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THE VERY STONES WOULD CRY OUT: A STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IN LUKE 19:37-40

James Gregory Gardner
THE VERY STONES WOULD CRY OUT: A STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

IN LUKE 19:37-40

By

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
Graduation with Honors from the
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1. ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................. 2
2. SUMMARY .................................................................................................................. 3
3. LESSON CONTENT .................................................................................................... 5
   i. LESSON 1 .............................................................................................................. 7
   ii. LESSON 2 .......................................................................................................... 10
   iii. LESSON 3 ......................................................................................................... 13
4. MASTER TEACHING ................................................................................................. 17
   i. LESSON 1 ............................................................................................................. 19
   ii. LESSON 2 .......................................................................................................... 21
   iii. LESSON 3 ......................................................................................................... 23
5. VISUAL AIDS .......................................................................................................... 25
   i. LESSON 1 ............................................................................................................. 26
   ii. LESSON 2 .......................................................................................................... 29
   iii. LESSON 3 ......................................................................................................... 33
6. SOURCES .................................................................................................................. 36
7. APPENDIX .................................................................................................................. 37
   A. Thesis Proposal .................................................................................................... 38
   B. Timeline .............................................................................................................. 41
   C. Post-Defense Updates ....................................................................................... 42
ABSTRACT:

My senior thesis project is a Sunday School sermon series to be used for the high school ministry at Shandon Baptist Church. I’ve been an intern for the Shandon youth ministry for a year and a half, including the current semester, and have been involved in the ministry in some other capacity for nearly six years. Through my experiences with the youth ministry there, it has become my desire to pursue vocational ministry myself, and this project has become a great practical way for me to do research and learn what it will be like to be a youth pastor and to create sermon and lesson plans on a regular basis.

The basis for this series was found in Jesus’ words to the Pharisees during His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, found in the Gospel of Luke. When commanded to silence His followers, Jesus says that should they be silent, then the rocks would cry out. I thought that this was a very interesting point, and began to wonder what a series of rocks my have to say about the biblical events that transpired around them. This thesis details the series that I produced, including topic and content, communication method, and all other sermon aspects that are necessary in creating a Sunday service.

I received the opportunity to utilize the series that I created for the youth group at Shandon Baptist Church from youth pastor Frank Shimkus, who served as the second reader for the project. He joined my director, Dr. Pat Wright, who is a Sunday School teacher and parent of a student at Shandon. Working with them gave me great theological insight as well as a practical opportunity to put into use the work that I had done.
SUMMARY:

My approach to this project was to break down a sermon series into multiple components and tackle each of them individually. As I started my initial planning and research, I realized that the actual topic and content that was shared in the lesson was only a fraction of the research and planning that went into it. Besides the content itself, it is also essential to decide on a delivery format, practice communication skills, create a visual component to aid in delivery, and create a connecting theme through use of worship and other media.

I chose the Gospel of Christ as a topic for the whole series. I broke this down into individual points for lessons, including creation of the world, the fall of mankind, revelation of sin and its consequences, payment and reconciliation, and redemption and repentance. As I was creating a series for Shandon Baptist, I was somewhat constrained by the time that I had available, so I was forced to consolidate various points into three lessons. This is an essential part of sermon planning, as time constraints may exist and the totality of the message needs to be shared. The final topics were the reality of sin, the payment, and redemption.

After choosing the overarching and individual topics, I selected three biblical stories containing rocks to parallel each message. The three stories were the delivery of the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel, the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ, and the resurrection of Jesus after His death. These topics and stories constituted the major content of each lesson, consolidated into a single point to get across. However, to get that point across effectively, I also had to identify an audience and select a communication method.
As I was creating a series for a youth group, my audience was exclusively high school students. The method commonly utilized in the youth group at Shandon, and the one that I chose to use as well, is a brief master teaching of all students followed by individual classes, taught by volunteer adult teachers. I was responsible for creating and leading the master teaching, as well as communicating the lesson to teachers and properly equipping them to teach it to students in turn.

Finally, after creating the full content to be taught in each lesson, I prepared for the teaching itself, including my stage presence and communication skills, as well as visual aids that I would use to convey the message.
LESSON CONTENT:

Each lesson began with an individual topic, fitting into the overarching series topic, and a parallel biblical rock story, following with the theme laid out for the series. My goal was to portray each of the stones as a “character” within their respective stories, and use their role in the story to convey the message. To begin, I had to determine just what that message was for each of the lessons.

Keeping with the style of lesson established at Shandon, I boiled down the content of each lesson to a singular main idea, which was placed at the top of each teacher lesson. This allowed easy access for teachers of various theological skill level and background, and brought greater focus for myself as I fleshed out further content in the lesson. Each lesson also had a key verse to accompany the main idea, containing a scripture reference that fully teaches the idea that the lesson is focused on. Together, the main idea and key verse serve as both a launching pad and target for the lesson as a whole.

After identifying both of those components for each lesson, I did significant research on each of the stones themselves. I sought to achieve two things with my portrayal of the stones in each lesson. First, I wanted to establish them as a character clearly and with great detail. Also, by showing archaeological research that was done for each of the stories and stones in question, I hoped to provide a real-world connection to the lesson for each of the students. It makes it so much more real and meaningful to point to a specific place or rock that you can visit and touch, rather than lots of hypothetical and unconfirmed research.

Besides the research and information on the physical rock itself, I also expanded on the theological aspect of each lesson, cross-referencing other
passages of scripture and using outside analysis and commentaries to shape the message and point back to the main idea, ultimately arriving at a "what's the point?" section. This is where I wrapped up each lesson for the teachers and clearly laid out how the key verse points to the main idea, and how exactly to share the main idea with students through the teaching.

Finally, I wrapped up each lessons with a series of discussion questions. I developed these through several conversations with Frank making sure that each question has a purpose. The first two are always the same, serving to provide open-ended discussion and break the ice for each class. After that, each lesson contains a variety of questions, but each generally does the same thing. At least one will point the students to the Bible and make them read a passage of scripture. Another will force them to self-analyze and hopefully open up about their own feelings on the topic. Ultimately, each of the discussion questions will direct the teachers to share the main idea and get to the “what's the point?” moment with their classes.
Main Idea: When God created the world, He set a standard and expectation of holiness, and if you don't satisfy it, you're dead.

Key Verse: Romans 3:19-20

The Ten Commandments
After the Exodus from Egypt, God paused in the desert to officially establish His covenant relationship with the people of Israel. This takes place at Mt. Sinai, traditionally located in the southern Sinai Peninsula located in modern day Egypt, though some scholars place the actual mountain in the northern Sinai Peninsula or in modern day Saudi Arabia. This is an article detailing some evidence for Mt. Sinai from Dr. Bob Cornuke, a biblical archaeologist who many of you may remember from our past Impact Weekend events. (http://www.baseinstitute.org/pages/mt_sinai/18).

When the Israelites arrive, God calls Moses up the mountain to give him the two physical tablets, along with the rest of the Law. The tablets, according to Jewish tradition, were square and made of a blue stone, like sapphire. This is quite dissimilar from the grey round-topped rectangles that we are used to seeing today. Tradition also states that each tablet contained the full Ten Commandments, which was common practice at the time in making covenants, so that each party would possess a full copy of the agreement. The tablets were cut and inscribed by God Himself, being in His presence and witnessing His full glory. I believe this is pretty apt, as they are intended to represent the perfect standard of holiness that God expects of His people.

Finally, the tablets were given to Moses as he returns from the mountain, where they were almost immediately destroyed in his anger. Idolatrous Israel was seen breaking the first commandment before the tablets even entered their midst. Even from the very beginning of their existence, the true purpose of the tablets
was to reveal God’s perfect standard of holiness and convict all people of their guilt before God.

The story closes with the first set of tablets being smashed against the ground by Moses, immediately before 3000 Israelites were killed and God sent a plague among the people.

**Covenant**

God demanded obedience from the people of Israel, and in return, He promised that they would become His people, a treasured possession separate from the rest of the world. However, God’s covenant also comes with a warning: if you fail to meet the standard of holiness that He sets, you’re dead. That’s obviously a difficult standard to keep, as the Israelite failed before the tablets even made it down the mountain. No one is able to keep it perfectly, so everyone owes the steep penalty of death. (Romans 3:23)

This is a point that we’ll look at more in depth in the next lesson, but I want us to be absolutely clear that God does requires payment from anyone who does not keep the Law, and the only payment that is accepted is death. However, notice that there is a difference between keeping the Law and satisfying its requirement. As Moses interceded on behalf of the people of Israel, there is hope in Christ.

**So what’s the point?**

If the Law was given as a perfect standard of holiness to be kept by Israel, but the Bible also establishes that no one can be perfectly holy, then what is the point? The true purpose of the Law was to make sin apparent by revealing God’s standard and to convict the people of God of their sin when they failed to meet that standard. (Romans 3:19-20)

Ultimately the Law exists to:

1. Highlight our sin
2. Demand payment of our lives
3. Demonstrate our need for salvation
   a. This eventually points us to Christ, which we will discuss more in depth next week.
Questions

1. Retell the story of the Ten Commandments from the point of view of the stone tablets. What stands out to you as you tell the story in this way?

2. What testimony do the stone tablets “cry out” in this story?
   - The tablets testify to God’s perfect standard of holiness, and point out to us that we are incapable of satisfying that standard alone.

3. Which commandment did the people of Israel break at Mt. Sinai? What was their punishment? Do you think that punishment was just? Why or why not?
   - The people broke the 1st commandment, falling into idolatry. About 3,000 people were killed, and God sent a plague among the rest of the people.
   - Ultimately, death is the only just punishment for failing to keep the Law.

4. Read the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) as a group. Have you successfully kept any of the Ten Commandments? What do you think a just punishment would be?
   - It’s important for our students to realize that no one can keep even a single commandment perfectly for their entire life.
     i. Idolatry can include any relationship, item, or activity that a student places above their relationship with God. Greed or covetousness is also equated with idolatry (Colossians 3:5)
     ii. Even using “OMG” in casual conversation could be taking God’s name in vain when compared to His perfect standard.
     iii. The last six are also pretty straightforward. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus equates matters of the heart with outward action, meaning we have to be perfect on the inside and on the outside.
   - I suspect that where many would find the punishment of the Israelites to be just, it will be much more difficult to bestow the same punishment on ourselves. The key to this lesson is that any slip, even a little one, means that we haven’t met God’s standard and the only just punishment is death.

5. Is it possible to keep the Law perfectly? If not, then what is the purpose of having the Law?
   - Highlight sin, demand payment, and show need for salvation.
   - Obviously, from the last question, no one can possibly keep the Law, not even a little bit. Really getting to the root of this question begins to point us to salvation through Jesus’ substitution, which we will get into much deeper next week.
Main Idea: God does require a payment of blood for sin, but because of His grace, He provided Christ as a sacrifice in our place.

Key Verse: Hebrews 9:15-22

Golgotha
The place of Jesus’ death has many names for Christians due to the various languages that were spoken at the time or used to translate since then. The Aramaic name, Golgotha, is used in most of the Gospels, along with a translation of the Greek (Kranion Topos) meaning “place of the skull (lit. cranium)”. The Latin translation (Calvariae Locus) is the basis for the English word Calvary, which is a commonly used modern name for the location.

Both Golgotha and Jesus’ tomb are traditionally located within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Tomb). This church is located in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. After Jesus’ death, the site was a temple to the Roman goddess Venus until the 4th century when Constantine built a church, at which point his mother claimed to have discovered the cross and a tomb. As with Mt. Sinai, the traditional location is not universally accepted.

A hill north of the city, just outside the Damascus Gate, is one alternate site, often called Gordon’s Calvary. It fits many of the qualifications of Golgotha, being outside of the city gates (Hebrews 13:11-12) and north of the Temple Mount (Leviticus 1:11). It’s almost eerie seeing formations in the rock face that resemble a skull. It gave me chills the first time that I saw a picture of the rocks. The second alternate location commonly given for Golgotha is a hill just outside the Lion’s Gate, east of the Old City of Jerusalem.
Jesus' Death

These stones see and tell the story of Jesus' death. After He is tortured and sentenced to death, Jesus is made to carry His own cross out of the city to the place that He will be crucified. When He comes into view of Golgotha, Jesus is a beaten and bloodied mess, without the strength to carry His own cross. Jesus walks to the top of Golgotha, is nailed to the cross, and hangs suffering for hours. Finally, Jesus gives up His spirit and dies.

But Jesus’ suffering was not only physical. All sin was placed on Jesus and He paid the penalty of death that every person owes to God. This additional burden is apparent in the rapid death of Jesus. The Romans had perfected the method of crucifixion to cause intense, but lingering, pain and suffering. Victims often took many hours, and even days, to finally die. This is even pointed to in Scripture (Mark 15:44).

44 Pilate was surprised to hear that He should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether He was already dead.

After Jesus’ death, Scripture details several things that happened. Most prominently, the curtain of the temple was torn in two. This was significant in that it signified an end to the system of Levitic priests, but also because the curtain was approximately 60’ by 30’, and early Jewish tradition states that it was nearly 4 inches thick. There was also an earthquake, and rocks were split in half. Even some tombs were opened and some people were raised from the dead. Finally, near the end of the day, Jesus’ body was taken down from the cross and buried in the tomb before being sealed with a large rock.

So what’s the point?

God requires blood as payment for our sins. As He lays out the sacrificial system in the Law, He points to blood as the source of life in the flesh, thus it is given to us as the source of atonement for the flesh (Leviticus 17:11). This is reiterated in the New Testament when establishing the new covenant. There can be no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:15-22). Sin takes life (Ephesians 2:1), and life can only be returned by blood, the source of life in the flesh.

Jesus died as a substitute for us, so that we would not have to pay that penalty. His substitution for us is absolutely vital, in that the penalty of death was not simply swept away. God did, and still does, demand a payment of death for sin, but Jesus died for us so that His death will be counted as our payment. In the moment of Jesus’ death, He literally became sin (2 Corinthians 5:21) so that His death would satisfy the wrath of God.
Questions

1. Retell the story of the Jesus’ crucifixion and death from the point of view of Golgotha and the Garden Tomb. What stands out to you as you tell the story in this way?

2. What testimony does the mountain of Golgotha “cry out”?
   - Golgotha testifies of Jesus death, specifically of the blood that was literally shed at His death. It cries out that the sacrificial system is completely finished because the sacrifice that Jesus made was sufficient forever.

3. Read Hebrews 9:15-22. Why is the shedding of blood necessary to forgive sins?
   - The shedding of blood in this passage links back to the sacrificial system and the description of blood given in Leviticus 17:11. Sin takes life, and those under its power are dead in their flesh. Blood is the source of life in the flesh.
   - The author also points out in the first half of this passage that a will only takes effect and inheritance is received after a death has occurred.

4. Last week we talked about the Law. With Hebrews 9:15-22 in mind, what is the true purpose of the Law?
   - We said last week that the purpose of the Law was to highlight our sin, demand payment of our lives, and reveal the need for salvation.
   - A large portion of the Law was dedicated to the sacrificial system, and the Law was eventually fulfilled by Jesus’ shedding of blood. Thus, the purpose of the Law was to restore life through blood to those who were dead in their sins, until Jesus’ blood restored life completely, once and for all.

5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 and 1 Peter 2:21-24. According to these verses, what did the death of Christ accomplish?
   - Jesus’ death reconciled us to God, so that we could die to our sin and be righteous in the eyes of God. In becoming sin, His death ultimately satisfied the wrath of God by paying the penalty in blood required by the Law. The most important point to take away from this lesson is that God did truly demand payment for sin, but Jesus settled that debt and did satisfy the wrath of God.
Main Idea: After His death paid the penalty for sin (death), Jesus was resurrected and glorified, defeating death forever and make salvation available for all.

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 15:12-23

The Tomb
A tomb from around the time of Jesus death would have likely consisted of a small room cut out of a stone wall, with a small door easily sealed by a large stone. This stone was generally set into a small groove in front of the entrance to be rolled into place, usually at an incline. This made it possible for just two men to roll the several ton stone into place. It was much more difficult to roll the stone back up the incline, and would have been impossible for a single man to do so from inside the tomb with nothing to grip. The stone in front of the tomb was likely around 4’-5’ in diameter and about 1’ thick.

The tomb would have been cut from rock, which was usually only reserved for royalty or very wealthy citizen who could afford it. The Greek word (laxeuo) used here suggests that the tomb was not just cut from the rock, but also polished or highly developed. Also, rolling stones were very uncommon during this time, as only a handful of such tombs from this time period have been discovered. It would have been very difficult to move, and thus made the burial much more permanent.

As for the literal tomb, a few locations are suggested near the proposed sites of Golgotha. The traditional location is inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with the traditional Golgotha. The major alternative, Gordon’s Calvary, has several nearby tombs, one of which he claimed to be the tomb of Jesus. A nearby cistern and winepress place the location in a garden, specified by John as the
location of the tomb (John 19:41). This tomb also has a groove in the ground in front of the entrance, indicating that it once held a stone in front of the door.

The stone itself would have witnessed the somber scene when Jesus, appearing dead and beaten to the world, was placed within the tomb and sealed inside. It saw the disciples going away in sadness and confusion. It also saw Roman guards come to confirm His death and prevent a story of false resurrection. Most importantly, the stone is the only character to witness the moment of Jesus’ resurrection. As light filled the dark tomb, Jesus returned to life and defeated death in an instant. What a moment that must have been! Finally, the stone was rolled away from the entrance and witnessed the first reunion of Jesus with His followers.

**Resurrection**

Jesus’ death paid the penalty for sin, which is death, but His resurrection permanently defeated it. If Christ had not risen, then sin and death would continue to have dominion over the world, and we would continue to be stuck in our sins (1 Corinthians 5:17). Because of the resurrection, we are able to walk in new life with Christ.

It’s also essential to notice that Jesus’ resurrection, and therefore our own, will be one of body as well as of spirit. Our bodies are as much a part of who we are as our spirit (Genesis 2:7). God intended for our bodies to last for eternity. It was not until sin, and therefore death, entered the world through Adam that physical bodies began to deteriorate. Jesus was and is fully human, though without the curse of sin. His life and resurrection are the perfect example of what a human life was intended to be.

**Repentance**

Jesus’ death and resurrection alone will not save you though. We are required to believe, confess, and repent of our sins. Reaching back to our discussion of a covenant, there is a promise (resurrection), which comes with an expectation (repentance). We must believe that Christ was resurrected and confess that He is Lord of our lives (Romans 10:9-10). But finally, we must repent of our sins and live a life like Christ.
So what’s the point?

The resurrection completes the work that Jesus began with His death. Salvation required a payment in blood, which Jesus provided with His death on the cross. He allows us to share in the death the He died in our place, paying the debt that we owe for our sin. However, if that were all that there were to salvation, we would simply be joining Christ in the death. It is only because He was resurrected and defeated death so that we are able to join in His victory over sin.

Ultimately, we are reconciled to God and His wrath is satisfied by Jesus’ death, but we are saved and allowed to share in His life due to the resurrection (Romans 5:10).
Questions

1. Retell the story of the Resurrection from the point of view of the stone in front of the tomb. What stands out to you as you tell the story in this way?

2. What does the tomb and the stone “cry out” in this story?
   - The tomb and stone witnessed the very moment of Jesus’ resurrection. It’d be a pretty incredible thing to see. If they could cry out, they would be screaming of Jesus’ resurrection to the world.

3. Have you ever questioned whether or not the Resurrection truly took place? Why or why not? How would that impact your beliefs?
   - I imagine almost every Christian has struggled with this belief at some point in their lives. If the Resurrection proved to be untrue, the foundation of everything we believe would be false. There would be no hope for our own resurrection in the future.

4. Why would the disciples have rolled a stone in front of the tomb?
   - The stone was heavy and very difficult to move. Rolling the stone in front of the entrance likely meant that the disciples viewed Jesus’ death as permanent.

5. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-23. According to these verses, what is so important about the resurrection?
   - If Jesus was not resurrected, then there is no hope for man. We will be stuck in a state of sin for eternity. Jesus would also continue to be dead, so we could not have a relationship with Him. He would be unable to advocate on our behalf to the Father. We would continue to be under the dominion of death, and would have no hope for a fate other than joining Christ in death.

6. Read Romans 5:10. What things do the death and resurrection of Jesus accomplish? Which do you think has had a greater impact in your life and why?
   - Reconciliation and justification comes through Jesus’ death. Salvation and sanctification are provided through His life.
MASTER TEACHING:

The master teaching portion was significantly different than the lesson content that I created for teachers in classes. While the individual Sunday School classes are designed for small group discussion, the master teaching involves all of the students in the high school youth ministry at once, so the style is necessarily different. It was also a very interesting learning experience for me, as Frank and I discovered through a separate exercise for work development that I felt my strengths lie away from stage presence and large group teaching. I have had the most success in the past with creating lessons, and facilitating discussion and teaching with small groups. However, speaking from the stage is an essential part of youth ministry, so I wanted to gain experience in that aspect as well, pushing me towards my goal of vocational ministry.

I devoted this part of the series to the generally historical and archaeological research that I had done on the physical rocks themselves, setting them up as characters in the theological discussions that followed in the Sunday School classes. I was also the first sight and sound, generally, that all of the students would see when they came together for the lesson, so I was responsible for kicking off the morning with energy and getting them motivated for the lesson. This led to lots of research and conversation with Frank and other pastors regarding how to warm a crowd up with an intro and how to transition smoothly to keep their attention.

The goal with each introduction was to find a non-related topic that shared a theme with the lesson topic. Humor was also a premium tool to use for waking students up. I took just a minute or two to bring in the introduction topic before pointing out the shared theme and transitioning into the main teaching.
The structure of each master teaching, once I transitioned to the body, was relatively similar. I pointed to specific scripture references that detail the stone from each lesson, shared information regarding the physical place that the stone is located in, and then detailed the stone itself. Finally, I wrapped up each lesson with a tease of the theological discussion that was to come in the classes.

The most important thing that I discovered through this process was the need for attention. Attention is not permanent, and it is constant work to maintain focus during a large group talk. I discovered that many speakers take advantage of frequent shifts in focus to maintain their grip on the audience, so I sought to do the same with visuals, responses from the audience, and focus on me while speaking.
Master Teaching – Lesson 1

About the series

- Read Luke 19:37-40
  - 37 As He was drawing near – already on the way down the Mount of Olives – the whole multitude of His disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, 38 saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” 39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” 40 He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

- Pray
- During each of the next three weeks, we will take a well-known biblical story, introduce one or more stones as a main character, and interview them to discover what testimony they would give and how they would point to Christ.
- This week we will be discussing the story of the Ten Commandments.

Facts About Mt. Sinai

- Mt. Sinai is a real, physical place. You can go there and see it for yourself.
- Read Exodus 19:1-3a
  - 1 On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, 3 while Moses went up to God.
- The traditional location of Mt. Sinai is in the southern Sinai Peninsula of modern-day Egypt. Contemporary scholars also place the mountain in the northern part of the peninsula or in modern-day Saudi Arabia.
  - Pictures of Mt. Sinai and Jabal al-Lawz
  - Read Exodus 19:18. Moses relates that God descended upon the mountain in a fire.
    - 18 Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.
- Most mountains in these areas, including the leading candidates for the biblical Mt. Sinai, are made up of various kinds of granite, including some volcanic rock.
Facts About the Ten Commandments

- Read Exodus 31:18
  - \textit{18}And He gave to Moses, when He had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

- The stone tablets of the Ten Commandments are traditionally displayed as two round-topped rectangles made of grey stone. However, this only came about in the Middle Ages to more closely resemble the writing tools that were used at the time.
  - Picture of traditional tablets.

- Jewish tradition says that the tablets were made of blue stone (such as sapphire or lapis lazuli, Exodus 24:10) and were square with sharp corners (approximately 20 inches on each side, and 10 inches thick).
  - Exodus 24:10 – \textit{10}...and they saw the God of Israel. There was under His feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness.
  - Picture of square tablets and blue stone.

- Other less common traditions surrounding the tablets include:
  - Letters being bored all the way through the surface, meaning some pieces of rock were suspended supernaturally.
  - The words read the same from both the front and the back of the tablet, rather than mirrored.

Dismissal

- The title of today’s lesson is Stones of Covenant. These stone tablets were given as a witness of the covenant made between God and His people. A covenant is an agreement or a treaty. It establishes a set of expectations for both parties, including a promise if it’s kept. However, this particular covenant also includes a warning should it not be kept.
  - A final interesting note about the tablets is that each stone may have contained a full copy of all Ten Commandments. This would have made some sense, as it would have represented a full copy of the agreement for each party.

- Today in classes, you will be discussing the Ten Commandments as a character in this story. Pay close attention to what the tablets witnessed, why they are important to the story, and ultimately how they point to the person of Jesus Christ.

- Dismiss to classes.
Master Teaching – Lesson 2

Intro Lesson

• Most ridiculous and trivial demands that have ever come up in a law suit.
  o Man sued McDonald’s because they didn’t give him more than 1 napkin. ($1.5 million)
  o Man sued his wife because she gave birth to an ugly baby. (Won $120,000)
  o Man sued dry cleaners for lost pants, resulting in inconvenience and mental anguish, and not living up to the “satisfaction guaranteed” sign. ($60 million)
  o Woman sued McDonald’s after she ordered coffee and spilled it on herself, but the lid didn’t have a “hot coffee” warning. (Won $2.5 million)
  o Woman sued Disney for stealing Frozen from her autobiography. ($250 million)

• We talked about the Law last week, and that there is a consequence for not living up to it. Let’s take a look at what God demands.
• This week we will be discussing the story of Jesus’ crucifixion, death, and burial. Our character this week is Golgotha

Pray

Facts About Golgotha

• Golgotha is the original Aramaic name of the place. The Greek (Kranio Topos), and later Latin (Calvariae Locus), names mean “place of the skull”. The English name (Calvary) was derived from the Latin.
• Each of the Gospels say little about Golgotha other than its name and its identity as the place of Jesus’ death, so we must look outside the specific Scripture references.
• A few possible biblical qualifications do exist.
  o Golgotha was located outside of the city walls (Hebrews 13:11-12).
  o It may have been north of the Temple Mount, in line with Jesus’ fulfillment of the sacrificial system (Leviticus 1:11).

Church of the Holy Sepulchre

• Christian tradition, particularly Roman Catholic and Orthodox, place Golgotha and Jesus’ tomb inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Tomb). A temple to Venus was constructed years after Jesus’ death. Constantine built the church in the 4th century after the discovery by his mother, Helena.
  o Picture of the church.
  o Diagram of Golgotha and the tomb.
• This site does not match either of the biblical qualifications.
Alternatives

- As with Sinai last week, there are some alternatives. The two most commonly cited alternatives are Godon's Calvary and a hill outside of the Lion's Gate.

- The hill outside the Lion's Gate was proposed because it appeared like the top of a skull (cranium), and it had a clear view of the Temple doors to see the curtain. That isn't necessarily a qualification, however, and it places the hill east of the Temple Mount.
  - Picture of Lion's Gate hill.

- Gordon's Calvary, for which I believe to be the most evidence, is a rocky cliff north of the Old City of Jerusalem. It meets both qualifications from scripture, and the appearance of the rock face is eerily reminiscent of a skull face. This is also not necessarily a qualification for Golgotha, but is pretty cool in my opinion.
  - Pictures of Gordon's Calvary.
  - Map of Old City.

Dismissal

- To wrap up, let's talk about what God wants. He demands blood for sin. The Law was given to reveal our sin, but it also provided a way out. The Law installed the sacrificial system, which allowed us to atone for sin with (intercessory) blood. Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of the sacrificial system.

- In class you will be talking about Jesus’ death and burial and what that means for us.

- Dismiss to classes.
Master Teaching – Lesson 3

Intro

- We just celebrated Thanksgiving recently, and that comes with Black Friday. How many of you went out into the craziness that night? Check out this video of some Black Friday stampedes.
- You notice how everyone piles up at the front door of the store, and the rush in as soon as the door is cracked open. They want what’s inside, but they’re relying on the employee to open the door and give them access.
- The week we’re going to focus on Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, and how His resurrection and defeat of death gives us access to the work of salvation that He began with His death.
- The character that we will be looking at is the tomb and the stone that was rolled away from the door.
- Pray.

Facts About the Garden Tomb

- The Gospels do have a little bit to tell us about the tomb. It did belong to Joseph of Arimathea, and John places the tomb in a garden, and nearby Golgotha.
- Many tombs exist throughout the hills around the Old City, but one near Gordon’s Calvary is found nearby an ancient winepress, a likely indication of a vineyard or garden. This tomb was cut into a rock wall and contained a groove by the door to roll a rock in front.
  - Picture of Garden Tomb

Facts About the Stone

- Read Matthew 28:2, Mark 16:3-4, Luke 24:2-3, and John 20:1
- Scripture gives us a few clues, but not much detail about the stone itself.
- The stone itself was not as huge as we might think, only 4’ to 5’ in diameter and 1’ thick. The doors to the tombs were usually rather small, sometimes only around 2’, so a very large stone was not needed. Depending on what type of stone it was made of, the stone could have weighed as much as 1 to 2 tons.
  - Pictures of tomb door and stone.
- Stones were used to seal the tomb rather permanently, as they were difficult to move, especially to move after placed. They rolled in a groove between two small walls, usually at slight decline. Two men could easily move the stone into place, but it would take several to move it back. It would have certainly been impossible for a single person to move it from inside with nothing to grip.
- Use of stones was rather uncommon at the time though, specifically because they were costly. Only four tombs from the era around Jesus’ life have ever been discovered with stones at the door. A stone-cut tomb was
expensive in itself, and the Greek word laxeuo suggests that it was of very high quality construction.

- The stone was present for the very moment of Christ’s resurrection, a moment not accounted for anywhere in Scripture. I can’t imagine what that must have been like, but what a moment it must have been!

Dismissal

- In conclusion, it’s essential to realize what effect the resurrection has, and how it is different than His death on the cross. Jesus began the work of salvation (specifically reconciliation) with His death, but the resurrection is essential for that work to be completed.
- You will be discussing that moment of Christ’s resurrection today in your classes, and what His resurrection means to us as Christians today.
- Dismiss to classes.
VISUAL AIDS:

I created a slideshow to accompany each master teaching session to help in keeping focus and attention throughout the teaching time. The various visual aids used included scripture references, pictures of stones, pictures of places, maps, and my own background slides.
Visual Aids – Lesson 1

**Luke 19:37-40**

37 As He was drawing near - already on the way down the Mount of Olives - the whole multitude of His disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, 38 saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." 40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."
Mt Sinai

Exodus 31:18

18 And He gave to Moses, when He had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.
Ten Commandments
Visual Aids – Lesson 2

Aramaic - Golgotha
Greek - Kraniou Topos
Latin - Calvariae Locus
English - Calvary
Golgotha

33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull)
- Matthew 27:33

22 And they brought Him to the place called Golgoth (which means Place of a Skull).
- Mark 15:22

33 And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified Him...
- Luke 23:33

17 And He went out, bearing His own cross, the the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.
- John 19:17

11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. 12 So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own blood.
- Hebrews 13:11-12
11 And he shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the Lord, and Aaron's sons the priests shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar.
- Leviticus 1:11

Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Lion's Gate
Visual Aids – Lesson 3

![Image of stones and text]

![Image of map]

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33
Garden Tomb

59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud 60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.  
- Matthew 27:59-60

46 And Joseph bough a linen shroud, and taking Him down, wrapped Him in the linen shroud and laid Him in a tom that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.  
- Mark 15:46

53 The he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid Him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid.  

40 So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.  41 Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.  
- John 19:40-41
The Stone

2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.
- Matthew 28:2

3 And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" 4 And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back - it was very large.
- Mark 16:3-4

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.
- John 20:1


APPENDICES
A. THESIS PROPOSAL
B. TIMELINE
C. POST-DEFENSE CHANGES
APPENDIX A

THESIS PROPOSAL:


“38 [The whole multitude of His disciples were] saying, ‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in Heaven and glory in the highest!’
39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, ‘Teacher, rebuke your disciples.’ 40 He answered, ‘I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.’”

I will be researching and writing a sermon series that presents the Gospel of Christ as viewed through the lens of Luke 19:38-40. Also included in the scope of my project will be formatting the series into a small group or Sunday School lesson, shaping the message to be relevant and appealing to my target audience (high school youth), communicating with and equipping volunteer leaders to teach each lesson to students, and developing my own communication skills to introduce and guide each lesson with effective master teaching.

The majority of my research will be focused on the content of the sermon series. The unifying theme of the series will be the Christian Gospel, focusing on both the fallen and sinful nature of mankind and the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ to redeem mankind. This core teaching will be brought forward through the above scripture, each individual sermon detailing a biblical passage significantly featuring a rock or stone. Each of these sermons
will relate a portion of the Gospel to the testimony that each rock or stone would give if it should “cry out”.

Outside of the content of the sermon series itself, I will also research and plan effective methods of communication. The scope of this project will be limited to a Sunday School small group setting, so I will be focusing on communicating ideas in that medium. A variety of volunteer teachers will be used to lead each class, each with different backgrounds and varying levels of biblical knowledge and teaching experience, so equipping those people to teach this lesson knowledgably and effectively will be a large part of the communication aspect of this project.

Finally, a small portion of the project will be devoted to other aspects of planning a sermon or Sunday School service. This will include use of other media, such as videos or music, to accompany the lesson, and otherwise planning the flow of a service. This can help to create an effective atmosphere and a unifying theme for each service. This is often not the purview of a pastor and not central to a service in the same way as message content and communication are, so I will utilize advice from others in addition to my research in this area, and delegate to volunteers for its execution.

Overall, the goal of this project is to spend approximately 70% of my time and research into developing and writing the content of the sermon series itself, 25% on communication and teaching skills, and formatting the lessons for small group settings, and the final 5% on any other aspects of service planning and execution.

The culmination of this project will be the utilization of these lessons for the high school youth Sunday School at Shandon Baptist Church for a three week
series on November 15, 22, and 29. This will allow for a practical application of the project research and a setting for real experience in youth ministry lesson planning. This narrow scope of a youth group Sunday School setting will require formatting the lessons in a specific way and with a specific audience in mind, and will also require condensing the material into a three week series.
APPENDIX B

TIMELINE:

- October 11
  - Series outline created
  - Individual lesson topics decided on
    - Component of the Gospel
    - Rock/Stone passage to be used
- October 25
  - Full outline created for each individual lesson
- November 1
  - Lesson 1 content is finished
- November 8
  - Lesson 1 is formatted for small group
    - Questions and teacher copy are ready to go
    - Any additional media and service planning is finished
  - Lesson 2 content is finished
- November 15
  - Lesson 1 is given at Shandon
  - Lesson 2 is formatted and ready
    - Questions and teacher copy are ready
    - Any additional media and service planning is finished
  - Lesson 3 content is finished
- November 22
  - Lesson 2 is given at Shandon
  - Lesson 3 is formatted and ready
    - Questions and teacher copy are ready
    - Any additional media and service planning is finished
- November 29
  - Lesson 3 is given at Shandon
  - Any additional lessons will be finished, formatted, and included in the final copy of the project
APPENDIX C

POST-DEFENSE CHANGES:

A few changes were suggested by my thesis board during the defense, and a few other changes arose after the first week of the actual sermon series. All changes were made in the paper itself and are noted here.

- The title of the series was condensed from *The Very Stones Would Cry Out* to *Stones Cry Out*.
- The stone tomb was moved from the second lesson to the third. It was deemed a better fit for the resurrection, as it is closely connected to the rolling stone, rather than the death of Christ and Golgotha.
- The title of each lesson was made shorter, consisting of only the name of each stone or stones. A subtitle was added, classifying the stones.
- Some detailed information regarding Mt. Sinai was removed, as it did not pertain explicitly to the stones in question or the main point of the lesson. Any such information in the subsequent lessons was also removed unless it specifically pointed to the main idea of the lesson.
  - A small exception to this was made regarding some information on Mt. Sinai. This was kept to give a physical location to which I could point as a real place, giving it some grounding in the minds of students.
- Recording capabilities weren't available during the actual master teaching, so a transcript was made and included instead.
• The introduction was detailed a little bit more specifically after it didn’t go over well during the first lesson. Subsequent lessons had the introduction written out in more detail in the master teaching.