

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2018

MORNING MESSAGE

“The Harrowing of Hell”

(The Doctrine of the Descent)

Acts 2:22-36

I. THE REALITY OF THE DESCENT

A. The scriptures teach that Jesus descended into hell

1. Acts 2:27,31, “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption...He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption”
2. Romans 10:7, “Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that, to bring up Christ again from the dead).
3. Matthew 12:40, “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”

B. There are four words that are all translated “hell” in your Bible

1. “Sheol” is the Old Testament Hebrew word that is translated “hell”
 - a. Psalm 9:17, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God”
 - b. Psalm 16:10, “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption”
 - c. Psalm 139:8, “If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there”
 - d. Jonah 2:2, “I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice”
 - e. “Sheol” always means the grave, the realm of the dead, the region of the non-living
 - f. In the Hebrew mind, all people, good and bad, went to sheol when they died
2. “Hades” is a New Testament Greek word translated “hell”
 - a. Matthew 16:18, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”
 - b. Luke 16:23, “And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and see Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom”
 - c. Revelation 20:14, “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death”
 - d. “Hades” is the New Testament counterpart to the Old Testament “sheol”
 - e. Acts 2:27 is a quote from Psalm 16:10; the Old Testament Hebrew uses “sheol” and the New Testament Greek uses “hades”
 - f. Sheol (OT) or Hades (NT) was divided between the realm of the righteous dead and the unrighteous dead
3. “Gehenna” is a New Testament Greek word translated “hell”
 - a. Matthew 10:28, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”

- b. Matthew 18:9, "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire"
- c. James 3:6, "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell"
- d. "Gehenna" is the final "unresting" place of the unrighteous, unbelievers, unsaved
- e. "Gehenna" speaks of the valley of Hinnom, or valley of Gehenna; it is a valley in Jerusalem where the bodies of dead animals and unclaimed criminals were taken to be burned
- f. "Gehenna" is the "lake of fire" in Revelation 20:14-15
- 4. "Tartarus" is a New Testament Greek word translated "hell"
 - a. 2 Peter 2:4, "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment"
 - b. "Tartarus" is a special place reserved for fallen angels
- C. Where did Jesus go when He descended into hell?
 - 1. It was not Tartarus
 - 2. It was not Gehenna
 - 3. It was Sheol or Hades, the realm of the dead

II. THE REASON FOR THE DESCENT

- A. The scripture teaches four reasons for the descent
 - 1. To lead captivity captive
 - a. Ephesians 4:8-10, "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)"
 - b. "The lower part of the earth" is a reference to sheol, hades, the realm of the dead
 - c. "Captivity captive" means He liberated the Old Testament saints who died in faith
 - d. Matthew 27:52-53, "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many"
 - e. When Jesus arose He emptied one side of Hades; after Jesus arose, the Old Testament saints arose and ascended to glory
 - 2. To spoil principalities and powers
 - a. Colossians 2:14-15, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it"
 - b. Verse 14 speaks of His death and verse 15 speaks of His resurrection

- c. "Spoiled" means to strip away weapons and armor
 - d. "Made a show of them openly" means to put on public display
 - e. "Triumphing" pictures exalting, boasting, and celebrating
 - f. Through His descent and resurrection, Jesus disarmed the devil, disgraced the devil, and defeated the devil
- 3. To proclaim judgment to the unrighteous dead
 - a. 1 Peter 3:19, "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison"
 - b. "He" is a reference to Jesus; Verse 18, "For Christ..."
 - c. "Preached" means to proclaim
 - d. "Spirits" refers to the Old Testament unbelievers and possibly fallen angels
 - e. "Prison" literally means a "cage"
 - f. Jesus went and preached to the unrighteous dead; it was not an evangelistic message, but an explanation of why they will spend eternity in hell, Gehenna
 - 4. To proclaim victory to the righteous dead
 - a. 1 Peter 4:6, "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit"
 - b. "Preached" again means to proclaim
 - c. "Dead" refers to the Old Testament believers; people who had died in faith
 - d. This would be the realm of the righteous dead; the place Jesus called "Abraham's bosom" in Luke 16:22
 - e. Jesus went and preached to the righteous dead the full gospel message

III. THE RESULT OF DESCENT

- A. There is victory in Jesus
 - 1. Isaiah 25:8, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces"
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 15:54, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory"
 - 3. 1 Corinthians 15:57, But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"