

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The most important events in the history of the world were the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
- B. In this lesson, let us consider a few points concerning what happened when Jesus died on the cross.

II. WHEN JESUS DIED

- A. When Jesus died, the world was shaken.
 1. All of the gospel accounts record the Lord's death with a brief description.
 - a. Mark 15:37 – And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last.
 - b. Luke 23:46 – And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” Having said this, He breathed His last.
 - c. John 19:30 – Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.
 2. Matthew gives the most detail in his description of the events that happened as Jesus died. Consider Matthew 27:50-54:

⁵⁰And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. ⁵¹And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. ⁵²The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”
 3. These events did not happen by chance. They were positive, miraculous proof of Christ's identity, and the guards rightly interpreted their meaning: Jesus is the Son of God.
- B. When Jesus died, His spirit went into Hades.
 1. As stated in the passages above, Jesus gave up His spirit at death.
 - a. “The body without the spirit is dead” (Jas. 2:26), so Jesus literally died as His body was left behind on earth while His spirit went beyond.
 - b. Just prior to His death, He cried out, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit” (Luke 23:46). This was a quotation of Psalm 31:5 and a fulfillment of prophecy. The destiny of the Lord's spirit was in the hands of the Father.
 2. In Luke 23:43, Jesus foretold the destination of His spirit when He said to the thief with Him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”
 - a. The word “paradise” came from a Persian word used to describe the beautiful parks and gardens of Persian kings and nobles. It was used in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) to describe the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8) and other lush gardens (Num. 24:6; Neh. 2:8; Eccl. 2:5; Song 4:13; Isa. 1:30; Jer. 29:5; Ezek. 31:8-9).
 - b. By the first century, the Jews who believed in spirits used the word “paradise” to describe a place of comfort for righteous spirits.
 3. Jesus went into Paradise, which was not in heaven but in Hades.
 - a. Notice that after His resurrection Jesus said to Mary in John 20:17, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father...” If He had not been to the Father, then He had not been to heaven.
 - b. Instead of heaven, the Lord's spirit went into Hades, which is evident by two passages from Acts 2:
 - i. Acts 2:27 – ...because You will not abandon My soul to Hades, nor allow your holy one to undergo decay. (This is part of a quotation from David in Psalm 16:8-11. It was not fulfilled in David, but in Jesus.)
 - ii. Acts 2:31 – He looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay.
 - iii. Note: The King James Version incorrectly translates the word “Hades” (ᾅδης) as “hell.” Jesus did not go into hell (γέεννα).
 - c. Hades is the place where the dead await the judgment of God. It is the same as Sheol in the Old Testament. The best biblical description of Hades is found in Luke 16:19-31.
 - i. Hades has a place of comfort, which Jesus called “Paradise” in Luke 23:46. This corresponds to “Abraham's bosom” in Luke 16:22-23.

- ii. It also has a place of torment, which is separated from the place of comfort by an impassable chasm (Luke 16:26).
 - d. Paul later described a man (himself) who went into the Paradise of the third heaven (2Cor. 12:4). This was not the same place where Jesus went at death, for He did not enter heaven until after His resurrection and ascension (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:2, 9-11; 2:33).
- C. When Jesus died, His body went into the tomb.
 - 1. When Jesus came into the world, His body was prepared for Him so that it could be an offering for all of us. Notice Hebrews 10:5-7, 10 (vv. 5-7 are quoted from Psalm 40:6-8):
⁵Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, “Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, but a body you have prepared for Me; ⁶in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure. ⁷Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come (in the scroll of the book it is written of Me) to do your will, o God’”... ¹⁰By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
 - 2. After the Lord’s spirit had departed, His body was removed from the cross and buried (Matt. 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-55; John 19:38-42).
 - a. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, both prominent rulers of the Jews, obtained permission from Pilate, took down Christ’s body, and prepared it for burial. Joseph laid the body in his own tomb, which was new and had never been used before.
 - b. To prevent a hoax resurrection by the disciples stealing His body, the chief priests and Pharisees requested and received soldiers to guard the body and placed a seal on the tomb. Of course, not even these safeguards could prevent His resurrection.
 - 3. Although He was buried, recall that Acts 2:27, 31 stated that His flesh did not see decay. His body did not remain in the tomb, but instead it was reunited with His spirit and raised from the dead to powerfully declare that Jesus is the Son of God (Rom. 1:4).
- D. When Jesus died, His covenant went into effect.
 - 1. As He died, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).
 - a. The veil of the temple was a heavy curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place. Only the high priest was permitted to pass through the veil into the most holy place once each year on the Day of Atonement (Heb. 9:6-7).
 - b. The tearing of the veil was a sign that access to God was no longer by the means of the old covenant (Moses’ Law) through the Levitical high priest. The covenant and the priest has changed (Heb. 7:11-19). Jesus is now our high priest (Heb. 4:14-16; 9:11-12).
 - c. Now we have access to the true holy place, which is heaven. Consider Hebrews 10:19-22, and notice what it says about the veil:
¹⁹Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let 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.
 - 2. At Christ’s death, the old covenant ended, and the new covenant came into effect.
 - a. Christ took away the old covenant, “having nailed it to the cross” (Col. 2:14).
 - b. The new covenant of Christ is His will and testament. Like any will and testament, it was executed after His death. Notice Hebrews 9:16-17:
¹⁶For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. ¹⁷For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.
 - c. The new covenant went into effect immediately upon Christ’s death, but parts of it still needed to be executed. Jesus is the Mediator, and when He ascended to heaven, He appeared in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:24). Now the covenant is in full effect.

III. CONCLUSION

- A. When Jesus died, it was a dark day on earth, but it was a dawn of light for sinners. Because of the sacrifice of His body, we all have the opportunity for salvation in Him.
- B. By His sufferings, “He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:8-9). Have you obeyed the terms of His covenant so that He can be the source of salvation for you?