

The Apostle's Creed

Sunday School
October 1, 2023

Lesson Notes: WEEK 9 "He descended into hell"

- There are **FOUR** main approaches/methods of thought toward the "he descended into hell" phrase of the Apostle's Creed:
 - **One**, "There isn't enough evidence" view
 - **Two**, Lutheran view
 - **Three**, Catholic view
 - **Four**, Reformed/Presbyterian view

- This phrase is **NOT simply a modern issue** but one that's been argued over since the **Reformation!** In fact, a Dutchman named "Matsberger" during the Reformation was put into prison for three years because he supported this statement from the Apostle's Creed.
 - The earliest framework of the Creed wasn't seen on paper until 215 AD. This phrase in particular didn't show up in written form until 390 AD.

- **Romans 14:22-23**
 - We must never recite anything that *goes against our conscience* – BUT we also must *articulate our faith BOLDLY* and as **MATTER OF FACT**.

- **In response** to someone saying "there isn't enough evidence" that Jesus descended into hell, there are **4 considerations** to keep in mind:
 - **First**, just because the Bible doesn't directly say it, does NOT mean the Bible doesn't teach on it. **EX:** Trinity & abortion. Both these words aren't found in Scripture, yet Scripture teaches on them! (Matthew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3, Psalm 139, Jeremiah 1:1-5)
 - **Second**, heaven and hell are real places. These are the only **TWO** places Scripture mentions regarding our eternal whereabouts.
 - Hebrews 2:9
 - **Third**, depending on the CONTEXT, hell can have different meanings:
 - Sheol (OT) & Hades (NT) = common name for "the grave" – focusing on where our **BODIES** are placed after death = hell (little h).
 - Jesus did directly say in **Matthew 12:40** = "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."
 - Hell = focusing on what happens to our **SOULS** after death – awaiting eternal punishment for unrepentant sin & evil.
 - Luke 16:19-31, called "Hades" here

- **Fourth**, keep in mind the chronological progression of Jesus' humiliation & exaltation.
- **In summary**, we must admit that something happened to Jesus' body & spirit before he rose. As **Colossians 1:18** says, Jesus is the “*head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.*”
- Christ, being the ultimate substitute for our sin – as a PART of his sacrifice, experienced DEATH AND remained under death for a time to show the finality of death and what our sin causes – *but glory be to God that HE IS RISEN!*