

Heaven and the Afterlife
Lesson 4 – Where are the dead?
(The conscious existence of man before the resurrection)
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Introduction: What has God revealed about the present state of the dead?

- A. Many ask the question Job did! “If a man dies, shall he live again?” (**Job 14:14**)
 - 1. This question often grows in importance as we become more acquainted with death. God has revealed some things about this topic.
 - 2. Do we cease to exist? Do we go straight to heaven? Do we come back to earth as ghosts? Can we have contact with the living?
- B. We have testimony from Jesus about all these things. (**Jn 3:11-13; 2 Tim 1:10**)
 - 1. We are given the truth that God wants us to have. (**Deut 29:29; 30:11-14**)
 - 2. Men can easily get involved in things that distract men from daily repentance!

I. Defining body, soul and spirit

- A. Man can be described as consisting of body, soul and spirit. (**1 Thess 5:23**)
 - 1. These words can vary in their meaning depending on the context!

THAYER'S Greek-English Lexicon, p. 677 presents the following points of definition and usage:

- 1. breath (Lat. *anlma*) i.e.
 - a. the breath of life; the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing...
 - b. Life...also...the life which is lived on earth...
 - c. that in which there is life; a living being; a living soul...
- 2. The Soul (Lat. *animus*)
 - a. the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions, (our soul, heart, etc.. R.V. almost uniformly soul)...
 - b. the (human) soul in so far as it is so constituted that by the right use of the aids offered it by God it can attain its highest end and secure eternal blessedness, the soul regarded as a moral being designed for everlasting life:
 - c. the soul as an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death (distinguished from *TO SOMA*, as the other part of human nature...) ..the soul freed from the body, a disembodied soul... From: **Jehovah's Witnesses Volume 2 by Maurice Barnett**

2. Man's body was created and then life was given. How are we created in the image of God since God is a spirit? (**Gen 1:26-27; 2:7**)

- B. There are many passages that show the dual nature of man while on earth.
 - 1. There are two different places at death for the body and the spirit. (**Ecc 12:7**)
 - 2. It is possible to kill the body and not the soul! (**Mt 10:28**)
 - 3. We can leave our body and have another one with the Lord. (**2 Cor 5:1-2, 8**)
 - 4. Our present bodies will be discarded! (**Phil 1:22-23; 2 Pt 1:13-14**)

II. The meaning of "hell" as used in the Bible

- A. In the King James translation there are three Greek words translated "hell."

Hades - (Acts 2:27) - *Hades* (lit. *an unseen place*); (1) the place of the dead *underworld* (**Acts 2:27**); (2) usually in the NT as the temporary underworld prison where the souls of the ungodly await the judgment (**Lk 16:23**)

Gehenna; lit. *the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom*, ...figuratively in the Gospels for *hell*, a fiery place of eternal punishment for the ungodly dead (**Mt 5:22**).

Tartarus - (2 Pt 2:4) - the name of a subterranean region, doleful and dark, regarded by the ancient Greeks as the abode of the wicked dead, where they suffer punishment for their evil deeds; it answers to the Gehenna of the Jews.

- B. The OT word "Sheol" has *the same meaning* as "Hades" in the NT.
1. Jesus after His death went to "Hades." (Psa 16:10, Acts 2:27, 31)
 2. "Hades" will not prevail against the church. How is that true? (Mt 16:18)
 3. This abode of the dead is temporary and will yield all its occupants at the judgment day. (Rev 20:13-14)
- C. The word "Gehenna" describes the final abode of the wicked and of Satan himself.

III. Old Testament passages describing consciousness in Sheol

- A. Jesus pointed to the words of God spoken to Moses! (Ex 3:6, 15)
1. God said that "I AM" and not I WAS" the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This tense of a verb shows that these men continue to exist.
 2. Jesus gave more details about this existence! (Acts 23:6-8; Mk 12:26-27)
- B. There are two different places where the body and spirit go after death. (Ecc 12:7)
1. David knew he would later go to be with his departed child. (2 Sam 12:23)
 2. This serves as a warning to all men concerning how we live this life.

IV. The account of the rich man and Lazarus

- A. Jesus speaks of two men and their experience after death. (Lk 16:19-31)
1. Is this an actual historical account or a parable?
 2. A parable always makes comparisons to known things.
 3. Jesus said a "a certain beggar named Lazarus." This is specific with a real name mentioned. No parable does this.
 4. What common things are named in this parable when referring to Hades?
Consider: 1) "he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue" and 2) "I am tormented in this flame." and 3) "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed" and 4) "that those who want to pass from here to you cannot"
- B. There are two realms in Hades, one for the righteous and the other for the wicked.
1. The rich man was in torment. That torment involved heat and a flame. (Lk 16:23-24)
 2. Lazarus was in "Abraham's bosom" which was a place of good things and comfort. (Lk 16:23, 25)
 3. The place and the destiny of each individual is eternally set at death. The things done in one's "lifetime" determines this destiny. (Lk 16:25; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 9:27)
 4. Angels are involved with the transportation of souls at death. (Lk 16:22)
 5. There is a conscious knowledge and interaction with others.
- C. Consider the truths this account teaches us. (Ex. Some things in hell the church needs)
1. Spiritual things become of great importance to all men in Hades.
 2. Mercy is not to be found for the wicked.
 3. Evangelism becomes very important to the wicked concerning those that they love who are still alive.