

Intro: On the eve of the "Exodus" Passover, Jesus is opening a way to reconciliation with God through His own blood. He is leading out a multitude of people as the sacrificial lamb whom death received in our place. He is consumed by the deep sea, thrown into chaos and destruction like no man has ever seen, nor will ever see, for He knows the Father. He is the obedient Son, who fulfilled the Law given in the wandering of the wilderness as the Son of the house.

More than the blood on the doorposts of their Egyptian homes, His blood not merely signified the passing over of death, but the drinking down of death's cause: sin. Jesus was being judged as sin. All the just wrath and righteous anger that we feel towards evil cannot compare to the holy wrath that God feels towards it and poured out upon His Son in our place. You see, our salvation, our Exodus, our freedom from sin and its curse comes *through* the judgment of God, not apart from it or without it. This is what Luke wants us to see: Jesus rescues us from our slavery to sin and death by being judged in our place. As Paul interprets it: "He who knew no sin, God made Him sin on our behalf, that we might be made the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21). This is our only hope of being made new, and righteous, and holy, and seeing God as a friend.

1. The Passion of Jesus is About Judgment

- a. "Passion" – old church word describing the "suffering" of Jesus
 - i. Passion originally meant "suffering" (Latin, *pateres*)
 - ii. Came to mean the deep-seated feeling related to desire
- b. Darkness from noon to 3pm (the brightest part of the day)
 - i. specifically, "the sun failed"
 1. Amos 8:9 - "and it will come about in that day...that I shall make the sun go down at noon and make the earth dark in broad daylight"
 2. Joel 2:31 - "the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes"
 - a. Peter quotes this entire passage (Holy Spirit poured out AND judgment of cosmic imagery) relating to Jesus at Pentecost
 - ii. The inclusion of this effect of Jesus' death is not merely a note of geological or astronomical significance, but rather a portent of these passages of judgment
 1. God is judging sin in an eschatological sense
 2. That is, this judgment is that ultimate judgment that comes upon sin and evildoers according to His holy promise given to the patriarchs: Adam, Abraham, David, the prophets, etc.
 3. The original curse of the original sin, Adam's rejection of God's word and wisdom and the self-determination that he assumed, is in light here: "You will surely die."
- c. This also reveals to us that Jesus's death was a specific event: God pouring out His promised wrath against sin *upon His Son*
 - i. Thus, Jesus' suffering on the cross and the judgment of God was not poured out *after* Jesus' death (as in Hell), but *through* His suffering and death
 - ii. The darkness precedes the death, i.e. the judgment precedes the resurrection.

2. The Passion of Jesus is About Salvation

- a. Curtain "in the midst of the Temple" "was split"
 - i. Matthew and Mark note "from top to bottom"
 - ii. Exodus 26:31-33 (Tabernacle) / 2 Chr 3:16 (Temple of Solomon)
 1. Purpose of the veil was to separate God's holy presence from the people, and even the priests

2. Only the High Priest approached within the veil once per year, to make atonement for the people (Heb 9:7)
 - b. Jesus opened the way into the Most Holy Place with His own blood
 - i. The problem is not merely sin, but sin in the light of holiness
 - ii. God provided a curtain, a barrier to protect us from His blazing center of holiness, but it separated us from His glory because of our sin
 1. Jesus, however, split the barrier by providing a sure and better way to not merely protect Man from God's blazing beauty, but to provide surety and security in His presence
 - iii. Hebrews 9:11-26; 10:19-22 (cf. 6:19)
 - c. What does this mean?
 - i. We have access, by means of being united to Him
 - ii. Reconciliation between the Holy God and Profane Man
 1. Romans 5:10-11
 2. Sin created animosity, enmity between God and Man – and Humanity isn't going to win that battle (though we are self-deceived enough to try)
 3. Thus, God worked to bring about an answer to the problem of our animosity, that is our sin and self-determination, by providing His perfect holy Son as our substitute and champion for our death and for our life
3. The Passion of Jesus is About Our Salvation Accomplished *Through* His Judgment
- a. Jesus cries out abnormally loudly
 - i. Up to this point Jesus has been utterly tortured in numerous and various ways
 1. Physical
 2. Psychologically
 3. Emotionally
 - ii. Yet, it wasn't until now that he "cried out with a loud cry"
 1. Why?
 2. Because his suffering here (passion, old word for the crucifixion story) is otherworldly
 3. It is the judgment of God
 - a. Notice the emphasis that Luke reveals:
 - b. Jesus doesn't cry out, "my hands, my side, my feet!" but rather simply screams and addresses the Father with words of surrendering trust
 - iii. This cry is a loud "sound" – wordless scream
 1. This is the cry of "outer darkness", the phrase used most by the gospel writers to refer to the place of God's utter condemnation, i.e. Hell
 2. It is the rejection of the Father of Lights, so that Matthew records Jesus here saying as well, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"
 - a. Again, quoting from the Psalms
 - b. The agony is being forsaken of God – thrown into lifeless darkness of God's horrible wrath against despicable evil, the ugly mutinous sin of humanity
 3. Jesus is being sucked down into a spiritual condition that is eternal
 - a. Heaven and Hell are spiritual conditions, not temporal places
 - i. Heaven is being in the presence of God accepted
 - ii. Hell is being utterly rejected and thrown out of the presence of His majesty (see Luke 13, the fig tree and the door)
 - b. There is no such thing as being 3 hours in heaven or 3 hours in Hell
 - c. Thus, Jesus was experiencing all the suffering and loss and terror of anyone who is *eternally* cast out of the presence of God

- i. And only the eternal Son of God could bear it for the rest of humanity
 - ii. He is experiencing an infinity of suffering – and nobody has ever experienced this while still saying, “Father, I trust you. I love you. I obey you.”
 - 4. There is nothing more traumatic than your most beloved rejecting you
 - a. The experience of suffering in rejection correlates to the love of the relationship
 - i. If your enemy rejects you, who cares?
 - ii. If your acquaintance rejects you, you will get over it quickly
 - iii. If your friend rejects you, it will heal.
 - iv. If your spouse or parent rejects you, it is devastatingly life-altering.
 - b. What do you think it means when the eternal Son of God, existing in bliss and harmony and love for all eternity with the Father, is rejected by the Father?!
 - i. No wife has ever been so one with her husband!
 - ii. No child has ever been so one with his father!
 - iii. No soul has ever been so one with his body!
 - c. This is why Jesus *screams!*
- b. At the same time, His cry of agony is a cry of deep, deep faith in the Father’s love for Him
 - i. “commit” or “commend” = “set before”
 - 1. Jesus is setting his spirit before the Father to do with as He promised: to raise it up
 - 2. He refers to God as “Father” here, indicating an intimacy and trust that is deeply personal
 - a. To entrust this much (the spirit of the eternal Son of God, to move it into the heart of Hell, to bear up the agony of such judgment/rejection) into the hands of One whose wrath is being excised takes tremendous faith in His Word
 - b. Jesus believes the Father will keep His Word *even in the midst of terrible rejection, judgment, and suffering*
 - 3. He quoted from Psalm 31 - the cry of the distressed and of trusting the LORD for His soul
 - ii. Why did Jesus do this?
 - 1. This is the great irony of the mockers of Jesus, who proclaimed three times, “Save yourself!”
 - a. If Jesus had saved Himself to take another breath, entrusting His spirit to His own will and not the Father's, then we could not have been saved
 - i. Save himself = no salvation for us
 - ii. Commit His Spirit = save us
 - b. This is the ignorance that Jesus refers to when He asks the Father to forgive them, “For they don't know what they are doing.”
 - i. It is not merely ignorance of whom they are killing, they don't *believe* that, but are not ignorant of Jesus' claims (obviously they mention them, 'if you are the Christ')
 - ii. It is ignorance of the reality that if Jesus were to come down off the cross and save himself, then they would all be doomed - they don't know that this act of death is the act by which they are saved ultimately

1. The second thief seems to get it because he doesn't ask Jesus to save his skin, but trusts that Jesus has a Kingdom beyond his death
- c. Jesus is expressing great faith in the Father's provision, ability, and willingness to raise Him up, to secure Him through this death
- i. Jesus sees no contradiction between the Father's love for Him and His suffering, even though He *must* bear the Father's wrath against Him
 1. Some have tried to say that the Father was being abusive and unloving in sending His Son, but Jesus sees exactly the opposite
 2. John 17:23 – Jesus shows that the Father's love is *known* and expressed by *His sending of the Son*
 3. The Father loves the Son (John 3:35; 5:20; 17:23), sent the Son (John 6:39), gave the Son to redeem a sinful world (John 3:16; Rom 8:32), raised the Son from the dead (Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20; Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 6:14), exalted the Son above all things (Phil 2:9), and glorifies the Son (John 17:1,22,24)
 4. The Son loves the Father and obeys His will, to go to the cross as the atoning sacrifice, a substitute for you and for me, for Adam, that those who entrust themselves to Him would receive eternal life, access into the presence of the Holy God without fear of condemnation and destruction
 - ii. Though God is damning Him, condemning Him, pouring out His wrath against all evil upon Him, He is still entrusting His soul to God, as His Father, *because He is accomplishing something through it.*
 1. Psalm 22:30-31, "Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; ³¹ they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it."
 2. Thus, our salvation which is accomplished by Jesus, is not merely a salvation *without* judgment, as if God simply swept sin under the rug, or looked past it
 3. No, it is, rather, salvation *through* judgment, in that we are saved through the judgment of God poured out against evil and sin and rebellion against God all upon Jesus *in our place*
 - a. This means that all sin has a cost, an infinitely *unglorious* cost
 - b. This means that we have a God who pays the cost to reconcile sinners to Himself
- d. Jesus willingly resolves to die *to save you from such outer darkness*: He commits His spirit and breathes it out
- i. He is always in authority, even over his own death
 - ii. Therefore, His trust in the Father and delight to do His will, to rescue sinners for the sake of the Father according to his great love for them
 - iii. Is Jesus willing to save a messy, broken, rebellious, failure-soaked sinner like you?
 1. His desire for your salvation and flourishing was only surpassed by His desire to honor and love His Father
 2. Thus, His passion is a great word, for His desire to glorify His Father and His desire to save you meant that He was willing to suffer to see it done. And he has done it!

"The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world *to save sinners*, of whom I am the chief." (1 Tim 1:15)