

Let's begin by reading from the context surrounding Jesus' final words on the cross:

Luke 23:44-46 (NIV)

44 *It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon,*
45 *for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.*
46 *Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.*

These final words of Jesus, *"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit,"* are deeply meaningful. They were not spoken casually, but intentionally rich with theological significance, rooted in both His mission and His divine identity.

1. Why Did Jesus Say These Words?

A. Fulfillment of Scripture

Jesus was quoting Psalm 31:5, a well known verse among devout

Jews:

“Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, Lord, my faithful God.” (*Psalm 31:5, NIV*)

By quoting this Psalm, Jesus was:

- Affirming His trust in the Father, even in death.
- Fulfilling prophecy, identifying Himself with the righteous sufferer described in the Psalms.
- Demonstrating intentional surrender, not being killed by force but willingly laying down His life.

As Jesus had said earlier:

“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.” (*John 10:17-18, NIV*)

B. Spiritual Reality Before the Resurrection

Before Jesus' death and resurrection, the state of the dead even the righteous was not as secure as it is now. The Old Testament describes a place called Sheol (Hebrew) or Hades (Greek), the abode of the dead. It was often depicted as a shadowy, waiting place (see Ecclesiastes 9:10; Job 10:21-22).

In 1 Samuel 28, we see that the prophet Samuel though righteous could be summoned from the dead by a medium:

"The woman said, 'Whom shall I bring up for you?' 'Bring up Samuel,' he said." (1 Samuel 28:11, NIV)

"Samuel said to Saul, 'Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?'" (1 Samuel 28:15, NIV)

This shows that even saints like Samuel were in a place that could be disturbed before Christ's victory over death.

Thus, Jesus entrusted His spirit to the Father to secure its safe passage through death and to fulfill His mission of descending to the realm of the dead (1 Peter 3:18-19) and setting captives free.

2. What Happened After Jesus Died?

A. He Gained Authority Over Death and Hades

After His resurrection, Jesus declared:

“I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”
(Revelation 1:18, NIV)

In biblical symbolism, keys represent authority. Christ now holds sovereign power over the realm of the dead authority that Satan once exploited to torment or claim souls.

B. He Led the Righteous Captives to Paradise

After His resurrection, Christ didn't just leave things as they were

He transformed the experience of death for believers:

“When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.”

“What does ‘he ascended’ mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?” (*Ephesians 4:8-9, NIV*)

The idea here is that Jesus descended to “Hades”, not to suffer, but to proclaim victory and liberate the righteous who had died before the cross (see also 1 Peter 3:19; 4:6).

3. What Does This Mean for Us Today?

A. We No Longer Need to Fear Death

Because Jesus conquered death, believers today are no longer held in bondage by the fear of it:

“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power

of him who holds the power of death that is, the devil and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." (*Hebrews 2:14-15, NIV*)

B. Our Souls Are Now Secure in Christ

Today, when a believer dies, their soul is immediately with Christ in Paradise:

"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." (*Luke 23:43, NIV*)

Paul also affirms this confidence:

"We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord." (*2 Corinthians 5:8, NIV*)

C. We Must Entrust Our Lives to Christ Now

While Jesus entrusted His spirit to the Father at the moment of death, we are called to entrust our whole lives to Him while we are still living.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God this is your true and proper worship.”
(Romans 12:1, NIV)

“Whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.” *(Romans 14:8, NIV)*

Christ Has Secured Our Souls

Because Jesus entrusted His spirit to the Father, conquered death, and now holds the keys of death and Hades, we who believe in Him no longer need to fear what comes after death. The souls of

the righteous are now kept safe in Christ, awaiting the resurrection and eternal glory.

So, while we may not need to repeat Jesus' final words verbatim at death, we should live every day in the reality of their meaning entrusting our lives and eternity into God's hands.

Maranatha Come, Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:20)

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