From the Cross to the Throne

Central question: Where did Jesus go during the three days between His death and resurrection, and what did He accomplish?

Part I — Where Did Jesus Go? (35 minutes)

1. Jesus died and descended into the heart of the earth (5 minutes)

John 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

> James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.
>
> **His spirit did not stay in His body.**

Luke 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

Ephesians 4:9–10

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

- Jesus' body was placed in the tomb. What happened to His soul and spirit?
- Jesus said He would be in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:40).
- Matthew 12:40 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.
- Interpreters differ whether "lower parts of the earth" means the realm of the dead or His coming to earth.
- Jesus declared His redemptive work finished before He died.

2. Jesus entered Hades — the realm of the dead (7 minutes)

Acts 2:27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Acts 2:31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. (2 places in hades, Peter never says that Jesus was tormented.)

Psalm 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

This refers to the physical body corrupting after 3 days.

- “Hell” in Acts 2 translates Hades; the Hebrew counterpart in Psalm 16 is Sheol.
- Hades, the realm of the dead, is not identical in meaning to Gehenna, associated with final punishment.
- Peter emphasizes that Jesus was not abandoned to Hades and His body did not decay.
- These passages do not describe Satan torturing Jesus.

3. Jesus went to Paradise — Abraham’s bosom (8 minutes)

Luke 23:42–43

42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Luke 16:22–26

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 Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, 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 receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus 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.

- Jesus promised the thief Paradise that day.
- Abraham’s bosom is described as comfort, separated from torment by a great gulf.
- Traditionally, many identify Paradise with Abraham’s bosom; the passages do not explicitly equate them.
- Question: Where does Scripture say Jesus was tortured in hell that day?

4. Jesus proclaimed to the spirits in prison (7 minutes)

1 Peter 3:18–20

18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

Jude 6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

- "Preached" (kērussō) means to proclaim or herald.
- Interpretations include a proclamation to imprisoned spirits or Christ preaching through Noah to people now dead.
- The passage does not say Jesus suffered there or was punished by demons.
- Peter begins: Christ "hath once suffered for sins."

5. Jesus led captivity captive (5 minutes)

Ephesians 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Psalm 68:18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.

2 Corinthians 12:4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

- One traditional interpretation is that Jesus brought righteous Old Testament saints into heaven.
- Another sees the language as a triumphal procession over His enemies.
- Paul later describes Paradise in connection with the third heaven; its relocation is not explicitly described.

6. Jesus rose and ascended to heaven (3 minutes)

1 Corinthians 15:3–4

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Revelation 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Acts 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

- Jesus rose bodily, possesses the keys of death and Hades, and ascended victoriously.
- He appeared to His disciples over forty days before His ascension (Acts 1:3).

Part II — Did Jesus Suffer in Hell? (10 minutes)

7. Four passages often cited for suffering in hell (6 minutes)

A. 2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Claim: Jesus became sinful in nature. Response: The verse says He knew no sin; it teaches substitution, not that He acquired Satan's nature.

Old Testament Picture: The Sacrificial Goat and the Scapegoat

Leviticus 16:9, 15 — The sacrificed goat

9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering.
15 Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

Leviticus 16:21–22 — The scapegoat

21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:
22 And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Exodus 12:5 — The unblemished Passover lamb

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

1 Peter 1:19

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Teaching illustration: On the Day of Atonement, one goat was sacrificed and its blood presented; the other symbolically bore Israel's confessed sins away. Neither animal became morally sinful. Likewise, Jesus bore our sins as the spotless substitute; 2 Corinthians 5:21 does not say He acquired a sinful nature.

B. Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Claim: The curse required torment in hell. Response: Paul specifically connects the curse with hanging on the tree.

C. Isaiah 53:10–11

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Claim: The travail of His soul occurred in hell. Response: The passage describes the suffering Servant's sacrifice but does not locate this suffering in hell.

D. Psalm 88:6–7

6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.

7 Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.

Claim: This describes Jesus being tormented in hell. Response: Psalm 88 is a lament; a typological application to Christ does not establish postmortem torment.

8. Four passages establishing the sufficiency of the cross (4 minutes)

A. John 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

B. 1 Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

C. Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

D. Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Closing Statement Jesus did not have to become sinful to bear our sins. Scripture does not teach that demons tortured Him to complete redemption. He bore our sins on the cross, shed His blood, died, rose again, and ascended victoriously to the Father.

The cross was not the beginning of an unfinished payment. It was the place where Jesus offered Himself for our redemption.

"It is finished." — John 19:30