

A Journey to Heaven, Hell, the Cross, & the Empty Tomb

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Resurrection Day morning

Introduction: This morning we are taking four journeys: a journey to *Heaven*, a journey to *Hell*, a journey to the *Cross of Calvary*, and a journey to the *Empty Tomb of Jesus Christ*. So let's begin our journey. I want to take you to Heaven!!

- I. A Journey to **Heaven**. Oh, what a place Heaven is! Heaven is a perfect reflection of God. We read in **Genesis 1:1**, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." I want to take you back in time to the opening moments of Creation. In Job 38, we read that God laid the foundations of the earth, and "all the morning stars sang together, and all the [ANGELS] shouted for joy" (**Job 38:7**). All was perfect and harmonious. God said the Creation was all "very good" (**Genesis 1:31**). It was a paradise.

We don't know the timing, but during the opening weeks and months of Creation, one of the angels by the name of Lucifer became proud. Revelation 12:4 speaks of the rebellion that Satan incited in Heaven. He's called the dragon and we read that "his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth". At that time he said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars [ALL THE OTHER ANGELS] of God". He said, 'I will sit on the throne of God' - "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (**Isaiah 14:13-14**). God's response to Satan was ABSOLUTELY NOT— "thou shalt be brought down to hell". Satan fell "as lightning fall[ing] from heaven" (**Luke 10:18**).

It was at that time that God prepared a place called Hell "for the devil and his angels" (**Matthew 25:41**).

- II. So now we've been to Heaven. Let us now take a Journey to **Hell**.

This morning I'm not just going to simply give you facts on hell, with the help of those who have come very close to death, we are going to take an actual journey to Hell.

- A. Jesus describes **Hell**.

Three hundred times, the Bible talks about Heaven. Only sixty times does it talk about Hell. And the one who speaks most of hell might surprise you. It is none other than Jesus Christ. It is why Jesus Christ came, that he would call out a group of people that would not perish in the horrible, unthinkable place called Hell.

Matthew 13:49-50, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, 50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

He described Hell as a place where "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (**Luke 13:28**) speaking of the loneliness, the depression, and the unimaginable pain there.

- B. Now I want to do some Biblical interviews with a man who has gone to Heaven and back.

It is appointed unto men once to die and people only die once.

Paul the great Apostle to the Gentiles was preaching the Gospel in Lystra when he stirred up a riot. He was dragged outside of the gates of the city, and there he was stoned and left for dead. Some time later, his spirit returned to his body, he arose and went back into the city (**Acts 14:19**). That is the historical occasion for an experience that Paul records in **2 Corinthians 12:2** when he says, "I knew a man in Christ...fourteen years ago, (whether in the body...or whether out of the body, I cannot tell...such an one caught up to the third heaven.... 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." This was one of the very first recorded experiences of some one seeming to die and getting a glimpse of the world to come.

As DL Moody lay dying he said, "I see earth receding; heaven is approaching (or opening). God is calling me. This is my triumph. This is my coronation day. It is glorious. God is calling and I must go. Mama, you have been a good wife...no pain...no valley...it's bliss."

You don't want to go there. Hell is such a dreadful place that you will rarely hear anyone talk about it even in church!

- C. There are accounts of **others** who seem to have seen Hell and lived to tell about it. The Bible is our only authority on these matters, but some experiences of people seem to line up with the Scriptures.

Clinical death is not permanent death. Clinical death is the time when the heart stops, but you have four minutes of survival time with the brain cells without blood flow before rigor mortis, true death, sets in. Physical death is the permanent separation of the spirit from the body, and it is irreversible. A person can be brought back from clinical death during those four minutes, but the only way a person can be brought back from permanent death is resurrection—which is an impossibility.

Spiritual death is the separation of the spirit of man from God. And that is an even more serious matter.

Dr. Maurice Rawlings has written a book called "Beyond Death's Doors". Dr. Rawlings is a cardiologist. He is an expert in the diagnosis of cardiovascular disease. He is a fellow in the American College of Cardiology and an instructor for the American Heart Society in resuscitation techniques. He also was a complete skeptic concerning life after death. He believed that death was annihilation and extinction, and that was all there was to it. His whole view about life and death was changed through an encounter with a patient. This was a man 48 years old who was a rural mail carrier who complained of pains in the chest. They put him on a treadmill, connected up the EKG to see if it really was heart problems, and the man slowly began to walk and then jog. Well instead of the EKG registering some abnormalities, instead of his heart fibrillating, it suddenly stopped, and the man dropped dead on his office floor. There was no other doctor in the building at the time and so he began to perform emergency resuscitation methods—massaging his heart, and giving him artificial respiration.

Dr. Rawlings said this, "His heart stopped, and I immediately began resuscitation. It took me maybe thirty seconds to bring him around, and

during that time he was clinically dead. When he came to, he started screaming at me: 'Please get me out of Hell!'"

After some little while, the man came to. And he came to screaming, "I am in Hell". He worked on him some more, but since he didn't have help, when he went to get an instrument, the man's heart stopped, and he died again. Again he performed the heart massage. Finally after much labor the man came to again, and again he was screaming, "I am in Hell". Well that was too much for Dr. Rawlings, and he said, "Shut up with your 'Hell'—I'm trying to save your life!" That might give you an idea of how impressed this doctor was with the idea of Hell. And the man died again. The doctor reached for a catheter, and again he brought him back. This time he was screaming more loudly, and the man said, "Do you not understand that every time you stop, I go back to Hell". He said that he looked down at him, and he saw that his eyes were completely dilated; perspiration was all over his face. He had a look of *absolute* sheer horror on his face, and his hair was standing on end. Suddenly a wave of panic hit this doctor like nothing he'd ever experienced before, and suddenly he realized this man was indeed experiencing something beyond the grave when his heart stopped.

The doctor himself writes, "Once I felt he was out of immediate danger, I asked him to describe what he had seen. He said he had a spinning sensation downward, like he was moving through a dark tunnel. At the end of the tunnel he saw terrible grotesque creatures, a burning lake and a crowded cave full of suffering people."

Dr. Rawlings said other patients he had revived reported similar experiences. "That's one thing which struck me as too much of a coincidence," he said. "The patients who described hell all said just about the same thing with only a few variations."¹

Shortly after this experience, the man described in this story and Dr. Rawlings both committed their lives to Jesus Christ. Dr. Rawlings, formerly a complete atheist, is now a very faithful follower of Jesus Christ.

Now that's about all it would take for anyone in the world to become a follower of Jesus Christ. Just 30 seconds in Hell.

D. The Bible gives a fearful description of the journey to Hell.

1. The first thing people do before they go to hell is bow their knee to Jesus Christ. "Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord".

- I want to first say that you don't want to come to Hell. There is no escape from it. There's no way out. **Revelation 14:11** tells us that "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night".
- There is unbelievable pain in Hell. The Bible says there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth". The Bible says that the pain that wells up in you will be so great that you will be weeping uncontrollably. You will be gnashing

¹ From D. James Kennedy's account of his knowledge of Dr. Maurice Rawlings, and quotes from Dr. Rawling's book *Beyond Death's Doors*.

your teeth. And even worse than that is the loneliness and the depression is so heavy because there is no hope. There is no escape. There is no way out of this place.

- Now understand that this is your just punishment for sin. **Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christ came so that you wouldn't have to go to this awful place!!

So now turn over to **John 18**, and let us take a journey to the punishment that Christ took for you. Christ took your Hell! Christ took your eternal damnation. Never say that God isn't fair to send people to Hell. God is Holy. He must cut off all the unholy from His spotless presence. God is great enough to do that. But God is also GOOD! That is why He came in flesh to earth to die for our sins.

- **1 Timothy 3:16**, "God was manifest in the flesh".
- **John 1:1, 14** "In the beginning was the Word...All things were made by Him" and verse 14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."
- Jesus Christ "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (**Philippians 2:7**).

III. So let us take this Journey to the **Cross**—to Jesus' Hell on Earth—climbing up to the ground of the Cross on Calvary's hill, we can see that it is dark upon Mount Calvary. Almost nothing is visible because it is in the middle of the night. The only light that can be seen is far off in the distance. Look over there—in the Garden of Gethsemane—it seems to be the gleaming light of lanterns and torches, and you can hear the voices of angry people.

Not long before, Jesus had been praying that His Father would give Him the strength to endure the most horrendous death ever died.

A. The **Kiss** of Judas. There he is, leading the approaching mob of "a band of men [Roman soldiers] and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons": **Judas Iscariot (John 18:3)**. He is literally possessed with Satan—the devil himself has full control over his personality. The Satan possessed Judas is approaching the holiest Man that has ever lived. Here we have two men: one is God and one is the Devil. We have the vilest man and the holiest man ever to live standing together there in the Garden of Gethsemane. The vile approaches the Holy. Closer and closer the vile man comes to the Holy. And the devil himself places the kiss of hatred and betrayal on the spotless cheek of the Almighty Thrice Holy God robed in human flesh.

It was a mocking kiss. Jesus had told the Jewish leaders in **Matthew 26:48**, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast". The word Matthew uses for "kiss"² means "to kiss earnestly, intensively, and repeatedly". Judas could have

² *Kataphileo*: 2705 (Strong's) \ *kataphileo* {kat-af-ee-leh'-o} of Latin origin; TDNT - 9:114,1262;v. Also supported by Thayer's and Strong's.

simply pointed to the Lord, but under Satan's control he betrayed the Lord with the ugliest hypocrisy.

- B. The Crowd **Falls Down**. **John 18:4-6**, "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*." Look at **verse 6**, "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground." Jesus literally said, "I AM". He gave His title as the one true and living God. This was a display of supernatural authority and power. So they all fell to the ground. Jesus Christ had complete power over His enemies, and He could have walked away at any time. He willingly surrendered to them.
- C. Peter's **Sword**. They grab Jesus of Nazareth. The Creator of Heaven and Earth submits himself to the scheming religious leaders. The aggressive group comes forward, and Peter pulls out his sword. There in front of the high priest is a servant boy. Peter pulls out his sword and starts swinging. **John 18:10** records that "Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus."³ The Lord reaches out and touches the boy's now deformed face, and instantly the ear is made completely whole.
- D. The **Arrest** of Jesus. The hand that just healed the servant's ear is taken with the other, and at this time the hands of the Lord of Glory are bound with rope (**John 18:12**, "Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him")

He's taken away to the home of Annas, who is the former high priest who still had a lot of power (**John 18:13**). Annas sends him tied in ropes to his younger son-in-law Caiaphas who was the current high priest.

- E. The Illegal **Trial** of Jesus. The trial begins. The Holiest Man that ever Lived is placed before the Jewish Council of the Sanhedrin which consisted of 71 of the Jewish leaders including the high priest. The highest ranking Jewish leaders alive are present. Even the ancient Jewish scholar Gamaliel is there.
1. It is **illegal**. It is held in the middle of the night. This is against Jewish Law. But it doesn't matter. If one is willing to murder God, then what is it to break a few of the rules of fairness and justice? The Judge of All the Earth is has now entered into the Kangaroo Court of men.
 2. **False** Witnesses were sought. **Matthew 26:59-60**, "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; 60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none." They found many people willing to lie about Jesus, but none was a credible witness. **Mark 14:56** says that "many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together."
 3. **Two** more false witnesses are found. Both make charges about the Temple. Neither agreed with the other. They were accusing him of wanting to get rid of the Jewish Temple altogether. Of course He was talking about the Temple of His body.

³ Cf. Matthew 26:51.

4. Jesus put under **Oath**. Caiaphaias was getting no where, so he finally decided to put Jesus under oath and asks Him if He is actually the Jewish Messiah. Look at **Matthew 26:63**, "the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."
5. Jesus Responds by Revealing He is indeed the **Messiah**. Turn over to **Mark 14:62**, "And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? 64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death." So they all agreed on the verdict. He should be put to death for saying that He is the Messiah. The only problem was, they were looking at God in human flesh! He said, "Before Abraham was I AM". He said, "I am Alpha and Omega".
6. The High Priest rips his clothes and the Sanhedrin comes to a verdict. We read in **Mark 14:63**, "Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? 64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death".
7. Now the Sanhedrin begins to **Mock** and Beat Jesus. **Mark 14:65** says that at that point "some began to spit on him". **Luke 22:63-65** goes into even more detail, "And the men that held Jesus [THE SANHEDRIN] mocked him, and smote him. 64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? 65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him."

Isaiah 50:6 records that it was during this time that they also mockingly ripped out clumps of Jesus beard to taunt him. He says, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

Mark 14:65 says that the Sanhedrin was so corrupt that they even let the household servants join in and "strike him with the palms of their hands."

What was Christ's response to all this? Isaiah prophesied of this time and said of Jesus: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: As a lamb before her shearers is silent, so he opened not His mouth" (**Isaiah 53:7**).

While Jesus was inside the high priest's house on trial for His life, Peter was just outside in the courtyard. The Lord had predicted that Peter would deny Him three times. **John 18:16** tells us that both John and Peter followed the crowd that arrested Jesus to the house of Caiaphaias, the high priest. The Bible indicates that the high priest's servants knew John, and that is how Peter and John were able to gain entry. John didn't stay long, because he would have been known by the many servants of the high priest that were out in the courtyard.

F. The **Denial** by Peter.

1. **Denial Number One**: Peter enters through the gate and sits down by the fire (**Luke 22:56**). The girl who let Peter and John in was suspicious and went over to Peter by the fire to get a closer look. She probably studied Peter's face until she was confident of who Peter was. We read in **John 18:17**, "Then saith the

damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not."

2. **Denial Number Two:** Peter is then confronted by a whole group of servants.

- **Matthew 26:69-70**, "Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. 70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest." By comparing the accounts, Peter seems to be getting hit from every direction from several of the servants, and so this is a repeated and vehement denial.
- **Mark 14:68** tells us that "he went out into the porch; and the cock crew" the first time. Peter was no doubt unsettled that many of the servants now recognized him, and the porch was a covered area more toward the street, so if he needed to, he could make a swift escape.

It is ironic that these servant girls and the other servants would make Peter fear so much. There is nothing to suggest that anyone could have done any harm to Peter had he admitted to being a follower of Jesus Christ.

This vehement denial must have calmed the servants, because Luke records that another hour elapsed before Peter's final denial (**Luke 22:59**).

Sometime during that hour Caiaphas had gotten the testimony from Christ that the Sanhedrin considered blasphemous. The beating, blindfolding, and spitting on Jesus occurs before Peter's third denial (**Mark 14:64-66**). It is probable that where Peter was, he could see the Lord's trial going on, and he very likely witnessed the horrible abuse that Jesus suffered once the verdict was rendered.

3. **Denial Number Three:** Meanwhile, the group decides to present evidence and an eyewitness to prove that Peter is one of Jesus' followers.

- **Matthew 26:73**, "And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee."
- Then they presented the eyewitness in **John 18:26**, "One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?"
- This time he began to "curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew" (**Matthew 26:74**). Peter did not curse in the sense of profanity, but he cursed himself saying something like "May God kill me this night if I am lying!!"
- At the very moment of Peter's denial, just after the cock crows, according to **Luke 22:61**, the Lord Jesus, with swollen and beaten face, looks through the open window to the courtyard outside and makes eye contact with Peter. It's probably around 2 o'clock in the morning. We read in **Luke 22:61**, "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

The death sentence had been agreed upon by the Sanhedrin, but there were still a couple more hours until morning.

"At the site in Jerusalem traditionally believed to be the location of Caiaphas's house, there is a small, ancient stone dungeon with an opening just large enough for one person to be lowered into the dungeon. After His trial ended, Christ may have been confined in such a prison for the remainder of the night, or He may have been held in a room in Caiaphas's house under armed guard."⁴

G. The Sanhedrin debate on how to impose the **Death** Penalty. As soon as morning came, the 71 member Sanhedrin had one last meeting. They had to decide how they could get the death penalty on the weekend of the Passover Feast. They could not kill him, so they decide to send him to the Romans. They send him off to Pilate! We read in **Mark 15:1**, "And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate".

H. Pilate's **Judgment** Hall. It is still very early in the morning, possibly before 5am. The Jewish leaders bring Jesus shackled to Pilate's Judgment Hall, which also had his residence attached to it. Pilate would not have known of their coming, so he was probably awakened. It was a feast day, and we read in **Luke 23:1**, "the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate."

Pilate didn't want problems with the Jews on this special occasion. It was Passover. So he wanted to resolve this. Pilate wanted to deal with this quickly, so he told them "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law" (**John 18:31**). According to a new law in Rome, almost all capital punishment had to be done by Rome, so the Jewish leaders answered in **verse 32**, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death".

After examining Jesus, Pilate finds out that Jesus is from Galilee, and he decides the easiest way to get Jesus off his hands is to give him over to Herod who has jurisdiction over Galilee. Herod is in town for the Feast of the Passover. We read in **Luke 23:6-7**, "When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. 7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time."

I. **Herod's** Court—Herod just wants Jesus to do miracles before him. **Luke 23:8**, "And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him." The Lord refuses. **Verse 9** we read, "the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him". There in front of Herod, but Herod wouldn't bite. Since the Lord refused to do any miracles, Herod and his soldiers decide to mock Jesus and finally send Him back to Pilate.

J. So Jesus is sent back to **Pilate**—The Jewish leaders, in coming back to Pilate gather more of the crowd together to try and intimidate Pilate. We read in **Luke 23:13**, "And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: 15 No, nor yet

⁴ John MacArthur, *The Murder of Jesus*, 143.

Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. 16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him. 17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast)”. Neither Herod or Pilate found any guilt in Jesus. So Pilate decides to release Jesus as was the custom each Passover. Now turn to **Matthew 27:21**.

- K. **Barabbas** or Jesus? Pilate has an idea. He'll use the tradition of Prisoner Release to let Jesus go free! Pilate decides to take the most notorious prisoner and let the people choose who to release. Surely they wouldn't take the most notorious murderer and release him!

Matthew 27:21, “The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. 22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. 23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.”

So this idea has backfired on Pilate. He ends up having to release Barabbas! Barabbas goes free!

Transition: But he's got one more idea. Perhaps if they see Jesus scourged and mocked, that will be enough!

Luke 23:20 records it this way, “Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. 21 But they cried, saying, **Crucify him, crucify him.** 22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go”.

- L. Jesus' **Scourging** by Pilate. And so we read in **John 19:1**, “Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.”

Jesus was stripped of all his clothing and tied to a post by his wrists with his hands high enough over his head to virtually lift him up off the ground. The Roman scourging was so severe it was sometimes fatal. The Lord was flogged dozens and dozens of times with a whip called the “Cat-o-nine tails”. This whip had jagged fish bones, metal, and glass, and lead balls woven into the whip. The lead balls would create huge whelps on the Lord's back and legs, and the fish bones and other debris would literally rip open the whelps.

One witness to a Roman flogging described it this way: “The sufferer's veins were laid bare, and the very muscles and tendons and bowels of the victim were opened to exposure”.

After this Roman beating, our Lord would have lost so much blood that his body was in shock. He was in critical condition after the beating.

- M. The **Soldier's Mocking**. Jesus had already been slapped repeatedly, his beard torn out by the Jewish leaders. His face was surely already swollen and bleeding. After the scourging His back would be a mass of bleeding wounds and quivering muscles.

The entire garrison of 600 Roman soldiers decided to mock Christ. They found a badly faded tunic that had been thrown aside. Matthew says it was a robe of scarlet. Mark and John say it was a “purple” robe (**Mark 15:17; John 19:2**). It was the

closest thing to a royal color they could find. We read in **Matthew 27:27-31**, "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. 28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. 29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! 30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head."

N. The **Crowd's Mocking**.

Back to **John 19:4**, "Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, **Behold the man!**" Pilate is now mocking him before the crowd—playing the Jewish priests' game to try to get Jesus released after all this mocking.

O. The Crowd's **Demand**. **John 19:6**, "When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him." Now look at **verse 14**, "And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! 15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar."

P. Pilate **Washes** his Hands. **Matthew 27:24**, "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, **I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.**" The people were on the verge of a riot, so Pilate adopted a public Jewish ceremony of washing his hands. He wanted to wash his hands of the sinless Jesus and put the guilt on the people.

Q. Pilate is **Absolved** by the People. The crowd was glad to absolve Pilate of all guilt. In **Matthew 27:25**, the people shout back to Pilate as he is washing his hands, "His blood be on us, and on our children."

R. Pilate **Delivers** Jesus to be crucified. **John 19:16**, "Then [PILATE] delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away." Pilate capitulated to the crowd and delivered Him to be crucified.

S. The Public **Procession**. Victims of crucifixion were usually paraded through the streets and made to walk in a public procession in order to maximize the humiliation of the spectacle. **John 19:17** simply records of the Way that Christ carried his cross, "And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha". Jesus was forced to carry his own crossbeam to the place of execution until He could not carry it any longer. The crossbeam would have weighed about 125 pounds. This practice was what Jesus referred to earlier in His ministry when He said in **Mark 8:34**, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me".

But Jesus was in such a state of exhaustion and had such a great amount of blood loss that he could not carry his cross.

T. **Simon** of Cyrene at this time is just entering the city as Jesus is leaving Jerusalem for the outer limits to be crucified. Simon must take Jesus' cross the rest of the way.

U. The **Cross**. Jesus reaches the hill of Calvary at about 9 o'clock in the morning.

John 19:16, "And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called *the place of a skull*, which is called in the Hebrew *Golgotha*: 18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst."

1. As they laid Jesus on the ground, before they nailed his hands they gave him a mixture of **myrrh**—which acts like a narcotic—to numb the pain. He tastes it, realizes what it is, and then spits it out. **Matthew 27:33-34** records it: "And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, ³⁴ They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall [MYRHH]: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink."

You see Jesus is dying as a substitute. He comes to the Cross as a sin bearer, and He did not want His senses numbed!!

2. The **crucifixion**—**Matthew 27:35** simply records, "And they crucified him". They crucified Him!

The pain as they nailed His hands and feet to the cross would have been unbearable. The nails would have been driven through the wrists causing severe damage and unimaginable pain to the median nerves. Medical doctors today have said that when the Roman soldiers pierced Christ's hands and feet, it would have crushed the nerves there and it would have been agonizing and intense pain. Have you ever hit your "funny bone" at the end of your arm? It would have been that kind of pain, but much more intense pulsing through His body.

Finally, a single spike was driven through both feet, many times going directly through the Achilles tendons.

But Christ did not say a Word. "As a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth" (**Isaiah 53:7**).

3. The **damage** to His body. Though no bones were broken, after they nailed Him to a wooden cross, they hung Him up to die. The impact of the cross falling into the hole that was dug several feet down, would have dislocated many of the joints in Jesus' body.
4. **Breathing**. In order to breath, every minute was agonizing physically. He would have to push up on His feet and pull on His wrists in order to breath. As He did so the nerve pain would shoot through His entire body. This was constant.
5. Listen to Christ's 7 **words** from the Cross.

HIS MERCY!

- a. While He is on the Cross He has nothing but compassion. While the others are cursing, Jesus looks upon His enemies and says, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do".

- b. One of the criminal's—a thief—says "Remember me when you come you're your Kingdom." He puts His entire trust in Jesus as the Son of God. And Jesus responds: "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise"
- c. He says to his mother Mary, "Mother behold thy son!" and gives proper care to his mother while keeping the fifth commandment.

HIS SUBSTITUTION

- d. "My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken Me?" He already knew the answer to this question. He was forsaken for you and me! 1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God".
- e. As he nears death, his body is in shock because of loss of blood, seen by His plea, "I thirst!"
- f. "It is finished!" He finished suffering for our sins on the Cross. He had fulfilled all righteousness!
- g. "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit"

6. Finally Christ **Dies!**

V. All **Creation** Groans.

1. The **sun** was darkened from noon until 3pm. **Matthew 27:45**, "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour".

The cross is a place of Judgment! At the moment of Christ's death, a series of remarkable miracles takes place. **Matthew 27:50**, "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. ⁵¹ And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; ⁵² And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, ⁵³ And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many".

2. Miracles were done to attest to the fact of Christ's death.
 - The **veil** of the Temple was torn in two
 - The **earth** shook! There was a great earthquake
 - The **Dead** were raised. Many believers were **resurrected** from the dead and testified of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem.
 - The **Salvation** of the Centurion. Found in Matthew 27:54, "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

W. Jesus' **Death** was certified. **John 19:32-34**, "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. ³³ But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: ³⁴ But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." The soldiers would normally break the legs of the person to hasten their death. Jesus was already dead. They did not break his bones, as the Scripture prophesied that not one bone in his body would be broken (**Psalm 34:20**). So instead the soldier's spear pierced Jesus' heart. The blood from his heart was already coagulating. The Bible tells us that Jesus was confirmed dead. Permanent death—rigor mortis was setting in. His body became stiff and cold.

X. What does the death of Jesus **mean**?

2 Corinthians 5:21, "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."

Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

1 Peter 3:18, "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". Christ was made alive by the Spirit, and that brings us to our final journey.

IV. A Journey to the **Empty Tomb**. Let us now journey from the Cross to the Tomb of Jesus. Christ was taken down from the cross by Joseph of Arimathaea. Joseph of Arimathaea was a rich man, and gave a brand new tomb for Jesus' burial. Mark asserts that Joseph was "an honourable counselor", in other words, He was a prominent member of the Council (Mark 15:43)—that is the Jewish Sanhedrin.

A. The burial site of Jesus then was quite **Prominent**. Everyone would have known where He was buried. Jesus was a well-known figure in Israel. His burial site was known by many people.

In **John 19:40** we read that Nicodemus helped Joseph of Arimathaea prepare Jesus' body for burial: They took "the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand."

B. The **Security** of His burial site. The very prominence of the burial site made it secure, but we also have Joseph of Arimathaea and probably some servants put a TWO-TON stone in front of the grave.

1. There was a two ton **Stone**. We read in **Matthew 27:59-60**, "when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 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."

2. The Roman **Garrison**. **Matthew 27:65**, "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." So they sealed the stone with wax and with the imprimatur of Pilate's signet ring.

Now the Roman government was very ripe for a Jewish rebellion. Christ had openly prophesied of His Resurrection, so what they did is they stationed a Roman garrison in front of the tomb. A Garrison has 16 soldiers that if had to guard the tomb. If one fell asleep or neglected their duty, there was only ONE penalty: DEATH. None of the soldiers were put to death after the tomb was found empty. People could not have missed the 16 Roman soldiers in front of Jesus' tomb.

But something amazing was about to happen.

C. The **Witnesses** of the Resurrection. As Sunday morning approached, with the 16 Roman soldiers watching, the first witnesses to the Resurrection were the 16 Roman soldier!! We read in **Matthew 28:2**, "And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. ³ His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: ⁴ And for fear of him the keepers [16 ROMAN SOLDIERS] did shake, and became as dead men."

Conclusion: "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said"! Jesus Christ is risen from the dead! He is the only one who has ever conquered death and Hell.

So let me close with this. We began this journey by going to Heaven and then to Hell. Christ suffered the agonies of Hell and death for sinners like you. He conquered death. You will not conquer death on your own. But the Bible says in **John 3:16**, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Yes, dear friend, the truth of the scripture is that the anger and wrath of God will one day **fall upon your sins**. The only question is, will it fall upon you, in hell, forever, or will it fall upon Jesus Christ, upon the cross who has conquered death and Hell? That choice is yours to make. You WILL live forever, somewhere!

Won't you commit your life and your heart to Jesus Christ this morning? If you are here this morning and you say, I want to repent and turn from my wasted life and turn to Jesus as my all. I'm giving Him my life right now. I'm calling on the Lord to save me. If that is you please let me pray for you. By lifting your hand, you are saying, "Pastor, I need prayer..."