

DID JESUS DESCEND TO HELL?

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THE WELL-KNOWN TEACHING

- The popularity of the doctrine comes from the Apostle's Creed:
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
- The Apostle's Creed is a 4th Century document that contains a statement of belief.
 - While such statements serve purpose at certain times in history and for a particular group, Baptists have stubbornly refused to be a creedal people.
 - The dangers of creeds are that wrong doctrine becomes cemented in Christianity itself.
- If Jesus *descended into hell*, we will have to find evidence of such descent in the pages of Scripture, not in a creed (nor a theology book) of man.

THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS

- Ephesians 4:9 –
 - When Paul says that Jesus **descended first into the lower parts of the earth** he is referring to the world of the dead (as in Ps. 63:9 and Mt. 12:40).
 - Note that Ephesians 4:8 is often made to say much more than it actually says. This verse quotes Psalm 68:18.
- Acts 2:24 and 27 –
 - The Douay-Rheims Bible (a Catholic translation of the Latin Vulgate) translates Acts 2:24 as "...Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell."
 - The KJV uses **hell** for *hades* 10 of the 11 times the Greek word comes up in the New Testament. However, the English word was used of *sheol* and *hades* and has a meaning of "that which is concealed." In more modern times *hell* has come to mean "the second death."
- 1 Peter 3:19 – Christ spoke *triumph* (not the Gospel) to the **spirits in prison** (those who, in Genesis 6, tried to eliminate the possibility of a Messiah).
- Hosea 13:14 – speaks of the same thing as foreshadowed in 1 Corinthians 15:55, **O death, where is thy victory...**

THE THEOLOGY OF HELL

- Most modern pop-theology about hell is that all unsaved people of all times died and went immediately to "hell," which is the place of eternal torment.
- In actuality, "hell" as we imagine it is a *future* punishment, as yet uninhabited.
 - The first to go there will be the Antichrist and the false prophet and their followers (Rev. 19:20).
 - Satan will be cast into **the lake of fire** (Rev. 20:10) after the battle of God and Magog at the end of the Tribulation.
 - The **rest of the dead** will remain in *hades* (which KJV translates as *hell*) until after the millennium (Rev. 20:5, 14).
- Today, those without Christ die and go to *hades*, where the rich man was in torment in Luke 16:23.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE "ATONEMENT"

- There are some who teach that Christ had to endure the full suffering for sin, and this required a time spent in Hell.
- However, Jesus said that when He died, He would be in *paradise* (Lk 23:43).
- The doctrine that requires that Jesus suffer in hell fails to recognize the sufficiency of the *blood of Jesus Christ*. This sufficiency is taught over and over in the Bible.
 - Acts 20:28
 - Ephesians 1:7
 - Hebrews 9:14
 - 1 Peter 1:18-19
 - 1 Peter 2:24
 - 1 John 1:7
 - Revelation 1:5
- Just like the Passover lamb required nothing but the blood of the lamb, so Jesus, the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" accomplished this task with His blood.
- The propitiation was made without a "descent into hell." This is yet-another man-made doctrine which we can dismiss.