

## PART II.—THE DESCENT OF CHRIST INTO HADES

### *Simeon's Sons Tell Their Story*

1.1 Joseph says, “And why do you wonder that Jesus has risen? But it is wonderful that he has not risen alone, but that he has also raised many others of the dead who have appeared in Jerusalem to many. And if you do not know the others, Simeon at least, who received Jesus, and his two sons whom he has raised up—they at least you know. For we buried them not long ago; but now their tombs are seen open *and* empty, and they are alive, and dwelling in Arimathea.” They therefore sent men, and they found their tombs open and empty. Joseph says, “Let us go to Arimathea and find them.”

2 Then rose up the chief priests Annas and Caiaphas, and Joseph, and Nicodemus, and Gamaliel, and others with them, and went away to Arimathea, and found those whom Joseph spoke of. They made prayer, therefore, and saluted each other. Then they came with them to Jerusalem, and brought them into the synagogue, and secured the doors, and placed in the midst the old *covenant* of the Jews; and the chief priests said to them, “We wish you to swear by the God of Israel and Adonai, and so that you tell the truth, how you have risen, and who has raised you from the dead.”

3 The men who had risen having heard this, made upon their faces the sign of the cross, and said to the chief priests, “Give us paper and ink and pen.” These therefore they brought. And sitting down, they wrote as follows:

*The Disruption of Hades and the Patriarchs*

2.1 “O Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life of the world, grant us grace that we may give an account of your resurrection, and your miracles which you did in Hades. We then were in Hades, with all who had fallen asleep since the beginning of the world. And at the hour of midnight there rose a light as if of the sun, and shone into these dark *regions*; and we were all lighted up, and saw each other. And straightway our father Abraham was united with the patriarchs and the prophets, and at the same time they were filled with joy, and said to each other, ‘This light is from a great source of light.’ The prophet Isaiah, who was there present, said, ‘This light is from the Father, and from the Son, and from the Holy Spirit; about whom I prophesied when yet alive, saying, “The land of Zebulon, and the land of Naphtali, the people that sat in darkness, have seen a great light.” ’ ’ ”

2 “Then there came into the midst another, an ascetic from the desert; and the patriarchs said to him, “Who are you? And he said, ‘I am John, the last of the prophets, who made the paths of the Son of God straight, and proclaimed to the people repentance for the remission of sins. And the Son of God came to me; and I, seeing him a long way off, said to the people, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” And with my hand I baptized him in the river Jordan, and I saw like a dove also the Holy Spirit coming upon him; and I heard also the voice of God, even the Father, saying as follows, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And on this account he sent me also to you, to proclaim how the only begotten Son of God is coming here, that whosoever shall believe in him shall be saved, and whosoever shall not believe in him shall be condemned. On this account I say to you all, in order that when you see him you all may adore him, that now only is for you the time of repentance for having adored idols

in the vain upper world, and for the sins you have committed, and that this is impossible at any other time.' ”

### *Seth Tells His Story*

3.1 “While John, therefore, was in this way teaching those in Hades, the first created and forefather Adam heard, and said to his son Seth, ‘My son, I wish you to tell the forefathers of the race of men and the prophets where I sent you, when it fell to my lot to die.’ And Seth said, ‘Prophets and patriarchs, hear. When my father Adam, the first created, was about to fall once upon a time into death, he sent me to make entreaty to God very close by the gate of paradise, that he would guide me by an angel to the tree of compassion, and that I might take oil and anoint my father, and that he might rise up from his sickness. This thing, therefore, I also did. And after the prayer an angel of the Lord came, and said to me, “What, Seth, do you ask? Do you ask for oil that will raise up the sick, or the tree from which this oil flows, on account of the sickness of your father? This is not to be found now. Go, therefore, and tell your father, that after the accomplishing of five thousand five hundred years from the creation of the world, the only begotten Son of God, being made man, will come down to the earth; and he shall anoint him with this oil, and shall raise him up; and shall wash clean, with water and with the Holy Spirit, both him and those out of him, and then shall he be healed of every disease; but now this is impossible.” ’ ”

“When the patriarchs and the prophets heard these words, they rejoiced greatly.”

### *Satan Informs Hades of Jesus' Death*

4.1 “And when all were in such joy, came Satan the heir of darkness, and said to Hades, ‘O all-devouring and insatiable, hear

my words. There is of the race of the Jews one named Jesus, calling himself the Son of God; and being a man, by our working with them the Jews have crucified him: and now when he is dead, be ready that we may secure him here. For I know that he is a man, and I heard him also saying, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He has also done me many evils when living with mortals in the upper world. For wherever he found my servants, he persecuted them; and whatever men I made crooked, blind, lame, lepers, or any such thing, by a single word he healed them; and many whom I had got ready to be buried, even these through a single word he brought to life again.' "

2 "Hades says, 'And is this *man* so powerful as to do such things by a single word? Or if he be so, can you withstand him? It seems to me that, if he be so, no one will be able to withstand him. And if you say that you did hear him dreading death, he said this mocking you, and laughing, wishing to seize you with the strong hand; and woe, woe to you, to all eternity!' Satan says, 'O all-devouring and insatiable Hades, are you so afraid at hearing of our common enemy? I was not afraid of him, but worked in the Jews, and they crucified him, and gave him also to drink gall with vinegar. Make ready, then, in order that you may lay fast hold of him when he comes.' "

3 "Hades answered, 'Heir of darkness, son of destruction, devil, you have just now told me that many whom you had made ready to be buried, be brought to life again by a single word. And if he has delivered others from the tomb, how and with what power shall he be laid hold of by us? For I not long ago swallowed down one dead, Lazarus by name; and not long after, one of the living by a single word dragged him up by force out of my bowels — and I think that it was he of whom you speak. If, therefore, we receive him here, I am afraid lest perchance we be in danger even about the rest. For, lo, all those that I have swallowed from eternity I perceive to be in

commotion, and I am pained in my belly. And the snatching away of Lazarus beforehand seems to me to be no good sign; for not like a dead body, but like an eagle, he flew out of me; for so suddenly did the earth throw him out. Wherefore also I adjure even you, for thy benefit and for mine, not to bring him here; for I think that he is coming here to raise all the dead. And this I tell you: by the darkness in which we live, if you bring him here, not one of the dead will be left behind in it to me.’ ”

*The Gates of Hades Smashed*

5.1 “While Satan and Hades were in this way speaking to each other, there was a great voice like thunder, saying, ‘Lift up your gates, O you rulers; and be you lifted up, you everlasting gates; and the King of glory shall come in.’ When Hades heard, he said to Satan, ‘Go forth, if you art able, and withstand him.’ Satan therefore went forth to the outside. Then Hades says to his demons, ‘Secure well and strongly the gates of brass and the bars of iron, and attend to my bolts, and stand in order, and see to everything; for if he come in here, woe will seize us.’ ”

2 “The forefathers having heard this, began all to revile him, saying, ‘O all-devouring and insatiable! Open, that the King of glory may come in.’ David the prophet says, ‘Do you not know, O blind, that I when living in the world prophesied this saying, “Lift up your gates, O ye rulers?” ’ Isaiah said, ‘I, foreseeing this by the Holy Spirit, wrote, “The dead shall rise up, and those in their tombs shall be raised, and those in the earth shall rejoice. And where, O death, is thy sting? Where, O Hades, is thy victory?” ’ ”

3 “There came, then, again a voice saying, ‘Lift up the gates.’ Hades, hearing the voice the second time, answered as if he did not know, and says, ‘Who is this King of glory?’ The angels of the Lord say, ‘The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.’ And

immediately with these words the brazen gates were shattered, and the iron bars broken, and all the dead who had been bound came out of the prisons, and we with them. And the King of glory came in in the form of a man, and all the dark places of Hades were lighted up.”

### *Satan Bound and Delivered to Hades*

6.1 “Immediately Hades cried out, ‘We have been conquered; woe to us! But who are you that has such power and might? And what are you, who comes here without sin, who is seen to be small and yet of great power, lowly and exalted, the slave and the master, the soldier and the king, who has power over the dead and the living? You were nailed on the cross, and placed in the tomb; and now you are free, and have destroyed all our power. Are you then the Jesus about whom the chief ruler Satan told us, that through cross and death you are to inherit the whole world?’ ”

2 “Then the King of glory seized the chief ruler Satan by the head, and delivered him to his angels, and said, ‘With iron chains bind his hands and his feet, and his neck, and his mouth.’ Then he delivered him to Hades, and said, ‘Take him, and keep him secure till my second appearing.’ ”

### *Hades to Punish Satan*

7.1 “And Hades, upon receiving Satan, said to him, ‘Beelzebul, heir of fire and punishment, enemy of the saints, through what necessity did you bring about that the King of glory should be crucified, so that he should come here and deprive us *of our power*? Turn and see that not one of the dead has been left in me, but all that you have gained through the tree of knowledge, all have you lost through the tree of the cross. And all your joy has been turned into grief; and wishing to put to death the King of glory, you have

put yourself to death. For, since I have received you to keep you safe, by experience shall you learn how many evils I shall do unto you. O arch-devil, the beginning of death, root of sin, end of all evil, what evil did you find in Jesus, that you should compass his destruction? How have you dared to do such evil? How have you busied yourself to bring down such a man into this darkness, through whom you have been deprived of all who have died from eternity? ”

*Jesus Delivers Adam and the Patriarchs*

8.1 “While Hades was in this manner discoursing to Satan, the King of glory stretched out his right hand, and took hold of our forefather Adam, and raised him. Then turning also to the rest, he said, ‘Come all with me, as many as have died through the tree which he touched; for, behold, I again raise you all up through the tree of the cross.’ Thereupon he brought them all out, and our forefather Adam seemed to be filled with joy, and said, ‘I thank your majesty, O Lord, that you have brought me up out of the lowest Hades.’ Likewise also all the prophets and the saints said, ‘We thank you, O Christ, Savior of the world, that you have brought our life up out of destruction.’ ”

2 “And after they had spoken in this way, the Savior blessed Adam with the sign of the cross on his forehead, and did this also to the patriarchs, and prophets, and martyrs, and forefathers. And he took them, and sprang up out of Hades. And while he was going, the holy fathers accompanying him sang praises, saying, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord: Alleluia; to him be the glory of oil the saints.’ ”

*At the Door of Paradise*

9.1 “And setting out to paradise, he took hold of our forefather Adam by the hand, and delivered him, and all the just, to the archangel Michael. And as they were going into the door of paradise, there met them two old men, to whom the holy fathers said, ‘Who are you, who have not seen death, and have not come down into Hades, but who dwell in paradise in your bodies and your souls?’ One of them answered, and said, ‘I am Enoch, who was well-pleasing to God, and who was translated here by him; and this is Elijah the Tishbite; and we are also to live until the end of the world; and then we are to be sent by God to withstand Antichrist, and to be slain by him, and after three days to rise again, and to be snatched up in clouds to meet the Lord.’ ”

*The Thief Arrives in Paradise*

10.1 “While they were speaking in this manner, there came another lowly man, carrying also upon his shoulders a cross, to whom the holy fathers said, ‘Who are you, who has the look of a robber; and what is the cross that you bear upon your shoulders?’ He answered, ‘I, as you say, was a robber and a thief in the world, and for these things the Jews laid hold of me, and delivered me to the death of the cross, along with our Lord Jesus Christ. While, then, he was hanging upon the cross, I, seeing the miracles that were done, believed in him, and entreated him, and said, “Lord, when you are be King, do not forget me.” And immediately he said to me, “Amen, amen: today, I say unto you, you shall be with me in paradise.” Therefore I came to paradise carrying my cross; and finding the archangel Michael, I said to him, “Our Lord Jesus, who has been crucified, has sent me here; bring me, therefore, to the gate of Eden.” And the flaming sword, seeing the sign of the cross, opened to me, and I went in. Then the archangel says to me, “Wait



a little, for the forefather of the race of men, Adam, with the just also comes, that they too may come in.” And now, seeing you, I came to meet you.’ The saints hearing these things, all cried out with a loud voice: Great is our Lord, and great is His strength.”

*Simeon's Sons Affirm Their Testimony*

11.1 “All these things we saw and heard; we, the two brothers, who also have been sent by Michael the archangel, and have been ordered to proclaim the resurrection of the Lord, but first to go away to the Jordan and to be baptized. There also we have gone, and have been baptized with the rest of the dead who have risen. Thereafter also we came to Jerusalem, and celebrated the passover of the resurrection. But now we are going away, being unable to stay here. And the love of God, even the Father, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”

Having written these things, and secured the rolls, they gave the half to the chief priests, and the half to Joseph and Nicodemus. And they immediately disappeared, to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.