

Order of Events: *Good Friday through Easter*

The Order in the Creeds:

Apostles':

- ...suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried;
- He descended into hell;
- The third day He rose again from the dead;
- He ascended into heaven...

Nicene:

- was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried.
- *[no descent into hell in this creed]*
- And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures
- and ascended into heaven

Athanasian:

- who suffered for our salvation,
- descended into hell,
- rose again the third day from the dead,
- ascended into heaven

There is NOT a Time when Believers are Dead between living on Earth and being in Heaven:

Keep in mind that believers are alive in two ways: *physically and spiritually*. When physical death occurs, believers continue to live spiritually with God, Jesus, the holy angels, and the other believers in the third heaven / paradise (2 Corinthians 12:2-4).

1. Eternal life is present tense: ^{NAU} **John 5:24** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, **has eternal life**, and does not come into judgment, but **has passed out of death into life.**"
2. Jesus said to Martha: ^{NAU} **John 11:26** "...everyone who lives *[physically]* and *[while living physically]* believes in Me *[as their Savior]* **will never die.**"
3. Believing spirits go from their dead bodies to Jesus: ^{NAU} **Acts 7:59-60** They went on stoning Stephen as he called on *the Lord* and said, "**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!**" Then falling on his knees, he

cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.

4. When believers die, they join the others in heaven: ^{NIV} **Revelation 7:13-14** Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes-- who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who *[are coming (present tense)]* out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."
5. Jesus referred to Exodus 3:6: ^{NAS} **Luke 20:37-38** "...in the *passage about the burning bush*, [the LORD called Himself] the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for **all live to Him.**"
6. From the body to the Lord: ^{NAU} **2 Corinthians 5:8** we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be **absent from the body** and to be *[alive and]* **at home with the Lord.**

Good Friday: Jesus and the criminals died around 3 pm (**Matt. 27:46-50**):

1. Their souls and spirits were separated from their bodies.
 - a. Jesus and the repentant criminal, *in their souls and spirits*, were immediately in paradise/heaven.
 - i. ^{NAS} **Luke 23:43** And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, **today** you shall be with Me in Paradise."

^{BGT} **Luke 23:43** καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἀμὴν σοι λέγω,

And He said to him, "Truly to you I say,

σήμερον μετ' ἐμοῦ ἔσῃ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ.

Today with Me you will be in the paradise."

Note: In actual Greek texts from the era when Koine Greek was used as a day-to-day language, **Greek was usually written with no punctuation**. The words ran together completely, with no spacing or markup. Accents,

breathing marks, spaces, and other punctuation are added at a much later time, making texts easier to read.¹

- b. The unrepentant criminal, *in his soul and spirit*, was immediately in a place of torment:
 - i. [NAU Luke 16:22-23](#) "...the rich man also died and was buried. In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom."
 - ii. [NAU 2 Peter 2:4, 9](#) For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment... *then* the Lord knows how... to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment...

2. Jesus' body was entombed before sunset on Friday. Though not recorded in the Bible, the criminal's body was buried.

Holy Saturday: Jesus' body rested in His tomb.

Easter Sunday: When God the Father raised Jesus's body to life, Jesus, *in soul and spirit*, came down from heaven and was united to His glorified body; **then** He descended into hell to proclaim His victory over sin, death, and Satan.

1. Jesus' descent into hell: [NAU 1 Peter 3:18-20](#) For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the just for the unjust*, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to **death in the flesh**, but made **alive in the spirit**; in which also **He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison**, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in

[the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark... // A difficult passage!](#) Dr. Giessler wrote: "The words 'made alive in spirit' or 'made alive by the Spirit' must mean Jesus's body came alive physically when He resurrected. (Jesus's 'spirit' never died, only His 'body.')." ²

2. The purpose of His descent: "Christ descended into hell to declare His victory over death and all evil forces. His power surpasses all others. Scripture does not teach that He offered these spirits a second chance for salvation." ³
3. A summary of what Dr. Luther wrote, according to Dr. Pieper: "Christ was put to death according to His lowly, earthly mode of subsistence in the state of humiliation and quickened according to His glorious, heavenly mode of subsistence in the state of exaltation. In this glorified state, as the exalted Savior and Lord, He went and preached to the spirits in prison" (2:320).
4. He rose again on the third day: Jesus descended in body, soul, and spirit. When we say He "rose again," that points to Him being alive and seen by others on earth (which was after His descent into hell).

Concluding Summary:

- ✓ Good Friday: Jesus and the repentant criminal died; then their souls and spirits immediately went to paradise.
- ✓ Easter Sunday:
 - God raised Jesus' body to life and reunited it with His soul and spirit.
 - Jesus descended into hell.
 - Jesus appeared to various people on earth, showing that He was alive.

¹https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Koine_Greek/1._Alphabet,_Pronunciation,_and_Punctuation#:~:text=In%20actual%20Greek%20texts%20from,making%20texts%20easier%20to%20read.

² Phillip Bruce Giessler, Solving New Testament Mysteries with Old Testament Clues (Ishpeming, MI: BookVenture Publishing LLC, 2019), 231. (Also see 228-246)

³ Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). The Lutheran Study Bible (p. 2155). Concordia Publishing House.