**The Strangest Part of the Creed: He Descended into Hell**

1 Peter 3:18-19

The Creed tells us that Jesus did this of His own \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Whatever the phrase “He descended into hell” means, it didn’t happen by accident, but by our Lord’s divine design. Wherever He went and whatever He did there, He went there and He did it on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1) **Psalm 139:7-8**

The phrase “in the depths” translates the Hebrew word \_\_\_\_\_\_, which the King James Version translates with the word “\_\_\_\_”

2) **Colossians 2:15**

By His bloody death on the cross, Christ triumphed over Satan and his demons in all their various ranks and titles. The cross was a decisive \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for the Son of God.

3) **I Peter 3:18-19**

First, there is the Hebrew word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. A very common word in the Old Testament, it refers to the shadowy realm of the dead. Sheol is where dead people go when they die. Sometimes it is translated as “grave.”

Second, there is the Greek word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which to us means “hell” but in the New Testament, it is the equivalent of the Hebrew sheol.

Third, there is the Greek word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which always refers to the place we call “hell,” the place of fire and brimstone. It is the place of eternal torment.

I. **What it can’t mean**

**First, it can’t mean that Jesus offered salvation to those who were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ dead**.

**Second, this phrase cannot mean that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the flames of hell**.

Third, whatever else this phrase might mean, **it can’t mean that Jesus did anything between his death and resurrection that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

II. **What it might mean**

In the Middle Ages various writers developed an elaborate doctrine called “*the harrowing of \_\_\_\_\_*.” Many people believed that between His crucifixion and resurrection, Christ went to the regions of darkness and proclaimed His victory over the devil and the demons.

If you ask me if this is true, I will have to say that I don’t know. I think it’s a **plausible** inference from various Bible passages, but we can’t be certain.

Do not miss the larger point: The death of Christ brought startling changes in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ world, most of which remain hidden to us. I think the Bible gives us hints and glimmers of the truth, just enough to let us know that something monumental happened “behind the scenes” as a result of Christ’s death.

III. **What it must mean**

A. **Christ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ experienced death**

This is the primary meaning of “He descended into hell.”

B. **Christ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ defeated the devil**

Here are five ways the devil was defeated by the cross of Christ:

**1. His head was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_—Genesis 3:15**

**2. His works were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_—I John 3:8**

**3. His power was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_—Hebrews 2:15**

**4. His demons were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_—Colossians 2:15**

**5. His doom was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_—John 16:11**

What should this truth mean to us?

1) **We need not fear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**.

2) **The work of salvation is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ complete**. “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

3) **The devil is now a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tiger**.

Hear the words of Martin Luther: “**Through Christ hell has been torn to pieces and the devil’s kingdom and power utterly destroyed … so that it should no longer harm or overwhelm us.**”

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