

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a large, ornate brass key. The hand is positioned in the center of the frame, with the key held between the fingers. The background is a soft, out-of-focus image of a person wearing a white, textured garment, possibly a robe or a sweater, which adds a sense of solemnity and timelessness to the scene.

The
Intermediate
State

of The
madean
Realm
Matthew 16:18-19

A Biblical study of what happens when we die
by
R. Chip Denief

Table of Contents

Glossary of Terms.....	pg. 1
Why this Topic Matters.....	pg. 2
Scriptural Authority ~vs~ Personal Experience.....	pg. 3
Source of Life, Nature of the Human Soul/Spirit.....	pg. 3
Death in the Bible.....	pg. 4
Translation of Terms for Spiritual Realm.....	pg. 6
Biblical Case Studies on the Spiritual Realm.....	pg. 6
Saul and the Medium of Endor.....	pg. 7
Jonah and the Great Fish.....	pg. 8
Jesus and the Man called Legion.....	pg. 8
The Rich Man and Lazarus.....	pg. 8
Transfiguration of Jesus.....	pg. 9
Resurrection of Saints at Jesus' Crucifixion.....	pg. 10
Jesus in the Hadean Realm.....	pg. 11
Paul Caught up to the Third Heaven.....	pg. 12
The Heavens of the Bible.....	pg. 12
A Glimpse at the Structure of the Hadean Realm.....	pg. 14
Angels, Demons and Spirits.....	pg. 14
Impact upon Eschatology & Millennial Views.....	pg. 15
The Kingdom of Jesus.....	pg. 15
Triumphant Return of Jesus.....	pg. 16
Objections Answered from Scripture.....	pg. 17
Source Bibliography.....	pg. 22

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R. Chip Denief
www.unioncitycc.org

Note from the Author

This document represents a number of years and countless hours of research on my part, yet, I in no way claim authority on the subject. Truly, the desire of my heart as an evangelist is to present the truth of God's Word, in fact, I rejoice in this calling. Having such a goal before me with the topic at hand, I have referenced the only source which I can rely upon as time tested and true... the Holy Scriptures... for they alone represent truth. It is upon the truth of God's Word I have established my faith, and by which all men will be judged. Other sources have been referenced, and cited, in this study and yet, Scripture has been employed as the final authority.

Sometimes, truth is foreign to us and requires change on our part in order to be found obedient. My walk with the Lord, and desire to learn of His will has compelled me to go deeper in the Scripture. I pray such diligence is reflected in the materials presented in this study, and you will also learn to seek "*thus saith the Lord*" first in all matters of faith and practice.

Confession must be made on my part as I have been forced to change my perceptions and beliefs in certain areas due to this study. However, my faith is all the more firmly established upon Christ as a result. His word never ceases to amaze me and fans the flame of joy within me with this subject.

Words alone are not adequate to express the deep impression made upon me by spiritual men who have instilled within me a love for the Word, challenging me to go to Scripture for answers, rather than simply providing them for me. Such men as "my preacher" Mike Dennis, Emmitt McConnell Jr, Elwood LaMonda, Dr. Dick Damron, Dr. James Girdwood, Dr. Terry L. Peer, Dr. Jack Cottrell and Dr. Danny Gabbard Sr, with whom I rejoice as fellow laborers for Christ and His kingdom.

Wisely, God recognized it is not good for man to be alone, and created a suitable helper for him. I understand how Adam must have felt upon seeing his wife for the first time for I share this sense upon every thought of my wonderful helpmate. In creating her with such love for the Kingdom, encouragement, spiritual insight and patience for my long hours, I praise God for my precious Rita.

Certainly there is a special reward for proof-readers. For their hours of tedious proof-reading, gentle correction and editing suggestions, I wish to thank my friends Ron Marionneaux and Ray and Emily Burns. Your diligence and willingness to serve in this way is a great blessing.

Lastly, with a desire to honor the Lord Jesus first, I humbly dedicate this study to my father, Edward F. Denief, and my father-in-law, Kenneth R. Gollihue, who, having shed their earthly tent, have been carried by the angels to Paradise, abiding in the presence of all the saints as they eagerly await the triumphant return of Jesus and their resurrection to redemption. I long to be reunited with them and agree with the saints who cry out "*Come quickly, Lord Jesus!*"

Glossary of Terms

- **Bosom of Abraham:** Used to describe the spiritual place of the righteous dead, also *“Paradise”* and the *“Presence of Jesus”*.
- **Gehenna:** Hebrew word for eternal place of punishment for the unrighteous, translated *“Hell”*. Comprised of 2 words *Ge* (the) *Hinnom* (Hinnom Valley), a burning dump site.
- **Hades:** NT Greek word referring to the temporal, spiritual place of the dead equal to Hebrew *“Sheol”* or *“the grave”*. Refers to the general realm of the souls of all the dead.
- **Hadean Realm:** The temporal, spiritual realm where the souls of men abide until Christ’s return. Paradise (Abraham’s bosom) and Torment (Tartarus) comprise the Hadean realm.
- **Heaven:** The eternal place of reward for the righteous, following judgment and redemption; known as the dwelling place of God. Unless otherwise noted, *“Heaven”* will be used to mean the *“Heaven of Heavens”* or *“Eternal Heaven”* for this study.
- **Hell:** The eternal place of punishment for the unrighteous. Some Bible translations have used *“Hell”* in translation of other words, like Sheol or Hades, which is incorrect. Unless otherwise noted, for the purpose of this study, Hell will refer to the eternal placed of the damned following judgment. Also the *“Lake of Fire”*, *“Second Death”* and the *“Abyss”*.
- **Intermediate State:** The spiritual realm where the departed souls/spirits of men abide until Jesus’ triumphant return. This intermediate state is referred to as the *“Hadean Realm”* throughout this study, also *“Hades”*, *“the grave”* and the *“place of the dead”*.
- **Paradise:** Greek word referring to the place of the righteous dead, also *“Abraham’s bosom”*, *“Presence of Jesus”*. Paul said to be there is *“... to be present with the Lord.”*
- **Purgatory:** Catholic false doctrine of temporal punishment of venial sins of individuals. It must be noted that Purgatory and Hades are not the same. The concept of Purgatory developed from a passage in non-canonical writings over centuries of Catholic tradition.
- **Sheol:** OT Hebrew word referring to the spiritual place of the dead; also used to refer in a general way to the grave. It is the OT equal to the Greek word *“Hades”*.
- **Spirit/Soul:** The metaphysical, eternal, spiritual nature of humanity which animates the flesh. The soul of man is the spiritual component created by God to be eternal.
- **Tartarus:** Greek word referring to the place of the unrighteous dead, also *“torment”*. Peter used this term in 2 Peter 2:4, with the understanding this is the place of torment, within the Hadean realm. The term is of Greek Mythological origin.
- **Torment:** Describing Tartarus, the spiritual place of the unrighteous dead. Tartarus is a term Peter borrowed from Greek mythology to refer to the place of torment reserved for the unrighteous within Hades. He used this term with an audience familiar with its use.
- **Venial Sin:** Catholic false doctrine of *“minor sins”* not deserving eternal punishment. These sins require punishment or torment in Purgatory while delaying the believer from receiving Heaven. Venial sin punishment may be shortened by the employment of the prayers of living believers on behalf of those in Purgatory, or through the purchase of indulgences.

Why does the topic of the intermediate, spiritual realm matter?

First, because ***all Bible doctrine matters***; if it did not, the Holy Spirit would not include it in the Bible! And, secondly, because God does not want us to be “...***uninformed*** about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.” 1 Thessalonians 4:13

Unfortunately, there exists within the Church today a void of teaching and preaching on the topic of the spiritual realm. Whenever such a void exists, the enemy will fill it with false teaching. False teachings spawn false theologies, which, in turn, impact the application of faith in Christian practice. Sadly, due to the taboo nature of topics like the spiritual realm, some preachers refuse to even address the topic. Perhaps this is out of fear that a sense of association with false teaching or suspicion of false doctrine will be made against them. Such a response is counter to sound Biblical practice, after all, God is the author of truth and His Word teaches light (truth) illuminates and casts out darkness. We are called to ***reveal truth***, and to ***expose false teachings***. In fact, the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to spend time in his letter to the Ephesians charging Christians to expose false teachings, and to come out of darkness and into the light. (*Ephesians 5*)

Some choose not to address the spiritual realm in teaching or preaching out of a sense it is a “*non-salvation*” topic. Many in this category cite the phrase “*In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity*” as an excuse for ignoring the topic, stating that it is a “*non-salvation*” or “*non-essential*” matter. In my opinion, this is irresponsible and lazy on behalf of those entrusted with spiritual instruction. Paul charged Timothy and Titus to properly handle the Word as evangelists and to “*be instant in season and out of season*”, in order to ensure sound spiritual teaching. (*2 Timothy 4:2, Titus 1:13, 2:15*) Further, such an idea actually elevates a creed of man above the inspired Word of God. In this matter, we agree with Paul: “*May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar.*” (*Romans 3:4a*)

Our culture has been seduced by the practice of allowing experience and emotion to sift our faith. It is vital to understand that God alone has the right and ability to define truth, and human experience is not a trustworthy guide. Emotion often gets the best of folks, especially surrounding a loss, and I cannot count the number of times I have heard people say things, even from pulpits, which do not agree with Scripture. Certainly they do not intend to deceive because many say such things in an attempt to provide comfort. However, comfort comes when we have obeyed God’s word. Anything less patronizes us and reduces, even usurps, the authority of Scripture. Further propelling this problem is the issue of mishandling of the ancient languages in the translation into English. Certain translation errors have been made which influence theology when proper distinction is not referenced from the original languages. Fortunately, there is a cure for such spiritual ailment: ***teach the Scripture.***

As I approached this topic, I was deeply saddened by the inconsistency which exists within our brotherhood, and the Church universal, concerning this topic. My personal study on the topic has uncovered a number of poor applications of Scripture, an embracing of denominational theologies and a lack of Biblical evidence. Some of these cases can even be found within Restoration Churches. In fact, there exists very little usable information or commentary on this topic from Restoration authors.

Therefore, our task is to approach this topic (and every topic) with the goal of allowing Scripture to speak, and to rightly handle such passages to ensure a sound Biblical understanding and application of the subject at hand. The spiritual realm is a Biblical topic, it is inspired and important, bearing influence on faith, making it an “*essential*”. Therefore, let us give ourselves to the authority of the Scripture, approaching this topic with no bias or preconceived ideas, and allow the Bible to determine what we must believe. This study is designed as an appeal to stand upon God’s Word, thus resolving current doctrinal and theological errors.

Scriptural Authority ~vs~ Personal Experience or Emotion

One very popular trend in modern culture is to allow personal experience to determine truth. In Jeremiah 17:9-10, Scripture says the heart is “... *more deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick*” it goes on to say the Lord searches the hearts of men. The obvious application of the Jeremiah text is man cannot know his own heart, and only the Lord is able to rightly discern the hearts of men, and, therefore, is singularly qualified to direct the paths of men in righteousness. Judges 17:6 says while there was no king in Israel, every man did what he thought best in his own eyes and we are told of the end of such a model in Proverbs 14:12. Face it, personal, human experience is not a good means for determining right and wrong. Similarly, we cannot “*interpret*” Scripture according to our own experience or emotion.

It is clear man needs a source of direction and authority outside of personal experience, or the experience of others. In this matter, Scripture provides the only reliable source of direction. For matters of emotion, such as in the passing of a loved one, it is quite easy for individuals to allow emotion or experience to direct their faith. I cannot begin to count the number of times I have heard people say “*I don’t care what the Bible says*” or “*You can’t tell me my family member is lost because I know better*” or “*If God would not allow my family member to be with Him in Heaven, I don’t want to go there either*”. Christians are responsible for presenting the standard or rule of God’s expectation as presented in His Word. **If** any exceptions occur they solely belong to God and not mankind, further, they are not manipulated by emotion or mans experience.

At the judgment of man, God will not ask us how we feel or what we have experienced, nor will He ask for our “*testimony*” as a test for acceptance or denial into His kingdom. We are judged by the Word of God alone.

Finally, it should be noted that translations from one language to another offer many challenges. Scriptural authority is not based in an English translation of the Scripture, but in the Scripture itself. At times, English translations differ, and some of the differences are significant and bear an effect upon doctrine. In the few texts where this comes into play with our study of the spiritual realm, we will address the ***original language*** as a source of clarity.

Source of life, and the Nature of the Human Soul/Spirit

Mankind is created as a composite being, a truth many refer to as “*duality*” or “*plurality*”. This means man is created with a temporal, physical body, which is illuminated or “*animated*” by an immortal spirit or soul within the body. Numerous references to the two part composition of man exist, each using terms which express the temporal nature of the flesh (tent, vessel, earthen jar, etc) while revealing the truth that the soul is immortal and exists beyond the fleshly body. Consider the creation account of Genesis:



Genesis 2:7

**Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground,
and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;
and man became a living being.**

From this text we can see man's physical body was formed by God using dust from the ground. It is this dust which comprises half of the composition of every person and is known as our physical body. However, man was not living at this point since he was truly only half finished. The latter portion of the passage reveals that God breathed into the nostrils of the form of man the "*breath of life*" thus providing the second component necessary for man to become a living being... the soul or spirit.

It should be noted the soul is a gift of God which brings life. Scripture uses the terms "*soul*" and "*spirit*" interchangeably, thus we understand they are referring to the same spiritual, immortal component of the duality of humankind. Some in Christendom believe the spirit and soul of man are distinguished, as is the physical body, thus the view known as "*trichotomy*". However, Dr. Jack Cottrell points out Scripture consistently refers to the two parts of man, and uses soul and spirit interchangeably.¹ Both "*spirit*" and "*soul*" are used in reference to that part of man which is immortal and survives death, i.e., the disembodied element in the intermediate state: soul (Matt. 10:28; Rev. 6:9; 20:4), spirit (Heb. 12:23). Both terms are also used to describe the part of man which departs the physical body at the moment of death: soul (Gen. 35:18; 1 Kgs. 17:21), spirit (Ps. 31:5; Lk. 8:55; 23:46; Acts 7:59; Jas. 2:26).² (Also, see Job 32:8; Ecc. 12:7; Zech. 12:1; Dan. 7:15).

Death in the Bible and its Relationship with the Soul

Because life for the physical body depends upon the soul/spirit, we can therefore conclude that when the spirit departs the physical body, death occurs. The Biblical teaching of death, whether physical or spiritual, is best understood as separation of the fleshly body from the immortal soul/spirit. Some have forced the concept of annihilation into Scriptural text, but it should be noted Scripture never uses death in the sense of extinction, annihilation, or cessation of one's existence. As we have already seen, the soul continues beyond the physical body. So, what happens at death to the dual components of man?

The Genesis account provides insight into this question:



Genesis 3:19

"By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, 'til you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

¹ Cottrell, Jack. *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today* © 2002, College Press Publishing Co, Joplin MO. (pg. 138-140)
² Cottrell, Jack. *Is There a Difference Between Soul and Spirit?* © 2010, Dr. Jack Cottrell, Facebook Note

Here, we are told mankind, upon death, physically returns to dust and to the ground. This clearly indicates Scripture identifies a difference between the physical body, and that which illuminates the body & brings life... the spirit or soul, which is a gift from God. (Confirmation of the duality of man.) Solomon further illustrates this in his writings in Ecclesiastes 12:5b-7.



Ecc. 12:5b-7

For man goes to his eternal home while mourners go about in the street. Remember Him before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed, the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed; then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

This is a description of what happens to the temporal, physical component of man. However, it says little about the second component of man, the soul, apart from saying it returns to God. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament reveal man is composed of both soul/spirit and body (Zechariah 12:1; Matthew 10:28; 1 Corinthians 5:5). At the point of death, the spirit separates from the body. Keep in mind the spirit/soul is the eternal gift of life which comes from God, while in contrast, the fleshly body is a temporal “*container*” for the soul of man which is intended to return to the dust from which it was created.

Even Jesus’ death is described in John’s Gospel as “*giving up His spirit.*”



John 19:30

Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

There are a number of other examples from Scripture which can be used to illustrate that, at the point of death, the soul/spirit departs from the fleshly body. (Consider Rachel’s death in Genesis 35:18, or the death of the daughter of Jairus in Luke 8:54ff.)

Knowing the soul or spirit is what illuminates the physical body, it cannot remain with the body, but must separate upon death. In fact, death occurs when the soul leaves the body. We have previously discovered that the body begins to return to dust upon death. Because the soul is eternal, and departs from the physical body at death, we must ask: “*What happens to the soul or spirit upon the physical death of the body? Where did the spirits of Rachel and Jairus’ daughter go? Where did the spirit of Jesus and the thief go upon death?*”

David reveals in Psalm 16 the soul does not undergo decay, nor is it abandoned to the grave as is the fleshly body of man. Consider what he says concerning Jesus’ death and the process of decay, which speaks of the truth of Jesus’ physical resurrection.



**For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.**

According to this passage, Jesus' soul went to the realm of departed spirits, known as Sheol in the Old Testament and Hades in the New Testament (Acts 2:27; Luke 16:23). This passage illustrates the translation problem, because the King James Version translates "Sheol" as "Hell". In fact, the KJV consistently mistranslates "Hell" rather than using the correct terms in a number of passages. We will discover such a mistranslation, (whether an intentional change to the text or a genuine mistake) can bear significant impact on theology.

Proper Translation of the Original Language

The correct translation of words or terms used in the original text is necessary for correct understanding and application of any text. Therefore, we familiarize ourselves with some terms or words from the ancient language, and their proper application in the English language.

- "Hades" is a Greek word for the unseen realm of the dead, righteous and unrighteous.
- "Tartarus" is the place of torment for the unrighteous in Hades. (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6,7)
- "Sheol" is a Hebrew word, equal in meaning to the Greek word "Hades". (Psalm 16:10)
- "Paradise" is the word used by Jesus to describe the place of comfort in Hades. It is also referred to as "Abraham's bosom" and "the Lord's presence." (Luke 23:42-43, 1 Peter 3)
- "Gehenna" is the Bible word for "Hell", used 12 times in the New Testament.

The King James Version is the only translation which translates Gehenna, Hades and Sheol as "Hell". The other translations (correctly) identify the distinction between the terms, only translating Gehenna as Hell, and transliterating Hades & Sheol. Psalm 16:10 is a classic example of mistranslation of the word Sheol as "Hell" in the KJV. The word "Hell" is used 54 times in the KJV, but only 12 of these actually apply to the eternal abode for the damned.³ (To transliterate is to change letters, words, etc into corresponding characters of another alphabet or language.)

This mistranslation carries significant implications, namely, that Jesus was in Hell, rather than the general abode of the souls of the dead (Sheol). The reality of the Gospel as expressed in Scripture, is Hell came to Jesus,⁴ while He assumed our guilt and sin on the cross. Therefore, He did not have to go to Hell for us, as Catholicism teaches, and as implied by the Apostle's Creed.

Biblical Case Studies for the Intermediate, Spiritual Realm

Thus far we have established the soul/spirit is a gift of God to man which provides life for the fleshly body. We understand death occurs when the soul departs the physical body, and they body is designed to undergo decay "returning to dust" and the soul returns to God. No doubt, man is a 2 part composite being, primarily of a spiritual nature.

³ Cottrell, Jack. *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today* © 2002, College Press Publishing Co, Joplin MO. (pg. 573)

⁴ Cottrell, Jack. *Did Jesus Go to Hell To Pay for Our Sins?* © 2010, Dr. Jack Cottrell, Facebook Note

The following Biblical accounts will be examined as case studies for this topic:

- Saul & the Spirit Medium of Endor
- Jonah and the great fish
- Jesus and the man called Legion
- The Rich man and Lazarus
- Transfiguration of Christ, Moses and Elijah
- Saints Resurrected at Jesus' death
- Jesus in the Hadean Realm
- Paul in the Third Heaven

Unfortunately, due to the influences of German rationalist thinking, "*higher criticism*" of Bible texts and authorship, and the influence of denominational and mythological sources, it must be clearly stated ***the author holds these passages to be real, historic accounts***. These accounts are not to be understood as "*parables*", "*oral legends*" or "*myths*" as is commonly taught in many Bible Colleges and Seminaries. However, for the sake of argument, let's suppose these are "*only parables*" as some propose them to be. The parables of Scripture always present a spiritual truth, therefore, the principles or lessons presented by these accounts still bear witness to the truth of the intermediate, spiritual realm.

Further, we can know these are actual, historic events for the following reasons:

- Names of real people, known by the audience, are used, including Abraham.
- Phrases like "*There was a certain man*" speak of reality, not allegory.
- Eyewitness accounts, as in the case of the saints resurrected at Jesus' resurrection.
- Apostolic witness, as in the Transfiguration account and Paul's Third Heaven testimony.
- Divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit for inclusion in the Scriptures.
- Testimony of historic events, as in the prophetic word of Samuel to Saul at Endor.

Saul and the Spirit Medium of Endor (1 Samuel 28)

Points to consider:

- Saul was abandoned by God for his disobedience in dealing with the Amalekites. vs 18.
- God would not answer by Urim (casting of lots), prophets or dreams, signifying complete abandonment and condemnation of Saul due to his disregard for God. His kingdom rule was about to be removed.
- The spirit medium was shocked and frightened by Samuel's appearance. (Samuel had previously passed away.) This further confirms spiritism as a con game to extort people, otherwise, the medium would not have been surprised by Samuel's appearance. Further, it is possible the medium was being deceived by evil spirits through her occult activity.
- Numerous times the Scripture names Samuel as appearing, not a demon. This, in the opinion of the author, completely destroys the idea purported by some that this was a demonic spirit appearing to Saul, rather than Samuel himself appearing.
- Demons ***do not*** have full knowledge of coming events, they are not "*Omniscient*" or "*all Knowing*" as God is. Only a prophet of God could foretell the account described to Saul with such accuracy. Further, historic record confirms the prophetic prediction of Samuel to have been exactly correct, even occurring within the time frame he revealed to Saul.
- God allowed Samuel to be "*brought up*", as he did with Moses and Elijah with Jesus on the mountain of transfiguration, with a divine purpose. This verifies it is possible for those in the spirit realm to communicate or appear, however, it is *unnecessary* since the living have the revelation of God's Word readily accessible. God still condemns spiritism today.

- Samuel clearly tells Saul he and his sons will be *“with him”* (Samuel) the next day. This further confirms the fact that the unrighteous and the righteous will be together in the Hadean realm. Hades is revealed in Scripture as the general place of all the souls of the dead. However, as revealed by Jesus’ account of Lazarus, the righteous dead and the unrighteous dead are separated by an expanse or *“great chasm”* within the spirit realm.

Jonah and the Great Fish (Jonah 1)

Points to consider:

- The experience of Jonah is compared to Jesus’ experience of being in the grave.
- Jonah’s account was accepted by the Jewish teachers as historic fact.
- The book of Jonah was agreed upon for inclusion in the Canon of Scripture.
- Jonah refers to the fish as his *“Sheol”* or grave.
- It is not intended to believe Jonah died, but was simply understanding he was in a terribly dismal condition, facing eminent death in the fish. This further underscores the idea of something beyond *“Sheol”* simply meaning *“grave”*.
- Scripture uses this account to illustrate intellect and awareness present in those within the Hadean realm. (Conversation, awareness of time, recognition of others, etc.)
- Further illustration is given in this account that nowhere, even *“Sheol”*, is removed from the presence of God.

Jesus and the Man Called Legion (Luke 8:26-39)

Points to consider:

- Jesus presented this account as fact, not allegory, nor in a parabolic form.
- Numerous witnesses, including an entire town, are cited for this account.
- The demons possessing the man were *“many”* in number, thus, the name *“Legion”*.
- Jesus held authority over the demons.
- The demons recognized Jesus, verbally announced Him, and fell before Him begging.
- An understanding of time, future and accountability before God is shown by the demons.
- Extraordinary strength, self destruction, isolation from other people, nakedness and a complete disregard for human dignity are shown by the demonic possession.
- The demons clearly understood Jesus’ appearance was a prelude to the unrighteous (both living and dead) and the demons being cast into the Abyss following judgment.
- Upon being cast out, the demons rushed into a herd of swine, further identifying the problem of a spirit being disembodied. Paul makes mention of this same struggle on behalf of the righteous in 2 Corinthians 5:1-4, where he says the soul longs to be clothed with immortality (the perfected, resurrected body). As two part beings, our soul longs for a body.
- Demonic possession caused the man to live among the tombs showing demons have a sense of destruction, and the ungodly have a fascination with death.

The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)

Points to consider:

- Jesus did not present this as a parable, providing the real names of each involved. The use of a parable does not erase the truth of the intended message of that parable. When employing parables, Jesus always used examples which were familiar to His audience. Since no one in the audience would have experienced death, a *“parable”* argument is moot. Also, Jesus provided known names for those involved in this account, Abraham and Lazarus, which would be totally unnecessary in a parable. The language structure of Jesus’ presentation clearly cites this as a real event... *“There was a man...”*, etc.

- Both men died, and the rich man was buried. (No mention of burial for Lazarus.)
- Lazarus was carried by angels to a spiritual place referred to as “*Abraham’s bosom*”.
- The rich man is described as awaking in Hades, a place of torment. The Greek word “*Hades*” is incorrectly translated “*Hell*” in the King James Version.
- Both the rich man and Lazarus had physical senses and conscious awareness of their surroundings. The rich man experienced thirst with nothing to quench and agony from flames, describing it as “*torment*”, while Lazarus received comfort.
- Abraham and the Rich man were able to converse openly.
- A “*Great Chasm*” or expanse separates the two regions of this place, one of torment and the other of comfort. The size of the expanse is simply described as “*great*”.
- No one can pass between the two sides of the chasm.
- The rich man begged to send Lazarus back to the living to warn his brothers. This further confirms the souls in the intermediate realm are not “*asleep*” in the sense of being in a state of unconsciousness, rather, they are conscious and aware of their surroundings.
- Abraham does not say it is impossible, (or forbidden) simply unnecessary to send Lazarus back to the living due to the Law and Prophets. In fact, he even references the resurrection of Christ (and the saints at Jesus’ resurrection) stating if they “*do not believe the Law and Prophets they will not believe even if someone were resurrected from the dead.*”
- Some suggest the account of Abraham’s bosom, and Torment is simply borrowed from Greek mythology, which has a very developed structure of the “*netherworld*” of the unseen, afterlife. Even the name of the Greek deity over the realm of the dead is named “*Hades*”. This projection is simply not the case in this account. There are a large number of Biblical accounts which are distorted by the traditions and myths of various cultures (creation, flood, resurrection, etc.). However, truth is not defined by the distortions of others. These distortions by other cultures and people groups do not remove the validity and truth of the accounts of Scripture. In fact, in some manner they confirm these accounts. Most myths and legends spring from a portion of truth which becomes distorted due to an inaccurate recording of the accounts. Nearly every culture around the world shares similar events, although the details of such events may have differences. This does not provide validity to the distortions and variances, however, it often validates the event/account which originally occurred. (We all know what happened on 9/11, and look at all the variations of that account only 10 years removed.)
- The language employed in describing Paradise and Torment removes any concept of an unconscious, sleep state of the dead. How can one understand pleasure and comfort (Paradise) or torture, pain, thirst, etc. (Torment) if they are unconscious?
- Torment is the description used by the rich man who begs for his thirst to be relieved, he mentions his tongue and Lazarus’ finger (note a similar form between soul and flesh).
- In his description, the rich man mentions being “*in this flame*”. This insight helps us recognize the similarity with Hell, however, Torment is a temporal place where Hell (yet to be opened) will be everlasting.

Transfiguration of Jesus, Appearance of Moses and Elijah (Mark 9:1-8)

Points to consider:

- Peter, James and John offer eye witness accounts of this transfiguration event.
- A specific location is cited for the event, providing further confirmation of an actual event.
- Jesus was transfigured before them and His appearance changed. Perhaps (most likely) this is a glimpse of Jesus in His perfected, resurrected body.

- The apostles recognized Moses and Elijah.
- Scripture names Moses and Elijah as appearing with Jesus.
- This account is not a vision or a dream as is clearly shown by the details given in a number of visions and dreams referenced in Scripture. Scriptural accounts of dreams are always clearly identified. Also, for this to be a dream would require at least Peter, James and John to have identical and simultaneous visions. Although not impossible for God, this is never spoken of anywhere else, and is highly improbable. Our understanding should reflect that this is an actual historic account, and not a vision or dream.
- The details of this account confirm a three-dimensional appearance because the Apostles try to convince Jesus to allow them to build dwellings for them.
- Scripture never says Moses and Elijah are “*spirits*”. A trend in teaching among many Churches is to dismiss the account of Saul at Endor as an appearance of an evil spirit, rather than an actual appearance of Samuel, however, to do so would also require the same understanding of this event. No one would dare say the transfiguration was an appearance of evil spirits or a delusion of sorts, yet, they dismiss Saul’s account on such grounds. Both accounts use similar language and provide the same details, thus, both are historic, reliable accounts.

Resurrection of Some Saints at the Resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 27:50-54)

Points to consider:

- Some saints resurrected, physically coming from the tombs, at the resurrection of Jesus.
- These same saints went into the city, appearing to many.
- The event is linked to the crucifixion earthquake, but the resurrection occurs simultaneous to Jesus’ resurrection, *not before*.
- Jesus is the “*First Fruits*” of those who “*sleep*”, or who are in the Hadean realm. (1 Corinthians 15:20) This does not refer to resurrection in general, since others in Scripture were resurrected, however, it speaks to the unique nature of Jesus’ resurrection in that He is the first to resurrect and never die again. Therefore, these saints were not resurrected with a perfected body, nor did they ascend to Heaven. They, like Lazarus, the daughter of Jarius and others, would return to the grave. Some have misunderstood this event as preceding Jesus’ own resurrection, however, this is not the case. Consider what Harold Fowler says on the construct of the language in this text: “*A better view, better supported by the grammar, is to see the words as constituting one complex idea: “they arose and, coming out of the graves after His resurrection, entered”. The resurrections and appearances in Jerusalem all occurred after Jesus arose.*”⁵
- Many have assumed these saints have received their perfected bodies, but Scripture does not say this. Those who argue such a position have wrongly understood Ephesians 4:8 and Psalm 68:18 which speaks of Jesus leading captive a host of captives. They suppose this to mean Paradise was emptied at Jesus’ resurrection and ushered into Heaven. Such a view misses the “*captive*” component of the text. Scripture uses the term “*free*” when speaking of the redeemed, not “*captive*”. Further, Jesus led them “*in captivity*”, in other words, bound, defeated, and in chains. This does not refer to the saints, rather, it speaks of the spoils of victory... the defeated enemy. Satan is said to be bound during the kingdom reign of Christ, which is at the present time, the “*Millennial reign*”. Satan and his rebellious angels are bound, awaiting the day when death (the final enemy) is abolished by Christ at His triumphant return (1 Corinthians 15:20-26) immediately followed by the

5 Fowler, Harold, *The Gospel of Matthew*, VOL. 4 © 1976, College Press Publishing Co. (Pg. 877)

judgment of all, and Jesus handing the Kingdom over to the Father.

- This event illustrates the amazing power of God expressed at Jesus' resurrection.

Jesus in the Hadean Realm (Luke 23:33-49, 1 Peter 3:18-22)

Points to consider:

- Following the sacrificial death of Jesus, having been "*put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit*", Jesus went to the "*spirits in prison*."
- The spirit prison referred to in 1 Peter 3:19 is the place of the dead, or the Hadean realm.
- Jesus "*made proclamation*" to the spirits in prison. This is not to be understood (as some understand it) to be a preaching of the Gospel for repentance, rather, it is a *proclamation of victory* by Christ to His enemies, and an *announcement* to the righteous dead.⁶
- Jesus did not descend into Hell, rather, He descended into the Hadean Realm to be with the saints, to bring with Him the captives into captivity, and to proclaim victory over His enemies.⁷
- The "*spirits in prison*" are the spirits of the lost in Hades.⁸
- Jesus names "*Paradise*" as the place where He and the thief will be following their death.
- The timeline for this transfer from life to the Hadean realm is rapid, "*today you will be...*".
- Jesus' kingdom also began "*today*", as identified by the request of the thief to remember him *in His kingdom*, as well as in Jesus' response. (See 1 Corinthians 15 for more info.)

Due to improper translation of the word "*Hades*" in the KJV, a number of false theological ideas and doctrinal positions have developed. These false teachings affect the redemptive death of Jesus as well as project a false understanding of Hell. Consider the seven points Dr. Jack Cottrell offers on this topic in the following note⁹ from his Facebook account:

1. The atoning work of Christ was finished at the moment of his death (see John 19:30). His main suffering for sin was not just in his human nature (body and spirit), but mainly in his divine nature. Beginning in Gethsemane and continuing up through the moment of his death, Jesus was experiencing the fullness of the Father's wrath in our place. Especially in his divine nature, he was suffering the equivalent of eternity in hell for the entire human race. He did not have to "*go to hell*" for this to happen.
2. At the time of Christ's death and following, hell itself, as the eternal destiny of Satan, his demons, and lost human beings (Matt. 25:41), was not even in existence yet. The same is true of the eternal home of saved human beings (the new heavens and new earth). Both of these eternal abodes will be unveiled after the final judgment.
3. Jesus never "*descended into hell*" as such. The KJV of Acts 2:27, 31 (based on Psalm 16:10) says "*that his soul was not left in hell*," but this is just a bad translation. The word in Psalm 16:10 is "*Sheol*," not hell; and in Acts, it is "*Hades*," not hell. In this context these words mean "*the grave*," which receives the dead bodies of both the lost and the saved.
4. At death, the bodies of most human beings are put into a grave, i.e., into one kind of "*Hades*." At the same time the souls (i.e., spirits) of the lost go to another place also called "*Hades*" (Luke 16:23); the souls (spirits) of the saved go not to "*Hades*", but to Paradise (Luke 23:43).
5. "*The spirits in prison who disobeyed*" (1 Peter 3) are the spirits of the lost in "*Hades*". That

6 Cottrell, Jack. *Did Jesus Go to Hell When He Died? (1 Peter 3:18-19)* © 2009, Dr. Jack Cottrell, Facebook Note

7 ibid

8 ibid

9 ibid

Jesus preached or “*made proclamation to*” these spirits does NOT mean he preached the gospel to them in order to give them (another) chance to be saved. The word “*preached*” here is NOT “*preached the gospel,*” but simply “*proclaimed, announced.*” The point is Jesus announced to His enemies in the spirit that He was indeed triumphant over them; Rev. 1:18.

6. The only way to read a “*second chance*” preaching of the gospel into 1 Peter 3:18 is to assume that 1 Peter 4:6 is talking about the same event, but I am convinced this is not the case. In the latter verse Peter says the gospel was preached (this is a different Greek word) to those who have died, but he does not say it was preached to them AFTER they died. As I understand it, he is talking about Christians who heard the gospel and believed it and who are now dead. They (like Christians still living) are “*judged according to the flesh*” by wicked men who persecute and blaspheme God’s people (see 1 Peter 2:12; 3:16, 18; 4:1-2) even to the point of martyrdom, but “*according to the spirit*” they are living for God and with God. The point of 1 Peter 4:1-6 is to give comfort to those Christians who are suffering persecution. It has nothing to do with giving a first or second chance to the wicked dead.

7. For further information on the intermediate state, heaven, and hell, see “The Faith Once for All,” chs. 29, 32, 33. (Listed in the bibliography of sources at the end of this document.)

Paul Caught up to the Third Heaven, into Paradise (2 Corinthians 12:1-4)

Points to consider:

- Paul specifically stated a time for his experience, but does not know whether it occurred while *in the body* or *out of the body*. Paul is using the term “*in the body*” to mean “*alive*” and “*out of the body*” to mean “*dead*”. Some commentators believe this was one of the occasions where Paul had been stoned and left for dead by the Jews.¹⁰ This is further evidence that the soul can depart from the body... you can be “*out of the body*”.
- The phrase “*third Heaven*” is used in vs. 2, and “*Paradise*” is used in vs. 4 of the text.
- “*Paradise*” and “*third Heaven*” are not employed by Paul to describe the same place.
- Paul went “*unto*” the Third Heaven, and “*into*” Paradise, a clear distinction in the Greek.
- This account is blessed by the Holy Spirit for inclusion in the Scriptures.
- Paul presents this as a factual account, from his first hand experience.
- He concludes by stating that he “*heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak*” while in this account.
- There are several “*Heavens*” spoken of in the Scripture.

The “Heavens” of the Bible

Scripture says “*God created the Heavens and the earth...*” (Genesis 1) and it uses a plural word, rather than a singular “Heaven”. Therefore, we know there is more than one Heaven. In fact, the Bible refers to four (4) Heavens, as understood in the following manner. (The Jews had a concept of seven Heavens.)¹¹

Heaven #1 is the “*expanse*” of the sky, or the atmosphere surrounding the earth. This is what we would refer to as the sky, where clouds are and where birds fly. Genesis 1:1 refers to the creation of the first heaven. *This Heaven is temporary.*

Heaven #2 is the “*stellar*” or “*planetary*” heaven, where the stars and planets reside. Genesis 1:7 and following refer to the creation of this second Heaven. *This Heaven is temporary.*

Heaven #3 is addressed by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:1-9, 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, Psalm 16:10,

¹⁰ Faull, George, *Where are the Dead?* <http://www.summit1.org/>

¹¹ *ibid*

Luke 23:33-49, 1 Peter 3:18-22 and a number of other passages. Traditionally understood as the place where God's presence is, the inhabitants of this Heaven are the angelic creatures, Jesus, God. *This Heaven is temporary.*

Heaven #4 is the *eternal Heaven*, yet to be revealed, received following judgment. This Heaven is called by many names, the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, New Heaven, the Foursquare City, Mt. Zion, and others. The clear understanding is that this is the eternal dwelling place of God and His people.

Although Paul is unable to provide great detail about what he heard while caught up to the third Heaven, we can partner this passage with others to create a deeper understanding of the Heavens of Scripture. Along with the passages already addressed, we can conclude the following:

- Paradise and the third Heaven are **not** the same place.
- The third Heaven is temporal, and the inhabitants are not yet in their "*perfected*" body.
- Although not in the direct presence of God, this Heaven is in *proximal location* to the throne of God and still understood as being "*at home with the Lord*".
- All former Heavens (#1, #2, #3) will be consumed in the wrath of God at judgment, and the "*New Heaven*" will then be inaugurated and inhabited for eternity.
- The final Heaven is not yet finished, being prepared by Jesus, and will not be received until the redemption of the saints, following the triumphant return of Jesus, resurrection of the dead and the judgment of humanity.
- Scripture refers to at least four Heavens. (The Jews believed in seven Heavens.)
- Judgment and reward/redemption and punishment/damnation will be in one "*general*" event of judgment. This counters the idea that men are immediately judged upon their death. Another suggestion is that man (upon death) is no longer bound by time, thus, we are immediately judged. Scripture does not support this, in fact, it counters this idea.
- Jesus is already reigning in His kingdom, (since death still exists) and will continue to do so until death is abolished as the final enemy (the gates of Hades hold no power over the Church according to Peter's confession in Matthew 16:18.). Further evidence of Jesus' current reign over the kingdom is found in 1 Corinthians 15:24 in that He must "*hand over*" the kingdom to the Father, meaning the kingdom is in His possession currently.
- The abode of the dead is called Hades and consists of two divisions, one for the righteous, known as Paradise, or Abraham's bosom, and the other division for the unrighteous, referred to as Tartarus, or Torment. Between the two divisions of Hades is fixed a great chasm which no one may cross.
- Righteous angels carry the dead (righteous and unrighteous) to the Hadean realm. Fallen angels hold no authority, and are currently bound "*in captivity*".
- Satan and his rebellious, fallen angels are currently bound until the culmination of the Millennial reign of Jesus at His triumphant return.
- Hades, Paradise and Torment are temporal and will be destroyed by God's wrath, with Hades and death in general being cast into the Lake of Fire following judgment.
- The soul of man animates the fleshly body of man, and death occurs when the soul departs the body. The soul is an immortal, spiritual being given directly by God.
- Souls are conscious and aware of their surroundings in the intermediate and eternal realms. It is a satanic doctrine which embraces the annihilation of souls in Hell, as the Jehovah's Witnesses teach. Incidentally, this false teaching is making headway in our

own brotherhood as testified by an article in the Christian Standard on 1-2-2011 by Glen Elliott... see full article at <http://christianstandard.com/2011/01/what-should-we-believe-about-hell>

- Jesus is the “*First Fruits*” of those to resurrect never to die again.
- Spirit appearances in the Old and New Testament are not demonic or evil in nature, rather, they are dramatic and miraculous interventions of God for His divine purpose.
- Spiritism (necromancy) is still condemned by God today. (Deuteronomy 18:10-11)
- The souls of the dead remain in Hades today, awaiting the triumphant return of Jesus and their resurrection at His appearing.
- The very fact God forbids communication with the dead bears witness it is possible. This practice is referred to as Necromancy or Spiritism, and is real. (Isaiah 29:4)

A Glimpse at the Structure of the Hadean Realm

- Hades is a spiritual, unseen realm of the souls of the dead. Refer to the special study on demons for more information on evil spirits or demons.
- Tartarus is a special place created for Satan and his fallen angels, perhaps the Abyss.
- Hades, is divided by a great expanse or chasm. One side of the chasm is referred to as Paradise, or Abraham’s bosom, reserved for the righteous dead. The other side is called Torment and is reserved for the unrighteous dead.
- Paradise is a place of peace and comfort, referred to as being “*at home with the Lord*”, or “*under the altar of God*”.
- Torment is a place of torture, suffering and fire.
- Those inhabiting the Hadean realm have not yet received their perfected or glorified body, a condition referred to in Scripture as “*naked*”, yet their souls long to be clothed.
- The Hadean realm is temporal and presently inhabited by all the dead, who will remain in this realm until the triumphant return of Jesus prompts their resurrection. At the resurrection, everyone will be given their “*glorified*” or perfected body and appear before the judgment throne of Jesus. The righteous will be redeemed and shall inherit the “*New Heaven*”, while the unrighteous will be condemned and receive the just penalty for their sins, being cast into Hell. Following the resurrection, Death, Hades and Hell (including its inhabitants) shall be cast into the everlasting lake of fire, referred to as the second death in Revelation.

For a graphic representation of the Hadean Realm, resurrection and judgment, refer to the chart included in the study which illustrates these truths.

Angels, Demons and Spirits

One common misunderstanding of the eternal realm is that mankind will somehow become angels in eternity. Another is that demons and evil spirits are fallen angels. Neither of these concepts is correct, and the Bible is quite clear on what angels, demons and evil spirits *really* are. We must make an appeal to the original language and its correct translation for a proper understanding of these concepts. Although we do not have time to provide an exhaustive study on this single topic, Bro. Joe Beam (of our Church of Christ brothers) has a wonderful book on this topic entitled “*Seeing the Unseen*” by Howard Publishing. Beam’s book does an outstanding job covering this topic, and is highly recommended as reading for students interested in a responsible study on this topic. Brother George Faull (Summit Theological Seminary) has two courses available on the topic of the Hadean realm (Where are

the Dead?) and Demonology which are recommended. Additionally, Alexander Campbell's discourse on Demonology is provided along with this study to provide another great defense for the proper understanding of demons.

The following Biblical facts must be understood:

- Angels are always angels, men are always men and the two shall never cross.
- Angels are never shown in Scripture as "*possessing*" men, only evil spirits or demons are able to possess men. (A clue as to what evil spirits and demons are.) The only exception to this rule is John 13:27, where "*Satan entered into*" Judas, however, based upon the greater context of teaching and this passage, this is understood as figurative, not literal possession.
- Demon literally means "*knowing one*", also referred to as a "*familiar spirit*", or one familiar with the realm of the dead, bearing knowledge of the dead.
- The ancients understood and employed the languages of demons/evil spirits being the souls of the unrighteous departed, and not angels. Acts 23:8-9 shows spirits and angels are different spiritual beings, and not the same. (Refer to Campbell's address on demonology.)
- Angels are created higher than mankind (Hebrews 2:9) and never show a desire for a human body. Why would they want to be demoted by taking human form?
- Demons have a preference for human bodies, and will also possess other creatures.
- The KJV imposes a poor translation, by rendering "*demon*" or "*evil spirit*" as "*devils*".
- Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10 is often cited as an argument against demons as the departed or disembodied souls of man. However, this is a passage by Solomon, speaking as an *unconverted man*, reminding us of what he *used* to think, while living in *ungodliness*.¹² We must be cautious not to extract a single passage, taking it out of context, in order to justify beliefs.

Impact upon Eschatology and Millennial views

Proper understanding of the spiritual realm helps to correct a number of "*End Time*" theologies, otherwise known as "*Eschatology*". There are three predominant views of the end times, also referred to as "*Millennial Views*". Due to time constraints and the depth of the topic of millennial views, we will only comment on the impact of each millennial view on the realm of the dead.

Suffice it to say any theology which requires more than one return of Jesus or more than one resurrection of the dead is not in keeping with the revealed message of Christ. Scripture teaches a universal return of Jesus (every eye shall see), not the "*rapture*" of certain millennial views. Further, such theology places the eternal kingdom reign of God in an overlapping position with death still reigning in the world, and accommodates a 2nd chance opportunities to men beyond the grave.

Kingdom Reign of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15)

1 Corinthians 15 provides the description of the reign of Jesus, the proper understanding of His triumphant return and the events which follow it. Here, the Holy Spirit reveals through Paul the following facts:

- The triumphant, future return of Jesus is just as real as His post-resurrection appearances, which were witnessed by hundreds of Christians still alive at the time of the writing.

¹² Faul, George, *Where are the Dead?* <http://www.summit1.org/>

- Our hope is placed upon the certainty of the coming return of Jesus, and the resurrection He provides by His power. Hope implies unseen, unrealized, future benefit which is tied to our present promise from God.
- Reference is made of those who have *“fallen asleep”* in an understanding of resurrection being a future event, and not in vain.
- Jesus is the first fruits of those raised never to die again.
- The order of resurrection is clear: Upon Christ’s return, the dead in Christ will rise first, then those who are His (living) at His coming. (1 Thessalonians provides further detail.)
- Christ’s reign began at His resurrection, and continues for a *“thousand years”* (meaning an era of time) until His triumphant return and the resurrection of the dead.
- At the return of Jesus, the dead will be raised immortal, with glorified, perfected bodies.
- Jesus’ will gather the dead for judgment, then He will abolish death... casting it into the lake of fire, handing His reign over the kingdom to God.
- Jesus’ kingdom reign will continue until death is abolished.
- Hebrews 9 reveals Jesus is the High Priest and had to enter into the holy place by Himself with His own blood as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. He entered in once for all. This shatters the concept that Jesus took resurrected saints with Him to Heaven upon His ascension. Further, vs. 28 says He will return for those who eagerly await Him. Jesus has provided His service as High Priest, and now serves as reigning King.
- The prophecy of Daniel 7:13-14 was fulfilled in Acts 1:9-11 when the disciples witnessed Jesus’ ascension into the presence of God, where He was crowned as King.
- Acts 2:27-36 identifies that David did not ascend into Heaven, rather, Jesus alone ascended and is exalted at the right hand of God. David’s descendant (Jesus) is on the throne reigning as King, but David has yet to ascend, awaiting the return of Jesus and the resurrection of all the dead for judgment. (Reference Psalm 16:8-11) David’s body is still in the grave, according to the text, but Jesus was witnessed by the Apostles ascending into Heaven, making Jesus the *single fulfillment* of this prophetic word. May it be noted that this passage, quoted by Peter at Pentecost, convinced 3,000 Jews to accept Jesus as Messiah!

Triumphant Return of Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

- George Faull suggests (I agree) every Bible student should approach this passage by asking *“Who is going to bring whom where, and when?”*¹³ for a proper understanding of the Triumphant return of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead.
- At Jesus’ return, God will *“bring with Him”* those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. (It does not say Jesus is bringing with Him, but, rather, God is bringing the saints (via resurrection to meet the Lord in the air) and then the living saints will be *“brought”* up via a transformation from mortal to immortal and will be caught up in the air with the Lord.
- Proper understanding of this phrase is shown in context of the passage by reading vs. 16... *“the dead in Christ will rise first”* (at Jesus’ return).
- Following the resurrection of the dead in Christ, those who are *“alive and remain”* shall be *“caught up with them”* to be with the Lord.
- Following the resurrection and “catching up” of the righteous, the unrighteous will be brought up for judgment. We must note in Matthew 25:31-46, judgment will begin with a separation (as in Hadean Realm) of the righteous and unrighteous, with judgment first of the righteous to receive reward.

13 Faull, George, *Where are the Dead?* <http://www.summit1.org/>

- 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 says *“we shall not all sleep”* (die) but *“we will all be changed”*, speaking of the shedding of the mortal flesh in order to *“put on”* the immortal, glorified body.
- John 3:13 says *“No man ascended up into Heaven, but He who has descended from Heaven, the Son of Man”* which clearly identifies Jesus alone as going into Heaven. Therefore, no man is in Heaven yet, and will not be until after the return of Jesus.
- This text silences the idea Paradise has been moved into Heaven. Paradise is described in Revelation as being *“under the altar of God”* yet being described by Paul as *“being at home with the Lord”*, therefore, we can conclude Paradise is in *proximal location* to the presence of God, without being in the *direct* presence of God. Another, perhaps more simplified, way of saying it is that the saints are in the house with God, but not in the same room. Following the return of Jesus, the resurrection and judgment, we shall see God face to face... sharing the same “room” for eternity, or *“there we shall ever be with the Lord.”* Therefore, we can agree with Paul... *“comfort one another with these words.”*

Objections to the Hadean Realm Answered from Scripture

1) Objection:

“Immediately upon death we are ushered into Heaven or Hell.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 as a proof text. However, a careful study of the text reveals certain facts which put this objection to rest.

- The terms *“earthly tent”* and *“house”* speak of our physical body which is compared in contrast to the *“eternal building”* built by God, yet to be received. (At Jesus’ appearing.)
- While here (in the flesh) we groan, longing to be clothed with our immortal body.
- Who is groaning? The soul/spirit, which does not desire to be unclothed (disembodied) but clothed with the immortal body. The body is the *“clothing”* for the soul in this analogy.
- When is the mortal *“swallowed up”* by life? Not while in the flesh, absent from the Lord or while walking by faith, but at a time when we are absent from the mortal body and present with the Lord, a time of *“sight”*.
- Judgment must occur and *“recompensation for deeds in the body”* must be provided before Heaven or Hell is awarded. To immediately enter into Heaven or Hell denies the judgment, and usurps the authority of Christ as judge. Further, Matthew 25:31-46 reveals the judgment occurring after the return of Jesus, and as a universal, group event, not a single individual judgment upon death.
- The mortal takes on immortality at the triumphant return of the Lord.
- See also 1 Corinthians 15:42-29, Philippians 3:20-21 and 1 John 3:2.

2) Objection:

“To die is gain, to live is Christ implies immediate Heaven for the believer.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites Philippians 1:21-23 as a proof text. Again, a careful study of the text (in addition to the above facts) puts this objection to rest.

- 2 Timothy 4:6-8 is Paul’s answer as to when this occurs. His use of terms in vs. 8 is quite descriptive: *“in the future”*, *“will award”* (future event), *“righteous judge”* (judgment must occur), *“that day”* (a term describing the appearing of the Lord, and judgment), *“not only me”* (universal, not individual), *“who love His appearing”*.
- See also Hebrews 9:27-28 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

3) Objection:

“Jesus emptied Paradise ‘leading captivity captive’ at His ascension.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites Ephesians 4:8-10 as a proof text, a quote of Psalm 68:18.

- Common misunderstanding is ‘captivity’ refers to the saved in Paradise, which Jesus led into Heaven, ascending with Him. Proponents of this belief often cite the resurrection of saints (Matthew 27:52-53) as further evidence. However, there is no mention of Paradise or the saved in this text. Further, we know that no one has ascended into Heaven except Jesus (who descended) and the rest await His return. (Acts 2:29-35)
- ‘Captivity’ being led ‘captive’ does not speak of freedom, but of imprisonment.
- Christians from the 1st Century would have understood this by practical experience. They knew a victorious commander would place hooks in the lips and cheeks of their defeated enemies and lead them with ropes in an open procession through the streets, sharing the spoils of war with those who helped win the battle. This is what Jesus did to His enemies by making an open, public display of them. (Colossians 2:15, Ephesians 3:10)
- See also Judges 5:12 for an understanding of leading a procession of captives.

4) Objection:

“Jesus brings the dead saints with Him at His appearing.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites 1 Thessalonians 4:14 as a proof text.

- Context of the passage must be preserved for a proper understanding of the text. This demands that vs. 14 be understood in light of the greater context of vs. 13-18.
- Paul defines what is meant by *“with Him”* (refer to pg. 16 for further info.) by describing the scene in its entirety... *shout, voice, trumpet and resurrection* all accompany the thought of *“with Him”*. This is clearly speaking of the triumphant return of the Lord.
- Comfort in this passage is in the understanding of togetherness at the Lord’s return.

5) Objection:

“Upon death the concept of time will not matter, thus immediate reward.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 as proof texts.

- Context again come into play here, with both passages taken out of context more often than not. These passages do not imply that God does not hold to, recognize or operate within time as we know it. Simply put, God operates within time but is not restricted by time (being eternal) and the thrust of these passages speak to His eternal nature and loving kindness in terms of patience with mankind.
- The creation week, structure of our seven day cycle and the use of literal 24 hour days reveal God, in fact, does operate with a knowledge of time toward our benefit.
- The concept of eternity requires an understanding of time as we know it.
- Revelation 6:9-11 speaks of an understanding of time for those who are *“under the altar”* in Paradise as they are told to *“rest a little while longer”*.

6) Objection:

“Saints were resurrected at Jesus’ resurrection, thus Paradise was moved.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites Matthew 27:52-53 as a proof text.

- A careful study of the passage reveals that only *“some”* of the saints were resurrected,

and not “all” of the saints. Jesus would not have resurrected only a few.

- Many others were resurrected in the Scripture as well and returned to the grave.
- For this to be valid, Jesus would have taken others with Him into Heaven (or at least Paradise) but Scripture clearly states that He ascended alone.
- Jesus, as High Priest, could have no one else with Him as He presented the blood of sacrifice in the presence of God. (Hebrews 9)
- Some even cite the Revelation 6:9-11 “*underneath the altar*” phrase to mean that Paradise is in the direct presence of God. However, one must remember Revelation is written in an apocalyptic style, using apocalyptic language which is not always to be understood as literal. The altar could also imply those “*under the sacrifice*” or “*blood*”.

7) Objection:

“Jesus holds the Keys to Death and Hades, thus He freed Paradise.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites Revelation 1:18, Matthew 16:18 and Hebrews 2:14-15 as proof texts.

- Jesus does hold the keys to death and Hades, but there exists no passage which say that He used those keys to empty Paradise.
- Both passages focus on His resurrection, neither provide specific timing of the release of Paradise. The Church is founded upon the resurrection of Jesus.
- Death has been conquered (at Jesus’ resurrection) yet it still exists and is yet to be abolished by Jesus at His triumphant return. (1 Corinthians 15)
- Bondage, fear and death are identified with the flesh in the Hebrews 2 text.
- Death could not prevent (overpower) the Church from being established.

8) Objection:

“Abraham rejoiced to see Christ’s day.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites John 8:56 as a proof text.

- This is Jesus speaking of an event before His own death.
- Understood in light of vs. 58 to be speaking of the eternal nature of Jesus.

9) Objection:

“Hades is cast into Hell, therefore, if it still exists, all the dead will be lost.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites Revelation 20:13-15 as a proof text.

- Death and Hades gave up their dead for judgment, then they were cast into Hell.
- Revelation is written in an apocalyptic style, using apocalyptic language which is not always to be understood as literal.

10) Objection:

“Jesus released the spirits in prison.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites 1 Peter 3:18-22 as a proof text.

- The passage does not say Jesus released the spirits in prison.
- Jesus’ resurrection had not occurred, He could not preach resurrection to the saints yet.
- According to the text, Noah preached, Jesus proclaimed.
- See also 2 Peter 2:5 and Hebrews 9:27. (No second chance after death.)

11) Objection:

“Paradise and Heaven are the same place according to Paul.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 as a proof text.

- Careful attention to the text reveals Paul is not referring to Paradise and the Third Heaven as the same place, nor does he claim to have been *in* the Third Heaven. The text says he was *“caught up to the Third Heaven”* and *“into Paradise”*. Note: *“up to”* and *“into”* are unique Greek words which have different, specific meanings.
- The Jewish understanding of the heavens included seven heavens, and the third heaven would not have been considered the “highest heaven”.
- See also Objections #3, #6 and #7 on pg. 18-19.

12) Objection:

“Away from the body is at home with the Lord, thus Heaven is immediate.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 as a proof text.

- Context of the passage provides the best interpretation, and the first five (5) verses of the passage place the context applying to those *currently living*.
- Holy Spirit inspired Paul to use the phrase *“at home in the body”* to describe our mortal life in the flesh and underscores that our soul is *“absent from the Lord”* which is a general statement identifying our soul in a location other than the direct presence of Jesus.
- In a general sense, we understand and believe that we exist in the general presence of God, but are not able (while in the flesh) to be in the direct presence of God.
- Holy Spirit does not provide the timeline for when Paul will be at home with the Lord so there is no need to imply an immediate audience with God.
- Immediate *“at home with the Lord”* does not provide for the corporate, universal judgment of mankind referred to in Scripture, but requires individual judgment following death.
- Again, one would have to ignore the passages which speak of the intermediate realm in order to agree with this objection.
- See also Objection #1 on pg. 17.

13) Objection:

“Paradise cannot be close to Torment because saints would grieve the lost.”

Answer:

- In Luke 16 we see both the righteous and unrighteous have awareness of each other.
- Some have suggested that we will no longer have a memory of past loved ones when in Paradise, nor a recognition of those who are not present with the saints. The author rejects this on three grounds: 1) This would be deception and God never operates under deception. 2) The account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16 reveals a knowledge of the “lost” via the rich man’s request to send someone back to his brothers. 3) Grace and redemption cannot be fully appreciated without understanding guilt and punishment.
- While in the flesh we have only a partial knowledge, seeing through a lens dimly, but then we shall see face to face and have full knowledge, recognizing God’s righteous justice.
- God Himself shall comfort us and shall *“wipe away every tear from our eye.”*
- See Luke 16:19-31, 1 Corinthians 13:12 and Revelation 21:4.

14) Objection:

“Appointed once to die, then judgment implies immediate judgment.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites Hebrews 9:27 as a proof text.

- The certainty of death and judgment in vs. 27 underscore the link with Jesus' triumphant appearance resulting in salvation for those who eagerly await Him in vs. 28.
- There is no mention of the timeline of judgment following death, therefore, one must be careful to theorize the judgment occurs immediately following death.
- This passage emphasizes the certainty of Jesus' return, and not immediate judgment.

15) Objection:

“Jesus resurrected the saints at His resurrection, taking them to Heaven.”

Answer:

This objection commonly cites Daniel 7:13-14, 12:2 and Matthew 27:52-53 as proof texts.

- Daniel's prophecy was fulfilled at the ascension of Jesus, and His Coronation which followed in the presence of God.
- *“Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake”* is presumed by proponents of this position to speak of the Matthew 27 resurrection of the saints. However, the Daniel text continues by stating *“these to everlasting life”* which is inconsistent with the text in Matthew having already identified that only *some* of the saints arose, not all. Daniel's prophecy does not exclude a segment of the saints, and is not referring to the event in Matthew, rather, it is referring to the triumphant return of Jesus and consequent resurrection of all mankind... the saints to *“everlasting life”*, and the others to *“disgrace and everlasting contempt.”*
- Proponents of this position argue improper translation of the trumpets mentioned by Paul suggesting an incorrect translation of a Greek article used to identify the trumpet as *“the”* or *“a”* trumpet. Such an argument is baseless and only necessary as an appeal toward defending their position of many trumpets (as in distinct *“trumpets”* per individual), rather than one, universal, corporate trumpet call.
- Scripture says many saints arose at Jesus' resurrection but it does not provide details as to their activity for the 40 days between the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Such a significant event would have been addressed in Scripture, yet no reference exists.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 provides the order of resurrection and the events surrounding the triumphant return of Jesus, speaking of a future, universal, corporate event.
- John 5:28-29 quotes Jesus as saying *“an hour is coming”* (a precise, universal event) when *“all in the tomb”* (not a few, or limited number) will *“hear His voice”* (understood as a single, universal event rather than many *“individual”* trumpets) will *“come forth”* (clearly meaning a single, universal and corporate resurrection of the dead). Following this event is the judgment of mankind with the righteous to resurrection of life, while unrighteous resurrect to a judgement.
- Apostle Paul refers to the *future appearing* of Jesus at an unknown date and time, he does not refer to the resurrection/redemption event as having already taken place. The triumphant return of Jesus is also described by Paul as a universal, corporate, single event which precedes a universal, corporate event of judgment.
- See Matthew 24:30-31, John 5:28-29, Acts 1:9-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 5:1-11 as well as Objections #6, #7 and #10 on pg. 18-19.

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