

The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

DARRELL DELANEY

Golgotha is the place where it happened; where the price was paid; where our God demonstrated the love he has for us; where he stretched his hands and died. There is no resurrection Sunday without Good Friday. To the God we owe everything, we give our thanks. There is only one moment in history that is bigger than this one, and we will talk about that in the next episode. In *this* episode, we will talk about the actual moment of the atoning sacrifice of our Lord, and remember that sacrifice. Stay tuned.

SCOTT HOEZEE

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

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, we are on the second-to-last episode of our Lenten series that focuses in on the significance of the cross. In the first episode, we talked about the why of the cross: Why did Christ have to die in the first place; in the second episode, we talked about the curse and how he became a curse for us; in the third episode, we talked about the shame of the cross; and then in the fourth episode, we talked about the paradox of the cross; and in the fifth episode, we talked about the sufficiency of the cross and why that debt sacrifice was satisfied once and for all. That brings us to today, Scott.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and that will bring us to the four gospels. So, as we have mentioned in other *Groundwork* episodes before, there was some scholar...some commentator some time ago who said: You know, all four of the gospels are really passion narratives with long introductions. In other words, the main event is the cross and the crucifixion of Jesus; and of course, the resurrection, which we will focus a little more on for our Easter episode in the final episode of this series. So, when the person said that the gospels are passion narratives with long introductions, they sort of mean everything up until that final week of Jesus' life was the intro; now we get to the main event—the cross; and each of the four gospels, of course, has it. It brings us to Golgotha, which is the Place of the Skull, and skull in Latin is *calvarium*, so that is where we get Calvary; and Golgotha means skull, too.

So, we want to just briefly dip into, Darrell, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in this episode to see the different angles of the actual atoning event that each of them shows us.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, with Matthew, he is writing to a Jewish audience, and he wants to prove that Jesus is the promised Messiah that has been coming over the centuries; and the kind of Messiah that Jesus was really threw people off because they thought he was going to be the conquering king like David was. He was going to overthrow the Roman government; he was going to take over; but then, this Messiah decides he wants to come and die for them, and that really threw people off because they did not expect that kind of Messiah; and so, we look at the situation where Jesus is going into his trial, his crucifixion, and his death in Matthew 27, and he talks about it here.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, here is from Matthew 27:45: From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” (which means, “My

God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”) ⁴⁷When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” ⁴⁸Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff and offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.” ⁵⁰And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. ⁵¹At that moment, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split, ⁵²and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

DARRELL DELANEY

Scott, this line in verse 51 here, where it says: At that moment, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; that is significant for Matthew to put in because he comes from the understanding of the Levitical law and how there is the outer court, the inner court and the Holy of Holies; and the veil—that curtain that was there—separated...and only the priests could go in...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

Once a year on the Day of Atonement—Yom Kippur—there would be one priest who would go and have a rope attached to his leg, and if he died because God struck him down, then they would pull him out; but when that curtain torn from top to bottom happened, it is like God is saying: Anybody can come in. There is no special person or intermediary you need anymore. Christ has paid the price; so, now we...anyone...can enter.

SCOTT HOEZEE

A holy God cannot freely intermingle with unholy people, and that is why that veil was there. I mean, God lived in the midst of Israel, in the Holy of Holies, behind the veil, upon the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant, true, but the veil reminded us there is a huge difference between God and you. He is holy, you are not, so stay outside. Now, the veil has been removed and there is only one explanation: we have been made holy now, so now, we can go in; and what made us holy? Well, what just happened on the cross. And I like...you know, you emphasized, too, Darrell, Matthew makes sure to tell us that the veil got torn from the top...

DARRELL DELANEY

There you go.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, you know who is doing the ripping; which I know, some people today say: Well, c’mon; we know God doesn’t really live up in heaven. Heaven is not really above us. Well, true; but you know, to this day in movies and TV shows, whenever some character says c’mon, Lord, give me some help; where do they look? They look up. So, we do still, metaphorically, think of God as above us. So, the tearing of that veil from the top to the bottom says God is the one who is opening the door, because now, if you are in Jesus, you are holy, as God is holy. We don’t need to keep you separated anymore.

DARRELL DELANEY

You know what I thought about when you were saying that, Scott, is that not only does the veil get torn from top to bottom so that God’s people can go in, but it is also so that God can come out. So, we look at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit comes on the people and they become witnesses, as Jesus says, in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. So now, we are vessels, we are the temple, and the Holy Spirit is going out to these places...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly.

DARRELL DELANEY

To find everyone where they are. So, now you don't even have to come in, because God is going to come out and meet you where you are. So, it is really powerful to see that the veil had a two-way action to it. It is not just people can go into God's presence, but God's presence is also going to come out; because he is not limited by buildings, by temples, or by holy places at all. He wants to be in his people and among his people everywhere.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; that is a beautiful, beautiful point. This is sort of the universalizing of the presence of God—that God is on the move, and we will see that in the book of Acts. I mean, once the Holy Spirit is poured out on the disciples and they become the apostles—the sent ones—that is what apostle means—the sent ones—the holiness of God can go everywhere; and the Holy Spirit is always going ahead of them in the book of Acts; they cannot even keep up.

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Every time they get to some place new, the Spirit has already been there, planting the seeds and getting the ground softened up for the gospel to take hold. Because Matthew was writing for a Jewish audience that were very literate in the Jewish scriptures, Matthew is bringing a whole lot of biblical threads together here and braiding together this tapestry of salvation by grace alone through the cross.

DARRELL DELANEY

And what is beautiful about that, Scott, is because the veil is torn, we have divine access to God that we didn't have before; because you had to come to God a certain way and you had to come through a priest; but now that the veil is torn, God is saying: I want you to come in and have a relationship with me directly. I need you to have a relationship with me and me with you, and no intermediary other than Christ. You have access in this situation; and when we look at the rest of these other gospels, we want to look at the discussion of Christ's crucifixion continued. So, stay tuned for this.

Segment 2

SCOTT HOEZEE

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

DARRELL DELANEY

And Scott, we have been talking about the death of Christ, and how significant that moment was in history; and how God had torn the veil and all the barriers for entering his presence are gone. That is really exciting and that is really encouraging.

So, when we turn to the book of Mark...I mean, according to scholars, Mark is the shortest, the first gospel; it is the one that came out the earliest, and it is designed to help Gentile Christians understand the humanity of Jesus, and who has access to him.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, Mark's crucifixion account comes in his 15th chapter; and there are women present when Jesus was crucified. Mark 15:40: Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome.⁴¹ In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there. So, Mark highlights the fact that in some ways the women disciples were more faithful than the male disciples, who had all fled. Peter had disowned Jesus, Judas had obviously betrayed him and was gone, but all the other disciples had just sort of scattered to the wind after the Garden of Gethsemane. Only the women follow all the way to the end, to the cross; the women who had bankrolled Jesus' ministry, it appears; the women who had supported him and prayed for him and followed him, they are there, to the end.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, it is beautiful how Mark picks up that there will be...in a very subtle way, he picks this up; there is no gender distinction. The men are not in a hierarchy over the women, and he is humanizing the fact that there are men and women a part of Jesus' ministry; and even though that is a male-dominated context, Mark kind of thumbs his nose at that context and says: Oh, no; there are important women who are a part of this, and God loves men and women, and male and female he created them. He wanted to save them and redeem them as well.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And as we know from Mark, also the other gospel accounts, the women are also the faithful ones who come to that tomb the day after the Sabbath, and they are the ones who are given the message: He is not here, he is risen...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And they go back and tell the disciples—the men disciples. So again, there too the women become the first evangelists. They preach the gospel long before Peter does or John does or James, because they bring the good news to the disciples in all of the gospels because they were the ones who went to the tomb when nobody else was around; and so, they are the ones who ran into the angels...

DARRELL DELANEY

It is beautiful.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Who gave them that message. So, that is an interesting angle to the crucifixion of Jesus from Mark; but Darrell, let's now look at Luke.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, Luke is a physician by trade. I don't think he even had a relationship with Jesus personally. He gathered all of his information about Jesus. Because he is a physician, he is really interested in the physical...what is happening with Jesus physically...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

And emotionally, and he puts that in his depiction of the crucifixion and the death of Christ; but there are other parts of his story that stick out. One of the stories that sticks out for me is the one where Pontius Pilate is on trial...Jesus is on trial with Pontius Pilate...and Barabbas is there.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Apparently, there was a tradition...we find out in this passage...I don't know where it began, but that some...maybe around the time of the Jewish Passover, kind of an act of good will, they would let somebody free who had been arrested; and this Barabbas was apparently kind of a bad actor. He was a criminal, he was a genuine criminal; and so, Pilate is going to give them the choice of who to release: Jesus, who has now also been arrested, or Barabbas. I am guessing Pilate figured it would be an easy choice because Barabbas was a bad guy...he was dangerous; but the crowd had other ideas.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, let's look at that passage in Luke Chapter 23; it says: ¹³Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, ¹⁴and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. ¹⁵Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. ¹⁶Therefore, I will punish him and then release him." ¹⁸But the whole crowd shouted, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!" ¹⁹(Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.) ²⁰Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. ²¹But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" ²²For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore, I will have him punished and then release him." ²³But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. ²⁴So Pilate decided to grant their demand. ²⁵He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, Pilate is trying to do the right thing. Pilate is not a theologian. He has no idea that Jesus is sinless and, you know, the Son of God; but he is a smart enough jurist to know that these are beefed up charges. There is nothing to it. This man is falsely accused; whereas, Barabbas was justifiably convicted of even murder. But no; the crowds say we would rather have Barabbas running around free again than this Jesus fellow. So, you know, Pilate just accedes to their wishes; although, I do remember, Darrell, reading a lesson by the pastor and novelist and writer, Frederick Buechner, who said: You know, the crowds decided to let Barabbas go free instead of Jesus; but of course, if Jesus had been given the same choice, he would have set Barabbas free too, because that is what Jesus does. He forgives and gives us a second chance; but yes, so that is very interesting how insistent they were that Jesus had to die, even though Pilate said: What did he do? Nothing.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, it is crazy because we look at Barabbas as if he is the bad guy, but to be honest, we are Barabbas.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

We have rebelled; we have hated our brother, which has actually contributed to what scripture calls murder, if we hate our brother or sister. We have broken the law. We are the ones that are in rebellion. We have done the insurrection against God...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, it is interesting how we could look at Barabbas and shake our finger and then shake our heads, but we need to be looking in the mirror, because we are Barabbas that God is dying for—that Jesus is dying for. It is an interesting twist on that. If we look at it with humility, we are the reason for the death penalty, and Christ came to die for us.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And it is very, very interesting, too, Darrell, that surely...well, of course, Jesus knew he was innocent. Of course, Jesus knew that he was being falsely accused. Of course, Jesus knew Barabbas was the real criminal, not him; but he doesn't protest. He doesn't plead for his own life. I would; you would; if we were arrested falsely and we were facing the death penalty, we would be on our knees, you know, pleading for our life and pleading for a new jury or pleading for a new judge, or anything...

DARRELL DELANEY

No question.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But Jesus didn't because deep down, he now understands, if he didn't understand all along, this is why he came. This is why he came; he came to give his life for people like Barabbas; and as you just said, Darrell, we are all Barabbas. Jesus came to give his life for us. That is the divine exchange that happens, and Luke is the one who brings it out in such a beautiful way; but there is one more gospel, the Gospel of John, and we will look at that as we close out this program in just a moment, so stay tuned.

Segment 3

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 we are talking about the importance of the cross in this sixth episode of a seven-part series for Lent. We have been meditating on the cross of Christ, and in this program going directly now to the four gospels and each of their accounts. We have looked at Matthew, Mark and Luke; now, we are up to John.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, we have been talking about different things that have been happening around the actual story of the cross, and some significant characters; but in John's gospel, we want to emphasize these different parts, where he keeps saying the scripture is fulfilled. So, let's look at it here in John 19. It says:

²⁸Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so the scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." ²⁸A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. ³⁰When he had received the drink, he said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. ³¹Now it was the Day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have their legs broken and the bodies taken down.

SCOTT HOEZEE

³²The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ³³But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," ³⁷and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

DARRELL DELANEY

You know what is interesting about that, is the scripture may be fulfilled: verses 28, 36, and 37, it tells me that God preplanned this. That he has already given prophecies about it hundreds of years before Jesus was even born; and the fact that Jesus is following the exact plan lets me know that God has a plan for not only salvation, but for my everyday life. It gives me hope to know that I serve a God who is in control, and knows the end from the beginning; and when things are out of control in my life, I can trust a God who knows what is happening. All the days that were ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be, and that is encouraging to me because I cannot see the future.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; John is the...let's say, the most theologically heady of the four gospels. John's theology is pretty rich and thick. It begins with his opening chapter: In the beginning was the Word...you know, it is very lofty. John stands apart a little bit from Matthew, Mark and Luke. It was probably the last gospel written. He may have been aware of Matthew, Mark and Luke. So, he wrote a much more theologically hefty gospel. So, there is a whole lot of stuff that is coming together here, Darrell; but I think the main thing that John does want us to take away from this is that God knew exactly what he was doing. This was not some terrible accident...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

That happened to Jesus, that had God just saying: Whoa, no; stop, stop! This had to happen; and that is why, in John...so, you know, we have done a series before on *Groundwork* on the so-called seven last words; and indeed, if you take all four gospels, you can find seven different things that Jesus said on the cross, and no gospel has all seven. Here in John, *it is finished* are Jesus' final words. We just looked at one earlier where Jesus just breathes his last and doesn't say anything; but here, *it is finished*; but notice, Darrell, he doesn't say *I am finished*.

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Or this is the end, or this is just a bad thing. Literally translated, this the Greek verb for *to be perfected*.

DARRELL DELANEY

The *telos*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

The *telos*, yes. The *telos*. This is the fulfilment. I have now reached the end goal. So, a *telos* is a goal. So, I don't mean to trivialize it at all, but you know, in soccer matches...football, as they call it in Europe, you know, there aren't that many goals. When somebody gets a goal...IT'S GOOOOAL!

DARRELL DELANEY

They lose their minds.

Scott Hoezee: Right, yes. The goal! That is kind of what Jesus is saying: GOAL! I have hit the goal. All is accomplished. All is fulfilled. Again, because of what you just said, Darrell, God's good plan.

DARRELL DELANEY

That is beautiful, because when I think of that *telos* verb that you are talking about, I think of a financial term. It is a financial term: the debt has been paid.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

Paid in full. When you get the stamp that says: Paid in full, this is what John is trying to point us to, that Christ came and actually fulfilled it; and it is interesting to me because when the rubber hits the road, I think about my sinful situation and where I came from and where we found ourselves. We were in an impossible situation. We didn't have enough "spiritual" money to pay the debt that we incurred for our own sins. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord; and because God loves us, he is the one who did something about that. He intervened into this, and that is what John went into great

detail to explain; but the writer of Hebrews also talks about why God did this in the first place as well.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Before we look at that, though, I will also mention, just to tie this off, Darrell, that clearly John is presenting Jesus as the perfect Passover lamb...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

That is why it was important. His bones weren't broken. They broke the bones of the other men to induce such last-minute agony that it would finish them off; but Jesus' bones were not broken. He was the perfect lamb; but indeed, when we get to Hebrews Chapter 12, reflecting back on all of this:

¹Therefore (the writer says), since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race that is marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

DARRELL DELANEY

Man, that encouragement is for us as well. We can make it through these hard times and setbacks because we have a God we can come to. When we have sins, we can confess them. That phrase: *the joy set before him*, sticks out to me, and I would love to believe that we are that joy. Even though we have made a lot of mistakes and we are not perfect, he wanted to have a relationship with us, so he went through these great lengths to lay his life down for us; and I love that. Even though the cross is tragic, it is also beautiful at the same time; and this is the place that we need to remind ourselves of. That brings us hope.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And that goes back to the fourth episode of this series, Darrell, where we looked at the paradox of the cross, that through this bloody instrument of death came life; and now we see that despite this bloody instrument of horror, Jesus was able to look beyond it...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And see joy...the joy on the other side when he was able to save us and raise us, and we are going to talk about in our next program. So, thanks be to God for that.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Darrell Delaney and Scott Hoezee, and we hope you will join us again next time as we conclude our series by discussing our participation in Christ's death and resurrection.

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SCOTT HOEZEE

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