



JESUS DESCENDED INTO HELL

By Jeanne-Louise Viljoen



"The Descent to Hell," a tempera on panel by Duccio di Buoninsegna from around 1308, shows Jesus freeing Adam and other Jewish patriarchs from hell. The man with the bright golden crown and red robe is King David.

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1 INTRODUCTION

“Jesus Descended into Hell” is probably one of the most thought-provoking articles or studies I have had the pleasure of putting together. If you have read any of my other articles or studies, you will know that I want to inspire the reader to search for the truth. The reader has to do further research and find the truth for themselves, because it creates a sense of personal growth and self-discovery. Don't just believe what the “main-stream believers” believe. Research different sources. Spend time in prayer. Spend time in God's Word. Let the Holy Spirit guide you on your quest for the truth.

Having had a near-death experience, I could not resist doing some research about this topic - what really happened to Jesus after He died on the cross? May you enjoy this journey into the unknown.

2 SOME SIMPLE TRUTHS

1 John 4:2 (ESV)

“By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,”

Matthew 4:2 (ESV)

“And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.”

If Jesus was a man (as seen in the above scripture), it would mean that when He died, He had to die as a human man. In dying as a human man, His physical body had to die, which it did. As for His spirit, this too had to go where every dead human being had to go – Hades, also known as Hell, or Paradise as it was known in Jesus' time.

Many different religions have different views and beliefs surrounding this event. In this study we will try to address the most relevant ones. Feel free to study more about all the other religious views that are out there in your own time.

Over the centuries many people have wondered about the after-life and what their religion says about it. In the Christian community, which has many of its own denominations, have wondered the same thing. When it comes to Christ Jesus, there are just as many questions surrounding His death. What makes His death different is the fact that He rose again on the 3^d day. However, what has fascinated everyone is where did Jesus go in those 3 days after He died and before he rose from the grave?

When looking at Scripture, we find the following basic facts.

John 19:38-42 (NKJV) Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

(similar reading in Matt 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56)

“After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. 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. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.”

After Jesus' body was removed from the cross, He was placed in a tomb. Thus, over the next couple of days after Jesus' death on the cross, His physical body was left in the tomb.

John 20:1-2 (NKJV) The Empty Tomb

(similar reading in Matt 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12)

"Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved [John], and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.'"

In the **early** hours of the morning when Mary had gone to the tomb to visit Jesus' body, it was already missing from the tomb.

John 20:6-7 (NKJV) The Empty Tomb (continues)

(similar reading in Matt 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12)

"Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself..."

As we read the passage in John 20:6-7, it appears that Jesus' body may have been stolen. That would be the logical thought to His missing body, right? Consider this for a moment though. The thieves would not have bothered about folding up a handkerchief. It seemed as though Jesus, if He rose, took His time and was not rushing. A lot must have been going through Jesus' mind having got up in the tomb.

John 20:11-14 (NKJV) Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord

(similar reading in Mark 16:5)

"But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.' Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus."

The question to ask then would be, **"Where did Jesus' soul go for those couple of days before He rose again to life?" Some say Jesus' body was in the tomb only one and a half days, while others say it was there for three days.** We will go through the facts and discover more about this.

The chronological accounts of when Jesus died

Jesus Christ was crucified on a Wednesday and got up on Saturday afternoon.

However, Church tradition has taught that Jesus Christ died on a Friday, hence "Good Friday". Then it is taught that Jesus Christ rose on Sunday morning. Where did this traditional idea come from? It is thought that Jesus Christ died before a sabbath, and everyone knew that the Jewish Sabbath is Saturday, and if Jesus Christ died the day before a Sabbath He must have died on Friday. However, this is not entirely true.

Some truths to consider about the order of events that lead to Jesus' death on the cross, up to the moment of His resurrection:

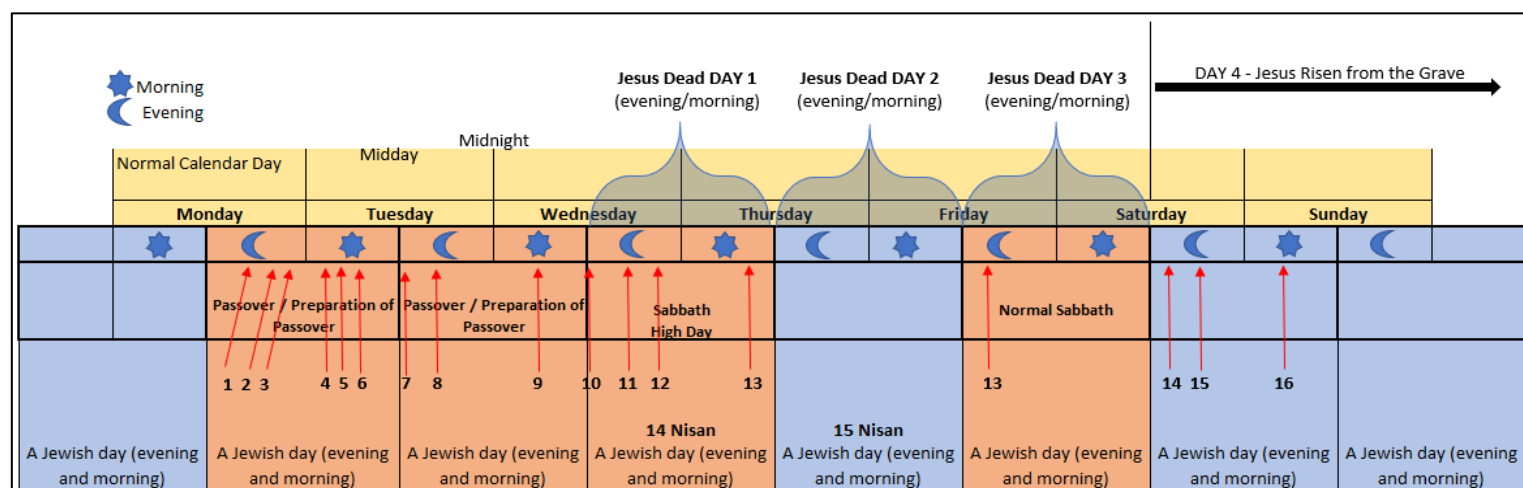
3 Days and 3 Nights

- When the phrase "Day and Night" or "Night and Day" is used in the Bible, it describes a 24 hour day.
- In Matthew 12:40, Jesus' words speak about three full days and three full nights – thus a full 72 hours.
- Jesus also mentioned this in the following scriptures:
 - Mark 8:31 "After 3 days"
 - Luke 24:46 "The 3rd day"
 - John 2:19 "In 3 days"

Thus, Jesus could not have died on a Friday and rose Sunday morning.
John 20:1 describes Jesus had already risen come Sunday morning (the first day of the week).

When we look at the Passover in Jesus' time it is important to note the following:

- Passover was celebrated throughout the 'Diaspora', whenever Jews were dispersed from the land of Israel.
- Many would go up to Jerusalem for the celebration, however there would be thousands upon thousands of gatherers, which surely caused accommodation problems.
- It was also tradition for the Passover to be held within the city walls, hence the disciples' desperation to find a room for the Passover meal.
- Each family head selected a lamb on Nisan 10, which was then slaughtered in the afternoon of Nisan 14.
- At the Temple courts the priests would do the sacrifice and then the man would be able to return to his family with the lamb wrapped in hide.
- Meanwhile families and guests of 10 or more would gather. The children would have ensured that all 'leaven' was removed from the home by midday.
- Sunset would then mark the start of Nisan 15. This is when everyone sat down for the meal.



The numbers in the above diagram are described in the table below.

ORDER	SCRIPTURE	TRUTH
1.	Luke 22:13-15 (NLT) <i>"They went off to the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there. When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table. Jesus said, 'I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins.'"</i>	Monday night - Jesus celebrated Passover with His disciples.

2.	<p>Mark 14:26 (NLT) <i>"Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives."</i></p> <p>Mark 14:39-41 (NLT) <i>"Then Jesus left them again and prayed the same prayer as before. When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn't keep their eyes open. And they didn't know what to say. When he returned to them the third time, he said, 'Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But no – the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.'"</i></p>	Monday night - Jesus prayed three times in the Garden of Gethsemane.
3.	<p>Mark 14:53 (NLT) <i>"They took Jesus to the high priest's home where the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law had gathered."</i></p>	Monday around midnight – Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested.
4.	<p>John 18:12-13 (NLT) <i>"So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. First they took him to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at the time."</i></p>	Tuesday early morning - Jesus bound and taken to Annas house (Father-in-law of Caiaphas).
5.	<p>John 18:24 (NLT) <i>"Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest."</i></p>	Tuesday early morning - Jesus bound and taken to Caiaphas, the High Priest.
6.	<p>Mark 15:1 (NLT) <i>"Very early in the morning the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law – the entire high council (Sanhedrin) – met to discuss their next step. They bound Jesus, led him away, and took him to Pilate, the Roman governor."</i></p> <p>John 18:28 (NLT) <i>"Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor (the Praetorium). His accusers didn't go inside because it would defile them, and they would not be allowed to celebrate the Passover."</i></p> <p>Luke 23: 6-11 (NLT) <i>"'Oh, is he a Galilean?'" Pilate asked. When they say that he was, Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas, because Galilee was under Herod's jurisdiction, and Herod happened to be in Jerusalem at the time. Herod was delighted at the opportunity to see Jesus, because he had heard about him and had been hoping for a long time to see him perform a miracle. He asked Jesus question after question, but Jesus refused to answer... Then Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus. Finally, they put a royal robe on him and sent him back to Pilate."</i></p>	<p>Tuesday early morning - Jesus bound and delivered to Pilate.</p> <p>Pilate also sent Jesus to Herod</p>
7.	<p>John 18:29-40 (NLT) <i>"So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, 'What is your charge against this man?'... 'He is not guilty of any crime. But you have a custom of asking me to release one prisoner each year at Passover. Would you like me to realise this 'King of the Jews'?' But they shouted back, 'No, not this man! We want Barabbas!'"</i></p> <p>Matthew 27:26 (NLT) <i>"So Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified."</i></p>	Tuesday morning and afternoon – Jesus trial before Pilate and his flogging.

	<p>John 19:13-14 (NLT) <i>“When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgement seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover.”;</i></p>	
8	<p>Mark 15:16-19 (NLT) <i>“The soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the governor’s headquarters (called the Praetorium) and called out the entire regiment. They dressed him in a purple robe, and they wove thorn branches into a crown, and put it on his head. Then they saluted him and taunted, “Hail! King of the Jews!” And they struck him on the head with a reed stick, spit on him, and dropped to their knees in mock worship.”</i></p>	<p>Tuesday later afternoon and evening – Jesus tortured by the soldiers during the night.</p>
9.	<p>Mark 15:20 (NLT) <i>“When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the purple robe and put his clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.”</i></p> <p>Mark 15:25 (NLT) <i>“It was nine o’ clock in the morning when they crucified him.”</i></p>	<p>Wednesday early morning hours – 9am Crucifixion began. This was the day the Passover lamb was killed, according to the Old Testament, and the Jewish day starts in the evening. So, after the killing of the Passover lamb, the next day would be a Sabbath, no matter on which day of the week it fell on. (Exodus 12:6,16, Leviticus 23:6). Thus, Jesus was killed on the same day the Passover lamb would be killed, leaving the next day to be the Sabbath day.</p> <p>We find that it seems in the gospel of John 19, it mentioned it was the preparation day for a special Passover, yet this same day was the day of Passover? What does this all mean, and why does it sound so confusing?</p> <p>According to Jewish culture there are 2 days of celebration of Passover. This tradition goes back to the beginning of the diaspora, about 2,500 years ago. Jewish culture celebrates their holidays according to the lunar cycle (or Hebrew calendar), and thus their public holidays are constantly changing. With the lunar cycle there are 29 days, 12 hours and 44 minutes in each lunar cycle. About 2,500 years ago they use to determine the NEW month by searching the skies for the NEW moon. Once the new moon is spotted, they needed to announce the arrival of the new moon to everyone. Back then it was done via horse-back. Because of this method that took time, they could loose hours</p>

		<p>or a day or two since the new moon was announced. Thus, for them to be sure they were celebrating the holiday at the right time, they held it over 2 days. John 19 clearly indicate then that Jesus was crucified on the 14th of Nisan, and not the 15th of Nisan.</p> <p>However, this problem was corrected in the 4th century. However, because of Jewish tradition, up to today most Jews celebrate 2 days of their specific celebration days, except for Yong Kippur as it is a fast day.</p> <p>Thus, we can conclude that these 2 days of Passover are found in these passages describing the last days of Jesus's crucifixion. Remember Jesus was celebrating Passover with His disciples on the evening of His betrayal and capture, Monday night. And Jesus was sentenced on the day of Passover, which was Tuesday. and crucified on the day of Passover which was Wednesday. So, when John was saying that it was a day of preparation of the Passover, they were preparing for the second day of Passover, on Tuesday, which would be held on Wednesday.</p> <p>One fact: The Passover is set on the Jewish calendar to be on the 14th of Nisan. (John12:1) It took Jesus 6 days journey to get to Bethany for His triumphant entry (Luke 19). So, Jesus needed to start His journey on the 8th of Nisan. However, the 8th would have fallen on a Shabbat if we assume that the 14th of Nisan fell on a Friday. But Jews did not travel on the Shabbat, thus the Passover, 14th of Nisan could not have been on a Friday.</p> <p>Another fact is that in Luke 19, describing Jesus triumphant entry from Bethany into Jerusalem happened on the 10th of Nisan, which also was the day when the sacrificial lambs were inspected for the Passover offering on the 14th of Nisan.</p>
10	Matthew 27:45 (NLT) <i>"At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o' clock."</i>	Wednesday at noon - At noon, 12pm, there was darkness over the land.
11	Matthew 27:46 and 50 (NLT) <i>"At about three o' clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eli,Eli,</i>	Wednesday at 3pm - At 3 pm that Wednesday afternoon Jesus dies.

	<i>lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?... Then Jesus shouted out again, and he released his spirit."</i>	
12	<p>Matthew 27:57-60 (NLT) "As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who had become a follower of Jesus, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left."</p> <p>Mark 15:42-47 (NLT) "This all happened on Friday, the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath. As evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea took a risk and went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. (Joseph was an honoured member of the high council, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come.) Pilate couldn't believe that Jesus was already dead, so he called for the Roman officer and asked if he had died yet. The officer confirmed that Jesus was dead..."</p> <p>John 19:31 (NKJV) "Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."</p>	<p>Wednesday afternoon after 3pm - Jesus buried. The bodies could not remain on the cross because that next day would be a special Sabbath, the high day.</p> <p>This was the day of preparation for the Sabbath. No work was to be done the next day, which would be the start of the Sabbath on Thursday.</p>
13	Matthew 27:62 (NLT) "The next day, on the Sabbath, the leading priests and Pharisees went to see Pilate."	<p>Wednesday night and Thursday morning – was the first Sabbath called the High Day in the Passover week.</p> <p>Friday night and Saturday morning – Was the second Sabbath before Sunday.</p>
14		Saturday night – Jesus rose out the grave.
15	Mark 16:1 (NLT) "Saturday evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene and Salome and Mary the mother of James went out and purchased burial spices so they could anoint Jesus' body."	Saturday night – Mary Magdalene and Salome and Mary mother of James went to get spiced to put on Jesus body first thing Sunday morning.
16	Matthew 28:1 and 6 (NLT) "Early Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb... He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying."	Sunday morning – Jesus body was not found in the grave.

Another simple depiction of the timeline when Jesus died and when he was resurrected.

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<div>Christ dies</div> <div>Night 1</div>	<div>Night 2</div>	<div>Night 3</div>	<div>Christ Resurrected the evening</div>	

The one question remained about **Mark 15:42** that speaks about a Friday in specific Bible translations. The New Living Translation reads *“This all happened on Friday, the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath.”* In the Hebrew / Greek Interlinear Bible it does not say “Friday”. The scripture reads *“And it became evening already, since it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath.”*

Thus, Mark was actually referring to the High Day Sabbath and not the normal weekly Friday-Saturday Sabbath.

After assessing the facts around the timeline leading to Jesus’ crucifixion and death, let’s look at what the Bible says may have happened to Jesus after He died.

3 WHERE DID JESUS GO WHEN HE DIED?

When doing a study such as this, it is crucial to keep in mind that the Bible remains the first truthful source of reference. Many “scholars”, “teachers” and “rabbis” have their own opinions about this topic. Some may be interesting and well argued. The fact remains, we need to always come back to God’s Word.

1 Peter 3:19-22 (NLT)

“So he went and preached to the spirits in prison- those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood. And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honour next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.”

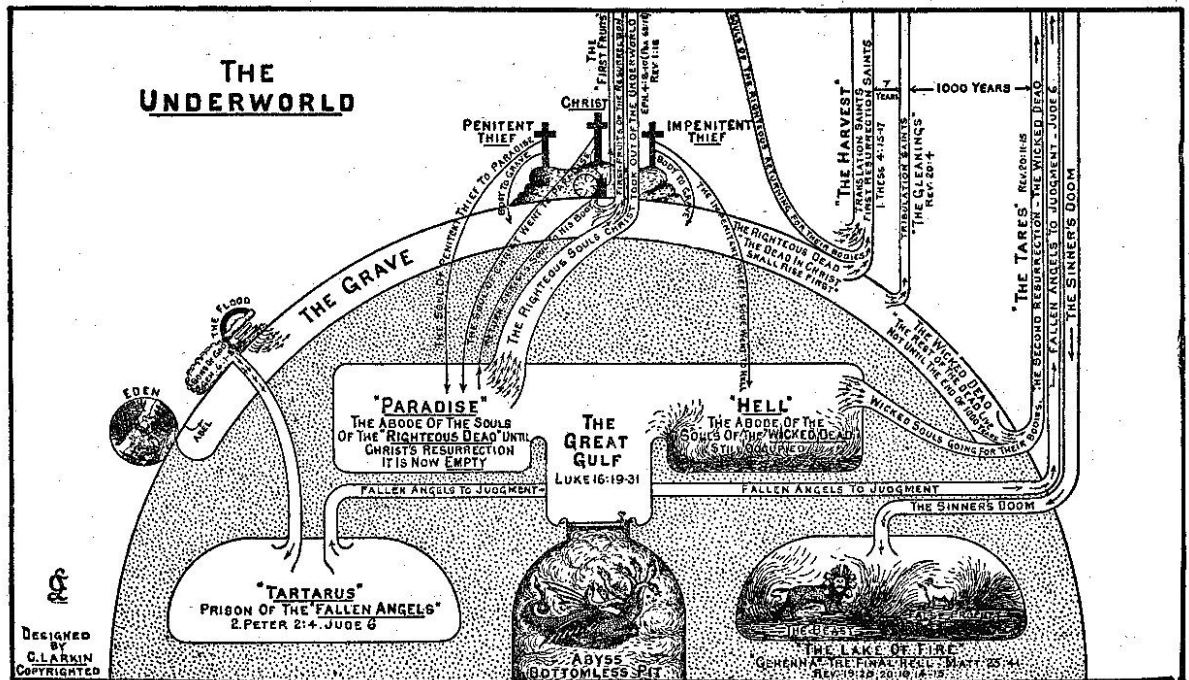
1. **According to verse 19**, Jesus went and preached to the spirits in prison.
But, where is this place?
Who were these spirits?
What did Jesus preach?
When did this happen?

1.1 Where is this place? – it is probably Abraham’s bosom, down in Sheol.



Sheol is the Hebrew word for the underworld which contained both Paradise and a place of eternal suffering. The Greek word for “Sheol” is Hades.

The Underworld (*Diagram depiction of the Underworld*)



The underworld is always depicted in the depths of the earth. Luke 16:19-31 speaks about the two places, paradise and hell and the great gulf between the two places.

Paradise (Abraham’s Bosom) – The Hebrew word for paradise is “Sheol”. Before Christ, paradise was occupied by those who believed in God. Once Jesus was crucified, He went down to paradise to set the righteous people free from the underworld. They are now in the present paradise in heaven, thus the paradise in the underworld is now empty.

Luke 23:43 (NLT) - “And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.””

Sheol - was the destination for the soul, not the body. The body went to the grave, while the soul went to Sheol. It was seen as the location for the departed souls – the abode for the dead, both good and bad. Sheol was always indicated to be under the earth, or in the lower parts of the earth – which is the opposite from heaven above.

During those 3 days, Jesus emptied Paradise when He died.



"Harrowing of hell". Christ leads Adam by the hand, c.1504 painting.

- **Congregation of the dead – Proverbs 21:16 (NLT)** - *"The person who strays from common sense will end up in the company of the dead."*
- **Abode for the souls of the wicked - Numbers 16:33 (NLT)** - *"So they went down alive into the grave, along with all their belongings. The earth closed over them, and they all vanished from among the people of Israel."*
- **The good were also found here before Jesus emptied it – Psalm 16:10 (NTL)** - *"For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your holy one to rot in the grave."*
- **Sheol** described as:
 - **Deep – Job 11:8 (NLT)** - *"...It is deeper than the underworld - ..."*
 - **Dark – Job 10:21-22 (NLT)** - *"before I leave-never to return – for the land of darkness and utter gloom. It is a land as dark as midnight, a land of gloom and confusion, where even the light is dark as midnight."*
 - **With bars – Job 17:16 (NKJV)** - *"Will they go down to the gates of Sheol? ..."*
- Thus, we also know the dead go "down" to it.
- Sheol should not be confused with a place like a grave. The physical grave is where our physical bodies are laid to rest.

Hell – The Greek word for hell is "Hades". The word Hades means "that which is out of sight". The word "Hades" is also associated with the Greek word "Orcus", which is an infernal region, a dark and dismal place in the very depth of the earth, the common receptacle of all disembodied spirits. This place contains the wicked from before Christ and after Christ. It was situated at the centre of the earth. Hades is the nether world, the realm of the dead. The place is dark and dismal in the very depth of the earth. Elysium also means Paradise.

Hades - is characteristic of the following:

- **Abode of unsaved dead** before the Great White Throne Judgment – *Revelation 20:11-15*
- **Prison – 1 Peter 3:19 (NKJV)** - *"by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison"*. This scripture refers to when Jesus went down to Hades after His crucifixion.
- **Has gates, bars and locks – Matthew 16:18 (NKJV)** - *"..., and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."* This was Jesus speaking to Peter. Then in the Book of Revelation Jesus was speaking to John - **Revelation 1:18 (NKJV)** - *"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death"*.

- **Is downward** – Jesus was speaking here - **Luke 10:15 (NKJV)** - *“And you Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades.”*
- **The righteous and wicked are separated.**
- **Paradise** – Also known as **Abrahams Bosom** – **Luke 16:22 (NKJV)** - *“So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom”.* Just and interesting note here, angels, plural brought the beggar to Abraham’s bosom. Many times, we have heard people who were near death, describe four angels waiting for them. Angelic escorts for the dead were also known in Judaism. Thus, those who died knew their fate immediately.
Luke 23:43 (NKJV) - *“And then Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.””* Take note though, after Jesus’s resurrection, Abraham’s Bosom was emptied, and those souls reside in Heaven with Christ at that moment.

Thus, we can see the word “Hades” and “Sheol” mean the same thing. Hades was the Greek term for Hell, and Sheol was the Hebrew term for Hell.

One misconception is that people believe Satan rules in Hell. The truth is that Hell was designed for Satan, where he will be sent and bound in one day. At the moment his domain has been earth.

Some Insights to Hades:

- People in Hades are fully conscious. They have a memory, they can speak, they have pain and they have desires (Luke 16 account).
- The person’s eternal destiny is irrevocably fixed. There is no way out.
- The person knows that what they are experiencing is fair and just.
- Jesus was not in Gehenna (Lake of Fire), only in Hades.
- What sufferings are possibly present:
 - Loss of all earthly goods.
 - Utter expulsion from the presence and favour of God.
 - Utter withdrawal of the Holy Spirit.
 - Unrestrained dominion of sin and sinful passions.
 - Experience constant despair and misery.
 - Evil associates.

Tartarus - Tartarus is different from Hades. This place is for those angels who had fallen with Satan, and probably includes the fallen angels, “sons of God”, from Genesis 6:2, who took on human form and married women before the Flood.

Jude 6-7 (NKJV) - *“And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness of the judgement of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”*

They will stay here until the Great White Throne Judgment.

2 Peter 2:4 (NLT) - *“For God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into hell, in gloomy pits of darkness, where they are being held until the day of judgement.”*

Abyss / bottomless pit - The Greek word for “bottomless pit” is “**Abussos**”. The Hebrew word is “**Tehom**”. The Abyss is a place where the following will happen:

- **Demon locusts** emerge from here – **Revelation 9:7-11 (NKJV)** - *“The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like faces of men. They had hair like women’s hair, their teeth were like lions’ teeth. And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their*

wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.”

The angel of the bottomless pit is demonic and controls the demonic locusts. If this angel serves God, this is another instance where the activity of Satan or his demons is under the Lord's sovereign control. The name of the angel in Hebrew as in Greek means “Destruction”.

- **The Beast, Anti-Christ, satanic empowered world rules** (in Revelation 13, and 17) emerges from the bottomless pit. This beast will be sent and allowed to kill the two witnesses in the same city where Jesus was put to death. – **Revelation 11:7 (NKJV)** - *“When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcoming them, and kill them.”*
- **Satan bound for 1000 years. Revelation 20:1-3 (NKJV)** - *“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon,, the serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.”*

The angel here may be the same angel who held the keys to the bottomless pit in Revelation 9:1. Satan will be sealed up. However, this same angel will need to release him, as he will not be able to escape from the pit. Thus, God will still use Satan for His own sovereign plan.

- **Lake of Fire (Gehenna)**

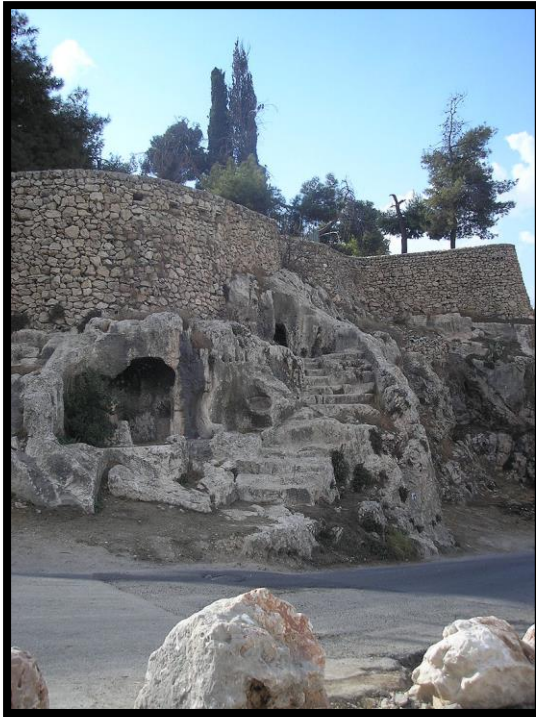
The Hebrew word for “lake of fire” is “**Thoret**”. In the Greek it is called “**Gehenna**”.



The Valley of the Son of Hinnon in 1900 – the valley where the children were killed in Jerusalem.

In the Bible, Gehenna was originally the “Valley of Hinnom”, south of Jerusalem. The filth and the dead animals of the city were cast out and burnt here. This city dump was constantly burning with fire. There was even a time in Jerusalem's history when children were offered here to a foreign god, by idolatrous Jews. **2 Chronicles 28:3 (NKJV)** *“He (Ahaz) burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the*

fire, according to the abomination of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel”.



Tombs in the Valley of Hinnon

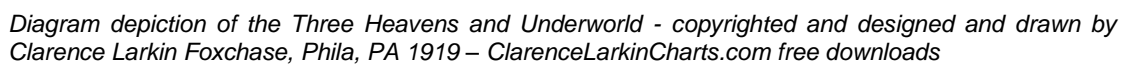
The Lord referenced this word 12 times in the Bible. **Luke 12:5 (NKJV)** - *“But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”*

Gehenna - Is the final resting place for Satan. After the 1000 years, Satan was released from the Abyss by the assigned angel to go and deceive the nations. However, after the battle and the fire of God rains down on them, he will be cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are. Here they would be tormented for eternity.

Revelation 20:7,10 (NKJV) - *“Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth... The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”*

The wicked who are found in Hades (which was temporary), and the fallen angels that have been sent to Tartarus, will be taken up for The Great White Throne Judgement. After the Great White Throne Judgment all the wicked and fallen angels will be sent to Gehenna forever. Gehenna will have no end. Thus, these people and angels end up with Satan in the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:13-15 (NLT) - *“The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up its dead. And all were judged according to their deeds. Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.”*



Only the righteous found in Abraham's Bosom or Paradise were released by Jesus to join Him in Heaven. When we think back to the words Jesus spoke on the cross, he only

addressed the thief who had confessed his sins to Jesus and asked forgiveness. Jesus only told this thief they will be together in Paradise.

Luke 23:43 (NKJV) - *"And then Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'"*

Jesus did not say anything about the salvation for the other thief who had no remorse. Hence, we can conclude that the second thief went to Hell and would not be released by Jesus.

However, there could have been spirits (individuals) who had never heard of Jesus Christ or that there was a One true God. What about these people? We will look at this question in our next point.

1.3 What did Jesus preach? Jesus may have preached a couple of messages while being down in Sheol. Only His disciples would have truly known what these messages contained. We can also be sure that Jesus could have instructed them to only write and share what He allowed them to share in their writings we find in the Bible today. Or, Jesus only shared with them what He thought they needed to know, and no more.

However, from Scripture we can see there are possible three main themes Jesus would have preached in His time in Sheol.

- a. Victory over death leading to the release of the righteous prisoners in Paradise, to join Him in Heaven.
- b. Announcing His confirmation of overcome death to the unrighteous prisoners in Hell.
- c. The possible 3rd message would be the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who had never known Jesus in their lifetime, and had died just before Christ's crucifixion.

1 Peter 4:6 (NLT) *"That is why the Good News was preached to those who are now dead – so although they were destined to die like all people, they now live forever with God in the Spirit."*

According to the above scripture the Good News of *"Christ dying for our sins and giving us eternal life if we believe in Him"*, could have been preached to the dead in Sheol who had never known of the love of God.

Apostles Creed from the Roman Catholic Church - An early version of the Apostles' Creed, the Interrogatory Creed of Hippolytus from about 215 A.D., refers to Christ's descent to the dead. The Creed reads as follows:

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead (or "he descended into hell" or "hades" depending on the translation). On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him. The descent into hell brings the Gospel message of salvation to complete fulfilment. This was the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission'.

1.4 When did this happen? This all happened within the 3 days after His death. Once Jesus was resurrected, all the righteous He had freed from the prison of hell were also resurrected with Him. These people also appeared to many people, just as Jesus did.

Matthew 27:53 (NIV) – *"They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people."*

Scripture referring to Christ descending to Sheol within those 3 days

Philippians 2:9-10 (NLT) – *“Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honour and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.”*

Acts 2:24 (NLT) – *“But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not hold him in its grip.”*

Acts 2:27 (NLT) – *“For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your Holy One to rot in the grave.” (Also in Psalm 16:8-11)*

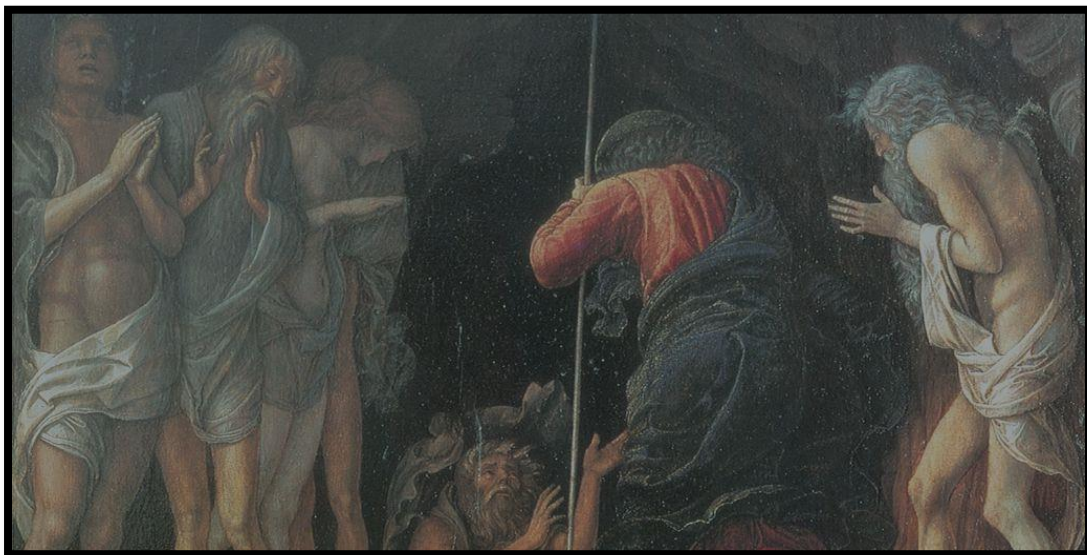
Peter explains in the above Scripture that King David had prophesied about his own descendent, Jesus Christ, that would be raised from the dead because God promised it.

Romans 8:11 (NLT) – *“The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.”*

Isaiah 24:21-22 – *“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.”*

4 DETAILS AROUND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC APOSTLES CREED

These questions are still, and will probably in future, remain a source of debate for all current and future Roman Catholic Christians.



The widely used Apostles' Creed reads, *“was crucified, dead, and buried, he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead.”* However, this phrase *“he descended into hell”* does not occur in the Bible.

Where did the phrase come from?

It is surprising to find that the phrase “he descended into hell” was not found in any of the early versions of the Creed (in the versions used in Rome, in the rest of Italy, and in Africa) until it appeared in one of two versions from Rufinus in A.D. 390.

Then it was not included again in any version of the Creed until A.D. 650.

Rufinus, the only person who included it before A.D. 650, did not think that it meant that Christ descended into hell, but understood the phrase simply to mean that Christ was “buried.” In other words, he took it to mean that Christ “descended into the grave.” (The Greek form has *hadēs*, which can mean just “grave,” not *geenna*, “hell, place of punishment.”). The phrase only appears in one of the two versions of the Creed from Rufinus: it was not in the Roman form of the Creed that he preserved.

This means, therefore, that until A.D. 650 no version of the Creed included this phrase with the intention of saying that Christ “descended into hell”—and the only version to include the phrase before A.D. 650 gives it a different meaning. Later when the phrase was incorporated into different versions of the Creed that already had the phrase “and buried,” some other explanation had to be given to it.

There have been three possible meanings proposed throughout church history:

1. Some take this phrase to mean that Christ suffered the pains of hell while on the cross. Calvin takes this approach, as does the Heidelberg Catechism.
2. Others have understood it to mean that Christ continued in the “state of death” until his resurrection. The Westminster Larger Catechism, Question 50 takes this approach.
3. Finally, some have argued that the phrase means just what it appears to mean on first reading: that Christ actually did descend into hell after his death on the cross.

5 ROMAN CHRISTIAN CATHOLIC VIEW

The Catholic Catechism interprets Ephesians 4:9, which states that “[Christ] descended into the lower parts of the earth”, as also supporting this interpretation. This near-absence in Scripture has given rise to controversy and differing interpretations. The Harrowing of Hell is commemorated in the liturgical calendar on Holy Saturday.

According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, the story first appears clearly in the Gospel of Nicodemus in the section called the Acts of Pilate, which also appears separately at earlier dates within the Acts of Peter and Paul. Verses containing the word “Hades”.

The Harrowing of Hell was taught by theologians of the early church: St Melito of Sardis (died c. 180) in his *Homily on the Passover* and more explicitly in his *Homily for Holy Saturday*; Tertullian (*A Treatise on the Soul*, 55), Hippolytus (*Treatise on Christ and Anti-Christ*) Origen (*Against Celsus*, 2:43), and, later, St Ambrose (died 397) all wrote of the Harrowing of Hell.

Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman (during His Anglican days) commented:

Our Savior, as we suppose, did not go to the abyss assigned to the fallen angels, but to those mysterious mansions where the souls of all men await the judgment. That He went to the abode of blessed spirits is evident, from His words addressed to the robber on the cross, when He also called it Paradise; that He went to some other place besides Paradise may be conjectured from St. Peter's saying, 'He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient' (1 Pet. 3:19-20). The circumstances, then, that these two abodes of

disembodied good and bad, are called by one name, Hades . . . seems clearly to show that Paradise is not the same as Heaven, but a resting-place at the foot of it. Let it be further remarked, that Samuel, when brought from the dead, in the witch's cavern, said, 'Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?' (1 Sam. 28:15), words which would seem quite inconsistent with his being then already in Heaven. (Sermon: "The Intermediate State," 1836; my italics)

Luke 23:42-43 (RSV) *"And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." [43] And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."*

2 Corinthians 12:2-3 *"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. [3] And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows"*

Revelation 2:7 *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."*

Jesus didn't ascend to heaven until some forty days (Acts 1:1-11) after His Resurrection, which was on a different day than His death. Therefore, He couldn't be referring to heaven on the cross (Lk 23:42-43), in talking to the thief next to him.

But, in 2 Corinthians, note how St. Paul uses *paradise* (Gk: *paradeisos*) and *third heaven* interchangeably. It's a different meaning than in Luke 23:43. Likewise, *paradise* in Revelation 2:7 is *heaven*, since we know by Revelation 22:2, 14, 19 that the "tree of life" is located in heaven.

In this regard, another passage is directly related to 1 Peter 3:19-20: mentioned by Cardinal Newman:

Ephesians 4:8-10 *"Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." [9] (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? [10] He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)"*

With this elaboration of the word *paradise* in Scripture, it becomes quite clear where Jesus went after His death. It was Sheol: the Hebrew word for the netherworld, or abode of the dead (Greek: Hades). The "good" part of Sheol (Lk 16:19-31) is also called "paradise."

The only confusion remaining is the reference in the Apostles' Creed: "He descended into Hell." The word *hell* actually has a wide latitude in theological usage. The Catechism of the Catholic Church elaborates:

633 Scripture calls the abode of the dead, to which the dead Christ went down, "hell" – *Sheol* in Hebrew or *Hades* in Greek - because those who are there are deprived of the vision of God. Such is the case for all the dead, whether evil or righteous, while they await the Redeemer: which does not mean that their lot is identical, as Jesus shows through the parable of the poor man Lazarus who was received into "Abraham's bosom" . . .

Hades / Sheol is distinct from the biblical Greek place, Gehenna, which refers to "the unquenchable fire" reserved for those who to the end of their lives refuse to believe" (CCC 1034). Accordingly, the 1910 Catholic Encyclopedia ("Hell") states that "Theologians distinguish four meanings": 1) everlasting fire and punishment (Gehenna), 2) limbo, 3) limbo of the fathers (limbus patrum), or Hades / Sheol, and 4) purgatory.

Jesus descended to, and led captives from Sheol, not Gehenna.; also known as "paradise."

Did Jesus Go Down to Purgatory

The Roman Catholic Church believe in the place called Purgatory. As a Pentecostal Christian we do not believe in this view, however I thought to mention it in this study as a side study.

Firstly, lets explain the word Purgatory. Purgatory is the condition, process, or place of purification or temporary punishment in which, according to medieval Christian and Roman Catholic belief, the souls of those who die in a state of grace are made ready for heaven.



Purgatory

The function for going down to Purgatory, according to the Roman Catholic belief, is that it is a place of a temporal punishment for sin, and the cleansing from the attachment to sin. Purgatory purifies the soul before the soul's grand entrance into heaven. *(At this juncture, Pentecostal Christianity don't believe the same, as Jesus' death on the cross has freed us from the bonds of sin. Once we die, we are purified and do go to heaven where the Lord is. We do not go to another place after death to be cleansed from our since, as the Blood of Jesus has already done this for us. Once you are born again, you are a child of God and will go to heaven, not to a place such as described by Purgatory. From my personal experience, having died and come back, the day I died, I did not go to an in-between place. Because I was a reborn Christian at the time, I experienced going to heaven.)*

The seven levels in Purgatory

Apparently Purgatory has a place called Purgatory proper, where the soul will have to pass through a gate to arrive at seven levels of Purgatory. These levels are related to the seven deadly sins, or the seven roots of sinfulness:

- Pride
- Envy
- Sloth
- Avarice (Greed)
- Gluttony
- Lust



The **Map of Hell** painting by Botticelli is one of the extant ninety-two drawings that were originally included in the illustrated manuscript of Dante's *Divine Comedy* commissioned by Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici.

Where did the belief in Purgatory come from then? (This is an extract from Wikipedia)

The idea of purgatory has roots that date back into antiquity. Medievalist Jacques Le Goff defines the "birth of purgatory", i.e. the conception of purgatory as a physical place, rather than merely as a state, as occurring between 1170 and 1200. A sort of proto-purgatory called the "celestial Hades" appears in the writings of Plato and Heraclides Ponticus and in many other pagan writings. This concept is distinguished from the Hades of the underworld described in the works of Homer and Hesiod. In contrast, the celestial Hades was understood as an intermediary place where souls spent an undetermined time after death before either moving on to a higher level of existence or being reincarnated back on earth.

Descriptions and doctrine regarding purgatory developed over the centuries. Those who believe in purgatory interpret extra-biblical passages such as 2 Maccabees 12:41-46 (not accepted as Scripture by Protestants but recognized by Orthodox and Catholics), and biblical passages such as 2 Timothy 1:18, Matthew 12:32, Luke 16:19-16:26, Luke 23:43, 1 Corinthians 3:11-3:15 and Hebrews 12:29 as support for prayer for the dead, an active interim state for the dead prior to the resurrection, and purifying flames after death. The first Christians looked forward to the imminent return of Christ and did not develop detailed beliefs about the interim state. Gradually, Christians, especially in the West, took an interest in circumstances of the interim state between one's death and the future resurrection. Christians both East and West prayed for the dead in this interim state, although theologians in the East refrained from defining it.

The idea of Purgatory as a physical place (like heaven and hell) was "born" in the late 11th century. Medieval theologians concluded that the purgatorial punishments consisted of material fire. The Western formulation of purgatory proved to be a sticking point in the Great Schism between East and West. The Catholic Church believes that the living can help those whose purification from their sins is not yet completed not only by praying for them but also by gaining indulgences for them as an act of intercession. The later Middle Ages saw the growth of considerable abuses, such as the unrestricted sale of indulgences by professional "pardoners" sent to collect contributions to projects such as the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Would Jesus have gone to Purgatory to set the captives free, or did He descend to Hell only?

The only answer I could find was online on the "Regnum Christi Spirituality Center" website. Here I found someone who has posted similar questions, which I will quote here:

"When Jesus died, he went to "the place of the dead to release the just." Were there "unjust" in the place of the dead at the time of the Crucifixion? Did Jesus only release the just? And if so, what happened to them? Did they then go to purgatory? Also, did purgatory begin after the Crucifixion? Did purgatory begin when hell began? Thank you for your answers. -D.F."

The questions were answered by Fr. Edward McIlmail, LC.

"A: When Jesus "descended into hell" (as the Apostles' Creed says) he went to the abode of the dead, to release the just souls who needed him to open the gates of heaven for them. This abode could be thought of as a kind of purgatory. The unjust were those already suffering eternal damnation. Jesus did not release them.

The Catechism in No. 633 says, "Scripture calls the abode of the dead, to which the dead Christ went down, 'hell' — Sheol in Hebrew or Hades in Greek — because those who are there are deprived of the vision of God. Such is the case for all the dead, whether evil or righteous, while they await the Redeemer: which does not mean that their lot is identical, as Jesus shows through the parable of the poor man Lazarus who was received into 'Abraham's bosom': 'It is precisely these holy souls, who awaited their Savior in Abraham's bosom, whom Christ the Lord delivered when he descended into hell.' Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him."

As to what happened, and when, to all the just is hard to say. Some of the just could have entered heaven immediately. Whether others lingered longer, in a purgatorial state, is harder to tell. Suffice it to say that all of the just souls eventually get to heaven. Certainly the unjust remained in hell, the state of eternal damnation.

Some scholars apparently hold that the Sheol or Gehenna of the Old Testament could be equated with purgatory in the New Testament. The problem is that terms are sometimes a bit vague, with different connotations, in the Old Testament.

It seems reasonable to think that souls from the Old Testament who were basically just but who had flaws would have suffered something after death and before the opening of the gates of heaven. In that sense purgatory could be akin to the Sheol of the Old Testament. So purgatory wasn't a totally new phenomenon after the Crucifixion.

In the Old Testament we see evidence for the belief in what we call purgatory. 2 Maccabees 12:43-46 says: "He then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection in mind; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin."

This need for offering sacrifice and making atonement for the dead would support the idea that the souls were suffering something and somehow needed the prayers and intercession of the living to help them.

Though Judaism has not included the books of Maccabees in its canon of Scripture, some Jews have embraced a belief in a process of purification after death.

Did purgatory begin when hell began? This is an intriguing question, because the things of the spirit world are outside of time as we know it.

Nevertheless, it seems as if some of the angels fell first, among them the one we now call Satan. He, in turn, tried to turn men away from God. If we accept that sequence of events, then it seems reasonable to say hell existed first, since it was the punishment of the fallen angels.

Purgatory, or Sheol, or Gehenna — however we want to label the abode of the just who can't enter heaven yet — would have started with the death of the first humans."

6 THE GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS

A whole mythology arose about Jesus rescuing people from the netherworld after the crucifixion. The Gospel of Nicodemus, which dates to the third century and did not make the Bible cut, offers a narrative of Jesus retrieving Adam and other Old Testament figures from Satan's clutches.



A 9th or 10th century manuscript of the Gospel of Nicodemus.

(extracts from Wikipedia)

The **Gospel of Nicodemus**, also known as the **Acts of Pilate** (Latin: *Acta Pilati*; Greek: Πράξεις Πιλάτου), is an apocryphal gospel-claimed to have been derived from an original Hebrew work written by Nicodemus, who appears in the Gospel of John as an associate of Jesus. The title "Gospel of Nicodemus" is medieval in origin. The dates of its accreted sections are uncertain, but according to the 1907 edition of the Catholic Encyclopedia scholars agree in assigning the resulting work to the middle of the fourth century AD.

The section about Pilate is an older text found in the Greek *Acts of Peter and Paul* and is a purported official document from Pontius Pilate (or composed from reports at the praetorium at Jerusalem) reporting events in Judea to Emperor Tiberius, and referring to the crucifixion of Jesus, as well as his miracles.

The authenticity of the document is unlikely and there is no historical basis that Roman governors wrote reports about non-citizens who were put to death. Most modern scholars view the Acts of Pilate as not authentic and as a Christian composition designed to rebut pagan sources.

An extract from the Gospel of Nicodemus. I have included it for interesting reading. However, the facts of this Scriptures have not been verified or validated. Thus, it is up to the reader to use their judgment in its meanings:

CHAPTER XIII.

1 The narrative of Charinus and Lenthius
commences. 3 A great light in hell. 7
Simeon arrives, and announces the coming
of Christ.

*O LORD Jesus and Father, who art
God, also the resurrection and life
of the dead, give us leave to declare
thy mysteries, which we saw after
death, belonging to thy cross; for we
are sworn by thy name.*

*2 For thou hast forbidden thy servants
to declare the secret things,
which were wrought by thy divine
power in hell.*

*3 When we were Placed with our
fathers in the dept of hell, in the
blackness of darkness, on a sudden
there appeared the colour of the sun
like gold, and a substantial purple-
coloured light enlightening the place.*

*4 Presently upon this, Adam, the
father of all mankind, with all the
patriarchs and prophets, rejoiced and
said, That light is the author of
everlasting light, who hath promised
to translate us to everlasting light.*

*5 Then Isaiah the prophet cried out
and said, This is the light of the
Father, and the Son of God, according
to my prophecy, when I was alive
upon earth.*

*6 The land of Zabulon, and the land
of Nephthalim, beyond Jordan, a
people who walked in darkness, saw
a great light; and to them who dwell-
ed in the region of the shadow of
death, light is arisen. And now he is
come, and hath enlightened us who
sat in death.*

*7 And while we were all rejoicing in
the light which shone upon us, our
father Simeon came among us, and
congratulating all the company, said,
Glorify the Lord Jesus Christ the
Son of God.*

*8 Whom I took up in my arms when
an infant in the temple, and being
moved by the Holy Ghost, said to
him, and acknowledged, That now
mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
which thou hast prepared before the
face of all people; a light to enlighten
the Gentiles, and the glory of thy
people Israel.*

*9 All the saints who were in the
depth of hell, hearing this, rejoiced*

the more.

10 Afterwards there came forth one like a little hermit, and was asked by every one, Who art thou?

11 To which he replied, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, John the Baptist, and the prophet of the Most High, who went before his coming to prepare his way, to give the knowledge of salvation to his people for the forgiveness of sins.

12 And I, John, when I saw Jesus coming to me, being moved by the Holy Ghost, I said, Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world.

13 And I baptized him in the river Jordan, and saw the Holy Ghost descending upon him in the form of a dove, and heard a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

14 And now while I was going before him, I came down hither to acquaint you, that the Son of God will next visit us, and, as the day-spring from on high, will come to us, who are in darkness and the shadow of death.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 Adam causes Seth to relate what he heard from Michael the archangel, when he sent him to Paradise to entreat God to anoint his head in his sickness.

BUT when the first man our father Adam heard these things, that Jesus was baptized in Jordan, he called out to his son Seth, and said,

2 Declare to your sons, the patriarchs and prophets, all those things, which thou didst hear from Michael, the archangel, when I sent thee to the gates of Paradise, to entreat God that he would anoint my head when I was sick.

3 Then Seth, coming near to the patriarchs and prophets, said, I, Seth, when I was praying to God at the gates of Paradise, beheld the an-

gel of the Lord, Michael, appear unto me, saying, I am sent unto thee from the Lord; I am appointed to preside over human bodies.

4 I tell thee, Seth, do not pray to God in tears, and entreat him for the oil of the tree of mercy wherewith to anoint thy father Adam for his head-ache;

5 Because thou canst not by any means obtain it till the last day and times, namely, till five thousand and five hundred years be past.

6 Then will Christ, the most merciful Son of God, come on earth to raise again the human body of Adam, and at the same time to raise the bodies of the dead, and when he cometh he will be baptized in Jordan;

7 Then with the oil of his mercy he will anoint all those who believe in him; and the oil of his mercy will continue to future generations, for those who shall be born of the water and the Holy Ghost unto eternal life.

8 And when at that time the most merciful Son of God, Christ Jesus, shall come down on earth, he will introduce our father Adam into Paradise, to the tree of mercy.

9 When all the patriarchs and prophets heard all these things from Seth, they rejoiced more.

CHAPTER XV.

1 Quarrel between Satan and the prince of hell, concerning the expected arrival of Christ in hell.

WHILE all the saints were rejoicing, behold Satan, the prince and captain of death, said to the prince of hell,

2 Prepare to receive Jesus of Nazareth himself, who boasted that he was the Son of God, and yet was a man afraid of death, and said, My soul is sorrowful even to death.

3 Besides he did many injuries to me and to many others; for those whom I made blind and lame and

*those also whom I tormented with
several devils, he cured by his word;
yea, and those whom I brought dead
to thee, he by force takes away from
thee.*

*4 To this the prince of hell replied
to Satan, Who is that so powerful
prince, and yet a man who is afraid
of death?*

*5 For all the potentates of the earth
are subject to my power, whom thou
broughtest to subjection by thy
power.*

*6 But if he be so powerful in his
human nature, I affirm to thee for
truth, that he is almighty in his di-
vine nature, and no man can resist
his power:*

*7 When therefore he said he was
afraid of death, he designed to en-
snare thee, and unhappy it will be to
thee for everlasting ages,*

*8 Then Satan replying, said to the
prince of hell, Why didst thou ex-
press a doubt, and wast afraid to re-
ceive that Jesus of Nazareth, both
thy adversary and mine?*

*9 As for me, I tempted him and
stirred up my old people the Jews
with zeal and anger against him;*

*10 I sharpened the spear for his suffering;
I mixed the gall and vinegar,
and commanded that he should drink
it; I prepared the cross to crucify
him, and the nails to pierce through
his hands and feet; and now his
death is near at hand, I will bring
him hither, subject both to thee and
me.*

*11 Then the prince of hell answering,
said, Thou saidst to me just
now, that he took away the dead
from me by force.*

*12 They who have been kept here
till they should live again upon
earth, were taken away hence, not by
their own power, but by prayers
made to God, and their almighty
God took them from me.*

13 Who then is that Jesus of Nazareth

*that by his word hath taken
away the dead from me without prayer
to God?*

*14 Perhaps it is the same who took
away from me Lazarus, after he had
been four days dead, and did both
stink and was rotten, and of whom I
had possession as a dead person, yet
he brought him to life again by his
power.*

*15 Satan answering, replied to the
prince of hell, It is the very same
person, Jesus of Nazareth.*

*16 Which when the prince of hell
heard, he said to him, I adjure thee
by the powers which belong to thee
and me, that thou bring him not to
me.*

*17 For when I heard of the power
of his word, I trembled for fear, and
all my impious company were at the
same disturbed;*

*18 And we were not able to detain
Lazarus, but he gave himself a
shake, and with all the signs of
malice he immediately went away
from us; and the very earth, in which
the dead body of Lazarus was
lodged, presently turned him out
alive.*

*19 And I know now that he is
Almighty God who could perform
such things, who is mighty in his
dominion, and mighty in his human
nature, who is the Saviour of man-
kind.*

*20 Bring not therefore this person
hither, for he will set at liberty all
those whom I hold in prison under
unbelief, and bound with the fetters
of their sins, and will conduct them
to everlasting life.*

CHAPTER XVI.

*1 Christ's arrival at hell-gates; the confusion
thereupon. 19 He descends into hell.
AND while Satan and the Prince of
hell were discoursing thus to each
other, on a sudden there was a voice
as of thunder, and the rushing of
winds, saying, Lift up your gates, O
ye princes; and be ye lift up, O ever-*

*lasting gates, and the King of Glory
shall come in.*

*2 When the prince of hell heard
this, he said to Satan, Depart from
me, and begone out of my habitations;
if thou art a powerful warrior,
fight with the King of Glory. But
what hast thou to do with him?*

*3 And he cast him forth from his
habitations.*

*4 And the prince said to his impious
officers, Shut the brass gates of
cruelty, and make them fast with iron
bars, and fight courageously, lest we
be taken captives.*

*5 But when all the company of the
saints heard this they spake with a
loud voice of anger to the prince of
hell,*

*6 Open thy gates, that the King of
Glory may come in.*

*7 And the divine prophet David
cried out, saying, Did not I, when on
earth, truly prophesy and say, O that
men would praise the Lord for his
goodness, and for his wonderful
works to the children of men!*

*8 For he hath broken the gates of
brass, and cut the bars of iron in
sunder. He hath taken them because
of their iniquity, and because of
their unrighteousness they are afflicted.*

*9 After this, another prophet,
namely, holy Isaiah, spake in like
manner to all the saints, Did not I
rightly prophesy to you when I was
alive on earth?*

*10 The dead men shall live, and they
shall rise again who are in their
graves, and they shall rejoice who are
in the earth; for the dew which is
from the Lord, shall bring
deliverance to them.*

*11 And I said in another place, O
grave, where is thy victory? O death,
where is thy sting?*

*12 When all the saints heard these
things spoken by Isaiah, they said to
the prince of hell, Open now thy*

*gates, and take away thine iron bars;
for thou wilt now be bound, and
have no power.*

*13 Then was there a great voice, as
of the sound of thunder, saying, Lift
up your gates, O princes; and be ye
lifted up, ye gates of hell, and the
King of Glory will enter in.*

*14 The prince of hell perceiving the
same voice repeated, cried out, as
though he had been ignorant, Who is
that King of Glory?*

*15 David replied to the prince of
hell, and said, I understand the
words of that voice, because I spake
them in his spirit. And now, as I
have before said, I say unto thee, the
Lord strong and powerful, the Lord
mighty in battle: he is the King of
Glory, and he is the Lord in heaven
and in earth.*

*16 He hath looked down to hear the
groans of the prisoners, and to set
loose those that are appointed to
death.*

*17 And now, thou filthy and stinking
prince of hell, open thy gates, that
the King of Glory may enter in; for
he is the Lord of heaven and earth.*

*18 While David was saying this, the
mighty Lord appeared in the form of
a man, and enlightened those places
which had ever before been in dark-
ness.*

*19 And broke asunder the fetters
which before could not be broken;
and with his invincible power visited
those who sate in the deep darkness
by iniquity, and the shadow of death
by sin.*

CHAPTER XVII.

*1 Death and the devils in great horror at
Christ 's coming. 13 He tramples on death,
seizes the prince of hell, and takes Adam
with him to Heaven.*

*IMPIOUS death and her cruel officers
hearing these things, were*

*seized with fear in their several kingdoms,
when they saw the clearness
of the light,*

*2 And Christ himself on a sudden
appearing in their habitations, they
cried out therefore, and said, We are
bound by thee; thou seemest to in-
tend our confusion before the Lord.*

*3 Who art thou, who has no signs
of corruption, but that bright appearance
which is a full proof of thy
greatness, of which yet thou seemest
to take no notice?*

*4 Who art thou, so powerful, and so
weak, so great and so little; mean,
and yet a soldier of the first rank,
who can command in the form of a
servant and a common soldier?*

*5 The king of Glory, dead and alive,
though once slain upon the cross?*

*6 Who layest dead in the grave, and
art come down alive to us, and in thy
death all the creatures trembled, and
all the stars were moved; and now
hast thy liberty among the dead, and
givest disturbance to our legions?*

*7 Who art thou, who dost release
the captives that were held in chains
by original sin, and bringest them
into their former liberty?*

*8 Who art thou, who dost spread so
glorious and divine a light over those
who were made blind by the dark-
ness of sin?*

*9 In like manner all the legions of
devils were seized with the like horror,
and with the most submissive
fear cried out, and said,*

*10 Whence comes it, O thou Jesus
Christ, that thou art a man so powerful
and glorious in majesty so bright
as to have no spot, and so pure as to
have no crime? For that lower world
of earth, which was ever till now
subject to us, and from whence we
received tribute, never sent us such a
dead man before, never sent such
presents as these to the princes of
hell.*

11 Who therefore art thou, who with

*such courage enterest among our
abodes, and art not only not afraid
to threaten us with the greatest
punishments, but also endeavourest to
rescue all others from the chains in
which we hold them?*

*12 Perhaps thou art that Jesus, of
whom Satan just now spoke to our
prince, that by the death of the cross
thou wert about to receive the power
of death.*

*13 Then the King of Glory tramp-
ling upon death, seized the prince of
hell, deprived him of all his power,
and took our earthly father Adam
with him to his glory.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

*1 Beelzebub, prince of hell, vehemently
upbraids Satan for persecuting Christ and
bringing him to hell. 14 Christ gives
Beelzebub dominion over Satan forever, as
a recompence for taking away Adam and
his sons.*

*THEN the prince of hell took
Satan, and with great indignation
said to him, O thou prince of
destruction, author of Beelzebub's de-
feat and banishment, the scorn of
God's angels and loathed by all
righteous persons! What inclined
thee to act thus?*

*2 Thou wouldst crucify the King of
Glory, and by his destruction, hast
made us promises of very large ad-
vantages, but as a fool wert ignorant
of what thou wast about.*

*3 For behold now that Jesus of
Nazareth, with the brightness of his
glorious divinity, puts to flight all
the horrid powers of darkness and
death;*

*4 He has broke down our prisons
from top to bottom, dismissed all
the captives, released all who were*

*bound, and all who were wont
formerly to groan under the weight
of their torments, have now insulted
us, and we are like to be defeated by
their prayers.*

5 Our impious dominions are subdued,

*and no part of mankind is now
left in our subjection, but on the
other hand, they all boldly defy us;*

*6 Though, before, the dead never
durst behave themselves insolently
towards us, nor being prisoners,
could ever on any occasion be merry.*

*7 O Satan, thou prince of all the
wicked, father of the impious and
abandoned, why wouldst thou
attempt this exploit, seeing our prisoners
were hitherto always without the
least hope of salvation and life?*

*8 But now there is not one of them
does ever groan, nor is there the
least appearance of a tear in any of
their faces.*

*9 O prince Satan, thou great keeper
of the infernal regions, all thy advantages
which thou didst acquire by
the forbidden tree, and the loss of
Paradise, thou hast now lost by the
wood of the cross;*

*10 And thy happiness all then expired,
when thou didst crucify Jesus
Christ the King of Glory.*

*11 Thou hast acted against thine
own interest and mine, as thou wilt
presently perceive by those large
torments and infinite punishments
which thou art about to suffer.*

*12 O Satan, prince of all evil, author
of death, and source of all
pride, thou shouldest first have in-
quired into the evil crimes of Jesus
of Nazareth, and then thou wouldst
have found that he was guilty of no
fault worthy of death.*

*13 Why didst thou venture, without
either reason or justice, to crucify
him, and hast brought down to our
regions a person innocent and
righteous, and thereby hast lost all the
sinners, impious and unrighteous
persons in the whole world?*

*14 While the prince of hell was thus
speaking to Satan, the King of Glory
said to Beelzebub the prince of hell,
Satan the prince shall he subject to
thy dominions for ever, in the room*

*of Adam and his righteous sons, who
are mine,*

CHAPTER XIX.

*1 Christ takes Adam by the hand, the
rest of the saints join hands, and they all
ascend with him to Paradise.*

*THEN Jesus stretched forth his
hand, and said, Come to me, all ye
my saints, who were created in my
image, who were condemned by the
tree of the forbidden fruit, and by
the devil and death;*

*2 Live now by the wood of my
cross; the devil, the prince of this
world, is overcome, and death is
conquered,*

*3 Then presently all the saints were
joined together under the hand of
the most high God; and the Lord Je-
sus laid hold on Adam's hand, and
said to him, Peace be to thee, and all
thy righteous posterity, which is
mine.*

*4 Then Adam, casting himself at the
feet of Jesus, addressed himself to
him with tears, in humble language,
and a loud voice, saying,*

*5 "I will extol thee, O Lord, for
thou hast lifted me up, and hast not
made my foes to rejoice over me. O
Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and
thou hast healed me."*

*6 "O Lord thou hast brought up my
soul from the grave; thou hast kept
me alive, that I should not go down
to the pit."*

*7 "Sing unto the Lord, all ye saints
of his, and give thanks at the re-
membrance of his holiness, for his
anger endureth but for a moment; in
his favour is life."*

*8 In like manner all the saints, prostrate
at the feet of Jesus, said with
one voice, Thou art come, O Redeemer
of the world, and hast actually
accomplished all things, which
thou didst foretell by the law and thy
holy prophets.*

9 Thou hast redeemed the living by

*thy cross, and art come down to us,
that by the death of the cross thou
mightest deliver us from hell, and by
thy power from death.*

*10 O Lord, as thou hast put the ensigns
of thy glory in heaven, and
hast set up the sign of thy redemption,
even thy cross on earth; so,
Lord, set the sign of the victory of
thy cross in hell, that death may have
dominion no longer.*

*11 Then the Lord stretching forth
his hand, made the sign of the cross
upon Adam, and upon all his saints.*

*12 And taking hold of Adam by his
right hand, he ascended from hell,
and all the saints of God followed
him.*

*13 Then the royal prophet, David,
boldly cried, and said, O sing unto
the Lord a new song, for he hath
done marvellous things; his right
hand and his holy arm have gotten
him the victory.*

*14 The Lord hath made known his
salvation, his righteousness hath he
openly shewn in the sight of the
heathen.*

*15 And the whole multitude of
saints answered, saying, This honour
have all his saints, Amen, Praise ye
the Lord.*

*16 Afterwards, the prophet Habbakuk
cried out, and said, Thou wentest
forth for the salvation of thy people,
even for salvation with thine anointed.*

*17 And all the saints said, Blessed is
he who cometh in the name of the
Lord; for the Lord hath enlightened
us. This is our God for ever and
ever; he shall reign over us to ever-
lasting ages. Amen.*

*18 In like manner all the prophets
spake the sacred things of his praise,
and followed the Lord.*

CHAPTER XX.

*1 Christ delivers Adam to Michael the
archangel. 3 They meet Enoch and Elijah
in heaven, 5 and also the blessed thief,*

who relates how he came to Paradise.

THEN the Lord, holding Adam by the hand, delivered him to Michael the archangel; and he led them into Paradise, filled with mercy and glory;

2 And two very ancient men met them, and were asked by the saints, Who are ye, who have not yet been with us in hell, and have had your bodies placed in Paradise?

3 One of them answering, said, I am Enoch, who was translated by the word of God: and this man who is with me, is Elijah the Tishbite, who was translated in a fiery chariot.

4 Here we have hitherto been, and have not tasted death, but are now about to return at the coming of Antichrist, being armed with divine signs and miracles, to engage with him in battle, and to be slain by him at Jerusalem, and to be taken up alive again into the clouds, after three days and a half.

5 And while the holy Enoch and Elias were relating this, behold there came another man in a miserable figure, carrying the sign of the cross upon his shoulders.

6 And when all the saints saw him, they said to him, Who art thou? For thy countenance is like a thief's; and why dost thou carry a cross upon thy shoulders?

7 To which he answering, said, Ye say right, for I was a thief, who committed all sorts of wickedness upon earth.

8 And the Jews crucified me with Jesus; and I observed the surprising things which happened in the creation at the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus.

9 And I believed him to be the Creator of all things, and the Almighty King; and I prayed to him, saying, Lord remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.

10 He presently regarded my supplication, and said to me, Verily I say

*unto thee, this day thou shalt be
with me in Paradise.*

*11 And he gave me this sign of the
cross, saying, Carry this, and go to
Paradise; and if the angel who is the
guard of Paradise will not admit
thee, show him the sign of the cross,
and say unto him Jesus Christ who is
now crucified, hath sent me hither to
thee.*

*12 When I did this and told the an-
gel who is the guard of Paradise all
these things, and he heard them, he
presently opened the gates, introduced
me, and placed me on the
right hand in Paradise,*

*13 Saying, Stay here a little time, till
Adam, the father of all mankind,
shall enter in, with all his sons, who
are the holy and righteous servants
of Jesus Christ, who was crucified.*

7 SOURCES

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