

Teaching / Preaching Outline

The Journey After Calvary: Paradise, Not Hell

Theme

Exposing the false tradition that Jesus descended into hell, and showing from Scripture that His body was in the grave, while His soul was in paradise.

Key Texts

- **Matthew 12:40;**
- **Luke 23:42 43;**
- **Psalm 16:10 with Acts 2:27, 31;**
- **Ecclesiastes 12:7;**
- **2 Thessalonians 2:10 12.**

I. A Strong Tradition That Cannot Stand

Aim: Show that the popular story is tradition, not Scripture.

1. The common story;
 - Jesus dies on a Friday;
 - He goes down into hell to preach and rescue Old Testament saints;
 - He rises early Sunday morning.
2. The only sign Jesus gave;

Jesus in **Matthew 12:40:**

“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whales belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

- The Friday to Sunday time line gives one day and two nights;
- It fails the only sign Jesus gave of His Messiahship;
- To keep that story is to choose **tradition** above **truth**.

3. The danger of religious tradition without love of truth;

Paul in **2 Thessalonians 2:10 12:**

“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall

send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

- When truth is rejected, God may allow strong delusion;
- Popular and ancient does not mean Scriptural.

II. The Certain Word From The Cross: “To Day... in Paradise”

Aim: Let Jesus own words settle the question.

1. The thief request and faith;

Luke in Luke 23:42:

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

- He believes Jesus has a kingdom;
- He looks beyond death;
- He calls Him Lord.

2. The Lord clear promise;

Jesus in Luke 23:43:

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

- “**To day**” not some distant future;
- “**With me**” personal fellowship;
- “**In paradise**” that is, the kingdom and church of God, not hell.

3. Body in the tomb, soul in paradise;

John in John 19:38:

“And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.”

- The **body** is taken and buried;
- The **soul** goes where Jesus says, **paradise**;
- Jesus is God, He cannot lie, so the hell story must be wrong.

III. Solving the “Soul in Hell” Text

Aim: Explain Psalm 16 and Acts 2 in simple terms.

1. No contradictions in the Bible;

Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:33:

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

- If texts appear to clash, we have misread one or both;
- We must use God method of study.

Isaiah in Isaiah 28:13:

“But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little...”

Isaiah in Isaiah 34:16:

“Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate...”

- Compare Scripture with Scripture;
- Let one verse find its mate, its companion.

2. The text that is often misused;

Peter in Acts 2:27:

“Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

Peter explains in **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.”

- He is explaining **resurrection**, not a journey into torment;
- Notice the link with “**flesh**” and “**corruption**”.

3. The word for “soul” **NEPHESH**;

- **NEPHESH** can mean the inner being;
- It can also mean a living person;
- It can even mean a **dead body**.

Example of **NEPHESH** as people:

Moses in Genesis 12:5:

“And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brothers son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran...”

Example of *NEPHESH* as a dead body:

Moses in **Numbers 6:6**:

“All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body.”

- In Hebrew, “dead body” there is *NEPHESH*;
- So *NEPHESH* in **Psalm 16:10** can rightly mean **body**;
- In a resurrection context, this fits perfectly.

4. The word for “hell” *SHEOL*;

- Sometimes translated “grave”;
- Sometimes translated “hell”;
- Context decides which is right.

Example where *SHEOL* clearly means grave:

Solomon in **Ecclesiastes 9:10**:

“Whatsoever thy hand findest to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

- No work, no device, no knowledge, no wisdom there;
- This fits the **grave**, not a conscious place of torment.

So in **Psalm 16:10**:

David in **Psalm 16:10**:

“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

- *NEPHESH* points to the **body**;
- *SHEOL* points to the **grave**;
- Joined with “corruption”, it clearly speaks of the **body in the grave**.

5. Harmonised picture;

- Christ **body in the grave**, not left to decay;
- Christ **soul in paradise**, as He promised;
- No need for a descent into a place of torment.

IV. Application: Leaving Tradition, Loving Truth

Aim: Bring the hearers to decision.

1. Recognise the danger of holding to tradition;
 - Popular creeds can be wrong;
 - Religious calendars can mislead;
 - To keep a lie against clear Scripture invites delusion.
2. Commit to the Bible way of study;
 - Precept upon precept, line upon line;
 - Whole Bible harmony, from Genesis to Revelation;
 - Let clear words of Christ rule our understanding.
3. Rest in the true Christ and His finished work;

Jesus in **John 17:17**:

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

- Sanctification comes through **truth**, not tradition;
- The real Christ is the One revealed by the Word;
- His journey after Calvary was body in the grave, soul in **paradise**, and resurrection in power.

Suggested Closing Questions

- Am I willing to let go of any tradition that does not agree with the plain Word of God;
- Do I measure my beliefs by creeds and seasons, or by the words of Jesus Christ;
- Will I seek God to sanctify me through His truth, whatever it may correct in my thinking.