

Message #27 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

“What Are Your Leaders Teaching You?”

With Randy Smith

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk to you about a day that I call Resurrection Sunday. Most people call it Easter, which is a word that comes from the mythical goddess Ishtar. In regard to biblical history, Easter was celebrated for this goddess, and occurred at approximately the same time as the Jews Passover. In the church today, most people equate the rising of Jesus from the dead with Easter morning. I don't think it's a wicked thing to refer to Christ's resurrection day as Easter, but I'm not comfortable with it either. That's why I like to refer to that day as Resurrection Sunday. But what I'd like you to pay attention to today is the fact that Christians are being taught in every church, or a least almost every church, that the Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday, and that the Thursday before Easter in some churches, is called Maundy Thursday, or Holy Thursday, and that Jesus Christ was crucified on Friday, and rose from the dead on Sunday. Although these events took place, not all the days are correct according to scripture.

Jesus was crucified on Thursday, not Friday. Yes, I understand your immediate reaction, but it is absolutely necessary that you understand this instead of making Jesus a liar as all the churches are doing continuously. Jesus made it very plain and clear that he would be three days and three nights in the earth. Jesus does not lie. So we will take Jesus' word as truth, and we will count the days right now. Number them with me. According to church teaching, our ministers are telling us that Jesus died on Friday afternoon. So, let's count the days from Friday to Sunday. One day brings you to Saturday and two days brings you to Sunday. This is not three days and three nights, as Jesus said. Of course, the teachers of scripture tell us that according to Jewish

history, the Jews counted the day of the event as one of the days, even if it was just a small part. But let's look at another scripture first, and then we'll return and count again. The scripture is, Matthew 12:40, which says, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the fish's belly; so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." These words were spoken by Jesus, explaining that he would be in the grave for three days and three nights. Not just three days, but also three nights. Now, let's go back and count again. Starting on Friday afternoon, let's count the nights. There is Friday night, that's one. There is Saturday night, that's two. Um, there are no more nights to count because Jesus Christ rose on the first day of the week, early in the morning.

So, how can we understand what really took place? The answer to that is actually quite simple, in that Jesus was crucified on Thursday, and the events which are currently being described in our churches today as having taken place on Friday, actually occurred on Thursday. The first thing that is questioned by those who cling to the standard Friday crucifixion date, is the scripture in Mark 15:42-43, which says, "And now when the evening had come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathaea, an honorable counselor, who also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went boldly in to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus."

We know that Jesus had to be taken down from the cross before sunset because the Sabbath would then begin. In Israel, a new day begins at sunset, unlike our day which begins at midnight. Also, the scripture I just read informs us that the day Jesus was taken down from the cross was a preparation day, which means that it was a day in which the Jews prepared for the upcoming Sabbath. And of course, the Jews had also been instructed that no one was to hang on a tree all night, but was to be taken down and buried. Because this was considered work, it must be accomplished before the setting of the sun which was the beginning of a Sabbath.

Now, let's take a look at the definition for a Sabbath. Sabbath means, a day that is set aside for the Lord, and the Lord only, a day which no work was to be done. The day Jesus was crucified was a day of preparation for the upcoming Sabbath.

But now, consider this. The error that is continually taught in our churches is that the Sabbath which approached, as Jesus hung on the cross, was the seventh day Sabbath, a Sabbath which occurred weekly. But in actuality, the Sabbath these verses refer to is not the seventh day Sabbath which occurred weekly, but the Passover Sabbath which occurred once each year.

In accordance with the Old Testament covenant through Moses, the children of Israel were to celebrate a Passover Sabbath, which began at sundown, immediately after the Passover lambs were killed. On the Passover day, the Jews were to bring a lamb for sacrifice, and it was to be killed at evening. Evening was considered to be the fourth quarter of the day, beginning at 3 p.m., and ending at 6 p.m. Therefore the slaughter of the Passover lambs began at three o'clock in the afternoon. Jesus, our Passover Lamb, died on the cross shortly after 3 p.m., just prior to

the Passover Sabbath. Notice now, that the Biblical account of the crucifixion took place at the same time as the killing of the lambs for the observance of Passover.

Now, think of this. The observance of a Sabbath was the same, whether it was a seventh day weekly Sabbath, or a feast day Sabbath, such as this yearly Passover Sabbath. There were other feast days requiring Sabbaths to be observed, and in each case, for every Sabbath, there was to be a day of preparation the day before, and in every case the Sabbath was to be observed by the same rules as the weekly seventh day Sabbaths. In addition, no matter which day of the week we were looking at, we know that according to scripture the day following the crucifixion was being observed by the Jews as the first day of the Passover feast. This first day of the Passover feast was to always be observed as a Sabbath, therefore, the upcoming Sabbath was the Passover Sabbath, and not a weekly Sabbath.

So you see, Jesus was crucified on the preparation day for that years Passover Sabbath. Jesus died on Thursday, it was a preparation day, and he was put into the tomb prior to the setting of the sun in order that the Passover Sabbath would not be desecrated. Jesus was in the tomb for the rest of Thursday afternoon, Thursday night, Friday, Friday night, Saturday, and Saturday night. At the break of day Sunday morning, Jesus had risen from the dead, fulfilling three days and three nights in the earth, just as he had said he would.

As a confirmation to the scriptures, let's look at another one. In Luke 24, we see an account of Jesus joining two men on the road to Emmaus. One of the men, named Cleopas, explained to Jesus concerning the events which had taken place, about the crucifixion of their Lord. Cleopas said to Jesus, "do you not know about the crucifixion? Do not know what took place, and that this is the third day since those things happened?" Notice that in this verse, Cleopas said that it was the third day since those events. Once again, let's count the days using the concept that Cleopas used, "since those events." And we'll count the days using the improper reference of Friday being the day of crucifixion, and see what happens. Starting with Friday, the first day since those events would be Saturday. The second day since those events would be Sunday. And, because Sunday should have been the third day since those events, it doesn't fit into the calendar. So, what do we have here? It doesn't compute. The only way it does compute is to start on Thursday. And if we start with the events being on Thursday, the first day since those events would be Friday, the second day since those events would be Saturday, and the third day since those events would be Sunday. Now, the scriptures in Luke 24, explain clearly that this conversation of Cleopas with Jesus took place on Sunday, the first day of the week. Therefore the only way that the statement of Cleopas makes sense is to recognize that the crucifixion took place on Thursday, and that Sunday, that first day of the week was the third day since. Once again we see that Jesus, being crucified on Thursday, was three days and three nights in the grave, just as he said he would, and rose on the first day of the week.

But then, you might say to me, "Randy, why is it so important to know that Jesus was crucified on Thursday instead of Friday?" And the answer to that is actually simple. If you are teaching something that is contrary to Jesus' own words, then you are subverting the word of God. We

don't follow the word of God just in general fashion, but specifically. We don't interpret the word of God according to our own convenience, but specifically and accurately according to that which God says. Through the ages our leaders have lost understanding of the word of God, and therefore have lost the power that the word of God brings. This is referred to explicitly in Zechariah 11:17, where it says, "Woe to the idol shepherd, (meaning the vain shepherd, who has no real value) that leaves the flock! The sword shall be upon his arm (meaning he will lose spiritual strength), and upon his right eye (meaning he will lose the ability to see spiritually into the things of God): his arm shall be completely dried up, and his right eye shall be completely darkened."

This is exactly what has happened to the shepherds of today's churches. They have lost the ability to comprehend the spiritual things of God, and as a result, they have lost the power of the word also. Instead of teaching the whole scriptures, they teach according to the doctrine of men, according to the traditions of the church. But let's not put all the blame on our leaders, for we sheep are partly to blame also. For how often do we question the word that is taught us? How often do we study the word for ourselves? How often do we ask our pastors, our teachers, to explain certain passages, and answer the questions of how, and why?

The reason I have discussed the subject of the crucifixion is to point out that there are very plain things in scripture which have not been taught accurately for ages and ages, and this is an example, a clear example, that all things are not as they should be in our churches. Yet, Christians everywhere contend that the rapture is about to take place, and they are completely ready for it. But I would suggest to you that the church is not ready for it, because they cannot seem to understand anything unless it lies openly on the surface in clear view.

What has happened to the church that used to dig beneath the surface? Are we too busy with the things of this world? Certainly we are. The average Christian spends much more time watching TV and movies than they do reading their Bible. TV and movies are Satan's Bible. TV and movies describe everything that applies to the animal nature of man, the beast nature of man, and teaches man how they should live their lives, what things are important, what things are to be sought after, and more knowledge than you can shake a stick at. You can buy and sell anything that is worldly, including knowledge of earthly things, but when it comes to spiritual things there is a famine for the word of God.

Amos 8:11 tells us how there can be a famine, not for bread, but for the word of God. Revelation 6:6, tells us that a famine has come on the land, and that the barley and wheat are rationed out, but the oil and wine can hardly be purchased for any price. The barley stands for the Old Testament word of God, because it is a coarser grain which when ground for bread flour provides a flower which is not as fine as that which is made from wheat. Of course the wheat stands for the New Testament word of God, and as a grain which makes a finer flour, the wheat signifies that it gives a greater comprehension and clarity of heavenly things than the Israelites had through the Old Testament. The oil and the wine represent Jesus Christ, signified by the vine,

and the Holy Spirit, signified by the oil, and together they represent the revealing of the word of God.

Notice that in Revelation 6, the event of the famine for the word of God takes place just prior to the Great Tribulation, or may actually be part of the Great Tribulation. Therefore, Great Tribulation comes upon God's people because of their lack of understanding of the word of God. God's people today have a general knowledge of the scriptures, but a deep understanding of God's word is yet far away. I struggle with this in myself, because of the severe lack of understanding that I have. I only have a glimpse of what is truly there. There are a few things that God has shown to me, and I try my best to relate them to you, but there is so much more that God wants us to learn. But how can we learn more until we have applied that which he has already shown to us? God says that he will give us line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little. The reason he doesn't give it all to us at once is that he doesn't want to give it all to us if we will then toss it aside as unimportant. He will only give more when we take that which he has already given and contemplate it, and apply it to our lives.

Let me give you another example where scripture has been incorrectly explained. Acts, chapter 2, records the event of the Holy Spirit coming from heaven to those people in the upper room. What is taught in most of the churches today, is that there were 120 people in the upper room. Now, this is not an impossibility, but that is a lot of people for an upper room in that day. Secondly, the only reason people mention the number 120, is because of the event prior to that day where they had a meeting and chose another disciple to replace Judas. There were 120 people present at that meeting. But you see, there has been an assumption made, that just because there were 120 in that prior meeting, that there would also be 120 in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. But when it says they were all in one accord in the upper room, it just refers to all the disciples who lived there. The Holy Spirit did not come and manifest itself in the 120, but in the 12 apostles.

This is explained in Acts 2, where the foreigners imply that all those speaking were Galileans. Now we know all the followers of Jesus Christ were not from Galilee. Certainly of the 120, Joseph of Arimathea was not a Galilean. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were not Galileans, but were residents of Bethany, a short distance from Jerusalem. And we also know that Peter, when he stood up to explain what was taking place to the foreigners, stood up with the other 11 apostles, and not with 120 people. Also, we know that Jesus had given instructions to his twelve apostles, who were all Galileans, to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they were empowered. This does not mean that other followers of Christ were not to receive the Holy Spirit. It just means that the 12 apostles were the first ones to be given the honor of receiving the Comforter.

It is time for the church, beginning with its leaders, to begin to search the scriptures and find that which lies beneath the surface, rather than just picking around on the open ground. It is time for us Christians to begin to ask deep questions of our ministers, and to expect answers. It is time for understanding to come through the Holy Spirit, rather than deciphering God's word by

methods or tools, or by just teaching another minister's doctrine without confirming it for yourself. Satan does not want God's people to rely on the Holy Spirit, but has convinced them that they can understand all that is needed by just using logical tools or by following a study course by Christian college professors. That's why no one understands what the image of the beast is, nor understand what the Mark of the beast is, nor perceive what the miracles of the beast of Revelation really are. That's why the understanding of the church is so feeble, and that's why Christians need to realize that it is time to repent from their worldly lifestyles, and come back to being Christians like Christians were intended to be.

The true things of God, the spiritual things of God, are suffering a great famine. And it seems that God's people have adjusted their outlook to being satisfied with life as long as they can buy and sell all that is offered in the world. They are happy with clothes, fine automobiles, fancy houses, expensive vacations, manicured lawns, expensive jewelry, and painted faces. Satan has convinced God's people that there is plenty of bread for sale, after all, at reasonable prices. But God's people have not stopped to realize that the bread they buy in Satan's worldly system will not fill that spiritual hunger, and it won't even fill that fleshly hunger for long.

But what are we to do? Leave the churches and become hermits? No, I don't think so. But what I do think we need to do is to begin to seek God with all our hearts in order that He might reveal to us what our present situation really is. Matthew 24, talks about an abomination of desolation, and that when it is seen by those in the end times, they should flee from it. But who can flee from something that they don't think is there? And in the same sense, unless you suspect there is a danger somewhere, you're not going to pray for God to reveal it to you. But that's why he sends people to warn his children of impending danger. That's why there are watchmen on the walls of a city. Scripture says that what the watchman's job is, is to sound the alarm when they see the enemy approach. If he doesn't, and the enemy comes in and kills them, the watchman is judged guilty of the blood of those who were killed. But it says that if the watchman warns the people, and they ignore the warning, and then the enemy comes in and kills them, the watchman is free of condemnation because he warned them, even though they did not listen. I don't want to sound like a bearer of bad news, or sound like someone saying the world is coming to an end, but in actuality the world is coming to an end, and God's people need to be warned because the enemy is poised for a killing blow on God's church. And if you're not really watching, you will be taken with all the rest of the people who are like the five virgins who ran out of oil for their lamps. Yes, we're all slumbering, but hopefully you haven't run out of oil.