

## SHEOL, HADES AND PARADISE

### Introduction:

The Hebrew word “Sheol” (Old Testament) is the same as the Greek word “Hades” (New Testament). See Psalm 16:10 as quoted in Acts 2:27.

“Sheol” means “the nether world” (NASB margin at Psa. 16:10).

*Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Ed.*, defines it as “the world of the dead.”

*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, says, “Sheol is used of the place of conscious existence after death” (p. 227, OT)

“Hades” means “the region of departed spirits of the lost, (but including the blessed dead in periods preceding the ascension of Christ) It corresponds to ‘Sheol’ in the OT” *Vine’s*.p. 287, NT.

The King James Version of the New Testament confuses the two Greek words “Hades” and “Gehenna,” often erroneously translating them *both* as “Hell.”

Scriptural instances indicating that the *spirits* of the dead are in Hades immediately following their death...(their bodies were buried on earth)

The rich man was in torment in Hades....Luke 16:22-23

Jesus’ soul was not abandoned to Hades (i.e., left there)....Acts 2:22-27, 31

Hades was apparently a two-compartment realm, where a great chasm separated the wicked from the righteous...Luke 16:26

The rich man was being tormented by flames, yet could see Abraham and Lazarus at a distance ...Luke 16:23-25, 28

Lazarus was comforted in Abraham’s bosom (i.e., presence)...Luke 16:22-23, 25

Jesus’ spirit was in Hades following His death (Acts 2:27, 31); He told the thief on the cross that he would be “with me” following his death (Luke 23:42-43); The place where the thief would be is called “Paradise” (Luke 23:43)

Yet the final reference to Hades in the Bible is at the last Judgment when those in it are cast into the lake of fire (obviously “Hell”)...Rev. 20:13-14

Obviously, there were then no more righteous people in Hades. If not, why?

## **I. THE SPIRITS OF THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD NOW GO DIRECTLY TO HEAVEN**

Paul said that at death he would be with Christ....Phil. 1:23

But, at His ascension, Jesus went to heaven...Acts 1:11; 7:55; Heb. 9:24

[At God’s right hand ..Acts 2:33; Heb. 10:12; I Pet. 3:22]

Paul said that absence from the body meant being present with the Lord....II Cor. 5:1-9

When our earthly “tent” is torn down, we have a new “house” in heaven...V. 1

Stephen realized that when he died he would be in the presence of the Lord Jesus (who was then in heaven)....Acts 7:54-60

## **II. THE RIGHTEOUS WERE REMOVED FROM HADES AT JESUS’ ASCENSION..**

Jesus had the *keys* of Death and Hades...Rev. 1:17-18

Just as Jesus gave Peter the “keys” of the kingdom (to open it up for people to enter...Matt. 16:16-18), so Jesus used “keys” to open Hades & release the righteous

The most likely time when Jesus accomplished this is at His ascension...

The reference to leading “captives” may refer to Jesus releasing those in Hades and taking them to heaven with him as he ascended...Ephesians 4:7-8

An alternate view, held by many, has Jesus leading His enemies (the devil, sin, fear of death) as captives (figuratively) in his triumphal ascension...See Col. 2:15

Jesus brought to nought the devil and delivered people from the fear of death Heb. 2:14-15

He judged the prince of this world (Satan)....John 12:31; 16:11

While this point may not be conclusive, the previous Scriptures show that, following Jesus' ascension, people went straight to heaven at death....(See Vine's on "Hades" p. 287, NT).

**Conclusion:**

Prior to and during Jesus' ministry the spirits of the righteous dead went to a place called Hades (the portion of it called "Paradise," where Jesus & penitent thief went)

Following His ascension the spirits of the righteous dead went directly to heaven. (Note that "Paradise" was now in God's presence..II Cor. 12:2-4; Rev. 2:7; (22:1-5)