

The Park Church
Adult Study Group
“Understanding Holy Week”
Rev. Wayne E. Gustafson, D.Min.
March 1 – April 4, 2009

Saturday

Mark reports nothing about Saturday.

How then do we deal with the Ancient creeds that talk about Jesus “descending into Hell?”

The descent into Hell is about vindication of the righteous.

There are two Biblical models of divine vindication: Saved from danger before death, as in the saving of the Prophet Daniel from the Lion’s den,

Or

After death as in the story in *Wisdom of Solomon* about the persecution of a righteous man and the mistaken experiment of trying to eliminate him by killing him. The persecutors don’t know that the souls of the righteous remain with God – and are thereby vindicated.

This second is the belief surrounding Jesus that the early Christians were well aware of.

God’s Justice and the bodily (as opposed to spiritual) resurrection of the dead

The background for this concern is “apocalyptic eschatology”. This usually refers to the imminence of God’s transformation of this world here below from one of violent injustice to one of nonviolent justice (not to the end of the world).

Another reason for the belief in the bodily resurrection was that martyrs bodies were tortured and broken, so God’s justice required them to receive transfigured bodies.

Beyond that, Jesus’ descent into Hell is to reclaim those who had died unjustly or righteously in the past. Sometimes referred to as the Harrowing of Hell.

The material for this class comes from:

Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, [The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus’s Final Days in Jerusalem.](#) HarperOne. ISBN978-0-06-087260-1