

Question if you have the time

by Pastor F. M. Riley



Hi Pastor Riley,

I was wondering if you could shed some light on something.

Could you tell me what happened after Christ was crucified? I know he descended into hell, but did he do more than take the keys from Satan? In the book of 1 Peter 3: 18-19 it speaks of Christ preaching to the spirits in prison. Was this after his crucifixion? Who are these spirits? What is this prison? I guess I'm looking for a lowdown of what happened from the crucifixion to the ascension of Christ.

Also, in the Old Testament... where did people go when they died? I've heard of Abraham's bosom, but it confuses me. I thought you might have some answers.

Thanks for your time.

Your sister in Christ,

Kelly



After His Crucifixion

Dear Kelly,

When Christ was crucified His body was placed in the tomb, but His spirit and soul descended downward into the lower parts of the earth into the place called "sheol," **Ephesians 4:8-10..**

Sheol is that place in the underworld [beneath the surface of the earth] that is the Old Testament counterpart of the New Testament "hades." This was where the souls of all mankind went who died during the Old Testament dispensations. It was divided into at least two "levels" and perhaps more. The lowest level in it was known as "torments," the area of the underworld containing fire and brimstone, **Luke 16:23; Deuteronomy 32:22.** Another "level" was known as "Paradise" or "Abraham's bosom," **Luke 16:22-23; 23:43.** There was a "chasm" or "great gulf" that separates between the two areas, **Luke 16:26.** You will notice that the rich man "**lifted up his eyes**" in order to see Lazarus being comforted on Abraham's bosom. This suggests that Paradise was on a higher "level" in the underworld, and those in torments had to look up to see it.

The "great gulf" that separated between the two areas or "levels" is apparently synonymous with "the bottomless pit," **Revelation 20:1-3**. This entire area could best be described as a vast "prison complex." All the souls of mankind were "prisoners" in that place, regardless of which "level" they were in, because all mankind was guilty of the crime of transgressing God's Law. Whether they were saved or lost, they were all held there as "prisoners" awaiting final judgment.

The Lord went down into the underworld when He died on the cross, because that was where the souls or spirits of all mankind went before the blood of Christ had been presented to the Father in Heaven, and our Lord was the "seed of the woman," true man as well as true God. As man He was our Kinsman Redeemer; Emmanuel; God in flesh. Therefore when He died He went to the same place all mankind had to go during the Old Testament dispensations.

But when the Lord entered that place He was not imprisoned. Rather, He was "free among the dead" for the prison was only for those who had sinned, and our Lord was altogether innocent of sin, **Psalm 88:4-6**. There were no charges that could be brought against Him. So He remained "free among the dead." Glory hallelujah!

Yet He had been punished for [in place of] the sin of all mankind who were being held as prisoners there, **Psalm 88:7; Hebrews 2:9**.

Therefore, He stood before the gates of Paradise in the underworld and preached "deliverance" to those Old Testament saints, proclaiming to them that the price of their sin debt had been paid for by His own shed blood and death upon the cross, and therefore they were free to leave the prison, **Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61:1; 49:8-10**. Glory to God!

Then He boldly demanded that the keeper of the prison give to Him the keys to the whole "prison house," for He had not only paid the sin debt for the Old Testament believers, but He had paid the sin debt for all of Adam's race, past, present, and future. Therefore the keys of death and hell were turned over to our Lord by the keeper of the prison, **Hebrew 2:14-15; Revelation 1:18**.

The Lord then opened the Paradise "level" of the prison, and "set the captives free," **Zechariah 9:11; Isaiah 42:7**. Glory to God!

But He then also preached to the spirits in "torments" who had refused to repent of their wickedness and believe on the coming Messiah and Savior that had been proclaimed by the prophets of God all through the Old Testament dispensations, **1 Peter 3:18-20**. As Christ stood before the gates of "torments," He had the sad duty of proclaiming to the unrepentant wicked imprisoned there, that they would remain confined in "torments" until the great judgment day, **Revelation 20:11-15**. Even though He had paid their sin debt by His precious blood, they had obstinately refused

to repent and believe on Him during their lifetime, choosing rather to follow Satan and the false gods of the heathen nations.

The time the Lord spent in the underworld was three days and three nights; 72 hours, **Matthew 12:40**. His spirit and soul then reentered His body and He triumphantly rose from among the dead and came forth from the tomb, having conquered [overcome] the angel of death, the underworld [sheol; hades], and even the grave. Hallelujah! Glory to God!

When Christ arose from among the dead, many of those Old Testament believers also arose, **Matthew 27:52-53**. In just a few hours the Lord took them with Him to glory and presented Himself and them to the Heavenly Father as the "**firstfruits**" of the resurrection and rapture of all of God's people which was to follow.

That all occurred some 2,000 years ago. Now we are living today in the very "time frame" of the resurrection and rapture of the remainder of the harvest which always follows the offering of the "**firstfruits**." At any moment now our Lord will come to gather "home" the remainder of the harvest. Praise the Lord! Glory hallelujah!

I hope this answers your questions dear sister. I am attaching two Bible studies on this subject which should be of some help to you. If you have further questions, please feel free to write. I love to share God's Word. Please remember me in prayer. God bless you.



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