

Easter Morning
April 4, 2010

Turn to **1 Corinthians 15:3**. I would encourage you to read the entire 15th chapter, because it tells of the power of the resurrection. In **Verses 3-4**, the Apostle Paul tells us of the basics of the gospel of Jesus Christ. **"For I delivered you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."** Those that died on crosses other than Christ did not die for our sins. **Verse 4: "And that He was buried."**

Some liberal preachers today believe in several false statements. They believe that Jesus didn't really die but that He was in like a semi-conscious state. They call it swooning. One preacher stated that he believes Jesus was swooning in the grave. Jesus died and He was buried, but that was not all. **"And that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."** So, He died, was buried, and on the third day He arose from the dead.

I'm not going to preach an ordinary sermon today, but I want to talk about some things that makes me think. I want to know **(1) Where Did Jesus Go When He Died?** I don't believe death is extinction. I do not believe that death is annihilation. I believe death is a separation of our spirit from our body.

Muslims believe that Jesus was not God. They believe if He was God He would not have died, because God can't die. That makes you think, doesn't it? Well, Jesus was human and divine. The divine part did not die. The divine part was not buried, because you can't kill God. The human part died, and the human part was buried. He was a perfect human sacrifice, but He also was God; and when He died, His spirit went somewhere and I want to know where did He go? The Scriptures talk to us about that.

Look at **Luke 23:39**. When Christ was dying on the cross, there was a thief on his left and a thief on his right. Correct? One thief began to mock Jesus and said, **"If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."** The thief on the other side began to share that they were getting what they justly deserved. He said, **"And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this Man has done nothing wrong."** This man could tell that Jesus was different from the two of them.

Finally, this man said in **Verse 42**, **"Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."** How could He look like a king? Isaiah said, "There was no form of beauty for us to even desire Him," but this man recognized that Jesus has a kingdom

and he said, "Remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

In **Verse 43**, Jesus tells the thief, "**Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.**" That meant Paradise was a place. In the Bible, Paradise is referred to as "Abraham's bosom." It's referred to as "the garden of God," but Paradise is not in Heaven.

In the Old Testament, everyone that died went somewhere; and when you die, you are going to go somewhere. Some of you are getting ready to take trips and you have gathered brochures and planned where to stay, but many of you are going to take a trip some day when you die, and you haven't thought one thing about it. I'm trying to tell you that you are going to go somewhere, and that place, when Jesus died, was called Sheol.

In the King James Version, it is translated as "hell." It isn't hell. It's the place of departed spirits. It's called Sheol, the place where everyone in the Old Testament went to when they died. The upper region was called Paradise, and the lower region was called Hades. The final abode of the lost is not Hades but the lake of fire.

In **Luke 16:19-26**, Jesus tells of a rich man and a poor man whose name was Lazarus. The Lord was trying to tell those people of that day where they would go when they died. **Verses 22-23** say that the rich man died and was buried, and when he woke up, his body was in torment in Hades, but he saw Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom.

Here is a strange thing. This rich man could communicate with Abraham. One was in Paradise and one was in Hades. They could communicate, and the rich man was still giving orders. He said, "Send Lazarus down here and give me a drink of water." Isn't that amazing? What you are when you die is what you will be throughout eternity. So this rich man is giving orders in Hades, and Abraham says something I want you to note. This is the reality of where Jesus was.

In **Verse 26** Abraham said, "**Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed (a great divide), so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.**" That was Sheol. So, Jesus dies and descends into Sheol.

In **Matthew 12:40**, Jesus gives one sign in all of His ministry. He says, "**For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man (Jesus) be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**"

When Jesus was buried, He wasn't buried in the ground. He was buried in a cave. He isn't talking about His body. He was three days in the heart of the earth. Paradise was in the center of the earth. Do you know where Hades is? It's in the center of the earth.

Turn to **Ephesians 4:9**. Jesus first had to descend (go down). **"Now this, He ascended."** That means to go up. **"What does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?"** Most of you had no idea Jesus went somewhere when He died, and do you know who went there with Him? A thief, and instantly He is in the upper region of Sheol. What is He doing? He is preaching.

It says in **1 Peter 3:19** that when Jesus went to Paradise, **"He preached to the spirits in prison."** Now, remember I told you that those in Hades could hear those in Paradise, and Jesus is in Paradise proclaiming, "I have won the victory!" To those in Hades, that was sad news; but to those in Paradise, that was joyful news. Hades was not the kingdom of God. It was a place where spirits went, and they could not get out. Jesus proclaims in Paradise, "I have won the victory!"

What did Jesus do when He preached? He proclaimed the victory won on the cross, and **Revelation 1:18** tells us He did something. On the third day, He came out of that tomb; and when He came out, He came out with keys. From the New Century Version, He says, **"I am the one who lives. I was dead, but look, I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys to death and to the place of the dead (Hades)."**

In the Greek, the word Hades there means Sheol. It's the place of departed spirits. The key to death means that death could not control His body. His body is coming back to life. He is resurrected, so He has the key. Death could not hold Him, and death will not hold you or me! Death will not hold our bodies. Those in the grave, if they are children of God, will be taken up in the rapture.

Now, keys have the ability to lock or unlock. Jesus unlocked death (it could not hold Him), and He unlocked Sheol, the place of departed spirits. What did Jesus do when He did that? He emptied it. He emptied Paradise. No one goes to Paradise. So, Jesus comes out of the grave and begins to do certain things. He begins to appear to people.

(2) Where Did Jesus Go When He Arose? In **John 20**, Jesus appears to Mary first. He appears first to a woman who is going to a tomb with spices and perfume to anoint a dead body. She wasn't going there to find a risen Savior. As a matter of fact, she is shocked with she sees Him. Look at **Verses 14-16**. When Jesus appears to her, **she**

doesn't know who He is until He speaks her name. Once He said her name, she immediately knew who He was.

Mary was so excited when she saw Jesus that she falls on her knees and grabs Him, and Jesus tells her something. In **Verse 17** Jesus says, "**Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father.**" Here is why He told Mary not to cling to Him.

In the Old Testament, the high priest had to be unpolluted. Once the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies, he could not touch anything. Jesus was now becoming the High Priest for us, getting ready to enter into the Holy of Holies in Heaven. So He told Mary not to cling to Him.

Do you know the Bible says our resurrected bodies will be like His? Between the time He told Mary not to touch Him and the time He tells Thomas to touch Him, He had ascended to Heaven. Our bodies will have the same capability as His body. So, Jesus ascended to Heaven.

In **Ephesians 4:8** it says, "**When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive.**" When He left Paradise, came back into His body, stepped out of the grave, told Mary not to cling to Him, then ascended back to His Father, He emptied Paradise. He led captivity captive. Every person that was in Paradise left and went with Jesus.

The reason why those that were in Paradise couldn't leave before was because there was no blood on the mercy seat in Heaven. When Christ ascended back to Heaven, He goes into the Holy of Holies, puts His own blood on the mercy seat, and tells those who left Paradise to come on in. The Bible says that you and I can enter into the throne room of God because of the blood. We are saved by the blood, healed by the blood, and we will get to Heaven because of the blood!

Christ shed His blood on the cross, but His blood did not stay on the cross. Read the Book! Look at **Hebrews 9:12**. "**Not with the blood of goats and calves (or any other animal) but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place (the Holy of Holies in Heaven) once for all.**" He put His blood on the mercy seat one time.

The high priest in the Old Testament had to do it year after year on the Day of Atonement, but our Lord and our Savior went in one time, took His own blood and put it on the mercy seat once for all, "**having obtained eternal redemption.**" Eternal redemption means "to buy back." The Lord put His blood on the mercy seat and redeemed us. He bought us back! He applies His blood, descends again to this planet,

and reappears.

It says in **John 20:26-29** that Thomas did not believe it was Jesus. He said, **"Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."** Then Jesus walks through the wall. I don't know about you, but that would have stirred me up, and Thomas changed his opinion. Have you ever changed your opinion?

Jesus walked through the wall, Thomas saw Him, and he fell on his face and said, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus stretched out His hands, and there were wounds in His hands.

(3) Where Is Jesus Today? The Bible tells us in **Mark 16:19**. Jesus is in Heaven, and not only is He in Heaven, but He is seated at His Father's right hand. The right hand in the Bible is the hand of authority, and Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of authority. **"So the after the Lord had spoken to them (His disciples)."**

He is now on the Mount of Olives and has been on this planet for 40 days preaching and teaching. **"So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into Heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God."**

So, Jesus descended down into the lower parts of this earth and came up out of there on the third day with keys (authority). He said in **Matthew 28:18**, **"All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth."** Where did He get it? He won the victory on the cross when He shed His blood. The devil is defeated. You need to declare it.

Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, and **(4) What Is He Doing There?** He is interceding for us. Look at **Hebrews 7:25**. **"Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him."** The only way you can get to God is to come through Jesus. **"Since He (Jesus) always lives to make intercession for us."**

An intercessor is like a mediator. When there is a dispute, a mediator steps in to bring the two parties together. **Jesus Christ is a mediator**. He brings us and the Father together through His blood. He stands between a Holy God and a sinful man, and He is intercedes (prays) for us.

When you pray, you have to pray in the name of Jesus. When you come to God in the name of Jesus, let me tell you what happens. When we pray to a Holy God in the name of Jesus, the Father then looks for the receipt stating that this prayer has been paid for. Jesus then shows Him the receipt. That is why He has the scars.

John 14:1-3 tells us that right now Jesus Christ is preparing a place for us. He says, **"I go to prepare a place for you, 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."**

Let me tell you what Jesus is doing right now. He is receiving the souls of the redeemed who died in Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:8** says, **"[For the child of God] to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."**

The moment the child of God breathes his or her last breath, they are in God's presence. You have to be ready, because when you die, you will either be in the presence of God or you will be in Hades, the place of torment. Right now, Hades is the place where all the lost are waiting for judgment.

God is a just God, but if you reject God's Son and all that He did for you, you will see God's wrath. The Bible says it is a dangerous and serious thing to fall into the hands of a Holy God.

The last thing I believe Jesus is doing right now is that He is getting ready to come and take His church out of this world, and it will be without warning. He can come any second, and there will be many who will be left behind. Everything Jesus went through He did in order to save us, and being saved does not give you a free ticket. When you give your heart to Christ, that means you live for Him. You walk with Him, and the old life is done away with.