

*"Where are the dead?"*

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**Introduction:** We often ponder the question about what follows death.

- A. This is important because in the answer we find we will be motivated to live right. **(Psa 90:10-12)**
  - 1. Death was a product of sin after it was introduced into the world. **(1 Cor 15:21-22)**
  - 2. Death is for our good because it humbles us and gives us cause to look to God.
  - 3. Satan has tried to use the fear of death for his purposes but Christ defeated his plans in his resurrection. **(Heb 2:14-15; Rev 1:18)**
- B. There are many false positions men have taken concerning the dead.
  - 1. Some claim that the dead go out of existence.
  - 2. Others claim there is a place of temporary punishment where men can "pay for their sins."
  - 3. What does the Bible teach? Let us carefully harmonize several passages.

**I. Defining Important Bible Words**

- A. Consider the definitions of the following Bible words:
  - 1. **Sheol** - **(Psa 16:10)** - 1) Sheol, underworld, grave, hell, pit 1a) the underworld 1b) Sheol - the OT designation for the abode of the dead.
  - 2. **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)**; (3) personified as following along after Death **(Rev 6.8)**. - Friberg Lexicon
  - 3. **Gehenna**; lit. *the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom*, a ravine south of Jerusalem where constant fires were kept burning to consume the dead bodies of animals, criminals, and refuse; figuratively in the Gospels for *hell*, a fiery place of eternal punishment for the ungodly dead **(Mt 5.22)**. - Friberg Lexicon
- B. The bible words "Sheol" and "Hades" describe the place where all the dead go.
  - 1. Jesus after His death went to "Hades." **(Acts 2:27, 31)**
  - 2. This is the same "hell" that will not prevail against the church. How? **(Mt 16:18)**
  - 3. This abode of the dead is temporary and will yield all of its occupants at the judgment day. **(Rev 20:13-14)**
- C. The Bible word "gehenna" describes the final abode of the wicked and of Satan himself. **(Mt 25:41; Mk 9:45-47)**

**II. There is a conscious existence after death.**

- A. Some have failed to see the context of some verses. **(Ecc 9:10,11)**
  - 1. From the viewpoint of things "under the sun" this is true.
  - 2. Does our view of this verse harmonize with others?
- B. Do we go out of existence at death or in the final judgment when we are cast into hell?
  - 1. How could this verse be true? **(Mt 5:29-30)**
  - 2. Notice that there is something else besides our bodies. **(Mt 10:28)**

- C. The argument Jesus made on the resurrection demands that there is presently a continued existence of dead men. **(Mk 12:24-27)**
  - 1. This was later proven to the three apostles on the mount of transfiguration. **(Mt 17:3-5)**
  - 2. Peter has no doubt about these truths. **(2 Pet 1:17-18)**

### ***III. Were do the dead go after death?***

- A. Consider the case of the rich man and Lazarus. **(Lk 16:19-31)**
  - 1. Both died and went to a conscious place of existence.
  - 2. Depending on their spiritual preparation they either were tormented or comforted.

“The safest road to hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.” - C. S. Lewis

- 3. There was an ability to think and communicate.
- B. Based on this verse we see both a "physical" torment as well as a mental torment.
  - 1. The rich man could now think about not only his lost opportunities but about his loved ones as well.

“Hell is truth seen too late.” - Anonymous

- 2. Could this be the source of "many stripes?" **(Lk 12:47-48)**
- “The pain of punishment will be without the fruit of penitence; weeping will be useless, and prayer ineffectual. Too late they will believe in eternal punishment who would not believe in eternal life.” - Cyprian (200-258)

- C. For the righteous there is the comfort and presence of Christ. **(Phil 1:23-24; Acts 7:59)**

“I have talked to doctors and nurses who have held the hands of dying people, and they say that there is as much difference between the death of a Christian and a non-Christian as there is between heaven.”

### ***IV. Where is the final abode of the dead?***

- A. The unrighteous go to hell, "gehenna". This is also called the "lake of fire." **(Rev 20:12-14)**

“The man who dies out of Christ is said to be lost, and hardly a word in the English tongue expresses his condition with greater accuracy. He has squandered a rare fortune and at the last he stands for a fleeting moment and looks around, a moral fool, a wastrel who has lost in one overwhelming and irrecoverable loss, his soul, his life, his peace, his total, mysterious personality, his dear and everlasting all.” - A. W. Tozer

- B. The righteous then go to heaven. **(Rev 21:1-5)**

***Conclusion:*** Were will you spend eternity?

- A. There were some who upon knowing of these things were baptized. **(1 Cor 15:29)**
- B. Can you face death without fear? It is possible if we are ready!

“Death has an amazing power of altering what a man desires because death profoundly affects his outlook.” - Oswald Chambers