

Not Ashamed of Jesus

By Phillip G. Kayser · Acts 2:22-28 · 2005-7-24

Last week we looked at the introduction that Peter gave to his first sermon. Today as we begin to look at the heart of that sermon, I want to show how Peter identified with the Lord in His humility. He was not ashamed of Jesus. Let's start at verse 22:

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth..." Let's stop there because I think that this is a very significant clause. Peter wants them to hear about Jesus of Nazareth. To identify Jesus with the scum city of Nazareth could have been very embarrassing for even a Gentile. But there is more. What is so striking about this is that 53 days before, Peter was ashamed to be identified with him. When Christ was captured and Peter went into the courtyard of the High Priest to look, there were three people who identified Peter with Jesus. The first servant girl said to him, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." When the Jews from Jerusalem added the term "from Galilee" to a person's name, it was usually a put-down. According to several scholars, those were the hillbillies of Israel. So in effect she was saying, "You also were with Jesus, the HillBilly." Peter denied knowing the Lord. Matthew 26:71 then goes on to say,

And when he had gone out to the gateway another girl saw him and said to those who were there. "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth." But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!"

If being a Galilean was considered bad, being a citizen of the town of Nazareth was considered even worse. Remember Nathaniel said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Nazareth was considered the arm pit (or worse) of Israel. Matthew goes on to say,

And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your *speech* betrays you." Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!"

The reason his speech betrayed him is that Galileans didn't know how to talk properly – at least in the minds of Judeans. Commentators say that it would have been like a Hilly Billy from West Virginia addressing an audience at Harvard. And who is Peter addressing in Acts 2:14? It is men of Judea and residents of Jerusalem. Who does he address in verse 22: Men of Israel. They could tell that he was not one of them.

Now with that background, listen to those words again. "Men of Israel, hear these words." Peter was no longer intimidated by these classier Jews. He speaks with authority. And the specific message of the cross that Peter wants them to pay attention to is a message that Paul said the Jews continued to stumble at. It was hard for them to accept. It could have been tempting to soften the message and to repackage it in such a way that it would be appealing to these crowds. But God goes out of His way to make sure that any Jews who respond to this message positively are humbled. They must first of all be willing to receive the message from a man who did not have good academic credentials and who spoke with an awful accent. Look at Acts 4:13. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were

uneducated and untrained men, they marveled." Why did they marvel? Because they thought that these uneducated Hillbillies would be intimidated by them, but they were not. They were bold. And so the verse goes on to say, "And they realized that they had been with Jesus." Jesus Himself had that same boldness. Social class was unimportant to Him. He was not impressed with degrees behind people's names. In fact, Paul was the only apostle who had a degree. It was from Gamaliel. The rest fit the description that Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 1, where Paul says,

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are noit, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

And he ends that chapter by saying, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

And so, right off the bat, Peter makes sure that he does not soften the message of the cross one bit. He says, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God..." It didn't matter what these people thought of Nazarenes. What mattered was God's opinion. And Peter piles fact upon fact to show that they had absolutely no excuse in rejecting their Messiah. "A Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know..." They could not plead ignorance. Their unbelief was not due to lack of evidence. It was a willful unbelief. And by the way, that is one of the purposes of apologetics: to strip away false excuses from the unregenerate and to show them that if they continue to reject Jesus, it is not because they lack evidence. It is because of willful unbelief.

But I do want you to notice the purpose of these miracles, signs and wonders: it was to attest that Jesus was indeed a *man* of God. It says, "Jesus of Nazareth, a *Man* attested by God to you by miracles." This is so contrary to the claims of many people. One commentary I have says on this verse, "What Jesus did was clear proof that He was God both for His generation and for every generation after that." (p. 31) And I think the motive of some people is that we shouldn't expect to do the miracles that Jesus did because we are mere men, whereas Jesus was the God-Man. "That's how come He could do miracles." The motive for others seems to be apologetics. They are trying to prove to Jews that Jesus was more than a man; that He was also God. And good as their intentions may be, the claim is bogus. Jesus did not do His miracles by means of His power as God the Son. He limited the expressions of His divine power while He was here on earth. And He did it so that He could experience everything we experience. When Satan tempted Christ to command the stones to turn into bread he was tempting Jesus to utilize His own divine power and to stop living as our example of perfect Manhood. Jesus refused, and He responded as all men should respond. He depended on God the Father through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. And by the way, He used *Scripture* to resist Satan, not His own authority. So verse 25 goes on to say, "signs which *God* did *through* Him..." He always prayed to the Father for the healings, or the cleansing of lepers or raising the dead. If those things proved that Jesus was divine, then it proved that Peter was divine when He walked on the water, and that Peter was divine in Acts 9 when he raised Dorcas from the dead, or that the disciples were

divine in Luke 9 when they healed lepers. And we would respond, "No. Those were signs which *God* did *through* them just as these miracles that Peter references are signs *God* did *through* Jesus. I think it is important to realize that Jesus exercised the same power that the apostles did when he did miracles: the power of the Holy Spirit. Let me give you one example. In Matthew 5:28 He says, "I cast out demons by the Spirit of God." Not by the Son of God (though He could easily have done so), but as a model man He cast out demons by the Spirit of God to show us how to do it. There is no reason that men, women and children do not have access to the same miracles by prayer if those miracles would serve *God's* interests and glorify *His* name. Why? Because we have the same Holy Spirit. I'm not saying that we can do miracles on demand. We cannot. What I am saying is that claims that we can't do miracles because they are proofs of Christ's divinity are wrong unless they are qualified by the next point.

But there is a second aspect in that phrase that we need to notice and that is that these miracles were *God's attestation*. It says "attested by God to you by miracles...." To attest means to certify or to guarantee that something is true. The miracles were (at least in part) *God's attestation* that Jesus was the Messiah; that He was who He said He was. Now in that sense they do attest His divinity because they attest that Jesus is who He says He is, and He claimed to be God. But *God* also used miracles to attest to the *apostles* that they truly were messengers of Christ. So in 2 Corinthians 12:12 they were called "signs of an apostle." They were *God's attestation* that they were who they said they were. *God* did a miracle in Solomon's temple as His attestation that this temple does have a legitimate claim to being the temple of *God*. And in the last verses of Mark *God* points out that *God* often attests that believers are who they say they are by producing miracles through ordinary believers.

So Peter highlights the fact that Jesus did these miracles as a *Man* because there are going to be all kinds of miracles done by men of *God* in this book. And secondly, Peter says that miracles are *God's attestation* to the authenticity of Christ's message just as they would authenticate the message that the apostles brought. *And this message needed some authentication* because of how *God* bypassed every avenue of prestige that would have made the Gospel acceptable and less embarrassing in the eyes of the world. He was born in a stable to a peasant mother, then grew up in Nazareth, identified Himself with the Galileans, ministered to sinners, prostitutes and tax collectors. That wasn't a good start if He was going to use the method politicians have to use to climb the ladder. And what was worst of all, He died a death that was proof positive to many Jews that He couldn't be the Messiah – He died on the cross as a criminal! That meant that Jesus was doing things illegal. People might think even if Jesus was right in what he said, do I really want to be associated with that which was illegal?" You've got to enter into their situation to get a feel for how embarrassing it would be to follow Jesus. It's sort of like becoming a believer in [country] today (and it may be one of the reasons why *God* gives so many miracles in [country]). The moment you become a believer you are labeled as a criminal and lumped in with ignorant peasants since 99% of the Christians in [country] are among the uneducated peasants. That's why Hebrews 13:13 says, "Let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach." Or as some translate it, "sharing His shame with Him."

We live in a different century, and there are other things about the Scriptures that can make us ashamed and unwilling to go outside the camp of the respectable and to be looked down upon. You know which Scriptures you have been bucking against and ashamed of. You know which ones you have been rationalizing so that you can still maintain some dignity and respect among men. But whatever those may be, Jesus said, "whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38). Don't seek the praise of men. "Not ashamed of Jesus," should be our cry.

Moving on: verse 23 says: "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death." One question that may have come up in their minds was: "How can He save others if He couldn't save Himself," And Peter gives four answers: 1) This was God's plan all along, 2) Jesus laid down His life; it was not taken from Him, 3) Jesus was raised from the dead to sit on His Messianic throne, 4) the Pentecost outpouring was evidence that Jesus was reigning.

We'll only have time to look at the first two answers today. But in verse 23 Peter points out that the Father planned this all along. "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God..." Notice that it doesn't simply say that God knew this was coming. Foreknowing things that are not in God's control would be no answer at all. Peter uses three words to show that no detail of this crucifixion was outside of God's control. First, it was foreknown. God was not blindsided. Second, it was God's purpose or plan that He be crucified. And by the way, that's why it is foreknown. Acts 15:18 says, "Known to God from eternity are all His works." God knows all things possible because HE knows what His attributes could accomplish and He knows all things actual because He knows His purposes; He's not double mind. So there is the word foreknowledge, the word purpose, which shows that this wasn't an accident. It was on purpose. And third, it was a determined purpose or a predestined purpose. Take those three words together and you realize that there was no way that this crucifixion could *not* have happened. It had to happen. Over and over in the Gospels Jesus says that He had to be crucified. Luke 24: 7 says, "The Son of Man *must* be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." In fact the Greek word for "must" (*dei*) occurs so many times on Christ's lips that theologians speak of it as the divine *dei* (DEI) which governed every aspect of Christ's life on earth. Jesus had to be crucified. God determined it long before, which is why Revelation calls Jesus the lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. In God's purposes it was as good as done. It was predestined.

But, lest a person think that God's predestination robs people of their own initiative and their own decision making, Peter goes on to say, "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, *you* have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death." He puts the blame on them. Later he calls them to repent of that sin. Just because a decision was made by an individual does not mean that God did not determine it. And just because God has determined an historical event does not mean that people will not be held responsible for it or that they are not active participants in it. Peter says, "You did it. You are guilty." How can both be true? Hyper-Calvinists have gone to one extreme by denying human responsibility.

Arminians have gone to the other extreme by denying God's sovereign predestination of all things. But the Biblical balance is that both are true. God predestines every detail of history, every decision of man, every word that comes from their lips. In fact, every sin is predestined. Even the mocking that the priests made of Jesus was recorded hundreds of years before in Psalm 22.

If you think that is not true, then you have no comfort for the bad things that happen to you. That means that the sinful abuse you received as a child cannot possibly work together for your good. If "*all things* work together for good to those who love God," which Romans 8:28 says that they do, then here comes the question: Did God plan for Joe to be struck by a drunk driver and be paralyzed from the waist down the rest of his life? That is what Romans 8:28 is asking us to believe. God worked that together. It was not a meaningless event. But how could God plan that without ensuring that the drunk would get drunk at just the right time, and that he would sinfully drive his car at just the right time? The Scriptures are clear that God neither tempts anyone to sin, nor does He sin Himself. Was God, or was God not in control of that car accident? I have talked to Christians who think you are blaspheming to say that God willed that. They would have to think that it was a meaningless event. Yet here in this passage we have the greatest sin in all of history said to be not only foreknown by God, but purposed by God and determined by God. In fact, it was determined down to the smallest minutia,

Let me illustrate with this pen here on how both Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are true. Those of you who have been around for a few years have heard this, but have patience for the newer members, because I think A. W. Pink's illustration is very helpful. The thing that is keeping this pen from falling to the floor is the restraining energy in my hand. If I let go of the pen it will fall to the ground of its own accord. That's just the nature of how gravity works on a pen. I don't have to actively throw it down to the ground for it to go to the ground. By letting the pen go, I have determined that it will fall, but it falls of its own accord. In the same way, God's restraining grace holds sinners up and keeps them from sinning any worse than they are presently sinning. Just as the inherent nature of gravity pulls a pen to the ground, the inherent nature of human sinfulness pulls them down into deeper and deeper and worse and worse sins. God's common grace restrains that downward pull, and keeps them from becoming worse sinners. That's an incredible mercy. There are all kinds of sins that he is keeping them from committing, which, if they had committed them, would bring them greater judgment. They don't deserve God's restraining grace. Some sinners are downright nice people. But if God were to withdraw His restraining grace from any sinner, he would immediately plummet into worse and worse sins simply because of the pull of his fallen nature.

Who is to blame for the sinner's sins? It's the sinner. The sinner wants to do the sin. God is not forcing him. I don't have to throw the pen down to determine that the pen will go down. All I have to do is withdraw my restraining hand. And God doesn't have to throw sinners down into sin in order to determine that they will sin. God would never do that. He is not the author of sin. All He does is to withdraw His restraining grace; a grace which they don't deserve anyway; a grace which they despise and resist; a grace God *can* very justly withdraw. And is this not exactly what Romans 1 and 2 say that God does to sinners who persist in their sins? He gives

them up to a depraved mind, Paul says. HE gives them up. And what happens when a pen is given up to its own nature? It falls to the ground. What happens when a sinner is given up to his own nature? He falls into sin. So Romans 1 lists a long catalogue of sins that people automatically enter into when they are given over or given up to a depraved mind, homosexuality being one of the sure signs of being given up. When they sin, they want to sin, yet God determined it without being the author of it. Both sides of the equation are true: God is sovereign over even sin and men are responsible for their sins.

With this as an explanation, we can make sense of many Scriptures: Beginning in Exodus 8, Scripture says three times that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (8:15,32; 9:34) and beginning in chapter 4, the Scripture says 15 times *God* hardened Pharaoh's heart (cf. 4:21; 7:3,13; 9:12; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:4,8). Which is correct? Both are. If God hardened his heart by withdrawing His restraining grace, God didn't have to work upon his heart to make it hard. That would make Him the author of sin. God merely withdrew His restraining grace.

The same is true of evil wars. God moved nations to declare war and then condemned them for their wickedness in doing so (cf. eg. Deut. 2:30; Is. 19:14; 26:12; 14:24-27; 44:21-45:23; 46:9-11; Hab. 1:6; 2 Sam. 17:14; Josh. 11:19,20; Judges 14:4; 1 Kings 12:15; Jer. 13:13-14). Wars are not an indication that God is out of control. Proverbs 21:1 affirms, "the king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like rivers of water, He turns it wherever He wishes." God is in control of that king's heart. Isn't that what it says? "the king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like rivers of water, He turns it wherever He wishes." However, if God forced such kings or even tempted the nations to declare war in ungodly ways He would be guilty of sin. But Scripture affirms that all God has to do is to "give men up to their carnal desires" and they will plummet into sin of their own accord. The mystery is not why men sin. The mystery is why men are so good. God's common grace to man restrains them from sin. It's an incredible gift. Now, if instead of viewing men as one pen that falls, you view him as composed of a complex of 1000's of pens, then you can see how God could restrain some sins and allow others and control every aspect of history without in any way being the author of sin or tempting others to sin.

Even believers can have God's restraining grace withdrawn when we are presumptuous and despise that grace. 2 Samuel 24:1 shows this when God got angry at David. He moved David to number Israel the text says. But how did He do that? It was by removing His protection from David's life. 1 Chronicles 21:1 tells us that Satan was the active agent. So 1 Samuel 24 says that God moved David's heart to number Israel and 1 Chronicles 21 tells us that Satan moved David's heart. Which is true? Both are. God moved David by withdrawing His protection: a protection that David was taking for granted. And God knew that Satan would immediately take advantage of that removal of protection by moving David's heart. God guaranteed this sin and subsequent judgment because of David's presumption. Since David was not depending on God, God needed to show David how impossible it is to live without Him. 1 Samuel 2:25 is another example. Speaking about the sons of Eli it says, "Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the LORD desired to kill them."

What are the practical implications of this doctrine? It means that we as Christians ought to hold tightly to the LORD. Never grow tired of thanking God for His mercies; never despise His goodness and treat it as a light thing. Never presume upon the Lord's grace by thinking that you can get away with sin.

Secondly, be quick to repent of sin as David did. One sin leads to another down a slippery slope. But we are not destined to fall if we call out to God. God exalts the humble and abases the proud; He gives grace to the humble; "A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise." (Psalm 51:17).

Thirdly, realize that when evil comes against you from others, that it is not a sign that the world is falling apart. God controls absolutely everything that happens. He will not allow anything to happen to you that is not for your good and for the glory of His kingdom. Nothing can mess up His plans. That's encouraging.

Fourthly, everyone is fully responsible for their own sins. You can't get off the hook for your sins because you did them freely; you wanted to do them and you aggravated your sin by rejecting God's restraining grace. Unbelievers are fully responsible for their sins. There is no such thing as a victim of one's own sin. Men who are in bondage have willingly placed themselves in bondage.

Fifthly, have confidence that God can help you to overcome any sin; and to get out of any situation. Any God who can control everything and yet preserve and guarantee freedom is a God that ought to give us confidence when He has promised, "If God is for us, who can be against us." Or who promised 1 Corinthians 10:13 And so, verse 23 is an incredibly encouraging verse.

Moving on, verse 24 says, "whom God raised up," Point by point Peter is demolishing any reasons they might have for being ashamed of Jesus. But notice that *he doesn't remove the shame*. Instead, he changes their focus off of themselves and off of the praises of men, and onto God. This is talking here about what *God* thought of Jesus. "...whom God raised up." God had clearly certified that Jesus was the Messiah. God had clearly empowered Him in ministry with miracles, wonders and signs. God had determined His crucifixion and God had raised Him up. In fact, these last two verses make clear that they could not have crucified Jesus unless God had given Jesus up, and the fact that they crucify Him, did not stop God from raising Him up. It is God in control. He goes on:

"having loosed the pains of death," The word "pains" means literally "birth pangs." And what a wonderful image to use of death for any son of God. Death is not the end. It is the beginning a new life for us. And the same was true of Jesus. God the Father loosed Him from death's grip, and Peter gives as his reason: "because it was not possible that He should be held by it." He was the Messiah. As one older author said, "the abyss could no more hold the Redeemer than a pregnant woman can hold the child in her body." And you know what? The same is true of us. Death has no hold on those who trust Jesus.

Then Peter gives proof from the Old Testament for His assertions. Everything is backed up by the Scripture. A sermon without Scripture is not a sermon. I have heard sermons where the only time the Bible was referenced was in the Scripture reading just before the preaching. No, Scripture has given us all kinds of sermons that we can model our sermons after, and those sermons always reference the Word of God. Anyway, Peter quotes Psalm 16:8-11.

For David says concerning Him: "I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.

And I'm going to end today's sermon just by commenting on that paragraph. Peter is saying that the Messiah was supposed to be resurrected, but you can't get resurrected unless you die first. So the very thing that was a stumbling block to the Jews, that Messiah died, was a necessary prerequisite to Jesus being enthroned. (And we will look at His enthronement next time.) But this passage goes even further and shows how even in the grave and in Hades, Jesus was triumphing with the full favor of God resting upon Him. It's an incredible answer to any shame these Jews may have felt over Jesus.

"For David said concerning Him:" Those are important words. I have several commentaries that see this whole psalm as talking about David, not Jesus, and that they only tangentially refer to Jesus. I don't see how you can square that with what Peter says here. I agree with those commentaries that say that every word in verses 25-28 are the words of Jesus, prophetically uttered by David. This is Jesus talking now (and so the "My's" should be capitalized): "I foresaw the LORD always before my face." Jesus foresaw every step of the way. Though abandoned briefly on the cross, His last words were, "Into Your hands I commit My Spirit" (Luke 23:46). God was with Him even in death. Verse 25 goes on: "For He is at My right hand, that I may not be shaken." If God was at Messiah's right hand in death, it was not a sign of the Father's dishonor, but of His great honor of the Messiah. What man despises, God honors. And this Messiah that the Psalm says would die, was being honored by God in death. And God's presence guaranteed that Messiah would not be shaken. This is a testimony that all God's saints can make: if God is for us, who can be against us?

Verse 26: "Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad..." This is further proof that Christ's death was something to rejoice in, not to be embarrassed about. Christ rejoiced in death, during those three days He was in the tomb.

"Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope." Even His body, which was at that point lying in the tomb was something that Jesus could commit to God's care. It was simply resting. When He says, that his body will rest in *hope*, he was indicating that there was something to be hoped for for the body. It's a reference to the resurrection of Christ's body. And he goes on to expand on that in verse 27:

"For You will not leave My soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." Christ's body did not rot and decay. But what about the first part? It's His soul in

Hades before it was taken out. For the most part, the Puritans rejected the interpretation given in the King James version that says that Jesus was in hell. In the King James it says, "You will not leave My soul in hell." If it will not be left in hell, the clear implication is that Jesus's soul *was* in hell. And yet Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Paradise doesn't exactly sound like hell. And so there has always been a tension for those who have followed the King James at this point. How could He be in hell (and hell is one of two legitimate ways of translating Hades here – but how could He be in hell) and still be in paradise at the same time? The same issue comes up when people recite the Apostles Creed. I have always refused to say, "He descended into hell." So let me spend some time discussing this issue.

In the original Greek of the apostles Creed it says about Jesus, "He descended into Hades." You can see from this verse that it is Biblical to say that Jesus was in Hades. However, when the Apostles Creed got translated into English, they translated it wrongly as, "He descended into hell." Notice that it is Jesus' soul that is talking here, and His soul is *not* in torment. It is comforted and secure in God's presence (verse 25). Verse 26 says that His heart is rejoicing and His tongue is glad. The tongue of the rich man of Luke 16 was not glad when he was in Hades. Both he and his tongue were in anguish. So what's going on here? Verse 28 says, "You have made known to Me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence." This sounds more like the Paradise that Jesus referred to when He was talking with the thief on the cross.

And there is an easy solution to this. It was held to by the ancient Jews, by the early church fathers, by the church in later centuries, by many Puritans and other Reformed people like Charles Spurgeon (even though I have to admit that it is a minority view in Reformed circles today – or actually, it's probably for the most part an unknown view). It is the older view that both believers and unbelievers went into the heart of the earth to a place called Sheol in the Old Testament and called "Hades" in the New Testament. Unbelievers were confined to what Scripture calls "lower Sheol" while believers were in a place called Paradise or Abraham's bosom, and that was located in upper Sheol or upper Hades. Some people think that this view originated in the early church, but the ancient Jewish synagogues held to this as well. For example, Josephus wrote a treatise on Hades in the first century AD, and in that treatise he describes a lower part containing torment and grief, and an upper part called Paradise. Actually, he said it had two names. He describes the paradise portion as, "This place we call the Bosom of Abraham." He said that lower Hades was a waiting place until judgment day when all the damned would be cast into the lake of fire. But even though they were waiting for judgment day, they still suffered in this place of fire. He said that a huge gap lay between these two subterranean places. Speaking of unbelievers in Hades, Josephus says, "where they see the place of *the fathers* and of the just, even hereby are they punished; for a *chaos* deep and large is fixed between them; insomuch that a just man that hath compassion upon them cannot be admitted, nor can one that is unjust, if he were bold enough to attempt it, pass over it." Does this not sound identical to Luke 16? Why don't you turn there, and I want to read that passage.

Luke 16:19 There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. Luke 16:20 But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, Luke 16:21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs

came and licked his sores. ^{Luke 16:22} So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom.

Any Jews who were listening would have immediately understood this to mean the upper part of the subterranean waiting place of Hades. "The rich man also died and was buried."

^{Luke 16:23} And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

So Jesus calls it the same thing that Josephus does, and also says that upper Hades was a long way from lower Hades. Notice that he has to lift his eyes up. Why? Because he was in lower Hades.

^{Luke 16:24} Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

^{Luke 16:25} But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

^{Luke 16:26} And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

Almost identical words to those written by Josephus, the Jewish priest.

^{Luke 16:27} Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,

^{Luke 16:28} for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'

^{Luke 16:29} Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

^{Luke 16:30} And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

^{Luke 16:31} But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'

Both Paradise and torment were places in Hades, in the heart of the earth. The Old Testament word for Hades was Sheol, and Deuteronomy 32:22 speaks of fire burning in "the lowest part of Sheol." Because of how deep it was, Sheol was called "the pit" (Job. 33:22), and Scripture speaks of "the depths of Sheol" (Prov. 9:18). It should not be translated as the grave because people are conscious in Sheol. They have pain there (Psalm 116:3), "sorrows" (2 Sam. 22:6) and people communicate with each other in Sheol (Isaiah 14:9,10; Ezek. 32:21-33). It's a real place in the heart of the earth.

But Paradise Sheol was clearly down in the earth as well. Jacob claimed, "I will go *down* into Sheol to my son mourning" (Gen. 37:35). Sheol was *down* for Jacob. In 1 Samuel 28:11-16 God did an unusual thing in bringing the spirit of Samuel up to talk to Saul, and it says that God brought him "*up* out of the earth" (1 Sam. 28:11-16). Well, if he was being brought up, then he was formerly down. Samuel said, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" (v. 15), Samuel went on to say to Saul, "Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me." (v. 19). Everyone went to Sheol/Hades in the Old Testament.

Some have thought that Enoch and Elijah were caught up into the third heaven, and based on those two Scriptures they say that everyone in the Old Testament went to heaven upon death. However, that would be a flat out contradiction of Christ's statement in John 3:13. In John 3:13 Jesus said, "No one has ascended to heaven except He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven." (John 3:13). He said, "No one has ascended to heaven." But some people respond saying, "That can't be. Genesis says, "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." How or where God took him is not stated. The other passage they bring up is 2 Kings 2:11, and that admittedly is more troublesome. It says, "suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." But it should be noted that there are three heavens and "went up into heaven" could easily mean "went up into the air." Secondly, it should be noted that in 2 Kings 2:16-18, the prophets in Elijah's school thought that God had cast his body on the ground somewhere. They went out searching for it. Their concept of heaven did not allow the idea of a human body being there yet. And they were prophets. They would have known. So they wanted to bury the body. Thirdly, the reason for taking Elijah away is probably the same reason God removed Moses' body from the people in Deuteronomy 34:6. God purposely removed his body so that no one could set up a shrine. But it is likely that his body was buried by God as was the body of Moses. Moses was whisked away from the people as well, and his body was buried so that it could not be found. Satan was greatly interested in taking the body, and according to Jude, Satan disputed with Michael the archangel over the body of Moses. But he was not allowed to have it. Satan no doubt wanted to use it as a shrine to be a snare to the people. Thus, since 2 Kings 2:11 is the only passage which would contradict the old view, and since it is easily capable of an alternate interpretation, it in no way discredits our thesis.

Turn with me to Romans 10. I want to look quickly at three passages which show that Jesus did not visit heaven during the three days while He was dead.

Romans 10:6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?.' (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*)

Romans 10:7 or, 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

Notice that the term abyss is another term for the place of the dead. It is the deep place of the earth. So this passage indicates that when Christ was dead, He was in the abyss.

Turn next to Ephesians 4. This is a passage that deals with the giving the Holy Spirit and gifts being distributed to the church. But all of it flows from the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Ephesians 4:7.

Ephesians 4:7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Ephesians 4:8 Therefore He says: "*When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.*"

The ones who were captive were believers in Sheol. Though it was a paradise, it was still a provisional place of waiting. Verse 9:

Ephesians 4:9 (Now this, "*He ascended*": what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?)

Keep in mind that Christ's body did not go down into the lower parts of the earth. IN fact, it was lifted up into a carved out tomb and set on an elevated platform. But this says that Jesus descended into the lower parts of the earth.

Ephesians 4:10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

Now that fits very well the view that Hades is within planet earth: "the lower parts of the earth." The next passage is 1 Peter 3:18.

¹Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

¹Peter 3:19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,

¹Peter 3:20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

Here Christ is said to have gone after His death to a place called "prison," and preached (or literally "made a proclamation") to people long since dead – people from the time of Noah. What the proclamation was we are not told by Peter. We know from Luke 9:31 that shortly before His death (on the mount of Transfiguration) Christ spoke to Elijah and Moses about "His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31). The Greek word for departure is *exodus*. Christ was about to accomplish a major Exodus much like Moses had years before. Only this time, the Exodus would be of souls out of prison. Christ took all the saints who were in the Paradise portion of Hades and took them to heaven. Christ told his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you." And He did. From that point on, the moment believers die, they go straight to heaven. And so Christ led an Exodus out of Hades and into the final promised land of heaven (that's Luke 9:31). Whatever His proclamation was when He descended into "the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. 4:9), it is clear that it caused great joy because as a result of Christ's death Isaiah 44:23 calls upon the "lower parts of the earth" to shout for joy. This was a victory march as Christ led the Exodus and announced His victory. Revelation gives the story of the resurrection in the language of a great battle and an Exodus into the wilderness.

Now that was a long detour, and if you want more information, I have an old paper I wrote on the subject of Hades, but let's go back to Acts and finish off the section. Beginning at verse 25 again:

Acts 2:25 For David says concerning Him: "*I foresaw the LORD always before my face,* For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.*"

Acts 2:26 *Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.*

Acts 2:27 *For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*

Acts 2:28 *You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence."*

Though the Jews had been too proud to embrace Jesus previously, Peter makes it unmistakably clear as his sermon progresses that to be ashamed of Jesus is to miss out completely on the fullness of joy that is found in God's presence. We won't look at the rest of Peter's sermon today, but let me close with a few thoughts on verse 28. Jesus says, "You have made known to me the ways of life..." Stephen Charnock makes a wonderful note on this phrase when he comments on Psalm 16. He says, "God hath now opened the way to paradise, which was stopped up by a flaming sword, and made the path plain by admitting into heaven the head of the believing world." Paradise and life has been regained by the Second Adam, and He is the first one to step through those gates and to prepare a place for His people.

So the next phrase says, "You will make me full of joy in Your presence." Psalm 16 adds, "At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." This joy; this fullness of joy is what Christ entered into as our forerunner. This can be your heritage if you put your trust in Jesus Christ. He paid the penalty for your sins with His death, and He has purchased heaven with his life. It is faith that is the key that opens the door and gains entrance to this paradise of God. What an awesome exchange: fullness of joy in God's presence forever. Yet how many people will lose that joy because they are ashamed of Jesus. God offers fullness of joy. May it be a joy that each one of you secures by trusting Jesus. Amen.

Children of God, I charge you to not be ashamed of Jesus or anything that He stands for, but instead, to be willing if necessary, to go outside the camp of respectability and bear the shame that others may heap upon you – knowing that true fullness of joy can only come through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hades: The place of the dead *before* the resurrection of Christ.

The place of the dead is called "Sheol" in the Hebrew and "Hades" in the Greek. However, not all are agreed on how to translate the word, and most versions that translate it give different renderings in different places. Sometimes they translate Sheol as "hell" (cf. Deut. 32:22; Psalm 18:5; etc.), sometimes as "the pit" (cf. Numb. 16:30,33; Job 17:16; etc.) and sometimes as "the grave" (cf. Gen. 37:35; 42:38; 44:29,31; etc.). But none of these translations is appropriate, and it seems passing strange that three totally different meanings can be ascribed to the same word. My position is that in the Old Testament period all (both righteous and wicked) went to a subterranean place for souls. This place had two compartments divided by a great gulf which could not be passed over (Luke 16:26), and with gates (Job 17:16). **Torment Sheol/Hades** (my name for it) is called in the Bible the "lowest part of Sheol" (Deut. 32:22; Psalm 86:13) or "the depths of Sheol" (Prov. 9:18). Notice that the rich man "*lifted up* his eyes" in Luke 16:23 even though Lazarus was also in Sheol/Hades. Torment Sheol/Hades is a place of torment (Luke 16:23-31), pain (Psalm 116:3), "sorrows" (2 Sam. 22:6) and burning fire (Deut. 32:22; Luke 16:23-24). This has led many people to translate these passages as "hell," but notice that in Revelation 20:14 Sheol/Hades is clearly distinguished from the lake of fire: "Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire." Torment Sheol is also a place where the dead communicate

with each other (Isaiah 14:9,10; Ezekiel 32:21-33; cf. Luke 16:19-31). **Paradise Sheol/Hades** was also called "Abraham's bosom" by the Jews (cf. Luke 16:22) because at death a believer is said to be "gathered unto his people" (Gen. 25:8,17; 35:29; 49:33) or to have "rested with his fathers" (1 Kings 2:10; 11:43; 14:20; etc.). The Paradise portion of Sheol/Hades was "afar off" (Luke 16:23) from Torment Sheol/Hades, and was elevated far above the place of torment (cf. Deut. 32:22; Psalm 86:13; Prov. 9:18 with Luke 16:23). It was a place of comfort (Luke 16:25), rest and freedom (Job 3:11-19). Compared to Sheol/Hades, earthly existence was disturbing (1 Sam. 28:15). This was the place Christ was referring to when He said to the thief on the cross "Today you will be with Me in Paradise." (More on this in a moment, but first an objection.)

Now some may object and say that the thief on the cross went to heaven. But if Christ was in heaven with the thief, how could he say after His resurrection, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father" (John 20:17) Indeed, how could Ephesians 4:8-10 say that Christ had to "first descend into the lower parts of the earth" before He could "ascend" to heaven? For three days and three nights Christ's "*soul*" was in Sheol/Hades (Psalm 16:10; 49:15; Acts 2:31-32). Each of those passages distinguish between Christ's soul and His body. His soul was released from Sheol and His body was preserved from corruption. Romans 10:7 makes it clear that when Christ came up from the dead, He ascended from "the abyss." The abyss (translated "the pit") was the prison place of certain vicious demons (Rev. 9; 11:7; 17:8; Luke 8:31; Matt. 8:29; cf also Tartarus 2 Pet. 2:4) and is where evil men are cast (Rev. 20:3). Isaiah 14:15 uses Sheol and Abyss as synonyms. Speaking of Satan it says, "Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit." Notice the use of the phrase "*lowest depths of the pit.*" The only part of the pit; the only part of Sheol/Hades that Satan had access to was the "lowest part." Thus, according to Romans 10:7, the abyss was the place where Christ was for three days. Thus, the thief joined Christ in Paradise Sheol/Hades. The truth of the matter is that heaven was not yet prepared to receive the Old Testament saints and be made into the glorious New Testament paradise. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1-4). Until the resurrection, no one had been to the highest heaven (though some had been caught away in the atmospheric heaven to be buried in another place - like Elijah and Moses). (See footnote 1.) Christ made this very clear when He said, "*No one* has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven." (John 3:13). No one but the pre-incarnate Christ had been to heaven.^[1] All Old Testament saints went "*down* into Sheol" (Gen. 37:35)

The following is some confirming evidence that Sheol/Hades is always the subteranean place of the dead. Consider Genesis 37:31-35. Jacob says, "I will go down into the grave to my son in mourning" (v. 35). The Hebrew word for "grave" is Sheol. Jacob thought Joseph had been eaten by animals, so surely he could not mean that he would join Joseph in a grave, or even in a grave like Joseph. Joseph simply was not in a grave. He was in the subteranean place of the dead. Likewise, when Samuel was brought back from the dead, he did not come down from heaven, but came "up out of the earth." (1 Sam. 28:11-16). And "Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Interestingly, Samuel told Saul, "Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me." (v. 19). Those who believe in soul sleep might try to say that he just meant that they

would join him in the grave. But in chapter 31 we read that Saul didn't make it to the grave. He was hung on a wall for a day and then burned. Clearly Samuel was referring to the *souls* of these men. Lest it be thought that Saul was a believer, it should be pointed out that Samuel called Saul God's enemy (v. 16). Again, this is further proof that both the righteous and the wicked went to Sheol/Hades, and though there was a great gulf fixed between the righteous and the wicked, they were in the same place, and were no doubt able to converse to some extent like Abraham and the rich man did in Luke 16. Jonah actually died when he was in the belly of the fish. He begins his prayer in the belly of the fish, but finishes it "in the hollow of Sheol." (2:1-2). Though it is possible that this is figurative, 2:6-7 seem to indicate that he actually died: "I went down to the moorings of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God." If it be thought strange that Jonah could talk out of Sheol to God, consider the three other times when that happened (Ezekiel 32:21; Isaiah 14:9-20; Luke 16:19-31).

Heaven during the time of Christ's burial

Christ did not visit heaven (as to His humanity) during the three days that His body was dead (John 20:17). Rather, He visited Paradise Sheol/Hades (Psalm. 16:10; 49:15; Luke 23:43; Acts 2:31-32; Rom. 10:6-7; Eph. 4:7-10; 1 Pet. 3:18-20). The last passage does not say that He "preached" (as KJV has it). The Greek word is *kerusso* and simply means that He made some kind of proclamation. What the proclamation was we are not told by Peter. We know that Christ spoke to Elijah and Moses about "His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31) shortly before His death. The Greek word for departure is *exodus*. Christ was about to accomplish a major Exodus much like Moses had years before. Only this time, the Exodus would be of souls out of prison. And thus Ephesians says that at Christ's resurrection "He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Eph. 4:8).^[2] Whatever His proclamation was when He descended into "the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. 4:9), it is clear that it caused great joy because as a result of Christ's death Isaiah 44:23 says, "Sing, O heavens [ie. the angels], for the LORD has done it! Shout, you *lower parts of the earth* [ie. Old Testament saints]." This was a victory march as Christ led the Exodus and announced His victory. Revelation gives the story of the resurrection in the language of a great battle and an Exodus into the wilderness.

Heaven after Christ's resurrection.

The question then comes, when did the first saint enter heaven? There are different answers given. Some say it was at Christ's ascension. However, I believe it was sooner. Matthew 27:50-53 is a clear proof, and I will quote from the NKJV for a literal translation as paraphrases have tended to obscure the meaning: "Jesus, when He had cried out again with a loud voice, yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and *coming out of the graves after His resurrection*, they went into the holy city and appeared to many." This is the only correct translation of the time frame for their coming out of the graves. Any who translate it that they came out of the graves before Christ did, violate many Scriptures which state that Christ was the *first* to rise

from the dead (Acts 26:23; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 15:20,23; Rev. 1:5 and Col. 1:12-15 with Psalm 1 and Acts 13:33).

Since these saints were released from captivity and given bodies, it is clear that the time frame for Ephesians 4 is prior to the ascension. But where were the saints during the forty day period of Acts 1:3? There are two possibilities. One is that Christ ascended twice - once for the Exodus, and once for His coronation. The proponents of this view say that Christ did not permit Mary to cling to Him in John 20:17 since He had not yet ascended to the Father. However, later in the day He allowed them to hold Him by the feet (Matt. 28:9). The time period between these two appearances was when He as High Priest presented the blood as it were before the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies (cf. Lev. 16) and came out of the Heavenly Temple to make His declaration of acceptance. This would give time for the resurrected saints to appear before others in Jerusalem before they ascended in Christ's coronation ascension. The other interpretation is that there is only one ascension, and that Christ's statements to Mary were concerning clinging, not touching. Thus, on this interpretation, the saints would be at large for the forty day period (but perhaps like Christ's resurrection body were not always immediately recognizable or seen). If this is correct, then just as Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years, they waited for 40 days prior to entering into the final Canaan. I am not dogmatic on the time frame of ascension, but the following Scriptures should be studied as supplemental information concerning a resurrection of Old Testament saints.

Hosea 6:1-3 "Come, and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth."

Isaiah 26:19 "Your dead shall live; Together with My dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the departed spirits" [literal Hebrew. See New King James Version and NASB margin also]

Ezekiel 37 speaks of the resurrection of the whole house of Israel and their entering into the land given to them. *Hebrews 11* speaks of the land that O.T. saints looked for was a "heavenly country" and a "heavenly Jerusalem." It is a better homeland. That kingdom cannot be inherited apart from resurrection. Prior to Christ's coming, that kingdom and all the promises relating to it were not inherited by O.T. saints (v. 39) since God was planning something better for us in order "that they should not be made perfect apart from us." Their "perfection" or resurrection is tied up with those of us who are presently making kingdom conquest in some way. Their resurrection could not happen until the New Covenant people came into existence. But apparently their resurrection did happen since we are "surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses" (12:1) as they rule with Christ from heaven above. Notice too that Ezekiel 37 speaks of the bones being exposed for a period of time before they are resurrected. In the same way, Matth 27 speaks of the O.T. saints as being exposed with open graves until after Christ was raised.

Daniel 12:1-4,13 "At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time [see Matthew 24 which identifies this as the Jewish war ending in 70 A.D.] And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. And many [notice the same word as in Matt 27:52-53] of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever. But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." Notice that John in the book is commanded not to seal the book since the time is at hand. See also the first century context of almost all "last days", end times verses. **verse 13 says**, "But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."

John 5:24-29 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the *hour is coming, and now is*, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for *the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves* will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." Two separate resurrections are being contrasted.

Ephesians 4:8-10 "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? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

Hebrews 12:23 we have not come to mount Zion, but to the heavenly Jerusalem, the angels, etc. and "to the general assembly and church of the *firstborn who are registered in heaven*, to God the Judge of all, to the *spirits of just men made perfect* . . ." The "firstborn from the dead" is a phrase used of Christ's resurrection and is a synonym for "firstfruits from the dead" (Cf Col. 1:12-15,18 with Psalm 1, Acts 13:33; 1 Cor. 15:20,23; Rev. 1:5). Thus "firstborn" here may be a reference to the church of Christ, or the church of the resurrected saints. Likewise, "spirits of just men made perfect" certainly refers to spirits who have already been completed by means of the resurrection. The phrase, "church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven" is a reference to a climactic change that has occurred with O.T. saints. They are now registered in heaven rather than Sheol/Hades.

Revelation 20:1ff. The first resurrection is Christ and all those resurrected with Him.

Matthew 12:39-42 "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh *will rise in the judgment with this generation* and condemn it,

because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South *will rise up in the judgment with this generation* and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here." Remember Christ's statement, "now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself. This He said, signifying by what death He would die." Christ's death and resurrection then was the judgment on that generation in some sense.

Revelation 11:18

Job 19:25-27

Luke 20:34-38 "And Jesus answered and said to them, 'The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But *those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead*, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. Now even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him."

Christ Prepared a place for His people (John 14) and transferred Paradise to heaven (2 Cor. 12:1-4)

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1. Some have thought that Enoch and Elijah were caught up into the third heaven. However, that would be a flat contradiction of Christ's statement in John 3:13. Furthermore, the Bible says nothing about Enoch being caught up bodily. It says simply, "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." How or where God took him is not stated. 2 Kings 2:11 is more troublesome. It says, "suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." But it should be noted that there are three heavens and "went up into heaven" could easily mean "went up into the air." Secondly, it should be noted that the prophets thought that God had cast his body on the ground somewhere (2 Kings 2:16-18). Their concept of heaven did not allow the idea of a human body being there yet. So they wanted to bury the body. Thirdly, the reason for taking Elijah away is probably the same reason God removed Moses' body from the people (cf. Deut. 34:6). God purposely removed his body so that no one could set up a shrine. But it is likely that his body was buried by God as was the body of Moses. Moses was whisked away from the people as well, and his body was buried so that it could not be found. Satan was greatly interested in taking the body, but was not allowed (Jude 9). His use of it as a shrine was not doubt intended. Thus, since 2 Kings 2:11 is the only passage which would contradict the old view, and since it is easily capable of an alternate interpretation, it in no way discredits our thesis. ☐
 2. The question might come up, "Why does it say that saints were in captivity?" Well, first it should be admitted that that is precisely what the text says about them, and thus they could not be in heaven yet. Secondly, we have seen that even Paradise Sheol is described as a place with bars, gates and a great gulf. Not until redemption was actually accomplished could the gates be opened (Rev. 20:1). There had to be a time in history when sins were definitively put away (Heb.

9:26; 10:4). However, because Christ's redemption was sure, salvation, and the glories of Paradise were enjoyed by Old Testament saints in a provisional way. □