

June 24-30, 2019

Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20–21

“He Is Risen”

Summary: *Christ the Lord is risen—He appears to many—He has all power in heaven and earth—He sends the Apostles to teach and baptize all nations.*

Christ is risen—He appears to Mary Magdalene, then to others—He sends the Apostles to preach and promises that signs will follow faith—He ascends into heaven.

Angels announce the resurrection of Christ—He walks on the Emmaus road—He appears with a body of flesh and bones, eats food, testifies of His divinity, and promises the Holy Ghost—He ascends into heaven.

Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John find the empty tomb—The risen Christ appears to Mary Magdalene in the garden—He appears to the disciples and shows His resurrected body—Thomas feels the wounds in Jesus’ hands, feet, and side—Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus appears to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias—He says, Feed my sheep—He foretells Peter’s martyrdom and that John will not die.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How do death and burial practices contrast the resurrection?

The resurrection is so exceptional and such a “antithesis of death,” that an added insight to Jewish burial practices may be of value. “Decent burial was regarded to be of great importance in ancient Israel, as in the rest of the ancient Near East. Abraham’s purchase of the cave at Machpelah as a family tomb (**Genesis 23**) and the subsequent measures taken by later patriarchs to ensure that they would be buried there occupy a prominent place in the patriarchal narratives. Biblical biographies ordinarily end with the statement that a man died, and an account of his burial reflects the value assigned to proper interment. To bury an unidentified corpse was considered to be so great a good deed that even the high priest was required to do it although it involved him in becoming ritually unclean.” “There is no explicit biblical evidence as to how soon after death burial took place, but it is likely that it was within a day after death. This was dictated by the climate and by the fact that the Israelites did not embalm the dead (Jacob and Joseph were embalmed following Egyptian custom).” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

Where were the dead buried?

“In Talmudic times, burial took place in caves, hewn tombs, sarcophagi, and catacombs; and a secondary burial, i.e., a re-interment of the remains sometimes took place about one year after the original burial. Jewish custom insists on prompt burial as a matter of respect for the dead, a consideration of particular relevance in hot climates. The precedents set by the prompt burials of Sarah (**Genesis 23**) and of Rachel (**Genesis 35:19**) are reinforced by the Torah’s express command that even the body of a man who had been hanged shall not remain upon the tree all night, but “you must bury him the same day” (**Deuteronomy 21:23**). Some delays in burial are, however, justified: “Honor of the dead” demands that the proper preparation for a coffin and shrouds be made, and that the relatives and friends pay their last respects. Certain delays are unavoidable. Funerals may not take place on the Sabbath

or on the Day of Atonement; and although the rabbis at one time permitted funerals on the first day of a festival, provided that certain functions were performed by gentiles, and regarded the second day of festivals "as a weekday as far as the dead are concerned," some modern communities prefer postponement. Where there are two interments at the same time, respect demands that the burial of a scholar precedes that of an *am ha-arez* ("average citizen"), and that of a woman always precedes that of a man." "The duty of burial is an obligation of the deceased's heir but if they cannot or do not perform it, the whole community is responsible. In Talmudic times, the communal fraternal societies for the burial of the dead evolved out of an appreciation of this duty. In many communities, even till modern times, acceptance into the *hevra kaddisha* (as the society is known) is considered to be an honor and only mature, respected men and women are initiated."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What is the "Manner of the Jews" in burial?

"One of the functions of the *hevra kaddisha* is the *Tohorah* rite. This is washing the corpse and preparing it for burial. In ancient times various cosmetics were used but these have been largely discontinued. The corpse is dressed in simple white shrouds and, as a rule, wrapped in the *tallit* he wore during his lifetime. The *tallit* is, however, invalidated by having one of the *zizit* removed." "Coffins were unknown in biblical times. The corpse was laid, face upwards, on a bier and brought to his grave. The custom of burying important people in coffins developed only later. Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, however, ordered that holes be drilled in his coffin so that the earth touch his body. This custom is always followed where coffins are used and in countries outside Erez Israel it is also customary to put earth from Erez Israel in the coffin." "In ancient times a form of coffin was the ossuary which was a small chest in which the bones of the deceased were placed after the flesh had decayed. In various places in Israel, such as Bet She'arim, stone coffins, known as sarcophagi (singular sarcophagus) have also been found. Many were elaborately carved, some with non-Jewish motifs. In the Middle Ages there was no general rule as to whether burial should be in a coffin. In Spain the coffin was not used, while in France it was, and was commonly made from the table that had witnessed the hospitality of the deceased. Coffins were also used in Eastern Europe and often rabbis' coffins were made from the desks at which they had studied. In the 16th century the idea grew that it was meritorious to be buried in direct contact with the earth --- "For dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19) --- and interment without a coffin became the rule for strictly Orthodox Jews. In countries where the secular authorities insisted on the use of a coffin, their bottoms were either made of loose boards or holes were drilled into them." "In the Western world even Orthodox Jews nowadays use coffins in compliance with the law of the land but they are usually made plain and of cheap wood. In Israel, burial is without a coffin except for soldiers who are buried in plain wooden boxes."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Where were the dead buried?

"Although nowadays burial always takes place in a cemetery, this was not always so. In biblical times the practice was to bury the dead in family sepulchers which might have been in natural caves or man-made buildings. In Talmud times, the custom developed of setting aside special places to bury the dead. This was primarily to keep the graves out of town since they can be a source of ritual impurity, particularly for the *kohanim* (priests). The cemetery, therefore, has no intrinsic holiness and is not "hallowed ground." However, great care has always been taken to keep the cemetery in the best possible order out of respect for the dead and sensitivity to the mourners. No activity showing disrespect for the dead,

such as animals grazing there, was allowed. Further, anything that shamed the dead, such as eating and drinking or wearing *tallit* or tefillin or reading from the Torah, is also forbidden because the dead cannot do these things." "It is customary to visit the cemetery on the anniversary of a loved one's death, as well as during the month of Elul, preceding the High Holy Days. Cemeteries are usually owned by the community and some people reserve space next to their relatives. *Kohanim* are always buried in the first rows since their relatives, also *kohanim*, may not enter the cemetery and so can see their loved ones' graves from outside. Apostates and suicides were at one time buried in a separate section of the cemetery but this law is usually not followed." "The custom of decorating graves with flowers is strongly opposed by some Orthodox rabbis on the ground that it is a "gentile custom." Neither Conservative nor Reform Judaism, however, objects and it is also common practice in Israel, particularly in military cemeteries." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

What about marking the grave?

"The first tombstone mentioned in the Bible is the monument the patriarch Jacob set up over the grave of Rachel. From other parts of the Bible and in Talmudic times, it seems that such monuments were set up for important people. Later the custom developed of erecting some sort of marker on the grave, most probably to be able to locate it easily, and so that *kohanim* should avoid it. Still later people started to inscribe epitaphs on the gravestones, recording the name of the person buried there, his dates and some biblical verse and statement in his praise. Some of the epitaphs described the function and position of the deceased and some, from early periods, have been found in Greek." "Escorting the dead to his last resting place is considered a great *mitzvah* "the fruit of which a man enjoys in this world while the stock remains for him in the world to come." It justifies even an interruption in the study of the Torah and is called "the true kindness" since one can expect no reciprocation of any sort. The minimum duty is to rise as the funeral cortege passes, and accompany it for four paces." "One who sees a funeral procession and does not escort it," states the Talmud, mocks the dead and blasphemes his Maker." Only if the hearse passes a bridal cortege is the bride given preference; to honor the living is considered greater than to honor the dead." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

What does the "Day of Atonement" mean to the Jews?

The atonement has been the central issue of true religion from the beginning of man's mortal sojourn through eternity. In Judaism, a special day was established as a Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. "The tenth of the Hebrew month of Tishrei is Yom Kippur, a day of fasting and prayer for all Israel, a day which has been significant to Jews throughout the ages. The Day of Atonement is the last of the Ten Days of Penitence which begin with Rosh Ha-Shanah, and is the climax of the repentance and soul-searching incumbent on every Jew during this period." "The essence of the day and the reasons for its special prayers and ceremony are expressed in the Torah: "For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord." "So important is Yom Kippur that it is the only fast day which may be observed on the Sabbath and is never postponed until the next day. Moreover, the Torah describes the holiness of Yom Kippur by calling it the "Sabbath of Sabbaths." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

How does the reading of the Book of Jonah imply the atonement?

The Jewish reading of the scriptures on Yom Kippur is the book of Jonah who survived being in a great fish three nights and spewed out on the third day. "In ancient literature there are several stories of people being rescued from inside fish (Heracles the Hesione,

Perseus, and Andromeda); but only in that of Jonah was the rescue effected by prayer and not by force. The book is to be understood as a lesson in Divine forgiveness and mercy --- to Jonah as well as to the people of Nineveh --- and as a lesson in obedience to God's will. As a symbol of the effectiveness of repentance it is read as the *haftarah* at the afternoon service of the Day of Atonement." "Jonah is known for the incident involving the whale, or large fish, but that episode is secondary to the lesson the Book comes to teach. Jonah learned through bitter experience that non-Jews are also God's creatures and one must not begrudge them God's love and forgiveness. Also to be learned is the fact that true repentance is accepted by God and earns His pardon for almost any sin. Because of its theme of sin, repentance, and forgiveness the Book of Jonah is read every Day of Atonement at the *Minhah* service." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How does repentance play a role in the atonement?

"Repentance consists of several stages --- firstly the sinner must reflect on his actions and realize that he has indeed done the wrong thing. He must then make up his mind never to do it again, and confess his sin. This confession is not made to any other human being but is made by the sinner directly to God. On this basis the two confessions *Ashamnu* and *Al-Het* were introduced into the prayers for the Day of Atonement which is a special occasion for repentance and forgiveness. However, even when a sinner has done all these things, his repentance is still not final until he has been exposed to the same temptation and withstood it. Of course he should not deliberately put himself on that spot again."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What latent clue might Jews have about three days "rising again?"

When the famous Rabbi Schneersohn from Brooklyn died, some of his followers expected him to rise again after three nights and three days. Thousands of posters of the famous rabbi had been distributed, boldly captioned with statements such as "We want Messiah now!" "The 7th Lubavitch leader, Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, born in Russia in 1902 and educated in mathematics and engineering at the Sorbonne in Paris, led the New York community from 1951 until his death in 1994. He was childless and did not designate a successor. Under his direction, the influence of the Lubavitch community spread far beyond the hasidic community and penetrated the mainstream of Jewish life in all parts of the world. In theory, the Habad Hasid is too sophisticated to expect miracles from his leader --- he looks to him only for spiritual guidance. Nevertheless, the great "rebbe" was said to have cured a man of cancer by placing his hand on the man's side and saying "*si'z gornisht*" (It's nothing). A campaign hailing Rabbi Schneersohn as a Messiah began in the late 80s and has continued beyond his death in the 1990s. The messianism gripped a large part of the Lubavitch community and has created a huge debate in the ultra-Orthodox communities in the Diaspora and Israel." "To some, Messianism undermines the first line of defense against Christian missionizing which has always been that Judaism cannot accept a Messiah who dies in the midst of his redemptive mission. To others, Rabbi Schneersohn is the one who will be resurrected to complete a process of redemption for the Jewish people."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What Sign was given to the Pharisees?

In the New Testament, the example of Jonah being swallowed by a great fish for three days and three nights is a symbol of atonement or at least that the Messiah would rise from the dead. Yet, the three nights and three days of Jesus' interment and living again is still not recognized by the Jews as a sign of his Messiahship. One major reason for this may be that

the account of his death and resurrection simply is not known, and if it is known it is not recognized. There were two Sabbaths in a row that year (the Passover Sabbath and the regular seventh day of the week Sabbath). In that sense, Jesus was crucified on what we call a Thursday. This fits in the time reckoning of Palm Sunday being five days before the Passover (**John 12:12**). Then in fulfillment of prophecy, He really was in the tomb three nights; and on the third day He arose: “. . . and be raised again the third day.” (**Matthew 16:21; 17:23, Mark 9:31**) This corresponds directly with the three days of darkness in the Book of Mormon lands. (**3 Nephi 8:23**) The only “sign” Jesus gave the Pharisees, “Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (**Matthew 12:38-40**) In speaking to the Pharisees, He specifically connected himself with Jonah, who was in a great fish, “. . . three days and three nights.” (**Jonah 1:17**)

How can I believe, and know?

The scriptures bear witness, the spirit bears witness of an empty tomb: “He is not here.” (**Matthew 28:6, Mark 16:6, Luke 24:6**) They teach us that color, calendar, clock, people, places and experiences were used to foreshadow the atonement. With open hearts we may have experiences, meet worthy people, visit holy places, understand God’s timing of calendar events, and see eternal purposes of Him who died and came alive again.