

Victory

Exploring scripture with 3 base premises: 1. The Bible is accurate. 2. God does not lie. 3. God the Father loves His son and all mankind. I had long pondered how Christ on the cross could tell the thief beside Him, "Today you will be with me in paradise" and then go to preach in Hell for 3 days and nights?
Matthew 12:40

Eventually, the answer came that Jesus told the truth as He knew it at the time. He did not know that He was bound for Hell, just as He did not realize that the Father had to leave Him when He assumed our sins. His cry of "My God, My God why have you forsaken me?" in Matthew 27:46 shows His surprised anguish. A loving Father had withheld the full knowledge of what Christ had to endure when He, the Father, must abandon the son because of the presence of sin. When Christ died as a sinner, He was destined for hell, not because of His desire to go, but because He became sin. The Father knew that all that had died before Christ must be sent to Hell because they could not attain Heaven through the "Law". No one could be that perfect! They had no salvation through the Grace of Christ. Christ, in fairness, must give them an opportunity for grace. Jesus must be separated from the presence of the Father for a time and be bound within Hell. This may well have been worse than the physical torment that He endured on earth. Now He had to endure the Spiritual torment of loss of the Father's presence for a season. He still had the Father's love though, just as we do, even when we sin.

While in Hell Jesus likely only did one miracle. He threw open the doors of Hell and rose to life, taking with Him the captives who believed in Him. This was total victory over the physical and spiritual weapons of Satan. Christ's ministry had started with a 40 day temptation by the devil. It had ended with escape from the last weapons that Satan had, physical death and spiritual separation from the Father. Jesus had indeed achieved total victory for Himself and mankind. God had proved His perfect love for mankind and had created a bridge of escape, called Grace, for others to follow. Jesus truly is Lord over all. He was now worthy to be raised above even the angels, Hebrews 1:4, and worshiped by the Angels, Hebrews 1:6. He is worthy of our praise also.