

Lesson 37

8.6 Where the saved went in the OT; Sheol and Hades.

- We've seen that the law doesn't save anyone, but the faith that the individual exercises in God's provision to resolve the issue of sin in his life is what saves him and unites him once again to God. We studied God's provision in the OT through animal sacrifice, where the animal died in place of sinful man, the animal was the substitute. However, we also saw that the blood of that animal did not take away man's sin, it only covered man, delivered him from the wrath of God, who is holy, and then man could relate to God.
- So, a question arises: where did the Old Testament saints go when they died? They were saved because they believed in God's provision for that time, but when they died, their bodies were buried and the soul and spirit could not go to heaven, the blood of Jesus had not been shed for their sins, and sin doesn't enter heaven. We have studied that the blood of goats and bulls does not take away sins, so where did they go when they died?
- Until Jesus Christ, the saints, the saved of the Old Testament, when they died, went to a place called Sheol or Hades. Sheol, in Hebrew, is *'the name of a place,'* it has no translation. In the New Testament, in Greek, the word is Hades. Not as a translation, but didactically, we can call it *'the place of the dead'*. Let's look at **the picture on page 139**.
- All people before Jesus went to Hades when they died. Hades, or Sheol, is a place in the middle of the earth. The Bible says, *'they went down'*. So, the person died, the body was buried, and the soul and spirit went to Hades. Hades is divided into two sections, one called *'Paradise or Abraham's bosom'* and the other called *'the place of torment'*. There is a great golf between the two sections. Those who died believing in God's provision went to *'Paradise or Abraham's bosom,'* and those who died not believing in God's provision went to *'the place of torment'*. *'Tartarus'* is the deepest abyss. It is the place where fallen angels who have acted in extreme rebellion are imprisoned.

⇒ Luke 16:19~31

- Many people call this passage a parable, but it's not a parable; it's a story. Jesus told the story of a man named Lazarus. If it was a parable, Jesus would say: *'a certain beggar,'* but here he says, *'a beggar named Lazarus'*. There are no proper names in parables.
 - **V.19~22**; do not confuse that every rich man will not be saved and every poor man will be saved; Jesus is not saying that at all.
 - **V.22**: *'The beggar died...'*, this is where our focus begins.
 - **V.23**; *'In Hades...'*; other translations say, *'In Hell...'* and this leads to confusion. The word hell is not the word Hades. Hades is the name of a place. Hell in the Bible is the *'lake of fire,'* called *'Tofet'* in Hebrew and *'Geena'* in Greek. Hell is the lake of fire and brimstone prepared for Satan and his fallen angels; hell was never prepared for human beings (⇒ **Matthew 25:41**).
 - There is no one in hell yet; hell is absolutely empty today. The Antichrist and the false prophet will be the first to go to the lake of fire, which is the place of eternal state for the lost (⇒ **Revelation 19:20**).

- The place of torment is like a waiting room for hell; it's hard to talk like that, but we have to learn. **V.23: 'In Hades, ... being in torment...'**, that's why this compartment is called the place of torment, it's to make it easier to study.
- **'...He saw Abraham in the distance...'**; we see the rich man who is in the place of torment talking to Abraham who is in paradise. So, they were in the same place.
- **'... In Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes...'**, he had to look up. So, the place of torment was lower than Paradise.
- **'...And saw Abraham and Lazarus afar off...'**; do you think Lazarus and Abraham were in heaven? No, because Hades is in the middle of the earth, it's below, we don't know where, but we know it's on the earth and below (⇒ **1 Samuel 2:6**).
 - ⇒ **Ephesians 4:9~10**; It is said that Jesus went down to the lowest part of the earth, to the bosom of the earth.

Then, in the place of torment, the rich man sees Abraham and Lazarus, who has been taken to Abraham's bosom. (See how Abraham is a landmark in history).
- **V.24: 'And he cried out: Father Abraham, have mercy on me...'**; he was a blood descendant of Abraham. **'...for I am tormented in this flame,'** he is already tormented.
- **V.25**: What Jesus is teaching here is that it's not our social position and possessions that will save us.
- **V.26: '...Between us and you there is a great gulf...'**, this is Abraham speaking.
- **V.27**: What did the rich man want? **'Look, Father Abraham, send Lazarus back to my father's house, V. 28, because I have five brothers'**. Notice the conscience, the total recollection of everything after physical death; at no time did the rich man say: **'I am here unjustly'**. I believe that the great torment is to go from this physical life to eternal death and to remember, there in Hades, all the missed opportunities. It's not a joke, because we can see that in this rich man.
- **V.29**: Look at the rich man's concern for his five brothers who are still on earth; he is no longer concerned about himself. Once a man has died, there is nothing more to be done; if there were, he would ask: **'Tell him to pray for my soul,' 'Tell him to light a candle for me,' 'Tell him to do this or that.'** There is nothing more to do.
 - ⇒ **Hebrews 9:27**; *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.*
 - ⇒ **Job 7:9~10**; *So, he who goes down to the grave does not come up. He shall never return to his house.*
- **V.29: 'Abraham said to him, You have Moses and the prophets; listen to them'**. In other words, Abraham said: Read the Bible.

- **V.30:** No dead person has ever returned and will never return. Every dead person who appears in the spiritist sections or wherever are familiar demons. They are prominent demons that accompany the person all the time, they can even imitate the person's voice and the problems that surround them. This man was asking for Lazarus to come back, and Abraham will make it very clear that there is only one way for him to come back and that is to be resurrected.
- **V.31: '... Even if someone is raised from the dead.'**
- Jesus is explaining many things in this story:
 - 1st. For a dead person to come back to earth, he must be resurrected. Abraham was very clear.
 - 2nd. After death, there is nothing more to be done for a person's soul.
 - 3rd. There is total awareness of the person after death, who they are, where they are, how they recognize others, etc.
 - 4th. The person accepts the place where they are, because in this story there was no complaint from the rich man, he just asked Lazarus to go back and tell his people not to go to the place where he was.

There every illusion, every lie, every fog, every sophistry ends; there the whole truth comes out. He knew: *'Tell my brothers to find the way so that they don't come here'*.
- Do you understand? What an enlightening passage, how many teachings are there? So, people died and went to Hades, to *'Abraham's bosom - Paradise'* or *'the Place of Torment'*.
- When Jesus died, He died first to spiritual death and then to physical death and descended into *'hell'*. The Catholic creed says: *'He descended into the mansion of the dead'*. The word is actually Hades; many say: *'He descended into Hades'*.
 - ⇒ **Ephesians 4:7~10**
 - **V.8:** *'He ascended on high...'*, who? Christ.
 - **V.9:** *'... descended into the lower parts of the earth?'*
 - **V.10:** *'He who descended is also the One who ascended...'*
- Then Jesus descended into Hades. We will see that Jesus also descended into *'Tartarus'* where He proclaimed His victory to the spirits in prison.
 - ⇒ **I Peter 3:18~20;** Preached to the spirits in prison; where? in Tartarus, the deepest abyss.
 - ⇒ **II Peter 2:4;** Hell, here the word is *'Tartarus'*.
 - ⇒ **Jude 6;** Angels reserved in eternal prisons; kept for the judgment of the great day, when they shall go into the lake of fire.
- So, Jesus also went to *'Tartarus'*, the deepest abyss. There Jesus preached the gospel to the spirits in prison; it is more accurate to say that Jesus *'proclaimed'* the gospel to the spirits in prison. The Greek word *'preach the gospel'* is different from *'proclaim'*, here it is more in the sense of proclamation. Jesus makes a proclamation to the spirits in prison, in Tartarus (a place that does not refer to those in *'Abraham's bosom'* nor to those in the *'place of torment'*), a place where angels are imprisoned; angels are spirits.

The Bible never uses the word spirit alone to refer to human beings; the word soul is common for human beings. *'To the spirits in prison'* refers to the angels to whom Jesus proclaimed His victory. So, we see that no being in the universe is unaware of this fact.

- Then Jesus took all those who were in Hades, the place of Abraham's bosom - Paradise - and said: *'Now I replace the blood of the animals that covered your sins before the Father; my blood has already been shed, and you are washed clean'*. Jesus replaces the blood of atonement, the blood of the animals, with His own blood for the people who were waiting, for the people who believed in God's provision in the Old Testament. Then Jesus takes them to the 3rd heaven, the place of God's dwelling, where today it is called *'Paradise'*, and closes the *'bosom of Abraham'*.

⇒ **Matthew 16:18**; *'And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against the church'*.

- The correct word here is also Hades, not hell. Jesus says: *'No one from the church will come here'*. Now that the blood of Jesus has been shed, all those who die washed in that blood, who die physically, soul and spirit, go directly to heaven to meet the Lord. Paul says: *'I would rather leave this body and be with Christ'*. Where is Christ? At the right hand of God, the Father, that is, in heaven.
- The *'bosom of Abraham'* in Hades is closed, the people of the church who die do not go there. Every church member who falls asleep (*this is the term the Bible uses for those who die saved*, ⇒ **1 Corinthians 11:30**) is washed clean by the blood of Christ, closes his eyes on earth, and immediately goes to meet his Savior in heaven. The Bible says that the body falls asleep because at the rapture that body will be restored and go up to heaven.

⇒ **Luke 23:39~43**

- The thief who believed in Jesus on the cross, when he died, had a unique experience, he went to Hades, to *'Abraham's bosom - Paradise'* **V.43**. We saw in ⇒ **Ephesians 4:10** that Jesus descended and here Jesus said to the thief: *'Today you will be with me in Paradise'*. That's why this place in Hades is also called Paradise.
- But where is paradise today? In the 3rd heaven.

⇒ **Ephesians 4:8**; *'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive'*.

⇒ **2 Corinthians 12:2~4**; Paradise is synonymous with the 3rd heaven.

When Paul was taken up to the 3rd heaven, he speaks of the 3rd heaven and paradise (*we have already studied that there is the 1st heaven - the blue we see, the 2nd heaven - the stratosphere and the 3rd heaven - the heaven of heavens, the dwelling place of God*).

- So, the Paradise was moved to the 3rd heaven. Jesus said: *'Today you will be with me in Paradise'*, and the Bible says that Jesus descended into the bosom of the earth, the lower parts of the earth. Then Paul says, *'I went to the third heaven; I went to Paradise'*. Paradise is all the saved people of the Old Testament who could now go up to heaven because Jesus shed His blood; He took the place of the blood of the goats and the bulls. Jesus took them up, and today every person who dies believing in Jesus, those who fall asleep in Christ, immediately their soul and spirit go to heaven, they go to Paradise.

