

**“He Descended to the Dead”**  
**What Christians Believe, Part 7**

**I. What It Doesn’t Mean**

1. It doesn’t mean that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ in hell’s flames (he didn’t)
2. It doesn’t mean that Jesus gave some dead people a \_\_\_\_\_ chance to be saved (he didn’t)
3. It doesn’t mean that Jesus suffered hellish pains on the \_\_\_\_\_ (though he did)

**II. What It Does Mean**

“When the soul had departed from the body it did not stay idle but descended into the lower regions. This means nothing else than that it experienced the same condition as other souls separated from their bodies...” **Peter Martyr Vermigli** (Protestant Reformer, 1544 A.D.)

1. Old Testament and Intertestamental Background
2. New Testament data
  - i. Luke 16:19—31 → Acts 2:27, 31; Luke 23:43
  - ii. Matthew 12:40
  - iii. Romans 10:6—7/Ephesians 4:8—9
  - iv. For further study, see Revelation 1:18, 1 Peter 3:18—22, Romans 14:9, along with all verses that speak of Christ “rising *from the dead*” (Greek ἐκ νεκρῶν, literally “from among the dead ones”)
3. Closing Thoughts About the Afterlife of Old Testament Saints

“The presence of Jesus in paradise . . . changes its entire constitution. Rather than being a place where the righteous dead await the coming of Israel’s promised Messiah, the Christ is now in their midst. First, in the descent, he is present with them in his human soul, and then, after the ascension, he is present with them bodily. This change in paradise’s constitution . . . is mirrored in the New Testament by a change in spatial description. . . . The spatial description of paradise shifts from the underworld to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2–3), not because it has been physically moved (it is a spiritual, not physical, realm), but because its spiritual reality has changed.” **Matthew Emerson, *He Descended to the Dead***