

“Heaven was Torn Open!” (Mark 1:9–15)(2.2.2020)

Mark 1:9–15 (NIV84)

9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, 13 and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

The word of God for the people of God.

Title: A Sacred Day

LET US PRAY.

INTRODUCTION:

The dominant understanding in the American Protestant Church focuses on the personal salvation aspect of Jesus’ life and sacrifice. What I have been doing these last weeks, and will continue today, is to demonstrate that Jesus’ primary mission was to inaugurate the establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth. Yes, individual and personal salvation are a subset of that mission. The LORD chooses to use human and heavenly creatures as his instruments to effect the reclaiming of the nations from Satan and his minions.

Becoming a Christian is not about what Jesus can do for us. INSTEAD, becoming a Christian is about what we can do for the kingdom of God. We have been made new creations in Christ. We have been blessed by the living presence of the Holy Spirit within us. That same Spirit of God has equipped each of us with spiritual gifts for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

Remember the Great Commission that the Captain of our Faith pronounced just prior to His ascension.

Matthew 28:18–20 (NIV84)

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

BODY:

My study over these last several weeks has crystalized the connection and cohesiveness of the scriptures. My prayer is that you are joining me on this journey. Seeing this unifying thread will mobilize THIS Body of Christ in our community.

This is a visual depiction of all the cross references in our Bibles.

Another way of thinking about our Bible is that we tend to look at bits and pieces without keeping the big picture in mind.

OT references and Acts/Galatians say: “through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.” Then we have Genesis 28:10–14 (NIV84):

Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood the Lord, and he said: “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.

In John 1:51 (NIV84) Jesus then added, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

This is an amazing correlation as Jesus connects the promises to the patriarchs of the Chosen People to His mission here on earth. The Gospel of John makes it clear that the kingdom of God has broken through the heavens into the earthly realm. Jesus is the promised Offspring and the connection to heavenly power and purpose. Think of D-Day during World War II. The landing on those Normandy Beaches was not victory accomplished; but certainly, it was victory established. The “time” was at hand.

When Jesus comes up from the water he experiences three things that in Jewish tradition signified the inauguration of God’s eschatological kingdom: the heavens were opened above him, the Spirit descended into him, and the heavenly voice spoke to him. The concurrence of these momentous events at the baptism signals that Jesus is the “more powerful one” (1:7) promised in the OT and the inaugurator of God’s eschatological kingdom.

Isaiah 64:1–2 (NIV84)

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you!
2 As when fire sets twigs ablaze
and causes water to boil,
come down to make your name known to your enemies
and cause the nations to quake before you!

Can you feel the POWER of the Messiah’s coming?

Isaiah 42:1 (NIV84)

42 “Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him

and he will bring justice to the nations.

Unmistakably, this points forward to Jesus' baptism.

What is the Septuagint? 72 Jewish scholars translated the Old Testament into Greek around 250 BC. The primary impetus for translating the Hebrew scriptures into Greek was "the conquests of Alexander the Great and the resulting spread of Greek language and culture throughout most of the ancient world." This translation is often quoted by the New Testament writers.

The parting of the Red Sea uses the same word as the one Mark uses here for the splitting of heaven.

The only other time this word is used in the Gospel of Mark is the splitting of the Holy of Holies Veil.

Isaiah 40:1-5 (NIV84)

40 Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.

2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

3 A voice of one calling:

"In the desert prepare
the way for the Lord;
make straight in the wilderness
a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

5 And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the
Lord has spoken."

— This is another gathering of the Assembly like which we have been examining the last few weeks.

— John the Baptist is pointing from Jesus' baptism back to a heavenly decree by Yahweh in the Great Assembly.

The New Testaments is very clear about the active work of God's messengers: the angels.

In Jesus' temptation account, we read about the angels ministering to Him at the end; but, the grammar indicates that they were ministering to him throughout His wilderness experience.

Every one of these temptations come to fellow-sons and co-heirs with Jesus. The pathway of faith lies through testings which appeal to bodily needs; to fanaticism instead of faith, and to the avoidance of that suffering which for us, too, lies between conversion and the crown (Rom. 8:17).

– There is a very significant point that the Spirit of God drove Jesus into the wilderness.

– Bread to overcome hunger

– Testing God's providence

– Submitting to Satan

1 John 3:8

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

– Jesus said in Luke 11:20 (NIV84) "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you."

– Jesus returns from his testing in wilderness, calls his disciples, and starts casting out demons.

– Jesus proclaims the kingdom of heaven is near.

CONCLUSION:

For the darkness shall turn to dawning,
and the dawning to noonday bright;
and Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,
the kingdom of love and light.

Genesis 1:1-2 (NIV84)

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Through the Word, all things were made; without him nothing was made that was made. And, it was good.

From the dirt, Adam was created and God breathed life into him. From Adam's rib, Eve was created. They lived with God in the Garden of Eden. And it was very good.

As there was disobedience with the heavenly beings, there was disobedience in humankind. It got so bad that the Lord regretted having created man. Yahweh started again with Noah and his family. But in exercising his free will, man tried to ascend to heaven by way of the Tower of Babel. The peoples were dispersed to the 70 nations under the governance of the sons of God. Wickedness abounded.

God started again by choosing His own people; a nation of His making. Oh, but Israel failed time after time.

The Lord's desire was for them to reside in The Promise Land; but, prosperity always led to their falling away.

They killed the prophets sent to warn them. The nation of Israel was destroyed and dispersed. Later, the remnant was returned to Judah and Jerusalem.

The Chosen People wearied Yahweh with their waywardness. For 400 years there was silence. The Holy Spirit was hovering but did not touch down. Galatians 4:4-5 (NIV84) 4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons [and daughters].

When the exact time was right, the Savior, who had created the world, began the offensive to save His world. Jesus established the beachhead. He is the supply line that connects heaven and earth and sustains the soldiers of Christ. He has equipped us with the support of angels; the sword of God's inspired word; the communication channel of prayer; established the battle plan of the Great Commission; and, feeds our faith that God's purposes for us and His kingdom will not be defeated.

We've a message to give to the nations,
that the Lord who reigneth above
hath sent us his Son to save us,
and show us that God is love,
and show us that God is love.
Amen and amen. Let us pray.