

Title: Dead Indeed
Text: Matthew 27: 57-66
Date: April 24, 2011
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In the garden of Gethsemane, the Lord Jesus suffered a load of guilt, a weight of sin, an unimaginable burden, such a pressure of sorrow which forced drops of blood to fall as sweat from his brow. Beyond the fleshly agony, on the cross our Lord suffered under the wrath of God the distress, the horror, the alarm, the misery and guilt, the anguish and darkness of separation from God which every elect child would have felt in hell for ever—all because the LORD laid on him the iniquity of all his elect children and justly poured out justice on his Son. Having suffered the full weight of sin and punishment for his people, the Savior said, “It is finished” and he voluntarily gave up his life.

By his WILLING obedience unto death our Lord Jesus Christ made complete satisfaction for his particular elect people and effectually obtained eternal redemption for them. All those for whom he suffered and died shall be called by the Holy Spirit and united to Christ in faith. That is the message of the gospel.

When Christ commended his Spirit into the hands of the Father the Father received it and thus his spirit returned unto him immediately into paradise—as he said to the thief “Today, shalt thou be with me in paradise.” So shall it be for every believer who dies in Christ. Then three days after our Lord’s death—in victorious triumph--the body of our Redeemer was raised from the grave.

Great is the mystery of godliness. Our Savior’s incarnation is a great mystery. His life and death as our Substitute sin-bearer and Surety is a great mystery. But as vital and as equally as these other mysteries, is the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15: 14: And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.

Still, the God of all providence does not take us from Christ on the cross directly to his resurrection—but the Spirit of God makes the believers living hope even greater by first taking us from the cross to our Savior’s tomb.

Proposition: The Spirit of God declares at great length--using friend and foe--that Christ Jesus really died and was buried. Therein we behold in greater light that having really died, he really did rise from the dead—that he really is exactly who he claims to be: the Messiah, the Christ, the King, the Son of the living God, who has saved his people from their sins.

Divisions: **1. Christ’s Death Witnessed by his Friends; 2. Christ’s death witnessed by his enemies; 3. The assurance for the believer from beholding Christ’s body lying in the grave**

I. CHRIST’S DEATH WITNESSED BY HIS FRIENDS

A. The disciples of the Lord begged and were given his lifeless body.

Mattheew 27: 57: When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple: 58: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

John 19:39: And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. }

Joseph begged “the body of Jesus.” Pilate accounted the Lord Jesus to be truly dead commanding “the body to be delivered”.

B. They prepared the body for burial.

Matthew 27: 59: And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth

John 19: 40: Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

C. They buried the body of the Lord Jesus in tomb.

Matthew 27: 60: And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

No other remains were in that tomb to pollute it. No other body was there so it could not be said that another had risen. It was a tomb of rock so no one could dig into it from the side. And a great stone was used to cover the door.

D. Other faithful witnesses were there also.

Matthew 27: 61: And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

Mary Magdalene—out of whom the Lord had cast 7 devils; and the other Mary--the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children.

Illustration: Visit to the family cemetery this week.

II. CHRIST’S DEATH WITNESSED BY HIS ENEMIES

Matthew 27: 62: Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

Unbelief never rests. These self-ascribed pious religious leaders had rejected THE Sabbath for a day, rejected the Lawgiver for a pretense of law-keeping, rejected Christ our Passover for the ceremony which foreshadowed him. They accused the Lord because he healed the sick and fed the hungry on the Sabbath. Now here they are working on the same day in the name of “preventing error.” How ironic hypocrisy is!

A. They bear witness that Christ truly died.

Matthew 27: 63: Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

B. These enemies SECURE the tomb.

Matthew 27: 64: Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. 65: Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make

it as sure as ye can. 66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

Note: The Sovereign Hand of our God is amazing. These enemies would have done nothing to protect the Lord while he lived. Now the Lord uses them to protect his body.

Job 12:21: He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.

Proverbs 3: 34: Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly

So the Holy Spirit in the inspired word bears witness by friend and foe that Christ really did die.

1. Just as real as the Holy Ghost came upon the virgin, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her, and that holy thing born of her is called the Son of God—just as the Son of God was manifest to be Immanuel, God with us, made flesh and dwelling among us; so too, Jesus Christ really died.

2. Just as real as Christ Jesus was manifest to be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinner in that Christ Jesus “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously” (Luke 1: 35; 1 Peter 2: 22-23.) so too in the burial of Christ Jesus it is manifest that Christ Jesus really died.

3. Just as real as man’s depravity is manifest in that Christ Jesus was really “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Is 53: 3); just as real as man’s hatred against God is manifest in the reality that the Lord’s “visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men”—so too the reality of his death is manifest in that his body was wrapped in a linen cloth and laid in a tomb and a stone rolled upon the sepulcher door.

4. Just as the Lord’s cry of separation on the cross and the three hours of darkness over the face of the earth bear witness to the reality that “the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity” of all his people (Is 53:6); that “he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5: 21); that Christ “his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree (1Pe 2:22-24); that he was “once offered to bear the sins of many”; that he really was “wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him (Is 53: 5); so his burial in a tomb manifests that he was really “cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of [God’s chosen] people was he stricken” (Is 53: 8), his burial in the grave manifest the reality that “in that he died, he died unto sin once.” (Romans 6: 10.),

Charles Spurgeon, “...though some in our own times would reduce redemption to something shadowy and unsubstantial. Jesus was a real man, and truly tasted the bitter pangs of death; and therefore he in very deed lay in the sepulcher, motionless as the rock out of which it was hewn, shrouded in his winding-sheet.”

The Son of God coming in human flesh was real. Christ who knew no sin, bearing the sins of his people in his own body on the tree, suffering in the flesh, dying unto sin and thereby making satisfaction to God for his people was a real substitutionary, sin-bearing, propitiating, vicarious accomplishment of eternal redemption. Christ rising from the grave victorious in glorified—but real human flesh—is real. Logic can not explain these the mystery of godliness, nor receive it—only God-given faith.

III. THE ASSURANCE FOR THE BELIEVER FROM BEHOLDING THE BODY OF CHRIST LYING IN THE GRAVE.

(We will look at the latter half of these scriptures in the second part of this message titled: The Resurrection

and the Life, but for now just take note of the first half, which have to do with the death of Christ.)

Ro 6: 4: Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death...6: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed...10: for in that he died he died unto sin once...11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin...

Romans 7: 1: Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. 3 So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

To you who believe on Christ Jesus the Lord by the invincible grace of the Holy Spirit, to you who have followed the Lord in believer's baptism, behold in the lifeless body of our Savior the death of your body of sin. We are dead to all sin—profane and self-righteousness. Our fruit is no longer dead fruit of ourselves, to the praise of ourselves, no longer unto men but our fruit is from God by Jesus Christ, of the Spirit of God, and it is unto God. What a glorious sight to behold the lifeless body of Jesus Christ in the tomb as we behold the death of our body of sin. Oh, rejoice—"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."