

“He Is Not Here, for He Is Risen”

Lesson
27
Summary

Matthew 28; Luke 24; John 20–21

Scripture Summary:

Christ the Lord is risen—He appears to many—He has all power in heaven and in earth—He sends the apostles to teach and baptize all nations. Angels announce resurrection of Christ—He walks on Emmaus road—He appears with a body of flesh and bones, eats food, testifies of His divinity, and promises the Holy Ghost—His ascension. Mary Magdalene, Peter, John find empty tomb—The Risen Christ appears to Mary Magdalene in the garden—He appears to disciples and shows his resurrected body—Thomas feels the wounds in Jesus' hands, feet, and side—Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus appears to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias—He saith: 'Feed my sheep'—He foretells Peter's martyrdom and John's translation.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

What is the Day of Atonement for the Jews? The atonement has been the central issue of true religion from the beginning of man's mortal sojourn through eternity. In Judaism, a special day was established as a Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. It is the last of the Ten Days of Penitence which begin with Rosh Ha-Shanah, and it is the climax of the repentance and soul-searching incumbent on every Jew during this period. “The essence . . . and the reasons for its special prayers and ceremony are expressed in the Torah: "For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord." (Leviticus 16:30) “. . . it is the only fast day which may be observed on the Sabbath . . . the "Sabbath of Sabbaths." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Consider What Jews Read on this Most Holy Day! “In ancient literature there are several stories of people being rescued from inside fish (Heracles the Hesione, Perseus, and Andromeda); but only in that of Jonah was the rescue effected by prayer and not by force. The book is to be understood as a lesson in Divine forgiveness and mercy --- to Jonah as well as to the people of Nineveh --- and as a lesson in obedience to God's will. As a symbol of the effectiveness of repentance it is read as the *haftarah* at the afternoon service of the Day of Atonement.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Beloved Rabbi Did Not Rise After Three Nights: When the famous Rabbi Schneersohn from Brooklyn died in 1994, many of his followers expected him to rise again like Jonah, after three nights and three days. Thousands of posters of the famous Rabbi had been distributed, boldly captioned with statements such as “We want Messiah now!” “To some, Messianism undermines the first line of defense against Christian missionizing which has always been that Judaism cannot accept a Messiah who dies in the midst of his redemptive mission. To others, Rabbi Schneersohn is the one who will be resurrected to complete a process of redemption for the Jewish people.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Jesus Prophesied about Three Nights – but Christians Calculate Only Two Nights of Jesus' Death: For the Jews, as well as for the Christians, the example of Jonah being swallowed by a great fish for three days and three nights is a symbol of atonement or at least that the Messiah would rise from the dead. Yet, the three nights and three days of Jesus' interment and living again is still not recognized by the Jews as a sign of his Messiahship. One major reason for this may be that the account of his death and resurrection simply is not known, and if it is known it is not accepted. Many Christians struggle with the symbolism due to a “mainstream” Christian tradition of Good Friday as the crucifixion day and Easter Sunday as the resurrection day. That, according to the scriptural way of calculating twenty-four hour days, still is only two nights and two days. “Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered . . . Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth . . .” (Matthew 12:38-42)

Countdown – Mock Trial of Jesus by Caiaphas Began During the Night Before Passover: Jesus was betrayed, arrested, and taken to Caiaphas the High Priest by his soldiers. The incarceration and interrogation were not part of an official trial. Both were illegal under the circumstances. That night was the beginning of the Preparation Day, a holiday by itself; that is why there was no formal charge against Jesus. Caiaphas and some powerful elders conspired to trap Jesus by his own words. “But Jesus held his peace . . .” (Matthew 26:63)

Blasphemy Backfires: The priestly wordsmiths, who would not even utter the name of God, used phrases such as, “He that comes in the clouds of Heaven,” “He that sits on the right hand of Power,” or “Blessed is His name.” In anger, the High Priest challenged Him, in the name of God, “. . . tell us whether thou be the Christ, the son of God.” Jesus simply

replied, “Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see [this] Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” (Matthew 26:63-64) The High Priest, perhaps stung by the realization that he himself had invoked God’s name, cried out, “He hath spoken blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, he is guilty of death.” (Matthew 26:65)

Jewish Executions Only Allowed for Temple Violations: Under the Roman political system, the Jewish priests were not to carry out executions except for temple violations. (Their executions would have been by stoning--throwing the victim over a high cliff and then covering him with stones they threw.) The priests bound and led Him to Pontius Pilate, who at first did not want to be troubled with the case. However, he soon realized a potential political gain. He taunted the priests with Jesus’ release. Maddened by Pilate’s reluctance to favor them with an execution, they cried out, “. . . crucify him.” Pilate said, “Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, we have no king but Caesar.” The political gain was achieved (the priests publicly acclaimed Caesar to be their king). “Then delivered he him . . . to be crucified.” (John 19)

Countdown – (1st Night) – The Crucifixion and Burial: Jesus, bearing His cross (probably just the cross beam, as the upright post was most likely already at the crucifixion place), “. . . went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha.” (John 19:17) Daylight had progressed about six hours. It was close to noon, but, “. . . there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.” (Mark 15:33) The Jewish priests did not want the crucified bodies hanging on the cross on Sabbath days (for that evening was the beginning of an extra Sabbath day, a High Day – Passover). Before nightfall, a disciple of Jesus, with the help of Nicodemus, took the Lord’s body to a nearby Garden Tomb, “. . . There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews’s preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.” (John 19:40-42)

Countdown – 2nd Night – Two Sabbaths in a Row: It is probable that there were two Sabbaths in a row that year; the Passover Sabbath and the regular seventh day of the week (Friday night) Sabbath. In that sense, Jesus was crucified on what we call a Thursday. (This fits in the time reckoning of Palm Sunday being five days before the Passover).

Countdown – 3rd Night – Then in fulfillment of prophecy, He really was in the tomb three nights; Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and on the third day He arose: “. . . and be raised again the third day.” (Matthew 16:21;17:23, Mark 9:31)

There is a Reason: Jewish burial customs include a seven night, seven day mourning period with the exception of the “Lord’s Day,” a Sabbath. The family and friends of Jesus were not able to publicly mourn on the first night and first day because it was the Passover Sabbath. They were not able to publicly mourn the second night and the second day because it was the regular Sabbath, but on the third day . . . “when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene . . . and she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.” (Mark 16:9-10) Consider that the Lord’s death could not be mourned because of the two Sabbaths and then on the day they came to mourn, at what was now an empty tomb, the angels said, “He is not here, He is risen.” He took all grief (mourning) upon Himself, teaching us not to mourn but to rejoice, He lives!

Daniel Rona, born in Israel and living in Jerusalem has authored Old & New Testament and Book of Mormon Supplement Study Materials to be used in conjunction with the weekly LDS Gospel Doctrine Lesson study. NOTE: Three versions of the supplemental study materials are available *FREE* at www.HolyLandsRevealed.com. (Just click “LDS SUPPLEMENTS”)

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