

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!

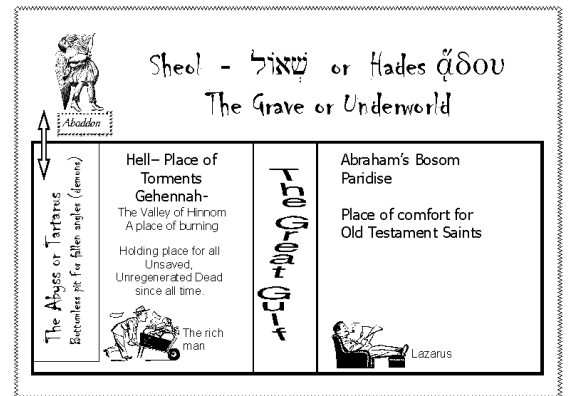
1. Let’s look at our text. (read 18b-20a)
2. Some take this to mean Christ went to preach to the spirits in hell.
 - a) Either to give a **2nd chance**(contrary to scripture); Or, to just proclaim that he had **triumphed**.
 - b) These do fail to adequately explain the passage or the setting of the context.
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.*).

1. (MacArthur) “It is an earthly expression of a spiritual reality.”

P. **Baptism: Peter ties Noah to the subject of baptism.**

1. 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).

2. 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.

3. 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.**

4. **Baptism is** a picture of death, burial, and resurrection.

5. The water that **buried** the wicked world, bore Noah to **safety**.

6. The **water** did not save him; the **ark** did. In this way Noah anticipates Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

a) Remember, the occupants of Noah's ark were kept “*out of*” the water!

b) **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.

1. 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

2. **Slide #12** (end)