
CHAPTER 19

THE HEREAFTER

THE UNDERWORLD

The Bible gives us some insight into the abode and state of the spirit world of the dead, demons, fallen angelic beings, and the final states of all unsaved human kind at the consummation. While some fallen angels and demonic spirits have limited and restricted but free movements and activities, others are confined in the underworld. The Scriptures speak of the underworld as compartmental divisions and each of these divisions will be finally swallowed up in Gehenna, which is the final and eternal Hell Fire (Rev 20:11-15).

a. Sheol or Hades:

Sheol (Hebrew) or Hades (Greek) is generally recognized as being "the place of departed spirits" or "the unseen state". It basically means the grave, or death. However, its use in Luke 16:23 shows a reference to a place of spirit beings, where its inhabitants are very much alive and conscious. So, 'the grave' in the sense of the physical grave is not what is meant but the soul state after death.

SHEOL is referred to 65 times in the 39 books of the Old Testament. They are translated as "the grave", "hell" or "death". It is the place for those who have departed from this life, both Old Testament saints before the resurrection of Christ and all unbelievers.

HADES is the New Testament equivalent for SHEOL describing this temporary place of the dead. It is referred to 42 times in the 27 books of the New Testament.

b. Tartarus:

The Greek Tartarus is used only once in 2Peter 2:4. There is doubt as to

whether hell is the best translation. But a consideration of 2Peter 2:4 with Jude 6 shows that tartarus is a prison or jail, specifically for sinning angelic spirit beings. It is a non-material realm in which they live and move with definite limitations. It is "down" and a place of darkness where these fallen angels are kept and held until their final judgment at the Great White Throne (1Cor. 6:3; 2Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 20:11-15).

c. Abyss:

The third division in the lower (down) departments of the earth (Ps. 63:9; 88:6, 13; 139:15; Is. 44:23; Ezek. 26:20; Eph. 4:9), is also called 'the Deep' (Lk. 8:31; Rom. 10:7; Rev. 9:1-3) or the Bottomless Pit. This is the place (prison) for demon spirits. This is where Satan will be locked during the Millennium (Rev. 20:3).

d. Gehenna

The final and eternal hell is seen in the Greek word "Gehenna" which means "The Valley of Hinnom". It is translated "hell" 12 times in the New Testament, although overlapping in places in Matthew and Mark (Matt. 5:22, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mk. 9:43, 45, 47; Lk. 12:5; Jas. 3:6). It is used by Jesus eleven (11) times. It is the permanent, literal place of torment for dead souls who reject God. It is called Hell or the Lake of Fire. It was originally to be the place prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41) as a place of eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46). In the book of Revelation we read of it as:

- The eternal abode of Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet and all fallen angelic beings and demon spirits (Rev. 19:20; 20:10)
- The eternal abode of all the human unbelievers throughout history (Rev. 20:15; 21:8)
- It is an eternal lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:10)
- All residents will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Rev. 20:10)
- It is an eternal, second death where Death and Hades are cast (Rev. 20:14)

It is well noted that all the references given will show us that each place or department of "hell (Hades)", the underworld or the spirit world, is a prison or jail for different created beings, who have sold themselves out to evil. As an intermediate state, all of it with occupants will find themselves in Hell Fire as the final eternal state or destination. (Rev. 20:14, 15).

WHAT IS DEATH?

The use of the word 'death' or dead is more varied even in Biblical standpoint. There are four meanings in reference to our subject from the Bible.

1. Physical Death - Separation of the spirit from the body

This refers to dying physically, being dead, when the spirit of a living being and the body part company (Gen. 3:19; 2Cor. 5:1-4). Peter speaks of it when he saw that the moment of his death was near – because I know that I will soon put it (the body) aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me (2 Peter 1:14). Scripture again states - Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

2. Spiritual Death - Separation of the spirit from God

This is the condition of those who are physically alive on earth, but not alive to God, that is, they are not in touch with Him, nor do they have His new life within them because they are not born again. It is a dreadful condition to be in. This is state of every one born into this life but does not know Jesus as Lord, and the Bible describes it. Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12). Christians, before they were born again from infancy were – dead in your transgressions and sins (Ephesians 2:1). This is obviously not physical death for Paul is writing to those who were physically alive. How wonderful it is that Christians can say – He made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in

transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved (Ephesians 2:5). God will perform this miracle for anyone who will come and ask Him to do it for him or her. Every human being must experience the new birth through Jesus to escape from this since in Adam all died (Rom. 5:12-19). You may be a well respected fellow- a business gentleman, even a church-goer like Nichodemus; nonetheless you must be born again (John 3:3-7). If you need it, all you have to do is to ask Jesus to come into your life right now. Do not put it off, otherwise you will face the next kind of death; the second death when you die physical.

3. Second Death – Eternal Separation from God

This is the awful, final, eternal state in which the unsaved are when they have died physically, been raised at the resurrection, and been judged by God. It is the death referred to in Scripture – The soul who sins is the one who will die (eternally)... (Ezekiel 18:20), and described again in another second death for those whose names are not found written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 20: 4-7, 14).

4. Carnality Death - The lack of true spirituality through carnality

This is the condition of all believers though in Christ but who, being carnally minded, live and walk in the flesh instead of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5, 6; etc). Carnality is dangerous because such Christians not taping into true spiritual life behave like unbelievers (Rom. 8:1-8; 1Cor. 3:1-3; etc). It is an undesirable condition for any truly born again Christian and the Church; and must be dealt with promptly to avoid spiritual decline and apostasy (Rom. 8:9-17; 1Cor. 3:1-3; 6:9-20; Gal. 5:16-26; 1 John 1:7-2:2; Rev. 3:1).

WHERE ARE THE DEAD NOW?

Presently, death is the ultimate physical end of man. The spirits of the dead are, however, consciously waiting in an intermediate state. The Bible uses some words to describe the place of the dead, Sheol (Hebrew) or Hades (Greek) translated hell in the English. This is not Hell Fire, Gehenna; however, it is a place of confinement.

Description of Sheol-Hades

The story of Lazarus and the rich man describes the place of the dead (Luke 16:19-31). There are three compartments.

- a. Abraham's bosom or Paradise: A place for the righteous souls immediately after death during the Old Testament Days. It's a place of comfort.
- b. Great Gulf fixed: An impassable gulf, over which men may look and converse but not cross. This denotes a chasm that separates the believers and unbelievers in the next life.
- c. Place of torment: It is detailed explained in Luke 16:23. It is quite likely that in Hades souls are in prison in various compartments, for a specific mention is made of the spirits/souls of those that were judged with the flood in Noah's day (1Pet. 3:18-20).

Just as men place accused criminals and offenders in different prison cells according to their crime, each awaiting their sentence, and final judgment of their case, so God has various jails in which God allows the locking up of prisoners until the Great White Throne judgment, when all will be tried and sentenced eternally to the final hell fire, Gehenna. This means the three divisions mentioned above refer to the 'Intermediate State', that is, the state in between death and the final judgment. It is clear that those kept in prison or in jail, awaiting final judgment are conscious as in Luke 16:23. This point dismisses the teaching concerning soul sleep. The soul sleep theory teaches that there is total unconsciousness that follows death; thus the body and soul are 'asleep' until the final resurrection of the dead. According to this theory, those who are dead are aware of nothing whatsoever. The New Testament does NOT teach soul sleep.

- a) Jesus went to paradise and the repentant thief was to be there with Him (Luke 23:43).
- b) Jesus went to preach to spirits of those who died during the flood of Noah (1Peter. 3:18)

- c) Lazarus went to Abraham's side when he died (Luke 16:22).
- d) The rich man went to Hades where he was in conscious torment and could converse with Abraham (Luke 16:22 - 24).
- e) Paul states categorically that the only possible state for the Christian when 'away from the body' was to be 'at home with the Lord' - 2 Corinthians 5:6, 8; Philippians 1:23.
- f) The spirits of martyred Tribulation saints are conscious before the Lord (Rev. 6:9-11).

Location of Hades

The exact geographical location is absolutely impossible to know. However, it is described as in the underworld, where the souls of the dead descend (Isa. 14:9, 10; Rom. 10:7).

THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS' ESCAPE FROM SHEOL-HADES TO HEAVEN

- a. Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:25-31 and Rom. 10:7-10 establish the fact that Jesus is not in Sheol or Hades today. He is in Heaven (Acts 1:11; 2:33-36; Eph. 1: 20).
- b. 2Cor. 5:8 shows that the spirit plus the soul of the believer at death is present with the Lord in Heaven and not in the underworld. Thus, no Christian souls presently go to Hades [un-like unbelievers] at death; we die in the Lord and our spirits/souls are carried to Paradise in Heaven! This obviously includes even future Tribulation martyrs and saints up to the time of their resurrection (Rev. 6:9-11).
- c. Matthew 27:51-53; Luke 23:43 and Ephesians 4:8-10 seem to indicate the translation of paradise (or better put, the dead in paradise) from SHEOL-HADES to Heaven (2Cor. 12:1-4). This is the product of the miracle brought by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Presently, it may be noted that the blood of the Lamb – Christ Jesus has made it possible for the spirits/souls of all dead saints, of all ages, to have resting place in heaven. Of course, not all Old Testament saints enjoyed the translation, for Scripture says some

indicating that the rest are still awaiting future resurrection. It means then that the large portion of Old Testament saints have been translated into paradise in heaven not in their glorified bodies. Their resurrection will probably be sometime after the visible, corporeal Parousia, that is, the appearing of Christ Jesus. The reason is that there will continue to be martyred souls until after the battle of Armageddon when all will be resurrected at the end (Dan. 12:3, 4,13). The Scriptures affirm that Jesus went up bodily into Heaven alone as firstfruits from the dead (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:20-23); and that only the spirits of all just men are made perfect with Him in Heaven after death (2Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; Heb. 12:23). In any case, even though no one except the Lord knows the details about the state of these bodily resurrected saints of Matthew 27, the evidence is still that our God has power over death and Hades; and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Lord of all (Matt. 27:51-54; Acts 10:36)!

WHY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS COULD NOT GO DIRECTLY TO HEAVEN

Their souls were confined in Abraham's bosom, a paradise, which then was in the underworld. Scripture assigns some reasons for this. Namely:

- a. John 14:6 states that Jesus is the only way to heaven. So until the death and resurrection of Jesus the way was not opened for anyone, either in spirit or in bodily form. Under the Old Covenant, Heb. 9:9-10; 11:39-40 indicates the inadequacy of animal blood for the covering of their sins for Old Testament saints. Jesus had to shed His blood in order to also qualify all Old Testament saints or godly believers for heaven.
- b. Rev. 1:17b-18 Jesus has the keys to Sheol-Hades, and that's why He had the power to transport Paradise to Heaven.
- c. The Holy Spirit could not permanently indwell the Old Testament saints in the sense it is with New Testament regenerated believers as a guarantee (John 3:1-7; 14:15-23; Eph. 1:11-14)

THE UNDERWORLD

Hades (Greek) ← → Shoel (Hebrew)

Luke 16:19-31

Abraham's Bosom – Place of comfort (Souls/Spirits of Righteous or Saved Dead) (Luke 16:22, 23; Rom. 10:7)	Great Gulf (Luke 16:26)	Hell - Place of torment for Souls/Spirits of Unsav- ed dead (Luke 16:22, 23)
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Abyss: Bottomless Pit (Demons) (Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1-3, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3)	Tartarus (Fallen Angels) (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6, 7; 1 Pet. 3:19, 20)	Gehenna (Hell Fire) (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 19:20; Rev 20:10, 14, 15)
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THE UNDERWORLD AFTER JESUS' RESURRECTION

Hades (Greek) ← → Shoel (Hebrew)

Luke 16:19-31

Abraham's Bosom (Emptied by Jesus to heaven) (Eph. 4:8-10)	Great Gulf (Luke 16:26)	Hell - Place of torment for Souls/Spirits of Unsav- ed dead (Luke 16:22, 23)
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Abyss: Bottomless Pit (Demons) (Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1-3, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3)	Tartarus (Fallen Angels) (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6, 7; 1 Pet. 3:19, 20)	Gehenna (Hell Fire) (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15)
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OTHER PLACES OF OUR HEREAFTER

It is necessary to make brief comments in this Chapter on other places of our hereafter. Having mentioned Hell Fire earlier on we will thus mention of Heaven.

HEAVEN

Heaven, in contrast to Hell Fire, is the real, literal abode of God. It is assumed to be way up beyond the skies and not in the underworld, as

are Hades and Hell Fire. Heaven may be used, figuratively, as a reverent term for God or that which bears His stamp. Thus when the prodigal says '*I have sinned against heaven*' (Lk. 15:18, 21), he means 'I have sinned against God'. Since human kind is finite, it is impossible to comprehend everything about the Infinite God. So, we can only infer from what has been revealed to us scripturally. The Bible seems to suggest that the expanse of heaven is in three levels. The first level is called the heavens, and has a reference to the atmospheric skies, hundreds to thousands of miles up the planet earth (with the firmament - Gen. 1:8; rain - Gen. 7:11; sun - Ps. 19:4-60). Secondly, there is the heaven composed of the starry galaxies which span thousands to millions of miles from the planet earth. Then the next reference is Heaven proper or what is called the 'third heavens' (2Cor. 12:3), where God lives is probably millions to billions of miles away beyond the planetary space. God then is to '*Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven*' (Deut. 26:15). God is '*the God of heaven*' (Jon. 1:9), or '*the Lord, the God of heaven*' (Ezr. 1:2), or the '*your or my Father in heaven*' (Matt. 5:45; 7:21, etc.). God is not alone there, for we read of 'the host of heaven' which worships him (Neh. 9:6), and of '*the angels in heaven*' (Mk. 13:32). Believers also may look forward to '*an inheritance ... kept in heaven*' for them (1 Pet. 1:4). Heaven is thus the present abode of God and his angels; the spirits of dead saints and also the ultimate eschatological destination of all his saints in glorified bodies.

Among many ancient peoples and even now, there is the thought of a multiplicity of heavens; some say as many as seven. But if God's abode, called 'the third heavens' (2 Cor. 12:2, 3) is the farthest; then we can only accept the scriptural position of three levels of heavens. Jesus, in His glorified body, is also said to have passed 'through the heavens' (Heb. 4:14), referring to the first and second heavens to reach His Father home, in Heaven (John 14:1-3; Acts 2:32-36). God's home, Heaven, is a place of absolute righteousness, perfection, orderliness and beauty, and a very, very vast place for we are told that the magnificent New Jerusalem comes out of this Heaven. "*Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ... having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. ... The city is laid out as a*

square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. " (Rev. 21:10, 11, 16).

Presently, the Church has the privilege of touching Heaven spiritually and as a *bona fide* agent of its kingdom coming on earth. This is what is expressed in Heb. 12:22-24, "*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.*" Besides, when believers in the Lord die, their souls and spirits together go to rest in Heaven to wait for the final resurrection (2Cor. 5:8).

Finally, we must notice an eschatological use of the term in both Old and New Testaments that the present physical heaven is not eternal, but will vanish away and be replaced by 'new heavens and a new earth' (Is. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1).

PARADISE

It is necessary to say something about the word "*paradise*" and its usage in scripture. It is used directly in three ways to refer to heaven (Luke 23:43; 2Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7). The *first direct usage* is in Luke 23:43, "*And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'*" We discover that Jesus himself said this to a dying man; and would imply that Hades at the time had a paradise to be the intermediate state for saints when they died. And it may be inferred that this was the same place as Abraham's bosom in Luke 16. Since scripture states that Church saints or believers in Christ go to be with the Lord in heaven at death (2Cor. 5:8), it may be inferred that the spirits of the dying thief and all other saints have been transported to heaven. We may conclude that the *paradise* in Hades may have been emptied at the resurrection of Jesus and He later led them in His train into paradise in heaven (Eph. 4:8-10).

Both the *second and third* usage of paradise links it to the third heavens. Paul infers 2Cor. 12:2-4, "*I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows-- such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man-- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows--*

how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter". John later states in Rev. 2:7, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." The paradise of God, therefore, is currently in heaven above, and could be a place in the would-be New Jerusalem. This is inferred from references in two verses in the book of Revelation could where each makes of mention of the presence of the *tree of life* (Rev. 2:7; 22:2). In describing this glorious city, the New Jerusalem, John writes, "In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (Rev. 22:2).

Paradise is, however, used indirectly in many ways, some referring to the same place or thing. We know that paradise has existed with God or simple put it is a blissful, restful place in God's home in heaven. When applied to the world in context, there are a number of inferences. *First of all* we notice that the Hebrew text used a similar word, *pardes*, meaning beautiful 'park' or 'forest' or 'orchard' (Neh. 2:8; Eccl. 2:5; Songs of Solomon 4:3). *Secondly*, it is applied many times to places of beauty and splendor such as the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15; 3:23) and the well-watered plains of Jordan, which Lot desired (Gen. 13:10). Probably that's why the Lord used it to refer to the state of spiritual bliss for the dying repentant thief (Luke 23:43); obviously in Abraham's bosom where the souls of saints before Christ were carried to by angels at death (Luke 16:22, 23).

SPECIAL NOTES ON EXTRA-BIBLICAL 'PURGATORY' AND 'LIMBO'

There is no Scriptural support for any mention or existence of *Purgatory* and *Limbo* as some Christian thoughts would want to suggest, as the place for the semi-righteous dead and the place for dead saints before the vicarious death of Jesus, respectively. This teaching has given rise to indulgences and weakened the power of the true gospel. Just as there is no room for 'second chance', even so is there no room for any retribution after death. In the grave you cannot change a person's destiny; one is either finally bound for Heaven or Hell Fire (Luke 16:19f; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:1-6; 11-15).

