six days, He rested from His creation work. Before the Son of God had taken that rest He had declared that all things were "very good."

The Son's second rest was needed. That is because, in just three years of earthly incarnate ministry, He had worked to fulfill all that had been prophesied about Him. His life and work were recorded that all might hear that He alone is the center of salvation prophecy.

A reality to be proclaimed each Holy Week every year is that Jesus, in entering His rest on the Cross, lies the center of all human history. Before He fell asleep on the infamous gibbet, all creation had looked forward through thousands of years to get a glimpse of the image of its slain Savior. All creation now looks back, past years now numbering almost two thousand, to behold its Savior slain on a tree.

The resting Savior, Jesus, had displayed through signs and wonders that He alone, of all people, had the Divine power to completely restore His fallen creatures, and this fallen creation. He had healed the sick; given sight to the blind, hearing to the

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<sup>1</sup> John 19:36-37.

deaf, and voice to the mute. He had chastised the false teachers of Israel; He had forgiven sinners their sins. He had given bread of life in the wilderness and repeatedly multiplied fish to provide food for the hungry. He had faced temptation, and defeated the devil more than once.

The Savior of all people, the Anointed One of God, Jesus the Christ, had even raised the dead. He did so not once, but several times. The last person on record to be raised from the dead by Jesus was His friend Lazarus. (There could have been no doubt he was dead, he had lain in the tomb four days. Even any over-spiritualizing Jews would have had to acknowledge Lazarus' life-spirit had departed by then).

Jesus, God's own Son, had given more than enough evidence to show to all who had not hardened their hearts against the eternal truth that He rightly bears the title "Jesus Christ God Son Savior." (That is the English translation of the meaning of the little fish that adorn some of the vehicles which may cut you off in traffic on your way to the Lord's Services). Jesus, in entering His High Sabbath rest, had no more need to show to anyone the reasons for which He had become one with us, to be our sin-bearer.

So, as the Son of God began His second Sabbath rest, He was spent. He physically needed to Rest in Peace. His was a rest He had well-earned, for He had just completed the exhausting work of restoring creatures hell-bent on continually falling from grace. St. John, speaking the Word of God still, declares his personal testimony of the Sabbath Rest of Jesus as the center of salvation prophecy in the waning hours of daylight after Jesus had given up His Spirit:

*For these things happened that the scripture might be fulfilled, "His bones were not broken," and again (a) different scripture says, "They will look upon the One whom they pierced."<sup>2</sup>*

In a manner which the Holy Spirit liked to use in the evangelists and apostles, there stands record of Jesus, in His earthly Sabbath rest, having fulfilled Old Testament

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<sup>2</sup> John 19:36-37.

prophecies. The first one, *His bones were not broken*, is a quote lifted from the 34<sup>th</sup> Psalm. In its original setting, the Lord through the Psalmist promised God's deliverance of, and removing condemnation from, His servants. Jesus, as He took His Sabbath rest, bore the condemnation of God's servants in His Body. He carried it into death to bring them, you, deliverance.

The second Old Testament prophecy, *they will look upon the One whom they pierced*, in addition to being found in Zechariah 12, is also recorded in the last Book of the New Testament. As prophecy is lined up in both books, with John's having declared it fulfilled in Jesus, His death in our sin is also connected to the Last Day. On that rapidly approaching Day, all flesh shall look upon the One they pierced and behold the power of the Lamb, our Savior.

Also from St. John's record, we learn of two disciples of Jesus who witnessed what was left of Him after He entered into His Sabbath rest. The first man, Joseph, was a secret follower. The second man, Nicodemus, was a long-term conversion project for our Lord. Both men, as those well-catechized in the confession of the Faith of that era would surely have been familiar with this writing or others like it:

*Let us behold if the words of Him (are) true, and let us test the things in His end. For if He remains the Righteous Man, Son of God, He will help Him, and He will deliver Him from (the) hand of His adversaries. With arrogant hate and torture let us test Him that we might know the gentleness of Him; then we may reckon the patience of Him. Let us condemn Him to shameful death; for it will be of His own words (that) He will be watched over. (Wisdom 2:17-20).*

So, with sayings like that in the minds of those two men, they beheld him hanging as Jesus entered into His earthly Sabbath rest. His Word had been tested. For a moment in time, it appeared to have been untrue. He had lived as the Righteous Man. He had died a shameful death. He had appeared to have done what the scriptures promised of the Son of God.

Yet, His own words, that God was His Father, seemed to have failed Him. Even so, Joseph and Nicodemus acted to honor Him in His rest, as our text proclaims:

*They took the Body of Jesus, and they bound it in linen bandages with the aromatics, just as it remains the custom of the Jews to bury. Now, it was in the place where He was crucified, (a) garden, and in the garden (a) new tomb in which no one had been placed; so, then, on account of the Preparation Day of the Jews, because the tomb was near, they placed Jesus.<sup>3</sup>*

Jesus, Whose body had been wrapped in linen strips as He entered mortal life, was once again wrapped in linen. He, Who had come into mortal life in His creation through the Virgin's womb, now departs mortal life in a virgin tomb. He, whose entrance among men was celebrated with gifts of spices, now leaves the world of men entombed in spices. He, Who once walked in the cool of the Garden of Eden, calling for Man who had fallen from grace in sin, then reclined in the cool Garden Tomb, His Voice silenced, as He bore Man's sins fully into the grave.

On Good Friday we remember that the Stations of the Cross have been taken by our Lord. He is now at our ninth Station. As the final collect for the devotional we use for walking those stations concludes, so shall this sermon today. Let us pray that which Jesus did in entering His Sabbath rest:

*Almighty and Everlasting God, who willed that Your Son should bear the pains of the cross for us, in order that You might remove the power of the Adversary from us; Help us to remember and give thanks for our Lord's Passion that we may obtain remission of sin and redemption from everlasting death: through the same, our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

Good Friday Tenebrae Vespers

Psalm 2; Psalm 27; Psalm 31; John 19:1-42  
April 3, 2105

*Paster Michael A. Morehouse*

*Soli Deo Gloria*

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<sup>3</sup> John 19:41-42.