



A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES
Week 17: What Happens When We Die? Part 2
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Review:

- You and I, as believers, exist in 3 parts: body, soul, and spirit.
- All these parts are manifest and active in the earthly composition of the believer.
- That is not the case with the unbeliever whose spirit is essentially nonfunctional according to God's Word: which is quickened at the time of salvation, or 'made alive' if you will.
- Our body has little value on this earth. It is corruptible, it will die and decay.
- According to **Hebrews 9:27**, we are all appointed to die. This is inescapable unless the Rapture takes place before some of us reach that point.
- The best way to look at this is: the souls we have are the 'real us.' It continues after our bodies die. In other words, the souls is the REAL us. Our awareness, our emotions, our consciousness, our intellect, and so on continue even when our body is dead.
- As was said last week, "We are souls with a body, rather than bodies with a soul." That's the better way to look at it.

NOTE: We began, last week, to evaluate the story of the rich man and Lazarus in **Luke 16**. That story unpacks these very matters.

NOTE: In our last lesson, we looked at the path of the believer when they die. Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:8** that "*to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.*" In **Philippians 1:23** Paul adds that this is his preference: "*to depart and be with Christ.*"

I think it's always been that way, meaning, I don't see anyplace in the Bible that an intermediate state is prescribed for those who die in the faith.

- This would apply to pre-cross times as well as post-cross times. The Bible does not give any argument that things are different between the two ages.
- When Jesus was dying on the cross and the good thief asked Jesus to remember him, Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" (**Luke 23:43**).
- Jesus knew that His death was imminent and that He would soon be in heaven with His Father.
- The terms "paradise" and "heaven" are synonymous. They are used in the Bible to describe the same place.
- In **Luke 16** we find the term "Abraham's Bosom" being used to describe paradise or heaven. This is the only place in the Bible this term is used. It is a Talmudic term to describe a place of peace, rest, and absolute joy, in other words: heaven.
- There is no Biblical basis for 'purgatory' or any state wherein we can somehow improve or merit ourselves. That is an idea of man's design, not God's.

- I. **THOSE WHO DIE WITHOUT SAVING FAITH;** The Bible makes the details of this alternate and horrible path clear, and should go back to **Luke 16** once more to start understanding this.
- A. There are some terms we need to go over and clarify concerning what happens after we die
1. We've already seen that 'paradise,' 'heaven,' and 'Abraham's Bosom' are all one and the same.
 2. But there are some other terms we may use or hear of that I want to quickly clarify:
 - a. SHEOL – (**Cf. Psalm 16:10**) - *For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption* (NOTE: Some translations use Hell or 'realm of the dead.')
 - Sheol is a general term used to describe the 'grave,' 'the place of the dead' or the 'realm of departed souls.'
 - It is a general term used to refer to the process of leaving this present life and going to another. If you're still here – you're not in Sheol. If you're not here anymore – then you ARE.
 - It is not meant to distinguish between the paths of the righteous vs. the unrighteous, but again, it is a general commentary on leaving this present body at the point of death
 - Other Scriptures in the New Testament indicated that Sheol is a temporary place where souls are kept as they await their final resurrection.
 - There is a resurrection for the righteous, and one for the unrighteous. We studied that a few weeks ago, and I'll comment on it further in this lesson as well.
 - b. GEHENNA - The Greek word *gehenna* is used in the New Testament for "hell."
 - It shows up a few places in some translations, but the best way to understand this term is to think of the eternal lake of fire
 - c. HELL – this is the final place of judgment for those who die without saving faith.
 - It is synonymous with the phrase 'the lake of fire,' or 'eternal torment'
 - More on the commentary of Hell a bit later.
 - d. TARTARUS - The Greek word *Tartarus* appears only once in the New Testament, and it seems to describe a special place IN Hades. It is sometimes referred to as 'the abyss.'
 - NOTE: The term 'abyss' here should not be confused with the term 'abyss' used in **Revelation 9:1-3, 11**. We will learn in a lesson down the road that this is an entirely different location with a different purpose in God's plan.

- **(Back to Tartarus): 2 Peter 2:4** says, “God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to [Tartarus], putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment.”
- It’s important to understand that these fallen angels – the very same ‘sons of God’ we studied about back in **Genesis 6:1-4**, are being ‘held for judgment.’
- Something else is still coming in their sentencing process. Therefore, Tartarus is, among other things, a temporary incarceration.
- Most English versions translate *tartarus* as “hell” or “lowest hell.”
- The word *Tartarus* can be best understood to be “the deepest abyss of Hades.” It appears that there are compartments or sections to Hades, and this is the lowest / deepest one.
- According to **1 Peter 3:19**, Jesus “made proclamation” to these spirits, these fallen angels, who are in confinement in Tartarus.
- The Greek word translated “proclaimed” or “preached” means “to publicly declare” or “to herald.”
- Basically, upon His death, Jesus went to Tartarus, to the Abyss, and proclaimed His victory to the fallen angels imprisoned there.
- It’s interesting to note that Peter’s discussion of Tartarus in **2 Peter 2** is within the context of condemning false teachers.
- Peter says those who introduce heresy into the church will suffer a fate similar to that of the fallen angels who sinned in **Genesis 6:1-4**; they will end up in Tartarus.
- Takeaway: The Lord does not tolerate those who deceive The Church and who lead His children astray.

B. When one dies without saving faith, they go to a place called Hades (**Cf. Luke 16:23 – not “hell” as some English translations put it**).

1. Hades is a place of great torment (**vs. 24** – “*agony, flames, heat, and certainly conscious regret*)
 - e. I would go so far as to say it is extreme punishment and torment of indescribable dimensions
 - f. But - - it is still NOT hell. Hell is yet worse.
2. I want you to understand right now is Hades is a temporary abode. It is not permanent.
 - g. Everyone through all the ages of human history up to the present time who has died without saving faith, that includes Old Testament times and New Testament times, and the Church Age, has gone to Hades.
 - h. Remember, their souls have gone there. Their bodies are in the grave in a state of decay.
 - i. The ‘real’ them is in conscious agony, but this place is NOT hell.

- j. For the past, present, and future portions of human history that all precede The Great White Throne Judgment, this place called 'Hades' has a transient or temporary role to play.
3. When the rich man died in **Luke 16**, his soul went to Hades where he was in extreme torment.
 - a. In this place, the rich man was awaiting – and STILL IS awaiting – his final judgment and sentencing.
 - b. Hades has a role to play by God's design. A time is coming when that role is not needed anymore, but till such point, Hades is a real place with a real purpose.
 4. To illustrate these statements better, turn to **Revelatio. 6:7-8**.
 - a. This passage describes what we call 'the fourth seal judgment'
 - b. We hear about the 'four horsemen of the apocalypse,' and this would be the fourth one in that sequence
 - c. These four horsemen describe a series of judgments to come on planet earth at a time following the Rapture
 - d. John gets taken up to heaven in **Revelation Ch. 4**, and 6 of the 7 the seal judgments are outlined in **Revelation Ch. 6**.

NOTE: We are going to be studying these Seal Judgements soon. I'm trying to follow a general trajectory here: Rapture > Rewards > Understanding of what happens when we die > then what happens after the Rapture.

- II. **FOR NOW, PERMIT ME TO SUGGEST TO YOU THAT THESE FIRST FOUR SEAL JUDGEMENTS**; these Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, describe, more or less, man's depravities and calamities brought on mankind.
 - A. It's the lawlessness, the rampant hatred, the unprecedented spiritual deception, and so on, that descends on this Earth after The Church is supernaturally removed from it.
 - B. My present conviction is that these Seal Judgments take place in that time period BETWEEN the Rapture and the onset of the Tribulation.
 - C. I'll explain more why I feel that way in a later lesson, but for now, let's look more closely at this 'Fourth Seal Judgement.'
 1. There are TWO riders (NOTE: The other three horses each have one rider)
 2. The two riders are called Death and Hades (see **vs. 8**)
 3. Specifically, the main rider is Death, and "...Hades was following close behind him"
 4. What do we see here in this description? Several things:
 - a. FIRST – there is a sequence. Death takes place, then there's the role of Hades. It's in that order.

- b. SECOND – with this judgment, we see that the primary impact of this fourth seal judgment is on the unsaved population of the Earth. Hades is not a fate for those who are saved.
- c. THIRD – Death, and ultimately Hades, are specified as four different means:
 - ‘sword’ (that means escalated war and conflict),
 - ‘famine’ (think of the trends in food shortages starting now),
 - ‘plague’ (think pandemics), and
 - ‘wild beasts of the earth’ (as I shared before, I think this is a Nephilim reference rather than lions and tigers and bears).
- d. LASTLY – Note that power was given to Death and Hades OVER a fourth of the Earth. That is to say, it is one-quarter of the earth’s population that will act in this destructive and deadly campaign.
- e. But once again – there is a dual role here. Death takes place first, THEN the role of Hades comes into play.

C. The role of Hades will not last forever. It will come to an end at a prescribed time (**Cf. Revelation 20:13-14.**)

NOTE: We’ll study this in greater detail later, but there are a few issues to point out here:

1. The Great White Throne judgment: It marks the juncture between the heaven and earth we essentially know now, and the new heaven and new earth which is to come.
2. Death and Hades will have no further role to play in the new heaven and new earth. Sin is done away with, and with that so is the consequence of death.
3. In like manner, there will be no more unsaved people who will die and face judgment after this point, and therefore, Hades has no more role to play either.
4. Death and Hades are both personified here. They are both pictured as entities which are destroyed permanently. They are both thrown into the eternal lake of fire.
5. Now – this is the real HELL. This lake of fire is true Hell. Up to this moment, there have been three occupants: the antichrist, the false prophet, and Satan (thrown in at **vs. 10**)
6. This is also known as “the second death.” Why?
 - a. It is another level of judgment: this one is permanent.
 - b. It’s another heightened level of torment.
 - c. It’s not temporary, this one will never cease. It is eternal.
 - d. It is the ‘forever fate’ of those who have rejected Christ and His offer of salvation.
 - e. It is the place where the resurrected dead who have received a body will go. They will eternally endure the flames of hell.

