

PASSION WEEK

WCBC Saturday Evening Meditation

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It is Saturday of our Savior's passion week. Prior to sundown on Friday, Jesus cried out, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit" ([John 19:30](#)). "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" ([John 1:29](#)), "who gave Himself for our sins so that He could save us from this present evil age" ([Gal. 1:3-5](#)). All four Gospel accounts document the death and subsequent burial of Jesus Christ ([Matt. 27:57-61](#); [Mark 15:42-47](#); [Luke 23:50-56](#); [John 19:38-42](#)). These accounts verify that evening had already come, and it was the day of preparation and the Sabbath (Saturday) was about to begin ([Luke 24:54](#)). In keeping with Sabbath regulations that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath ([John 19:31](#)), Joseph of Arimathea had requested permission from Pilate to take the body of Christ and bury Him in a nearby tomb. "Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph ([Mark 15:44-45](#)). So, Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried by the end of the day on Friday. What does the Scripture reveal about the Saturday of passion week? The tomb of Jesus was sealed and heavily guarded and the soul of Jesus was not abandoned to Sheol.

The Tomb Of Jesus Was Sealed and Heavily Guarded ([Matt. 27:62-66](#))

The chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate for a strategic meeting ([Matt. 27:62](#)). They were gravely concerned that Jesus' disciples would come and steal away His body to perpetuate a deception upon a deception; They testified that Jesus (that deceiver) said while He was still alive, "After three days I *am* to rise again" ([Matt. 27:63](#)). If the tomb of Jesus was left unguarded, Christ's disciples would take away His body "and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead'" ([Matt. 27:64](#)). Pilate granted to them not only a guard, but his own Roman seal upon the stone ([Matt. 27:65-66](#)).

The Soul Of Jesus Was Not Abandoned To Sheol

We recognize unequivocally, that Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. But what if anything else happened between this time of His death on Friday and the time of His resurrection on Sunday. Two related Scriptures shed some important light on this question. First, the apostle Peter applies the promise of God revealed to David in Psalm 16:10 (see [Acts 2:25-28](#)) to Jesus; most specifically, "For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay" ([Psalm 16:10](#)). David (and subsequently Peter) is stating here two important realities concerning the state of Christ following His physical death. First, God will not abandon Christ's soul to Sheol, the place of the dead. Second, God will not allow His Holy One to undergo decay in the grave. The bodily, physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead on the third day fulfills the second part of God's promise that He would not undergo decay, but what of the soul of Jesus Christ at His death? Jesus Himself reveals some important truths here.

Jesus was crucified between two criminals. We find initially, that both of "The robbers who had been crucified with Him were also insulting Him with the same words ([Matt. 27:38-44](#)). But while one of the criminals continued abusing Jesus, the other feared God, rightly confessing, "we indeed *are suffering* justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong" ([Luke 23:41](#)). Then he said to Him, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" ([Luke 23:42](#)). Now notice what Jesus "said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise'" ([Luke 23:43](#)). John MacArthur clarifies, "Paradise...is an old Persian word for garden. It's a synonym for heaven...So he's not saying anything but you're going to be with me in heaven today. There's no waiting place. There's no transitional place. Absent from the body, present with the Lord, to depart and be with Christ" (MacArthur, "The King Crucified: Conversion at Calvary"). Brothers and sisters, we can be rest assured from these truths that Christ's soul was not abandoned to Sheol, and His promise that this robber would be with Him in paradise was immediately fulfilled at the very moment of Christ's death upon the cross on that day.