

Outline Study Notes
on
**Death, The Abode of the Dead,
and
The Eternal State**



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Death, The Abode of the Dead, and The Eternal State

It is appointed unto man to die once, and then what?

Some Basic Facts

1. There is only one way to be born:

- in sin ... under wrath ... and with a sentence of death

“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” *Ps. 51:5*

“The wicked are estranged from the womb; these who speak lies go astray from birth.” *Ps. 58:3*

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ... and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ... you were at that time separate from Christ, ... having no hope and without God in the world.” *Eph. 2:1-3, 12*

“What is man, that he should be pure, or he who is born of a woman that he should be righteous?” *Job 15:14*

2. There are two ways to die:

- in sin ... in Adam ... condemned
- in faith ... in Christ ... justified

There is no question *whether* we will die.
The preeminent question of Scripture is: *how* will we die?
This question needs to be carefully weighed by every person.

“For God did not send His Son into the world to judge [and condemn] the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged [and condemned]; he who does not believe has been judged [and condemned] already, because He has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” *John 3:17-18*

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”
John 5:24

Note: eternal life is here contrasted with judgment & death ... and judgment & death are used synonymously

“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.” *Rom. 5:1-2*

3. There are two abodes after death:

- Sheol/Hades
- Paradise

Comment: The fact that there are two ways to die has profound implications relative to the state and eternal destiny of persons after death.

The Bible affirms with clarity, and therefore we affirm with conviction, that the soul exists continuously & eternally with full consciousness. The continuity of personal, conscious existence is what we refer to as “*life after death*” – it is a necessary essence of “*life after death*”.

The soul of every man continues to exist right on through the moment of physical death, and continuously thereafter.



Noteworthy Clarification

The terms Sheol (*Heb.*) in the O.T. & Hades (*Gr.*) in the N.T. are used as equivalent designators for the general place where the soul-spirits of the dead reside.

“For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.” *Ps. 16:10*



“For David says of Him, ‘... Because Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.’ ”
Acts. 2:25-27

“[David] looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that ‘He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay.’ ” *Acts 2:31*

The following Scriptures emphasize:

- the sure reality of a continuity of conscious life following physical death;
- the factual reality of a place where the soul-spirit of every person takes up residence upon death – the place called Sheol in many OT texts ... the place where soul-spirits of both righteous & unrighteous dead are held within the ordered economy of the OT age – during the period from creation until the cross of Christ.

<p>“And Abraham breathed his last and died full of days, an old man and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people.” <i>Gen. 25:8</i></p> <p>“And Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, an old man and satisfied with days;” <i>Gen. 35:29</i></p> <p>“Then [Jacob] charged them and said to them, ‘I am about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave ... which Abraham bought ... When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.” <i>Gen. 49:29-33</i></p> <p>“So Jacob tore his clothes, ... and mourned for his son [Joseph] many days. ... And [Jacob] said, ‘Surely I will go down to <u>Sheol</u> in mourning for my son.’ ” <i>Gen. 37:34-35</i></p>	<p>“But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to Him.” <i>Lk. 20:37-38</i></p>	<p>“So are the paths of all who forget God; and the hope of the godless will perish.” <i>Job 8:13</i></p> <p>“The wicked will turn to <u>Sheol</u>, even all the nations who forget God.” <i>Ps. 9:17</i></p> <p>“This is the way of those who are foolish, and of those after them who approve their words. As sheep they are appointed for <u>Sheol</u>; death shall be their shepherd; and the upright shall rule over them in the morning; and their form shall be for <u>Sheol</u> to consume, so that they have no habitation. But God will redeem my soul from the power of <u>Sheol</u>; for He will receive me.” <i>Ps. 49:13-15.</i></p>
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- Conclusion: comparison of the OT & NT texts quoted at bottom of the previous page, and texts quoted above, reveal:
- Sheol is an Older Testament equivalent of the Newer Testament place termed Hades.
 - Sheol/Hades is the general abode of the dead – righteous and unrighteous.

Clarifying Distinctions & Terminology

It is important to distinguish between separated compartments that are contained within the general place referred to as “Sheol/Hades”. The distinction between these differentiated abodes of soul-spirits is set forth most clearly in the teaching of Jesus recorded in *Lk. 16:19-31*.

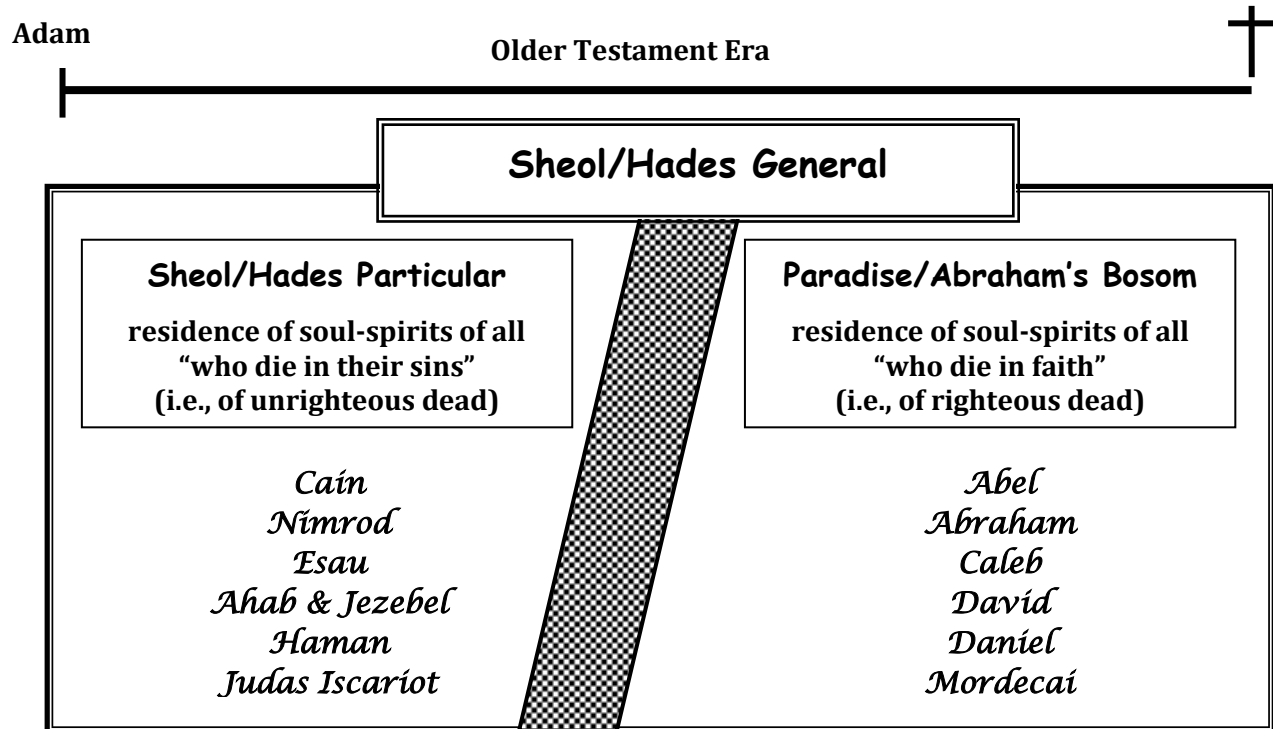
Words of the Scriptural text <i>Lk. 16:19-31</i>	Commentary
<p>“Now there was a rich man, And a poor man named Lazarus. ... Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to <u>Abraham’s bosom</u>; and the rich man also died and was buried. In <u>Hades</u> he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame’.</p> <p>But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And, besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and none may cross over from there to us’.”</p>	<p>This Scripture clearly defines two distinct residences within the general abode of departed soul-spirits referred to as Hades (i.e., Sheol/Hades). Our Lord differentiates between one abode called “<u>Abraham’s bosom</u>” and another abode referred to simply as “<u>Hades</u>”.</p> <p>That these are indeed differentiated abodes is clear from the fact that they are separated by “a great chasm” (“a great gulf” [KJV]).</p> <p>It seems clear that the abode of the soul-spirit of a righteous person is here indicated as residing in “Abraham’s bosom”, because Abraham is held in Scripture as the quintessential saint who “died in faith). By contrast, the soul-spirit of an unrighteous person who “died in sin” is here indicated as being held in “Hades”.</p>

Clarifying Distinctions & Terminology cont'd.

With the evident use of Sheol/Hades in a dual sense across different Scriptural texts, we will hereafter refer to the general abode of departed soul-spirits encompassing all of the OT dead, both righteous & unrighteous, by the term “**Sheol/Hades General**”. Based on Jesus’ teaching in *Lk. 16:19-31*, we identify within and internal to “**Sheol/Hades General**” two differentiated (distinct & separated) compartments (abodes).

1. The compartment where the soul-spirits of all who “die in their sins” reside, termed “**Hades**” by Jesus as recorded by Luke, we will refer to as “**Sheol/Hades Particular**” for purposes of clarity and precision.
2. The other compartment where the soul-spirits of all who “die in faith”, termed “**Abraham’s bosom**” by Jesus as recorded by Luke, will henceforth be referred to by the term “**Paradise**”.

Hence, we can represent the abode of the dead during the whole of the OT era in terms of the following schematic. This schematic depicts the state of affairs pertaining to all those who died ranging from the time of Adam’s fall and consequent imposition of the Curse until the time of Christ’s resurrection from the dead.



★ Observe that Jesus referred to the abode of the righteous dead in *Lk. 16:22* as “**Abraham’s bosom**”, but as “**Paradise**” in *Lk. 23:43* when He gave His promise to the repentant thief on the cross. Later, after Christ’s resurrection, the abode of the righteous dead in heaven is also referred to as “**Paradise**”.

“And [Jesus] said to him (i.e., to the repentant thief on the cross), ‘Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in **Paradise**’.” *Lk. 23:43*

Just as we distinguish between **Sheol/Hades General** and **Sheol/Hades Particular**, it is evident that we also need to distinguish between **Paradise-Hades** and **Paradise-Heaven**. That this distinction is necessary is clearly revealed by the use of the word “**Paradise**” in later Scriptural references, such as those listed below.

“And I know how such a man ... was caught up into **Paradise**, and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.” *II Cor. 12:3-4*

“To him who overcomes. I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the **Paradise** of God.” *Rev. 2:7*

“And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and the Lamb, ... and on either side of the river was the tree of life.” *Rev. 22:1-2*

These latter texts are clearly “post resurrection” references; they pertain particularly to that time period following the epoch-changing event of Christ’s resurrection from the grave. Our Lord’s victory over death & the grave, and His accomplishment of a complete salvation for sinners, opened the way for a change in both Sheol/Hades and in heaven. We have clear statements of Holy Scripture, such as listed below, indicating that the soul-spirits of righteous persons go immediately to **Paradise-Heaven** upon physical death, no longer to **Paradise-Hades**.

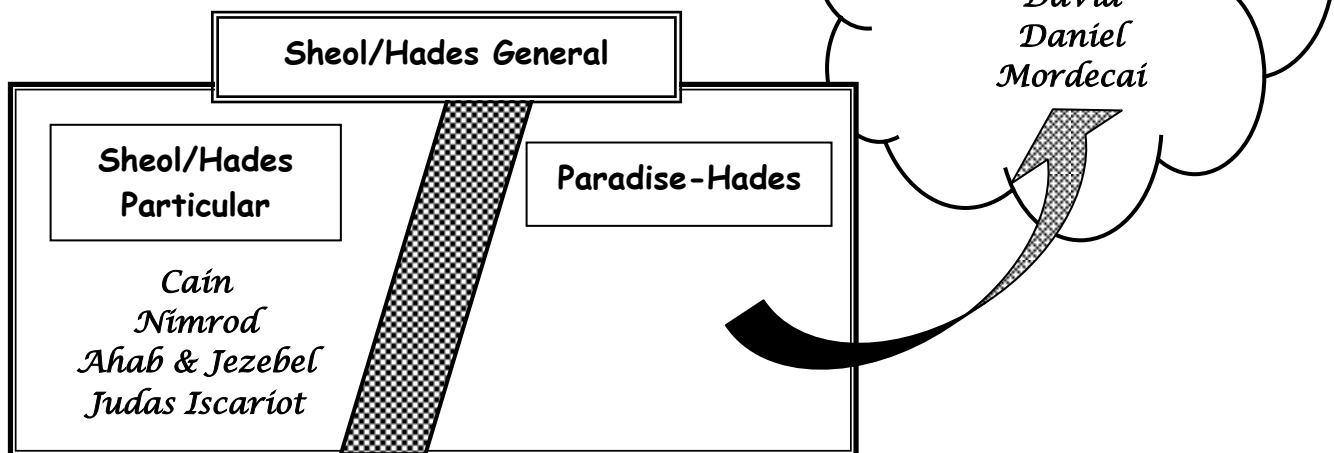
“Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” *II Cor. 5:6-8*

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ... But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.”
Phil. 1:21-24

It is without dispute that our Lord ascended to the “right hand of the Father” in heaven, and is there seated in the position of authority as Head of the Church, as the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, and as the coming Messiah-King. Hence, for a saint in the post-resurrection age to “be at home with the Lord” and “to depart and be with Christ” means that their soul-spirits necessarily go directly to **Paradise-Heaven**. Not only this, but there is Biblical foundation to believe that that all the soul-spirits of righteous dead of the whole period from creation to the cross have been transported from **Paradise-Hades** to **Paradise-Heaven** – there to forever be with the Lord.

★ All occupants who entered their rest in **Paradise-Hades** during the OT era have been transported to a new place of rest – to **Paradise-Heaven**. The soul-spirits of all the saints of all the ages henceforth reside in God’s glorious heaven where they dwell with full consciousness in the real presence of the risen, glorified Christ.

The status of **Sheol/Hades General** has been forever changed – **Paradise-Hades** has been evacuated.



Eph. 4:7-10 is a text containing possible reference to this indicated transfer of OT saints from **Paradise-Hades** to **Paradise-Heaven**. This Scripture is somewhat of a “hard saying”, and its intended meaning is clouded by several differing interpretations. With the goal of exploring its possible support for the view that **Paradise-Heaven** is the present abode of the soul-spirits of all righteous dead, as the quoted texts *II Cor. 5:6-8* and *Phil. 1:21-24* seem to quite clearly require, we will engage a brief textual analysis of *Eph. 4:7-10*, conjoined with its originating OT reference *Ps. 68:18*.

❖ Biblical Support for a Post-Resurrection Transfer of OT Saints out of **Paradise-Hades**

The originating reference *Ps. 68:18* clearly speaks concerning a triumphal return of a warrior-king with spoils & captives associated with a victorious military campaign. The specific earthly reference in view may well have been

a reference to David returning to Mt. Zion in one of his victory parades. However, the statements in *Ps. 68:17-18* are decidedly Messianic, and must therefore be speaking of a particular Messianic triumph.

“The chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands; Adonai is among them as at Sinai, in holiness. You have ascended on high, You have led captive Your captives; You have received gifts among men, even among the rebellious also, that Yahweh Elohim may dwell there.” *Ps. 68:17-18*

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.’ (Now this expression, ‘He ascended’, what does it mean except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)” *Eph. 4:7-10*

Relevant Interpretive Points

1. Some interpreters, while specifically holding the Messianic context in view, consider *Eph. 4:8* to be a reference to Christ’s conquest of His enemies: Satan, sin, death, and the curse.
 - Counterpoint: The reference in *Eph. 4:8* indicates that the captives are taken to heaven, that very abode where the ascended, glorified Christ has gone. Now it seems neither reasonable nor true that Christ has led captive Satan, sin, death, and the curse to heaven. These enemies all remain actively operative on the cursed earth in this present age. Christ’s victory achieved in His incarnate humanity, especially His triumph over sin, death and Satan, through His death on the cross and resurrection from the tomb, have ultimate triumphal implications over these enemies, but these enemies have not yet been “led captive”.
2. The statement “led captive” in *Eph. 4:8* employs the past tense (aorist), a linguistic fact which contravenes seeing this text as referring to some on-going or future work of liberation as some have proposed. For example, the liberation of sinners from their slavery to sin through the divine work of calling, regeneration & justification, which some infer to be in view in this text, is an on-going deliverance of captives and not a past, completed event.
3. The reference to “descending into the lower parts (region) of the earth” accords well with the statements recorded in *I Pet. 3:19-20* speaking of our Lord’s activity immediately following His death on the cross ... and most likely preceding His glorious resurrection.
 - Note #1: With reference to *I Pet. 3:19-20* and our Lord’s descent into the “lower parts of the earth”, He clearly did not liberate those captive “spirits” who “once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah” (i.e., imprisoned fallen angels), for they are still being held in their incarcerated state awaiting the final judgment (cf., *II Pet. 2:4* & *Jude 6*). Yet the text of *Eph. 4:8-9* speaks clearly of a liberation of captives following a descent, even a descent that precedes a subsequent ascension to a place “far above all the heavens”.
 - Note #2. Furthermore, the reference to a descent “into the lower parts of the earth” seems to speak of something quite distinct from the ‘descent’ associated with our Lord’s incarnation (see *Phil. 2:5-8*), His coming to earth as the virgin-conceived son of Mary, as some have suggested.
 - ◆ As an example of this interpretive slant to the ‘descent’ in view in *Eph. 4:9*, consider the translation of the first statement of this verse as given in the New English Bible: “Now the word ‘ascended’ implies that He also descended to the lowest level, down to the very earth.” The NIV translates this same statement as: “What does ‘He ascended’ mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?” Clearly translations with such preferred interpretive slants are obstacles to an understanding of the text as pertaining to any evacuation of **Paradise-Hades** and leading the captive soul-spirits to a new abode; namely, a whole-sale translation of those soul-spirits directly to **Paradise-Heaven** as the texts of *II Cor. 5:6-8*, *II Cor. 12:3-4*, and *Phil. 1:21-24* seem to require.

Based on these considerations, it seems more convincing to this author that *Eph. 4:8-9* is actually describing a mighty deliverance of “captives”, even “Your captives” (per *Ps. 68:18* in the NASB). *Eph. 4:8-9* describes a deliverance of “righteous captives” – captives awaiting the completion of God’s great work of salvation, even arrival at an eternal state of intimate communal relationship with the Creator in peace and wholeness of being.

4. There are two resurrections:

- a resurrection of life ... the resurrection of the righteous ... “the first resurrection”
- a resurrection of judgment ... the resurrection of the unrighteous ... a “second” resurrection

“Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a **resurrection of life**, those who committed the evil deeds to a **resurrection of judgment**.”
John 5:28-29

“But when you give a reception, invite the poor, ... for you will be repaid at the **resurrection of the righteous**.”
Lk. 14:13-14

“having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be **a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked**.” *Acts 24:15*

“And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and the word of God, ... and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed.

This is **the first resurrection**. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in **the first resurrection**; over these **the second death** has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. ... And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is **the second death**, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” *Rev. 20:4-6, 14-15*.

Comment: There are several, chronologically-separated resurrections included in the term “**the first resurrection**”. That is, there are several distinct phases to the full scope of “**the first resurrection**”. Further, and from a strict chronological perspective, all participants in “**the first resurrection**” will be raised from the dead before any of the unrighteous dead residing in Sheol-Hades will be raised.

Those who participate in “**the resurrection of judgment**” (alt., the “second resurrection”) are not raised until just prior to the Great White Throne judgment at the end of the age, whereupon they are judged and condemned to their eternal destiny in hell → “**the second death**”. [See chart on next page.]

5. There are two ultimate destinies:

- hell ... “the lake of fire” ... “the second death”
- the new creation ... the new heaven & new earth

Comment: Both of these terms speak of real, physical destinies where real persons will exist in real, physical bodies. These are places to be inhabited by persons in imperishable, physical bodies. No one will enter either of these destinies in a disembodied state.

Note: No person is presently in hell. Hell will not be occupied by any unrighteous dead until after the “resurrection of judgment”. All unrighteous dead will then be brought before the “Judge of all the earth” in immortal bodies to be consigned to this eternal destiny.

“But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell (*Gr., Gehenna*); yes I tell you to fear Him!” *Lk. 12:5*

“And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” *Rev. 20:15*

“But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”
II Pet. 3:13

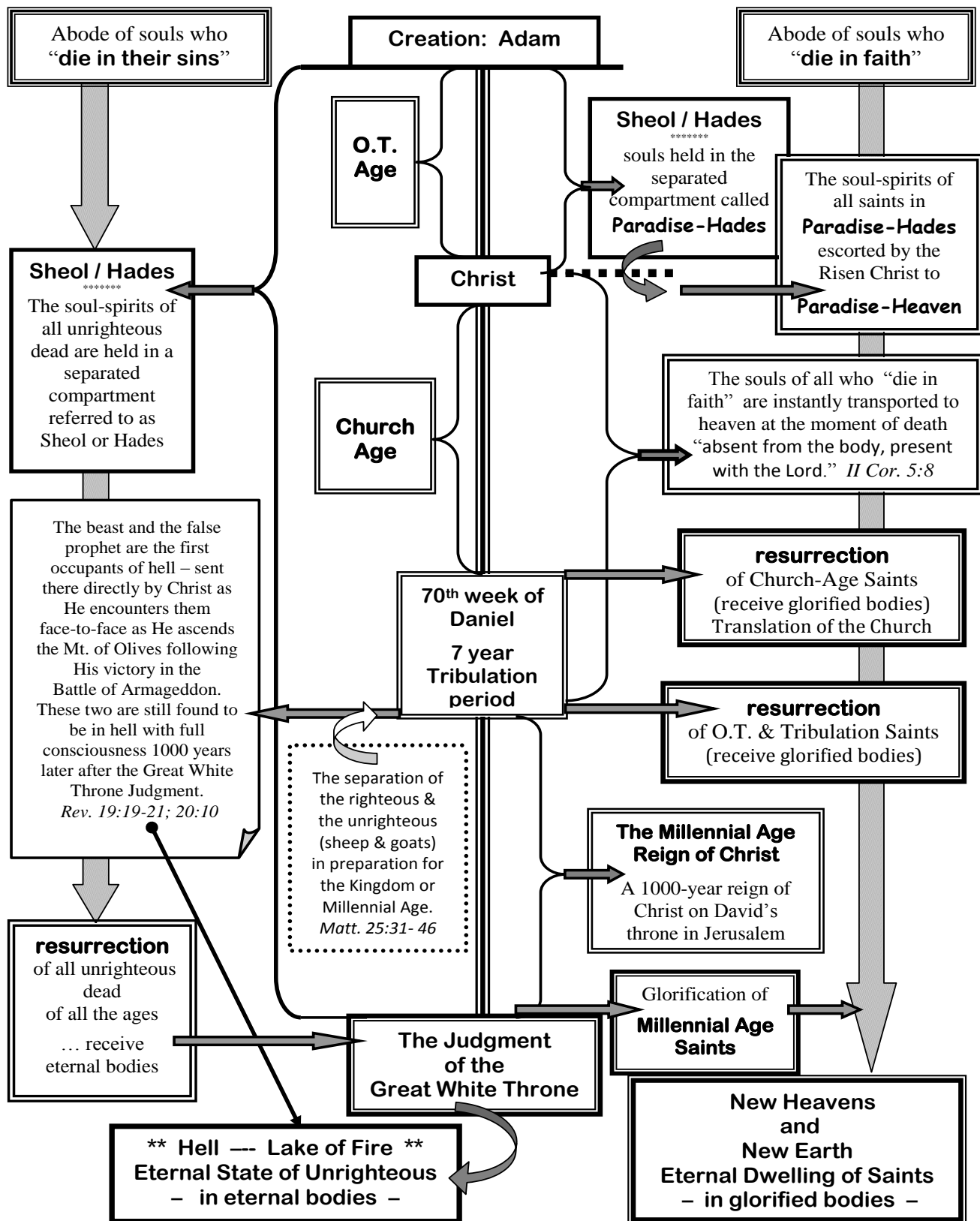
“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.” *Rev. 21:1*

Note: *Hades* is a place where only disembodied soul-spirits reside awaiting final judgment; *hell* is a place where only resurrected people are condemned & sentenced to eternal judgment to be experienced in physical bodies..

Note: The word ‘hell’ is used in many English translations of the Scriptures to translate both “Hades” and “Gehenna” without differentiating between these two distinctly different terms that refer to distinctly different places.

- Hades is a temporary residence.
- Hell will be a permanent residence.

A Chronologically Organized Summary of Resurrections & Destinies

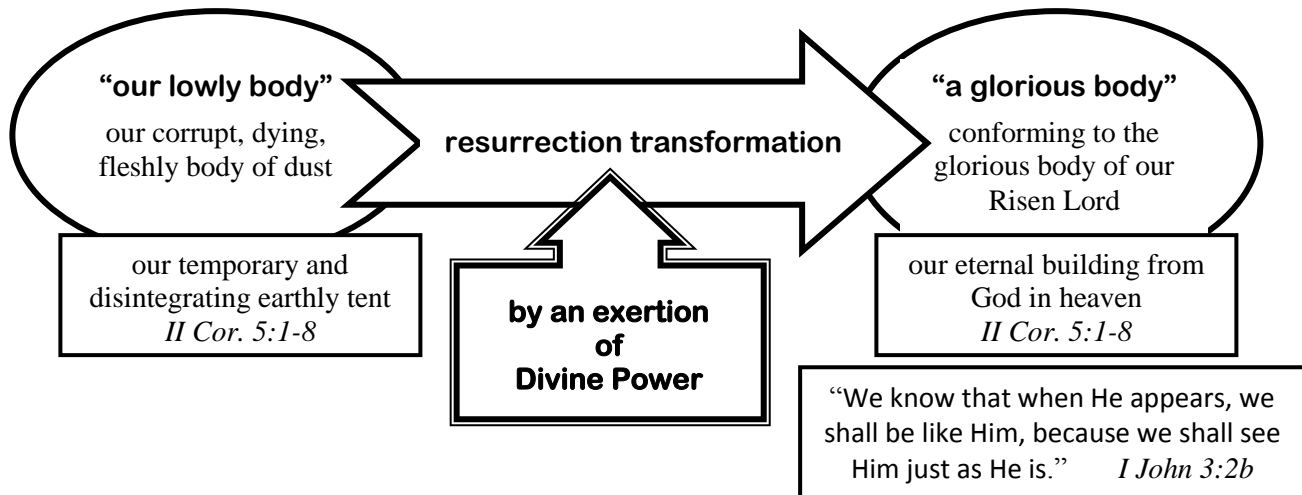


The Resurrection Body

The Eternal State of all "Who Die in Faith"

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with His glorious body, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." *Phil. 3:20-21*

"even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the **redemption of our body**." *Rom. 8:23*



"So also is **the resurrection of the dead**. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is **raised in power**; it is sown a natural body, it is **raised a spiritual body**." ...

"The first man is from the earth, earthy (made of dust); the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, **we shall also bear the image of the heavenly**." *I Cor. 15:42-49*

Question: What will our future bodies be like?

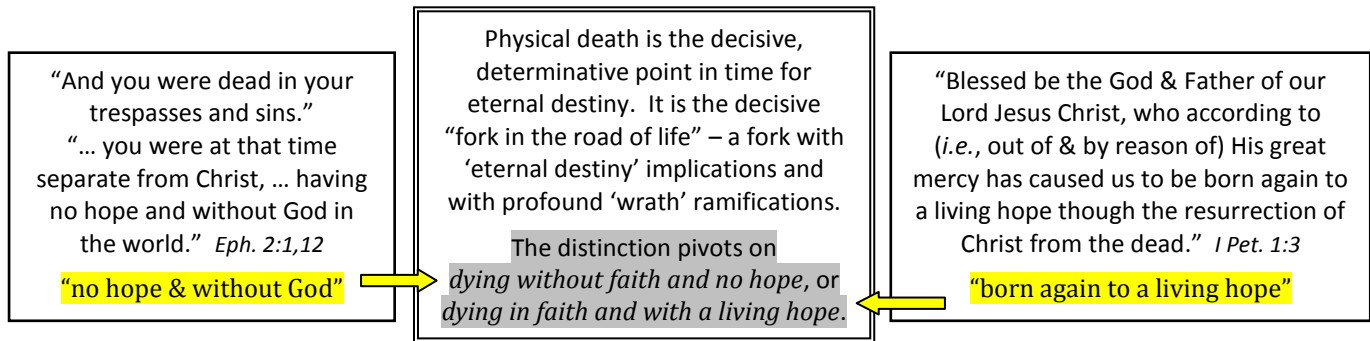
A few answers – some speculative.

- ◆ There will be unmistakable recognition of others.
- ◆ All effects of the Curse will be completely eradicated—no aging, no illness, no physical or emotional limitations, an existence with unhindered and unlimited fulfillment & peace, ... and more, much more—all of which is consistent with living in an environment totally enveloped with the glory and goodness of our Holy Creator – one filled with a sensible experience of the fullness of His glorious presence.
- ◆ We will likely be in a state similar to man in his prime.
 - ❑ If Adam had not sinned, he would have lived forever in his prime – the same state of physical and mental being with which he was created.
 - ❑ Our Lord was crucified in his prime, and His resurrected body – His eternal, glorified body – had the same appearance as His pre-crucifixion body.

Noteworthy contrasts between
our physical bodies and
our future glorified bodies

perishable	imperishable
dishonorable	glorious
weak	powerful
natural	spiritual
earthy	heavenly
image of dust	image of heaven
mortal	immortal
corruptible	incorruptible

Perspectives: Dying & Death of a Saint (One Who Dies “in Faith”)

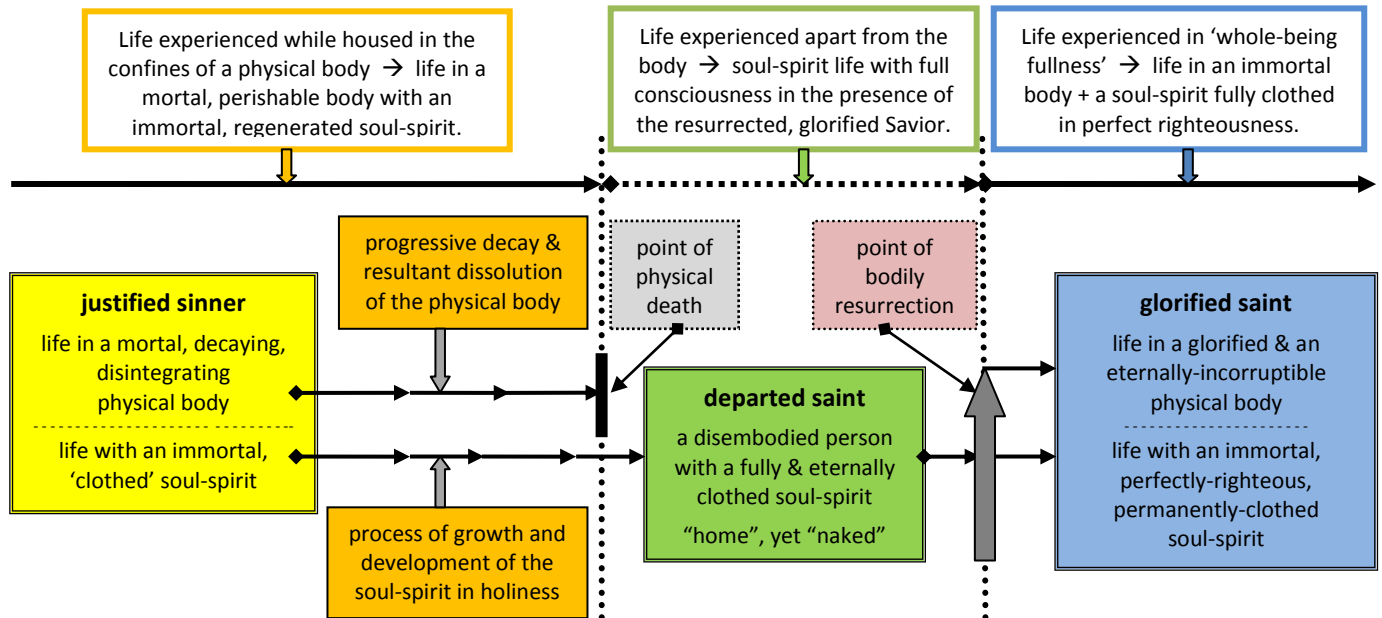


Key Promises Regarding Destiny & State of Being

“For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.” 1 Thess. 5:9-10

“we ... prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home (present) with the Lord.” II Cor. 5:8

“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ... I ... desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much (far) better.” Phil. 1:21-23



Comment #1. The moment of death for a saint is one of extreme dissonance for one’s essence of being. Death shatters every soul-longing for harmony of “being-fullness” and of intended “being-purpose”. Yet a new & far richer harmony of soul-spirit + body awaits that certain, future moment of bodily resurrection.

Comment #2. The moment of passing through death for one who dies in faith is accompanied with an instantaneous, cognitive beholding by one’s uninterrupted soul-spirit essence. It is a beholding of Christ that involves a ‘full-soul’ conscious awareness of being in the fullness of His glorified presence – it is a beholding that is in one grand & most welcome moment both real & true, and both vividly & intensely satisfying.

Comment #3. There is within the soul-spirit, so created by God at our regeneration, along with the attendant indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a ‘soul desire’ to be “fully clothed”. That is, to be immortal, wholly sanctified, and housed in an enduring & perfectly suited body → to be conformed to the very image of our glorified Lord & Savior. There is in every saint a great antipathy toward being “unclothed” ... to experience life in a temporary & corruptible dwelling. When this full & permanent compatibility of one’s total personal essence is realized, then “what is mortal” will be “swallowed up by life”. Then, and only then, will a person be “fully & truly alive” ... alive in the sense God purposed for His “called-out ones” from the beginning of the world.

“And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through the Spirit who indwells you.” *Rom. 8:10-11*

“For the anxious longing of creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ... For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.” *Rom. 8:19, 22-23*