

Christ's Journey to the Center of the Earth

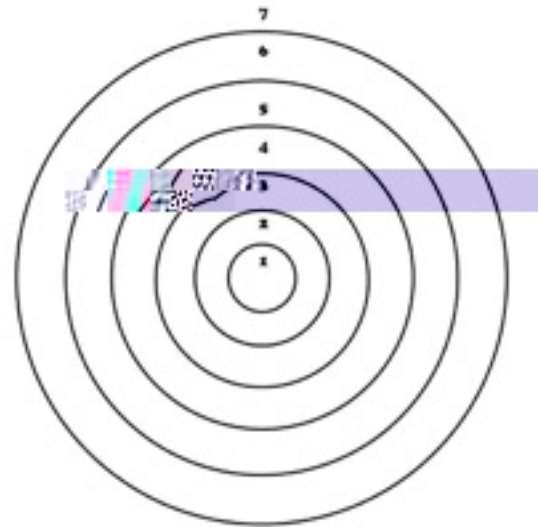
Matthew 12:40

In 1864, Jules Verne wrote the classic novel *"Journey to the Center of the Earth."* However, 2,000 years ago God recorded the account of Christ making a journey to the center of the earth and returning back within three days.

In this message, we will compare Scripture with Scripture and learn what happened between the time Christ gave up the ghost on the cross and He arose from the grave three days later.

COMPONENTS of the universe:

- 1= Paradise (Abraham's bosom)
- 2= Hell (At the center of the earth)
- 3= Under the earth's crust
- 4= The surface of the earth
- 5= The first heaven (atmosphere around the earth)
- 6= The second heaven (outer space)
- 7= The third heaven (God's dwelling place)



I. The PLACE (Mt. 12:40).

- Christ used the example of Jonah and the whale as a sign of His death, burial and resurrection.
 - A. Jonah was literally swallowed by a whale.
 - B. Jonah literally died in the whale's belly and resurrected after being buried in the deep for three days and three nights. While Jonah's body was in the whale's belly, his soul went "to hell and back" (**Jonah 2:2, 6**).

- Jonah 2:2- *...I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly OF HELL cried I, and thou heardest my voice.*
- Jonah 2:6- *I went DOWN to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her BARS was about me for ever: YET hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.*

C. **Location of Hell**—Hell is at the bottom of the earth’s mountains (Jonah 2:6). The Scripture always speaks of hell as being “down”

- Ps. 55:15—*Let death seize upon them, and let them go **down** quick into hell:*
- Prov. 15:24— *The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from **hell beneath**.*
- Is. 14:15—*thou shalt be brought **down to hell**, to the sides of the pit.*
- Luke 10:15— *And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust **down to hell**.*
- 2 Pet. 2:4— *For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them **down to hell**...*

1. **Three compartments (Luke 16:19-26).**

(1) Hell, a place of flaming fire—The abode of the souls of the wicked / unsaved.


(2) Abraham’s bosom or paradise (Luke 23:43)—The abode of the O.T. saints [now empty].

(3) These two compartment were separated by a “*great gulf*.”

2. Hell is said to have “*gates*” (Mt. 16:18) and “*bars*” (Jonah 2:6) that require “*keys*” to open (Rev. 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**”*).

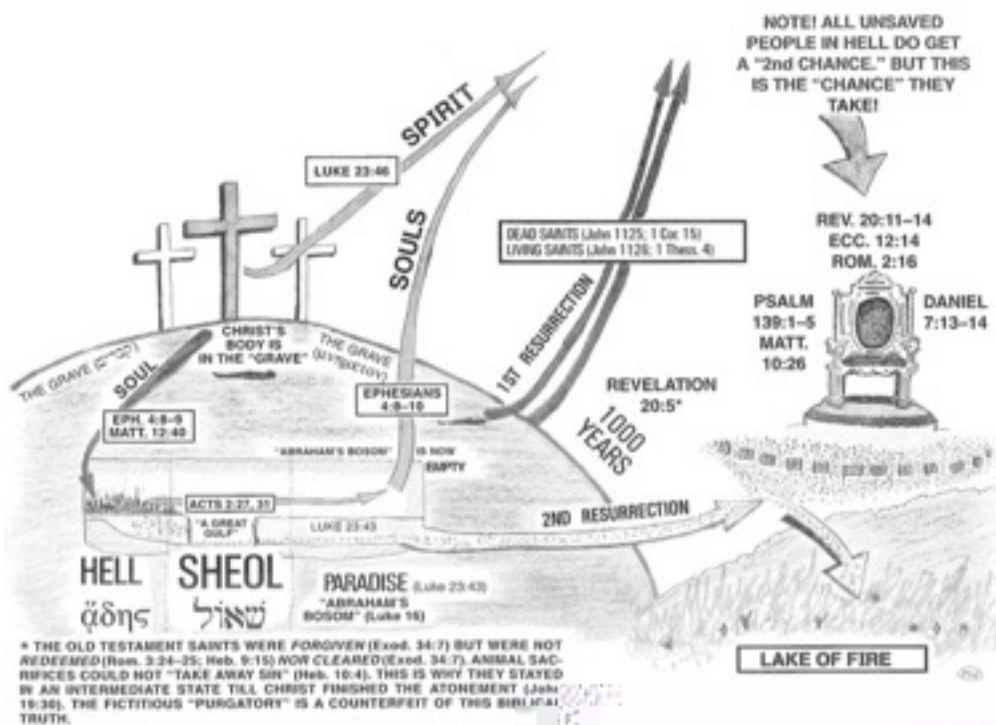
II. The PICTURE.

A. **God is a trinity—(1 John 5:7).**

1. Man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). [ **SLIDE 7b**] God is a trinity, therefore man was created as a trinity. He has a body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23).

- Likewise, Christ came to earth “*in the likeness of men... being found in fashion as a man*” (Phil. 2:6-8). Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ also had a body, soul, and spirit.

B. What happened when Christ died on the cross (See **diagram**):



- Christ's BODY— On the cross Jesus BORE “*our sins IN HIS OWN BODY*” (1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:4-6). Because He was bearing our sins and became sin for us, He could pay the penalty for our sin—Death (Rom. 6:23).
 - ➔ Christ's physical body laid in the grave for three days and three nights, as Jonah's body was in the belly of the whale three days (Luke 23:52-53).
- Christ's SPIRIT went back to the Father (Luke 23:46).
- Christ's SOUL descended into the lower parts of the earth (Mt. 12:40). BEFORE Jesus *ascended*, He *descended* (Eph. 4:8-9).
 - ➔ Jesus' soul went to hell (READ: **Acts 2:27-31**). It was Jesus soul that was made a offering for sin (Isa. 53:10).

III. The PRISON-BREAK. (READ: **Eph. 4:8-10**)

- Eph. 4:8 *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE, and gave gifts unto men.*
- Eph. 4:9 *(Now that he ascended, what is it but that HE ALSO DESCENDED FIRST INTO THE LOWER **PARTS** OF THE EARTH?)*
- Eph. 4:10 *He that **descended** is the same also that **ascended** up far above ALL heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

➡ **What did Jesus do when He “descended first into the lower PARTS of the earth”?**

A. Jesus took the keys, opened the gates and entered into hell.

- ➡ Jesus had sins on Him when He died. But when He came up from the dead He had no sins on Him for Mary couldn't touch Him (John 20:17). He bore my sins on the cross, and He is coming again WITHOUT SIN (**Heb. 9:28**—*So Christ was ONCE offered TO BEAR THE SINS of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the SECOND TIME WITHOUT SIN unto salvation.*). **What happened to my sins?** Where did my sins go? Jesus dumped them off in hell where they belong!

B. Preached to the spirits in prison (1 Pet. 3:18-19; 4:6).

- 1 Pet. 3:18-19 — *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;*
- 1 Pet. 4:6— *For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged ACCORDING TO MEN IN THE FLESH...*
- 2 Pet. 2:4 — *For if God spared not THE ANGELS THAT SINNED, BUT CAST THEM DOWN TO HELL, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;*

1. “**Spirits**”— Angels called “spirits” (Heb. 1:7, 14; Acts 23:8). Men have a spirit, but never called “spirits”—Men are called “souls” in the Bible (Gen. 2:7). They are “*judged according to men in the flesh*” (1 Pet. 4:6).

2. **“Disobedient”**—These would be angels that sinned during the days of Noah (cf. 2 Pet 2:4; Gen. 6:1-4).
 3. **“Prison”**—Hell (2 Pet. 2:4).
- C. He crossed over to Abraham’s bosom and *“led captivity captive...”*
1. These are O.T. saints who died before the cross. Their sins were covered by the blood of animals, but their sins were not removed. They could not go to heaven until their sins were removed by the shed blood of Christ. So they were “captives,” waiting “behind bars” (Mt. 16:18 cf. Jonah 2:2, 6) for Christ to come with a key to unlock the gate (Rev. 1:18). Joseph was there waiting... Joshua was waiting... David was waiting... Isaiah was waiting... Jeremiah was waiting... The beggar who was laid at the gate of the rich man was there waiting... The repentant thief that was crucified with Christ was waiting.
 2. Now that Christ’s blood has been shed, their sins were removed. Jesus made them His own captives and lead them out so they could go, to heaven (Abraham’s bosom now empty)!
 3. *“He ascended up on high... far above ALL heavens”* [three heavens] Eph. 4:8, 10).

IV. The PRESENT.

- ➡ Today Abraham’s bosom is empty and **paradise is in heaven.**
[2 Cor. 12:2-4; cf. Rev. 2:7].
- A. When a saved person dies today they go immediately to heaven.
- 2 Cor. 5:8— *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be ABSENT FROM THE BODY, and to be PRESENT WITH THE LORD.*
 - Phil. 1:23— *For I am in a strait betwixt two, having A DESIRE TO DEPART, and TO BE WITH CHRIST; which is far better:*
 - Phil. 1:21— *For to me to live is Christ, and TO DIE IS GAIN.*
- ➡ Can you honestly say right now that for you to die would be gain?

- B. When an unsaved person dies today, they go immediately to Hell to await the Great White Throne Judgment where they will be judged and be cast in the lake of fire (**READ: Rev. 20;11-15**).

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?