

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2026

IN CHRIST

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S DEATH ACTIVITIES

VARIOUS SCRIPTURES

- Where was Christ?
 - **The death record of Christ:** A detailed and verifiable account of what happened to the body of Christ prevents the gospel from drifting into mythology.
 - **Christ Death Activities:** An understanding of where Christ was and what He did while His body was in the grave builds our confidence in the promises given as we are “in Christ”.
 - **“In Christ”:** Speaks of the covenant relationship believers have with Christ and the blessings that union brings.
 - **How:** Faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice births the sinner into the New Covenant
 - **Identification:** What Christ accomplished in His sacrifice is the reality of believers – Eph 1:3-14
 - Christ's location and work between death and resurrection assure us that we have a place in His victory
 - Sheol: Hebrew word means “the place of the dead”.
 - Hades: The NT Greek equivalent is hades, which also refers to the “place of the dead.”
 - The OT makes clear that Sheol/Hades are the place where all go after physical death:
 - Believers in Sheol:
 - *And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, “For I shall go down into the **grave** to my son in mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.”* Gen 37:35
 - *But God will redeem my soul from the power of the **grave**: for he shall receive me.* Selah. Psalm 49:15
 - *I will ransom them from the power of the **grave**; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O **grave**, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.* Hosea 13:14
 - Unbelievers in Sheol:
 - *But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the **pit**; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.* Num 16:30
 - *The wicked shall be turned into **hell**, And all the nations that forget God.* Psalm 9:17
 - *Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the **grave**.* Psalm 31:17
 - New Testament Clarity **The rich man and Lazarus:** Lk 16:19-26
 - **One realm with two distinct places for the dead:**
 - One of comfort – Abraham's bosom or paradise
 - One of torment – Hell or hades
 - **Visibility and Communication:**

- The rich man could see and speak to Abraham
 - **Settled State:**
 - What was done in this life determined what state they experienced in Sheol
 - Putting the pieces together:
 - **Promise to a thief** - Paradise: Lk 23:43
 - **Statement to Mary** – not yet ascended: John 20:17
 - **Like man in all things** – even where humanity goes at death: Heb 2:17
 - **Sign of Jonah** – in the heart of the earth: Mt 12:40
 - **David’s prophecy** – not left in Hell: Psalm 16:8-11
 - As Christ’s body laid in the tomb, His soul was in Sheol, as would be the case with any man.
 - What was Christ doing?
 - He proclaimed a message of condemnation to imprisoned angels:
 - *By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison*; I Peter 3:19
 - **Preached:** To proclaim as a herald the decree of the king, not evangelize
 - **Spirits:** Fallen angels that engaged in something so great they were imprisoned. II Peter 2:4, Jude 6
 - What did they do?
 - An effort to prevent a Son to be born of the woman to bruise Satan – Gen 3:15
 - Connected to the depraved condition of man leading to the flood: Gen 6:1-8, I Peter 3:19, II Peter 2:5
 - Sons of God = Angels
 - A common attack of Satan:
 - **Cain’s murder of Abel** – Gen 4, I Jn 3:12
 - **Pharaoh** – Commanded to kill the sons of Hebrew women: Ex 1:15-16
 - **Athaliah** – Murdered the royal lineage after her son was killed: II Chron 22:10-12
 - **Haman** – His plan to destroy all the Jews: Esther
 - **Herod the Great** – Murder of the innocents of Bethlehem: Matthew 2
 - **Jesus’ temptation** – Matthew 4:5-7
 - His appearance and message displayed:
 - Satan was powerless to stop the purposes of God: “*destroy the works of the devil*” I Jn 3:8
 - The evil schemes of the world are defeated: “*I have overcome the world*” Jn 16:33
 - He presented Himself as the Savior to OT Saints
 - While in Sheol, Christ made known His victory over death and prepared OT believers to be led to Heaven when He ascended Ephesians 4:8-10
 - Just as a conquering king would return home with spoils, so would Christ return to His Father’s side with His elect.
- Why is this significant to us?
 - Confirms the literal nature of His death and resurrection leaving no basis for liberal interpretations of the biblical accounts
 - **Stolen body theory:** Simply removed from the tomb by His followers, authorities, or others

- **Swoon theory:** Jesus didn't die on the cross but merely fainted from exhaustion or pain, reviving in the tomb.
- **Hallucination theory:** Christ's appearances were hallucinations and not real encounters with a resurrected person.
- It confirms His work as the mediator between God and man: Heb 2:16-17
 - A Necessity: He must and did have the full human experience – even in death
 - This displays:
 - **To God:** a merciful and faithful high priest
 - **To Man:** made reconciliation for our sins
- Illustrates perfect trust of loving the Father: Acts 2:24-32, Jn 15:9-10
 - Christ, assured of the Father's love rested in great confidence of what God was going to do for Him. What was He thinking as He faced the grave?
 - *I have set the Lord always before me:* The Lord Jesus was always equally mindful of His Father in every place, condition and audience
 - *Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved:* In this mindful state, there was the protection that promised nothing would move Him
 - *Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad:* despite Christ circumstance, He was full of joy knowing that His Father had promised His care and love
 - *Moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:* His time in sheol was not anxiety, but perfect confidence in His Father's promise to raise Him from the dead
 - *Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell:* His time in sheol was only temporary, others didn't have this confidence. Though Christ was alone on the Cross, He would not be left in Hades.
 - *Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption:* He would not be abandoned to decay, but His body would be glorified
- It displays the power of the believer's union with Christ: Romans 6:5-11
 - His triumph over Hades shows that the power of sin and death has been completely broken over us
 - **W E** Because He is risen, so will we be: v5,8-11 **PEOPLE ARE LOVED**
 - Sin's power in this life is broken: v6-7
- Application
 - These truths and many more allow those "in Christ" to face uncertain days with confidence that what He has promised will be our reality.
 - As suffering comes to you standing for Him
 - As life's seasons bring physical and emotional burdens
 - As waiting on the Lord's direction stretches you
 - As the chaos of the world threatens your peace
 - As the powers of the world deceives