

Bought with a Price: Jesus, His Blood, Your Life (Part 2)

John 20:1-18

Introduction:

When I was pastoring in Kansas it was common for people to refer to God as the “man upstairs”; perhaps you have heard or used this reference as well – maybe its just an “ag thing” 😊. However, there are some concerning elements at play in how we think about God if He is to us just “the man upstairs”. For me, the “man upstairs” sees a God who is distant, disinterested and only shows up when called upon or need (mention “reverence, respect”).

This morning, on this Easter Sunday, I want to share with you about who God is; not the man upstairs, distant, far and checked out; but the Lord Jesus Christ and His Father, Your Father and your God, who has come down the stairs to meet you where you are, in your need.

Let’s pray...

John 20:1-10 - The Meeting at the Empty Tomb

This Easter we are looking at Jesus’s death/resurrection from the perspective of Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “You are bought with a price.” What does the “blood” mean? To answer that, let’s look at the story here in John 20.

Mary finds Jesus’s tomb empty

John 20:1-3

Okay, let’s look at the cast of characters John describes here. First, there is Mary Magdalene (prostitute, convert to Jesus), Peter (main disciple) and “the one who Jesus loved” (John – why this designation? Humility, joy, or hubris?).

The Disciples race to the empty tomb

John 20:4-10

This is interesting...but the main point is now they really begin to “believe”! But what exactly were they finally “believing” to be true about Jesus? And what is it that the scripture that is now being understood and fulfilled?

What I want to do for the next few minutes is offer an answer to the questions that John is now finally understanding about who Jesus is, why He died and why the tomb is now empty.

So, question #1 – why did Jesus die?

Well, the short and simple answer is “for our sins”. Why was that necessary?

To answer, we need to step back and look at the bigger picture of what Jesus’s sacrifice was all about...

Question #2 - What is the “Big Plan” of God?

Lev. 26:9-11

The Big Plan of God is to dwell with His people in fellowship and love.

However, for that to happen, something must be done about sin! God’s solution to that problem is the gift of “blood”.

Question #3 – How does “blood” help accomplish the “Big Plan” of God?

Lev. 17:11

God provides the “blood” as a means for atonement for human beings that deals with sin and impurities, and allows for union/fellowship. Now, here is where we need to understand something of the way Israelites and faithful Jews understood the significance of sacrifice, priests, rituals, and the temple.

Now, the purpose of the sacrificial system in Leviticus is to deal with sins at two basic levels: ransom and purification. Why? Because sin both endangers the worshipper in terms of violating God’s holy commands (requiring forgiveness) and it pollutes the worshipper in terms of God’s holiness (requiring purification). Think of it like this: a young mother tells her very energetic, determined son to NOT to go out and play in the rain because, a) you need to do your homework first before you play; but second, b) you’ll get your clothes wet and muddy. But the son, believing he knows best, sneaks out to go play with his friends in the rain and then accidentally falls into a mud pit. The boy comes home, and now we have two problems: he stinks and needs a shower, clothes need to be washed, AND he violated the rule. A commandment is broken, requiring some kind of restitution, and he’s all dirty and needs a shower lest he bring mud into the house!

This is what sin does – it pollutes and it violates. The blood of the ceremony is designed to deal with both – provide ransom for any hostility between God and the worshipper, and it purifies the worshipper and the place of worship for God to dwell there.

Thus the rituals in Israel’s sacrificial system must cleanse the impurity (purification) and rescue the endangered person (ransom).

But remember what we saw earlier in Leviticus 17:11 – who provides the blood? God! Who makes the system work? God! Who desires worshippers to enter His presence and communion with them? God! How can this happen? With the proper mechanisms in place of purification, ransom, atonement.

Question #4 – So, what does all this OT stuff have to do with Jesus?

So, what does this have to do with Jesus? Well, in a word, everything. Let me show you:

Jesus’s blood is greater...

Hebrews 9:11-14

Jesus’s sacrifice is greater...

Hebrews 9:23-28

Jesus’s invitation is greater...

Hebrews 10:19-22

Now that you understand God’s Big Plan, and how He accomplished it with Jesus, now we are ready to go back to John, and see what happens when Mary meets the resurrected Jesus. Listen to this:

Mary doesn’t recognize Jesus

John 20:11-14

Jesus calls Mary by name

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Pastor Grant Clay

John 20:15-16

Jesus declares that God's "Big Plan" has been accomplished

John 20:17-18

Keep in mind what John tells us about God's "Big Plan":

John 14:23

Main Idea:

By the blood of Jesus Christ, God has "come down" from heaven to ransom, purify, and dwell with us again.

Application: Have you seen THIS Lord?

Coming back to the question over how you view God, what comes to mind for you, friend? Is it THIS Lord? If it's not, then I have good news for you – your view of God is WRONG! And I have a better one to share with you today...

This God is absolutely and completely holy, pure, beautiful, and most worthy of your devotion. HE is totally OTHER than you and me. BUT, you were made in His image, and made for fellowship with Him, because though He is other, He is also a kind-hearted Father, who designed you to be holy and happy and totally dependent and satisfied in Him. And His Son is the same way – and to show you the extent of their desire to live in fellowship with you, this Son leaves Heaven, offers His blood for you, so that like Mary, you may learn to recognize Him as He really is. A God, a Lord, who knows your name, and invites you into His loving fellowship.

To the one with the broken heart...*here is a God who knows your name.*

To the one with who knows themselves lost...*here is a God who announces, "My God and YOUR God; my Father and YOUR Father."*

To the one who says... *"Meh", I fear for your soul...if the holiness and beauty of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ as given here by the inspired WORD of God recorded by eye-witnesses like John, if this doesn't capture your soul and somehow not move you to repentance and turning and seeing Him...I don't know what will.*

I leave you with this...

John 20:30-31

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."