

“What to do with the Descent?”
Orthodox Catechism, Lord’s Day 17,
Q & A 43
GCC, Sunday School, 6/19/22

Q. 43 Why is there added, “He descended into hell”?

A. That in my greatest pains and most grievous temptations I may support myself with this comfort, that my Lord Jesus Christ has delivered me (by the unspeakable distresses, torments, and terrors of His soul, into which He was plunged both before and then especially when He hung on the cross) from the straits and torments of hell.

Introductory remarks

A. HC authors take the metaphorical view

B. My Dissent Regarding the Descent

I humbly submit that Jesus Christ, between his death and resurrection, by means of his soul, descended into the underworld, to proclaim victory to the spirits in prison, transform the concept of Paradise, and triumph over Death and Hades for our salvation.

I. Brief Word on Creeds and Opinions of the Church

II. Death, the Afterlife, and the Intermediate State in the OT and Second Temple Judaism

A. Sheol (לִישׁוֹן) and Hades (Ἅδης) in the OT

1. Righteous and unrighteous go there

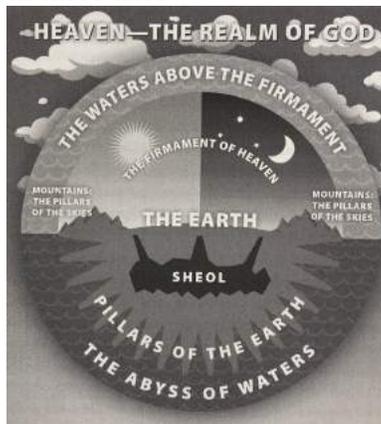
a. The Righteous, Jacob (Gen 37:35) and Samuel (1 Sam 28:11–19)

b. The Unrighteous, Korah (Num 16:30, 33), wicked kings (Isa 14:9–11), and wicked in general (Ps 48:15–16)

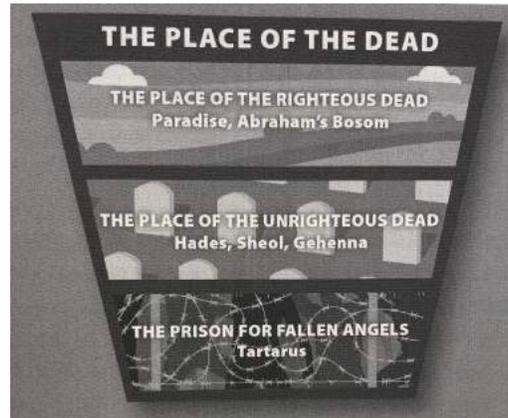
B. Second Temple Judaism

1. In 2TJ, there is development of the after-life/intermediate state.

2. Second, the world in three tiers



3. Third The realm of the dead is highly developed as the underworld with different compartments. In each compartment, they receive a foretaste of their eternal destiny.
 - a. Paradise [Elysium]—for the righteous
 - b. Hades—for the wicked
 - c. Abyss/Tartarus—for disobedient angels



III. NT Texts that Teach or Imply the Descent

- A. All three compartments of Hades are accepted and used in the NT
- B. Jesus' Preaching Tour Consisted of two things:
 1. Jesus Proclaims Victory to Spirits in Prison [Tartarus] (1 Peter 3:19–20 and 2 Peter 2:4)
 2. Jesus Emptying Saints from Hades (Paradise) and transforming the concept of Paradise (1 Peter 4:6)
- C. Strong man must be overcome (Rev 1:18; Matt 12:29)
- D. Death and Hades Ultimately Thrown into the Lake of fire (*Gehenna*)

IV. Application

- A. The Full gospel is that Christ conquered death
- B. Elucidates and accentuates the covenant sign of *baptism*
- C. Catholic Faith
- E. Children of the Risen Christ Do not Fear death