

01-29-12

Series: [The Resurrections](#)

# The Resurrections (56)

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[Matthew 28:1-10](#)

(Continuation from 01-22-12)

## The Doctrine of the Resurrections

### The Intermediate State

Now, relative to the lost, there are four different words used in Scripture that describe the place of those who have died in a lost condition – *Sheol, Hades, Tartarus, and Gehenna*. For instance, the word *Sheol* is the word that the Old Testament uses to describe the grave where the body is placed, as well as the conscious state of existence of a soul after physical death. Prior to the resurrection of Christ, it is my belief that the souls of both the righteous and the unrighteous went to *Sheol*. And *Sheol* was divided into two separate areas – *Hades* and *Abraham's bosom*. And in that **temporary** location, the individual experienced either suffering or blessing based on what area they were in.

In the New Testament, the word *Hades* (the word that we would refer to as “hell”) serves as a synonym for the term *Sheol* which is not used in the New Testament. These words do not describe the eternal or final state, but rather the temporary place in which the unsaved dead are waiting for the resurrection of their bodies. We clearly know and affirm that in the eternal state that the saved will be with Christ in the kingdom of God, and the lost will be in the **Lake of Fire** with the devil and all of his angels. So, these words simply represent the intermediate place and ensuing condition where the lost are waiting for their final judgment.

To be absolutely fair to all sides, there is disagreement relative to what each of these words actually represent. In our modern terminology, what we are discussing is the idea of “**heaven**” and “**hell**” prior to the **eternal state**. Most conservative interpreters (certainly not all) favor the concept of two compartments for *Sheol* and much of that is based on [Luke 16:19-31](#) that deals with the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Before we read this passage, many of the commentaries refer to this story as a “**parable**”. But there is nothing that states that it is a parable. In reality, it could very easily be a true story of which Christ is fully aware, and from Christ's explanation we can glean some major understanding of the Old Testament concept of *Sheol*. ([Luke 16:19-31](#))

It seems to be clear from this passage that there were two separate divisions that separated Lazarus from the rich man. Both were alive and conscious, one was saved and one was lost, one was experiencing torment and the other blessing, both had memories of their former lives, and although there was a great gulf that separated them, in some way they were still able to communicate. If this passage is taken literally, then it seems to confirm the two compartment concept of *Sheol*, or *Hades* and *Abraham's bosom*. If it is only a parable, then we would be hard pressed to read too much into the story, and it would seem that ultimately it would be about the five brothers of the rich man and what

01-29-12

Series: The Resurrections

they will need to do to be saved.

Now, what is important relative to this concept of the **intermediate state** is that many hold that **a fundamental change relative to the intermediate state took place at Christ's resurrection**. Prior to His resurrection, it is believed that everyone went to *Sheol* and were placed in either one of the two spiritual “**compartments**”. But we know that after Christ's resurrection that the saved go immediately into the presence of God.

For instance, Paul stated in [2 Corinthians 5:8](#),

**2 Corinthians 5:8 (NASB)**

**<sup>8</sup> we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.**

**2 Corinthians 5:8 (KJV)**

**<sup>8</sup> We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.**

The souls of New Testament believers go immediately into God's presence after they die. For the believer, death is a temporary cessation of bodily life and a separation of the soul from the body. But it is not a cessation of life.

[Philippians 1:23](#) says,

**Philippians 1:23 (NASB)**

**<sup>23</sup> But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;**

So, the question is **where are those that were in Abraham's bosom prior to Christ's resurrection?** I.e., where are the Old Testament saints today? Are they still in **Abraham's bosom**, or are they in heaven with Christ and all of the New Testament believers who have died? My personal opinion is that they are still in **Abraham's bosom** waiting for the resurrection of their bodies just after the **Second Coming**.