

GROWTH RESOURCES

WHERE ARE THE DEAD, PART 1

Eternity is not an option – but where we spend eternity is absolutely our choice. We are free to choose, but not free to choose the consequences of our choosing. Those consequences are in hands other than our own.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

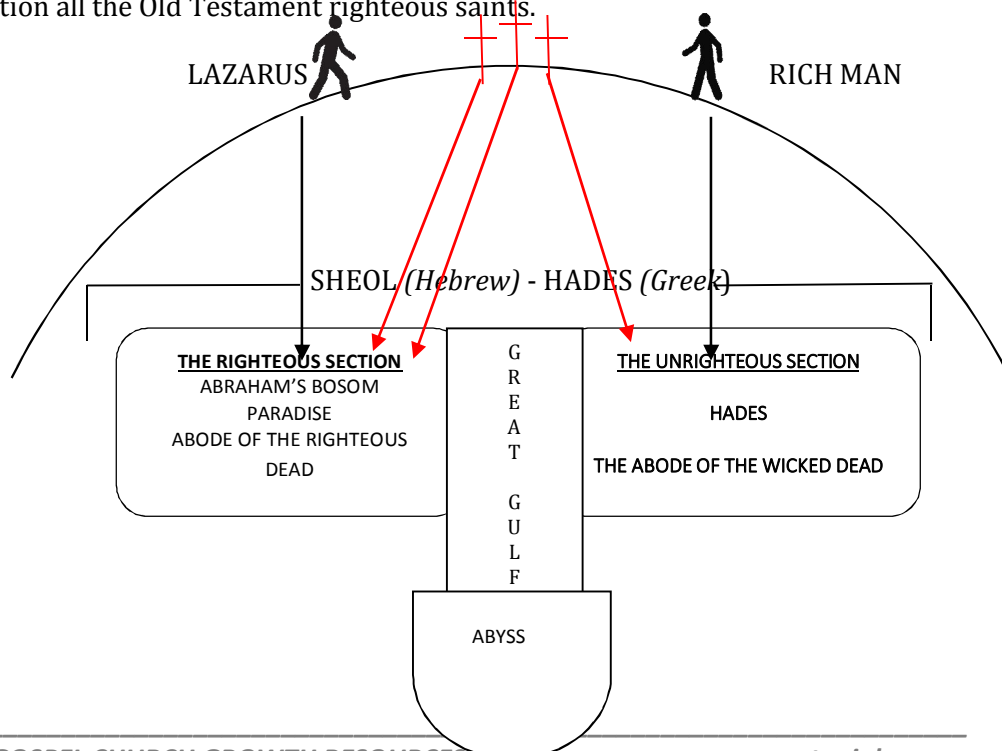
In the Old Testament everybody who died went to the “abiding place of the dead/(Afrikaans: VERDERF),” – Sheol (Hebrew) Hades (Greek), rendered as ‘hell’ in the KJV of the Bible. Jesus explained this-Lk 16:19-31:

- This is not a parable, but an actual event that took place which Jesus recalled.
- Parables do not record the names of people.
- Jesus mentioned the beggar’s name – Lazarus – because this is not a parable. Jesus said “*There was a certain rich man...*” Either there was or there was not.
- Sheol-Hades (ABIDING PLACE OF THE DEAD/Afrikaans: Verderf) was divided into 2 parts: a Righteous and an Unrighteous section with a great gulf dividing the two.
- The ‘Bosom of Abraham’ (Luke 16:22) was a phrase used among the Jews to signify “paradise” or the “abode of the righteous dead.” Abraham is the father of the Hebrew nation. On the cross Jesus referred to the righteous section of Sheol-Hades as ‘Paradise.’

JESUS ON THE CROSS

Luke 23:42-43 “And he [the thief on the cross] said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, Truly I say to you, Today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”

- Notice that Jesus did not say to the thief: “today you shall be with Me in My Kingdom, but today you shall be with Me in paradise!”
- Paradise was the abode of the righteous dead, up to that point in time. This is not the same place where the rich man was in torment. Paradise accommodated Abraham and Lazarus, and by implication all the Old Testament righteous saints.



BETWEEN THE CROSS AND THE RESURRECTION

What did Jesus do from the time He died on the cross until He rose from the dead?

(1 Peter 3:18-20) For Christ [the Messiah Himself] died for sins once for all, the Righteous for the unrighteous (the Just for the unjust, the Innocent for the guilty), that He might bring us to God. In His human body He was put to death, but He was made alive in the spirit. (v.19) In which He went and preached to the spirits in prison. (v.20) [The souls of those] who long before in the days of Noah had been disobedient, when God's patience waited during the building of the ark in which a few [people], actually eight in number, were saved through water. Other translation says: He was made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison.

THE MISSION OF JESUS WAS THREE-FOLD

1. He proclaimed His final victory to all the RIGHTEOUS SOULS in PARADISE – since Abel up to that point in time. He assured them that He is the One who walked in the Garden of Eden, walked with Enoch, saved Noah and family, called Abram and made a 'covenant' with him, gave Moses the law; The One the prophets prophesied about.

2. Jesus declared to the souls in the UNRIGHTEOUS SECTION of Sheol-Hade that HE IS GOD and that UNREPENTANT SIN has ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES:

Exek 18:4 "...the soul that sins, it shall die."

Rom 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Rom 6:23 "for the wages of sin is death"

The unrighteous section of Sheol-Hades is a TEMPORARY PLACE of WAITING for UNREPENTANT SINNERS who die until they, ALONG WITH SATAN AND HIS DEMONS, are finally thrown into the place prepared for them – the eternal lake of fire or Hell – because they rebelled against God's plan of salvation. *Matt 25:41 "Then He also say to those on the left hand, Depart from Me, cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels."* Read also: *Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezek 28:1-19.*

Jesus made His proclamation to those in prison

The Greek word for proclamation is KERUSSO. It is different from EUAGGELIZO, which means to preach the gospel. Jesus was not preaching the gospel to those in prison so they could be saved or get a second chance to repent of their sin and be saved, but instead proclaimed the TRUTH to them.

Who were those in prison?

- The people who were alive in Noah's day were killed in the flood. Those in the unrighteous section of Sheol-Hades are also in the prison of tormenting flames. Whatever the debate about this issue of who is in prison (after death), Jesus simply presented the facts concerning His work on the cross to those in prison after His death.
- Jesus also declared Himself to the rebellious demon spirits who followed Satan when he was cast out of heaven. (Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezek 28:1-18) These spirits are bound in chains in the bottomless pit/abyss until their final sentencing. God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into hell, in gloomy pits of darkness, where they are being held until the Day of Judgement.
- The demons of Noah's day were running riot through the earth, filling the world with their wicked, vile, anti-God activity, including sexual sin. Even 120 years of Noah's preaching, while the ark was being built, could not convince the human race to believe, except for eight people in his family. (Gen 6:1-5)

- 1 Pet 3:18-19 in no way means that a second chance to repent of sin will be given to those whom Jesus declares Himself to in the unrighteous section of Sheol-hades, or to the spirits that are bound.
3. Finally, Jesus declared that HE HELD THE KEYS of Death and Hades. *"And the Ever-living One [I am living in the eternity of the eternities]. I died, but see, I am alive forevermore; and I possess the keys of death and Hades (the realm of the dead)."* - Rev 1:18

WHERE, WHEN AND HOW DID JESUS CHRIST REDEEM REPENTANT MANKIND FROM SIN?

- On the Cross He shed His sinless blood!
- The price for sin was paid on the cross when Jesus said *"It is finished."* Gen 9:4 says "...life is in the blood."
- Romans 3:25 says God sent Christ to be our sacrifice. *"Christ offered His life's blood, so that by faith in Him we could come to God. And God did this to show that in the past He was right to be patient and forgive sinners. This also shows that God is right when he accepts people who have faith in Jesus."*

PAID IN FULL! IT IS FINISHED!

- Jesus Christ guaranteed our resurrection by rising from the dead Himself. Jesus did not die spiritually in the same way a sinner does, being eternally separated from God in the eternal flames of hell because of their choice to sin. (1 Pet 3:18)
- The notion that Jesus died spiritually (and not just physically) and suffered in Hades is an early church heresy called "Gnosticism." Had Jesus Christ died spiritually He would have had a beginning and an end like us as humans. His death would have been the end and His resurrection would have been the beginning. This would make Jesus mortal in nature, which is totally contrary to what the Bible teaches about Christ, who was God Incarnate!
- Spiritual death in Hades/Hell means eternal separation from God and His mercy, and torment in the flames of Hades.

Some believe and teach Jesus Christ was thrown into Hades, where He paid for the sin of mankind while tormented in the flames. This is not what the Scriptures teach.

1. He paid for our sin in this world, on the Cross, and not in the world to come! *(Matt 27:46) And about the ninth hour (three o'clock) Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? – that is, My God, My God, why have You abandoned Me [leaving Me helpless, forsaking and failing Me in My need]?* This does not mean that Jesus was forsaken 'after' He died and went to paradise.
2. Sinners in Hades are there because they sinned willfully, which means there is sin in their life. God explained where life is – *"the life is in the blood."* (Lev 17:11)
 - Jesus did not sin willfully and therefore did not have sin in His blood. Thus He could not be condemned to the flames of Hades. His blood was sinless!
 - The idea that the devil and his demons torment lost souls in hell arises from Greek mythology where Hades, god of the underworld, lord it over the underworld. That is where the idea comes from that in Hades/Hell the devil is king and lord it over lost souls, tormenting them for all eternity.
 - The tormenting comes not from the devil, but from the eternal flames made to punish the devil and his followers. They will be tormented and not tormenting others.
 - Some believe the devil torments in hell because he already torments us on earth. *(2 Cor 12:7)... there was given me a thorn (a splinter) in the flesh a messenger of Satan, to rack*

(torment) *and buffet (batter) and harass (annoy/pester/bother/hassle) me, to keep me from being excessively exalted.*

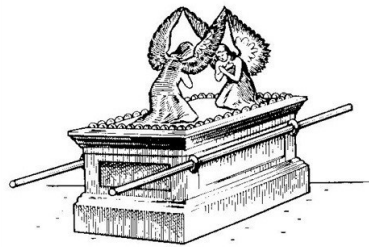
- Satan can only torment, tempt, and try humans while on earth (Job 1), but not for all eternity.
3. Hell was created to punish the devil and his demons. People choose to go there because they do not receive Christ and submit to His ways, which is the only Hope of Salvation. *(Matt 25:41) ... Begone from Me, you cursed, into the eternal flames prepared for the devil and his angels!*
4. The Scripture is very clear about what Jesus did between the Cross and His resurrection. He went to minister to the spirits in the abode of the dead (1 Pet 3:18-20, Rev 1:18). If Jesus was tormented by Satan in Hades, as suggested by some, the question then arises “when and how” could He have found time to proclaim His victory to those in the abode of the dead and the spirits?
- Jesus Christ came to do the will of the Father.
 - *(Isaiah 53:6) All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has made to light upon Him the guilt and iniquity of us all.*
 - *(John 8:28) so Jesus added, When you have lifted up the Son of Man [on the cross], you will realize (know, understand) that I am He [for Whom you look] and that I do nothing of Myself (of My own accord or on My own authority), but I say [exactly] what My Father has taught Me.*
 - Sin is rebellion against the ways of God, a violation of the will of God and a deliberate choice not to obey the law of God. Jesus never did any of those things.
 - Jesus took our place in death by taking our sin upon Himself and becoming sin, (2 Cor 5:21) not because He sinned willfully!
 - We humans sin because we have a sinful nature. Jesus Christ is God and does not have a sinful nature, hence He cannot sin (Heb 4:16). He, therefore, could not be condemned to Hades as a sinner after His death on the cross.
 - *(2 Cor 5:21) For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*
 - *(Heb 4:15) For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to understand and sympathize and have a shared feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of temptation, but One Who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning.*
 - *(Heb 4:16) Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace (the throne of God's unmerited favour to us sinners), that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it].*
5. As Jesus died on the Cross He said “it is finished...” *(John 19:30) “... It is finished! And He bowed His head and gave up the spirit.”* He did not say “I am finished” But “It is finished!”
- On the Cross He complete His assignment from the True Godhead.
 - *(John 3:16) For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*
 - *(Luk 19:10) For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*
 - After shedding His blood on the Cross, He went to deliver all the righteous souls in the righteous section of Sheol-Hades and relocated the righteous to their new Paradise.

CONCLUSION

In Old Testament times the High Priest took the blood of an innocent, flawless, sacrificial lamb and entered the Holy of holies to sprinkle it on the Mercy-Seat of the Ark of the Covenant. By so doing, atonement (forgiveness) was performed for the sins of the nations. *(Hebr 9:7) “the high*


priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance;"

- The ARK OF THE COVENANT was a wooden box overlaid with gold. The lid was called the Mercy Seat. It was housed in the inner sanctuary of the Temple – the Holy of Holies.



- When Jesus Christ rose from the dead He went to the Holy of Holies in Heaven as our High Priest, presenting the Blood of the Lamb of God to the Father and making atonement for the sins of mankind. Not only is Jesus Christ the Lamb of God, but also our High Priest.
 - *(Hebr 9:1) "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. (v.12) Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (v.14) How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*
 - *(Eph 1:4) "...according as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."*
- Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God slain for sinners before the foundation of the earth.
 - *John 1:29 tells us "The next day John sees Jesus coming to him and says, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*
 - *(Rev 13:8) And all the inhabitants of the earth will fall down in adoration and pay Him homage, everyone whose name has not been recorded in the Book of Life of the lamb that was slain [in sacrifice] from the foundation of the world.*

Bibliography: Where are the dead by Ferdie Warwick


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