

UNDERSTANDING 1PETER 3:19

1 Peter 3:18-19, reads: *For Christ, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison (NKJV).*

Going Down to Hades

We believe, once Jesus' body was laid in the tomb, He as a disembodied spirit went to the upper part of Hades, also known as Abraham's Bosom, or paradise (Luke 16: 19-30). That's where the believing thief in Luke 23:43 went. This place was the abode of the departed righteous. Pending a transfer to heaven, it was a waiting area for them.

Jesus did not go to the lower part, which is also called Hell (as the Apostle's Creed teaches). The fallen angels (which sinned by co-habiting with women) in Gen. 6:4; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6, and the departed, unbelieving souls of the OT, which are kept unto the Day of Judgment, are imprisoned there.

Jesus made His proclamation from Abraham's Bosom, and everyone from both places saw Him and heard Him. We are told the two places are vertically one above the other, with a great chasm in the middle. In Luke 16, we see the rich man in torment communicating with Father Abraham.

With the "finished work" victory proclamation and whatever else our Lord may have said, for sure, the righteous ones rejoiced, whereas the unrighteous souls and the evil spirits trembled with fear. It was a sealing of His message of judgment.

Going Up to Heaven

At some point prior to the ascension, Jesus emptied out Abraham's Bosom. With the train of righteous souls behind Him, He led a triumphant procession into heaven. In the air, the devil and all his hosts were forced to move aside. Having been disarmed, defeated and displayed, they had now become the Lord's true captives and prisoners of war. What an amazing Saviour! Praise God! In a dual sense, He led a "triumphal procession" in the spirit realm.

Read carefully Eph. 4:8-9; Col. 2:15.

1. Understanding Eph.4:8-9 in light of Judges 5:12.

Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended"--what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?

Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam (KJV).

Many of the people of Israel were being held captive by their enemy. The enemy at this time was Jabin, king of Canaan. And God, using the judges, Deborah and Barak, were to lead those captives out. This is

a phrase that means to set free those who have been captive. We know that God is not telling Deborah and Barak to take their enemies into captivity. We know that because we are told no enemy captives were taken. This phrase means the release of captured friends (John Hoole).

2. Understanding Col. 2:15.

The verse actually says that he "*put them to open shame, BY TRIUMPHING OVER THEM in him.*" In other words, the way in which the rulers and authorities were put to open shame was by being subject to the "triumphal procession" of God in Christ. The word translated "triumphing" (used elsewhere in the New Testament only in 2 Corinthians 2:14) was descriptive of a Roman general parading his captives behind him as the spoil and booty of war, all of which was designed to humiliate them and bring public attention to their subjugation.

Thus, Paul's point here may simply be that God's defeat of the demonic hosts is like that of an earthly military commander's triumph over and public display of his enemies (Sam Storms).

Subsequent to the triumphal procession, believers were instructed—"to be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).

Soli Deo Gloria