

## Sealing the Stone

### **Matthew 27:50 – 28:20**

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~ This is the final report in this leg of our Spiritual Safari's movement through the Gospel of Matthew. I hope our expedition together through Genesis and Matthew has been as fruitful, thrilling and rewarding for you as it has been for me. We set out on a mission to find the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible, so it's no wonder we conclude this study with His death, burial and resurrection! If ANYONE could ever tout a silly banner that said, "Mission Accomplished" – this is it. A few of you dear readers have stayed with me step for step so far; and I want to honor those of you who have by saying you are truly sincere students of Scripture. I am absolutely positive the Holy Spirit has changed your hearts and lives. There is no doubt in my mind that you now see the Word of God differently, properly with a full-orbed, big picture view, which is correct; and that the Spirit of God is calling you to know Christ completely now; as you never have before.

From here, our safari will branch out in Christ as we search the Scriptures. Someone has said the Lord Jesus can be found on every page of the Bible; well, we're sure going to try to keep our eyes on Him from here. We had Simon Peter demonstrate what happens when we get our eyes off of Christ; as Peter started out walking on water - but then took his eyes off of Jesus and began sinking. That ended with Peter being helped back into the boat by the Lord Jesus. The incident wasn't a failure, but it wasn't exactly a great victory, either. The brothers in the boat only knew they were glad they didn't try water walking – which is sad. I, personally, feel they should have - all twelve of them together - walked back across the sea and frightened the entire multitude and the religious rulers into sheer panic and caused pandemonium in the land and, ultimately, scared them into their graves. Well, that seems kind of crazy - and since I'm not writing the Bible I'm just going to guide you along in the record we do have.

There is no mistake we saw the crucifixion of Christ in our last report; and we conveyed exactly what we were told in the Word of God at verse thirty-five of this chapter, "...they crucified Him!" We didn't get any gory details

whatsoever and, quite frankly, I'm glad about that. I only had to report on things happening around the crucifixion. The Holy Spirit of God placed a black blanket over a whole bunch of white background and we saw NOTHING of what happened on that cross. I hope you will just turn all of this over in your mind right now a few times; several times, actually – and see what you come up with. There is nothing here to satisfy the curiosity of those who are not sincere in trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. We, as genuine children of God, know what we need to know: Christ died for your sins and for mine....

## XXVII

***50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.***

***51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;***

~ There are several notable events that occur when Christ died; and one of them is the earthquake. The veil that separated the Holiest of Holy's is now torn wide open and we can see right in there. It wasn't ripped from the bottom to the top because man didn't do it – God tore that veil open for us. The veil speaks of Christ's flesh and when the penalty had been paid on the cross our way to God became wide open. Today, we don't have a priest go in to represent us, and we don't have anything standing between us and the direct Throne of the Father in Heaven. I suggest you know how to approach that Throne properly, correctly and completely - and we're going to learn how to do that, too, in this safari. We must come to Christ as a sinner FIRST. We must emphasize that. The Lord Jesus Christ is the ONLY way anyone can ever come to God....

***52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,***

***53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.***

~ We're not going into too much detail about this passage because, quite frankly, not a lot has been revealed to us about this incident. We believe it happened this way as the account is given; and the dead that came out of the grave are part of the great company that went to Heaven with Him as He led captivity captive at His ascension - which we shall see in this report. This is no haphazard or incidental earthquake, either. The quake happened specifically to open the graves and to allow the dead to be released from it when it happened....

***54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.***

~ This brute of a centurion didn't know very much because he wasn't all that smart; but he knew enough to take his place beneath that cross and confess Jesus as the Son of God! God has never asked any sinner to do anything other than this – believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Believe and take your place beneath the cross of Christ today, friends. If you have already done that, do it again – you know – just to make sure you know that God knows that you mean business with Him in your life. There is no theology in this; there is no doctrine in this at all. It's not complicated and it's not impossible. This centurion had never read one single WORD about Jesus – but he still believed! I believe this centurion was a saved man that day as he witnessed those things that confirmed to him Jesus was Who He said He was....

***55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:***

***56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.***

***57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:***

~ John tells us more about Joseph of Arimathaea; and John also tells us that Nicodemus came at night and brought a hundred pounds of oil for the

body of Jesus. What I always wondered is: where was Nikki when Mary was breaking out her alabaster box and “wasting” her last dime on Jesus over there at Simon’s house? Well, perhaps we’ll never know. Also, didn’t Jesus say it was impossible for a rich man to enter Heaven? Well, it says right here Joseph was a rich man and a disciple! How are we going to reconcile those two? The very event that had caused the disciples to scatter has caused other, unknown disciples to show up. So, this man Joseph steps out and declares that he is a disciple; and that, amazingly, is the basis on which he goes to Pilate to ask for the body....

***58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.***

***59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,***

***60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.***

~ If you take a tour of Jerusalem, they will point out what is known as the “Garden Tomb.” Your guess is as good as mine is concerning whether or not this was the tomb of Jesus. I am a skeptic; so, I’m sure you know what I think about this. I just don’t see the importance of being able to locate this tomb today – because He isn’t in there. Eerily, some people make visiting the grave an obsession. I think that’s weird; and unhealthy. So many people have kissed the floor of that tomb you could catch a communicable disease there. I don’t see any value because they’re guessing about which tomb is which; and there are so many of those types of tombs over there you can’t even count them all. Taking the entire Word of God to the entire world in sound doctrine is just so much more important than taking ourselves into a guessing game about tombs....

***61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.***

***62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,***

**63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.**

**64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.**

**65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.**

**66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.**

~ The zealousness of the enemy and the lengths they went to only serves to completely confirm the accounts of His resurrection. If they had just gone away then the argument might be made two thousand years later that the body was just stolen. However, when you have a Roman guard around a sealed tomb it's safe to believe it was more secure than your local bank. If anyone says the disciples stole the body away they just don't happen to believe the Bible is the Word of God; because the Bible teaches that the tomb was sealed shut - not just a rock thrown up in front of it. It was completely plastered shut with some form of stucco.

What is really interesting is that, although the apostles didn't seem to understand when Jesus told them about His resurrection on the third day, the religious rulers sure heard it and remembered it! I'm sure most of them had only heard Jesus say that one time, too! They got another session with Pilate for the sole reason of telling him about this third day resurrection statement. Jesus is now dead and no one – not the religious rulers - not the disciples – expected Jesus to come out of the grave! You can just write that down! It will take all four Gospels to completely confirm the complexity of this magnificent account we have just considered.

So, that ushers us along into the last chapter in Matthew where we will examine the resurrected Jesus – or – He will examine us! We have, of

course, the Great Commission coming up. We have had the first two pillars on which the Gospel rests; and those are the death and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here, we have the other pillar that completes our Gospel; the resurrection. It only makes sense that the Gospel rests on three great pillars. Paul is going to preach to the Corinthians, “...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...” These three pillars are all essential to saving faith in Christ. The unique factor here is the resurrection, though. All religious leaders have died and been buried – or they will – albeit NOT for their followers; but Jesus did die for the sins of the world. No religious leader I have ever heard of has made the claim that they were coming back from the dead; and as far as we know – none have! All the founders of all other religions are dead; Jesus is alive at the right hand of God at this very moment!

Each of the four Gospel writers conveys their own personal perspective; and, as a result, there have been those who claim a contradiction in them. Tragically for the critic, the contradiction is only in their small-minded thinking – and is due to an inability to reason. They cannot reason because there is sin in their lives that they refuse to give up. The Old Scofield Bible has a very fine note about this and clears it up completely for me. If you don't have that Bible, you ought to, so you can look that note up. You will find it on page 1,043. It just happens to be critical for you to read and develop in your minds the order of the resurrection events. I try to specifically avoid quoting the notes from any Bible because you can simply purchase one and read them for yourself. We have enough regurgitated commentary today. We need something fresh and vibrant....

## XXVIII

***1 In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.***

***2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.***

~ So, here comes Mary with her own oil; but when the stone was rolled away – He wasn't there! The stone had to be moved – but not to let Him out - to let them in! Well, after this happens the guard is ready to march out because it could be perceived they had failed their duties; and that would mean death for every single one of them in the detail....

***3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:***

***4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.***

***5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.***

***6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.***

~ Being convicted in your heart that He is risen and settling in your mind that the place that He lay is not occupied in a tomb is essential before anyone ever endeavors to witness one single word about the Lord Christ Jesus. To know the Gospel and to be able to give an accurate and understandable account of this event is critical BEFORE you deign speak of Jesus, friends. We are to go and we are to tell so we better know where we are to go and who we are to tell what to....

***7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.***

***8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.***

***9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.***

***10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.***

***11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the soldiers from the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.***

~ These soldiers only know that they had sealed the stone and now Jesus was gone out of the tomb; and, as a result, they feared for their lives. I doubt the soldiers saw the angel; they only saw that the Lord Jesus wasn't there anymore. So, what happens next is simply not plausible. No military man in the world is going to lie and say they fell asleep and failed at their duties when they had not fallen asleep and failed – it is simply impossible to make that bribe successfully! That would have meant certain death for a Roman soldier! Well, this ridiculous story is still used by the enemy. The funny thing is, the religious rulers here promise to take care of the governor - but the soldiers aren't buying it....

***12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,***

***13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.***

***14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.***

***15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this lie is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.***

***16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.***

***17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.***



***18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.***

***19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:***

***20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.***

~ So, we are given our Great Commission here; and there are two rather extreme viewpoints of this today. This last passage in Matthew is the source of a never-ending controversy. One extreme viewpoint states that this is the only command we have for the church today. The other extreme viewpoint is that it has no meaning at all for today and it should not even be considered. The latter go as far as to exclude it from their church program. Both are unreasonable in their extreme - and both are in error. Our Spiritual Safari has shown us that the Book of Matthew has a very direct application for believers today.

This commission has the same application for us, too. It will certainly have a finer and fuller meaning in our future, to be sure. We know, however, that Matthew does not give the total and complete view of the resurrection, and this is not the total and complete scope of the resurrection. This must be considered in the light of the other three Gospels and also in conjunction with Acts chapter one verse eight. The only way to obtain a full-orbed command of the Gospel for our present day, and for the future, is to consider it completely, properly and correctly. This is a composite picture that only makes about half-sense if it's not examined that way. We are to be witnesses unto Him to the very ends of the earth and we are to be endowed with all power from on High!

Of course, we just read that some men doubted, and some people still doubt two thousand years later. Some believe; some doubt. If you're still reading I believe you believe. Christ is now our King! This will have a very personal and real application during the Great Tribulation period and even in the millennium; but it also has application for us today. This safari is

going to continue to teach and baptize with the Triune baptism; for we know Christ is with us always – even until the end of the age.

We need to note the Great Commission has a great omission here. The ascension is not found in Matthew - because Matthew presented Christ as the King in this Gospel - and the Kingdom will be HERE on this earth! Matthew, naturally, leaves the King on the earth where His Kingdom is to be. The Lord Jesus Christ takes the church out of the world to be with Him in Heaven and the ascension is essential for that to be understood. So, we'll get to it at the appropriate time. Christ was born a King and He lived as King; He died and rose again as a King! When the Lord returns to this earth He is coming again as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Most of our modern-day religious rulers are in rebellion against God at this very moment. Can you bow to Him today? IS the Lord Jesus Christ your Savior? Are you praying that His Word will go out to the entire world today? The answer to those questions determines your salvation, my beloved ~

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