

What Happened Those 3 Days and 3 Nights?

Donald W. Austin

"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." (Matt. 12:40)

"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:10-12)

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2Corinthians 5:21)

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" (Galatians 3:13)

- ***If Christ bore your iniquities*** (and if you are saved, He did, according to Isaiah 53:10-12)
- ***If Christ became sin for you*** (and if you are saved, He did, according to 2Corinthians 5:21)
- ***If Christ was made a curse for you*** (and if you are saved, He was, according to Galatians 3:13)

Then what did He do with your sins?

- Are they *still on* Him?
- If not, *where* were they taken off?
- *Who* took them off?
- Did *He* put them off?
- *Where* were they placed?
- Can you prove it by scripture?

Hebrews 9:28 says, **"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."**

Again - If Christ bore your sins - and if you are saved, He did; how does **"He appear the second time without sin"** unless He deposited His burden somewhere? If He was no longer bearing sin when Mary desired to touch Him (John 20:17), *what did He do with your sins?*

The question is - WHERE ARE YOUR SINS THIS VERY MINUTE?!

They were on Christ, and He bore them *on* His body (Isa. 53; 2Cor. 5:21; 1Pet. 2:24). If He did not go into the heart of the earth, into Hell-fire itself, and then on to preach to the spirits in prison (1Pet. 3:18,19), what did He do with your sins? *They were on Him when He died!* Furthermore, it was Christ's SOUL (Isa. 53:10) that was the offering for sin, and His SOUL was **"exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"** (Matt. 26:38).

We are dealing here with one of the greatest doctrines in the New Testament where it touches the salvation of the sinner: *the completion of the atonement for sins*. This lesson is to tell you where your sins are. They are where they ought to be - *in Hell*. And they will wind up in the lake of fire after the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:14).

Before Jesus' ascension into Heaven (Mark 16:19) **"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God,"** those who died went to the subterranean abode of *all* the dead (Hades in Greek, Sheol in Hebrew). It was divided into two compartments; Paradise, or Abraham's bosom, for the righteous; and Gehenna, or Hell, for the unrighteous. The two compartments were separate but visible from one to the other across a great gulf.

Luke 16:22-26 **"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come from thence*"** (emphasis mine). Notice that in Hell there were two parts. One was a place of tormenting flames of fire, while the other was Abraham's bosom, a place of comfort.

When the two thieves died, they both went to Hades - one thief to Paradise, the other thief to Gehenna or Hell. Luke 23:42,43 **"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And**

Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” When Jesus died, His *spirit* went back to the Father (Luke 23:46); His *body* went into the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50-53); and His *soul* went straight down into Hell-fire (Psa. 16:10; Acts 2:31), and through it (to purge the sins of His sheep), and back out the other side into Paradise, where the second thief was waiting.

Psa. 16:10 says, **For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.**

Acts 2:31 says, **He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.**

If Jesus Christ did not go down to (and through) Hell-fire, as in a **“place of torment”** for the punishment for sins (Luke 16:28), WHERE are your sins? *Where are the sins of the believer right now?* I mean, right this very minute?! WHERE ARE THEY?!

Ephesians 4:8-10, **“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)”**

Matthew 12:40 **“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.”**

The Bible says that Jesus Christ *descended* into the heart of the earth for three days and nights. Which part did He go to? I tell you, He went to Both!

Isaiah 53:10-12, **“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a *portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”**

I said earlier that His *soul* went to Hell, and these verses show that it was His *soul* that was made an **“offering for sin.”** When Jesus was in Hell, He deposited our sins there. When He came out of there, He brought the keys of death and Hell with Him (Rev. 1:18), so that the Gates of Hell could not

keep the "captives" enclosed. If Jesus Christ had only gone to Abraham's bosom (Paradise) and then returned with the captives, what did He do with the sins that were **"in his own body"** (1Pet. 2:24). You see, the scapegoat of Leviticus 16:10 made an atonement for sin, in type. But Jesus Christ did not merely bear them, *He carried them somewhere!* I tell you, He took them to Hell and He left them there.

After Jesus had finished the work the Father had given Him to do, after He had purged Himself of our sins, He went to the second compartment, Paradise, as He had promised the thief who believed on Him.

When Jesus was in Paradise, in the heart of the Earth, He preached to those in Paradise. Remember, while they were *in* the Paradise compartment, they had *never* believed the Gospel of 1Corinthians 15:1-4, *nor* had they received Jesus as Saviour, *nor* had they been *redeemed* - but they were there because they believed God. They had trusted in the Old Testament sacrifices which were only temporary. That is why the Priests had to constantly repeat them. But Jesus' sacrifice was **"once for all"** (Heb. 10:10). Jesus preached to them so they could believe the Gospel. 1Peter 3:18-19 says, **"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;"** and **"it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."** (1Cor. 1:21).

When Jesus ascended into Heaven, he took Paradise and all those therein with Him. Ephesians 4:7-10 says, **"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)"** We see by 2Corinthians 12:1-4 that Paradise is now in the third Heaven.

In summary: At His death on the cross,

- Christ's *spirit* went back to the Father (Luke 23:46)
- His *body* went into the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50-53)
- His *soul* went straight down to Hell-fire, and through it, and back out the other side, with the **"captivity led captive"** (Eph. 4:8-10).
- His *body* did *not* see corruption (Psalms 16:10; Acts 2:31), and
- His *soul* was *not* left in Hell (Acts 2:27).

More than likely, after Jesus removed Paradise, Hell expanded to fill the entire center of the Earth. Isaiah 5:14, **"Therefore hell hath enlarged**

herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it."

Someone might say, "But when Jesus died on the cross, He said, 'It is finished' (John 19:30)" Yes, the crucifixion was finished, but He still had things to do. He also said in John 17:4, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." His earthly ministry was finished, yet He still had to go to the cross. You might say that His work on earth was finally finished in Acts 1:9 when He ascended back into heaven.

Today when a person dies, if he is unsaved he goes to Hell, the same place where the rich man of Luke 16 is, in the center of the Earth. If he is saved, he goes immediately to Paradise in Heaven where Jesus and Lazarus and Abraham and Peter, James, Paul and John and my mother and father and I.D. Riddick are.

2Corinthians 5:8 says, **"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."**

The question before you now is: "Are *you* ready to meet the Lord?"



Addendum:

When Jesus said, **"It is finished,"** His work on earth was done. But he was far from finished with many other things he had to do after his death. And certainly the Gospel was not finished or fulfilled as he had yet to be buried and rise again.

1Cor 15:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Question: "What did Jesus mean when He said 'It is finished'?"

Answer: Of the last sayings of Christ on the cross, none is more important or more poignant than His very last utterance, "It is finished." Found only in the Gospel of John, the Greek word translated "it is finished" is *tetelestai*, an accounting term that means "paid in full." When Jesus uttered those words,

He was declaring the debt owed to His Father was wiped away completely and forever. Not that Jesus wiped away any debt that *He* owed to the Father; rather, Jesus eliminated the debt owed by those for whom He died - the debt of sin.

So we understand by this word not that Jesus is saying here, "I'm finished. I'm done. I'm ended. My life is gone. I've tried and wasn't able to do it. Now I'm going to go the way of all flesh." That is not what He meant when He said, "It is finished." But with a shout of victorious confidence, the Lord Jesus Christ is saying to us, and to God in our hearing, "The work that Thou gavest Me to do, the mission that Thou didst send Me to accomplish, is finished. It is finished!" It is a shout of victory. It is a cry of obedience, God-centered obedience. And, it is a word that you and I appropriate by a living faith that God gives us as a gift.

"It is finished" is Jesus' victory cry and a final report to his Father. Jesus accomplished his mission.