

Worship services are being cancelled until further notice because of Covid-19. However, we will have worship services through the Internet Zoom platform every Sunday at 10:30 AM in NB, NS and PEI. The Zoom link for this service will be sent to you by email. The telephone numbers for Zoom always remains the same but the Meeting ID and password number change every week. If you need more information, please contact Mr. Vautour. See the bottom of the bulletin the contact information.

If you have friends or acquaintances who want to join in the worship service, please do not hesitate to share with them the Zoom links to join with us in the worship our great God.

For more information about special activities happening in GCI, please see the international website at [www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org). On the left-hand upper side of the screen, you will see 3 short lines. You simply need to click on it. A drop-down menu will appear. Click on "PARTICIPATE".

Please note that audio sermons are available of sermons are available at [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca) and video sermons are now available on YouTube – GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL-MONCTON (see link below)

If you have a prayer requests, other events you would like to announce and/or praise to our great God you would like to share, please try to contact Mr. Vautour by email, text or telephone no later than Saturday, in the morning.

For local prayer requests and financial updates, please see <http://www.worshipim.ca/> and click on **Members Only**. It is password protected for confidentiality reason. If you do not have the password, please contact Mr. Vautour.

**Voice of the Martyrs** (<https://www.vomcanada.com/ng-2020-06-04b.htm>). Christians continue to be persecuted in many parts of the world. They need our prayers. You can receive a free publication through your email. If you are interested, please visit their website to subscribe.

Next Bible Study (1 John 5) (through ZOOM) is scheduled for Thursday September 27, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada: you can receive their magazine for free. If you are interested, please see for more details. <https://www.faithtoday.ca/Subscribe-FT-LIM>

For prayer requests please see local website [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca) under "For Members Only". If you do not know the password, please contact Mr. Vautour

### Prayer requests:

- Let us pray for our brothers and sisters in the faith as well as for all people living in 12 states in Western USA where uncontrolled fires are creating unimaginable destruction and taking people's lives.
- Let us also pray for our brothers and sisters in North Korea where persecution of Christians is rampant. Possessing a Bible often means death for them.
- Let us also pray for all Christians in our Western cultures in lands of plenty compared to many parts of this world that we will not grow weary in well doing. Let us pray not to fall asleep but to wake up and to realize how we are so dependent on God who is our true security in this present evil age as the apostle Paul describes it.

**Offerings:** you can send your offering directly to the following address: **Grace Communion International- Canada, Suite 203A, 2121 Airport Dr., Saskatoon, SK 7S1 6W5.** If you prefer, you can also call 1-306-653-2705. Thank you for your continued generous giving to God by giving to this part of God's church, his body.

**From Mr. Bill Hall – GCI Canadian Director** *"We will continue to process the donations we receive in Saskatoon. Members are urged to mail them directly to our office for the time-being. They can also donate via phone using a credit card, or via Canada Helps using the donate button on our website [www.gcicanada.ca](http://www.gcicanada.ca) We are waving the provision that all donations given via Canada Helps go toward national expenses for the time being. We will credit all donations received via Canada Helps to a member's local congregation, if we can identify where they attend."*

*For those living in Moncton area, if you wish, you can drop your offerings in our mailbox. I will mail them with the ministerial expenses at the end of each month.*

### THE DESCENT OF JESUS (part 1)

<http://thesurprisinggodblog.gci.org/2020/08/the-descent-of-jesus-part-1.html>

By [Ted Johnston](#) - [August 31, 2020](#)

*This post begins a series exploring **Raising Adam, Why Jesus Descended into Hell** by Gerrit Dawson.* A few years ago, I had the distinct pleasure of reading *Jesus Ascended, the Meaning of Christ's Continuing Incarnation* in which pastor and Trinitarian theologian Gerrit Dawson unpacks the vital gospel truth that when Jesus the incarnate Son of God ascended to the Father after his resurrection, he did so bearing our humanity. Jesus, Gerrit reminds us, remains forever *fully God and fully human* ([click here](#) [<http://thesurprisinggodblog.gci.org/2013/04/jesus-ascension.html>]). Having been blessed by *Jesus Ascended*, I was pleased to learn of Gerrit's newest book, *Raising Adam, Why Jesus Descended into Hell*. It unpacks the profound implications for our salvation of Jesus' *descent* -- from heaven to earth via the incarnation, in his suffering throughout the course of his earthly life, and most particularly, his descent into death on our behalf on Holy Saturday, the day between Jesus' death on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter Sunday. In this series of posts, I'll glean some of the main points from *Raising Adam*, though I encourage you to buy and read the book for yourself. You'll be blessed if you do, for Gerrit challenges us to think deeply about a topic that often is under-appreciated or overlooked.

#### **"Descended into Hell"**

Dawson has written *Raising Adam* to reflect on the profound meaning of a phrase in the Apostle's Creed, which declares that Jesus, having died, "descended into Hell" (or, as sometimes translated "into Hades" or "into death" -- more about that later). Some scholars say this phrase was added to the Creed, others debate

its meaning, others simply ignore it. But what Dawson does in his book is help us understand the gospel truth expressed in passages of Holy Scripture like **Revelation 1:17b-18**, where the crucified, risen and ascended God-man Jesus declares, "**I [became] dead, and behold I am alive forevermore and I have the key of Death and Hades.**" Dawson comments: "On Friday, Christ went down to the house of death, seemingly its captive. But on Sunday he came back with its keys! In between, Jesus took ownership of death" (p. 15).

When Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday, he was dead until being resurrected on Easter Sunday. Was his time in the tomb on Friday evening, all day Saturday, and into Sunday of any meaning to our salvation? The answer is a resounding "yes!" There is great meaning to be plumbed in thinking about the significance of what Jesus did on Holy Saturday. The icon above presents some of that meaning, which Edmund Spenser summarized in a poem he wrote in 1595. Here is an excerpt from that poem, which Dawson quotes in full on p. 9:

***Most glorious Lord of life! That, on this day,  
Didst make Thy triumph over death and sin;  
And, having harrowed Hell, didst bring away  
Captivity thence captive, us to win...***

Hades = Sheol = realm of the dead

As we read in **Acts 2:27 (KIV)**, the apostle Peter in his Pentecost sermon quoted Psalm 16. He did so to give voice to Jesus' prayer to the Father: "**Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption**" (**Psalm 16:10, KIV**). The KJV translates the Greek word *Hades* as *Hell*, but a more accurate translation (as in the NIV) is *realm of the dead*. *Hades* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *Sheol*, which means the grave or *realm of the dead*. The point here is that in dying, Jesus was really dead! He descended into the "condition of being dead." But is that all there was to it? Not by a long shot, as we will discover as this series of posts continues.

Early on, the church taught that "though [Jesus'] body was in the tomb, his spirit was not defeated but instead plundered Hell [*Hades*] of its captives" (p. 15). This assertion is controversial, and raises questions -- ones Dawson addresses at length. He does so, not by focusing on the speculative, but by focusing on what we know from Scripture, namely that Jesus' descent into Hades on our behalf is of great importance in God's plan of salvation for us in Christ. Dawson also shows us that we should view Jesus' descent into death as part and parcel of our Lord's descent on our behalf from heaven to earth and in multiple other ways -- all to share fully in our humanity, and in doing so to raise us up out of death into the liberty of his resurrected, glorified human life.

### **Victor over death**

As we'll see as this series of posts progresses, rather than being a *victim* of death, Jesus was *victor* over death. As Dawson notes, we apprehend this truth when we see Jesus' descent into Hades (the realm of the dead) within the context of the whole story of Jesus (i.e. the gospel). There is an important reason that Jesus was not resurrected immediately after dying on the cross. His prolonged time in Hades was vital for our salvation. As Dawson notes, Holy Saturday fits in the gospel story as the last in a series of descents the incarnate Son of God made on our behalf: "When we catch the trajectory of his entire life as a deepening descent into our human condition, the meaning of Christ's sojourn among the dead will open to us" (p. 18). Dawson goes on to show that this meaning is grounded in these three realities:

**1. Jesus' death was a real death.** "Jesus truly underwent the full consequence of human sin which is death (**Romans 5:12**). And he did so on our behalf. Christ engaged death in all its spiritual as well as physical horror.... Jesus endured the suffering of death, 'so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone' (**Hebrews 2:9**)" (p. 19).

**2. Jesus' death was the last of a series of descents.** "Fully human from his conception, Jesus threaded himself ever more deeply into our humanity as he made his way faithfully and lovingly *as* one of us.... In this final descent, [into death/Hades] the Son of God completed his downward journey into the human condition..." (p. 19).

**3. Jesus' death was the turn toward victory.** "At that nadir of Jesus' final descent, the Father initiated his exaltation, as risen and ascended Lord. So, foundationally, the descent also marks the turn from Jesus descending *for* us to his raising *with* us.... Jesus went down, even to the depths, in order to lift us up in renewed communion with the Triune God" (p. 20).

## Conclusion

Dawson concludes the introduction to his book (and so we'll conclude this post) with this statement:

*Only a Christ who willingly received the lethal consequence of our sin can truly take away the burden of them. Only one who has been there, in the hell of our making, can comfort us in our suffering. If Jesus didn't get all the way to the bottom of our predicament, our lost and forsaken condition, then we are left unredeemed at the root. We will be forever lonely, ever tarred with shame, never feeling known, never at peace. But because Jesus entered fully in the deathliness of our human existence, then he can bring us into the eternal life of the Triune God. (p. 20)*

**GCI principle website and Moncton Websites**—a) [www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org) , b) [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca), c) <https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton>; d) Grace Communion International-Moncton <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKazyWhmKmDZy69vJcFfPg>

For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website.

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