

## 2012 “Easter Special” (#02) “The Opened Graves”

A typical funeral has two services. It has a chapel service and then a graveside service. After leaving the gravesite, the grave attendants close it. In the cemetery story of our lesson text, a most unusual earthquake opened the closed graves miraculously (Matt.27:51-52).

Upon closer examination, it was discovered that only the graves of Christians were opened all over the cemetery. It was discovered that these graves were opened the very moment Jesus died on the cross (Matt.27:50-51). It was also discovered that these graves remained open for three days and nights. Then the Christians who had been buried in these graves arose from the dead and appeared in Jerusalem at the same time that Jesus arose from the dead (Matt.27:53).

We examine our lesson text by the following five homiletical points.

- Matt.27:45-46            Darkness            (Noon to 3pm) Passover of 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan (Wed.), 30 AD
- Matt.27:47-49            Doubters            Elijah (Matt.27:39-40) (Matt.17:2-3) [Transfiguration]
- Matt.27:50-51            Death                Veil and earthquake
- Matt.27:52-53            Debut                Deceased Saints
- Matt.27:54                Declaration        Centurion - “Truly, Jesus Christ is the Son of God”.

<b>This lesson will study three events associated with THE OPENED GRAVES.</b>
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### 1. Four unusual catastrophes occurred during the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

- **Darkness** (noon to 3pm) – last three hours of Jesus on cross (Matt.27:45).
- **Veil of temple** torn in half from top to bottom at time of the death of Jesus (3pm) (Matt.27:50-51).
- **First of two Earthquakes** at time of death of Jesus (3pm) (Matt.27:51).
- **Graves of Christians opened** in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus’ death (3pm) (Matt.27:53).

(1 John 1:5) “God is light, and in Him there is no darkness.” (John 1:4-5; 8:12) Spiritual darkness is results of Satan’s sin (Gen.1:2; Isa.14:12-15)

Adamic man is born in spiritual darkness of Adam’s Original Sin (AOS) and can only be delivered out of by the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 26:18; Rom.5:12; Eph.5:8; Col.1:13-14; 2 Cor.4:4; 1 Pet.2:9).

Jesus bore our sins and defeated Satan in angelic conflict on the cross (Col.2:14-15; 1 John 3:8; 4:4).

### 2. Removal of the Old Covenant (OC) temple veil teaches that the barrier of AOS was removed forever by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross (Matt.27:45-51; Ex.26:31-35).

- The temple veil was torn in half from top to bottom when Jesus declared that work of salvation was **finished** (tetelestai / perf.p.ind.3ps) (John 19:30).
  - (Heb.10:19-21) “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God.”

- The perfect humanity of Jesus Christ bore our sins for our salvation (1 Tim.1:15; 1 Pet.2:24; 1:19; 3:18).
- The temple became a tomb so that the tomb could become the temple
  - (1 Cor.6:19-20) “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? You have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”
- The temple veil was torn down at the exact moment Jesus declared work of salvation was FINISHED (3PM on 14<sup>TH</sup> of Nisan, 30AD).
  - (1 Cor.5:7) “For Christ our Passover lamb also has been sacrificed.” (John 1:29)
- The Law required the Passover lambs to be sacrificed at twilight (Ex.12:6). The Jewish historian, Josephus, says that twilight was between 3pm - 6pm on Passover. According to Josephus, the Passover on 30AD sacrificed 256,500 lambs. Normally 10 people to one lamb or 2, 565,000 people (Wars, VI, 9,3).

### 3. There were two unnatural earthquakes associated with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- **First unnatural earthquake** occurred the moment Jesus died on the cross (Matt.27:50-53). All over the cemetery, graves of believers who had died during the first advent of Jesus were opened. They remained open for 3 days and 3 nights or until Jesus was resurrected.
- **The second unnatural earthquake** was associated with the resurrection of Jesus (Matt.28:1-2). The tomb of Jesus was opened to let others in and not to let Him out.

After Jesus was raised from the dead, these deceased saints were also raised from the dead and “they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.” (Matt.27:53b) (NIV) [Resuscitation]

(Matt.11:4-6) “Go report to John what you hear and see; the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.”

These believers had died and went to Sheol during the first advent of Jesus and were now raised from the dead.

**Note:** Believers like the thief on the cross of (Luke 23:43) and the Lazarus of (Luke 16:20-31).

When they died a second physical death, they went to the third heaven (John 14:1-6; 1 Cor.15:20-22; 2 Cor.5:6-8; 12:2).

## WHAT ABOUT YOU?

**(Rom.1:16)**

**“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”**