

He Didn't Come Down

Matthew 27:38-42

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** The basis for our study today is from the book of Matthew chapter 27 beginning in verse 38:

Matt. 27:38-42: *“Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. 39 And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads 40 and saying, ‘You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’ 41 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 42 ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.’”*

2. I want to talk to you for the next few minutes about the consequences if Jesus had done as the chief priests, scribes and elders requested of Him: *“let Him now come down from the cross.”*
3. This short reading pictures our Lord suspended between heaven and earth ready to pour out His precious blood for the sins of mankind.
4. As Jesus was being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane He said: *“Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?”* (Matt. 26:53)
 - A. This verse is the basis of the song we sang before the lesson: *Ten Thousand Angels*
 - B. He could have called 10,000 angels and come down from that cross but He didn't!
5. The idea for this lesson came from another song: *He Didn't Come Down*;

3 *Often I stop to think just where I'd be
Had Jesus come down from that cruel tree,
There'd be no hope for man; no peace could be found
Thank God, I'm glad that He didn't come down*

****[Chorus]** *He didn't come down; oh, no, He didn't come down
Twelve legions of angels were camped all around
He could have called them to set Him free,
But He stayed on the cross for you and for me*

4 *Picture His mother there with tears in her eyes,
As they mocked and scorned Him and pierced His side
They said, “If you be King, then come to the ground”;
But He prayed, “Forgive them,” and He didn't come down*

****[Chorus]** *He didn't come down; oh, no, He didn't come down
Twelve legions of angels were camped all around
He could have called them to set Him free,
But He stayed on the cross for you and for me*

6. **5** The song got me to thinking about the fact that, if He had wanted to, Jesus could have come down from that cross.
 - A. Can you imagine what would've happened had Jesus come down from that cross?
 - B. That's what I want to talk to you about for the next few minutes: **He Didn't Come Down**

II. DISCUSSION:

If He had come down from the cross there would be...

1. **6** No New Testament:

- A. The first consequence if He came down would be that there be no New Testament.

- B. If He had come down all we would have in our Bibles would be the Old Testament!
- C. The Bible says: **Heb. 10:9-10:** *“then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”*
- D. Why did He “come”?
- (1) The text says He came “to do Your will, O God...”
 - (2) It was God’s will that He hang on that cross! If He came down He would not have done God’s will!
 - (3) But by not coming down, by doing God’s will the text says “He takes away the first that He may establish the second” (i.e., covenant or testament).
 - (4) The “second...will” or covenant is the covenant by which “we have been sanctified...”
 - (5) By not coming down He ushered in the New Testament; the covenant that saves all men who obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9).
- E. In Hebrews 9:15-17 the Hebrew writer points out an important truth:
- Heb. 9:15-17:** *“And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 16 For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.”*
- (1) We know our own wills do not become effective until we die; the same was true with the Lord’s will.
 - (2) Jesus’s will (i.e., NT) only became effective because of His death on the cross!
 - (3) You can’t read passages like that and not understand that if Jesus had come down from that cross we wouldn’t have the New Testament.
 - (4) If He had come down we wouldn’t have the story that we have about the Christ, or the Acts of the Apostles and the early church, or the epistles.
- F. If He had come down we wouldn’t have the gospel that Paul talked about in 1 Corinthians 15:
- 1 Cor. 15:1-4:** *“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,”*
- (1) I want you to try to imagine that!
 - (2) The New Covenant reveals the gospel “by which also you are saved...”
 - (3) But it all depends on “Christ died...He was buried, and that He rose again the third day...”
 - (4) None of that would have happened if He had come down!

If He had come down from the cross there would be...

2. **7** No church of Christ:

- A. Can you even begin to imagine that?
- B. Jesus said in **Matthew 16:18:** *“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”*

- (1) The Hadean realm, the grave, could not and would not prevent Him from building or establishing His church.

Acts 2:24: *“God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”*

Acts 2:26-27: *“Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.”*

- (2) The remainder of Acts chapter 2 records the church coming into existence.
 - (3) Luke says those that were “cut to the heart” by Peter’s sermon cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”
 - (4) They were simply, but profoundly told to: **Acts 2:38:** *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*
- C In the book of Ephesians Paul tells us that Christ is the savior of the body and the body is the church of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:24; Eph. 5:23).
- D. In Acts 20:28 Paul told the Ephesian elders said Jesus purchased the church (How?) “with His own blood”!
- (1) Do you know where He shed that blood?
 - (2) On the cross? Why? Because He didn’t come down!
 - (3) If Jesus had come down from that tree there would be no church of Christ and Paul would never had written in Romans 16:16 “the churches of Christ salute you.”

If He had come down from the cross there would be...

3. 8 No remission of sins:

- A. Hebrews 9:22 says, “without the shedding of blood there is no remission.”
- B. When you go back and read the book of Hebrews 10:1-4 he talks about how that back during the Old Testament period sins were remembered every year.
 - (1) The Jews offered all kinds of animal sacrifices and the sins were remembered year after year after year and just kept piling up.
 - (2) How did that work? Well, let’s read that together:

Heb. 10:1-4: *“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”*
 - (3) The reason their sins had to be remembered every year was because the blood of bulls and goats was powerless to take away sin! If Jesus had come down from the cross:
 - (a) Peter could have never have told those on Pentecost to: *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* (Acts 2:38)
 - (b) He could have never preached that because there would be no “shedding of blood,” hence no “remission of sins.”

- (4) But He didn't come down and that provides us with the "remission of sins" we so desperately need and that Paul talks about in Ephesians 1:7 when he says, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
- (5) Thank goodness Jesus stayed on that cross and did not come down!

If He had come down from the cross there would be...

4. **9** No reconciliation:

A. You see, as a consequence of sin is we are separated from God:

Isa. 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

Rom. 8:7: "...the carnal mind is enmity against God..."

Jas. 4:4: "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

Rom. 3:23: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

B. There would be no way you and I could be reconciled to God if Jesus come down from the cross.

(1) But He stayed on the cross He "endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2); He "endured such hostility from sinners against Himself" (Heb. 12:3).

(2) As a result the apostle Paul could write:

Eph. 2:13-17: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near."

(3) How wonderful! We are reconciled to God because He stayed on the cross!

(4) He stayed on that cross shedding His life's blood, paying that awful price so that you and I can be reconciled to God in "one body" (which is the church).

(5) Had He come down from the cross we wouldn't have any of that; we would be "...without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12)

(6) Think how bleak life would be! No hope! Forever an enemy of God with no possible way to remedy that awful condition.

(7) But, my friends, He didn't come down; He hung there willingly for you and me! Because He loved us! Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8

(8) As a result:

(a) We have access to the Father through prayer and we are built up as a spiritual habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22).

(b) We are reconciled to God because, as the song says, "There's a fountain free, 'tis for you and me: There's a living stream, with a crystal gleam: From the throne of life now it flows;"

If He had come down from the cross there would be...

5. 10 *No justification:*

- A. The theme of the epistle to the Romans is justification (acquittal of sin, declared “not guilty”).
- (1) For example, in Romans 5:1 Paul says, “*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*”
 - (2) But if Jesus had not stayed on the cross there would be no justification:
 - (a) Let’s read on:
Rom. 5:6-8: “*For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*”
 - (b) Had He come down from the cross and not died we would remain “unjustified”; “un-acquitted,” “guilty”!
 - (c) And in verse 9 Paul brings it all together when he says:
Rom. 5:9: “*Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*”
 - (d) As a result, the apostle was able to say, “*For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*” (Rom. 5:10)
- B. Have you ever thought about it?
- (1) Jesus could have come down from that cross.
 - (2) He had more than enough power do that; He had twelve legions of angels at His disposal but He didn’t call even one; He didn’t come down.
*“He could have called ten thousand angels
To destroy the world and set Him free.
He could have called ten thousand angels,
But He died alone, for you and me.*

If He had come down from the cross there would be...

6. 11 *No hope:*

- A. The religion of Jesus Christ is the grandest of all religions, not the least of which, because as a Christian we live “*in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began...*” (Titus 1:2).
- B. But if Jesus had come down from the cross there would be no such hope.
- (1) Can you imagine what this world would be like if we had no such hope? Paul did! I Cor. 15:12-19
 - (2) Notice what Paul says in Romans 8:24, “*...we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?*”
 - (a) This passage says that hope saves! How?
 - (b) It saves by motivating us to do what God tells us to do:

Heb. 6:18-19a: "...that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast..."

- (c) He said hope is the anchor of the soul!
 - (d) An anchor is keeps a ship from drifting away and becoming lost or wrecked.
 - (e) Our "hope of eternal life" allows us to sail the troubled seas of life; to look beyond this veil of tears and endure, to see beyond the heartaches and sorrows that trouble our lives, to get up and face another day, to treat the up's and down's of life as but a "light affliction." (2 Cor. 4:17)
 - (f) Hope transforms our otherwise meager existence into a life of joy; a life worth living!
 - (g) The Bible describes our hope as:
 - ✓ "a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3),
 - ✓ "a blessed hope" (Titus 2:13),
 - ✓ "the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23),
 - ✓ "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven" (Col. 1:5).
- (3) But, there is only "one hope" (Eph. 4:4), and that hope is real only because Jesus didn't come down from that cross; He stayed up there and died for you and me.

Finally, if He had come down from the cross there would be...

7. **12** No heaven:

A. In John chapter 14 when Jesus was about to leave the apostles:

Jn. 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

- B. Thomas didn't understand that and so Jesus spoke words that have rung down through the ages, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (Jn. 14:6)
- C. But if He had come down from that tree there would "no way"; no path to "the Father"; no "way which leads to life"! Matt. 7:14
- D. There'd be no place prepared for those who've obeyed the gospel – no place for those having heard it, believe it, repent of their sins, confess their faith, and are baptized into Christ, and added to the Lord's church, and remain steadfast and immovable (1 Cor. 15:58).
- E. Neither would there be any place for those who have obeyed the gospel but have gone astray; those seeing the need to come back and be restored to faithfulness through repentance, confession, and prayer.

*He didn't come down; oh, no, He didn't come down
Twelve legions of angels were camped all around
He could have called them to set Him free,
But He stayed on the cross for you and for me*

III. CONCLUSION:

- 1. Thank God Jesus didn't come down!
- 2. Thank God that...

Heb. 12:2: “...for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

“He learned obedience by the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5:8)

3. Because by not coming down, by His enduring the cross with all of its pain, all of its shame; by His obedience to the Father He has “*been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,*” (Heb. 5:9).
4. But, if you’re here today and have not obeyed the gospel and you are determined not to obey the gospel.
5. Or, if you’ve fallen away as a Christian and are determined to live in sin:
 - A. Jesus might as well have come down from the cross, because for you his death, burial and resurrection were in vain!
 - B. Your resistance to God’s loving call invalidates everything Jesus accomplished on the cross for you! Heb. 5:8-9
6. Why not accept God’s gracious gift?
 - A. You will rid yourself of the stain and guilt of sin.
 - B. You will no longer be an enemy of God; you will be reconciled to Him!
 - C. In doing so, you will find the ultimate in peace and have the hope of eternal life.
7. Would any sane and logical person reject such a gift?!

Adapted from a sermon by Ryan Thomas.