

## Luke 24A

- As our lesson came to a conclusion last week, Jesus' lifeless body still hung on the cross
  - The crowds have left
  - The religious leaders have returned to the city, no doubt congratulating one another on the success of their plan to kill Jesus
  - The women who know Jesus have stayed behind, perhaps watching Jesus hanging in a hope that something miraculous will happen
- Before we return to Luke, I want to take just a brief moment as we begin tonight to look at how John describes the scene at the cross following Jesus' death

[John 19:31](#) ¶ Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

[John 19:32](#) So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him;

[John 19:33](#) but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

[John 19:34](#) But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

- If you were present for my description of the crucifixion last week, you'll immediately understand the reason for the Jewish leaders' request
  - The ability of these men to push themselves up by their legs was critical to their ability to breathe
    - As long as they could use their legs to push up, they could remain alive on the cross for several days
  - Normally, Romans left their victims to die slowly on the cross
    - Which could be several days
    - After which they let the body on the cross for birds to pick at the corpse until it rotted away
  - But the Jews are concerned about the approaching Sabbath

- It would have been a great concern to see a body hanging in this way over a Sabbath day
- The Law of Moses required in Deut 21:22-23 that no one be permitted to hang on a tree overnight
- So to permit Jesus to hang there into a Sabbath would have been especially offensive
- Therefore, the Jewish leaders say lets get on with it
  - Break their legs,
    - The Romans used an iron mallet to smash the legs
    - The inability to push up promptly lead to asphyxiation
- But when they go to Jesus, He is dead already
  - But a soldier decides to test whether Jesus is truly dead
  - The soldier pierces Jesus' side
    - Of course, if Jesus wasn't dead, He would be now
  - Out flowed blood and water
    - This is actually normal physiology
    - The Roman probably aimed upward into the body cavity reaching the heart
      - And if he hit the heart, it would have resulted in blood and a watery fluid of the pericardial sac surrounding the heart pouring out the wound
  - There have been so many attempts to attach symbolism to the fact that both blood and water are observed
    - If there is symbolism intended, I lean toward a connection with the Last Supper
      - Jesus declared that the wine of that meal was His blood
      - But we know that those cups of wine were mixed with water

- Therefore, in the mixing of blood and water now, though it is a natural event
  - Perhaps it was intended to reinforce the image of Jesus as the blood of the new covenant, shed for the remission of sin and the Passover celebration
- With that background, let's go back into Luke, beginning at verse 50...

[Luke 23:50](#) ¶ And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man

[Luke 23:51](#) (he had not consented to their plan and action), *a man* from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God;

[Luke 23:52](#) this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

[Luke 23:53](#) And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain.

[Luke 23:54](#) It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

[Luke 23:55](#) Now the women who had come with Him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb and how His body was laid.

[Luke 23:56](#) Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes.

¶ And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

- Luke's description of the burial process paints a nicely detailed picture
  - As these verse begin, Jesus is still on a cross
    - But this being a preparation day before a High Sabbath, Jesus friends wouldn't want Him to stay there past sundown
  - So this man Joseph of Arimathea claims Jesus' body
    - We don't know too much about Joseph, but from the four Gospels, here's what we know
    - He comes from Arimathea, a town about 21 miles northwest from Jerusalem
      - This is the same city where Samuel the prophet lived and was buried
      - A legend grew up in the church that Joseph later became an evangelist traveling to England, founding the first Christian church outside Judea in Glastenbury and is buried there

- He was a member of the powerful ruling council of Jews – the Sanhedrin
- He was a believer in Jesus, but John tells us he was secretive in his belief
  - And Luke says Joseph hadn't agreed with the council's ruling against Jesus
- And Mark tells us that Joseph had to gather up the courage to approach Pilate to request the body
  - Joseph had good reason to fear here
    - He was a member of the council that had convicted Jesus
    - And Jesus had just been executed as a insurrectionist by the Romans
  - Up to this point, Joseph had been a secret admirer of Jesus
    - Now he was preparing to associated himself with Jesus publicly
    - And in doing so, he would be suspected by both the council and the Romans
  - When he asks Pilate for the body, Pilate asked if it were possible that Jesus was already dead
    - A six hour crucifixion was relatively quick
- We also know that Joseph was a man of wealth, according to Matthew
  - Which makes sense, since you wouldn't expect him to have bee on the council without some source of influence
- Joseph had recently prepared a burial place for himself
  - It was hewn out of rock
    - This was an expensive kind of burial
    - Only the wealthy could afford the labor and the land to have such a burial

- Consider what Joseph did here
  - First, he was used by God to fulfill scripture

[Is. 53:9](#) His grave was assigned with wicked men,  
 Yet He was with a rich man in His death,  
 Because He had done no violence,  
 Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

- Secondly, Joseph was obeying Jesus' own words to his disciples a few months earlier

[Matt. 10:25](#) "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more *will they malign* the members of his household!

[Matt. 10:26](#) ¶ "Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.

[Matt. 10:27](#) "What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear *whispered in your ear*, proclaim upon the housetops.

[Matt. 10:28](#) "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

- Joseph realized that serving Jesus in this dark hour required the courage to trust in the Lord rather than fear men
  - He showed more courage in that moment than all the disciples combined
  - God so often finds the least among His people to perform the greatest deeds in His name
- I also admire the generosity of this man
  - The donation of this grave would have been equivalent to donating a mausoleum
    - The price of a small home
  - You could have argued that now that Jesus was dead, there was little reason to go to so much effort to bury Him in such an elaborate way
  - Joseph didn't let reason get in his way of serving His Lord

- Like the woman with the alabaster vial of perfume
- She gave it all to Jesus for His feet without regard for its worth
- Because our service to Christ is priceless
- And what did Joseph receive for his sacrifice?
  - Only to have his story included in all four gospel records and his faithfulness immortalized forever
    - Seems like a fair deal, so long as your priority isn't personal wealth
- We also know from the other Gospels that when Joseph came to claim the body, the women were still there guarding over Jesus,
  - And they followed Jesus' body to the tomb,
    - And they observed Joseph and Nicodemus prepare the body for burial and place it in the tomb and roll the stone over the entrance
  - The presence of the women here is important because they provide a chain of custody of sorts
    - If you've read ahead, then you know it is the women who first discover Jesus' body missing on Sunday
      - Many commentators offer ideas for why the women were granted the privilege of learning of the resurrection first
      - At least one reason is because they provide the eye witness proof that Jesus was buried in the grave
        - And then when they return, there is no body to be found
      - Add to that the fact that Matt tells us how the Jewish leaders feared the body would be stolen, so they appeal to Pilate for a guard to watch the tomb and seal it shut
  - There move, by the way, only served to add evidence to Jesus claims to resurrection
    - It was harder to claim that Jesus resurrection was a fraud

- Together with the women's testimony

[Luke 24:1](#) ¶ But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

[Luke 24:2](#) And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

[Luke 24:3](#) but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

[Luke 24:4](#) While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing;

[Luke 24:5](#) and as *the women* were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, *the men* said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead?"

[Luke 24:6](#) "He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee,

[Luke 24:7](#) saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

[Luke 24:8](#) And they remembered His words,

[Luke 24:9](#) and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

- The first day of the week, as Luke describes it, was Sunday
  - This was the first day after the crucifixion that the women could travel to visit the tomb
    - The day of the crucifixion was Thursday
    - The next day was Friday, which was a Sabbath because it was the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread
    - The next day was Saturday, which was a normal Sabbath
    - So Sunday was the first day these women could return to pray and mourn at the grave and preserve the body
- They arrive at dawn, and actually a little before dawn according to John
  - The first thing they noticed was that the stone was rolled away
    - The stone is very large
    - In fact, in Mark's gospel they are quoted as wondering who will help them roll the stone away

- I get the sense that these women were so steadfast in their faith and devotion that they didn't let the fact that there was this huge stone covering the grave discourage them from going to Jesus
- But when they arrive, they find the stone has already been moved
  - It's shaped like a disc, so that it can roll from one side to another inside a groove cut in the ground
  - It would take several strong men to move it
    - But there were guards at this stone up till the moment that an angel, we're told in Matt's gospel, moves it
    - And scares the guards away in the process
  - So the chain of custody is complete
- They enter the tomb, we're told, but of course the body of Jesus isn't there
  - And they are perplexed or at a loss
    - Here for the first time, Luke uses the term Lord Jesus, which was the popular term in the early church
  - The resurrection of Jesus was a specific event
    - We'll study it in stages a little here and there as we go through the chapter, but let's begin with the most important piece
  - Jesus was resurrected in body and spirit
    - Jesus was all man and all God
      - He had a sinless body and He was one in His spirit with the Father
      - When His Body died, it died no less than when you and I suffer death
        - But that's where the similarities end
        - His body didn't decay, even in the slightest

[Psa. 16:10](#) For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;  
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo **decay**.

- From this passage, we see confirmation that Jesus body never suffered any decay
  - It was dead but never deteriorated
  - This is confirmed by the fact that the soldiers' sword drew blood and water as if the body were still alive
  - Because the deterioration process itself was something God instituted as a result of sin
  - Part of the curse on creation brought about because of the sin of Adam declares:

[Gen. 3:19](#) By the sweat of your face  
 You will eat bread,  
 Till you return to the ground,  
 Because from it you were taken;  
 For you are dust,  
 And to dust you shall return.”

- Since Jesus didn't share in the sin, He didn't share in the curse
  - So though He was dead, the body was not decaying
  - What made Jesus dead then? It was that the spirit had left the body
- Remember in Luke 23:46 when Jesus said that into the Father's hand He committed His Spirit
  - To fully understand the significance of that statement, we need to consider one other statement Jesus spoke before His death

[John 10:17](#) “For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.

[John 10:18](#) “No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

- When Jesus spoke His dying words, He was in a sense dictating the timing and manner of His own death

- He was laying down His life by commanding His spirit to be separated from His body, which is the cause of His body's death
- At that point, His spirit went to the place that all departing spirits went
  - Abraham's Bosom, Sheol
  - This was the waiting place for the departed souls
- The spirits of the saints who died prior to the resurrection, couldn't leave the earth and enter heaven
  - Because until Jesus had died and His blood had covered the mercy seat in the heavenly tabernacle, there hadn't yet been atonement for sin
  - Without atonement for sin, those souls couldn't enter God's presence without judgment for sin
- So God graciously prepared a suitable waiting place for the day when Jesus would sacrifice Himself, and after His death, His soul joined those who waited for Him in Sheol
- How can we be sure of this?
  - Scripture teaches us the details

[Eph. 4:8](#) Therefore it says,

"WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH,  
HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES,  
AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."

[Eph. 4:9](#) (Now this *expression*, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?)

[Eph. 4:10](#) He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)

[Is. 44:23](#) Shout for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done *it!*

Shout joyfully, you lower parts of the earth;  
Break forth into a shout of joy, you mountains,  
O forest, and every tree in it;  
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob  
And in Israel He shows forth His glory.

[1Pet. 3:18](#) For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; [1Pet. 3:19](#) in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, [1Pet. 3:20](#) who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah,

- So Jesus' body is sitting in the tomb without decay
  - His Spirit is in the depths comforting the OT saints while witnessing to the coming judgment for the disobedient
  - And Jesus spends three days away from His body
    - At which point He is resurrected
    - The resurrection of the body is the moment when our Spirit is resident again in a physical container
      - Jesus' physical container was not corrupted by sin
      - So as we mentioned at an earlier point in this study, His spirit can re-enter His original body and return to life in the same form He had upon His death
    - It must be different for you and I
      - First we were born with a corrupted spirit, inherited from Adam's nature
        - That spirit could never enter God's presence
        - So to those who are to be saved, God must put the old nature to death and give the body a new spirit, one that isn't corrupt any longer
        - Ultimately, when the day of our resurrection comes at the Rapture of the church, the second part of our renewal will be complete
        - But unlike Jesus, we will require a new body, since our original body will have returned to dust

[Rom. 8:10](#) If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

[Rom. 8:11](#) But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

[Rom. 8:20](#) For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

[Rom. 8:21](#) that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

[Rom. 8:22](#) For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

[Rom. 8:23](#) And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

- So back to the scene, Luke reports that the women see two men sitting in the tomb in place of Jesus
  - We know these men to be angels, but there is no indication that these women did
    - Remember, the word angel means messenger, and just as angels heralded Jesus' birth, here again God uses angels to announce Jesus resurrection
      - They open the conversation by asking why they are looking for the living among the dead?
        - This is a polite rebuke, in that it suggests these women should have know to expect the resurrection
      - And then the angel reminds them of all of Jesus' predictions and they are then given the insight to see the big picture
  - Remember we said earlier in studying Luke that the reason that the meaning of Jesus' earlier predictions of His coming death were hidden at the time was so that the meaning revealed now would have more impact
    - There would be a clearer understanding that this was all a part of God's plan

- Now that encouragement and explanation is put to use with these women and later with the disciples
- And in Matt's Gospel, they tell the women that Jesus has gone ahead to Galilee and would meet them there
  - These are great details
    - Jesus has just been resurrected, but He doesn't just float around the tomb
      - He's truly alive, truly a man in a body again never to suffer death again
      - So He plans to meet the disciples in Galilee, His home
    - He literally, stood up in the tomb, waited for the angels to push the stone back, and walked out probably moments before the women arrive
    - And now He begins His 80 mile walk back to the Galilee
      - We'll come back to a discussion of how Jesus actually travels in the days after His resurrection next week
  - And with this great news the women return to tell the eleven still hiding somewhere in Jerusalem

[Luke 24:10](#) Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the *mother* of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles.

[Luke 24:11](#) But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.

[Luke 24:12](#) But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he \*saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

- Naturally, the women run back to tell the eleven apostles
  - And naturally their reports are met with skepticism
    - Can you blame the disciples?
    - Well, in a way yes, since they had been warned
    - But forgetting that for a moment, the culture would have been a great barrier to belief
      - Women were not seen as credible witnesses

- They couldn't testify at trial, they had no legal standing
- They were viewed to be too emotionally frail to be trustworthy in serious matters
  - Just the fact that Jesus first appeared to women is the best proof I can offer that the Gospel account of Jesus' resurrection is not a contrived story written by some Jewish disciple
  - No Jewish writer wished his story was seen as credible would have made the first witnesses to the resurrection to be women
  - He would have selected men to encourage trust in his readers
- When they hear the report, it sounds like nonsense to the disciples
  - In fact, to show you how little trust these men had in the women's testimony, only Peter and John decide it's worth the risk to be seen in public to run to the tomb
  - But the only thing they saw in the tomb were the left over wrappings
  - Jesus had come back to life
- Why is the resurrection so important to our faith?
  - First and foremost, it establishes the truth of everything else that came before it
    - Jesus made many astounding claims about the nature of the Creator God and His character and His plan for mankind
      - And these claims were mutually exclusive to any other claim
      - Jesus said that the God of Israel is the only true God, and that He was the only Son or deliverer offered by the Father to mankind
      - Jesus declared that belief in Jesus was the one and only opportunity for men to be reconciled to their Father

- And He promised that just as He would be resurrected, those who trust in His atonement will likewise be resurrected
- Now talk is cheap
  - It's easy to make claims
  - Countless other faiths have come along and will come along making any number of claims about these same issues
  - And in every case, those claims come to us in much the same way as Jesus' claims first came
    - A man makes statement and demonstrates certain principles
    - He obtains a devoted following
      - The win over a few or many
  - So in the end, how do we know who to believe?
- Well consider what are offering you?
  - In these messengers are claiming to have an answer to the question of death and eternity, then you should ask what happened to their spokesman?
    - Many have come to make claims, but only one backed it up with proof
      - The resurrection was the proof that we can believe Jesus' claims
      - The fact that He rose from the dead and was seen by witnesses proved His divinity
      - And it gave us the hope that He can do as He promised for those who believe in Him

[Rom. 6:3](#) Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

[Rom. 6:4](#) Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

[Rom. 6:5](#) For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection,

[Rom. 6:6](#) knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

[Rom. 6:7](#) for he who has died is freed from sin.

[Rom. 6:8](#) ¶ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

[Rom. 6:9](#) knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.