

HELL

A Bible Study
Researched and Taught by
John L. Brooks, M. Div.
Macedonia Baptist Church of Kansas City, MO
Part 3

Is there proof in the bible that Jesus went down into hell after he was crucified?

It is commonly taught in the Churches today that when Jesus died, He went to Hell and fought the Powers of Darkness and then was raised back to the earth before being raised to the highest position in Heaven.

But where is the proof for such a commonly taught doctrine. Below I have found some scriptures that back up this teaching. I have an explanation of each verse, but ultimately you can make your own mind up about this matter.

In Ezekiel 26:20 (English-NIV) it says:

then I will bring you down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of long ago. I will make you dwell in the earth below, as in ancient ruins, with those who go down to the pit, and you will not return or take your place in the land of the living.

Notice that this scripture indicates that some people are dwelling in the Earth below (the pit).

Ezekiel 31:16 (English-KJV)

I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth.

Again Hell (sheol, underworld, grave, hell, pit) is referred to as being in the earth.

Luke 16:19-28 (English-NIV)

19 There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day.

20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores

21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.

24 So he called to him, `Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.

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25 But Abraham replied, Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.

26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.

27 He answered, `Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house,

28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.

Remember that these are the recorded words of Jesus himself. Taken literally it suggests that the world of the dead is/was divided into 2 regions. One for the wicked and the other for the righteous.

The wicked are in torment in hell and the righteous are in peace with Abraham.

There is a chasm between the 2 places that stopped either side from crossing to the other, yet they could/can still communicate with each other.

Matthew 12:40 (English-NIV)

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

This scripture is quite blatant about the fact that Jesus went to the heart of the earth for 3 days and 3 nights.

These scriptures indicate that Jesus was dead and is now alive, He also has the Keys of death and hell. We can see clearly that Jesus' mission to destroy the power that the devil had over death was a success.

1 Peter 3:18-20 (English-NIV)

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,

This scripture says that Jesus preached to disobedient spirits in prison who died before the flood of Noah. Although I myself do not quite understand the full ramifications of this verse, It does make sense that when Jesus defeated death, He could have proclaimed His victory to the wicked spirits in Hell, in other words He heralded their soon coming judgment, and then of course, He set the righteous spirits free to abide in Heaven. It doesn't necessarily mean that Jesus gave the wicked a second chance to repent as the New Testament scriptures are quite blatant about the fact that you can only repent while you are alive.

Confusion Regarding 1 Peter 3:18-20

Peter tells us that Jesus was put to death in the flesh and made alive in the spirit, in which He went and preached to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient during the building of the ark (1 Pet. 3:18-20).

Understanding Jesus' preaching relating to people living in the days of Noah is not essential for salvation. There are two popular suggestions:

1. that Jesus was preaching through Noah,
2. that Jesus went to the Hadean realm of torment and preached to these souls.

I believe that Jesus' preaching mentioned in 1 Pet. 3:18-20 was accomplished through Noah ---- Jesus is the eternal Word (Jn. 1:1), and Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5), therefore Jesus was preaching through Noah (Jn. 1:1; 2 Pet. 2:5).

Whether Jesus preached through Noah, or personally preached in Hades, notice that Jesus did not go to hell and preach ---- 1 Pet. 3:18-20 does not tell us that Jesus went to hell, after His crucifixion.

Matthew 27:50 - 52 (English-KJV):

50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

After Jesus died, many of the dead saints arose and walked the earth and appeared to many. This seems to suggest that Jesus freed the dead saints from a sleep, so He probably went to the place of the dead and set them free. These saints would have been in Paradise, (see Luke 16:19-28).

Remember that Jesus also rose from the dead and walked the earth before being taken up into Heaven. These saints of old that walked the earth probably were raised to heaven as well. There is no suggestion in the Bible that these saints continued to live amongst mankind.

The fact that the dead rose at the same time as Jesus' resurrection is a fulfillment of what Jesus said would happen in John 5:28-29 (English-NIV)

*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.*

Works Cited

Heaven.net.nz/answers/answer17.htm
Biblestudyguide.org/articles/jesus-hell-grave.htm