

of purgatory; and (3) It appeared late in the creeds of the Church. (In fact, the phrase, "He descended into hell" did not appear in the accepted version of the Apostles' Creed until AD 700. It does not appear in the versions of AD 150 or 350.) As a result, most of the Catechisms or Confessions of the Reformed Churches simply ignored the descent into Hades view. The Roman Catholic Church maintained the article, and gradually a minority of Anglicans and Lutherans came to accept it. In the twentieth century among evangelical churches the view has again become widespread, largely through its espousal by dispensational writers and teachers.

But what Scriptures are employed to support this view? There are several, and we should briefly glance at them.

Matthew 27:52-53 -- "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that slept were raised, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

There is no indication in this reference that this was anything more than a local phenomenon -- in the vicinity of Jerusalem. In addition, it does not say that *all* of the Old Testament saints in the vicinity of Jerusalem were raised, but *many* of them. Further, there is no hint here that these saints were raised because of any descent into Hades, or of any preaching on the part of Christ to those who were purportedly there. And finally, this passage proves too much, since in the descent into Hades, it is the *souls* of the pious Old Testament dead that are freed and taken by Christ with Him to heaven; there is no *resurrection of bodies*. The resurrection of Old Testament saints comes much later, at Christ's return.

Ephesians 4:8-10 -- "Wherefore, he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)"

Two clauses are especially stressed: "He led captivity captive," and "he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth." The first clause, "he led captivity captive," is a quotation from Psalm 68:18. This is