

Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection

SCOTT HOEZEE

The Bible consistently calls it the last and final enemy: Death. All living creatures, and most certainly all living persons, have a zest for life. We do not want to die; and we all know that when someone you love dies, the finality of it...the inability to do anything to reverse death and see your loved one back again, I think can cause you to be utterly disoriented and maddingly frustrated. Death is just so final. Today on *Groundwork*, we arrive at the moment of Jesus' own death and burial; but before this episode is finished, we will see a reversal of death after all, and the glory that just is the resurrection from the dead. Stay tuned.

DARRELL DELANEY

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, this is now the final program of our seven-part, fairly long series here on *Groundwork*...seven-part series on the traditional stations of the cross...fourteen in all. Today, we arrive at thirteen and fourteen; and real quickly, in the previous six programs, we went from Gethsemane to Jesus' betrayal and arrest; we saw Jesus before the Jewish Sanhedrin, who condemned Jesus even as outside of the courtroom, Peter denied even knowing Jesus, and he did it three times. Next, we saw Jesus before Pontius Pilate and then being whipped and fitted out with a crown of thorns by Roman soldiers. Then we saw Jesus take up the crossbar and was later helped to carry that heavy wooden beam by a man named Simon of Cyrene. Next up was Jesus addressing the daughters of Jerusalem before arriving at Golgotha and being crucified. We then saw Jesus' interaction with the one thief on the cross, as well as his words to John to take care of Mary, Jesus' mother. So, Darrell, today we witness the actual death of Jesus and his being laid in the tomb.

DARRELL DELANEY

We will also move just beyond that final station of the cross to celebrate again Jesus' resurrection from the dead; but in this first part of the program, we are going to look at the moment where Jesus died, because each of the four gospels presents this moment, of course; but each gospel has a slightly different vantage point. Since we think Mark is the first gospel to be written down, and probably Matthew, Luke, and John all had access to Mark, we are going to look at Mark 15; and we will start at verse 33, where it says:

At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?") ³⁵When [some of] those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah." ³⁶Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said. ³⁷With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. ³⁸The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, Darrell, here we encounter one of the well-known seven last words of Jesus from the cross. Mark has only one such word in Jesus' cry of dereliction that came from Psalm 22. Theologians debate pretty fiercely, how do we interpret that cry? I mean, did God the Father and the Holy Spirit as it were really turn their back

on Jesus, so that, for the first time in all eternity the Son of God felt alone? Or does this have more symbolic meaning, even though there was no actual breach in the fellowship of the Holy Trinity. It is difficult to say, Darrell, but for certain, the intensity of the cry displays that Jesus really was passing through death and encountering that last enemy of death. There was a moment of torment in hell; in fact, John Calvin believed that this moment represents what we say in the Apostles' Creed: He descended into hell.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; and I was thinking when you said that of Isaiah 53, when it says that the Lord has placed all of our iniquity on him...the iniquity of us all...and that moment is when all the iniquity of the world, past, present, and future, was put on Jesus to atone for and pay for. In any event, though, some people's Hebrew must have been a little bit rusty, because when Jesus uses the word for God, *Eloi*, they thought he was calling for Elijah for help; and then they offer him a wine vinegar as some sort of anesthetic; but then turn Jesus' cry into another chance to mock him: Well, let's see if Elijah comes to rescue him, shall we? Then, Jesus does cry out a loud cry, even though Mark does not specify what that cry was, the line in the temple actually begins to separate at that moment from top the bottom and the temple of the Holy of Holies is torn open as well.

SCOTT HOEZEE

That curtain in the temple, yes. It separated the temple from the rest of the Holy of Holies. You know, when Mark began at the baptism of Jesus, the heavens were torn open, almost as a sign that now God was getting at us, but now, in the end, the curtain is torn as a sign that now we have access to God, right? It will no longer be only the High Priest allowed in God's presence once a year. Now we can all enter at any time. Another thing to notice, Darrell, is that all through the Gospel of Mark, whenever anyone identified Jesus as the Son of God, they were told to keep quiet; every time. Probably because Jesus knew that people misunderstood what the Messiah was. They thought he was going to be a political figure to take on the Romans. So, Jesus did not want to play into those bad notions. So, he kept his identity a secret; but now, only at the end, is Jesus identified as God's Son, in public, by that soldier, and no one tells him to be quiet, because, Darrell, now that we know what the Messiah is about...suffering and sacrifice and death...now it is safe to say it out loud.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; it is beautiful and powerful. I think Matthew's version of this, in Matthew 27...his version of the death of Jesus is virtually identical to Mark's. So, how about we pick up what Luke says in Chapter 23.

SCOTT HOEZEE

⁴⁴It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. (And again) (⁴⁷paraphrased) the centurion says: Surely this was the Son of God.

So, Mark says he died with a loud cry; Matthew does too; but Luke now says one of the things that Jesus may have said in that loud cry...he asked his Father to receive his spirit.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; and so, now that leaves John's account, in John 19, where it says: Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. ³⁰When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, we get a loud cry, unspecified, I think, in Mark and Matthew; but then, we get: Father, into your hands I commit my spirit in Luke's version; and: It is finished, now in John 19. But Darrell, you know, when he says it is finished, we have to be really careful how we understand that. I mean, in England, if you ask for a second helping of shepherd's pie or something, they might say: Sorry, Luv, but the pie is finished; that would

mean that it is gone...it is done...you ate it all. And so today too if we say that somebody is finished, well, we mean that they are washed up; they are out of it. But Darrell, Jesus was not saying finished in that sense, was he?

DARRELL DELANEY

No, he wasn't. Actually, *tetelestai*, is a verb in the Greek that is basically a financial term. It means it was completed...it means it was achieved...it means it was accomplished. So, when Jesus says it is finished, he is saying the salvation plan that he came to accomplish has been fulfilled completely; and paid off as far as the debt ransom that *we* owed...the wages of sin that *we* owed for death...he paid the ransom with this sacrifice. So, it means that he has completed his task that he came down here to do.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; it is accomplished. The very moment, Darrell, when it looks like a dead end; I mean, a cross was a dead end. When it looks like Jesus *could* have said: I am finished; I am done; I did my best and now I am dead. No; no; that is not at all what this moment means. This is the capper; this is the accomplishment that brought the salvation that Jesus came here to do all along. He said: I have come here to do the will of my Father, and this is it. This is the climactic moment when he does exactly that; but what that means, Darrell, is that Jesus really is dead now.

So, next up we will see what we do with dead bodies, and that is, we bury them. Stay tuned.

Segment 2

DARRELL DELANEY

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, the last passage we dug into in the previous segment was from John 19. Let's go right back to that chapter...John 19...and now we are picking it up at verse 38: Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴⁰Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴²Because it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, here we encounter a new character named Joseph of Arimathea; and Matthew adds that Joseph was a very rich man; and in any event, he is a secret follower of Jesus. So, he secures Pilate's permission to take away the body. Obviously, Roman soldiers may have been involved in taking the body off the cross and removing the ropes and nails and all the things, but then we have the rather surprising appearance of Nicodemus, whom we have not heard from since John 3 in that well-known conversation, about being born again, under the cover of darkness. So, John did not tell us what happened in that chapter; whether Nicodemus understood or even believed or followed Jesus; but the fact that he is here now means it must have sunk in and that he is turning from a private, question asker to a public witness person in this situation.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; something got through to him, obviously. John just kind of leaves it hanging out there until, suddenly now, like sixteen chapters later, he reappears and appears to have indeed put his faith in Jesus. In any event, these two men embalm the body according to Jewish custom. Now, Darrell, experts say that slicking up a dead body with seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloe and then wrapping it all up with strips of cloth like a mummy...that would cause that cloth to stick to that body like glue. Those wrappings, in other words, were not going anywhere, which is a detail that we will want to remember for the last part of this

program; when later, those strips of linen will be seen neatly folded in an empty tomb.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; and since the next day was the Sabbath, when no work was allowed, they quickly get the body into a new tomb that no one has ever used before; and Matthew tells us that they rolled a large stone in front of it and no one would be visiting that tomb until the first day of the next week following the Sabbath; and we could also note that a couple of the gospels note that these men laid Jesus in the tomb. Mary Magdalene and one of the other women named Mary were standing at a slight distance. They witnessed the burial; and in fact, we can pick up that detail from Luke 23.

SCOTT HOEZEE

⁵⁵The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. ⁵⁶Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

So, they would wait to observe the Sabbath day, which on our calendars today would be a Saturday.

Apparently, not everybody, Darrell, was going to do that, because Matthew now...going to Matthew...in Chapter 27, he adds an interesting detail to the wider narrative. ⁶²The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³“Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ ⁶⁴So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.” ⁶⁵“Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” ⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

DARRELL DELANEY

Scott, the fact that they call him a deceiver means that the religious leaders and the Roman soldiers remain as unconvinced as ever that there ever was or had been anything special about Jesus; but they do not trust his followers, who they think are probably going to try to create some sort of conspiracy here. They wanted to stop that whole problem of grave robbery. So, Pilate says go ahead; take some soldiers; make it as secure as you can. It is really funny how.... I mean, there is a quote from Frederick Buechner that talks about this actual event.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; Buechner, in one of his sermons, he picked up on that line. Now, in the translation we just read, it was: Go and make it as secure as you know how. But another translation...older ones say: Sure, go make it as secure as you can; and Buechner kind of wryly observed that that could be a sign that, well, they can do their best to seal that body in there, but doing that to the best of their ability is not exactly going to thwart Almighty God, right? You know, do your best, but if God were to decide to do his best; well, good luck with that.

DARRELL DELANEY

You know, that reminds me, Scott, when the power of the gospel goes forth in the book of Acts and Gamaliel, the leader, is saying: Hey, if God is behind these guys...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

Good luck; but if it is not of God, I am sure it will fizzle out. But they found out later that God was definitely behind it; and they will find out that God is behind this as well.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And you wonder if Pontius Pilate suspected that the Jewish leaders were actually afraid of something more than grave robbery...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Maybe he did; but we should note...before we leave this part of the story and head to the very last segment of this entire series...we should note an irony here. You know, Darrell, on multiple occasions, as recorded in all four of the gospels, the Jewish religious leaders criticized Jesus up and down for allegedly violating the Sabbath. Now, it was never true. Jesus made that clear over and over. The things Jesus did fulfilled the true purpose of the Sabbath, but he kept getting accused of being a Sabbath breaker; but guess what, Darrell? Here, we discover that on the Sabbath, these religious leaders clearly violated their own fussy rules.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; they are running around. They are going to Pilate; they are going over to the tomb; they are working with the soldiers to seal the tomb. Surely none of that was established practice; I am pretty sure. And to try to keep this alleged Sabbath breaker...Jesus'...followers from staging a fake resurrection, they did all these things; and you see Matthew...he kind of winks, I think, in this situation, where he makes it clear in Chapter 27 that he does not overtly say that the religious leaders are approaching Pilate on the Sabbath...he does not use the word *Sabbath*, but he refers to it as *the next day*...you know the one after Preparation Day. He knows full well that this is his literate, Jewish audience who are going to pick up...they know what day that is—they know that is the Sabbath. So, the leaders who are guarding the Sabbath are violating the Sabbath in a double standard and critical way.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And you know, it is funny, they said, you know, this last deception will be worse than the first. Well, they are the ones who are going to end up causing a great deception. I mean, after what they really feared happens, they are going to spread the false story that it was a grave robbery, right? So, they are the ones who are going to be in the last deception. So, there is some irony there.

In just a moment, we will leave this final station of the cross—laying Jesus' body in the tomb—but we will still be at the tomb; it will be Easter. Stay tuned.

Segment 3

DARRELL DELANEY

I am Darrell Delaney, with Scott Hoezee, and you are listening to *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Darrell, let's dig right back into scripture. We will start with Mark's account of the resurrection. Once again, because we think this was the first one that ever had gotten formally written down. So, Darrell, let's hear from Mark 16.

DARRELL DELANEY

It says: When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ²Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. ⁶"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" ⁸Trembling and bewildered, the

women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You know, Darrell, all along, Mark's gospel has been a very speedy narrative. It took Mark only fourteen verses in Mark 1 to introduce John the Baptist, show the baptism of Jesus by John, and then tell us the story of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness and his temptations by Satan. It is a lot to pack into just fourteen verses; but now, he tells the whole Easter story in eight short verses; and what is more, this is where the Gospel of Mark ends. We have noted this before here on *Groundwork*, but, you know, when we celebrate Easter today, we shoot for all the joy and loud celebrations. We break out all the brass instruments. But the actual resurrection accounts indicate that the main reaction of the women and the disciples initially was not happiness or joy, but fear.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; so, we have had thousands of years in the Church to practice this celebration and think about these things, but when we think about the actual moment, there is not one time that the fear shows up, but there is two times: When they see the angel there, they are afraid. When they go away from the tomb with the message that they are supposed to go and tell the disciples; they are afraid and they don't tell anyone. It is interesting that the final word of Mark leaves us hanging with the word *afraid*; and that is just an interesting way to end the gospel. It is supposed to be the good news, right?

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes, yes; I mean, you know, when God does a stunning new thing; when something happens that isn't supposed to happen, you know, like a genuinely dead person coming back to life, it unsettles us long before it brings us boatloads of joy. Now, of course, the women didn't stay silent. We wouldn't have the story to tell if they had, okay? But you know, is this Mark's way of jostling us readers in the ribs a little bit, Darrell? You know, I mean, is Mark sort of saying: Yeah, but does this story end in silence in your life, dear Reader? Or do you also tell the good news as you must? Don't let the story end in silence, Mark is saying.

DARRELL DELANEY

I believe, too, that Mark is communicating to an audience of Christians who are being persecuted for their faith, and to know that this is the message; that their message should not end in fear while they are being threatened of their own natural life. I think it is another thing to think about, where Mark is going with his gospel: Don't let your fear stop you from testifying, even if it may cost you your earthly life. It is really powerful that it does end that way, to help us with challenges; but let us now listen to Matthew's account, which is actually only slightly longer than Mark's, and it is amazing that this climactic moment in galactic history occupies much less space than the crucifixion itself did. So, let's look at Matthew 28.

SCOTT HOEZEE

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went up to look at the tomb. ²There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; he has arisen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." ⁸So the women hurried from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

DARRELL DELANEY

Here now, we see some real trauma. We've got a violent earthquake; we've got a brighter-than-the-sun angel; we've got a rolling back of the tombstone. It was all too much for those Roman soldiers...the ones who were supposed to be the ones who were supposed to post and keep anything from happening; body-stealing and all

that. These guys are fading out like dead men. They fall out and so much for that plan, because they don't even get the chance to protect or do anything. They just fall out.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And as in Mark 16, so here, the women hurry away from the tomb. Again, we are told they are afraid; although, Matthew adds that there is some joy starting to take hold, too; and that joy magnifies in a big old hurry when they actually encounter the risen Lord Jesus. They run into Jesus, who basically gives them the equivalent of saying: Hi there! And now, they worship Jesus openly. He again has to tell them not to be afraid, but for sure to tell the disciples this news; and then, they need to go back to the place, Darrell, where it all began: Galilee. It all began there, and now a new beginning...a cosmic new beginning...a new beginning of the victory of life over death...it would begin there in Galilee as well. So, you know, you get these real realistic resurrection accounts in all four gospels: Fear was first, not joy; because this was just a shocking new work of God.

DARRELL DELANEY

No one had ever seen a resurrection before. They had seen...in John's account they had seen Lazarus raised from the dead...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

Of course, he is going to die again. This is the first time in history that Jesus shows that he is the first fruit of the resurrection, *and* everything he said came to pass. He broke the laws of humanity and science and everything else to show them the redemptive plan of God. Of course, that would make you afraid; of course, that would make you unsettled; when God does things that are extraordinary.

So, as we conclude the Stations of the Cross series, we conclude it in the victory of Easter. We have traveled this road in the *Groundwork* series, and we paused about fourteen times to take in the wonder, the awe, and the unending gratitude of all that Jesus had suffered and did for us sinners.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; we are concluding with Easter victory, but we don't for one moment forget all the anguish and sorrow; and above all, the actual death of God's own Son, that we have seen across these fourteen stations of the cross, because Jesus Christ accomplished what no one else could, and so brought about atonement and salvation and ultimately, Darrell, a new creation that likewise no one else could ever pull off. So, all that we have seen in this Lenten series is why, at the end of all things, it is this song that we hear from the heavenly throne room in Revelation 5: (verse 12b) Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise! (verse 13b) To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!" Amen.

DARRELL DELANEY

Thank you for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Darrell Delaney with Scott Hoezee, and we hope you will join us next time as we continue to dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives.

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SCOTT HOEZEE

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