

**Luke 23:43** Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise."

**Revelation 1:18** I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

**READ Revelation 20:11-15** Mark what stands out to you.

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. <sup>14</sup> Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. <sup>15</sup> Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

**REFLECT** Write your thoughts and feelings from the above passage.

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How should this affect your heart for and relationships with those people in your life AND around the world, regarding where their spiritual condition? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Conclusion

Why would a *loving* God send people to hell or even allow hell to *exist*?  
How could a *holy* God not send evil to hell? How could a *loving* God not *protect* those who accept Him?

**RESPOND** (Application for this week)

**BEST verses/passages** (write it out): \_\_\_\_\_  
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**WHY** that Scripture is *significant to me* at this time in my life: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**HOW** I can practically apply what God spoke to me about (give specifics): \_\_\_\_\_  
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**WHO** I can ask to hold me accountable for my application: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sermon-Based Devotional**

Lawrence Free Methodist Church  
(Based on a Sermon by Pastor Bryce Ball on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

**Going to Hell for All the Right Reasons**  
**Series: The Apostles' Creed**

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**  
**was crucified, died, and was buried;**  
**he descended into hell.**

On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

While the creed itself is not Scripture, every statement found within is inspired by Scripture.

I suggest we use it as a tool to define what we universally believe.

Today

**...suffered under Pontius Pilate,**  
**was crucified, died, and was buried;**  
**he descended into hell.**

One compelling distinction of Jesus' ministry is how public it was.

The confession regarding Jesus' suffering under Pontius Pilate grants historical credence and combats religious mythology.

**Tacitus: Roman senator and historian, c. 56-117 AD**

"Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome..." *Annals, Book 15, chapter 44, from second Medicean Manuscript*

**Josephus: Roman-Jewish scholar and historian, c. 37-100 AD**

“About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. And when, upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had condemned him to a cross, those who had first come to love him did not cease. He appeared to them spending a third day restored to life, for the prophets of God had foretold these things and a thousand other marvels about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared.”

*Jewish Antiquities, Book 18, chapter 3*

**READ** John 19:38-42 **Mark what stands out to you.**

<sup>38</sup> Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. <sup>39</sup> He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. <sup>40</sup> Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. <sup>41</sup> At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. <sup>42</sup> Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

**REFLECT** This is John's writing of historic information. Record your observations as a reporter might. \_\_\_\_\_

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**...he descended into hell.**

γέεννα “Gehenna” - the name for the place of eternal punishment, often portrayed as a fiery lake

**Matthew 5:29** “If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”

ταρταρόω “Tartaros” - the deepest abyss in hell; in Greek mythology it is the prison into which the Greek gods threw the titans, to be contained for all eternity

**2 Peter 2:4** For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment...

ᾗδης “Hades” - the realm of the dead, a place of shadow existence beyond life, Abraham's Bosom also known as Sheol

**READ** Luke 16:22-26 **Mark what stands out to you.** [Jesus is speaking.]

<sup>22</sup> “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up & saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. <sup>24</sup> So he called to him, “Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire. <sup>25</sup> But Abraham replied, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.”

**REFLECT** How do you feel about Jesus' account in Luke 16:22-26?

Write your thoughts and feelings. \_\_\_\_\_

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1. He went to suffer.

Jesus descended into the bad part of Sheol. He had to suffer what it meant to be a human and left unredeemed. In this way, He could fully understand all human experience, even after death.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

**READ** Hebrews 2:10, 14-15 **Mark what stands out to you.**

<sup>10</sup> In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what He suffered...<sup>14</sup> Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—<sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

**REFLECT** Paraphrase the above passage. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. He went to preach.

Jesus descended into the valley of Sheol to present the gift of redemption. Those in the land of the dead wouldn't necessarily accept the gift, but it would illustrate God's practice of mercy before judgment.

**READ** 1 Peter 3:18-20 **Mark what stands out to you.**

<sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. <sup>19</sup> After being made alive, He went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits—<sup>20</sup> to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water...

**REFLECT** From the above passage, describe what Jesus did for you, and for everyone in all of His creation. \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you think you should have a response that would involve action on your part? If so, what should your response be? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Jesus claimed victory over the devil and his demons.

He descended to Hades to steal the very keys to hell and death, making Him the new keeper of all human souls. This act gave Jesus Christ the right to control over everything in creation.