

# Jesus in Sheol/Hades

When I was about 30 years old a very dedicated elderly Christian woman at church came up to me and asked “Say, Cliff what do you think happened to all those who died before Christ?” Being taken aback I replied honestly “I don’t know. ... I guess they were judged by the law they lived under.” On rare occasion after that, the question crossed my mind. I repeated the same answer to myself ... and let it go.

Have you ever wondered about the implications of my “pat” answer? **My answer implies:**

- 1) God had different plans for salvation; one for those who lived after Christ, one for the Jews before Christ, and at least one for pre-Christ Gentiles. And yet the Bible says nothing about multiple plans of salvation!!! To the contrary the Bible puts great stress on the one plan for salvation for all and the fairness of God.
- 2) John 3:16 does not apply to all of humanity, but only those who lived after Christ. Thus implying when Jesus said “The world” He only meant the post-Jesus world.
- 3) Some people, actually **many** people, were saved without the benefit of the blood of Christ and the message of the Gospel!!! And ...
- 4) We have no information about where Jesus was and what He did while His body was in the tomb.

And these are just four reasons why **my answer was wrong**, there are many others! Last April I wrote and posted a much better answer. But a friend on mine, after reading my new answer, asked several questions and made several comments which demonstrated a need for some additional evidence and certain clarifications. Hence this new effort.

The purpose of this paper is to provide sufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt:

- A) The spirits of all people who died before Christ went to the same place (Sheol) where they were **unconscious**, Ecclesiastics 9:5-10.
- B) When Jesus died His spirit went to Sheol/Hades, Acts 2:25-31.
- C) While there Jesus preached to those spirits imprisoned by unconsciousness, 1 Peter 3:18b-20a.
- D) Those who heard this message lived, John 5:25, and were led to heaven by Christ, Ephesians 4:8-10, all before His bodily resurrection.

## **A) The spirits of all people who died before Christ went to the same place - Sheol, Ecclesiastics 9:5-10.**

To begin this study we must note the interesting fact that in the Old Testament all spirits, both good and bad, went to a holding place called Sheol at death. This fact is very important to remember as we proceed in this study. Please verify this by reading several of the 63 verses in the Old Testament using the word “Sheol,” only the ASV, ESV, RSV or YLT uses “Sheol” in their translations. **See a complete list of all 63 verses from three translations in the Appendix.** For example, check Genesis 42:38, Psalms 30:3, 49:15, 86:13, 89:48 (these verses in Psalms specify their souls went to Sheol), Ezekiel 32:21, but most especially Ecclesiastics 9:5-10, ESV

**5 For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. 6 Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun. 7 Go, eat your bread in joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do. 8 Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head. 9 Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. 10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.**

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Verse 10 from NIV **Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.**

Verse 10 from RSV: **Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.**

These descriptions of Sheol are very clear. In Sheol there will be no *work, thought/planning, knowledge* nor *wisdom!* If none of those things existed, what's left? What do the spirits in Sheol know or do? ... Maybe nothing!

Before we go further must define two words: conscious and unconscious.

**Webster's New World Dictionary**, Third college edition.

conscious - **1** having a feeling or knowledge (*of* one's own sensations, feelings, etc. or *of* external things); knowing or feeling (*that* something is or was happening or existing); aware;  
cognizant **2** able to feel and think; in the normal waking state **3** aware of oneself as a thinking being; knowing what one is doing and why  
unconscious - **1** a) not endowed with consciousness; mindless b) temporarily deprived of consciousness  
**2** not aware (*of*) **3** not known, realized, or intended; **4** not aware of one's own existence; not conscious of self

Compare the condition in Sheol, no *work, thought/planning, knowledge* nor *wisdom*, with the definitions of unconsciousness and it seems it might be reasonable to use this word to describe those spirits in Sheol. This might explain why the word "sleep" is used several times to refer to the spirits of the dead; alive but unconscious.

Therefore these spirits in Sheol were resting, basically alive (because no spirit ever dies) but unconscious, ... just waiting. Given God's great love for all mankind this is the only logical and scripturally consistent condition for all those who died before Christ's cleansing blood was shed. Consider the following passages to support this conclusion.

Hebrew 9:15-17,

¶ **Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. 16 For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. 17 For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.**

The transgressions committed under the first covenant, to say nothing of the sins of the Gentiles, were not forgiven until the death of Jesus. What happened to the spirits of all those who died before Jesus? If they were conscious then those spirits experienced pain or comfort. **If pain** then they did so without having an opportunity to know Jesus or His gospel, and they would suffer this pain, at least, until Jesus died. **If comfort** then they did so without the forgiveness of sins, which did not happen until Jesus died. Neither option is reasonable nor scriptural.

But, what if those spirits were unconscious, just waiting for the death of Jesus? This is both reasonable and scriptural, Ecclesiastes 9:10.

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Romans 3:23-26,

**19 ¶ Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

God “passed over” the former sins, that is, did not punish them in a permanent sense, to show His righteousness “at the present time.” Paul was referring to the preaching of the Gospel in his day, giving all an opportunity to accept Christ and manifest faith. So what happened to the spirits of those who died before this “present time”? Were they in comfort or pain? Or would an unconscious state be more consistent with Bible teaching?

Acts 13:32-39.

**And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, 33 this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm,**

**“You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you.’**

**34 And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way,**

**“I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’**

**35 Therefore he says also in another psalm,**

**“You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’**

**36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, 37 but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. 38 Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything 39 from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.**

Compare Acts 2:25-31 to the above verses 35-37. Since no man could be freed from the guilt of sins by the Law of Moses, what happened to all those spirits who were separated from their bodies at death before Christ?

Because of all this evidence it seems reasonable that these spirits in Sheol were resting, basically alive but unconscious, ... just waiting. Given God’s great love for all mankind this is the only logical and scripturally consistent condition for all those who died before Christ’s cleansing blood was shed.

If this conclusion is denied, we must have scriptural and/or logical evidence to justify our denial. In addition to the lack of adequate evidence to support this denial the necessary implications from such a denial is totally unacceptable. If the spirits of people who died before Christ were conscious then good people during the Old Testament time went to a place of comfort without having their sins forgiven and the bad people from that time went to a place of punishment without even one opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel! And the most well known passage in all the Bible, John 3:16, only applies to those who lived after Christ! Can we harmonize this with the great love and complete fairness of God and the plain words of Ecclesiastics 9:5-10?

Does the New Testament ever refer to this place, Sheol?

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## **B) When Jesus died His spirit also went to Sheol/Hades, Acts 2:25-31.**

When the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek sometime between 285 and 247 B.C. (called the Septuagint or LXX) the translators used the Greek word *Hades* for the Hebrew word *Sheol*, 59 of the 63 times *Sheol* was translated. Therefore the Greek word *Hades* **can** represent the same idea as the Hebrew word *Sheol*. But does the New Testament ever use the word *Hades* in this sense?

Psalms 16:8-10 (quoted in Acts 2:25-28).

**8 ¶ I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. 10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.**

Acts 2:24-32 (RSV)

**24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. 25 For David says concerning him,**

**‘I saw the Lord always before me,  
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;**

**26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;  
my flesh also will dwell in hope.**

**27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,  
or let your Holy One see corruption.**

**28 You have made known to me the paths of life;  
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’**

**29 “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.**

Please note that the Holy Spirit inspired David to write the Hebrew word *Sheol* in Psalms 16:10 and in quoting this passage in Acts 2:27 the same Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write the Greek word *Hades*. Thus we have an inspired translation of the Hebrew word *Sheol* into the Greek word *Hades*. Therefore, in this context, the very best Greek word to translate the Hebrew word *Sheol* is *Hades*! Acts 2:31 confirms that David in Psalms 16 was prophesying that Jesus would follow the pattern of all others who died under the Old Law, that is, at death his spirit went to *Sheol/Hades*, the same place David went as specified in Psalms 16:10 and Acts 2:27. Neither David nor Jesus was left in *Sheol/Hades*. Jesus left *Hades* before his resurrection, when did David leave *Hades*? You will see the answer to this question as we present the following evidence.

But how can the New Testament use *Hades* to mean a place of unconsciousness? We all know the story of The Rich Man who died and went to *Hades* (Luke 16:19-31), where it was certainly **NOT** a place of **unconsciousness**! Lazarus went to a place of comfort, therefore, also not **unconscious**! And they had no way to change the situation! It was permanent!

Is it possible that *Hades* has two meanings? We all know that almost every word in the English and Greek languages has more than one meaning. Simply get any Dictionary or Lexicon and check the meaning of any word at random to verify this point. The Greek word *Hades* does have these two meanings: 1) the place of all the spirits of those who died before Christ; i.e. *Sheol*, and 2) the place of torment for evil spirits, i.e. Hell. (For an excessive amount of evidence to prove this point see “Hades has two meanings in the New Testament” on the website [CLIFFBAIRD.WORDPRESS.COM](http://CLIFFBAIRD.WORDPRESS.COM). Please also check “Luke 16:19-31, Parable or history?” on the same website)

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Have we just proven a contradiction in the Bible, or an error in our logic, since we know that Luke 23:43 teaches that Jesus' spirit went with the thief on the cross to Heaven, where God is, and at the same time we have now proven that His spirit went to Hades. Is it not possible that He simply went to both places? This answer violates no scripture nor principle of interpretation nor logic. The scriptures say Jesus went to be with God in paradise, Luke 23:43, 46. The scriptures also say He was in Hades (Sheol), Acts 2:31. Which scripture is correct? Both are correct! He went to both places, as confirmed by Ephesians 4:7-10, which is studied in detail in section D.

### C) While in Hades Jesus preached to those spirits imprisoned by unconsciousness, 1 Peter 3:18b-20a.

God would not leave David's soul in Sheol/Hades, Psalms 16:10. When was David redeemed from Sheol/Hades? Why did Jesus go to Sheol/Hades? What did Jesus do while there? We are given a detail answer to these questions in verses 18b through 20a of First Peter 3. Since we must study any scripture in context we will read 6 verses from the NIV, 1 Peter 17-22.

**17 It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, 19 through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison 20 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, 21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also— not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience towards God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.**

As we read this passage we see that Peter is making several points. The most well known is in verse 21 where he talks about the importance of baptism. However, we are focusing on the underlined portion above, verse 18b through 20a. Let us look at several translations of each of these three verses, one verse at a time:

#### (NIV) 18b He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,

ASV - being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

RSV - being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit;

ESV - being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

KJV - being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

NKJV - being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

We should also compare four Interlinears:

1897, Berry's - having been put to death in flesh but made alive by the Spirit

1958, Marshall's - being put to death, on one hand, in [the] flesh, quickened, on the other, in [the] spirit

1990, Brown & Comfort - having been put to death in [the] flesh yet-having been made alive in spirit

2008, Mounce - He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit

Notice the similarity in all these examples in the description of the death of Christ. No variation of significance. But the translation of next phrase has significant differences at the end, "quickened" (or made alive) and "by the Spirit" (or in [the] spirit). All this variety is from the last two words in verse 18: ζωοποιηθεις (to make alive, quickened) and πνευματι (spirit).

In the Greek manuscripts the second word πνευματι (spirit) is never capitalized, even when modified by the word *holy*, as in Holy Spirit. So when the word *spirit* is alone (without the word *holy*) the decision to capitalize

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or not to capitalize it in English is based solely on the context. If the definite article is present implying *the spirit*, it sometimes means The Holy Spirit (Matthew 4:1, cf. Luke 4:1) sometimes not (Matthew 5:3, 26:41, 27:50). But if there is no definite article and no modifying adjective like *Holy Spirit*, *spirit of God*, or *spirit of the Lord* and no contextual necessity that the spirit mentioned be supernatural, then it refers to the spirit(s) of man. Simple observation of the Greek plus 3 of the 4 Interlinears signifying the definite article is not present by putting the article in brackets, i.e. [the], prove this is exactly the case in 1 Peter 3:18b.

Therefore the *spirit* in verse 18b is the spirit of Jesus not The Holy Spirit. This implies Brown & Comfort's Interlinear gives this translation, i.e. "having been put to death in [the] flesh yet-having been made alive in spirit." This wording basically says "Jesus died in body but lived in spirit," or in common language "His body died but His spirit lived." This simple statement clarifies the important fact that Jesus lived while his body was in the tomb. This, of course, is true for every one! When any human body goes to the grave the spirit still lives, somewhere. The location of that spirit depends on the time of the death. If the death occurred before Christ, the human spirit went to Sheol (Ecclesiastics 9:10 and most of the O.T. verses using Sheol), if the death occurred after Christ the human spirit went/will go to Heaven or Hell, Luke 16:19-31.

We must now look at the previous word in our context, ζωοποιηθεις, translated as *quicken*ed or *made alive*.

If we choose to use *made alive* as the translation we must realize it is a figurative use of this Greek word. Of course His spirit was not literally "**made** alive" as that can only happen if it (his spirit) was not alive, i.e. dead. Since no spirit ever dies this Greek word has to be taken figuratively, meaning enlivened, vivified, revived, or quickened, etc. Although BDAG Greek-English Lexicon does allow this figurative definition for the word ζωοποιηθεις, it gives no examples from the Bible. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, says "ζωοποιηθεις ... **2.** to cause to live, make alive, give life: ..... **by spiritual power to arouse and invigorate**, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Galatians 3:21; ... of the spirit, ζωοποιηθεις πνευματι, quickened as respects the spirit, endued with new and greater powers of life, **1 Peter 3:18**"

Therefore, the best translation of this verse is from Marshall's interlinear "on one hand, being put to death in body, on the other hand, invigorated in spirit." Showing this contrast: physical death versus spiritual refreshing. In this invigorated spirit, Jesus went and preached to the spirits in prison. These spirits in prison are identified as those who disobeyed long ago in the time of Noah.

### NIV - 19 through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison.

ASV - in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison,

RSV - in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison,

ESV - in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison,

KJV - By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

NKJV - by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,

We should also compare four Interlinears:

1897, Berry's - in which also to the in prison spirits having gone he preached

1958, Marshall's - in which indeed to the in prison spirits going he proclaimed

1990, Brown & Comfort - in (by) which also to the in prison spirits having gone he made a proclamation

2008, Mounce - in which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison

The somewhat unusual similarity of 6 different version and 4 Interlinears is telling. The message is clear, after His death, while His body was in the tomb, Jesus' invigorated spirit went somewhere to preach to the *spirits in*

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*prison*. We only know of two places Jesus went at death, Hades/Sheol, Acts 2:27, 31 and paradise/heaven Luke 23:43, Ephesians 4:8-10. If He went anywhere else we have no scriptural testimony saying so, and since the Bible is complete we can conclude He went nowhere else. If 1 Peter 3:19 is not a description of what He did in Hades/Sheol, why did He go there, where all the spirits of all people who died before Christ were residing?

Some have thought this verse implies Jesus is here speaking to angelic beings. But since *spirits* is plural we only have 2 possible meanings: angels or human spirits of the dead. Because we have absolutely no Biblical information about there being **any** benefit, need, or desire for Jesus to preach to the angels we can only conclude the *spirits* mentioned are the spirits of all humans who died before Christ. Yes, we do have additional scriptural authority for saying this, 1 Peter 4:6, RSV, ESP, KJV, or ASV:

**For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged indeed according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.**

We have no command, example, necessary inference **nor even hint** from God's word that angels could, should or would repent and change! Therefore what evidence do we offer to support the idea that Jesus was preaching to the Angelic beings "in prison?" Who would benefit from this preaching to angels in prison? After all, angels knew the gospel: being present at his birth, Luke 2:8-15; demons saying "you are the son of God," Mark 3:11, Luke 4:34, 41; present at His arrest, "I could pray and God will send twelve legions of angels ...," Matthew 26:53; The Devil tempted Him in the wilderness, Luke 4:1-13. Since Jesus created all things, John 1:3, he also created the angels! Which is more reasonable, the angels knew who created them or that Jesus did it in secret and the angels did not know it? After all Jesus was God, John 1:1! Then when Jesus was "made a little lower than the angels," the angels were unaware of the position He held before this? Plus, angel(s) are mentioned 47 times just in the synoptic Gospels. Could anyone support the concept that the angels, either good or bad, did not know who Jesus was and what He taught? And even if they did not know, why conclude Jesus preached to them with absolutely no scriptural support and no logical benefit for anyone?

However the human spirits in Sheol did not know Jesus nor the Gospel He taught, therefore they were perfect subjects for His preaching!!

Some have suggested we can learn what Jesus preached to the spirits in prison in 1 Peter 3:19 by reading what Paul says in **Colossians 2:13-16**:

**NIV - 13 ¶ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. 16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.**

Is this passage clarifying what Jesus was doing when He preached "to the spirits in prison?" If so, whatever He said was to make a *public spectacle* of ... who? Angelic beings? After His death Jesus now feels it appropriate to "triumph over the angels" by proclaiming ..... what? Maybe something like "I am the son of God. I have won (triumphed) over you and died for the sins of the world!" Where is the least Bible hint that Jesus needed to, wanted to, planned to, or received instructions to, preach/proclaim any such thing to angelic beings, or that it would have benefited any who heard him if he had? It seems that this theory has little logical and no scriptural support.

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To verify this conclusion compare the underlined portion of Colossians 2:13-16 above, with these 5 other translations and 4 interlinears.

ASV - ...cross; having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

RSV - ...cross. He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.

ESV - ...cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

KJV - ... cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

NKJV - ...cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Looking at our four Interlinears:

1897, Berry's - ...cross; having stripped the principalities and the authorities, he made a show [of them] publicly leading in triumph them in it.

1958, Marshall's - ...cross; putting off the rulers and the authorities he exposed [them] with openness, triumphing [over] in it.

1990, Brown & Comfort - ...cross; having disarmed the rulers and the authorities he made a show [of them] in public, having triumphed [over] them in (by) it.

2008, Mounce - ...cross. He stripped the principalities and {the} powers of their authority and disgraced them in public by triumphing over them in Christ.

It is clear that in verses 13 and 14 Paul is talking about Christ forgiving our sins, contrasted with the written code (The Old Law) which was against us which He took away, nailing it to the cross. Four of the six above translations and three of the four interlinears indicate a continuation of that thought by **not** starting a new sentence at verse 15. Paul continues that thought talking about putting the "powers that be" to public shame by the cross. In verse 16 Paul starts with *Therefore*, indicating a result of the previous comments about The Law by saying "**Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.**"

What word or group of words supports a change of subject from contrasting The Law with Christianity in verses 13 and 14 to the new subject of the characteristics of angels, or any other supernatural beings, and then returning to the subject of contrasting the Old Law with the New Law in verse 16? In keeping with the concept of context the most natural meaning for *rulers, principalities, powers and authorities* is those in charge of implementing and enforcing The Law, that is, the priesthood, whom He publicly disgraced by dying on the cross. If *rulers, principalities, powers and authorities* refer to angels, how did he: (ASV) made a show of them openly, (RSV) made a public example of **them**, (ESV) put **them** to open shame, (NKJV) made a public spectacle of **them**? If the powers talked about were angels how did he openly, publicly put them to shame? and Why? And where is the supporting evidence for this very dramatic event? The evidence to support *rulers, principalities, powers and authorities* being angelic beings is totally lacking. Even if, for the sake of discussion, we grant the entrance into the context of angelic beings, we still have no help for understanding our passage in 1 Peter 3:19. Consider the following evidence.

There are only two variants in these six translations and four interlinears; 1) the end of verse 14 is either a period or a semicolon, and 2) the last word of verse 15, where the pronoun  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$  is translated as neuter (*it* or *cross*) or masculine (*him* or *Christ*). This particular pronoun can be either masculine or neuter depending solely of the context in which it is used. Which noun is the antecedent to our pronoun  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$ ? Since our pronoun is singular our antecedent must be a singular noun. By the laws of grammar the antecedent is the closest preceding noun that matches the case and number of the pronoun. Any exception to this rule must be clearly seen in the context, i.e. there must be a word or a group of words that substantiate or justify any claimed exception to this grammatical rule. In our case the pronoun is singular and can be either masculine or neuter, therefore the

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antecedent must be a singular neuter (or masculine) noun. Going backwards from our pronoun (the last word in v. 15 ) look at each word individually. The very first singular neuter (or Masculine) noun we come to is “cross,” the last word in verse 14! Maybe that is why four of the six translations and three of the four interlinears chose to identify our pronoun as neuter (*it*), and motivated the NIV to actual translate the pronoun *it* by it’s antecedent noun *cross*! These verses tell us that Jesus “**disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.**” Jesus made a public spectacle of these powers by the **cross**, not by what He preached to the spirits in prison from 1 Peter 3:19.

Therefore these three verses in Colossians 2 tell us a very important action of Christ as He dealt with **the powers and authorities** (or *rulers, principalities*) in place at the time. But these verses give us **NO** information about what He preached, nor to whom He preached it in 1 Peter 3:19.

Some have thought Paul was speaking to this same group in Ephesians 6:12,

**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

This context is completely different than Colossians 2:13. In this verse from Ephesians we have words like “not flesh & blood,” “powers of darkness,” “spiritual forces” and “heavenly realms” which confirm supernatural beings. – No such words or ideas are even hinted at in Colossians 2. Such vague nouns as powers, principalities, rulers and authorities are only defined by the context. These two passages have completely different contexts, therefore cannot imply the same meaning for the words *powers, authorities, rulers or principalities*.

We must now return to our discussion of our main text in 1 Peter 3:18b-20a.

### **19 through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison**

We have not yet discussed the last word in verse 19, *prison*. The first observation is that the word *prison* in this context cannot be physical because it holds spirits and no physical building/prison can contain or restrict spirits. The meaning must be understood in the figurative sense of restricting, limiting or withholding certain freedoms or abilities. Any such restriction could/would be considered a *prison* for those spirits involved. Could spirits who are in a place where **there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom** be considered in a place of restriction, limiting or withholding certain freedoms or abilities, that is, a prison? If “yes” is a reasonable answer to this question then we must think about the possibility that all those who died before Christ and were in Sheol as being in prison, in this figurative sense, as indicated by Ecclesiastes 9:10.

### **20 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.**

This statement is obviously true. Our only question is “Is it exhaustive?” Are the spirits, identified as those “who disobeyed long ago ... in the days of Noah,” the only spirits that received Jesus’ preaching? There are only two possibilities: 1) only the people who lived and disobeyed during Noah’s lifetime received this preaching, or 2) those identified are, figuratively (figure of speech; synecdoche, a part for the whole) representative of all who died before the Gospel of Jesus was preached on earth.

If you chose to believe the first possibility, then there are several questions left to be answered:

- 1) Why only the people during Noah’s time? What about all those who disobeyed before Noah? Did those not deserve to hear the Gospel from the mouth of the Son of God? Or is God a respecter of persons?

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- 2) What about those who *obeyed* God during Noah's time? Did they not **need** to obey the Gospel also, or were they saved without or outside the Gospel? Did they not need the blood of Christ to wash away their sins?? Did they not deserve to hear the Gospel of Christ? Any eternal judgment before Christ died necessitates people receiving comfort without forgiveness or punishment without an opportunity to respond to, or even hear, the Gospel!
- 3) Why are the people of Noah's time more important or why should they get special privilege and not the people who lived and disobeyed in the time of Moses? Or Jeremiah? Or Isaiah? etc., etc., etc.
- 4) Does John 3:16 "God so loved the world ..." mean only part of the world, that part that lived after Christ? Does Hebrews 9:15 only applies to those who lived at the time of Noah? Is Acts 13:38-39 not a generalized statement, but only applies to those who lived at the time of Noah?

These questions, and many more, are not only unanswered, they are unanswerable. This option leaves the impression that God is a respecter of persons, which He is not, Acts 10:34.

If we choose the second option, "the people of Noah's day" represent all people who died before Christ, then this passage is in harmony with all the other scriptures which talk about God loving all mankind and the Gospel being a Gospel for all mankind. One of the most universally accepted characteristics of the Gospel is its universality. If it was to be preached to any who died before the time of Christ, then it must be preached to all who died before the time of Christ. And if **not** preached to **any** who died before the time Christ then God is a respecter of persons, with multiple plans of salvation! Option 2, above, agrees with 1 Peter 4:5-6 which says that the Gospel was preached (past tense) "even to the dead" without qualifying adjectives, implies all the dead received the preaching of the Gospel.

Therefore, the expression "[those] ...who disobeyed long ago ... in the days of Noah..." identifies a group who are representative (figure of speech, synecdoche, a part for the whole) of all those who died before Christ and went to Sheol, Acts 2:25-32. All those who died after Christ had/have a responsibility to obey the gospel of Christ that was/is being preached or receive the immediate judgment at death of Heaven or Hell, Luke 16:19-31.

**There is a position held by some** that says Jesus could not have gone to preach to the dead because that would be giving them (those who died before Christ) a second chance, as if that idea was so bad or unfair that Jesus wouldn't have participated. How many chances would the objector like to impose on people? How many chances do *we* (on this side of the cross) have to obey the Gospel? Should any mere human even discuss the possibility of limiting how many times any other person should hear the Gospel? Why do we humans sometimes want to assume the authority that only belongs to God? Who among us would claim this authority? Or be willing to criticize God for ANY of His actions? (One big difference between God and man: He never thinks He is us!)

Is it possible that the objector does not realize what a very great motivating force the Gospel is?? Having seen, through the eyes of the apostles, having heard, through the words of the New Testament, having talked to Jesus, through prayer, we of all people are blessed so far beyond our feeble ability to express it. Yet we want to deny this opportunity to those who lived before Christ? How is this possible for those who claim to love the lost? Has the objector, or anyone else, taken the position that some don't deserve to know the details of the cleansing blood of Christ, the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God when he willingly gave up His equality with God, took on the limiting "straight jacket" of the human body, suffered untold and untellable physical and mental anguish? etc., etc. All this and much, much more **we** do know and it motivates us to obey and live as Christians, yet we

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can't accept the plain words of Peter that Jesus went to preach this same message to those who died in the days of Noah, because ... well, because ... why? Because "that would be giving them a second chance!!" Could any Christian be so judgmental??

Besides all that, their position is wrong! It is **not** a second chance, it is their *first* chance to respond to the Gospel!! Having never had that opportunity because they died before the Gospel was preached to *anyone*!

**It has been said by some** that the preaching expressed in this passage was but the influence Christ exerted on the people before His incarnation, as hinted at in a few Old Testament scriptures. Let us examine this claim in detail.

Don't forget these spirits in Sheol were unconscious, knowing nothing, having no knowledge or wisdom (Ecclesiastics 9:10, please reread this verse printed on page 1). They were just waiting, until "the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live," John 5:25. Peter describes this event for us in 1 Peter 3:18-19, repeated here for convenience:

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, 19 through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison ..."

In this case it seems helpful to see the above underlined portion from Marshall's Interlinear:

**"being put to death on the one hand in the flesh, quickened on the other hand in [the] spirit in which indeed going to the in prison spirits he proclaimed ..."** ("the" being put in brackets, [the], implies absence of the definite article in the Greek-cb)

Knowing that Christ's spirit went to Sheol/Hades while His body was in the tomb, Acts 2:25-31, how is it reasonable to think this preaching (proclaiming) could have been done over several hundred years prior to His physical birth when this context ties the event to **after** His physical death? And if this preaching is not what Christ did while in Hades/Sheol, where does the Bible tell us what Christ actually did while there and why did He bother to go there at all?

Therefore Christ physically died before he preached to the **spirits** in prison. Therefore this preaching could not have been the influence exerted by Christ in the days of the Old Testament. Three other reasons for this same conclusion are: 1) In our passage he preached to "spirits," but the people He influenced under the old covenant were alive, having bodies. 2) the hearers referred to in 1 Peter 3:19 were all prisoners! The hearers during the Old Testament time were not in prison, literal or figurative! 3) Notice the  $\mu\epsilon\nu$  ...  $\delta\epsilon$  construction from Marshall. On the one hand He was put to death in the body, on the other hand He was quickened **in [the] spirit** in which indeed ... (He) proclaimed. This construction definitely confirms the preaching was done **after** his physical death.

Additional support for this conclusion is available from the very next chapter of Peter's letter, 4: 4-6 (ASV):

**wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: 5 who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged indeed according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.**

Verse 5, "*who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead,*" speaks of the judgment.

Who will be judged? Both the living and the dead. What portion of the dead will be judged? Of course, all the dead will be judged.

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Verse 6, *For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead...* further explains verse 5, as indicated by the introductory word "For." To accomplish the end result that all will be judged, the Gospel was preached even to "the dead." In this context, with no adjectives modifying *the dead*, it must mean **all** the dead, thereby confirming our decision on 1 Peter 3:18b-20a.

### **D) Those who heard the message lived, John 5:25, and were led to heaven by Christ, Ephesians 4:8-10.**

Further consistency is available from John 5:20-29

*For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. 22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. 24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. 25 I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. 28 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.*

All three of the previously used scriptures (Acts 2:25-31, 1 Peter 3:18-22, and 4:4-6) confirm that Jesus spent some time in Hades. We know from Acts 2:27, 31 that the place where Jesus went was the Hades that David went to, i.e. Sheol. This harmonizes perfectly with our decisions regarding 1 Peter 3:18-22, 4:4-6. Do we now have even more confirming evidence from John 5?

Notice the comparison between verse 21, 24, 25 and 28 of John 5:

*21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.*  
*24 whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.*  
*25 a time is coming and **has now come** when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live*  
*28 a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice*  
*29 and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.*

As we all know there are two kinds of death spoken of in the New Testament, physical and spiritual. Spiritual death is to be lost in sin, unsaved, separated from God. Physical death is when the spirit is separated from the body. The body goes to the grave and the spirit goes to ...well, that's what we are trying to determine. In the four cases from John 5 mentioned above, **1)** "dead" in verse 21; **2)** "death" in verse 24; **3)** "dead" in verse 25; and **4)** the words "all who are in their graves" in verse 28, which type of death is spoken of?

Looking at verse 21, the expression "raises the dead" is used only two other times in the New Testament:

Acts 26:8 *Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?*

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2 Corinthians 1:9 *Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.*

Both Acts 26:8 and 2 Corinthians 1:9 are talking about the physically dead being raised to life again. Therefore we must first examine the possibility that the expression “raises the dead” from John 5:21 is also talking about those who are physically dead being raised to life. Since this conclusion violates no principle of hermeneutics and harmonizes with the context and the general teachings of the Gospel we accept that “raises the dead” from John 5:21a means the physically dead being raised to life again in the general resurrection at the second coming, 1 Thessalonians 4:13 ff.

But the last half of John 5:21 says “*even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it*” sounds like a spiritual life, not physical life. John is simply making a comparison between **God** raising the physically dead and “even so” **Christ** raises the spiritual dead by giving spiritual life to whom he pleases. And He pleases to give spiritual life to all who obey him (John 5:24, Hebrews 5:8-9).

Let’s look at the example in John 5:24,

*whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.*

What kind of death is spoken of here? *Whoever hears my word* implies an option, some will hear, others will not. Adding the expression *eternal life* and the expression *will not be condemned* clarifies that the subject here are those who are spiritually dead and being brought to spiritual life by hearing the words of Jesus and believing, thereby becoming spiritually alive, a follower of Christ.

John 5:25 is very unusual.

*25 a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.*

Notice the time “*has now come.*” One important thing about this phrase is that it is NOT in verse 28 where Jesus is talking about the general resurrection. When Jesus says *a time is coming and has now come*, He is describing a current event. Current, in the sense of near future, as in the previous chapter, John 4:23. Here Jesus said to the woman at the well

**“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.”**

The near event spoken of here is the coming of His kingdom, the church, just after His resurrection.

In verse 25 of chapter 5 He is talking about the same time period (...and *has now come*, i.e. a near future event), but what event did He have in mind this time? It is the fact that *the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God*. In John 5:25 the subject is “the dead.” When *the dead* is used without any modifications it means all the dead. This expression, 99 of the 103 times it is used in the New Testament means the physically dead. Thus Jesus is teaching that a time has now come (at the time of His speaking) when all the physically dead will hear His voice **and those who hear will live**. This last clause implies an option, to hear or refuse to hear. Those who hear will live. Is this new life a physical or a spiritual life? Since only those who hear will live, it must be a spiritual life, because if only those who hear will live physically, what happens to those who do not hear? To imply that the non-hearers will not be brought to physical life is to contradict the general resurrection where **all** will be raised, John 5:28-29.

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How can the physically dead hear the voice of Jesus and have spiritual life as a result? We can only conclude that Jesus is here predicting His voyage into Sheol/Hades (1 Peter 3:19) to *preach to those in prison*. This idea is confirmed by Acts 2:27, 31 and 1 Peter 4:5-6 (ASV) *For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead*. With no opposing evidence and with all the corroborating evidence presented here we understand John 5:25 to be a prediction by Jesus of His trip into Sheol/Hades. Verses 28 and 29 of John 5 are plainly talking about the general resurrection which offers no new information for this study.

Our exegesis of John 5:25 harmonizes with Acts 2:27, 31; 1 Peter 3:19, and 1 Peter 4:6 while John 5:28-29 harmonize with all the passages on the general resurrection.

We now turn our attention to Ephesians 4:7-10. The context we will use is Ephesians 4:1-13, as follows from the NIV:

**1 ¶ As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 ¶ Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." 9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ.**

In verses 1-3 Paul uses his credibility, earned by his dramatically changed life since that famous trip to Damascus (Acts 9) and consistently suffering for his faithful life as a Christian (2 Corinthians 11:22 ff.) to the point of being in prison at the time of this writing, he urges humility and love in keeping the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

In Verses 4, 5 and 6 he stresses the oneness of the body, spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, and God. After stressing this oneness he then starts verse 7 with "But." This implies that verse 7 is going to show some kind of contrast to the previous verse, that is, the oneness he just stated does not apply to every aspect of our lives, that is, individual gifts are determined by the grace distributed by Christ. Paul stated: "But to each one of us grace is given as Christ apportioned it." This simply means that each one of us has some set of abilities that is not necessarily common to everyone. This introduces a new subject, i.e. the individual gifts of each Christian.

Verse 8b tells us the prophecy of Psalms 68:18 ("he gave gifts to men") is being fulfilled in the church at Ephesus by the Christians there receiving various gifts from Christ, as specified in verse 7. This same theme of personal gifts is continued in verses 11 through 13. He mentions apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Before each of these nouns he adds the adjective *some*, which implies most Christians will have different gifts. Verses 12 and 13 express strong reasons for these gifts, i.e. so that the church can grow spiritually and each member become a 'full grown man." Let us go back and examine in detail verse 8:

**This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."**

NIV "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train,"

ASV "When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive,"

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NRSV "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive;"

The two Greek words that cause the variation in the later part of the above translations are ηχμαλωτευσεν αιχμαλωσιαν. Three interlinears (Berry's, Marshall's and Comfort & Brown) all say these words are literally translated "he **led** captive captivity," as stated in the ASV and implied by the NRSV. Since captivity itself was taken captive, it (captivity) has lost its power to captivate, or could no longer hold captives, implying the captives were freed and "**led**" by Christ when He went "on high." Then verse 10 explains "*on high*" to be "higher than all the heavens," which must be Heaven. Therefore, Jesus led the freed captives to heaven.

One of the most comforting passages for all who love the truth is 2 Corinthians 1:13 "For we do not write to you anything you cannot read or understand." When the Holy Spirit wrote these words He knew He would make it so, exemplified in **this case** by writing verses 9 and 10 to help us in our understanding of verse 8. The NIV, RSV, KJV, NASB, and ASV all put these two verses in parentheses. I believe the context substantiates this decision. This simply implies that the first part of the quotation in verse 8 and all of verses 9 and 10 have no direct connection with the overall context stated in verses 1 through 13. Without verses 9 and 10 we could only guess as to why the first part of David's quotation was even mentioned! Fortunately we do have these two verses:

**NIV 9** (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? **10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.**)

**ASV 9** (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? **10 He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.**)

Paul starts out in verse 9 by explaining the first part of the quotation from Psalms 68:16. "He ascended" implies that he had previously descended. But the place he previously descended into was "*the lower parts of the earth,*" showing us from where he ascended. But where is this "lower parts of the earth"?

From our previous study of Acts 2:27, 31 we know for certain that Jesus descended into Sheol/Hades after His crucifixion while his body was in the tomb. It was common to use "the lower parts of the earth" and **similar expressions** to refer to Sheol, as in Psalms 30:3, 63:9, Numbers 16:30 and Isaiah 14:15, 44:23. To conclude in this case the expression had a different meaning would require very clear contextual evidence which is simply absent.

We also know, while there, Jesus preached to the "spirits in prison," (1 Peter 3:18-19) and "those who hear will live," John 5:25. From these facts it is clear, "the lower parts of the earth" is best understood as a description of Sheol/Hades.

Verse 10 adds support for this conclusion. "He that descended is the same also that ascended ..." This wording is somewhat unusual. Remember these words were chosen by the Holy Spirit to be the best possible choice for expressing exactly what was in His mind. A human author might have chosen something like "*He ascended implies he also descended to the earth and then he ascended to heaven, in accordance with the will of God.*"

Why repeat "*He that descended is the same also that ascended*"? Maybe to emphasize there was no change in the one who descended by the time he ascended. It seems a case could be made that a man without a body is not the same as the man with a body, and a spirit with a body is not the same as the spirit without a body. ... But why is this important? If we understand verses 9 and 10 to be talking about the time when Jesus was in Sheol/Hades then the passage is harmonious, as Jesus descended into Sheol/Hades **in spirit**, 1 Peter 3:18-19 and ascended to

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heaven **in spirit**, because it was before his resurrection. If we try to understand this passage as describing Jesus' descending to earth, which He did in spirit, and His ascending to heaven at the end of His service on earth (Acts 1) it does not fit because when He ascended He had His new glorified body, therefore He was not "the same also that descended" in spirit. (Compare the "I" in John 20:17. The "I" in verse 17 is different than the spirit who descended into Hades and ascended into heaven, as recorded in Ephesians 4:9-10, because the "I" included His new glorified body.)

Some have said verses 9 and 10 refer to his coming to earth to be born of a virgin, living 33 years as a human, dying on the cross, being put in a tomb, living on earth for 40 days after his resurrection then ascending back to heaven. In this case He descended in spirit and ascended with a new glorified body, which is not the "same as he who descended." Please look at the text again:

**ASV 9 (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)**

How is it possible to find 33 years between the words of verse 9 "***He ascended*** and ***what is it but that he also descended?***" As if "33 years before" had been added to the end of the sentence making it read "***He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth 33 years before?***" This position is so contrary to common understanding of the English language that I hope it needs no further discussion, especially since the idea is repeated in verse 10 "***He that descended is the same also that ascended.***" Again with no indication of a 33 year gap between the descending and the ascending!

Some may try to improve the position by saying *he also descended into the lower parts of the earth* refers only to his physical burial, meaning his descent was from the earth into the lower parts of the earth and his ascent referred to his bodily resurrection. But his burial was in a tomb, that is, a cave. Something you can walk into, Mark 15:46, Luke 23:53. If words have meanings his body did not "descend" into anything, especially not the "lower parts of the earth." It was put in the cave and a "stone was rolled against the **entrance**." So, his descent ***into the lower parts of the earth*** cannot refer to his burial.

Also if his descent refers to his burial, only his body was buried and that body was never seen again. It certainly was not part of his resurrection when his spirit was united with a **new glorified body**. And his old body from the tomb certainly was not part of his ascent into heaven recorded in Acts 1. "***He that descended is the same also that ascended***" certainly could not refer to His burial and resurrection.

Do the scriptures tell us what happened to those who "did **not** hear" when Jesus spoke to the dead, John 5:25? And what Happened to Sheol/Hades after Jesus preached to the spirits there and "led" them to heaven? For a detail discussion of these two questions please read **REVELATION 20:11-15** from the website [CLIFFBAIRD.WORDPRESS.COM](http://CLIFFBAIRD.WORDPRESS.COM)

### **This paper has attempted to present evidence that proves beyond a reasonable doubt:**

- 1) The spirits of all those who died before Christ, went to Sheol where they were all alive but **unconscious**, Ecclesiastes 9:10.
- 2) After His crucifixion, the spirit of Jesus went to Sheol/Hades and preached to the spirits residing there, Acts 2:25-31, 1 Peter 3:18-20.
- 3) Those spirits "who *hear* will live" spiritually (John 5:25) and were "led" by Jesus into heaven, Eph. 4:8-10.

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**Thus proving that all people of all time heard the same saving message, the Gospel, from the same messenger and judge, Jesus, and had the same choice of destinations, Heaven or Hell.**

I hope we can encourage each other to demonstrate our love for the truth as we strive to make our scriptural decisions based solely on the evidence. No Christian can accept a position based on less evidence than an opposing position. Any person who does this is saying God supported the truth with less evidence than a false alternative!

Any comments will be greatly appreciated. .... Cliff at [c2baird@charter.net](mailto:c2baird@charter.net)