

he or she must be willing to reconsider and modify or change his or her view, no matter how difficult the adjustment.

APPENDIX 2: CHRIST'S ALLEGED DESCENT INTO HADES

For some time the view has been disseminated that during the time between His death and resurrection, Christ descended to the Paradise compartment of HADES, unlocked its gates, brought out with Him all of the souls/spirits of the righteous dead imprisoned there, and placed them in the Paradise of the third heaven.

Since the view is often based on a few passages in the New Testament, we should note these passages.

Matthew 27:52-53 -- "and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many."

It should be noted that there is nothing in this reference to indicate that this was a general resurrection of Old Testament saints, but only a local phenomenon, in the vicinity of Jerusalem. In addition, it does not say that all of the 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 an alleged descent into ᾗδης, or because of any preaching on the part of Christ to those who were (allegedly) there. Finally, if this passage refers to Christ's descent into ᾗδης, it proves too much, since in the descent into hades view it is the souls of the Old Testament saints that are freed from hades and taken to heaven by Christ; there is no resurrection of bodies! (The resurrection of Old Testament saints comes later, at Christ's Second Coming).

Ephesians 4:8-10 -- "Therefore it says, When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men. (Now this expression, 'He ascended,' what does it mean except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)"

Two clauses are particularly stressed in support of the descent into hades view: "He led captivity captive" (A.V.), or "He led captive a host of captives" (NASB); and "He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth" (A.V.), or "He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth." (NASB) The first clause is a quotation from Psalm 68:18. This may simply be understood as teaching that Christ broke the slave-hold of sin over His people and bound them as captives to Himself; or it may be understood as teaching that Christ broke the bondage of death and made death His own captive.

The second clause, "He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth," is linked to Isaiah 61:1 -- "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me . . . he hath sent me . . . to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound." This is quoted by Christ in Luke 4:18. This clause really turns on the word "lower", as far as this view is concerned. However, if the contrast is not between Christ's descending to ᾗδης and then ascending to heaven, but between His descending to earth (which is certainly lower relative to His pre-incarnate state in heaven) and His subsequent ascending into heaven, then the use of this Scripture to support the view collapses. Again, if the adherents of this view want to press "the lower parts of the earth" idea, do they really want to locate the "Paradise compartment of Hades" in the interior of the planet earth?