

'He Descended Into Hell': Creed, Article And Scripture Part II

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1. The 'Descent Into Hell' according to the New Testament

In Part I I have briefly outlined the major representative positions taken up historically in the interpretation of the credal clause, 'he descended into hell'. Self-consciously I have avoided any critical analysis of these positions along theological lines, under the conviction that the best way of weighing up what the Creed can be taken to mean is to consider those various passages of Scripture to which appeal is usually made by theologians. I shall now endeavour to examine the major texts in order to see which, if any, of the theological views can be 'proved' by Holy Scripture.

a. Matthew 12.40

The first such text contains Jesus' words in Matthew 12.¹ 'For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so, will the Son of man be those days in the heart of the earth (*en tē kardiā tēs gēs*).'² Some have claimed that the expression 'heart of the earth' means simply the grave.² This however is to overlook the natural association that Jesus' hearers (and Matthew's readers) would make between the centre of the earth and *hades* as the realm of the dead.³ Even more compelling is the parallel between the experience of Jonah and what is being described. The term *kardia* occurs in the Septuagint of Jonah 2.4 (English 2.3) where the reference is to *hades*, and in Jonah 2.7 (English 2.6) Jonah's descent to *hades* is described as *katabēn eis gēn*. It seems safe to conclude that the word *hades* is replaced by a designation of its location, 'the heart of the earth', language adapted to express formally the parallel to 'the belly of the whale'.⁴ Matthew 12.40 therefore clearly expresses a doctrine of Christ's descent after death into the place of the dead; however, it tells us no more than this and as such is of no help in filling out the Creed beyond the plain meaning of its words.

b. Matthew 27.52-53

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom, and the earth shook, and the rocks were split, the tombs also

were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

This is an incident which is unique to Matthew, and it does not fit easily with the accepted position of the rest of the New Testament that all except Christ are waiting for the general resurrection (e.g. 1 Thess.4.13ff.). The point of the story is unquestionably to relate the eschatological significance of the death of Jesus: by his death the end of the ages has been ushered in.⁵ It is not uncommon for commentators to assume that the idea of the 'descent' underlies this passage.⁶ Caution however must be exercised in this matter, for whilst latter sources, such as the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, certainly use and develop this text Matthew himself speaks with brevity and sobriety. He does not describe a 'descent' at all. At the most one may conclude that the passage is complementary with certain interpretations of the descent formulated in dogmatic theology. In particular it is difficult to decide the precise sequence of events located in the passage.

The part of the text which reads 'and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city' is ambiguous, it could mean that the saints came out of their tombs after Jesus' resurrection or that they went into the holy city after his resurrection. If 'after his resurrection' (*meta tēn egersin autou*) is coupled with what precedes it the doctrine of Christ as the 'first born' and 'first fruits' from the dead, prominent in the New Testament (1 Cor.15.20; Col.1.18; Rev.1.5) is certainly preserved. On this account many see the expression as a deliberate Matthean addition to an earlier tradition.⁷ Robert Gundry however has argued that in all the temporal uses of *meta* ('with') elsewhere in the first gospel this preposition and its accusative object precede the verb qualified.⁸ He concludes that Matthew's meaning is not that the saints came out of their tombs after the resurrection but that they entered Jerusalem after Christ's resurrection. This leaves the question of the timing of the saints' resurrection open—did it occur before or after Jesus' resurrection?⁹ He is of the opinion, again against the background of the 'first born' doctrine that: 'the saints stayed in their tombs for several days even though their bodies had been raised to life.'¹⁰ For this view he cites no biblical or extra biblical parallels. It would seem to me that this opinion is contradicted by the very meaning of 'resurrection', both as Matthew and the rest of the Bible understand it. In 27.52 Matthew describes the resurrection of the saints in language reminiscent of the Old Testament 'and many of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised' recalls Dan.12.2: 'and many of those who sleep in the dust shall awake.' Matthew's 'and the tombs (*mnēmeia*) were opened' echoes Ezek.37.12 LXX 'I will open your tombs (*mnēmata*), and

will bring you up out of your tombs. . . ' It seems indubitable that these texts, together with the whole range of New Testament material,¹¹ describe resurrection as an immediate and public event. To be raised from the dead is simply to 'stand up' with a body, transformed and active in the world. It would seem natural therefore to suppose that this is Matthew's meaning in our text, he considers that the saints were raised immediately before their entry into Jerusalem and so *after* the resurrection of Jesus. If therefore Matt.27.52-53 is used in support of any 'descent' doctrine, and this in itself is an inference, it would seem best to place the 'descent' by which Jesus raised the saints after his own resurrection. One however feels very reticent about going behind the passage even to this limited degree.

c. Luke 23.43

Although this text is sometimes omitted in discussions of the 'descent into hell' it is perhaps the clearest of all New Testament passages concerning the experience of Jesus between his death and resurrection. In the context of the crucifixion Jesus says to the penitent thief on the adjacent cross: 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.'¹² I have already touched upon the concept of 'paradise' in Section 2 of Part I when dealing with the intertestamental literature. As the thief has just confessed Jesus as the Messiah (v.42), the dominical utterance would intimate to him immediate participation (after death) *with Jesus*, in the blessed abode of the righteous.¹³ Nothing here is said about the location or 'eschatological geography' of 'paradise' so prominent in apocalyptic literature, but the thrust of the passage is all the more clear because of this.¹⁴

d. Acts 2.27

'For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let thy Holy One see corruption.'

Here Peter is represented as quoting from Psalm 16.10 (in his sermon on the day of Pentecost) with reference to the experience of Jesus between his death and resurrection. *Prima facie*, the natural way of understanding this verse is that while Christ's soul, in company with all other men's, went down to *hades* God did not leave him there but raised him from the dead. If such an exegesis be accepted we have a clear reference to 'the descent into hell'.¹⁵

This interpretation has been resisted on a number of grounds. Calvin took the verse to teach, not that Christ's soul was in *hades*, but that his life was consigned to the grave.¹⁶ Such a position has about it an air of special pleading, and need not detain us here for a more plausible view takes into account details of Lukan theology. First, in Acts 2.24 Luke has described Jesus' resurrection in terms of being loosed from 'the pangs of death'. This expression is from the LXX

of Pss. 18.4; 116.3 where it is parallel to 'pangs of *hades*' and 'dangers of *hades*', and from 2 Sam. 22.6, where it is the LXX translation of 'cords of *sheol*'. If Luke was making a point about Jesus' descent into *hades* it is hardly likely that he would have chosen the neutral expression.¹⁷ Furthermore, Luke begins his quotation of Ps. 16 at verse eight 'I saw the Lord always before me. . .' (Acts 2.25). He can hardly mean by this that God was with Jesus in an undifferentiated underworld. Finally, since Acts 2.27a reads 'thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades (*eis haidou*)' it is quite appropriate to see Luke as holding that the Psalm as applied to Jesus means that God did not allow him to enter into (*eis*) *hades* at all.¹⁸ Much is to be said for Haenchen's remark that all of the above leads to the conclusion that Acts 2.24–27 pictures Jesus as in 'paradise'.¹⁹

e. Romans 10.6–7

But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart 'Who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down) or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

Here Paul adopts Deut. 30.12–4 (LXX) to describe certain characteristics of the righteousness by faith which comes through Christ. The key word here is 'abyss', which Paul has used to replace 'sea' in Deut. 30.13 so as to make more explicit a reference to Christ. In the LXX *abyssos* usually translates the Hebrew word *tehom*, 'depth of water', but in Ps. 71.20 it is used of the depths of the earth as the realm of the dead.²⁰ It is clearly in this sense that Paul uses it here.²¹ Yet how much can we safely deduce from this reference to the sojourn of Christ in 'the abyss'? In his article on *abyssos* in *Kittel* Jeremias is unable to produce a parallel to Paul's use of this term for the realm of the dead outside of a passage in the Babylonian Talmud.²² This means that apart from Psalm 71 itself we have no context in which to situate the word's connotation.²³ As the psalm in its Old Testament setting bears the usual meaning for *hades/sheol*²⁴ we cannot take Paul to mean anything more than Christ died and went to the place of the dead before his resurrection. To extract anything more than this from the passage is to go beyond its intention to proclaim Christ's accomplished work for the sake of salvation.²⁵

f. Ephesians 4.9

(In saying, 'He ascended' what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.).

The key expression here is 'lower parts of the earth' (*katōtera merē*

tēs gēs). This could mean either, 'the lower parts, that is, the earth', or 'the lower parts of the earth' i.e. the underworld.²⁶ Arguments for the second alternative include:²⁷

- (i) The language of Ephesians has parallels with Pss.63.9; 139.5 *katōtata tēs gēs*, where *sheol* is meant.
- (ii) If 'the earth' were meant *merē* would lack any force.
- (iii) It is simpler, for a genitive with *merē* most naturally denotes the whole to which the parts belong, especially if this whole has not yet been named.
- (iv) The obvious antithesis to an ascent to heaven is a descent to the underworld.
- (v) Only if Christ has been operative in his mission to the furthest reaches of the cosmos, represented by the heavens and the underworld, could he in fact 'fill all things' as Paul maintains.

Strong arguments however can be brought from the other side and have been usefully summarized by Markus Barth.²⁸

- (i) The LXX passages adduced to parallel Eph.4.9 are not exact, they speak of the 'deepest *places*' and not the 'deepest *parts*' of the earth.
- (ii) A descent to *hades* would be a second step following a descent to earth from heaven. A two stage descent would hardly correspond to the single ascent into heaven mentioned in Ephesians 4.8, 10.
- (iii) Parallels in the New Testament such as John 3.13 'No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man', discourage the thought of *hades*.

This matter is not easy to decide, but the grammatical considerations adduced for the first alternative are perhaps decisive.²⁹ Additionally, point (ii) immediately above would seem to be nugatory if the centre of the scene in Eph.4.9 is the earth itself, this would give a quite natural temporal sequence of the ascension following a descent to *hades*. This also eliminates the argument from John 3.13 where the point of reference is clearly heaven.

Accepting that Eph.4.9 refers to a descent to *hades* does not however entail seeing here a reference to the 'harrowing of hell'. According to Eph.2.2 and 6.12 the evil spirit and his hosts are located in the heavenly places, not under the earth. In Eph.1.19–21; 4.8 the defeat of the powers is explicitly linked to Christ's exaltation, not to his descent. Finally, a reference to a conquest of the realm of the dead would not seem to fit the context of Eph.4.9.³⁰ We seem to be left again with the rather mundane conclusion that whilst the New Testament makes reference to a descent of Christ into *hades* virtually no details are given.

g. 1 Peter 3.18–20; 4.6

Without a doubt 1 Peter has been considered by modern theology to be the *locus classicus* for the 'descent into hell'.³¹ For purposes of

convenience I shall treat the exegesis of 1 Pet.4.6 first.

'For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead, that though judged in the flesh like men, they might live in the spirit like God.'

The immediate context of this saying must be judged to be absolutely determinative for its meaning. Throughout the epistle Peter is seeking to encourage his fellow believers in the face of hostile persecution. He picks this matter up in some detail in 4.1ff. by describing the abuse and misunderstanding to which his readers are subject. Any interpretation of 4.6 must come to terms with this.

One popular line of interpreting the text seems to overlook this completely. It takes 'the dead' of v.6 to mean all who have died without the opportunity to hear the preaching of the Gospel. Christ preached to them at the time of his 'descent' in order that they, like the living, might believe.³² It is not explained however just how this teaching is meant to be meaningful to Peter's readers, for whom it would have to be a piece of esoteric dogma. Additionally this view is inevitably connected with (a particular interpretation of) 3.18ff., though neither by grammar nor in Peter's train of thought does there seem to be any linkage.

The other position understands 'the dead' to be Christians who have died since the apostolic preaching began, for whilst there is nothing in the context to suggest Christ was the preacher the verb *euangelizomai* often has Christ as its object in the New Testament.³³ The judgment 'in the flesh' is death itself, a common way of stating the fact of mortality in the Bible.³⁴ To 'live in the spirit like God' means that these believers, though they have died like all men, and outwardly seem not to have benefitted from their sober way of life, shall, unlike their pagan calumniators, enjoy a blissful state of imperishable existence. It is this view which makes excellent sense in context, and so removes 1 Pet.4.6 from any consideration of Christ's 'descent into hell'.³⁵

1 Peter 3.18ff. is more significant, and reads:

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey when God's patience waited in the days of Noah . . . who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

In interpreting this passage the main points to be considered are: 1. 'made alive in the spirit'. This is the R.S.V. text, but should it be printed 'Spirit'? The alternatives are between understanding a Petrine reference to Christ's immortal soul (or divine nature) or to his resurrection. There is general agreement amongst modern

commentators that the anthropological antithesis of 'flesh' and 'spirit' in v.18 is not to be interpreted, *contra* older writers, in terms of Platonic dualism,³⁶ but in terms of the whole man viewed from different standpoints. 'Flesh' refers to Christ's earthly existence and 'spirit' to his heavenly life. Since 'made alive' (*zōopoiein*) normally refers to the resurrection in the New Testament,³⁷ we may safely conclude that 'in the spirit' is a dative of reference. Christ having died in the earthly sphere has been resurrected in the sphere of the Spirit of God.³⁸

2. 'in which'. The critical question is whether this is to be treated as a phrase continuing on from 'in the spirit', that is the subsequent action described of Christ took place in his resurrected body,³⁹ or whether it is a vague resumptive phrase which could refer back to v.18 generally.⁴⁰ Although there are some weighty grammatical considerations favouring the second possibility patristic commentators unhesitatingly adopted the first sense, and this provides a natural temporal sequence for the passage as a whole. As such it is to be preferred.

3. 'he went'. Given the argument above, the timing of this journey of Christ to 'the spirits' can only have one reference: it must refer to the ascension. This is confirmed by what is said in verse 22 'who has gone into heaven . . .', which picks up the preceding texts without a break, as a reference to the suggested alternative, an interim descent, would not.⁴¹

4. 'the spirits in prison'. What is the identity of these beings? A popular opinion is that the spirits referred to here are sinful human beings, of whom the antediluvians are representative.⁴² This judgment however faces insuperable obstacles:⁴³

(i) it imposes a strict form of anthropological dualism upon the writer of 1 Peter alien to the ethos of both this epistle and the New Testament as a whole.

(ii) there appears to be only one clear New Testament use of 'spirit' used absolutely to stand for the dead, Heb.12.23, and there the context acts as a qualifier so that there can be no doubt that human beings are meant.

On the other hand there are many places both in the intertestamental literature⁴⁴ and in the New Testament⁴⁵ where *pneuma* is used absolutely to designate supra-human beings (angels). Peter would seem to be referring to those evil angels who transgressed in the days before the flood (Gen.6.1ff.) and who, both in Jewish and Christian tradition, were thought to be imprisoned for their misdeeds.⁴⁶

5. 'in prison'. Where is this located? Although it is common for this prison to be thought of as in the underworld⁴⁷ the context here (see

the arguments above) would suggest a prison *above* the earth.⁴⁸

In conclusion it would seem that there are no grounds for regarding 1 Peter 3.18ff. as teaching a doctrine of the descent of Christ with universalistic implications. On the other hand it would seem to be at one with other New Testament passages that associate Christ's triumph over the forces of evil with his ascension.⁴⁹ Having completed our biblical review it is now possible to proceed to evaluate the various dogmatic positions on the 'descent into hell'.

2. The Dogmatic meaning of the 'Descent into Hell'.

Various of the dogmatic positions outlined in Section 2 above must be immediately rejected as non-viable interpretations of the Creed since they find no support in Holy Scripture. In particular not one of the passages examined in any way suggests that the work of Christ for the salvation of mankind received a personal application by him to all the dead immediately subsequent to either his death or resurrection. 'He descended into hell' cannot therefore be taken to imply an offer of universal salvation. Likewise, the 'harrowing of hell' motif found in both patristic and Lutheran sources is out of place as an interpretation of the credal clause. Whilst the insight that Christ triumphed over the powers in a dramatic fashion is scriptural, the relevant New Testament passages never associate this with the period between his death and resurrection. It is the risen and ascended Lord who is the victor.⁵⁰ Since the 'descent into hell' in the Creed is placed before its statement concerning his resurrection the Creed itself cannot be referring to Jesus' defeat of the powers, however important this truth might be.

The Calvinist interpretation stands in a rather different position to the views rejected above, for whilst much can be said for its interpretation of the significance and manner of the death of Christ as alienation from the Father,⁵¹ it simply does not fit in with the way in which 'the descent' is spoken of in either Scripture or the Creed. None of the 'descent' passages I have examined openly link this event with Christ's experience on the cross. At least one passage however, Matthew 12.40, would seem to be incompatible with such an interpretation—Jesus clearly speaks of an extended *sojourn in hades* as occurring *after* his death. If the compilers of the Creed had meant to describe Jesus' abandonment by the Father to the pains of the eternal hell it is certain that *infernus* and not *hades* would have been used.⁵² Finally, the order of the Creed is against Calvin, for the clause is placed between Christ's death and resurrection.

This leaves us with only two possible viable positions, the oldest view of Christ's descent, that it was for the liberation of 'the fathers', and that Reformed opinion which understood the Creed to be emphasizing the reality of Christ's death. The latter is certainly complementary with the very restrained manner in which certain

New Testament passages, especially Matthew 12.40, Romans 10.6–7, and Eph.4.9, speak of 'the descent'. I have argued above that these tell us little more than that Jesus was truly dead. Yet against their background these texts should be taken as saying a little more, for in the ancient world to be dead meant to be in the place of the dead, unlike for us, the two were conceptually indivisible. This Reformed interpretation also fails to explain why the clause should have been added to the Creed at the relatively late date that it was. If it is simply a gloss on 'dead and buried' it 'makes a useless repetition in figurative language'.⁵³ By the time of the Apostles' Creed a polemic against Docetism, a theoretically possible reason for the clause's addition according to this view, would lack all historical relevance.⁵⁴ One must conclude that 'he descended into hell' has a more positive meaning than this interpretation allows.

Thus, by a process of selection, we would seem to be left with the original patristic understanding of the 'descent to hell' viz. that Christ visited the underworld in order to effect full salvation for the Old Testament worthies. An immediate advantage of this interpretation is that it has strong historical associations with the Creed and that it fits in harmoniously with the credal ordering of Christ's work. Is it however true to scripture? The answer would appear to be 'yes' but with qualifications.

In the light of the clearest accounts of what happened to Jesus immediately after his death, i.e. Luke 23.43; Acts 2.24ff., according to the New Testament he was in that part of *hades* known as 'paradise'. That is, he went to that blessed abode which at that time contained (only) the Old Testament righteous. It is at this point however that we must depart from the later patristic and Roman Catholic exegesis, for the Bible nowhere suggests that the ancient worthies were in any state that could be described as bondage, either to external evil or to the effects of original sin.⁵⁵ What would seem to be completely in accord with the teaching of the New Testament⁵⁶ is that the spiritual fulfilment which the saints received was nothing other than Christ's personal presence amongst them. That is, they received illumination and blessing by encountering the Lord fresh from his atoning victory, the same Lord whom they had longed by faith to know during their time on earth.⁵⁷ I contend that only this interpretation can claim to be faithful both to scripture and to the Creed itself.⁵⁸

3. Conclusion

It has been the express intention of this article to arrive at a meaning for the credal clause 'He Descended into Hell' which is consistent with a fair exegesis of the Creed itself and may find support in Holy Scripture. This would seem to be a minimum requirement of Anglican orthodoxy. Such a task has not been easy, for not only has

the language of the Creed presented a need for preliminary clarification but the credal clause itself has been subject to widely differing interpretations. Not a single one of these views has been deemed wholly satisfactory. That view of 'the descent' favoured by liberal theologians, that Christ gave an opportunity for salvation to the ignorant, must be seen as being controlled by motives alien both to the Creed itself and to the New Testament. On the other hand the majority patristic, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran interpretations have uncritically assimilated too many elements from Christian tradition, here theological heritage has influenced the interpretation of Scripture. The various Reformed positions, whilst expressing a truth *per se*, have not been faithful to the meaning of the Creed. I suspect that they represent an overreaction to that dependence on tradition which I have just criticized. It has been the genius of Anglicanism to seek to use intelligently the insights of tradition in the light of the final authority of scripture. The interpretation for which I have settled can claim to be true to this methodology, it has sifted tradition by scripture. If found acceptable it may enable a greater number of Anglicans to confess meaningfully what hitherto has perhaps been the darkest clause of the Apostles' Creed, 'He descended into Hell'.

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NOTES

- 1 All quotations are from the R.S.V. unless otherwise indicated.
- 2 So, W.C. Allen, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1912, p.139); F.V. Filson, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Black, 1960, p.152); E. Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew* (tr. D.E. Green, London: S.P.C.K., 1976, p.293).
- 3 See the discussion in Part I, note, 1 and in particular Ecclesiasticus 51.5.
- 4 See the arguments in R.H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982, p.244); A.H. McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Macmillan, 1952, p.182); J.M. Robinson, 'Descent into Hades' in *Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville; Abingdon, 1962, vol.1, pp.826-827); and especially J. Woodhouse, 'Jesus and Jonah', *Reformed Theological Review*, 43, 1984, pp.33-49.
- 5 See G. Bornkamm, *seio kil*, in *T.D.N.T.*, (7, p.200.)
- 6 E.g. Bornkamm, *seio*, p.200; Loofs, *Descent*, p.662; McNeile, *Matthew*, p.424.
- 7 So, Allen, *St. Matthew*, p.296; Filson, *Matthew*, p.297; Schweizer *Good News*, p.516.
- 8 He lists Matt.1.12; 17.1; 24.29; 25.19; 26.2, 32, 73; 27.62, 63. Gundry, *Matthew*, p.576.
- 9 Gundry, *Matthew*, p.576.
- 10 Gundry, *Matthew*, p.576.
- 11 E.g. John 5.28-29; 1 Cor.15.51-52; 1 Thess.5.16.
- 12 The Greek does permit as translation 'Truly, I say to you today, you will be with

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- me in paradise.' This rendering however makes the presence of 'today' superfluous, and removes from the statement the solace it offers to the dying thief. See A.A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978, p.103); J. Jeremias, *paradeisos*, in *T.D.N.T.* (5, p.770); A. Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1922, 5th edition, p.535.)
- 13 Cf. I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Exeter: Paternoster, p.873).
 - 14 W. Beveridge, *A Discourse upon the Thirty-Nine Articles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3rd edition, 1857, p.132) makes an attempt to escape the above interpretation by saying 'what our Saviour meant when he promised the thief he should be that day with him in paradise; certainly he did not promise him he would be with his soul, or with his body, but with his Deity.' This exegesis is so tortured as not to need a reply.
 - 15 So, Beveridge, *Discourse*, pp.125–126; Browne, *Exposition*, pp.88–89; Gibson, *Articles*, pp.167–168; W. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Oliphants, 1973, p.77); E.G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of Saint Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1952, pp.319–320.)
 - 16 J. Calvin, *The Acts of the Apostles* 1–13 (tr. J.W. Fraser and W.J.G. McDonald, Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965, p.71); cf. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p.342; Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, p.623.
 - 17 Robinson, *Descent*, p.826.
 - 18 At least not into the *hades/sheol* of Psalm 16, a place, in accord with the classical Old Testament view, devoid of God's activity and without regard to earthly righteousness.
 - 19 E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (tr. R.Mcl. Wilson, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971, p.181.)
 - 20 For details see, C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1979, vol.2, p.522–525), W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1911, 5th edition, p.288).
 - 21 *Abyssos* is commonly used as a description of the underground keeping place of runaway spirits both in the apocalyptic literature (Jubilees 5.6ff; 1 Enoch 10.4ff.; 11ff.; 18.11ff.) and in the New Testament (Luke 8.31; Rev.9.1, 2, 11; 11.7; 17.8; 20.1,3).
 - 22 J. Jeremias, *abyssos*, in *T.D.N.T.* vol.1, pp.9–10. He cites Giffin Baruch 84a.
 - 23 *Contra* Ernst Käsemann, *Romans* (tr. G.W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980, pp.289–290). I believe the Talmudic evidence to be too far removed in time from *Romans* to indicate a common Jewish-Christian midrash behind Paul's statements.
 - 24 See Part I Section 2.
 - 25 Cf. Selwyn, *1 Peter*, p.320: Paul's language is 'indefinite and untechnical'.
 - 26 The former is an example of the use of a genitive of apposition, the latter a partitive genitive. See F. Büchsel, *Katōteros*, in *T.D.N.T.*, (3, p.641.)
 - 27 See Beveridge, *Discourse*, p.123; Büchsel, *katōteros*, p.641; Selwyn, *1 Peter*, p.321; B.F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d. p.61.)
 - 28 M. Barth, *Ephesians 4–6* (New York: Doubleday, 1974, pp.433–434.) Cf. J. Calvin, *Sermons on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (rev. tr. L. Rawlinson and S.M. Houghton, London: Banner of Truth, 1973, pp.350–351); C.L. Mitton, *Ephesians* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951, p.205); E.K. Simpson, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957, pp.91–92) J.R.W. Stott, *God's New Society* (Downer's Grove, I.V.P., 1979, pp.158–159.)
 - 29 See R.W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (tr. and rev. of F.W. Blass and A. Debrunner 9th–10th German edition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961, 167).
 - 30 See Barth, *Ephesians*, pp.433–434; Büchsel, *katōteros*, pp.641–642; Mitton, *Ephesians*, p.205.
 - 31 Though there seems to be no use of this passage to support any interpretation of

- the descent before Clement of Alexandria c.190 A.D. See Selwyn, *1 Peter*, p.340.
- 32 See, e.g. E. Best, *1 Peter* (London: Oliphants, 1971, pp.155–158); Bicknell, *Articles*, p.124; C. Bigg, *The Epistle of St. Peter and St. Jude* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902, pp.170–172); Litton, *Dogmatic Theology*, pp.193–195.
- 33 Acts 5.42; 8.35; 11.20; 17.18; Gal.1.16.
- 34 Romans 5.12; 6.23; cf. Gen.2.17; 3.19; Wisdom 2.14.
- 35 For representatives of this view see A.T. Hanson, 'Salvation Proclaimed 1. 1 Peter 3.18–22', *Expository Times*, 93, 1982, pp.102–103; J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude*, (London: Black, 1969, pp.172–175); Loofs, *Descent*, p.659; Selwyn, *1 Peter*, pp.337–339.
- 36 See W.D. Stacey, *The Pauline View of Man* (London: Macmillan, 1956, pp.128 ff.; 154ff.); and the articles by E. Schweizer and others, *sax*, in *T.D.N.T.* (7, pp.98ff.); E. Schweizer, *pneuma*, in *T.D.N.T.* (6, pp.332ff.).
- 37 John 5.21; 6.63; Romans 4.17; 8.11.
- 38 See Best, *1 Peter*, p.139; Hanson, 'Salvation', p.100; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, pp.150–151. Cf. the important parallel 'the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.' 1 Cor.15.45.
- 39 Hanson, 'Salvation', p.101; Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, p.152.
- 40 So that the action in verse 19 cannot be pinned down to any particular part of Christ's work. So Best, *1 Peter*, p.140; Schweizer, *pneuma*, p.447; Selwyn, *1 Peter*, p.197.
- 41 Kelly, *1 Peter*, pp.155–156. Thus the sequence in vv. 18ff. is 'put to death' (crucifixion), 'made alive' (resurrection), 'preached to the spirits' (ascension journey), 'is at the right hand of God' (Ascension journey completed).
- 42 So Bicknell, *Articles*, pp.123ff.; Bigg, *St. Peter and St. Jude*, pp.162–163; Hanson, 'Salvation', p.102; Litton, *Dogmatic Theology*, pp.194–195; Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man*, pp.272–273; A. Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* (London: S.C.M., 1958, pp.210–211); Schweizer, *pneuma*, pp.447–448.
- 41 See Best, *1 Peter*, p.142; Selwyn, *1 Peter*, pp.198–199.
- 42 E.g. Tobit 6.6; 2 Macc.3.24; Jubilees 15.31; 1 Enoch 60.11ff.; Testament of Dan 1.7; 5.5; 1Q S 3.17ff.; 1Q M 12.8ff.; 13.10.
- 45 Luke 10.20; Heb.1.14; Rev.1.4; 3.1.
- 46 1 Enoch 10; 18.13–15; 21; 67.4; Jubilees 10; 2 Peter 2; Jude 6–7.
- 47 1 Enoch 10; 21.1–7; Jubilees 5.6; 2 Peter 2.4, 9; Rev.18.2; 20.7.
- 48 Cf. Odes of Solomon 22.1ff.; Testament of Levi 3.1ff.; 2 Enoch 7.1–5; 18.3–6.
- 49 Cf. Eph.4.8; 1Tim.3.16 (see the commentary by M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (tr. P. Buttolph and A. Yarbro, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972, pp.61–62.))
- 50 The exception to this, Col.2.15, places the triumph at the cross.
- 51 See, e.g. P. Green, *Studies in the Cross* (London: Wells, Gardner, Darton, 1914, pp.79–104).
- 52 Cf. Griffith Thomas, *Principles of Theology*, p.68 'but when the word "hell" is properly interpreted of "Hades" and not of "Gehenna", this view, though prompted by a true desire to express completely our Lord's redemptive work, is at once and necessarily set aside.'
- 53 Schaff, *Greek and Latin Creeds*, p.46.
- 54 Cf. Kelly, *Early Creeds*, p.379.
- 55 Cf. the references to the conditions of 'paradise' in Section 2 (a) of Part I of this article. For all intents and purposes, *contra* the oldest patristic view, 'paradise' is heaven.
- 56 Cf. 'you will be *with me* in paradise' (Luke 23.43); 'we would rather be away from the body and at home *with the Lord*' (2 Cor.5.8); 'to depart and be *with Christ* . . . is far better' (Phil.1.23).
- 57 Cf. this as a recurring theme in Heb.11.
- 58 It is appreciated that this theory presupposes a disembodied spirit

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can meaningfully communicate with other such spirits. Epistemological and anthropological questions relevant to this claim I have discussed at length in my *Intermediate State* and in 'Disembodied Existence in an Objective World', *Religious Studies* (forthcoming).