

The Resurrection of the Body

Because there is much confusion concerning the resurrection of the body, let's re-study this all important subject, using the Bible as our only textbook. When we speak of the "resurrection of the body" we are not talking about what happens to man's soul after death, but, rather, "What happens to man's body which is placed in the grave."

Because our answer to this question can only be found in the Bible, let's begin our search for the answer by taking a look at John 5:28-29 which states, "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out - those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned." The three important Biblical truths contained in this passage are that:

1. There **WILL BE** a resurrection of the body.
2. **ALL** the dead will rise...everyone is included!
3. There will be **MORE THAN JUST ONE RESURRECTION** because there will be at least two...one for the righteous and one for the unrighteous...and the idea of a "general resurrection"...that all the dead will rise at the same time...cannot be found anywhere in Scripture.

The following Scriptures clearly teach that there must be more than just one resurrection of the body because of the special promise that is given to the righteous that they will be a part of the first resurrection:

Philippians 3:11, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Why strive to "attain a resurrection" if all men were of the same resurrection?

Luke 20:35, "Those who are considered worthy of taking part in that world and in the resurrection from the dead." How can one "be counted worthy of the resurrection" if there is but one resurrection?

Hebrews 11:35, "...that they might gain a better resurrection." How can one "gain a better resurrection" if there is only one resurrection?

Luke 14:14, "You will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." How can one be "repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" if there is only one resurrection?

John 6:40, "For My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." **Verse 44**, "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day" (**Verse 54**) "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Why would God promise a reward of "raising one up at the last day" if all men are going to rise at the same time any way?

Revelations 20:5-6, "The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years." These verses clearly indicate that there is

more than one resurrection because how can there be a “*first resurrection*” unless there is more than one!

WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL "*ORDER*" OF THE FIRST RESURRECTION?

1 Corinthians 15:19-26 states, “*If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a Man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each one in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him. Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*”

In the above translation, the 23rd verse...which states that all we be made alive “*in his own turn*”...in the King James version, is translated, “*every man (will be raised) in his own order*”... however...both the phrase “*in his own turn*” and “*in his own order*” are translated from the Greek word “*tagma*” which is a military word which means “*troop*.” Using this meaning, then, this verse states that “*Every man will rise from the dead but in his own troop, or group...*” “*Christ, the first fruits*” (**troop #1**); “*then, when He comes, those who belong to Him*” (**troop #2**). “*Then the end will come...*” (**troop #3**)!

Let's take a look at these three troops (groups) that are mentioned here in this passage of Scripture:

1. THE FIRST GROUP of the first resurrection will be the saints who were raised when Christ rose from the dead...when He was “*resurrected*.”

Matthew 27:50-53 states, “*And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.*”

In 1 Corinthians 15:19-26, these saints who rose after Christ's death, and resurrection, are referred to as “*first fruits*” because they are analogous to the “*sheaf*” of first fruits of the Jewish harvest that was taken unto the priest and waved as a “*wave offering*” before the Lord. The “*first fruits*” of the Jewish harvest were just that...they were the first few grains (“*fruit*”) that had ripened prematurely...before the main harvest ripened...and when Israel would gather a handful of this very first ripe grain and bring it to the priest in the Tabernacle it was there offered as a promise, (pledge) and assurance, (guarantee) of the coming *great harvest* (Exodus 23:19, 34:26 and Leviticus 23:9-14).

According to 1 Corinthians 15:20 and 23, when Jesus rose from the dead, He was the “*First Fruits*” along with the company of the dead - (probably all the Old Testament saints) - that He took with Him into heaven as a token of God's assurance of a future resurrection.

2. THE SECOND GROUP of the first resurrection will be the saints who will be raised at Jesus' second coming.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 states, "*Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.*"

The second part of the Jewish harvest was the "*main harvest...the great ingathering of the grain*. This resurrection, at Christ Jesus' second coming, will be the great ingathering of the *main harvest...the great host* of believers, whose bodies will be raised at this time!

Note that only the "*dead in Christ*" will rise at this time...which means that there will not be one sinner who will rise at this time.

3. THE THIRD GROUP of the first resurrection will be the saints who will be raised at the end....the end of the tribulation period.

Revelation 7:14 states, "I (John) answered, 'Sir, you know.' And he (One of the 24 elders around God's throne) said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'"

Revelation 20:4 states, "And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the Word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

In the Jewish harvest, after the *main body* of the harvest had been gathered in, there was the gathering in of "*the gleanings*"...the grain which ripened late. **1 Corinthians 15:24** makes reference to "*the end ones*" who, no doubt, are the "*Tribulation saints*" who are referred to in **Revelation 4:14** and **20:4** and who are raised after the tribulation.

Let's continue reading in **Revelation 20:5-8**, "*(The rest of the dead...[that is the wicked dead]...did not come to life until the thousand years were ended) This is the first resurrection... (That is, the 'gleanings', or tribulation saints, complete the first resurrection as group one, group two and group three, of the first resurrection has now taken place) ... Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth - Gog and Magog - to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.*"

After the millennium is past, we read in **Revelation 20:11-15**, "*Then I saw a great white*

throne and Him Who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne...(This must be only the wicked dead)...and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death...(where the "body" of the wicked is)...and Hades...(where the "soul" of the wicked is)...(so both body, and soul, of the wicked dead)...were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

After the one thousand years of Christ's reign on earth is over, the "**SECOND**" resurrection will take place...time will be over...the last judgment will take place... and ...the eternal ages will be ready to begin.

Except for those who are saved during the millennium, this "*second resurrection*" will include just the wicked dead because all the righteous dead will have already been resurrected. It is at this "*second resurrection*"...or "*Great White Throne Judgment*" as Scripture so calls it...that the souls, and the bodies, of the wicked dead are reunited. While the soul of one who dies without Christ goes to Hades (**Luke 16:19-31**), his body goes to the grave to await this Great White Throne Judgment, where he will be sentenced...and committed...to the eternal lake of fire. In the same way that a criminal is placed in jail before he is sentenced to the penitentiary, the wicked person...who dies in...is guilty of...his sin of not accepting Christ as his Savior...is placed in "*Hades*" before he is sentenced (condemned) to the eternal lake of fire at the final Great White Throne Judgment.

The "*books*" that are opened at this Great White Throne Judgment (**Revelation 20:12**), evidently, will be the Bible and "*the Lamb's Book of Life*" according to the following Scripture passages:

John 12:48 states, "*There is a Judge for the one who rejects Me and does not accept My Words; that very Word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.*"

Revelation 21:27 states, "*Nothing impure will ever enter it...(heaven)...nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*"

The word "*death*," in our Old Testament Bible, is translated from a Hebrew word which literally means "*separation*" ...and, because when the Greek New Testament uses the word "*death*" it carries with it this same meaning of "*separation*," the first death, therefore, is the separation of soul and body, and the second death...(at which time the body and soul are reunited)...is...for the wicked...the consequential separation from God for all of eternity.

Having studied what God's Word teaches us about what happens to one's body at death, now let's go on and study His Word to answer the question:

WHAT HAPPENS TO ONE'S "SOUL" AFTER DEATH?

“*Man dieth...and where is he?*” This question, uttered by Job, the Patriarch, is not an unusual one because it is on the lips, and in the hearts, of multitudes of people...everywhere... who wonder about the dead and ask a thousand and one questions ...such as...

- What is the final destiny of man?
- Does he become non-existent at death, or does his real personality survive?
- If man does survive, where is he?
- Is he conscious?
- Under what conditions does he exist?
- Is any communication with him possible?
- And...will separation from loved ones be forever?

It is useless to tell man not to ask these questions because he is sure to ask them...he cannot help but ask them. From the beginning of time, questions pertaining to the dead have troubled the minds of men. These questions were asked at the very first burial, and they have been the universal heart-cry of humanity ever since. Certainly, not one can be found who has not desired to know all he can about what takes place after death...and...the late Andrew Carnegie even went so far as to offer \$1,000,000 - that's one million dollars - to the one who could prove, to his satisfaction, the reality of life beyond this one.

Are you satisfied merely to label these questions about death as an unknown “*mystery*” and let it go at that? The answer is certainly not! Where, then, can we find satisfactory answers to these questions? The answer cannot be given by...scientists...nor philosophers... because they are unable to tell us if there is life beyond the grave...or where our loved ones are and what their condition is...because...even the wisest philosopher on earth gives us only speculative answers when we stand before the grave and ask the question, “*Where are the dead?*”

Now, then, could it be possible that we are left without answers to the greatest questions that confront mankind? No, not at all, because the answers to these questions are found in the Bible...God's Word...because the answer to these great questions lies only in divine revelation.

In the Holy Scriptures, the Creator not only reveals the origin, and nature, of man, but He also reveals the DESTINY OF MAN...which is why if we but study the Bible...and accept its plain statements about what happens to man at death as ultimate reality...there can be no doubt in our minds as to any question we might have previously had concerning man's destiny at death.

The Material And Spiritual Natures Of Man

The Scripture conclusively proves that man has two distinct natures - a **Material Nature**, which is man's body, and a Spiritual Nature, which is man's spirit...and... because the body, and the Spiritual Nature within the body, are, in fact, two different, and distinct, natures, the Bible treats...and recognizes...them as such.

The whole of Scripture everywhere recognizes the distinction between the body, and the spirit, of man.

Job 32:8 states, “*But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.*”

Zechariah 12:1 states, “*The LORD, Who stretches out the heavens, Who lays the foundation of the earth, and Who forms the spirit of man within him.*” The “*spirit within man*” and the “*man*” are as distinct from one another as a house, and “*a tenant within the house,*” are from each other.

Job 14:22, “*But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn*” Here Job's “*flesh*” and his “*soul*” are made distinct from one another - Job's flesh is “*upon him,*” and envelops his soul, while his soul is “*within him*” or in his body. And these two, the “*flesh*” without, and the Spiritual Nature within, constitute the man, Job...every man.

1 Corinthians 6:20 states, “*You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body, and in your spirit which are God's.*” In this passage the “*body*” and “*spirit*” are so clearly distinguished from one another that no further comment could make it plainer.

1 Corinthians 2:11 states, “*For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.*” This passage makes such an obvious distinction between the human body and the spirit that it, conclusively, proves that man has a spiritual nature which is distinct from the body in which it dwells.

Matthew 10:28 states, “*Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One Who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*” This verse, as well, confirms the fact that man's spirit...and his body...are two different entities because Jesus is telling us here that while men are able to kill another's “*body*” they cannot kill his “*soul.*”

The first, and second, chapters of Genesis...which is the history of the creation of the first man...tell us, conclusively, that man was created as a compound being, with a body and a spiritual nature.

Genesis 2:7 states, “*And The LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being...soul.”*

Note the order of events...or the exact process of man's creation...as it is fully described here in God's Word:

1. The Lord God "formed man of the dust of the ground."

At this point in man's creation, God gave him a material nature...a body...and even though this body was perfect in all its parts...with the bones and muscles, and tendons, and veins, and heart, and arteries, and brain, and nerves, and lungs, and eyes, and ears, all in place ready for action...it, nonetheless, was cold and motionless because, as yet, man had no consciousness, no sensation, no life, no motion.

Why could not the brain yet think, the nerves yet feel, the eyes yet see, and the ears yet hear? Why did man have no life, motion, or intelligence? The answer is that it was because God had not yet given man an intelligent, conscious spirit

The man that God had formed out of the dust was, as yet, a mere human body which was inanimate and lifeless.

2. God “*breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.*”

This act on God's part was plainly His infusion of a spiritual nature into man's material body.

A literal translation of the original Hebrew renders this passage, “*And Jehovah Elohim formed a very man of the dust of the ground, and **blew into his nostrils the LIVING SPIRIT**, and man was a living creature.*” He was but a “*body*” before but now has become a “*living soul.*”

The Scriptures given above prove that God teaches us that man has a *SPIRITUAL NATURE* which is separate, and distinct, from his body in which it dwells, and, the history of the creation of Adam shows us that man's life began with the union of his material, and spiritual, natures.

The two following references not only further make distinction between man's spiritual nature and his body, but they also clearly establish the fact that man is a *triune being*:

1 Thessalonians 5:23 states, “*May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole **spirit, soul and body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Hebrews 4:12 states, “*For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*” The fact that this passage speaks of “*dividing soul and spirit*”...combined with the fact that Scripture has already confirmed the fact of man's body... teaches us that man is a **triune** being.

Since **Genesis 1:26** tells us that man was “*created in the image of God*”...and since God is a Trinity...this passage too, then, confirms the fact of man as a triune being.

While it is evident from Scripture that man's “*soul*” and “*spirit*” are distinct, and different, from one another, we will not, in this study, attempt to define that difference simply because the only purpose of this study is to show that man is a “*spiritual living being*” within a physical body.

Despite the fact that it is true that man's soul and spirit are distinct, they are, nonetheless, also closely related because when we speak of the entire “*spiritual nature*” of man it includes man's “*soul*” as well as his “*spirit.*”

The Nature of Death

Now that we have learned, according to God's Word, that **MAN DOES HAVE A SOUL** ... (spiritual nature)...that is distinct from the body in which it dwells...and that it is this dimension of his being that is the seat of his consciousness, thinking, remembering...the real individuality... and that...when God created Adam...his natural life began with the *UNION* of the spiritual nature and his body, we can proceed to show how Scripture teaches us that man's death

is the *SEPARATION* of these two entities...and...wherever death is referred to in the Bible, it has this same meaning...the separation of the spirit, or spiritual nature, from the body.

When **Genesis 3:19**...which is the original decree of death...states, “*By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken' for dust you are and to dust you will return*” it implies that it is only man's body that dies because it is saying that only so much of man as was “*dust,*” and “*taken out of the ground,*” was doomed to return to dust again. However, since the “*breath of life*” or spirit, breathed into Adam by his Creator, was neither “*dust*” nor “*taken out of the ground,*” the spirit of man, therefore, was not, at death, doomed to return to dust with the body.

In harmony with the above, we find that wherever death...the fulfillment of this original decree...is spoken of in the Scriptures, it is described as taking effect upon the “*dust*” of the body only because the spirit is released from the body and survives its dissolution...because...once again, according to the Bible, death is the separation of the spirit (spiritual nature) from the body.

Ecclesiastes 8:8 states, “*No man has power over the spirit...*[while it is true that the New International Translation translates this word as “*wind,*” rather than spirit, most translations use the word “*spirit*” because that is the more correct meaning of the original word]...*to contain it; so no one has power over the day of his death.*” When this passage...which clearly refers to death... states that no man has the power to “*retain*” the spirit, what it is saying is that man's spirit cannot be “*retained*”... by burial of the body...or...by any other means...because...at death, the spirit departs from the body.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 states, “*And the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God Who gave it.*” The allusion to **Genesis 3:19** is unmistakable in this passage because it shows, most clearly, the scope, and design, of the decree that, “*dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,*” namely, that the “*dust*”...(or man's body)...only is to “*return to the earth as it was*” while man's “*spirit returns unto God Who gave it.*”

Scripture further shows that death is a separation of the spirit from the body by its numerous descriptions of death as the “*giving up of the ghost*...(or spirit):

1. Abraham “*gave up the ghost*” Genesis 25:8.
2. Isaac “*gave up the ghost*” Genesis 35:29.
3. Jacob “*yielded up the ghost*” Genesis 49:33.
4. “*When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit; and having said this He gave up the ghost*” Luke 23:46.
5. Job said, “*Man dieth and wasteth away, yea, man giveth up the ghost*”
Job 14:10
6. Sapphira “*fell down and yielded up the ghost*” Acts 5:10.

And so, throughout the Scriptures, “*the giving up of the ghost*” is a common phrase to signify dying. It is evident from the above passages, that death is a “*giving up*”...or departure...of the spirit from the body!

That death is a separation of the soul from the body is clearly implied when Elijah prayed that the son of the widow Zarephath might be restored to life. **1 Kings 17:20-22**, states, “*Then he...(Elijah) ...cried out to the LORD, `O LORD my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?’ Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, `O LORD my God, let this boy's life return to him!’ The LORD heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's ‘life’...(or translated ‘soul’)...returned to him, and he lived.*” Here Elijah prays that the child's “soul” might re-enter his lifeless body; and in answer to his prayer, “*the soul of the child came into him AGAIN, and he revived.*” This clearly shows that this boy's death was the separation...departure...of his soul from his body.

When **Luke 8:49-55** tells us the story of Jesus raising the ruler's daughter to life, it states, “*While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. `Your daughter is dead,’ he said. `Don't bother the teacher any more.’ Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, `Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.’ When He arrived at the house of Jairus, He did not let anyone go in with Him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. `Stop wailing,’ Jesus said. `She is not dead but asleep.’ They laughed at Him, knowing that she was dead. But He took her by the hand and said, `My child, get up!’ Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat.*” This Scripture passage, like the previous one before it, could not be more definitive about the fact that death is a separation of the spirit from the body because it clearly states that when Jairus' daughter was “dead” her spirit had left her body, and, when Jesus restored her to life, “her spirit returned.”

In giving the account of David's having learned that his beloved child was dead, **2 Samuel 12:19:23** re-echoes the same truth when it states, “*David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realized the child was dead. `Is the child dead?’ he asked. `Yes,’ they replied, `he is dead.’ Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate. His servants asked him, `Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!’ He answered, `While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, ‘Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.’ But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.” This passage plainly indicates that David's child had gone hence, and that he could not return, but that the bereft father expected to depart also...to “go to him”...when his mortal life would end.*

In **2 Corinthians 5:6-9**, the Apostle Paul sets forth this same truth that death is a separation of the spirit from the body when he states, “*Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.*” What does Paul mean by “at home in the body” and “away from the body” if the soul and body are not distinct, and if death is not a separation of the one from the other? Surely “away from the body”...(or, “absent from the body,” as the King James translates the Greek)...means that, at death, one's soul will separate, or depart, from his body.

When, in the following Scriptural passages, the inspired writers of the New Testament speak of the human body as a “*tabernacle*”...or frail dwelling...that is “*put off*” at death, they, too, confirm the truth of death as a “*separation*”:

In **2 Corinthians 5:1**, the Apostle Paul states, “*Now we know that if the earthly tent... (tabernacle)...we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.*”

In **2 Peter 1:13-15**, the Apostle Peter states, “*I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent...(tabernacle)...of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.*”

In these passages, then, the “*tabernacle*” and the dwellers in the tabernacle are as distinct from one another as is a house and its occupant. It is equally clear that, in the previous passage, when Peter spoke of his “*putting off*” of his “*tabernacle*,” he meant his “*decease*.”

At present, you are in a tabernacle and, at death, you will put off your tabernacle... because... *Death is the separation of one's soul from his body!*

When Scripture refers to death as a “*departure*” it continues to confirm the fact that, at death, the spiritual nature...(the real individuality)...departs...separates...from the body:

Paul described his death as a “*departure*” that would occur when he ceased “*to abide in the flesh*” when he, in **Philippians 1:21-24**, states, “*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.*” What does the apostle mean by “*living in the flesh*” if it be not living in the body? And what does he mean by “*departing*” if it be not dying?

In **2 Timothy 4:6**, Paul states, “*For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.*”

Genesis 35:18 states, “*And it came to pass, as her...(Rachel's)...soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.*”

That death is a separation of soul and body is further evidenced from **James 2:26**, which states, “*As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*” In his endeavor to define what a “*living*”...as opposed to a “*dead*”...faith is, the Apostle James uses, as an analogy, a truth that was acknowledged by all professing Christians of his day which was that the body was “*dead*” when it was “*without the spirit*,” or, in other words, the body was dead when one's spirit had separated... departed...from it.

To summarize, in this lesson we have learned that: The original decree of death consigns that only man's “*body*”...“*the dust*”...is to return to the earth while his “*spirit returns to God Who gave it.*” Death is “*the giving up of the ghost*,” and the dead are not restored to life unless their “*souls come into them again.*” At present, we are dwelling in “*earthly houses of this tabernacle*”

which we shall “*put off*” at death...when our “*bodies*” are dead...at which time our “*spirits*”...our real personalities...will “*depart*”...be “*absent*”...from our bodies to be in the presence of the Lord!

The Abodes Of The Departed Spirits

At this point in the lesson we will not differentiate between the place where the departed spirits of the righteous vs. the place where the departed spirits of the wicked go, however, we will show what Scripture says on this matter, before this lesson concludes.

According to the Holy Scriptures, two facts have been established...namely that:

- (1) Man has a soul (spiritual nature) and,
- (2) At death, the spiritual nature separates, or departs, from the body.

Inasmuch as death is but the separation, or departure, of the spirit, or spiritual nature, from the body, the next logical question to be asked by every thinking person would be, **WHAT BECOMES OF THE DEPARTED SPIRITS?** Are they roaming about in space or do they depart to some definite place? If so, what place?

First, it can be clearly, and emphatically, stated that the spirits of the departed DO NOT roam about in space because the Bible makes it clear that there is a definite abode for them.

In order to get a correct understanding of this subject, it will be necessary to consider...and distinguish...between...the **PAST**...(that is, the time period before Christ's death and resurrection)...the **PRESENT**...(that is, the time period of this day and age)...**AND THE FUTURE**...(that is, the time period after this age comes to an end and the judgment is past).

To glean a clear understanding of what God's Word teaches us about the **ABODES OF THE DEAD**, it is necessary to study the meaning of the original Hebrew, and Greek, words from which we derive our English translation because:

Despite the fact that the translators of our English Bibles rendered the words of the Old, and New, Testaments as accurately as they knew how, nonetheless, there are some Hebrew, and Greek, words for which there is no exact...accurate...English equivalent.

For instance, in the original Greek text, the three different Greek words, *Hades*, *Gehenna* and *Tartarus* are used to designate three distinct different, places where the dead abide, and, yet, our King James Version translates these three Greek words with the one English word “*hell*.”

For example...while we find our English word “*hell*” in **Luke 16:23**, **Matthew 23:33** and **2 Peter 2:4**, the original Greek text used the word “*Hades*” in **Luke 16:23**...the word “*Gehenna*” in **Matthew 23:33**...and the word “*Tartarus*” in **2 Peter 2:4**.

Because when reading the English word “*hell*” in the New Testament, one cannot possibly know to which of the three places the writer was referring, one can, therefore, readily

see why it is necessary, at times, to go directly to the original text to arrive at a correct understanding of the subject in question.

In trying to answer the question as to **WHAT PLACE THE SPIRITS OF THE DEPARTED DEAD GO** it is also necessary for one to understand that while the Old, and New, Testaments use two different words (the Hebrew word *Sheol* in the Old Testament and the Greek word *Hades* in the New Testament) to refer to the place of the departed dead these words are interchangeable...which means that these two different words refer to the same place.

How does one know that the word “SHEOL” in the Old Testament Hebrew means the same as the word “HADES” in the New Testament Greek?

The following references will answer this question:

1. While, in the Hebrew Old Testament, the word “*Sheol*” is used in Psalms 16:10, when this Psalm is quoted in the Greek New Testament ...in Acts 2:27...this Hebrew word “*Sheol*” is translated as “*Hades*.”

Psalms 16:10 states, “*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell...(sheol) ...neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.*”

Acts 2:27 (which quotes this same verse) states, “*Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell...(hades)...neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.*”

2. An additional proof that the Hebrew word “*Sheol*” and the Greek word “*Hades*” are one and the same is that, in 275 B.C, when seventy scholars translated the original Hebrew Old Testament into Greek...(a translation which became known as the *Septuagint* version of the Old Testament)...they, invariably, rendered the Hebrew word “*Sheol*” by the Greek word “*Hades*.”

As an aside comment, it is also interesting to note, that while the word “*SHEOL*” is found 65 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, in our English version of the Old Testament, the word “*Sheol*” is translated thirty-one time as “*Hell*” ...thirty-one times as “*grave*” ...and three times as “*pit*.”

Scripture clearly distinguishes between the grave for the body
... and the “*abode for the spirits*”:

1. Both the Hebrew, and Greek, languages use two different words to differentiate the place where the “*spirits*” of the dead go from the place where the “*bodies*” of the dead go. In the Hebrew language, for instance, the word that designates the abode for the spirits is “*Sheol*” while the word that designates the abode for the bodies is “*Queber*”...and...in the Greek language, the word that designates the abode for the spirits is “*Hades*” while the word that designates the abode for the bodies is “*Mnemeion*.” Therefore, when Scripture uses the word “*Shoel*” or “*Hades*” it is referring to the abode of the spirits and when it uses the word “*Queber*” or “*Mnemeion*” (which in English is translated “*grave*”) it is referring to the abode of the bodies.

2. The word “*Sheol*” (or “*Hades*”) is never used in the *plural* because there is only one “*Sheol*”...only one place for the abode of spirits...however...the word “*Queber*” (or “*Mnemeion*”) is used in the plural because there are many quebers...many graves...many places for the abode of bodies.
3. It is because “*Sheol*” is only one place...the place for all departed spirits...that, in Scripture, one never reads of anyone having his own “*Sheol*.” In contrast to this, however, one does read of someone having his own “*Queber*”...his own grave.
4. Scripture never speaks of man's body being in “*Sheol*” or his spirit being in the grave...which, again, shows us that “*Sheol*” (or “*Hades*”) is not the grave.
5. Because “*Sheol*” is the abode for the spirits, it is neither dug by men nor located on the earth while “*graves*”...which are “*dug by men*”...are located on the earth.
6. At the final judgment, both the GRAVE and HADES will deliver up the dead.
Revelation 20:13 states, “*Death [the grave, the abode of the bodies] and hell [hades, the abode of the spirits] delivered up the dead which were in them.*” Obviously, this passage in Revelation makes a distinction between *Hades* and *the grave*.
7. **Revelation 1:18** also makes this distinction when it tells us that Christ has the keys of both *Hades* and *death*...this passage states, “*Behold I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (hades, the abode of departed spirits)...and of death...(the grave, the abode of the bodies).*”
8. **Acts 2:27**, too, makes this distinction when it tells us that Christ's soul was not left in *Hades* and neither was His body left in the tomb.
9. When Jacob's sons and daughters tried to comfort him (after his having been told by his sons...who, in their endeavor to deceive him, presented him with Joseph's blood-stained coat...that Joseph had been devoured by a “*wild beast*”...See **Genesis 37:35**), he would not be comforted, and said, “*I will do down into the ‘GRAVE’ unto my son mourning.*” Despite the fact that some of the translators of the Hebrew Old Testament have rendered this passage to read this way, the word that they have translated as “*grave*” is, in the original Hebrew text, “*Sheol*” which means that...in fact...Jacob was not referring to his going down into the “*grave*,” but, rather, his going down into *Sheol*...the place of departed spirits where he fully expected to see his son again...He could not have been referring to the grave because he did not believe that Joseph was in the grave because he believed that Joseph's body was in the belly of some wild beast and, because he believed this, it would have been impossible for Jacob to go to the “*grave*” to meet Joseph (See **Genesis 37:33**).
10. At Jacob's death, **Genesis 49:33** sets forth this same truth when it states, “*And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.*”
Since Scripture shows us that Jacob's body was NOT buried with the bodies of his ancestors until months after his death, his being “*gathered unto his people*” at the time of his death was the departure of his “*soul*” into the presence of the souls of Isaac...his father...and Abraham...his grandfather. At least eighty days elapsed between Jacob's “*gathering unto his people*” and the burial of his body in the cave at Machpelah in

Canaan because they took forty days to embalm his body... another thirty days to mourn before they left Egypt...another couple of days to obtain Pharaoh's permission to bury him in Canaan (**Genesis 5:3-6**)...another seven days to mourn at the threshing floor of Atad (**Genesis 50:10**)... so ...to state it again...Jacob's "*gathering to his people*" was not to the bodies of his ancestors in the graves, but, rather, to the place where their spirits were in their disembodied state.

I have given but 10 contrasting facts...as they are presented in Scripture...to show that "*Sheol-Hades*" could not be the grave, and I could give 35 more Scriptural examples if space allowed me to do so.

**SHEOL, OR HADES, THEN, IS NOT THE GRAVE
...THE ABODE FOR THE BODY . . .
BUT, RATHER, IT IS THE *PLACE OF DEPARTED SPIRITS*.**

Having established that;

- (1) Man is a soul, distinct, and separate, from his body.
- (2) At death, the soul is separated from the body, and
- (3) The soul of man departs to go to a place called "*Sheol*" (in the Hebrew) or "*Hades*" (in the Greek)...*which* is not the grave, but, rather, is the abode of the departed spirits of the dead...the next question is,

What does Scripture tell us is the location of Sheol-Hades?

Twenty of the sixty-five Old Testament passages that refer to Sheol state that Sheol is located downward. That is, there are twenty Old Testament Scriptures like the one found in Genesis 37:35, where Jacob states, "*I will go DOWN to Sheol.*"

The next logical question that follows would be, "*What is revealed about Sheol-Hades?*"

So far, in this lesson, when we have spoken of "*the abode of departed souls*" we have made no moral distinction between these departed souls...whether these souls are the souls of the righteous or the unrighteous.

While the New Testament sheds some light on what kind of a place "*Sheol-Hades*" is, the Old Testament, on the other hand does not...because...it says nothing in regard to any distinction between the abode for the spirits of the righteous and the spirits of the unrighteous, but, rather, merely tells us that all the dead depart to "*Sheol*."

- Why is it that the Old Testament is almost silent on man's future state?
- Why does The Old Testament leave us with so little information about the abode of the spirit of man?

The Bible clearly answers that question when it states that the time for the revealing of the conditions beyond the grave had not yet come in the Old Testament days because it was

reserved for Christ to “bring life, and immortality, to light through the Gospel.” And that is just what Christ did! **2 Timothy 1:10** states, “Christ Jesus...has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” The Old Testament teachings on immortality served as a kind of “twilight stage” of man's knowing until Christ would come to reveal...make manifest ...the conditions in “Sheol” by His teachings as we find them in the Gospel accounts.

2 Timothy 1:10 does not say that when Christ came He brought life and immortality into EXISTENCE, but, rather, that He brought it to light...He brought it into revelation... He revealed it to mankind. *Life and immortality existed in Old Testament days, but now they are made manifest, or revealed, by Christ through the Gospel.*

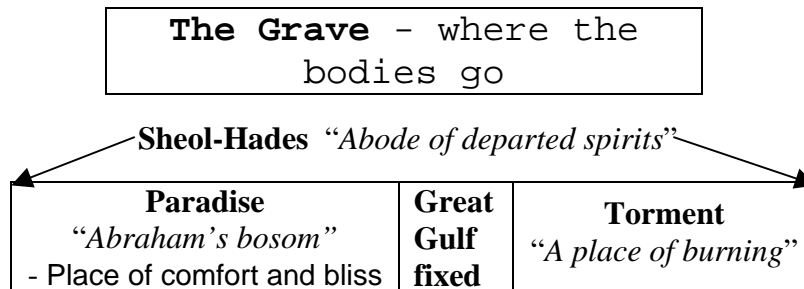
Since Christ was the One Who has brought immortality to light, it is important to see just exactly what He had to say on the subject of conditions in “Sheol”...the place (abode) of the departed spirits of the dead.

WHAT WAS CHRIST'S TEACHING REGARDING ALL THE DEAD, BOTH SAVED AND LOST?

Christ gives us a description of the abode of the departed dead as it was in the Old Testament days and in the day of His earthly ministry...that is, up until the time of His death and resurrection...when, in **Luke 16:19-31**, He tells us: “*There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’ But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’ He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them. ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”*

Note that, in this passage, Jesus tells us that when Lazarus died he “was carried by the angels in to Abraham's bosom” while, when the rich man died...and his body was buried...he was in *Hades* where he was suffering torment. (The word “torment” is used five times in this account.) In verse 28, Jesus refers to *Hades* as, “this PLACE of torment,” which shows us that “Hades” was not merely a “state of being” but, rather, it was a very definite place ...and it was from this place that the rich man saw Abraham and Lazarus in the distance. In verse 25, when Abraham says to the rich man “...but now he (Lazarus) is comforted here and you are in agony.”

In this passage in Luke, Christ tells us that *Hades* has TWO COMPARTMENTS ...a place of comfort for the righteous (or “*Abraham's bosom*” as it is called in verse 22...The Jewish colloquialism for a place of absolute *bliss*)...and a place of torment for the unrighteous and these two compartments...places...were separated from each other by a *GREAT GULF FIXED*, so that no one could pass from one PLACE to the other, (verse 26).



In **Acts 2:31**, Peter...after quoting David, the Psalmist, in Psalms 16:8-11...states, “*He (David) seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades...*” and while this particular Scriptural passage does not tell us which of the two compartments in Hades Jesus' soul would go after His death on the Cross, we do learn from Jesus' statement to the penitent thief on the cross, “*Today thou shalt be with me in PARADISE.*” (**Luke 23:43**) that Jesus, indeed, went to paradise...the place of comfort (“*Abraham's bosom*” ...when He died).

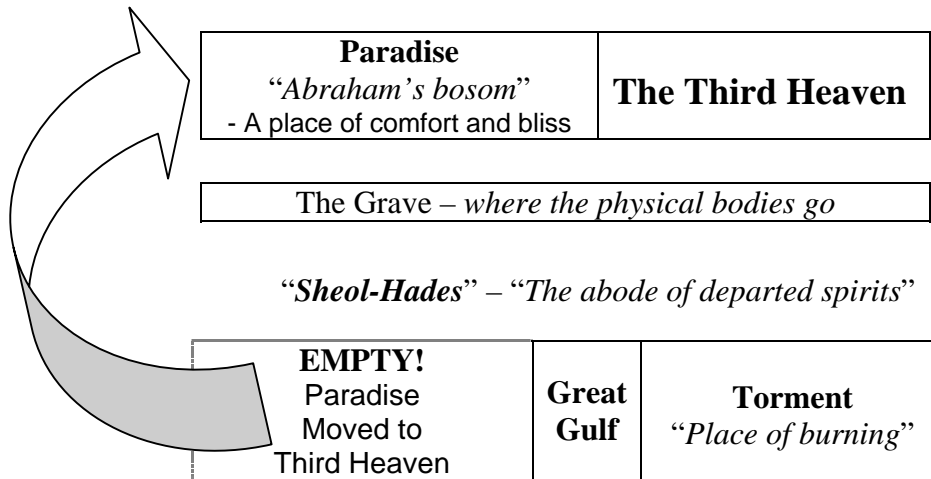
However,...after Christ's resurrection, and ascension, to the Father in heaven, the section in Hades known as “*Abraham's bosom,*” or “*Paradise,*” was...**IS...NO LONGER THE ABODE** for the spirits of the righteous dead...and...while before Christ's resurrection, and ascension, *Hades*, or *Sheol*, is represented as being BELOW and the souls of all the dead...both righteous and unrighteous...are said to have DESCENDED into this place, after Christ's resurrection, and ascension, the souls of the righteous are spoken of as “*going up*”...rather than “*descending*”...because...*Hades* is no longer the abode for the spirits of the righteous.

In **2 Corinthians 12:2**, Paul relates his experiences of being “*caught up to the third heaven*” and, in verse 4, he refers to this same place as “*Paradise.*” Therefore, according to Paul's teaching, “*Paradise*” and “*the third heaven*”...the “*abode of the righteous spirits*”...have the same location...and this location is “**UP.**”

Ephesians 4:8-10 states, “*When He...(Christ Jesus)...ascended on high, He led captives in His train and gave gifts to men. (What does ‘he ascended’ mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He Who descended is the very one Who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)*”

This passages plainly teaches that, before Christ ascended up into heaven, *He descended first into the lower parts of the earth*, and, when He ascended back into heaven, He did not go alone, but, rather, He brought a multitude with Him. He took the waiting spirits of the “*Paradise*” section of *Hades* with Him. Scripture says, “*when He ascended up on high HE LED captivity captive*” (verse 8). The marginal reading is, “*He led a multitude of captives.*” **Mark 16:19**, and many other Scriptures, tell us that Christ ascended into the heavens to the right hand of God, the

Father, and this account in **Ephesians 4:8-10** tells us that He brought a multitude with Him...all the righteous spirits from the “*Paradise-side*” of *Hades* – the place of departed dead spirits.



In addition to the accounts referred to above, there is more evidence which proves that *Paradise*, the abode for the righteous spirits, has been moved, and is no longer below in *Hades*...because...Scripture teaches us that the righteous dead, rather than being in *Hades*, ARE WITH CHRIST WHERE HE IS!

In **Philippians 1:23**, the Apostle Paul states that he desired to “*depart to be with Christ*” and, in **2 Corinthians 5:6-8**, he uses strong words in expressing his confidence that to be “*absent from the body*” in death, is to be “*present with the Lord.*” This passage in 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 states, “*We are always confident...(The literal translation is: `We can say with absolute boldness) ...and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body AND AT HOME WITH THE LORD!*” The righteous dead are “*with Christ*”...they are “*present with the Lord*”...therefore, they are where the Lord is!

Christ is not in *Hades* because the Scripture states in **Acts 2:27**, “*His... (Christ's) ...soul was not left in Hades.*” There are dozens of other Scriptures which tell us that Christ has ascended into the heavens and is at the right hand of God the Father. Inasmuch as the departed spirits of the righteous are PRESENT with the Lord, they must be there where Christ is...*UP in heaven* and not down in the “*section*” of *Hades* known as Abraham's bosom

In **Matthew 16:18**, when Jesus said, “*I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church: and the gates of Hades will not overcome it,*” He was plainly declaring that *Sheol-Hades* will not prevail against the righteous of this age...that is, against the Church... because...*Hades* will never be the abiding place of any true saint of this age!

The reason the Old Testament Righteous went to *Sheol-Hades* was because their sins were not yet “*put away*” (Hebrews 10:4), however, Scripture says, “*Christ has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of*

Himself,” therefore, when the sins of the Old Testament righteous were “*put away*,” by Christ's sacrifice on Calvary, they could enter into the very presence of God as do the spirits of the righteous of this age.

The Abode of the Unrighteous Dead Unchanged!

The spirits of the unrighteous dead still go to *Hades*...to “*the place of torment*” ... because Scripture reveals that there is no change in the place of their abode. The book of Revelation tells us that when the wicked appear at the *Great White Throne*, “*death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them.*” (Revelation 20:13)...which means that *Hades* is still the abode of the unrighteous and will continue to be their abode in the future...until they are “*brought up*” to appear at the *Great White Throne Judgment*.

[We will cover the subject of the PRESENT HELL in a later lesson]

The Present “*Three*” Heavens!

When the Bible uses the word “*heaven*” it has three distinct shades of meaning:

1. When **Acts 14:17** states, “*God gave you rain from heaven*,” the word “*heaven*” refers to the reign of the clouds...the heaven of the earth's atmosphere.
2. When **Ephesians 6:12** speaks of the “*spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*,” the “*heavenly realm*” refers to the heaven of the earth's stratosphere...or...the heaven of the stars where the powers of darkness dwell...(that is, Satan's kingdom).
3. When **2 Corinthians 12:2-4** states, “*I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know - God knows. And I know that this man - whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows - was caught up to PARADISE,*” the third heaven refers to God's throne and dwelling place.

Hebrews 8:1 states of Jesus, “*We do have such a High Priest, Who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.*”

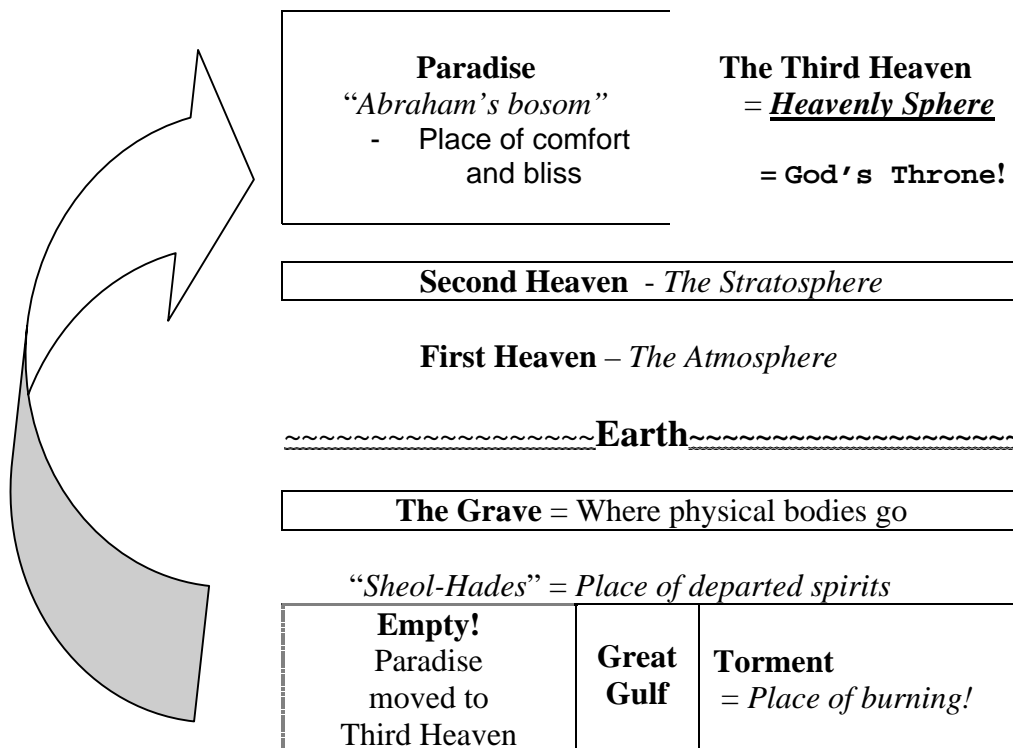
We must not confuse the present “*Paradise*,” and the “*third heaven*” with the final heaven...the New Jerusalem! We will speak of this later in this lesson.

Scripture tells us that when Christ rose from the dead in a glorified body...a very real body of flesh and bone...He ascended up to heaven and is NOW living in heaven in that body and that while the dead in Christ are now absent from their physical body. they are, nonetheless, present with the Lord in their “*spirit*” body.

In **2 Corinthians 5:1-9** we read, “*We know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down - when we die and leave these bodies - we will have a home in heaven, an eternal body*

made for us by God himself and not by human hands. We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long for the day when we will put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. But we will not be spirits without bodies, we will put on new heavenly bodies. Our dying bodies make us groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and have no bodies at all. We want to slip into our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by everlasting life. God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit. So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. That is why we live by believing and not by seeing. Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. So our aim is to please him always, whether we are here in this body or away from this body."

This means that heaven is somewhere in particular, and not just everywhere in general!



Many Scriptures testify that Jesus ascended up into heaven and is seated on the right hand of God. (The fact of Christ's ascension is given in **Luke 24:51**, **Acts 1:9-11**, and **Mark 16:19**.) **Hebrews 8:1** states that Christ is now seated "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heaven," there to "appear in the presence of God for us," (**Hebrews 9:24**). According to **Acts 7:55-60**, Stephen, when dying, saw the heavens opened and Christ at the right hand of God. These are but a few of the many Scriptures that tell us that Christ is ascended to the right hand of God...Who is in "heaven"...a heaven that is always spoken of as being "up!"

Are the "Souls" of the Departed Dead Conscious?

Thus far in this lesson we have learned that Scripture teaches that man has a spirit within the body, and that, at death, the spirit departs, or separates, from the body, and, we have also

learned, about the place to which the spirit departs at death. It has been established from Scripture, that since the ascension of Christ the spirits of the righteous depart to the third heaven, *Paradise*, to be in the presence of Christ, and that the spirits of the unrighteous still depart to hades, to the section prepared for them.

IS THE SPIRIT *CONSCIOUS* AFTER DEATH?

The Bible's answer is - *Yes!* However, in spite of the fact that Scripture seems to clearly teach that man's spirit is conscious after death, there are those who believe that physical death is the *cessation of all consciousness* until the resurrection of the body.

This theory...referred to as "*soul-sleep*" or "*annihilation*"...teaches that man is unconscious...or, even, non-existent...after death...and...those who claim this teaching base its validity on a few Old Testament passages which they unfortunately, have incorrectly interpreted and applied...such as:

Ecclesiastes 9:5,10, which states, "*For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten...Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.*"

and

Psalms 115:17, which states, "*It is not the dead who praise the LORD, those who go down to silence.*"

According to some, these Scriptures are supposed to prove that, when a man dies, he does not know anything...he has no knowledge, nor wisdom, nor memory ...and ...he is in a condition of unconsciousness, or, even, in a condition of non-existence.

In answering these so-called Scriptural proofs, it is important to keep in mind that which has already been established in one of our previous lessons...which is that the Old Testament is almost silent about any kind of real definition about man's future life ...after death...because the time for the full revelation of conditions beyond the grave had not yet come in Old Testament days, but, rather, was reserved for Christ to "*bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel,*" (**2 Timothy 1:10**). And remember that when this Scripture passage states that Christ brought "*life and immortality to light through the Gospel*" it is not saying that Christ's coming brought life and immortality into existence, but, rather, it brought it into revelation...a revelation which, because it did not come until Christ came, limited the Old Testament's vision of life after death to the *grave*.

1. With the truth of this reality in mind, then, we can, on the authority of God's Word, state that when **Ecclesiastes 9:5** says that "*the dead know nothing*" it is referring to the state of man's body when it is dead...because...man's body is not conscious when it is dead...because..."*from dust it came and to dust it returns*"...however...what is true of man's body, at death...that it goes into a state of unconsciousness...is not true of man's soul because the souls of all men

are immortal...which means that man's soul continues in a state of full consciousness between the death...and resurrection...of his body.

2. When **Ecclesiastes 9:10** states that “*in the grave...(sheol)...there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom*” it is not saying that man's soul is in a state of unconsciousness in “*Sheol*,” but, rather that earthly activity...(such as wisdom and knowledge) that is necessary for human life on earth, will have no place in *Sheol*.
3. When **Psalm 115:17** states that, “*the dead go down in silence*,” it is simply saying that the physical body...in the grave...is silent. It is not saying that the soul...in “*Sheol*”...is silent...because...as we have shown...the Scriptures make it quite clear that there is no silence in “*Sheol-Hades*.”

Doesn't Jesus speak of death as “*sleep*”?

It must be remembered that, whenever Jesus speaks of death as a “*sleep*,” He is referring, not to man's *soul*, but, rather, to his *body*. For instance, **John 11:11-14** states, “*After He...(Jesus) ...had said this, He went on to tell them, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.’ His disciples replied, ‘Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.’ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but His disciples thought He meant natural sleep. So then He told them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead.’*”

Even though here Jesus speaks of death as a sleep, it is very plain that He meant that Lazarus' body...not his soul...was “*asleep*”...dead...because...when Jesus said, “*I go to awake him out of sleep*,” He did so by raising Lazarus' BODY from the dead. When Martha said, “*By this time there is a bad order*”...(or as the King James Version says it...’he *STINKETH*’), she, of course, was referring to Lazarus' BODY...which is but another proof of the fact that it was Lazarus' body that had died...that was “*asleep*” ... and not his soul!

The fact that **Matthew 27:52** states that, at the time of the resurrection of Jesus, “*many BODIES of the saints which SLEPT arose*” confirms the fact that when the word “*asleep*” is used synonymously with the word “*death*” it is referring to man's body being asleep (dead) or **Matthew 25:52** would read, “*Many of the SAINTS which SLEPT arose*,” instead of, “*Many of the BODIES of the saints which SLEPT arose*.”

In telling us about the stoning of Stephen, **Acts 7:54-60** states that this stoning was so severe that he “*FELL ASLEEP*”...that is, that he died...however, these words, “*fell asleep*” cannot possibly mean that the SOUL of Stephen became unconscious because **verse 55** states that he , “*looked up into HEAVEN, and saw the GLORY OF GOD, and JESUS standing at the right hand of God*.” And then, when Stephen was dying, **verse 59** states that he said, “*Lord Jesus, receive my SPIRIT*.” Why should Stephen utter such a prayer if, at death, the soul entered into a state of unconsciousness?

When **1 Corinthians 15:20** states that Christ was the “*First fruits of them that have FALLEN ASLEEP*,” here, again, the word that is rendered as “*sleep*,” clearly refers to the

BODY sleeping, and not the soul, because the subject of this chapter is the RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

Whenever Scripture uses the word “*sleep*” in reference to the dead, it always, without exception, applies to the body because the body does appear to be sleeping... however...nowhere does Scripture refer to the soul...when separated from the body...as “*sleeping*.”

In **Luke 16:19-31**, the consciousness of souls after death is clearly taught in the authentic account of the rich man and Lazarus. This account was given to us by Christ Himself (See page 15 for passage).

Note that **verses 22-23** state, “*The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. the rich man also died and was buried. In hell... (Hades) ...where he was tormented.*”

Even though both men died...their bodies were buried...their souls, in their disembodied condition, were conscious because they could see...recognize each other... hear...talk...feel... and ...remember being comforted...or...tormented...after death.

Despite the fact that there are those who say that this was only a parable that Christ was relating, there is no indication, whatsoever, that this is a parable because Jesus stated, “*There WAS a RICH MAN,*” and “*there WAS a BEGGAR named LAZARUS.*” No, this account is not a parable, but, rather a true story of what happened to two men...who had lived at some point in history...after they had died.

Jesus always began parables with such words as, “*It was as*”...or...”*it was likened* unto,” and, Scripture, invariably, emphasizes the fact of when Jesus is relating a parable by stating, “*And He spoke unto them a parable, saying...*”

Even if this were a parable, the very same doctrine...(that, after death, man's soul is conscious...it lives...talks...remembers...is “*comforted*” or “*tormented,*”) is taught because the very purpose of a parable is to...distinctly and accurately...portray a truth which has Previously been obscure!

Indeed, **Luke 16:19-31** teaches that...after man's body dies...his soul...which dwells in the spirit world...is not only alive and conscious, but it is also either happy or miserable. The reality of this truth is so plainly expressed in this account of Lazarus and the rich man that any mind that could misinterpret...or pervert...the meaning of this account would pervert any teaching on the subject...no matter how...or in what language...the teaching was stated.

The fact that the soul lives, and is conscious, after death is also plain from **Matthew 10:28**, which states, “*Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but CANNOT KILL THE SOUL. Rather, be afraid of the One Who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*” This verse plainly teaches that while the body can be killed, the soul cannot be killed...and...since killing the body does not kill the soul...then, certainly, is the soul alive and conscious after the death of the body.

In giving the account of Christ's transfiguration, **Matthew 17:3** also states this truth when it says, "*Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus*"...because... according to **Deuteronomy 34:5-6**, Moses died, and was buried, fourteen hundred and eighty-three years before Christ's transfiguration, and, yet, here is Moses' *spirit* with Christ and Elijah on the summit of Mount Tabor, almost fifteen hundred years after his body had died and was buried.

Scripture confirms the fact...beyond a doubt...that the soul survives the death of the body ...and that it *lives* and *thinks*...and even *talks*, if necessary...ages after its "*earthly house*" has crumbled into dust!

Eternal Life

In this discourse on the *consciousness of souls* after the death of the physical body, the words "ETERNAL Life" are full of significance and are worthy of our consideration,

If a dying person has accepted Christ as his personal Savior...and is, therefore, a born-again Child of God...he HAS ETERNAL LIFE and he is in *present possession* of that eternal life!

John 3:36 states, "*Whosoever believes in the Son HAS eternal life.*"

John 4:24 states, "*Whoever hears My word and believes Him Who sent Me HAS eternal life.*"

Eternal life, since it is *eternal*, cannot be destroyed by death because, if there was a period of non-existence...or "non-consciousness"...between death and resurrection, it would negate the very definition of *ETERNAL LIFE*...because...eternal life, by definition means life (consciousness) that is eternal...unbroken...never ending.

John 11:25-26 states, "*Jesus said to her...(Martha)...'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even through he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die.'*" This passage of Scripture, given to us by the Son of God Himself, gives assurance to dying believers that they will "*live*" forever because they are in possession of the spiritual eternal life that never comes to an end...a life that flows on forever!

Jesus Answers the Sadducees

Various Scripture, and historical, references tell us that the Sadducees did not believe in life after death...that they denied all future existence. Josephus...a learned Jewish historian who lived about the time of the writers of the New Testament...wrote, "*the doctrine of the Sadducees is this, THAT SOULS DIE WITH THE BODIES.*" (Antiquities b. 28:4). "*They take away the belief of the immortal existence of the soul, and the punishments and rewards of Hades.*" (Wars b 8:14).

In **Acts 23:8**, Luke tells us that "*the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither Angels, nor SPIRITS,*" and, in **Luke 20:27**, he tells us that "*the Sadducees...deny that there is any resurrection.*"

Now when these Sadducees...who denied that souls live after death, and who said that there will be no resurrection...came to Jesus intending to ridicule, and make fun of, the doctrine of the resurrection, Christ told them, *“In the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord `the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all are alive,”* (Luke 20:37-38).

Why did Jesus use the account of Moses at the bush to show the Sadducees that God is *“not the God of the dead, but of the living?”*

Because God spoke to Moses from the burning bush 1,491 years before Christ was born in Bethlehem...and because Abraham died in 1821 B.C...Isaac died in 1716 B.C...and Jacob in 1689 B.C...consequently, it meant that, at the time God spoke to Moses at the burning bush, Abraham had been dead 330 years, Isaac 225 years and Jacob 198 years...and yet...when God spoke to Moses out of the midst of the burning bush, He said, *“I AM...the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”* The fact that this statement is in the present tense...(in other words, the fact that God did not say, *“I WAS”* ...past tense, but, rather, *“I AM”* ...at this very time...the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob)...tells us that these patriarchs must still have been ALIVE! Jesus states this truth when He made the plain declaration *“for to Him all are alive”*... or... as the King James states it...*“For ALL LIVE UNTO HIM.”* If all live unto Him, then, ALL are alive!

Now when these Sadducees...who denied that souls live after death, and who said that there will be no resurrection...came to Jesus intending to ridicule, and make fun of, the doctrine of the resurrection, Christ told them, *“In the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord `the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all are alive,”* (Luke 20:37-38).

In this passage in **Luke 20:37-38**, Christ uses the quotation, *“I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”* from the Pentateuch...(the first five books of the Bible) because He was addressing the Sadducees who accepted only the Pentateuch as the Divinely Inspired Word of God.

This being true, then if Jesus could prove...from the Pentateuch...that there was life beyond the grave, the Sadducees' theory that there was no resurrection of the dead would be in ruins... because to prove that the souls of men live after death was, effectually, to overthrow the system of the Sadducees and silence their objection to the resurrection of the body because, with the Sadducees, the two doctrines...namely...the consciousness of the soul...and...the resurrection of the dead...stood, or fell, together. By affirming that God was still the God of those patriarchs... Abraham...Isaac...and Jacob...and that they were not dead but still alive...Christ settled, beyond a shadow of doubt, the question of consciousness and existence...*“life”* ...after death...because...God could not be the God of those who had no existence.

Because when Christ chose those words from the Pentateuch He was able to prove to the Sadducees the fallacy of their belief that there was no resurrection of the dead, Scripture says, *“And no one dared to ask Him any more questions,”* (Luke 20:40).

Those who teach that man has no “*spirit*” distinct from his body...or that the spirit, or soul, dies with the body...are only reproducing the ancient doctrines of the Sadducees which Christ, so often, sternly rebuked.

Paul's Desire To Be With The Lord

In 2 Corinthians 5:6, when Paul states, “*Therefore we are always confident...(a literal translation would be, “We can say with absolute boldness”)...and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord*”...and, then, in **verse 8**, when he states, “*We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be AWAY FROM THE BODY and AT HOME WITH THE LORD. So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are AT HOME IN THE BODY or AWAY FROM IT”...he is, certainly, affirming...and confirming...the truth of consciousness after death because why would he say that he was willing to be “*absent from the body*” so that he might be “*present with the Lord,*” if, in the presence of the Lord, he was not going to be **CONSCIOUS** ...because...how could he possibly expect any satisfaction in being *unconsciously* present with the Lord? Paul would never be “*willing*” to be with Christ if he would not be in a conscious state!*

Paul states this same truth of consciousness after death when, in **Philippians 1:21-24**, he says, “*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far, but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.*”

How could Paul say that it would be “*GAIN*”...it would be “*FAR BETTER*”...to be out of his body and “*BE WITH CHRIST*” if, after death, he became unconscious or non-existent...cut off from conscious fellowship with God for centuries awaiting the resurrection? Because no child of God would ever say that oblivion is “*far better*” than living in this world, this passage teaches that there is conscious life after death because there can be no other explanation! Paul desired to “*depart to be with Christ*” because he knew he would be conscious...conscious of Christ's presence.

Jesus' Promise To The Dying Thief.

When, in **Luke 23:42-43**, the dying thief on the cross said to Jesus, “*Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, today, you will be with Me in Paradise.’*”

The Savior's promise to the believing thief...that, after death, he would meet Him that very day, in Paradise...would not have been good news...or any answer to this believing thief's prayer ...if *Paradise* was simply “*a paradise of unconsciousness, or non-existence*” because, if such were the case, what kind of “*remembrance*” would the dying thief have obtained? The only meaning that Christ's promise to this believing thief could have was that...after their deaths...He and the thief would meet in the Paradise section where they would be in a conscious state of “*pleasure*” and “*delight*”...because...how can one experience “*pleasure*” and “*delight*” if he is not conscious of these feelings?

THE ATTITUDE OF EARLY CHRISTIANS, AND MARTYRS, CONFIRM THE FACT OF THE SOUL'S CONSCIOUSNESS AFTER DEATH.

It is very clear, from the study of Church History, that the early Christians, and martyrs, understood Scripture to teach that, after death, the soul was conscious ... because...it is certain that they looked for conscious joy in Paradise immediately after they sacrificed their lives...in death...for what they believed. During the first three centuries of the Christian era, of the thousands of Christian martyrs who sealed the truth with their blood, not one of them expressed ...in his last moments of life...anything that suggested that he believed that his soul would die...or become unconscious...when his body was dissolved. On the contrary, these martyrs all expressed the hope of what they expected to be their immediate, and conscious, happiness after death.

One such example of these thousands of martyrs was a Christian by the name of Polycarp. Polycarp, who was a companion of the Apostle John, and had often heard him preach, suffered martyrdom in 166 A.D., at the age of 87, and from the account of his death, it is clear that he looked for an immediate life with Christ in Paradise when the pains of his martyrdom were over. And such was the testimony of many of the first martyrs...because...the doctrine of the soul's consciousness...and capacity to experience joy...after death was one that they had learned from the Apostles and from the Holy Scriptures. After hours and hours of research reading early Church history, I have found that, during the first three centuries, not one instance can be cited of a Christian who ever expressed any other hope in his last hours than that of entering, AT ONCE, into the joys of conscious, and endless, life.

In the catacombs of Rome...(the underground tunnels, and rooms, in which the bodies of the martyrs were buried during the first three centuries of the Christian era) ...the inscriptions upon the tombs throw great light upon the faith of the early Christians. The following are samples of some of these inscriptions:

- *“In Christ, Alexander is not dead, but lives - his body rests in the tomb.”*
- *“One who lives with God”*
- *“Gone to dwell with Christ.”*
- *“Snatched home eternally.”*

It is worthy to note that the word DEATH is never used in reference to even one of all these vast company of the departed

To the martyrs who died, death meant *immediate glory*...as it has meant to other Christian believers. During the last nineteen hundred years, among the millions of Christians who have had the privilege of making the Bible their study, how very few have understood it to teach any other doctrine than that...for the child of God...at death, the soul maintains its consciousness...and in a blessed state...because they learned...as a result of their Bible study...that death was merely the separation of the soul from the body and that the souls of the righteous enter, immediately after death, into the conscious joys of Paradise. In this faith they lived, and in this hope they died!

WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE REVEAL CONCERNING WHAT THE RIGHTEOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE PRESENT PARADISE?

Let's inquire into the Scriptures to see what else...besides the fact of consciousness...that is revealed concerning the souls of the departed dead...and...let's begin this inquiry by considering what Scripture reveals about the abode...which Scripture labels as Paradise...of the souls of the righteous dead.

First, it can be positively said that Scripture tells us that when a Christian dies...and departs from earth...he enters into a condition which is "*far better*" than what he has known in this world. (See **Philippians 1:21-21**). The assurance of...immediately after death...entering into a condition which is "*far better*" is certainly a great source of comfort for any child of God.

The most outstanding fact revealed concerning the righteous in Paradise is that they are "**PRESENT WITH THE LORD.**" Think of it, the righteous dead are in the bodily presence of Jesus Christ Himself! What could be more wonderful than the blessing, and glory, of being present with Jesus Christ our Savior?

As we said earlier, Paul, in **2 Corinthians 5:6-8**, stated "*to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord*"...and he prefaces his statement with the words..."*We are confident*"...*we can say with absolute boldness...*"

Other Scriptures shed light on...and give a greater understanding of...what it really means to be **present** with the Lord.

In **John 17:24**, Jesus' prayer for Christians reflects the blessedness of being present with Him when He prays, "*Father, I want those you have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory*"...and...it is at the moment of his death that the true Christian goes to be with the Lord...where He is...there to **BEHOLD HIS GLORY!** What more could anyone possibly ask than to behold the glory of Christ? Yet there are those of us who, at times, desire to have our loved ones back with us again and, while this is, certainly, a very normal...and natural...desire...because it is very normal to miss the presence of one we have loved...yet...if we could only understand...in its fullest sense...what it really means to be "*present with the Lord,*" and to, "*behold His glory,*" it would be our very love for our departed righteous loved ones that would desire that they not return from Paradise where they are "*beholding the glory of Christ*"...because ...only a selfish love would desire them to return to this ordinary realm.

Psalms 16:11...one of the Messianic Psalms...speaks about the joy of the righteous being in the presence of Christ, and beholding His glory, when it states, "*You fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand*"...(King James version says, "*In Thy Presence is FULLNESS OF JOY; at Thy right hand there are PLEASURES FOREVERMORE.*")

This reference in Psalms 16 not only assures us that the righteous dead go to a wonderful place where they know the "*Fullness of Joy*" in the presence of the Lord, but it also offers us one more positive proof that the departed souls of the righteous are conscious because they would have to be conscious in order to enjoy "*Fullness of Joy*" and "*Pleasure forevermore.*" **Luke 15:7** tells us that there is *JOY* in heaven over the conversions that take place on earth when it states, "*I tell you that in the same way there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.*"

Because the very word “*Paradise*” carries with it the meaning of “*pleasure*” or “*delight*” ... and because it is this word that Jesus used to identify the place where the righteous dead go...not only can we be assured that these righteous souls will know “*pleasure*” and “*delight*” in Paradise, but, because Scripture tells us that when Paul was caught up into Paradise, he heard “*UNSPEAKABLE words which were not lawful...(not possible)...for men to utter,*” we can also be assured that the degree of pleasure and delight...of “*wonderfulness*” and “*gloriousness*” ...that Christians will know in Paradise is impossible to express in human words.

Paul, the great rhetorician... (“*an expert in the art of rhetoric*”)... heard such unspeakable, and glorious, things that it was impossible for even this extremely gifted orator to explain them. And it was because he saw such exceedingly great, and marvelous, things...such great wonders and glories...that only he has been privileged to see in this “*abundance of revelation*”...a messenger of Satan was allowed to buffet him in order to keep him from becoming exalted, or puffed up, (See 2 Corinthians 12:1-10).

Revelation 14:13 also makes it clear that the righteous...those who die in the Lord...are “*BLESSED*” and are resting when it so states, “*BLESSED are the dead who die in the Lord.*” Because the King James Version translates the next word as, “*henceforth,*” (a word which is translated from the Greek word “*apart*” and means from this time on...IMMEDIATELY... BEGINNING RIGHT NOW!) this passage confirms the fact that those who have died in the Lord do not have to sleep in the grave...or be in a non-existence state, awaiting the resurrection day...before their heavenly joys begin, but, rather, they enter at once...immediately...into a state of “*blessedness.*”

In Scripture, the word “*blessed*” means the utopia of happiness and, certainly, implies consciousness...because...happiness is an emotion that demands consciousness.

Another verse that will add to the evidence of what we have already learned concerning the state of the righteous in Paradise is **Psalm 116:15**, which states, “*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.*” Certainly the death of a believer would not be precious in the sight of the Lord if He sent him into some kind of oblivion ...or put him “out of existence” to await the resurrection morning. No, on the contrary, the death of the believer is “*precious*” to the Lord because it brings the righteous Christian's spirit into a perfect, and permanent, communion with Himself...because... in fact...it is, for the believer, the beginning of joyful, never ending, union with his Lord, as he enjoys freedom from mortal limitations...and...deliverance from the realm of Satan and sin.

To summarize what has been revealed concerning the state of the righteous souls in Paradise:

1. Paradise is the place where Christians...the souls of the righteous... depart at death, and it is a place that is “*far better*” than anything one can know in this world.
2. Paradise is a place where the righteous are “*present with the Lord*”...a place where there is “*Fullness of joy*” and “*Pleasure for evermore.*”

3. Paradise is so wonderful, and glorious, that man cannot find words adequate enough to explain it. The depth of its gloriousness is “*Unspeakable.*”
4. Paradise is a place where the righteous dead are said to be “*Blessed*” and at “*Rest.*”
5. Paradise is the place where Christians begin their joyful, and never-ending union with the Lord...which is why the death of a Christian is deemed “*precious in the sight of the Lord.*”

Despite the fact that our human curiosity desires to know more details about what heaven is like, in actuality, the Bible gives us very few details about heaven because God's Word carries the subject of heaven only to a certain point, and no further, and for anyone to go beyond what God has seen fit to reveal in His Word...in an attempt to satisfy his curiosity...can only result in speculation and guess-work type theories.

It, of course, is the better part of God's wisdom that He...in His Word...reveals only a certain amount of knowledge about the conditions in Paradise and Heaven because, if we knew all about how really wonderful heaven is, we would not be content to remain here a single hour. Remember that, when Paul was caught up into Paradise ...to behold the “*abundance of revelation*”...because of the exceedingly great glories that he beheld, it was necessary that a messenger of Satan buffet him to keep him from being too much puffed up. (See **2 Corinthians 12:1-4**).

Heaven will be wonderful enough when we get there, so let's be content to just thank God for the “*fore-taste*” He has given us!

Will We Recognize One Another In Paradise?

When endeavoring to answer this question that is of great concern to many people, it is important that one gives worthy attention to the following considerations:

1. Regarding his son who had died, David, the inspired Psalmist, said, “*Now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.*” Surely David knew he would recognize his son when he would go to him at His own death or there would have been no purpose of his making this statement.
2. Christ said to the dying thief on the cross, “*Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise*” (Luke 23:43). Certainly they expected to recognize each other in Paradise, or the thief would have no consolation, or comfort, in this promise.
3. Certainly Paul would not have desired to “*depart to be with Christ*” if he were not sure he would recognize, and know, the One whom he desired to be with. (See Philippians 1:21-24).

4. Even though Moses and Elijah had departed from the earth centuries before, yet when they returned on the Mount of Transfiguration, they had maintained enough of their earthly identity, and personality, to be instantly recognized by Christ's disciples...men who knew them only by their description.
5. The rich man, in the account that Jesus gives in Luke 16:19-31, recognized both Abraham...one who had departed from this life centuries before his life time...and Lazarus... one whom he had known during his life time.
6. Since to be in Paradise is "*far better*" than to be here on this earth, we can be sure that we will not know less in Paradise than we know here. This being true, then, surely, if we know a loved one here we will know him there. 1 Corinthians 13:12 declares that we shall then see, not "*a poor reflection*" but "*face to face*"..."*now we know in part, but then we will know fully, even as we are fully known.*"

This means that we may certainly expect to know our loved ones in Paradise!

In our study of the abode of spirits, who have departed from this life, and the bodily resurrection, it must be remembered that Paradise is not the FINAL HEAVEN for all of ETERNITY. Even though, at death, the souls of the righteous go to Paradise to be in the presence of Christ, Paradise is not the Final Heaven...because...the eternal heaven...which the saints will occupy after they receive their resurrected bodies...is described in the last chapters of Revelation and is different than the Present Paradise, which the righteous occupy unto their resurrection.

The diagram on the following page should help to get a mind's eye picture of what Scripture teaches concerning the place of the departed dead...the resurrections... and end time events.

Scripture clearly distinguishes between the grave for the body and the "*abode for the spirits*":