

## Lesson Plan

### The Significance of Easter

Many of us realize that Jesus died on the cross as atonement for our sins. But there are many additional events that took place surrounding Christ's death and resurrection that many of us are totally unaware of. Following is a brief outline of some of those events:

#### Scriptural Principles

- 1) **Jesus triumphant entry into Jerusalem** – In **Daniel 9:25** we are told that the Messiah will enter Jerusalem 69 weeks of years (483 yrs.) after the order to restore the walls of Jerusalem. On March 14<sup>th</sup>, 445 BC King Artaxerxes commissioned Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Jesus entered the gates of Jerusalem riding on a colt on April 6 32 AD. This was exactly 483 years after King Artaxerxes decree of March 14, 445 BC. This is a miraculous fulfillment of old testament prophecy.
- 2) **Never too late** – In **Luke 23:39-43** we see that one of the thieves that mocked Jesus in **Matthew 27:44** repented and found last minute salvation. This shows that people can repent very late in life and still find salvation.
- 3) **God's Way to Show the Significance of the event** – In **Matthew 27:45** we read that darkness fell upon the earth for a 3 hour period. This was not a solar eclipse. God brought darkness upon the entire world. This was both spiritual and physical to show the world the gravity of what was taking place.
- 4) **The Double Suffering of Christ** - In **Matthew 27:44** Jesus quote **Psalm 22**, "My God, My God why have you forsaken me?" as a show of the anguish he felt when he took on the weight of the world's sin and felt for the first time in his life separation from God. This is why he prayed for God to take this cup away from me in the garden of Gethsemane (**Matthew 26:39**). He felt the physical agony and the agony of separation from God. He did this so that we would never have to experience separation from God.
- 5) **They thought he was calling out to Elijah to rescue him** – When Christ called out to God in **Matthew 27:45** the witnesses thought that he was calling out to Elijah. Elijah had ascended to heaven without death (**2 Kings 2:11**) and they thought that Elijah would return and rescue them from great trouble (**Malachi 4:5**) They even set an extra place at the passover table for Elijah in case he returned.
- 6) **The significance of the torn veil** – Prior to Christ's death the high priest would enter the Holiest of Holies in the temple and offer a goat or lamb for the sins of Israel to God. In order to do that he had to enter past a curtain that was in place to separate man from god due to man's sin. In **Matthew 27:51** the curtain in the temple tore in

half meaning that the sin barrier between God and humanity had been destroyed by Christ's death. (**Hebrews 9:11-14; Hebrews 10:11-12**).

- 7) **The significance of the folding of the handkerchief in John 20:6-10** – It is Jewish custom that if you leave the dinner table briefly but are planning to return to dine with someone you fold your handkerchief to indicate your intention to return. By folding the linen Jesus was showing his disciples that even though he was resurrected he intends to return.
- 8) **The first resurrection occurs in Matthew 27:52.** – Prior to Christ's death the souls of those that died in God's favor went to paradise. The souls of those that died not in his favor went to Hades. Until the time of Christ's death the souls of men could not enter heaven since their sins had not been totally atoned. Christ's death paid for all sins, therefore their souls were now freed from paradise to enter heaven. (**Hebrews 10:11-12**)
- 9) **In Matthew 27:64-66 The Pharisee's were afraid of Jesus' resurrection that he told them of in Matthew 20:17-19 so they took every precaution they could to prevent Jesus' return.**
- 10) **The Lie that continues to this Day.** – **Matthew 28:11-15** – The Pharisees bribed the Guards into lying about Jesus' resurrection. Even with the Shroud of Turin as a virtual "photograph of Christ's resurrection". We have secular lies and false teachings spread in books and television in an attempt to discount the truth of Christ's death and resurrection.