

1 Peter 3:18-22

2-2-11

“What did Jesus do for the 3 Days?”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. A guy named Erickson came up with 180 different interpretations from this text!
1. All Scripture is inspired; but not all is clear.
 2. Principle of Perspicuity/clear - there are *more clear* & *less clear* parts of the bible
 - a) We are to interpret the *less clear* by the *more clear*. [cults do opposite]
- B. **Slide #2 - Apostles Creed:** I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; *he descended into hell*; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick & the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; & the life everlasting. *AMEN*
- C. **Intro:** These passages have perplexed scholars for years.
1. First, to the new students of the bible! - Generally the Bible is very easy to understand. **But** when you teach through the whole bible you obviously have to teach on even the problem verses.
 2. 2nd, This is **NOT** a “major” bible doctrine! – instead it is a minor one.
 - a) What you believe on this has no bearing on salvation, & is something that took place in the past, **thus** isn’t relevant to your living as a Christian today.
 3. 3rd, You don’t need to interpret this the way that I do! – but I need to teach it the way I believe it is interpreted according to my studys.
 4. 4th, Let’s remember Peter’s main theme! - thus far Christ suffered wrongly(18) **but** God honored Him, & gave him glory(22). [i.e. Bookends to this section]
 5. 5th, let’s use our basic hermeneutical skills (science of interpretation).

II. **WHAT DID JESUS DO FOR THE 3 DAYS?** [Did He descend into Hell?]

- A. **1st SOME FACTS:**
- B. The bible never says, “*he descended into hell*.” [explain idea of subterranean dble compartment]
- C. The teaching crept into the church via the widely used *Apostles creed*[wasn’t composed by Apostles]
1. **Creed** = belief, “*we believe*”; a rule of faith.

D. **DIFFERENT THEORIES!**

- E. **Slide #3** - During the 3 days Jesus body was in the tomb He... [4 options:]
1. **#1** Descended into Hell **to proclaim His triumph** to the fallen angels & their condemnation (i.e. “**spirits in prison**”/locked up)
 2. **#2** Descended into Hell **to endure the suffering of hell** so we wouldn't have to.
 3. **#3** Descended into Hades (sub-compartment of hell/*the good side*) **to proclaim victory to the O.T. saints** & “set captivity captive”.
 4. **#4** Or, this has nothing to do with that!

F. **LET'S DEAL WITH EACH OF THESE!**

- G. **[1]** Descended into Hell to proclaim His triumph to the fallen angels & to proclaim their condemnation (i.e. “**spirits in prison**”/locked up)
1. Where would we find that angels sinned “during the building of the ark”? see vs20
- H. **[2]** Descended into Hell to endure the suffering of hell so we wouldn't have to.
1. This was been very popular in the “*Faith Teachers*” circle.
 2. Freddy Price, “Do you think that the punishment for our sin was to die on the cross? If that were the case, the 2 thieves could have paid your price. No, the punishment was to **go into hell itself & to serve time in hell** separated from God...Satan & all the demons of hell thought that they had Him bound & they threw a net over Jesus & they dragged Him down to the very pit of hell itself to serve our sentence.”
 3. Price then adds, “His(Jesus) spirit & soul went into hell, hades & served the sentence that you & I should have justly served. He did it for us. He went to hell for us.”¹
 4. *Rebutal* – Col. 2:14,15(read vs.15...1st) “having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having **nailed it to the cross**. (15) Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”
- I. **[3]** Descended into Hades (sub-compartment of hell/*the good side*) to proclaim victory to the O.T. saints & “set captivity captive”.
1. Here's where we need to dig into the background of this.
 2. **Slide #4** - As I said, the origin of the phrase “*he descended into hell*” came from the Apostles creed. [This was put together over time (200 to 750ad)]

¹ Fredrick K.C.Price “Identification #9” (1980) Tape #FP551, side 1. (pg.163, 396, Christianity in Crisis; see both #2,3 footnotes)

- a) Unlike the *Nicene creed* & the *Chalcedonian Definition* it was never written or approved by a single church council at one specific time (it *gradually* took shape).
- b) It was not in any of the early versions of the creed until it appeared in 1 of 2 versions from *Rufinus* (Tyrannius) in 390ad. (next appearance wasn't until 650ad).
 - (1) Yet in **Schaff's** "*History of the Christian Church*" he gives his own editorial comment about what Rufinus meant, "Rufinus himself, however, *misunderstood* it by making it to mean the same as buried." ("he descended into the grave")

J. Let's look at the **other Scriptures** that are used to support this!

K. Slide #5 - Acts 2:27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

1. **Hades** – can also be translated "grave, or death".
2. **Corruption/decay**, seems to be the context.
3. NIV translates it, **because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.**
4. **Below** it (in vs.29-35) it draws the **distinction** he is trying to make. **David's body** is still decaying in his grave which we can go visit; **but Jesus** rose from the dead.
5. **Therefore, this passage does not convincingly support the idea that Christ descended into hell.**

L. Slide #6 - Rom.10:6-7 **Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' "** (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

1. This passage hardly teaches that Christ descended into hell.
2. Paul's point is, you **don't** need to ask these 2 questions; **because Christ is not far away, but near.** Faith in Him is as near as **confessing w/your mouth & bel. in your heart**(vs.9).
3. These **forbidden questions**, are questions of **unbelief**; **not** declarations of what scripture teaches!

M. Slide #7 - Eph. 4:8,9 **When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.**(Now this, "He ascended"; what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?

1. This doesn't say he descended into hell. It says, "**he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth**".
2. NIV translates it "**earthly regions**". (i.e. speaking of His **Incarnation**)

3. vs.10 reads, “He who descended(to earth) is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.”
4. So this verse speaks of his incarnation & not descent into hell.
5. He led captivity captive? - (Wycliffe) “Jesus captured that which captured us, & annulled its power.”

N. [4] This has nothing to do with that!

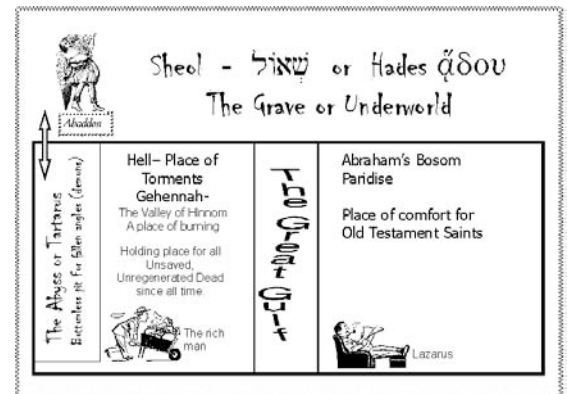
1. Let’s look at our text. (read 18b-20a)
2. Some take this to mean Christ went to preach to the spirits in hell.
 - a) Either to give a **2nd chance**(contrary to scripture); Or, to just proclaim that he had **triumphed**.
 - b) These do fail to adequately explain the passage or the setting of the context.
3. Peter does say that the people getting preached to were specifically **disobedient** & this was limited to the **time period** the ark was being built (120 years). [this would be a strange group for Christ to go preach to, either way you interpret it]
4. An argument for Christ having to **set the captives free in Hades** comes from the supposition that, “no one could enter heaven until the completion of Christ’s redemptive work was finished!”
 - a) Again, it doesn’t say that he spoke to the faithful, but to the disobedient!
5. Scripture does not give us clear evidence that OT saints **didn’t** have access to heaven(pre-cross)...*If anything* scripture is contrary to that idea.
 - a) **Enoch**: And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him...& then *stuck him in hades???*
 - (1) Heb,11:5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.
 - b) **David** said, Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever. (Ps.23:6)
 - c) **Solomon** said, Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it. (Ecc.12:7)
6. **Slide #8** - Long ago it was **Augustine** who said, “the passage refers **not** to something Christ did between his death & res, but what He did *in the spiritual realm of existence*(or *through the spirit*) at the time of Noah. When Noah was building the ark, Christ **in spirit** was preaching through Noah to the hostile unbelievers around him.”²

² Wayne Grudem Systematic Theology; pg.591

- a) **Note:** by whom(19) refers back to **the Spirit**(18) [LKGNT can attach to Jesus or Spirit]
- b) Also we see in 1 Pet.1:11 it says the “*Spirit of Christ*” was speaking to the OT prophets(10). So, this “*Spirit of Christ*” was speaking thru Noah as well.
7. We also see Noah was a “*preacher of righteousness*”(2 Pet.2:5)
- a) Both words *preached*(1 Pet.3:18) & *preacher*(2 Pet.2:5) are from exact same root.
- b) So it seems likely that when Christ “*preached to the spirits in prison*” he did so **through** Noah, in the days **before** the flood.
- c) **Read** Ps.102:18-20.
8. This then fits into the larger context of this chapter.
- a) The parallel between the situation of Noah & the situation of Peter’s readers is clear: **Both** were a righteous minority. **Both** were surrounded by hostile unbelievers **W/**Noah judgment was near; **w/**Peters readers God’s judgment may soon come. **Noah** witnessed boldly; **they** should witness boldly(15). **Noah** was finally saved; **they** would be finally saved.
9. **Slide #9 - Lazarus & the rich man - Lk.16:19-31.**
- a) **Lifted up his eyes** (not across); **afar off** (not near); **a great gulf fixed in between them**(not near); **Abraham’s bosom** (in Mt.8:11 Abraham’s bosom is referred to as, “*And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*”))
- b) **Slide #10 - Show how most understand Sheol/Hades.**

10. Last arguments against Christ descending into Hades:

- a) Jesus told us exactly where He would be, when He said to the thief on the cross, **Today you will be with me in paradise.** (Lk.23:43)
- b) Some say paradise wasn’t in heaven...**but it is. 2 other times used:**
- (1) 2 Cor.12:4**Paul caught up into heaven**
 - (2) Rev.2:7 it is the place where we find **the tree of life**; which is clearly in heaven. **See** Rev.22:2,14.
- c) Also, His cry from the cross “**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.**”
- (1) Obviously His **body** stayed in the grave.



- O. (21) **An Antitype** (αντιτυπος) – The impression of a seal (or, the closest possible correspondence; *opposite/stamp Lt.*).
- (MacArthur) “It is an earthly expression of a spiritual reality.”
- P. **Baptism: Peter ties Noah to the subject of baptism.**
- The flood was actually a **global baptism of water**;
The world is now being reserved for a **global baptism of fire** (2 Pet 3:5-7).
 - Peter **does not say** that baptism **saves us** or that water **washes away sins**.
In fact, he makes it clear that baptism **cannot** put away the filth of the flesh.
 - Submission to the Lord in baptism is an inward matter, the answer of a good conscience toward God. [**answer** = *pledge!*]
 - a) It was used in closing a contract(eg) **Q: Do you except the terms of this contract? A: Yes.**
 - Baptism is** a picture of death, burial, and resurrection.
 - The water that **buried** the wicked world, bore Noah to **safety**.
 - The **water** did not save him; the **ark** did. In this way Noah anticipates Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.
 - Remember, the occupants of Noah’s ark were kept “*out of*” the water!
 - So, as Noah had his family aboard “*riding to safety*”; so the Christian is saved by being onboard the “*ark of Christ!*”
- Q. (22) **Slide #11** - Christ was honored to a place of prominence, honor, majesty, & power, after accomplishing his work on the cross, & being raised from the dead.
- You can be honored too...**To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne,as I also overcame & sat down with My Father on His throne.**Rev.3:21
 - Slide #12** (end)