

Luke 23-24 • Corporate Solidarities

Introduction

The Bible is absolutely historically true in every event and their details. However, Scripture has the added dimension of providing lessons which extend deeper than the mere events themselves. Within the account of Christ's death and crucifixion are highlighted some key persons who were involved with these historical events whom the Holy Spirit uses to teach us personally about our own individual spiritual condition. Between Passover and Pentecost after His resurrection from the dead, the work of Christ was a continuation of His ministry prior to His crucifixion but with an even more potent effect. He came and preached the Word not only leading up to His death, but even more so immediately following with His resurrection. With Christ it is never about the signs but the greater message of the Word which accompanies them. In the days following His resurrection, the repeated point He would make to His disciples is, "The Word, the Word, the Word".

¹"Come, let us return to the LORD.
For He has torn us, but He will heal us;
He has wounded us, but He will
bandage us.
²He will revive us after two days;
He will raise us up on the third day,
That we may live before Him.
³So let us know, let us press on to know
the LORD.
His going forth is as certain as the
dawn;
And He will come to us like the rain,
Like the spring rain watering the
earth."

[Read Hosea 6:1-3]

Q: With whom are the three prophecies in each of these three verses first and foremost applied to?

A: The Messiah—Jesus Christ.

Q: But how do we know that Hosea is saying that they also apply to each of us?

A: Look how many times in these verses the pronoun is "us". In some sense, what happens to the Messiah co-equally applies to us.

Q: What is the true meaning when it states in v.1 that we should "return"?

A: This is the Hebrew word "tesuba" which can be literally translated "repent", meaning "to turn back to God".

Q: Why is biblical repentance not strictly limited to or defined only as being "born again"?

A: Throughout Scripture, it is the constant call through the Prophets to God's people to repent and return to God's Word and ways. Ephesus, a church who had right doctrine and good works, was told by Jesus to repent—to return to their first love.

'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

— Revelation 2:4-5

Q: What is the contrast of the first working of the Messiah in v.1?

A: Torn vs. heal and wounded vs. bandage. What happened to Him on the cross will also happen to us.

Q: What does the word "wounded" literally mean?

A: "Paga", here translated as "wounded", literally means "cut into", which related to Is. 53:5 where the same word is rendered in many translations as "pierced". "Paga" also happens to be the root for the Hebrew word "to intercede", which describes being wounded on behalf of another. Just as Jesus was wounded and healed, so when He wounds us He likewise bandages us.

Q: If His wounding and healing in v.1 is also ours, what is v.2 describing?

A: This is not just saying that Jesus **will** raise up on the third day, but that **we** are raised up on the third day. **His** death is **our** death, therefore **His** resurrection is **our** resurrection.

¹³Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, ¹⁴and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him. ¹⁵No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him. ¹⁶Therefore I will punish Him and release Him." ¹⁷[Now he was obliged to release to them at the feast one prisoner.]

¹⁸But they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!" ¹⁹(He was one who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection made in the city, and for murder.)

²⁰Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, ²¹but they kept on calling out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!"

²²And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death; therefore I will punish Him and release Him."

²³But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices began to prevail. ²⁴And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted. ²⁵And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Q: How does the prophecy of v.3 apply to the Messiah?

A: All four Gospels state Christ rose on the Hebrew Feast of First Fruits on the first day of the week at dawn when it was still dark—"His going forth is as certain as the dawn". This is followed by references to "maim hayim"—"living water", a metaphor for the giving of the Holy Spirit in John 4, John 7 and Isaiah.

*'For I will pour out water on the thirsty land
And streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring
And My blessing on your descendants;
— Isaiah 44:3*

Application: Through Hosea we see the Messiah's wounding, but also the resurrection—then we see the giving of the Holy Spirit after His resurrection. What happens to Him, happens to us. His death is to be our death, His life is to be our life, and the power of His Spirit is to be manifested in us.

[Read Luke 23:13-25]

Q: What is a "corporate solidarity"?

A: It is a theological term used when a single person in Scripture represents a larger group of people. A good example is how a whole nation is alternately referred to throughout Scripture as "Jacob" or "Israel"—"Jacob" whenever God's people act in the character of the old nature as the person of Jacob before wrestling with the Lord, and "Israel" as the new creation when they act in the character of the person given a new name and acting in concert with God's Word and ways.

Point: There are several corporate solidarities within the Gospels, one of the most important is found here: "Barabbas"—Aramaic for "a son of the father".

Q: Does Pilate really want to punish Jesus?

A: No. He not only attempts to defer the problem to Herod, but the Gospels clearly show that Pilate confirmed Jesus' innocence at least three times in the course of these back-and-forth proceedings.

Q: So what is Pilate's "trick" to get himself off the hook?

A: He offers someone who in modern terms would be called a "terrorist".

Q: Who, exactly, is Barabbas?

A: The New Testament refers to him as a "Zealot", whom Josephus describes as "Sukim"—people who use religion as a cloak for a license to terror and murder. In modern times we would call them "Al Qaeda" or the IRA. Josephus explains that Barabbas belonged to a group whose cruelty against their own people exceeded anything the Romans did to the Jews.

Q: What is the obvious irony here?

A: The true and innocent "Son of the Father" is going to die in place of the guilty and sinful "son of the father". The innocent will die in place of the guilty so they can literally attain what would otherwise be impossible.

Q: What is Bar-Abbas a corporate solidarity of?

A: Each and every one of us. Those who are born again, who repent of their sin and accept Jesus, acquire another name: "son of the father".

Application: We are all named "Barabbas" because Jesus, who was innocent, was put on trial in our place. Everything He was falsely accused of, we are actually guilty of. He died so we could become a son of God the Father.

²⁶When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.

[Read Luke 23:26]

Q: Who is the second corporate solidarity?

A: Simon.

Q: According to Roman law, what was the purpose of carrying one's own cross publicly on the way to execution?

A: This was a public display of that person's guilt. A guilty person had to carry their own cross.

Q: Why, then, did Jesus not carry His own cross?

A: By Roman law it would mean He was guilty of that for which He was going to be executed.

Point: Christ was not guilty of what He was going to be executed for—Simon was, I am, you are, but He is not.

Q: What might be significant about Simon's position when he takes up the cross?

A: It is **behind** Jesus. The call is always, "take up his cross and **follow Me**". (Mt. 16:24)

Observation: Richard Wumbrand, a Jewish believer who became a Christian who was first persecuted by the Nazis and then by the Communists once preached, "Jesus never simply said, 'I am going to die in your place. I am going to die in your place, but you get up here and die with Me'". It is a real-world example of what Hosea was speaking about, that after two days He will revive us and on the third raise us up that we may live before Him.

Application: We are all named "Simon" because, as a true Christian, we must crucify the old nature, pick up the cross, and follow Christ.

³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!"

⁴⁰But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴²And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"

⁴³And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

[Read Luke 23:39-43]

Q: Who is the third corporate solidarity?

A: The thieves who were guilty of the sin for which they were condemned.

Q: How do we know, scripturally, that we are ALL murderers, thieves and liars—guilty of every sin?

A: Scripture tells us if we covet something—desire that which belongs to another, then in the eyes of a holy, perfect God we have stolen it. If we lust after someone's spouse, as far as God is concerned we have already committed adultery just because we wanted to do it. Because we have hated someone without cause we are a murderer. We are all thieves, liars and murderers.

"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell... 'You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

— Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28

Q: But what about those in life who seem to have been forced to live in the worst of conditions, those to whom life has dealt nothing but misery?

A: The two books of the Bible which deal with this the most—Job and Lamentations, tell us that **no one** has **any** reason to complain. Because we are sinners in the eyes of God, we are worthy of condemnation and the resulting death sentence.

Point: *Jesus was the only one who had no sin and He uttered not a word in complaint. (Acts 8:32) He got the nails, we got the grace.*

Observation: *There are Christians in the Third World who know nothing but persecution or a prison cell, often martyred for their faith, yet remarkably are not complaining.*

Q: What is the difference in the motives between the “good” and “bad” thief?

A: Although they both cried out to Jesus, the “bad” thief cried out to Jesus because he wanted something just for this life; the “good” thief is someone who knows he is getting what he deserves and seeks relief for the next life.

Application: *We are all known as a “thief”, someone who knows they deserve to pay the price for their sin but want Jesus to forgive them anyway.*

[Read Luke 24:13-35]

Q: What is different about this corporate solidarity from those which have been discussed to this point?

A: This one goes beyond Christ’s crucifixion and comes into play **after** His resurrection.

Q: What is this general time period? How does it relate to the Hebrew calendar and what was taking place culturally at the time?

A: This is the period between Passover (“Pesach”) and Pentecost (“Feast of Weeks”). These were called “Pilgrim Feasts” when Jews travelled to Jerusalem and often stayed for all of the feasts before returning home.

Q: What is the first unusual thing that grabs our attention where these men are concerned?

A: In v.16, although it is apparent that they were disciples of Christ, it specifically states, “*But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him*”. We are not dealing with people who refuse to accept Christ, but those who are supposed to know Him firsthand.

Q: How is it that the men on the road bring up the issue of timing as it might relate to the Messiah?

A: In v.21, they specifically qualify their remarks with, “*besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened*”.

Point: *Scripturally speaking, “the third day” always alludes to a resurrection in some way in biblical typology. In any event, it is the third day and Christ is walking on the road to Emmaus.*

Q: What is Jesus’ primary response to their inability to not only recognize Him, but the meaning of all the events they were pondering?

1. All this was the fulfillment of God’s prophetic Word. (v.25)
2. The glory of the Messiah could not come without first His suffering and death. (v.26)
3. Every part of Scripture—the Old Testament, explained all these things in advance of their taking place. (v.27)

In other words, Jesus said it is the Scripture, the Scripture, the Scripture! Three times (including v.32) Jesus makes the issue the Scripture.

¹³And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.

¹⁷And He said to them, “What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?” And they stood still, looking sad.

¹⁸One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, “Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?”

¹⁹And He said to them, “What things?”

And they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, ²⁰and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. ²¹But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. ²²But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the

tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see.”

²⁵And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?”

²⁷Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

²⁸And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. ²⁹But they urged Him, saying, “Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.” So He went in to stay with them.

³⁰When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

³²They said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?” ³³And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, ³⁴saying, “The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.” ³⁵They began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

Q: How do the physical events taking place on the road to Emmaus represent a greater spiritual situation?

A: Christ was walking with them, but they did not know it! His own disciples did not understand Scripture so as to grasp the fact that He was walking with them yet they were not really seeing Him, not really hearing Him, all of which resulted in a situation where **HE** was with **THEM** but **THEY** were not really with **HIM**.

Application: *I am sure Jesus is with me, but how much am I really with Him? He is present and talking to me, but am I understanding what He is saying? I know He has died—been crucified, but how much of my own self is dying with Him?*

Q: What is the greater spiritual struggle this speaks to for each one of us personally?

A: We may be sure that He died and rose again, but have **WE** died and rose?

Q: How did they finally recognize Him?

A: In the breaking of the bread. (v.30-31) He had to eat with them.

Q: Throughout Scripture, why do we see somebody eating after they are raised from the dead?

A: To prove that it literally happened. This occurred in the case of the little girl (Mk. 5:43), Lazarus (Jn. 12:2), and again here.

Q: What was probably the crucial step as revealed by His stated intention to travel on further in v.28?

A: They had to invite Him in. (v.29-30) They wanted to hear and understand more of the Word.

Q: How might this relate to today, what many believe is the last age of the Church as represented by the church of Laodicea in Revelation?

A: They were a church so deluded that they were blind to their spiritual state, which resulted in Christ being on the outside at the door needing to be invited in.

‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

— Revelation 3:20

He is trying to get an invitation from those who are supposed to be His disciples to come in and dine with Him. Biblically speaking, “eating” the Word is one of the most common illustrations of someone who is putting God’s Word into practice and not merely knowing or aware of it. This issue of dining with Him in Old Testament and Hebrew cultural terms is that of being in continual, personal fellowship, not merely being a hearer of the Word but a doer.

Application: *We are all named “Cleopas”, someone who needs to daily consume the Word of Christ in order to manifest our co-death and co-resurrection with Christ.*

Overall Application

All four of these corporate solidarities provided against the backdrop of the death and resurrection of Christ provide a greater illustration of the complete working of salvation, justification and sanctification in every believer’s individual life. He died, but did we? Three times the issue is brought up that His own disciples’ problem is that although His Word is true, they do not understand it even though He is walking right on the road beside them. Christ is perfectly content and intent to continue on the road by Himself, but He will never turn down an invitation to dinner.