

The Saturday Before Sunrise – Part 2

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – a discussion of where Jesus was and what he was doing on the Saturday before he rose
2. aim – to cause us to appreciate more the completed work of Jesus in our salvation
3. passage – Matthew 25:23

b. outline

1. The Events of that Fateful Saturday

c. opening

1. a gathering on a cold Sunday morning before sunrise
 - a. it reminds us that the tomb *and the body of Jesus* are cold and lifeless
 - b. **i.e.** the crucifixion on that fateful *Friday* was **successful** – Jesus is dead, in accordance with the Scriptures and the plan of God to accomplish the salvation of the elect

I. The Events of that Fateful Saturday

Content

a. what the various “players” are doing on the Saturday before Easter

1. **Judas** – he’s gone (of course); he has his great remorse of conscience on Friday
2. **the Eleven (and others)** – they are “holed up” (probably in the Upper Room in Jerusalem)
 - a. waiting for the authorities to come and arrest them, although that is unlikely
 - b. probably discussing what it all meant and where they were going to go from here
3. **the religious leadership** – they are nervously “happy” that the situation is over
4. **the crowds** – returning blissfully to their apathy, carrying on with their religious customs
5. **the Romans** – returning blissfully to their apathy and to their focus on socio-political matters
6. **the Devil and his minions** – celebrating the defeat of their most formidable enemy
 - a. believing that they had eliminated the greatest prophet that God had sent to the Jews
 - b. convinced they have “done away with” one that posed the greatest threat they had ever known

b. what is Jesus doing on the Saturday before Easter?

1. **IOW:** if we accept the Christian view of the body and the soul (the mortal vs. the immortal), then we *must* accept that the *immortal* nature of Jesus (**i.e.** his human soul and divine nature) was still very much alive and “*present with the Lord*”
 - a. **weird:** some believe that Jesus “descended into hell” (literally) to preach to those who died before
 - b. **e.g.** he *himself* told the thief dying next to him that he would be present *with him* in paradise
2. **obviously:** the Scriptures do not tell us *anything* about what is happening in heaven when Jesus arrives – in fact, we actually learn very little about what happens to *anyone* in the “intermediate” state
 - a. **i.e.** other than a “peek” in the parable of **Luke 16** and some *obscure* visions of the saints in heaven waiting for their day of justice to arrive in **Revelation 6**
 - b. we are left only to *speculate* – but there is some **sanctified speculation** that we can do, based on other information revealed in Scripture that offers us some *clues* ...
 - c. **note:** all of this takes place **on the Sabbath** – the day of rest and worship – Christ has “rested” from his work on the “seventh day”, and a new age is about to begin (**Genesis 2:1-3**) ...
3. **my thesis: on that fateful Saturday, Jesus is being celebrated by the Father (and all the hosts of heaven), being endowed with honor and glory in anticipation of his resurrection**
 - a. Jesus is being welcomed (back) by the Father, and is being praised for his obedience and faithfulness to the **Counsel of Peace** (or Covenant of Redemption)
 1. **i.e.** the eternal agreement between the Father and the Son, whereby the Son would stand as Head and Surety of the elect, voluntarily taking the place of those whom the Father had given him for the purpose of their salvation
 2. Jesus is hearing those fateful words from the Father *himself* (**Matthew 25:23**):
“Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.”

- b. Jesus is being *celebrated* by the angelic host, as the eternal plans of God are now *fully visible* in his incarnation, sinless life, and substitutionary death
 - 1. **i.e.** the heavenly audience, created by the Father to observe his glory in creating and redeeming a fallen race of creatures made in his own image (**Ephesians 3:10**)
 - 2. Jesus is being celebrated by the hosts of heaven for finishing this work **with great anticipation** of what is to come next (**i.e.** the Resurrection, making known this work throughout the world)
- c. Jesus is being *endowed* by his Father with all authority and glory – he is being *crowned* as King of kings and Lord of lords over all the earth
 - 1. **i.e.** the Father is giving to him *“all authority in heaven and on earth”* (**Matthew 28:18**)
 - 2. the Father places a crown on his head, to rule over all the nations of the earth (**to fulfill the promise of Psalm 2:7-8**)

“I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.’”
 - 3. Jesus is being crowned with all of the glory and honor of the Godhead, to take his rightfully promised place as the Glorious One, the One to whom all creation will bow in worship
- d. Jesus is being *sent back* by his Father to take this glory for himself, and to usher in his kingdom
 - 1. **i.e.** to be the *“firstfruits”* of all of those for whom he came (**1 Corinthians 15:23**) – to rise from the dead as the *inauguration* of his kingdom upon the earth and the *hope* of his elect
 - 2. **i.e.** as a demonstration that his work was *fully accepted* by the Father, and that he has now been endowed with the *“name above every name”* (**Philippians 3:9**)
 - 3. Jesus’ body is raised to life in a glorified state by the Spirit, and his immortal nature reenters it, to walk from the tomb in the coolness of the morning **which changes the course of history**
- 4. **while the Saturday before Easter represents the darkest day in human history, it is (actually) a day of great celebration in the presence of the Father – for the Son is crowned with his rightful honor in great anticipation of his return, the “advent” of the glory of Christ in all the earth at his resurrection and ascension**