

Beyond Death's Door: What Happens After Death?

2 Corinthians 5:1-8

Introduction:

I. In this lesson we shall attempt to answer the question, "What happens after death?"

A. Look out along path of life to a place we know little of.

1. Look beyond the grave -- what's out there?
2. Where do we go when we die? - have memory - personality.
3. Do we go straight to heaven or hell - what happens?

B. These are age old questions - everybody wants to know.

1. Man hasn't provided answer.
2. Philosophers, poets & wise men have speculated - no answer.
3. But the Bible does answer these questions

II. Last week learned that death = separation - body & spirit.

A. Death is not the end life after death.

1. Body goes to the grave - dust to dust
2. Spirit lives on.
3. If it exists, common sense says -- the spirit must go somewhere.
4. But where does it go?? - that is question??

III The Bible's answer -- spirit goes to place called Hades.

A. Illustrated -- in resurrection of Jesus.

Acts 2:31 - he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY.

1. Christ "was neither abandoned to hades, nor did his flesh suffer decay"

- a. His flesh did not stay long in tomb and decay
- b. And His spirit did not stay long in hades.

IV Our lesson has two points:

- A. The Meaning of Hades and Sheol
- B. The Nature of Hades and Sheol

Discussion

I. ***The Meaning Of Hades And Sheol***

A. The O.T. taught that the dead go to Sheol; the N.T. teaches the people go to Hades (same place).

1. Sheol & Hades = " a place of conscious existence after death" -- " the region of departed spirits"

Genesis 37:35 - Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, "Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son." So his father wept for him.

1 Corinthians 15:55 - "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH (HADES, NKJV), WHERE IS YOUR STING?"

- a. Shoel translated pit, grave & hell.

- 1) Problem! Hades is not hell (gehenna).

Matthew 5:29 - "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Matthew 16:18 - "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

2. The Septuagint uses the Greek word Hades as an equivalent for Sheol.

Psalms 16:10 - For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

B. Hades is the place of disembodied spirits

2 Corinthians 5:1-8 - For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. 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.

Revelation 6:9 - When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;

Psalms 139:8 - If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.

Matthew 16:18 - "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

II. *The Nature Of Hades Or Sheol*

A. In telling about the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus gives a rather vivid picture of Hades

Luke 16:19-31 - "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. In Hades 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 the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' 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 that none may cross over from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house-- for I have five brothers--in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' But Abraham *said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' But he said to him, 'If

they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead."

1. Hades is neither heaven nor hell.

a. Jesus did not descend into hell at His death.

Acts 2:31 - he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY.

b. Jesus did not ascend into heaven at His death.

John 20:17 - Jesus *said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"

1) No, one except Jesus, has gone into heaven.

John 3:13 - "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.

Acts 2:34 - "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,

2 Peter 2:9 - then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

2) No one has been cast into hell.

Jude 1:6 - And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,

Matthew 25:41 - "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

2. There is consciousness in Hades.

a. We are said to sleep.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 - But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

1) Sleep is a metaphor to describe death.

2) It is also a euphemism

b. Rich man recognized Lazarus

Luke 16:23 - "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

1) He was reminded of life on earth

Luke 16:25 - "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.

2) He remembered his brothers on earth

Luke 16:27-28 - "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house-- for I have five brothers--in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

B. In this realm there are 2 abodes.

1. Paradise (Abraham's bosom) "park" a place of beauty and comfort.

Luke 23:42-43 - And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

Acts 2:31 - he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY.

2 Corinthians 12:4 - was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

Philippians 1:23 - But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;

a. Note: Consciousness, comfort, care & another abode.

2. Tartarus (torment) - the deepest abyss of Hades.

2 Peter 2:4 - For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

Jude 1:6 - And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,

Deuteronomy 32:22 - For a fire is kindled in My anger, And burns to the lowest part of Sheol, And consumes the earth with its yield, And sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.

Conclusion:

I. THE LESSON OF HADES:

- A. Our eternal destiny is fixed at death in Hades.
- B. There is consciousness in Hades.
- C. Our eternal comfort or pain will begin in Hades.
- D. We must choice now to serve God, not in Hades.
- E. Our eternal soul will never die! There is a heaven and a hell!
- F. Next: Beyond Death's Door: A Few Last Things