

“He Descended into Hell” (1 Peter 3:18-20)

Introduction: *Week after week we confess it... but do we understand it?*

- I. JESUS’ DESCENT INTO HELL DOES NOT REFER TO HIS SUFFERING
 - A. This is a common misunderstanding among Christians
 - B. The hell he suffered was on the cross (Mark 15:33-34)
- II. THERE HAVE BEEN VARIOUS EXPLANATIONS OF THIS “DESCENT”
 - A. The medieval Church thought it had to do with Old Testament saints
 - **the medieval play:** *The Harrowing of Hell*
 - B. Some Churches omit this from the Creed as just a symbolic event at the cross
 - C. Lutheran theology (*Formula of Concord, 1577*) says:

We simply believe that Christ, after the burial, descended into hell, conquered the devil, destroyed the power of hell, and took from the devil all his might. He destroyed hell for all believers, delivered them from the power of death and the power of the devil and from the jaws of hell.
- III. LET’S TAKE A LOOK AT THE ONLY BIBLE PASSAGE THAT SPEAKS OF IT
 - A. “*He died for sins once for all...*” (1 Peter 3:18)
 - B. He was “*the righteous for the unrighteous*” (v.18)
 - C. He was “*put to death in the body*” (v.18)
 - D. He was “*made alive (with respect to) the spirit*” (v.18)
 - E. He “*went and preached*” (v. 19)
 - the sermon topic: ***In your face, Satan!***
 - F. He preached to “*the spirits in prison*” (v.19)
 1. The *prison* is where demons & unbelievers are kept (Rev. 9:1-2; 18:2)
 2. The “*spirits in prison*” are those who rejected God’s grace
 - G. Jesus’ descent into hell was the first step in His exaltation (Colossians 2:15)

Conclusion: *Let’s confess the Creed with joy & understanding!*
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