

will be defeated when death is defeated (1 Corinthians 15:54-55). At the end of time all the righteous will be released from Paradise, resur-

the great gulf between Tartarus and Paradise after death. However, although sin causes a gulf between the saved and lost on earth, Christ has come that we might be saved through Him (Romans 5:9-10). In order to cross from the world into the church we must believe (John 8:24), repent (Luke 13:3), confess Jesus before men (Matt 10:32-33), and be immersed in water for remission of sins (Act 8:38-39; 2:38). At the point of scriptural baptism we are added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:41,47; 1 Cor. 12:13). If we remain faithful to Him till death we will be saved to spend eternity with God in heaven (Rev.2:10).

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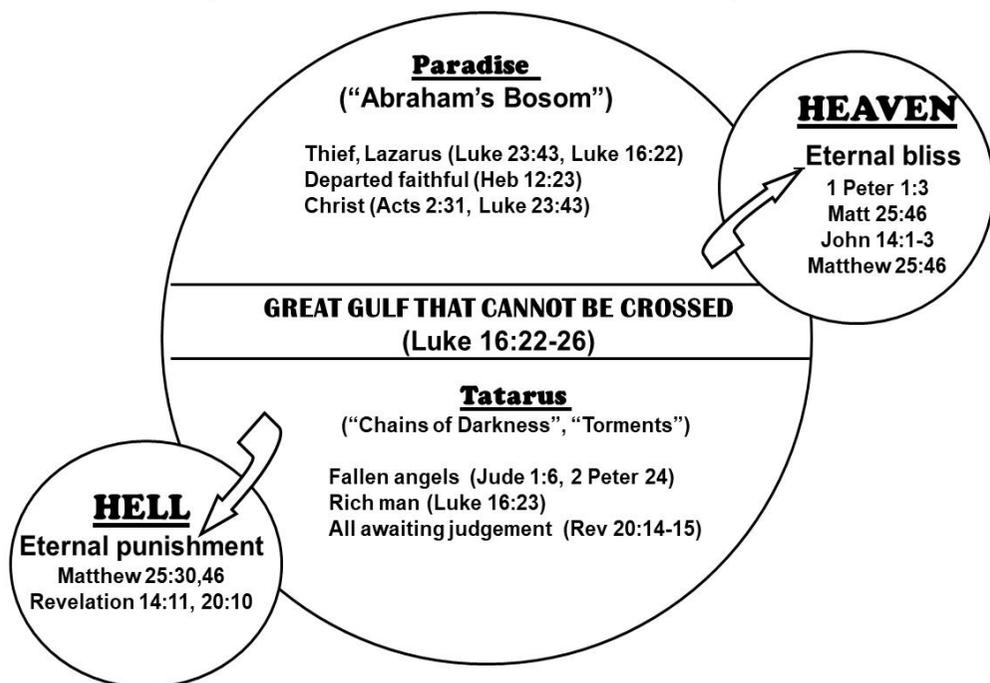
Life Beyond the GRAVE



Where do men go when they die? This is a question that is often asked. One view is that they go directly to Heaven or Hell. However, such is not the case. The apostle John tells us "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13).

MEN WILL NOT GO TO THEIR FINAL DESTINY UNTIL CHRIST RETURNS John 14:3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." From this we can see that it will not be until the Lord comes again that our reward in Heaven will be fulfilled. The Lord has not come again because the prophecies concerning His second coming have not been fulfilled. Some events that have not yet happened are: (1) The dead shall be raised: "The Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God and the dead shall be raised" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). (2)

HADES THE REALM OF THE DEAD



rected from the grave, and exalted to Heaven to be with God and Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). The lost in Tatarus will also be resurrected on that day (John 5:28-29), however they shall be cast into the lake of fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt.25:30). It will not be until then that the prophecy in Revelation will be fulfilled, "death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire" (Rev.20:14). "The lake of fire" refers to the final place of the wicked dead. This place is called GEHENNA, which is another Greek word translated "Hell" by the K.J.V. (Matthew 10:28; 5:22). This word always refers to the final realm of the dead who are lost.

We can see then that there is a place of conscience existence after death. No man can cross

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Both the righteous and unrighteous will be resurrected from the grave and given incorruptible bodies (John 5:28-29, Acts 24:15, Phil. 3:21). (3) The bodies of the living will be changed into incorruptible bodies in the “twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). (4) All will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Matthew 25:31-32). (5) The present Heaven and earth will burn up and vanish away (2 Peter 3:6-10). (6) The unrighteous will be cast into the place of eternal punishment and the righteous will be rewarded in the place of eternal life with Jesus (Matt. 25: 33-46, 2 Thess. 1:8-10, Rev. 20:12-15).

Even though we do not go to Heaven or Hell as soon as we die, this does not mean that we either go out of existence (such as the Jehovah’s Witness teach), or that our soul sleeps in an unconscious state until Christ comes again. The Bible teaches that our spirits await the return of Christ in a conscious state, in a realm known as Hades. The fact that Spirits can exist outside of bodies is easily proved by the fact that God exists and He is a Spirit (John 4:24). Christ Himself lived as God in Spirit form before He was born (John 1:1,14; John 8:58; John 17:5). The subject of Hades is a little confusing to some, because the K.J.V. translates the Greek word HADES as “Hell”. HADES however NEVER refers to the final place of the dead but rather to the place where our disembodied spirits await the second coming.

We learn much about this realm of the dead by an examination of some arguments given on the day of Pentecost by Peter to prove that Christ was resurrected from the dead. Please take time to read ACTS 2:23-36. We can notice the following facts from this section of Scripture.

When Christ died his body was in the grave and his soul was in Hades *“Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (HADES), neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (V*

27). This proves that Hades and the grave are different places. There is a realm for the body and a realm for the soul. It also proves that the body and soul are not the same thing. If Christ’s soul was the same as His body, and Hades and the grave were the same thing (as materialists teach), it would not only contradict the teaching of this verse, but also lead to the unthinkable conclusion that the Lord went out of existence for three days when he died.

Christ is the only one who has escaped out of Hades. This is seen by the continuance of Peter’s argument ... *“Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell (hades), neither his flesh did see corruption” (V.30-31).* The argument here is that the prophecy of David had to refer to Christ because David’s body was still in the grave, and his soul was still in Hades. Christ was the only one who had risen from the dead, and therefore He is the only dead person to have left Hades.

The righteous dead are in paradise. When one of the thieves that were on the cross with Jesus showed repentance and faith we read .. *“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise**” (Luke 23:43)* This verse tells us that Jesus went to **Paradise** with the thief on the cross when he died. The account in Acts 2 shows us that **He was in Hades**. It doesn’t take a scholar then to conclude that Paradise is in Hades.

We can also learn much about the realm of the dead in Christ’s account of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) While they were living on earth, Lazarus was a beggar, and the rich man was one who lived sumptuously refusing to

give Lazarus even crumbs from his table. However both men died. From this incident we can learn: (1) Both Lazarus and the rich man were still in their graves. (2) They were both conscious and able to remember their life on earth. (3) The rich man was experiencing incurable pain and torment, whilst Lazarus was in comfort. (4) Their fate was already sealed because there was a great gulf between the two of them that could not be crossed.

The unrighteous are in tartarus The word TARTARUS is found in 2 Peter 2:4, *“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (TARTARUS), and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”* Since these sinful angels were to be **“reserved unto judgment”** we can clearly see that Tartarus is not their final place of punishment. It is also clear from scripture that, although angels and men are different types of beings, lost men, and sinful angels share the same destiny. (Matthew 25:41)

Tartarus then, is the place where the rich man was suffering “in torments” awaiting the final judgment. Lazarus however was “carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom” (Luke 16:22-23), which is obviously the same place as “Paradise” where Jesus and the thief went. The saved in Paradise are called in the Scriptures “the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb. 12:23), and those who are lost in Tartarus are called “the spirits in prison” (1 Pet 3:19).

CHRIST HAS THE KEY TO DEATH AND HADES Revelation 1:18 *“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (HADES) and of death.”* We notice how death and Hades go together. They always go together in Scripture. The souls of all dead men will be in Hades and in their graves until the glorious return of Christ. Hades