

Chronologies Concerning The Final Phase



Of Jesus' Earthly Ministry

Thank God that our Bible is not theory but Divine Truth! The entire Old Testament reflects man's helpless sinful condition and God's Holy Heavenly ability and willingness to reach down to him. If man of olden times learned anything from the Jewish sacrificial system and us today in studying it, this finding must be paramount! Thus, God's solution to man's sinful situation is personally revealed and discovered when one exposes himself to God and willingly submits to His revealed will. Although the Old Testament foreshadowed the soon-coming reality in the God-man Christ Jesus, man's sinful condition remained unchanged and God's solution was steadfast. In the New Testament God walked among us to personally, and perfectly, supply all the legal system required in offering Himself as the perfect and final sacrifice. Jesus also became sin for us, personally suffered because of it, and gloriously conquered the consequences! The dilemma the unredeemed man undertakes is how to rationalize everything before accepting it. This is especially noticeable when the unbelieving world directs its attention to the events surrounding the death, the burial, and the resurrection of The Lord Jesus Christ. The reality of the life, death, burial, and the resurrection of the true Biblical Jesus is the only hope man has for redemption and matters of eternal nature. These four historical facts make up the foundational stones of the entire New Testament and the finalized true full gospel message from God to this world for the inhabitants of this world! The acceptance of these absolutes do not involve blind faith but rather Biblical faith i.e. reading and permitting God to take His Spirit and make personal changes to us based upon our willingness to trust and rest upon His ability to do so! One should also keep in mind that every event surrounding our Lord, from His birth in Bethlehem to His final ascension from the Mount of Olives, happened for a reason within His divine plan. These acts completely fulfilled every word and promise earlier prophesied about Him and those He personally proclaimed during His earthly ministry. As the only true and perfect God-man Jesus' acts reflected His perfect and sinless nature.

The reason for gathering the following information was to provide a fundamental reference in dealing with countless questions directed toward believers, pastors or otherwise, about such matters during the time of our annual resurrection festivities. Let us be like David when he cried, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (Psa.119:18)

I. The Order Of Events Of The Last Week

Palm / Psalm Sunday

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem – *Matt.*21:1-11; *Mk.*11:1-11; *Lk.*19:29-44; *Jn.*12:12-19

Monday

_Cursing of the fig tree – *Matt.*21:18-20; *Mk.*11:12-14,20,21

_Cleansing of the temple – *Matt.*21:12-13; *Mk.*11:15-17; *Lk.*19:45-46

_Healing the blind & the lame in the temple – *Matt.*14:14

Tuesday & Wednesday

_His authority questioned – *Matt.* 21:23-27; *Mk.*11:27-33; *Lk.* 20:1-8

_Parable of the two sons – *Matt.*21:28-32

_Parable of the wicked husbandman – *Matt.*21:33-41; *Mk.*12:1-9; *Lk.*20:9-16

_Parable of the king's son – *Matt.*22:1-14

_The question about the tax money – *Matt.*22:15-22; *Mk.*12:13-17; *Lk.*20:26

_The Sadducees' question about the resurrection – *Matt.*22:23-33; *Mk.*12:18-27; *Lk.*20:27-40

_The question about the great commandment – *Matt.*22:36-40; *Mk.*12:28-34

_Jesus' question – *Matt.*22:41-46; *Mk.*12:35-37; *Lk.*20:42-44

_Woes against the Scribes & Pharisees – *Matt.*23; *Mk.*12:38-40; *Lk.*20:45-47

_The widow's mite – *Mk.*12:41-44; *Lk.*21:1-4

_Jesus visited by inquiring Greeks – *Jn.*12:20-36

_Jesus' teaches on unbelief & the meaning & true value of believing – *Jn.*12:37-50

_Prophecies of end-time sorrows – *Matt.*24:1-14; *Mk.*13:1-13; *Lk.*21:5-19

_Additional teachings on end-time events – *Matt.*24:15-42; *Mk.*13:14-37; *Lk.*21:20-36

_Kingdom of Heaven parable of the ten virgins – *Matt.*25:1-13

_ talents – *Matt.*24:14-30

_Jesus' teaching on an upcoming judgment – *Matt.*25:31-46

_The scheme of Jewish leaders & Judas – *Matt.*26:1-5,14-16; *Mk.*14:1-2,10-11; *Lk.*22:1-6

Thursday

_Preparation for His last Passover – *Matt.*26:17-19; *Mk.*14:12-16; *Lk.*22:7-13

_The Passover meal – *Matt.*26:20; *Mk.*14:17-18; *Lk.*22:14-18

_Discord among the disciples over the greatest – *Lk.*22:24-30

_The foot washing – *Jn.*13:1-17

_The symbolic supper with the Lord – *Matt.*26:26-29; *Mk.*14:22-25; *Lk.*22:19-20

_After they learned of His departure, Jesus gave them hope and comfort – *Jn.*14:1-31

_Parable of the vine and the branches – *Jn.*15:1-11

_Jesus' promise of sending the Holy Spirit – *Jn.*16:7-15

_Jesus' intercessory prayer – *Jn.*17:1-26

_The garden agony – *Matt.*26:36-46; *Mk.*14:32-42; *Lk.*22:39-46; *Jn.*18:1

_The garden betrayal – *Matt.* 26:47-56; *Mk.*14:43-52; *Lk.*22:47:53; *Jn.*18:3-13

_The garden miracle – *Lk.*22:50-51

Friday

(before dawn)

_Jesus First Taken To Annas (Jn.18:13-24), Caiaphas' Father-In-Law. This stop was perhaps gather wisdom from the elder or just maybe his home was along their route. Both men were currently serving as high priests (Lu.3:2).

_Jesus was taken on to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin – Matt.26:59-68; Mk.14:55-65; Lu.22:66-71; Jn.18:19-24

(around dawn in the court yard of the high priest's residence)

_Peter's denies the Lord – Matt.26:58,69-75; Mk.14:54,66-72; Lu.22:54-62; Jn.18:15-18,25-27

(shortly after dawn)

_Jesus is formally condemned by the Sanhedrin – Matt.27:1; Mk.15:1; Lu.22:66-71

(Friday morning)

_Suicide of Judas – Matt.27:3-10; Acts.1:18-19

(early Friday morning)

_The Sanhedrin led Jesus to Pilate the first time – Matt.27:1-2,11-14; Mk.15:15:1-5; Lu.23:1-5; Jn.18:28-38

_Pilate sent Jesus to Herod – Lu.23:6-12

(early Friday just at sunrise Jn.19:14)

_Jesus is brought again to Pilate the second time – Matt.27:15-26; Mk.15:6-15; Lu.23:13-24; Jn.18:39-40

_The release of Barabbas – Matt.27:15-17; Mk.15:6-15; Lu.23:17-25; Jn.18:39-40

_The appeal of Pilate's wife – Matt.27:19

_Pilate washes his hands of the matter – Matt.27:24

_Pilate sentences Jesus to death– Matt.27:26-30; Mk.15:15; Lu.23:24; Jn.19:1-16

(early Friday morning between 6 and 9 a.m.)

_Jesus mocked & crowned with a crown of thorns – Matt.27:27-31; Mk.15:16-20; Jn.19:1-3

(before 9 a.m. on Friday)

_Jesus led away to Golgotha – Matt.27:31-33; Mk.15:20-22; Lu.23:36; Jn.19:16-17

_Because of Jesus' weakened condition, in route to Golgotha Simon was forced to carry His cross – Matt.27:32; Mk.15:21; Lu.26

_Jesus' discourse to the lamenting women & crowd that followed to Golgotha – Lu.23:27-31

A. The Order Of Events At The Crucifixion

(the first three hours on the cross- from 9 a.m. till noon on Friday)

_Upon arriving atop Golgotha Jesus was offered sour wine mixed with a pain killer but it was also laced with gall. He quickly refused this drink of mockery. Matt.27:34; Mk.15:23

_They parted Jesus' cloths and crucified Him between two criminals. – Matt.27:35-38; Mk.15:25-28; Lu.23:33-38

_Pilate ordered the identifying placard of our Lord, that had either been hung around His neck or carried before Him in the journey to Golgotha, nailed to the cross above His head. The inscription gave His name and home ("Jesus of Nazareth"), the charge on which He was convicted ("King of the Jews") and the identification ("This is"). – Matt.27:37; Mk.15:26. Both Luke and John mention the three languages in which it was written - Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. – Lu.23:38; Jn.19:19-20.

_His first cry from the cross - "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" – Lu.23:34

_The soldiers cast lots for his few articles of clothing. – Jn.19:23-24

_Mockery by those who passed by, the scribes, chief priests, and even the soldiers – *ℳatt.27:39-43; ℳk.15:29-32; ℒu.23:35-36*

_The discourse between the two thieves and one’s confession of belief – *ℒu.23:39-43*

_His second cry from the cross - “...*Today shalt thou be with me in paradise*” – *ℒu.23:43*

_His third cry from the cross came when Jesus noticed his mother, Mary the wife of Cleophas, Mary Magdalene, and John standing near the cross. - “Woman, behold thy son!” – *Jn.19:25-26*

_His forth cry from the cross - Then, when he commends his mother to John, we read - “Behold thy mother!” *Jn.19:25-27*

(the second three hours on the cross – from noon Friday until 3 p.m.)

_Darkness was over all the land – *ℳatt.27:45-50; ℳk.15:3-37; ℒu.23:44-46*

_His fifth cry from the cross - “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” – *ℳatt.27:46-47; ℳk.15:34-35*. This is the only one of the cries of Christ on the Cross recorder by Matthew and Mark.

_His sixth cry from the cross – “I thirst.” – *Jn.19:28*

_Jesus offered a sponge filled with vinegar – *ℳatt.27:48; ℳk.15:36; Jn.19:28*

_His seventh cry from the cross – “It is finished” - *Jn.19:30*

_In His eighth cry from the cross He dismisses His Spirit – “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” - *ℳatt.27:50; ℳk.15:15:37; ℒu.23:46; Jn. 19:30*

_The temple veil was rent – *ℳatt. 27:51; ℳk..15:38; ℒu.23:45*

_An earthquake took place – *ℳatt.27:51*

_A nearby centurion acknowledges Him – *ℳatt.27:54; ℳk.15:39-40; ℒu.23:47-48*

_Many of the saints’ tombs were opened; they were made alive again and walked into Jerusalem, appearing to many – *ℳatt.27:52-53*

(Friday afternoon before 6 p.m.)

_Many of his nearby followers, and some from Galilee, watched from afar until the very end – *ℳatt.27:55-56; ℳk.15:40; ℒu.23:50*

_Nearby Jews asked the soldiers to hasten the death of those on the cross in order to avoid from profaning the Sabbath – *Jn.19:31*

_A soldier pierced His side – *Jn.19:34*

B. The Order Of Events Following The Crucifixion

(Friday afternoon before 6 p.m.)

_Joseph of Arimathaea received permission to remove the body of Jesus from the cross and he was given assistance by Nicodemus in preparing and burying the body. – *ℳatt.27:57-60; ℳk.15:43-46; ℒu.23:50-54; Jn.19:38-41*

(The day following the day of preparation {after 6p.m.ourFriday- i.e. the Sabbath})

_Chief priests and Pharisees meet with Pilate to secure a guard and to have a seal placed upon the tomb. – *ℳatt.27:61-66*

(Friday afternoon until Saturday afternoon { just prior to, and during, the Sabbath}; After the Sabbath {i.e. after 6.m.our Saturday})

_The brief watch at the tomb by Mary Magdalene & Mary the mother of Joses, return & preparation of the spices, resting on the Sabbath – *ℳatt.27:61-66; ℳk.15:47; ℒuke 23:55-56*

(Near the end of the Sabbath { late our Saturday afternoon} & immediately after Sabbath { our 6 p.m.Saturday})

_Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome start their journey to the tomb with spices in order to anoint Jesus’ body. *ℳatt.28:1; ℳk.28:1*

(Early Sunday morning before Sunrise as the faithful ladies approached the tomb)

_A very large earthquake occurred; the angel of the Lord came and rolled away the stone causing the Roman guards to faint with fear. *ℳatt.28:2-4*

(Early Sunday morning at Sunrise as the ladies approached the tomb)

_The approached with concern as to how to open the tomb; Mary Magdalene appears to have been the first to arrive; found the stone rolled away; entered the empty tomb; saw two angels and heard God's great message for the world. She left being perplexed, frightened and at first was afraid to tell anyone. *ℳatt.28:5-8; ℳk.16:2-8; ℒu.24:1-8; Jn.20:1-2*

(Early Sunday morning after Sunrise when the ladies left the tomb)

_The women report to the disciples, with Mary Magdalene being the first to arrive and the primary spokesperson. *ℒu.24:9-12; Jn.20:2-10*

(Sunday morning at the tomb after the disciples and all the others had arrived and returned to their homes)

_Mary Magdalene stood nearby weeping; angels bring comfort; Jesus appeared and spoke but she at first did not recognize Him; eventually she recognized Jesus but He asked her to refrain from touching Him for He had not yet ascended to His Father. She returned to the mourning group and delivered the news but they did not believe. *ℳk.16:9-11; Jn.20:11-18*

_Jesus appeared to the other women and they were permitted to touch Him. Although the positioning of this event is a bit difficult, the fact of His appearance removed what existing fears they may have had earlier (*Mk.16:8*). *ℳatt.28:9-10*

(Later on Sunday morning)

_The guards report to the chief priests. *ℳatt.28:11-15*

_Jesus appeared to Peter before the other disciples. *ℒu.24:34; 1Cor.15:5*

(Later Sunday)

_Jesus appeared in "another form" to Cleopas and his friend on the Emmaus road. *ℳk.16:12-13 ℒu.24:13-32*

_The report of these two to the eleven disciples and their news about Jesus having met with Peter *ℒu.24:33-35; 1Cor.15:5*

_His appearance to the disciples with Thomas absent – *ℳk.16:14; ℒu.24:36-43; Jn.20:19-25*

II. The Order Of The Post-resurrection Events

(The following Sunday evening)

His appearance to the disciples with Thomas present – *Jn.20:26-31*

(Soon thereafter)

_Jesus appeared to seven disciples beside the Sea of Galilee and the great catch of fish – *Jn.21:1-25*

_His appearance to the disciples and over five hundred on a mountain in Galilee; the great commission – *ℳatt.28:16-20; ℳk.16:15-18; 1Cor.15:6*

_Jesus appeared to his brother James – *1Cor.15:7*

(Back in Jerusalem)

_His re-appearance to the disciples with a second commission; His journey to, and ascension from, the Mount of Olives – *ℒu.24:44-49*

(His forty-day period with them)

Acts 1:3-8

(On the Mount of Olives between Jerusalem and Bethany)

_His ascension up to Heaven

ℒu.24:50-53; ℳk.16:19,29; Acts 1:4-12

III. The Time On The Cross

A. The Hours Of The Crucifixion

The Jewish way of counting hours was simply to divide the night and day into twelve divisions each - beginning at sunrise and sunset. Mark says, "And it was the third hour, and they crucified him." (15:25) With this rule of thumb we have Jesus being crucified at 9am our time. Matthew writes that something happened at the 6th hour (our noon). "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." (Mat 27:45) Therefore, from our noon until 3pm there was darkness over the land. Sometime within His 6th hour on the cross, Jesus gave up the ghost.

B. The Time of the Resurrection

Mark, Luke, and John say that the resurrection took place on the first day of the week. (16:9 "Now when [Jesus] was risen early the first [day] of the week, he appeared...") (Luk 24:1 "Now upon the first [day] of the week, very early in the morning...") (Jn. 20:1 "The first [day] of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early...") John also informs us that, "...Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found the stone rolled away." (Jn.20:16) Luke records that the ladies and others came, "...very early in the morning, ...unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain [others] with them." (Lu.24:1) Thus, from Scripture we may easily understand that that Jesus arose early in the daylight hours on the first day of the week. Since the Sabbath was the Jewish last day of the week, and this period was observed from 6pm Friday until 6pm Saturday, the period following would be known as the first day of the new week – hence, our Sunday. Matthew confirms this by saying, "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first [day] of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." (Mat 28:1) Although we may assemble at any time and at any place to worship, the above passages laid the foundation for the tradition of Christians systematically gathering on Sundays to worship. The first place "Sabbath" is used it is found in conjunction with the word "holy." ["And he said unto them, This [is that] which the LORD hath said, Tomorrow [is] the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake [that] which ye will bake [to day], and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning." (Exo. 16:23)] By using the two words, together God was commanding them of the necessity of observing a perpetual *sacred intermission* that was to be completely dedicated to their Messiah for His deliverance. Due to the importance of Sunday in Christian's week, believers of past centuries have often referred to Sunday as being the Christian Sabbath.

IV. The Time Of The Tomb

(Matthew 12:38-40) "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. 39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: 40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

(Matt. 27:62-64) "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After

three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first."

(Mar 9:31) "For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day."

(Mar. 10:32-34) "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, *[Saying]*, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him; and the third day he shall rise again. "

As Peter preached in Joppa he declared, "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;" (Act 10:39-40)

Paul told the church at Corinth, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" (1Co 15:3-4)

After the removal of Jesus from the cross, His loyal followers had but a few hours to quickly tend to His funeral, before the arrival of the Sabbath at 6:30 on Friday. Without question, Scripture teaches that Jesus would, and did, rise on the third day and was in the heart of the earth three days and nights. This seems perplexing when we consider He was crucified Friday and arose from the grave on Sunday. Critics might call this an oxymoron. The famous Greek scholar, Dr. A.T. Robinson, said, "*The well-known custom of the Jews was to count a part of a day as a whole day of twenty-fours. Hence, a part of a day or night would be counted as a whole day, the term day obviously having two senses, as night and day, or day contrasted to night. So then the part of Friday would count as one day, Saturday another, and part of Sunday the third day. This method of reckoning gives no trouble to a Jew or to modern men, for that matter.*" We speak the same way. For instance, what day of the week was last night? Thus, during the time of Friday, we have a period of daylight and darkness; Saturday we find a period of darkness and daylight and, then, on Sunday we also have a recorded period of darkness, early in the am, that was quickly followed by daylight. Hence, as day contrasted with night, we have three nights and three days. God had beautifully orchestrated all the details surrounding the resurrection of The Christ! Today our faith is secure and strengthened by every aspect of this miraculous and prophesied event!

V. The Time Between His Death And Resurrection

A. Theories

Down through the ages a number of theories have developed in order to try to explain the disappearance of Jesus' body. Here I briefly note a few of the more prominent ones. (1) Joseph of Arimathaea secretly removed the body to a more suitable resting place. (2) The body was later removed by order of the Roman power. (3) His body was secretly removed from the tomb by the Jewish authorities in order to prevent the possible veneration of the tomb. (4) Jesus did not really die but recovered in the cool of the tomb and escaped. (5) The women were at the

wrong grave that Sunday morning. (6) The entire resurrection story was fabricated by the women.

B. Facts

Please keep in mind that the following are merely brief overviews and not exhaustive studies.

1. Jesus' ranking within the resurrection

"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then *is/* our preaching vain, and your faith *is/* also vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is/* vain; ye are yet in your sins. 18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, *land/* become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man *lcamel/* death, by man *lcamel/* also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." (1Co 15:12-23)

Several things are needful to grasp from the above text. Throughout the Old Testament, the first fruits of the land, much like the first born of man and beast, were always sacred to God. These first fruits were perpetual reminders that God was the true source of all their needs and blessings. Thus, with the resurrection of Jesus we see that He was the first of this action i.e. the first ever to rise from the dead and, in Jesus' case, to rise through His own power! Several questions immediately surface: What happened to previous believers when they died? Why is the significance of Jesus being the first fruits so important to begin with? Where did Jesus go when He willingly gave up His physical life? Lastly, what does all this have to do with us today?

2. Two words concerning the realm of the dead

In the Old Testament the English word "Hell" is used thirty-one times and in each instance the word is translated from the Hebrew word "*Sheol*". "*Sheol*" describes the general realm of those who have departed from this life without necessarily describing the happiness or unhappiness of that existence. In the New Testament we learn of a Greek word that carries a definition very similar to the word "*Sheol*". Translators also convert it over to us as the word "Hell". The only exception to the preceding statement is in 1Co.15:55 where the word is "grave". This unique word is "*Hades*". It, too, tells of the general realm of the dead until their resurrection. Only this time this realm of the dead is very often associated as being a place of misery and torment.

3. Peter referred to David's prophecy about the validity of Christ's death and resurrection.

When Peter preached on that great day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two, one of his points focuses upon the death of Christ. In doing such, he gleans from David's prophecy. "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption....at thy right hand *lthere are/* pleasures for evermore" (Psa 16:10-11). Peter declares, "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. 29 Men *land/* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day...He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Act 2:25-29,31). From this text, we quickly grab several facts. (1) God's sweet

Spirit brought personal strength, quality, and security to David's life. (2) David knew his soul would spend time in this "hell" after death. (3) When David's time of death finally arrived, God would not leave him through the passing. (4) Although David's dead body would be buried in his tomb, his soul would be very alive in this "hell". (5) David was confident that this "hell" was not the end because God would not leave his soul there. (6) Peter's usage of the above text declared that David was also prophesying of Christ's resurrection; that Jesus' very soul would go to, but not remain in, "hell" and, lastly, that the Jesus' body would never experience the decay brought by death.

Peter's reference is to Psalm 16:10. In Psalms the word translated "hell" is the Hebrew word "sheol". In Acts, the English word "hell" is from the Greek word "hades". Once again, while both usages refer to the realm of the dead, we now learn that this place is the abode of living souls. Secondly, the Holy Spirit utilizes both David and Peter to communicate that for some temporal period, part of this realm was a God-ordained location of security and tranquility for Old Testament believers prior to the finished work of the prophesied Redeemer. Please remember that the doctrine of soul sleep is foreign to our Bible. Only the body sleeps in death.

Another illustration of this place of the afterlife is in the Gospel of Luke. Critics and liberal teachers have called this account a parable but a consistent rule with Bible parables is the absence of proper names. Therefore, Jesus is telling of a literal event! "And there was a certain beggar named *Qazarus*, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and *Qazarus* in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send *Qazarus*, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise *Qazarus* evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." (Luk 16:20-31)

Without going into a detailed exposition, several fundamental things are noteworthy from the above passage. Both men died, one was a believer and the other was not, one is in torment while the other is in comfort and bliss, and, lastly, there is a great fixed gap between the two that guaranteed their separation, even though they were able to see across and communicate. In the above text, we encounter another bit of insight into this realm of the afterlife. Although one is in "hell" being tormented, the other is in the secure place referred to as "Abraham's bosom". The place called "Abraham's bosom" (a place of rest), although located in the general realm of the dead commonly called "hell" (Old Testament "sheol" and New Testament "hades"), was in no manner a place of punishment. This area seems to have been a place where Old Testament believers faithfully waited for their promised Messiah to lead them to their promised destination.

4. Jesus' journey to the realm of the dead

a. He proclaimed it on earth

Jesus often taught that He would die and rise again on the third day (Mk.8:31; Jn.2:19; etc). It was during one such discourse when the scribes and the Pharisees challenged Jesus by,

“...saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: (Mat 12:38-39) Please note carefully what Jesus said next, “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Mat 12:40) Since we have previously dealt with an explanation of the three-day time period, let us briefly focus upon the location. The phrase literally means “*in the middle of the soil.*”

b. He promised it from the cross

While our Lord hung on His cross He told one of the thieves, “...Verify I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luk 23:43) The word is used only in two other places (1Cor.12:4 & Rev.2:7). In all three Biblical references, the word “paradise” clearly refers to Heaven. We need to realize that looking forward to Heaven is not just a doctrine unique to the New Testament.

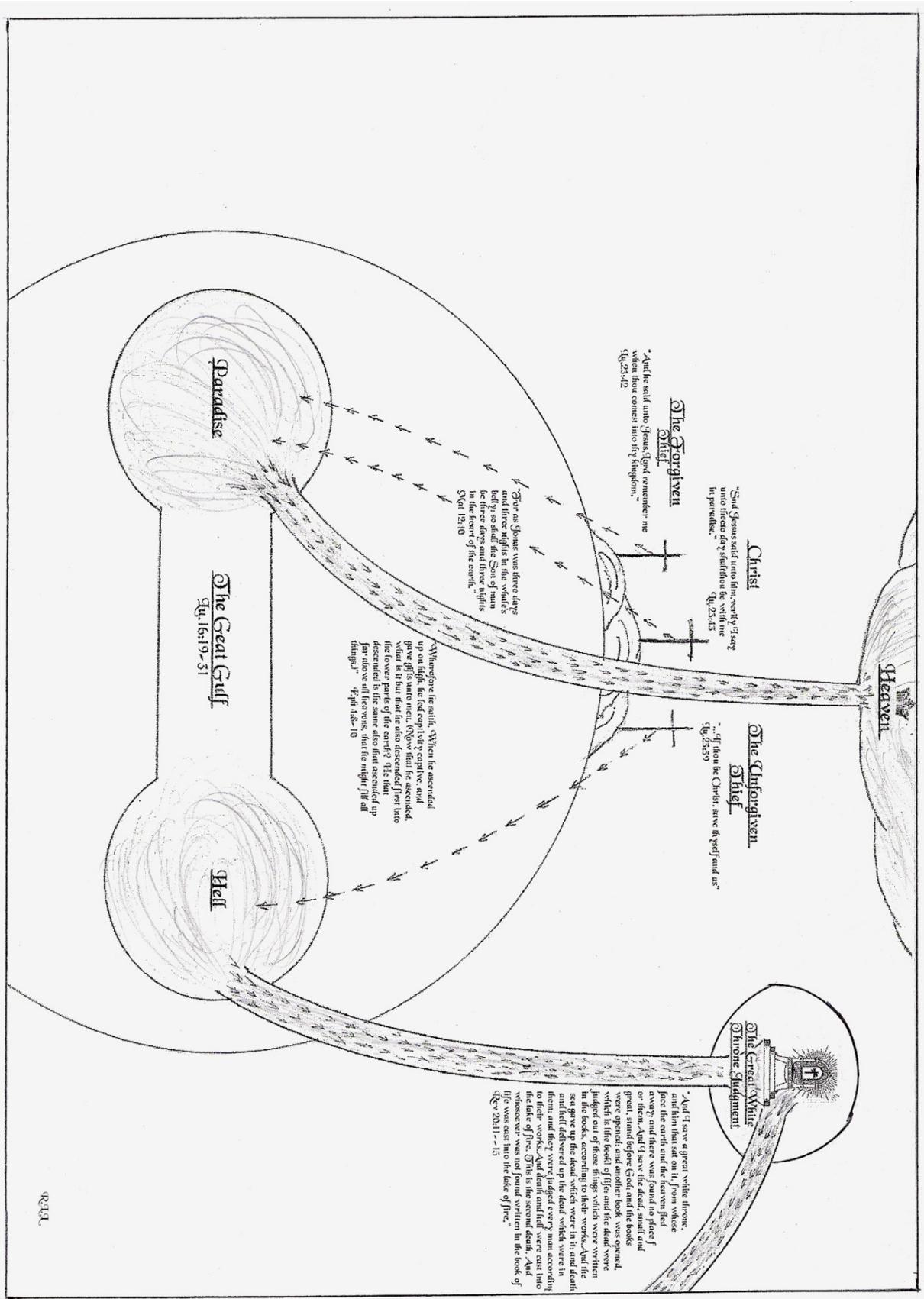
Take Abraham - “By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.” (Heb 11:9-10) This was also the anticipation of other Old Testament saints as well - “But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.” (Heb 11:16) Therefore, we learn that both Jesus and the forgiven thief would, that very day, have their souls depart from the cross and be together above in heaven. For the man it would be a spiritual journey but for Jesus the journey would become both physical and spiritual.

c. He paved it after death

“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.” (Eph 4:8-10)

Jesus was very busy after He breathed His last breath. He led a bunch of souls from one place to another place. The first place was somewhere in the earth. The second place was “far above all heavens”. Thus, we see that when Jesus completed His redemptive work He personally descended into the paradise (or “Abraham’s bosom”) side of “hell”, applied His work to the Old Testament saints and then escorted them upward to their promised destination. Due to the completed work of our Lord, today the paradise side of “hell” is empty. Paul reminds us that all who die in the Lord today immediately go to be with Him. “Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (2Co 5:6-8) All who have, or will, place their trust in the prophesied Biblical Messiah, be it in Old Testament times, in New Testament times, and certainly in our time, will all one day end up in the same place with the same King of our souls!

Perhaps the following chart will help put some of these things into perspective.



Heaven

Christ

"Said Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, thou shalt be with me in paradise." *Lu. 23:43*

The Forgiveness Chief

"And he said unto Jesus, God remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." *Lu. 23:42*

"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be in the belly of the earth." *Mat. 12:40*

"Wherefore the saint, when he ascended upon high, he led captivity captive, and gave light unto men. (Now that he ascended, he led captive the hosts of the lower parts of the air; that he descended is the same also that he ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)." *Ep. 4:8-10*

The Great Gulf

Qu. 16:19-31

Paradise

The Great White Throne Judgment

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before him; and he gave unto every man according to his works. And I saw another book, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." *Re. 20:11-15*

Because all people are descendents from the first couple who sinned, all people of the earth will eventually have death in common. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" (Rom 5:12) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" (Rom 3:23)

The Bible teaches in both testaments that there is an existence beyond this life. One place is perfect and the other is a place of indescribably horror. Through the mercy and grace of God, God has made available the plan of rescue whereby man can personally, apart from the aid of an earthly priest or a religious system, select his eternal destination only on this side of the grave. According to the Bible, this plan is the only plan of redemption from God to man! It is 100 percent centered in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, in His victorious and completed life on earth, up on the cross, in the tomb, and beyond the grave! Christ not only completely conquered death by experiencing it but He travelled through it and took up a new type of glorified physical body on the other side! "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. (Jn. 10:17,18)" "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8)

The resurrection message is at the very core of His gospel (or good news to man). Even though critics may scoff at His resurrection and modern liberals may ignore or even deny its validity, their feelings and actions do not change the fact that Jesus made history, both physical and spiritual! Sinful man needs to understand that he is a sinner with pending consequences. Secondly, he cannot save himself and, thirdly, he must reach outward and upward to God.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom 10:13) "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1Co 15:22) Even though the choice is a personal one, it is an urgent one, especially when one considers the consequences - "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (Joh 3:18)

Before closing please permit me to guide you to a message recorded by the old prophet Jeremiah. "Speak, Thus saith the LORD, Even the carcasses of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvestman, and none shall gather *them*. 23 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: 24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD." (Jer.9:22-24)

Thank you for making this journey with me.