

Spiritual Events of Jesus' Death and Resurrection

We are aware that Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected three days later; but not all of us understand what happened during those three days. I am not talking about the natural. We know what happened in the natural—after His body was taken from the cross, it was wrapped in linen with spices and placed in a borrowed tomb.

John 19:40 NASB

(40) So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

This lesson is about what happened in the spiritual realm. There was much activity in the areas which we don't see except by the Spirit and Word of God.

Let's begin with the thief on the cross beside Jesus. He recognized Jesus as King and desired to be remembered when Jesus received His Kingdom.

Luke 23:42-43 NASB

(42) And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"

(43) And He said to him, "**Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.**"

What did Jesus mean by "Paradise", especially since He would be dead on that day? We will answer that in a moment, but first let's continue with the sequence of events.

Luke 23:44-45 NASB

(44) It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour,

(45) because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two.

Matthew 27:50-51 NASB

(50) And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

(51) And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split.

The three hours of darkness that fell were a supernatural darkness, not an eclipse as some think. This was during Passover and Passover was always at the full moon. This would make it impossible for there to be a natural eclipse. When you add to the darkness the earthquake that split the rocks, it was a pretty scary sight for the natural man. No wonder some of the soldiers said that He was the Son of God.

As Jesus died, the veil of the temple was split from the top (signifying that God did it) to the bottom. According to Jewish records, this veil (which separated the Holy Place from the Holiest of Holies that contained the mercy seat) was as thick as a hand is wide and, of course, was as tall as the tabernacle since the veil went from floor to ceiling.

The Scriptures interpret the spiritual significance of this event. Not only did the blood of Jesus make atonement for us on the mercy seat in Heaven, His flesh has become the veil that separates the Heavenly Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. We now come into the presence of God by a new and living way through the flesh (veil) of Jesus.

Hebrews 10:19-22 NASB

- (19) Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,
(20) by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,
(21) and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God,
(22) let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Now, back to “Paradise”. What is it and where is it? It is also called “Abraham's Bosom” and Jesus told a very detailed picture about it. By the way, Jesus did not refer to this story as a parable so He must have meant us to take it literally.

Luke 16:19-31 NASB

- (19) "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.
(20) "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,
(21) and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.
(22) "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.
(23) "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and **saw* Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.
(24) "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'
(25) "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.
(26) 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.'
(27) "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house--
(28) for I have five brothers--in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'
(29) "But Abraham **said*, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'
(30) "But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!'
(31) "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

The rich man was in Hades but he could look up or across a wide gulf and see Father Abraham and the beggar Lazarus and wanted Abraham to send Lazarus with a drop of water. It couldn't be done because of the chasm fixed between the torment compartment and the Paradise section of the place of the dead.

In Hebrew this place was called "Sheol"; in Greek it is "Hades"; and in English it is "Hell". Our problem is that our understanding of hell is based on Hollywood movies or fables and myths from pagan religions. Very little of what we know about it is biblically correct. In order not to stir incorrect meanings from your previous understanding, I will use "Sheol" (the Hebrew word) to describe this place rather than "hell".

Apparently, Sheol had two compartments—one for the unrighteous dead (a place of fire and torment), and one for the righteous dead (Paradise) for those such as Abraham who looked forward in faith to a coming Messiah. These two areas were separated by a chasm or space which could not be crossed by those who inhabited either side.

So, when Jesus died, He descended into Sheol in the lower parts of earth before He ascended to the Father.

Ephesians 4:9-10 NASB

(9) (Now this *expression*, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?

(10) He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)

This is even foretold in the Old Testament.

Psalms 16:10 NASB

(10) For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

Jesus met the thief that believed while hanging on the cross in Paradise and, apparently, made proclamation across the chasm to the torment side. Peter says He did this when He was made alive in the spirit and in spirit proclaimed the fulfillment of God's promise of Messiah to the disobedient spirits which were imprisoned during the days of Noah.

1 Peter 3:18-20 NASB

(18) For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

(19) in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison,

(20) who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water.

While in Sheol, Jesus performed another very important function but, to understand it, we need to review a little background. Again, our understanding has been colored by myths, fables, and Hollywood productions.

First, we need to realize that Death and Hades are spiritual beings. Hades, Hell, Sheol is a place that is the responsibility of the spiritual being called Hades.

Revelation 6:7-8 NASB

(7) When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come."

(8) I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

In these scriptures from Revelation, Hades is following after a being named Death who is riding an ashen horse. It is not clear whether or not Hades is on his own horse or riding with Death, but there are together.

Revelation 1:17-18 NASB

(17) When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,

(18) and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Hades and Death both have keys. Obviously, these must be keys related to the place of the dead. When Jesus triumphed, He took the keys from Death and Hades. In other words, their authority and responsibility were curtailed by Jesus.

As believers, Death and Hades have no power over us. When an unbeliever dies, he meets Death face to face and Death escorts him to the lower parts of the earth and turns him over to Hades who places him in Sheol (the torment side). However, as believers, we don't see Death (the spiritual being).

John 8:51 NASB

(51) "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death."

Jesus didn't mean that we would never die physically. While our body dies, Death, himself, has no power to restrain us; we immediately go into the presence of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 NASB

(6) Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord--

(7) for we walk by faith, not by sight--

(8) we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

Now, back to Jesus after He died. He makes proclamation to the spirits in prison, takes the keys of Death and Hades and, then, as He ascends from the grave, He takes with Him all of the righteous ones who are in the Paradise side of Sheol. Some of these receive their resurrection bodies as they ascend with Jesus. This is to complete the first fruits offering to God.

Matthew 27:52-53 NASB

(52) The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;

(53) and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.

When Jesus ascends, He also has business to complete in the Heavens. Again, we need to clear up myths, fables, and our incorrect pictures of the Heavens. In verse one of Genesis, the word for “heavens” is plural. God created more than one “heaven”. In the Old Testament, the throne room of God is called the “heaven of heavens”. In the New testament, Paul called it the “third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2). If there is a “third heaven” there must be a first and second heaven. The first heaven is probably what we see when we look up at the sky or heaven. That leaves the second or mid-heaven between our natural sky and the throne room of God. I believe that it is in the second heaven that Lucifer, as the Devil, has set-up his kingdom of darkness and it is there that he rules the fallen angels. (Contrary to popular opinion, the Devil does not rule in hell; he is not even in hell and according to scriptures, he never will reside in hell, but will be thrown into the lake of fire).

Ephesians 6:12 NASB

(12) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

These aren't demons that we cast out, but, rather, spiritual rulers that are arrayed against us in heavenly places. We struggle or wrestle against these spiritual beings as we declare the Kingdom of God.

Prior to the resurrection of Jesus, these spiritual rulers had more power to hinder the work of God in the earth. We get a glimpse of this in Daniel.

Daniel 10:12-13 NASB

(12) Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding *this* and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.

(13) "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.

Daniel 10:20-21 NASB

(20) Then he said, "Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to

fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.

(21) "However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these *forces* except Michael your prince.

We see from this that some being called the "prince of the Kingdom of Persia" was able to stop one of God's angels for 21 days until Michael (one of God's chief angels) came to help him. This angel had to return to stand with Michael because another ruling power called the "prince of Greece" was coming to help the "prince of Persia".

However, when Jesus ascended, He made a few changes in the second heaven on His way to the throne room of God.

Ephesians 4:7-8 NASB

(7) But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

(8) Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."

Colossians 2:15 NASB

(15) When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

Jesus disarmed the rulers of darkness and publicly displayed His triumph over them. Their ability to hinder God's work has been severely restricted. We can wrestle against these beings and tear down their strongholds in the earth because Jesus overcame them and, as we are in Him, we also have overcome them.

When Jesus entered the throne room of God to appear before the Father, He was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom.

Daniel 7:13-14 NASB

(13) "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.

(14) "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

Psalms 110:1-2 NASB

(1) **A Psalm of David.** The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

(2) The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies."

Hebrews 10:12-13 NASB

(12) but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,

(13) waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.

The Father establishes Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords in all authority in His Kingdom. Jesus then pours forth the Holy Spirit to establish the Kingdom in the earth.

Joel 2:28-29 NASB

(28) "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.

(29) "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Acts 2:33 NASB

(33) "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

Romans 14:17 NASB

(17) for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.