

Holy Week – After The Cross
Bible Study April 4, 2024
St John Baptist Church – Pastor Charles A. Hall

When Jesus had completed the work that God the Father assigned Him to do here on earth, which included defeating death, He then began His return back home to Heaven. However, before he ascended back into heaven Jesus first descended back into the lower parts of the earth where both the saved and the unsaved who had died were. The place in the lower part of the earth was divided into two parts, one was called Hades which was a place prepared for those who will eventually go to hell. This other place was called the Bosom of Abraham, is where those that believed in God by faith were placed. Jesus Descended to the Bosom of Abraham to set free those who had died in faith, and to take them to heaven with him. They could not go directly into heaven until the finished work on the cross. Now those that die in Christ after the finish work on the cross do go directly to heaven. This is misunderstood and also falsely taught even in Christian churches today. Believers go immediately to heaven to be with God when they die. The bible tells us that this is a place of comfort and blessedness where our lord dwells. However, the earthly bodies of believers do not go with them to heaven, they must await the time of resurrection when God will raise up those who die in Christ and give them a new body. The good news for all believers is that our souls/spirits go directly to heaven to be with the Lord! Today, when a non-believer dies his soul/spirit continues to go to Hades, waiting for the day of the manifestation of hell.

- **Ephesians 4:8-10** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (9) (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? (10) He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)
- **2Corinthians 5:8** We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

We live in a bible period called the period of the dispensation of Grace, which mean our rewards are based on the undeserved favor from a loving God. The periods of dispensation in the bible relates to how God deals with Humanity under different biblical covenants. At another time we will do a detailed study of the seven periods of dispensation as recorded in the bible:

1. Dispensation of Innocent (God communicated face to face with His creation)
2. Dispensation of Conscience (God could not tolerate sin and brought a flood)
3. Dispensation of Human Government (Humanity rebelled against civil authority)
4. Dispensation of Promise (God's Covenant to the Hebrew people)
5. Dispensation of Law (God's people continually broke His laws)
6. Dispensation of Grace (All true Believers are given unmerited favor by God)
7. Dispensation of Kingdom (Resurrection of old testament saints, the church, and survivors of the tribulation)

At this present time, we are all under the 6th period of dispensation, the period of Grace, also known as the church age period. During this period believers enter heaven as a gift from God based on our faith in who He is, what he has done, and what He will do for all of

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humanity. We often time call this the finished work of the cross. This dispensation of Grace by God is the only way anyone can get into heaven, there is no other way. Jesus Christ alone is the only way into Heaven, there is no other way! Unlike other periods of dispensation when a believer dies, they go directly into the presence of God in heaven.

- **Ephesians 3:2-13** If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: (3) How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, (4) Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (5) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (6) That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (7) Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. (8) Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; (9) And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: (10) To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, (11) According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: (12) In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. (13) Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.
- **Acts 4:12** Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Jesus told one of the thieves on the cross that believed He was truly the Son of God, that he would be with Him in paradise. The paradise that Jesus was referring to was heaven.

- **Luke 23:39-43** And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. (40) But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? (41) And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. (42) And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. (43) And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

During Jesus time of earthly ministry, He tell a parable confirmed the existence of Hell and heaven.

Luke 16:23-24 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (24) And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.