

# The Pathfinder

#326.21

## WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

(Part 1)

HELL

HADES

## LEADING CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE

We know as the apostle Peter wrote in his first letter (vrs. 1:24), *that all flesh and the glory of man is as the flower. Its beauty is admired for a season, but then withers and falls away, back to the earth from where it came to be remembered no more;* but we may not know and wonder where everyone goes after they die?

It is clear that every *living creature*, that is, all *flesh* of every kind, race, creed, and religion will someday die, and after a short time, none of them will be a hint of a memory in anyone's minds. Of course, the glory of a few can be much greater than most, so their names and glories are often written in books so future generations can read about them. But reading people's histories form mental impressions and not memories, so even with this, their memories died with those who once had them.

However, if there is a transfiguration for the elect at the sound of the last trumpet, the natural will not fall back to the ground; for it will be swallowed up by the Spirit. But outside of that, everyone will ultimately give up their natural bodies for them to return back to the dust from where they came, while their spirits will be drawn back from where they came, which is back to God as *Ecclesiastes 12:7* tells us. There are other views of what happens to the soul and spirit once they depart from their bodies. Some believe the bodiless person goes immediately into a blissful realm of heaven to be without pain, sorrow, or suffering where they will remain throughout eternity. Just about all religions teach that there will be terrible punitive judgments to sinners and unbelievers. Some assume that these tormenting judgments are vindictive and will be without end; but it is ever so clear that God's judgments are designed to correct the wrongs and restore them back to Him.

The belief of some Eastern religions is to be reborn in several bodies, that the person continues to learn and evolve until they reach perfection through these many reincarnations. Then, there are those who believe that when the body dies, so does the spirit and soul until the time to be resurrected.

This is generally called *soul sleep*. A few believe, as did the Sadducees, death is forever, that once the heart ceases to beat, there is never again any life or consciousness whatsoever. Without the hope of the resurrection, we now know why they were called "*Sad You Sees*."

Many more thoughts and theories about the after-life, or after-death, could be listed; but rather than doing so or delving more into the ones mentioned here, we will notice what the Scriptures have to say about it. With this, hopefully, a ray of light can be shed and settle for the most part where we will go after our lives have fallen away. Therefore, we pray that the Spirit of truth guides us and opens our understanding to that which has been hidden from the eye of the unsanctified of the world as well as those embedded in the world of man's religion.

## HELL

There are three Greek words in the King James Version of the New Testament that have been translated, [\*] **hell**, and one Hebrew word in the Old Testament. The Hebrew is *sheol*. The Greek words are [1] **hades**, [2] **gehenna**, and [3] **tartaroo**.

[\*] **hell (Eng):** *a place or realm that is **unseen, imperceptible, sometimes erroneously** called the **lake of fire** and as a **fiery place of eternal torment**.*

[1] **hades (Grk):** *same meaning as the English "hell" **the unseen, imperceptible**. Any place or state of being that cannot be observed by others. This can be the grave, a closet with the door closed, a secluded place away from eyesight, in the realm of spirit beyond the veil of flesh. By definition, it is any place or realm that cannot be perceived or seen. The Greek Septuagint of the Old Testament uses the Hebrew word **sheol** as **hades**. The words are synonymous.*

[2] **gehenna (Grk):** *same as **the Valley of Hinnom**. It was the place of perpetual burning of Jerusalem's garbage and was also where dead bodies of criminals and the carcasses of animals were thrown and burned. The fires of Hinnom were necessary to purify and prevent the stench of decomposition and the spread of disease.*

[3] **tartaroo (Grk):** *Biblically, away from God's presence, English **tartarus**. It used one time in 2 Peter 2:4, which speaks of it being the holding place of the wicked until their time of judgment. "For if God spared not the sinning messengers, but thrusting them into the gloomy caverns of Tartarus, gives them up to be kept for chastening (and) judging." The Concordant Literal translation. The thought is one of confinement, incarceration, restraint; a condition in which apostates are held, reserved for final judgment. It is much as a prisoner is held captive in jail awaiting the day of his trial.*

Except for one instance, each of these words (**hades**, **gehenna**, and **tartaroo**) have all been translated as **hell**. It goes without saying that this has caused a lot of misunderstanding and confusion. One word can be translated as two or more words, but only when they carry the same meaning. As an example, the German word, *Verbrecher* could be translated to the English as *criminal*, *crook*, *felon*, or *outlaw*, and regardless of which word is used, we would understand the type of person the *Verbrecher* is. Or the translator could translate each of the English words into the one German word, *Verbrecher*, and the meaning of the words would not be lost. However, a good translator would never translate these three English words *jogger*, *dancer*, and *swimmer* as one word,

such as a *Spaziergänger* (*a walker*). Each word has to do with a person's movement; but they have their distinct meanings and should be treated in this respect. And it goes the same with the three words we are noticing today, *hades*, *gehenna*, and *tartaroo*. Using one word, *hell*, for three different words that have their own particular meaning is not good practice and can be very misleading.

*Hades* is an unseen, imperceptible place or realm, as it is the same with our English word, *hell*. Although there can be torment in any imperceptible, that is not the meaning or implication of the word *hell* in particular. You see, *hell* is a derivative of the Anglo Saxon *hillan*, or *helan*, and is akin to *holl*, a *hollow*, or *cavern*. Those of ancient times referred to it as *the concealed* or *unseen* place of the dead in general; but it speaks on a wider margin. For instance, a common term for burying potatoes covered with straw in the side of a hill to preserve them through the winter is called, "*helling the potatoes*," not roasting or tormenting them. In Ireland when roofers are putting shingles on the roof, the process can be called "*helling the roof*." When this happens, not one flame of fire is applied to it. It is simply *covered* with shingles, and the plywood roof and rafters underneath are hidden from view. They are in hell.

Also, when a young Irish lad is ready to take his girlfriend into a secluded place we might hear him say, "*I'll be taking my lass into hell tonight*." Upon returning from that *secluded, unseen, imperceptible place*, he might say with a smile upon his face, "*I've been to hell and back with my sweet lassie*," and he certainly would not be implying that he had taken her into a place of torment.

With this, we can also see how languages and meanings of words can change. *Hell* once stood for an *unseen realm or place*, as we have been noticing; but now, by indoctrination and popular usage, it has come to mean in many minds a place of torment, and for some it even incorporates the thought of being a lake of fire that burns forever with sinners stacked in like cordwood to keep the flames going. Our longtime late friend, Mark Toohey, said this about it in his article, *The Christianity Of Babylon*:

"Given the extent of Catholic doctrinal corruption still so prevalent in the minds of the translators of the 1611 King James Bible, and the imagery of hell so inculcated in their belief system, it is little wonder that the pagan concoction of purgatory would be carried over into the reformed church and passed down through the Authorized Version to modern Christendom. The doctrine of hell has been embellished as the domain of Satan, the modern incarnation of the fire-god, Moloch; and Satan himself has been exalted to the stature of a once-mighty archangel, 'Lucifer,' now cast out of heaven into the pit of hell, a notion borrowed from John Milton's 1667 work of fiction, *Paradise Lost*. The idea stuck, and with the misapplication of a verse or two of Scripture, it is now proclaimed as 'truth' to the gullible masses. It clear that Christianity's sacred article of faith is, in reality, pure myth and fantasy born out of pagan tradition and Christian fiction."

## HADES

Let us take a few more moments to consider again the word *hades* with hopes of learning more about where the dead go. For most folks their ideas of what the afterlife holds are largely influenced by their culture, traditions, families, and churches.

Although some believe that when the spirit of life ebbs from a person that they are unconsciously dead until they are resurrected and stand before the judgment seat of Christ. From reading the scriptures, we do not believe that a person ceases from being conscious as the heart renders its last beat. The body is certainly lifeless as it begins to return to the dust from where it came; but the spirit returns to God from where it came.

The spirit enters *the unseen, imperceptible realm*, that is, *hades*. Although *hades is unseen and unknown* to the natural eye and mind, departed spirits have not passed out of existence. Man is more than a body of clay. He is also soul (*mind, will, emotions, intellect*), and spirit (*life, human/godlike nature*). When the spirit of man passes from his tabernacle of flesh, it goes back to God from where it came, and if the soul is possessed by the spirit, as the apostle encouraged those in Christ to do (***Luke 21:19***), they together as one enter a realm unseen by the eyes of mortal beings. Let us keep in mind that this *unseen realm, this hades, this hell has nothing to do with torment*.

Concerning his son by Bathsheba, who died, David said, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." The apple of God's eye knew there was an unseen realm wherein he would join the spirit of his beloved son, and we cannot imagine him thinking that this unseen, imperceptible, *hadean realm* that is often called *hell* in the KJV would be a place of torment. On the contrary, it would be a place and time of great rejoicing. *Hades* occurs eleven times in the Bible. Ten of those occurrences, it is translated as *hell*. One time as *grave*:

- 1) "And death and *hell* were cast into the lake of fire." ***Rev. 20:14***.
- 2) "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to *hell*..." ***Matthew 11:23***.
- 3) "...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of *hell* shall not prevail against it." ***Matthew 16:18***
- 4) "...And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to *hell*." ***Luke 10:15***.
- 5) "And in *hell* he lift up his eyes..." ***Luke 16:23***.
- 6) "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in *hell*..." ***Acts 2:27***.
- 7) "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in *hell*..." ***Acts 2:31***.
- 8) "...I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of *hell* and of death." ***Revelation 1:18***.
- 9) "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and *Hell* followed with him..." ***Revelation 6:8***.
- 10) "...and death and *hell* delivered up the dead which were in them..." ***Revelation 20:13***.
- 11) "O death, where is thy sting? O *grave*, where is thy victory?" ***1 Corinthians 15:55***

Since our Lord has the keys to death and hell, why fear either of these two realms? Frankly, there is no reason for such. At one time we, along with the rest of the world, may have felt apprehension and dread of facing this *mysterious power that draws and swallows up all living*; but

now that we know Christ reigns supreme over it all, the *seen* and *unseen of hell/hades*, we should rest assured and have perfect peace in knowing that all is well, and all will continue to be well! Since He is Lord in our seen realm and are not afraid, and He is also Lord in the unseen – why would we fear the unseen any more than the seen?

I recall something a man that was nearing death's door expressing to his doctor. He told him that he was racked with fear due to not knowing what to expect on the other side. The doctor asked him if he knew Jesus as His Lord? And His answer was, yes! He was then asked, "Do you have a dog, and if so, does it trust and love you, and do you love you dog?" "Absolutely!" He exclaimed, "I love him and he loves and trusts me beyond measure!"

The wise doctor concluded by saying: "If your dog is alone in an unfamiliar building, he would surely be fearful as he explored ever hallway and open space he could access. But then he comes to a another room with a closed door, and rather than dead silence on the other side like it was with the others, he hears your loving voice calling to him, and although he has no idea what else is on the other side of the door, he knows you are there, and that is all that matters. He knows that since you are there, he will be safe and extremely happy to enter. And Brother, it is the same concerning once you cross over to the other side of this life. Your Lord will be there and all will be well regardless of what else might be in the room! So never fear when the hour comes for your flower to fade and fall to the ground. For your faithful, loving Lord is there to welcome you home, and most likely as well your loved ones who passed over before you!"

*Hades* is not necessarily a fearful place to enter. It is simply the invisible world of departed spirits, and there are two primary regions to this imperceptible realm. One is *positive*, and, of course, the other can be *negative*. Jesus spoke of the positive realm while upon the cross, which would be called *paradise*. "And Jesus said unto him: 'Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.'" **Luke 23:43**.

The negative realm is *tartarus*. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to *hell* [Grk, *tartaroo*, Eng., *tatarus*], and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." **2 Peter 2:4**. It is certainly not a pleasant place to be; but it serves a purpose that is part of bringing those therein to a godly sorrow that works repentance unto salvation.

Whether pleasant or otherwise, death is a transition from one form of existence to another. It frees us from the mortal realm of the flesh so that we can enter the next one; that is, *the spiritual state of the unseen*. We remain in this *hell/hades* until we are judged, corrected, made whole, and resurrection life lifts us out from among the dead, that is, until we ascend from that realm into a greater realm as we are robed in our new bodies. Paul talked about this in his first letter to the Corinthians: "But someone will say, How can the dead be raised? With what [kind of] body will they come forth? You foolish man! Every time you plant seed, you sow something that does not come to life [germinating, springing up, and growing] unless it dies first. Nor is the seed you sow then the body which it is going to have [later], but it is a naked kernel, perhaps of wheat or some of the rest of the grains. But God gives to it the body that He plans and sees fit, and to each kind of seed a body of its own." **1 Corinthians 15:35-38** (Amplified Bible).

So please know, regardless of how attached we might be to our mortal bodies, the scriptures do not support the thought of us being in the unseen realm with these bodies of flesh wherewith we are presently clothed. Nor does it suggest that these will be our bodies when we are manifested sons of God in the earth. You see, after Jesus' resurrection He was manifested in a body no longer subjected to this world's natural laws of physics. If He had been, He could not have appeared behind bolted doors or instantly vanish from sight. The heavenly body upon which He was clothed was far beyond the earthy one that walked the streets of Jerusalem and hung helplessly upon the cross.

### LEADING CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE

"Wherefore he saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." **Ephesians 4:8-10**. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison..." **1 Peter 3:18-19**. And, praise God, "Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." **Colossians 2:15**.

*Leading of hell captivity captive is subduing kingdoms and freeing those held as slaves. It is capturing the enemy. The king and armies of those conquered are captured and led captive to the victor's homeland. The captivated prisoners of hell are paraded through the city for all to see. Everything that is captured and freed is made an open show. It is a testimony of the unprecedented victory over the enemy and ignites great rejoicing throughout the Kingdom.*

This is what is meant in Ephesians 4:8 when Jesus entered hades and *led captivity captive*. He conquered totally the powers therein and freed the helpless. By His sacrificial death on the cross, ***He went into the strong man's house; He conquered and spoiled principalities and powers; He took the treasures of darkness; He made an open show of them; He triumphed over them; He led captivity captive; He led those He subdued captive and freed all who were held there from Adam to Noah!***

Through the power of His death, and also His resurrection, our victorious Lord broke the prison bars. Jesus swung wide *the gates of hell*. He also made a way for all men's hearts to flow freely and joyfully back to their Creator, the Father of all. And that is not all. He *gave gifts!*

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." **Ephesians 4:11-12**.

After conquering the enemy, subduing the adversary, leading every vestige of captivity captive, *and having destroyed the works of the devil (1 John 3:8)*, He began to build up. His focus was on reconciling, restoring, and delivering everyone from bondage. In His triumph, He divides the spoils with His own. What a wonderful King!

Jesus not only went into hell, that realm of the dead, He conquered the principalities and powers therein. They were utterly vanquished and could not hold Him. Their first defeat since Adam brought open shame to their power, especially when He returned and unselfishly gave unto us the rewards of that marvelous victory. And now, as with Him and through Him, we can also prevail. It is as the

apostle said: "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." ***Romans 8:37***. We are now members of His body who will build up the Church into His full triumph, even into the fullness of His own stature. That is, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." ***Ephesians 4:13***.

Our Lord regained possession from the enemy of everything that was taken from man due to the deceit of the serpent, and what a tragic loss it was! By the slight of tongue, the father of lies caused man to turn everything of worth over to him as well as all the dominions which God has entrusted to him. But, praise God, we now know that this was not the end of the story. The Savior of the world conquered that strong one of darkness and death, and He came back, returning to man that which was stolen plus much more! But will we with extended chests and proud looks brag about who we are and what we will be doing? The answer was given many years ago in one of Ray Prinzing's Daily Overcoming Devotionals:

"'Yet God forbid that I should boast about anything or anybody except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, which means that the world is a dead thing to me and I am a dead man to the world.' (Gal. 6:14, Phillips).

"One translation reads, 'Because of that cross my interest in all the attractive things of the world has been killed long ago. The world can no longer interest you, for you do not belong to its realm, you are not of its kind, your citizenship is in another kingdom, God's. So you are ignored, passing through unnoticed, as if you do not exist. Why then try to seek for its applause? No need to put on a grandstand play for the dead corpse of the world, it will not rise to applaud you. When He causes the world to be crucified to you, it is time to forget it, and go on to find your new life in Christ, in Him alone is fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.' (Ps. 16:11).

"But there is also another side to this crucifixion, for I am a dead man to the world. The world's interest in me is over. I am a misfit in their circles, and they do not want to know what God is doing in me. It hurt to be among acquaintances, perhaps even friends and relatives, and find they had no interest in what was happening in my life. And inwardly I wept, if only they would give a casual interest. Then the Spirit spoke this truth, 'You are dead to the world. They cannot find interest in you, for to them you are nothing, and why talk to nothing?'

"Yes, they ask about the family, the natural things, discuss the weather, the political action, but your real inner life is foreign to them. But the more we are crucified with Christ, the less it hurts to be ignored, shunned, and esteemed of no report.

"And though we wonder why a stranger we become  
To all the world around, and even dead to some,  
It is because in Christ, we, too, are crucified,  
The world to me, and yes, unto the world I died.  
We cannot pine again for things that used to be,  
The old must pass away – now is reality."

— End quote

This is a very real working part of the cross in our lives that will help to bring us in due time the manifestation of His dominion over all. However, for the present we will be reminded that, "...now

we see not yet all things put under Him," although we could be drawing very near to that hour when victory on every front will begin to be openly manifested. I do think many will agree, that we are nearing the end of this present age; for surely we are in the transition period of moving from one age to another as we see man's worldwide kingdom crumbling due to a *planned* or *accidental* release of a genetically altered bat virus. (If it was planned, I suppose we could call it a ***Plandemic.***)

Whatever was the cause, at the dawning of the new age, there will be manifestations of Christ's power and glory, and exponentially, we will find Christ and His elect ruling over all, yet in such love and peace. All that He has secured for man while in the unseen *hades* is going to finally become a reality. It will be more than what anyone had ever hoped for or could have thought or imagined. Even as Paul wrote: "... Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." **1 Corinthians 2:9.**

Now that we are seeing a little about what *hell is* and *is not*, and that Jesus went into its depth and led captivity captive, surely we are called to do the same. Therewith, let me pose a couple of questions:

***Who wants to help lead captivity captive? Who, then, wants to go to hell with me?***

Those of you who know your sonship, and know you a part of reconciling the world, the whole world on both sides of the veil, will be eager to join me. Others, perhaps not. Even so, until next time, be blessed by the riches of God's Kingdom that resides right now in each of us!

To be continued...

Elwin R. Roach