

Dear Nadeem,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You asked to whom Jesus preached when he descended into hell. You also wanted to know if there were two chambers or sections in hell. Thirdly, you asked if anyone accompanied Jesus to heaven.

The word “hell” in both the Old and New Testaments actually refers to the grave, the end result for everyone, good or bad. “For in the grave (hell), where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.” (Ecclesiastes 9:10) The Hebrew word in the Old Testament for “hell” is “sheol.” In the New Testament the Greek word “Hades” is used for “sheol.” Both words refer to the grave.

We must then ask if there is a difference between hell (Hades) and the lake of fire (Gehenna) mentioned in Revelation 20:14? It states, “Then death and Hades (hell) were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.” Some Christian denominations mistakenly lump Hades and Gehenna together as separate compartments of hell, which they erroneously say is a place of continual torment and torture. They think that the “lake of fire” (Gehenna) is actually the second chamber of hell, the first chamber being Hades. What, then, is this lake of fire, which is described as the second death, and how is it different from Hades? Gehenna pertains to the Valley of Ge-Hinnon, which was the garbage dump of Jerusalem. Fires were kept burning continuously so that all would be consumed. No living thing was ever thrown into it. This valley stood as an ominous symbol of everlasting and total destruction (not everlasting punishment) and that is why Jesus used it as an unmistakable symbol of the second death. Three examples where Jesus used “Gehenna” appear in Mark 9:43, 45, and 47. “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell (Gehenna), where the fire never goes out.” (Mark 9:43) Jesus is symbolically saying control your body so you will not be unfaithful, or you will be destroyed. The difference, then, between “hell” (Hades) and “the lake of fire” (Gehenna) is that Hades is the death that everyone goes to, and “Gehenna” is the second death from which there is no resurrection.

There is one scripture where the Greek word “tartaroo” is translated “hell.” It is found in 2 Peter 2:4, which reads thus: “God spared not the angels who sinned, but cast [them] down to hell [tartaroo], and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” Jude 6 also refers to these angels, “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.” In 2 Peter 2:4, the words “cast down to hell” are translated from the one Greek word “tartaroo.” This word very closely resembles “tartarus,” a word used in Grecian mythology as the name for a dark abyss or prison. But “tartaroo” seems to refer more to an act than to a place. The fall of the angels who sinned was from honor and dignity, into dishonor and condemnation, and the thought seems to be, “God spared not the angels who sinned, but degraded them.”

To whom did Jesus preach to when he descended into hell? We believe that Jesus preached to no one since he was dead (or non-existent) for parts of three days, just as all those who died before him were non-existent. In order to pay the ransom price and bring back all of humanity, Jesus had to actually die. Jesus’ death and resurrection was the crowning jewel in God’s plan for

humankind. Forty days after God resurrected Jesus, Jesus ascended into heaven to be with His Father. No one else went with him. But Jesus promised to return and gather his saints unto him. “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you may be where I am.” (John 14:3)

We believe that the words “sheol” and “Hades” are representative of the grave to which all our race were condemned on account of Adam’s sin, and from which all are redeemed by our Lord’s death and resurrection. All will be awakened to either eternal life in heaven or everlasting life on earth, after a period of testing. Gehenna, the second death, or utter destruction, is the final penalty upon those who, after being redeemed and brought to the full knowledge of the truth, and to full ability to obey it, shall choose death by opposing God’s laws of righteousness.

To whom did Jesus preach when he descended into hell? He preached to no one, since He and all others were dead, or non-existent. Were there two chambers in hell? No, hell is the grave and nowhere in scripture is there any mention of chambers in hell or the grave. Did anyone go with Jesus to heaven when He ascended? No one went with Him, but now the saints are with Him in heaven.

For more information on hell and its meaning, please see attached file, “What Say the Scriptures about Hell?”

We hope we have answered your questions. Please write us again.

Sincerely,
Christian Questions Radio