



THE APOSTLES' CREED





...he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again...



Naturally, since I myself am a writer, I do not wish the ordinary reader to read no modern books. But if he must read only the new or only the old, I would advise him to read the old. And I would give him this advice precisely because he is an amateur and therefore much less protected than the expert against the dangers of an exclusive contemporary diet.



...Every age has its own outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. And that means the old books.

- C.S. Lewis



For my soul is full of troubles,
and my life draws near to Sheol.
I am counted among those who go down to the pit;
I am a man who has no strength,
like one set loose among the dead,
like the slain that lie in the grave...
You have put me in the depths of the pit,
in the regions dark and deep.



Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come; it rouses the shades to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth; it raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations. All of them will answer and say to you: ‘You too have become as weak as we! You have become like us!’



I shall ransom them from the power of Sheol;
I shall redeem them from Death.
O Death, where are your plagues?
O Sheol, where is your sting?



Except for an oblique reference to Sheol as a place of thirst, the Old Testament nowhere suggests that it is a place of torment for the wicked. Rather, it is the general abode of all the dead.



If you approached a Jew on the streets of Jerusalem in Jesus' day and asked: "If you were to die tonight, why should God let you into heaven?" you would probably have heard: "You mean, 'Why should God let me into the good section of Hades,' don't you?"... All the dead go to Hades and there they wait for reunion with their bodies at the resurrection.



²²Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— ²³this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.



²⁵For David says concerning him,
“I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
²⁶therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
my flesh also will dwell in hope.
²⁷For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One see corruption.
²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.”



²⁹Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.



When I turned to the New Testament (and to most of the early Christian writers who wrote in its wake), I found... [that] no longer are the saints in Sheol/Hades, in subterranean chambers or treasuries of souls. Rather, they are in the very presence of God in heaven, in the heavenly Jerusalem, with the angels in festal gathering (Heb. 12.22), under the altar (Rev. 6.9), or standing before the throne (Rev. 7.9) ... what is the explanation for this?



...[It is] the fact that the long-awaited Messiah of Israel has come and has accomplished his mission! He was brutally murdered by his enemies, but his death had atoning power for the sins of his people. And though he died, Hades and the power of death could not hold him!



We have a Savior who has done what no one had done before - not Enoch who walked with God, not Abraham the friend of God, not Moses, faithful in all God's house, not Joshua who gave them rest, not Samson the strong, not David the triumphant king... We have a Savior who has entered death's realm and has conquered it, who has bound the strong man and spoiled his goods, who has risen and ascended to the throne of glory.

Ἡ ἀνάστασις.

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Fear not: I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.



Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.



- The fear of death tempts us to **SHRINK BACK...** but because Jesus has defeated death, we can **PRESS FORWARD!**
- The fear of death tempts us to **TREMBLE...** but because Jesus has defeated death, we can **TAUNT!**
- The fear of death tempts us to **DESPAIR...** but because Jesus has defeated death, we can **CELEBRATE!**