

# The Pathfinder

#327.21

## WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

(Part 2 of 2)

“For all flesh is as grass, and ...falls away.” 1 Peter 1:24.

We saw in our previous study a little about what hell is and what it is not. For one, we noticed that Jesus went into hell's depth and led captivity captive. He did not go into a flaming lake of fire that some imagine hell to be, but He went into the imperceptible realm where all the dead have gone, and will go. It was as one of our subscribers, Ronald Moore in Detroit, Michigan, shared with us:

"Jesus ministered to those who were disobedient before the days of Noah....'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive [**He led a train of \*VANQUISHED FOES**] (former enemies of God) and He bestowed gifts on men' (Amplified Bible). The wicked of those days were born-again, and those now in that realm can and will be ministered to by the manifested sons of God. The gates of Hell did not prevail against Him, just as they will not prevail against His unlimited glorious members of His church when they are manifested."

\* He conquered those who had conquered us—such as sin, the devil, and death. Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Holy Bible:

Those held in that place can certainly be in torment; but it can be otherwise as well. It became clear that the definition of hell does not carry the thought of it being a place of fiery brimstone, a place of torment, or a prison where the devil is the warden with his demonic minions carrying out his evil fantasies. It is simply ***the place that hides things or people from view. It is a realm of the unseen!***

And those who are called to sonship are very instrumental in bringing reconciliation to those of that unseen world. They also minister reconciliation to those of the seen world on this side of the veil as we read in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:18 . Therefore, we should be eager to go into either and start leading captivity captive regardless of which side of the grave they are on. The vanquished foes are to be our captives, and for their own good.

We also saw that sinners do not go straight to a tormenting hell when they die, and neither do the saved go straight to the third heaven upon taking their final breath. One of our departed friends wrote about this a number of years ago, of which the remainder of this study is comprised:

## Wither Have The Dead Gone?

By Ray Prinzing

### Departed Saints Are Still In Hades

That the saints do not go into the highest heavens immediately upon death to the physical body, is

borne out by Acts 2:34, "For David is not ascended into the heavens but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool."

This verse is found in the message that Peter was giving unto the people on the day of Pentecost, when he was speaking of the glorious resurrection of the "Son of God." He was preaching of the One who walked those lonely shores of Galilee, the One who was "a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders which God did by Him in the midst of you." [Acts 2:22], the One whom the rulers of the people demanded should be crucified and hung on a tree; but, Peter went on, He arose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of God where HE shall sit until His enemies are made His footstool. Yet note - Peter said that "David is not ascended into the heavens."

Now, if Christ had led out all the saints from that unseen world of Hades, then surely David would have been led out as well; but he was not, for that was not His capture. He subdued all that belonged to the realm of the satanic principality and power. David is still in his place — a good place we call Paradise. Might we say that it is a lot better there, than here where we are subjected to our mortal bodies, with all their limitations, pain and travail. Thus, people have dreams and visions of their loved ones in places so beautiful that they are hard to describe in words. MUCH OF THESE DREAMS AND VISIONS ARE IN HARMONY WITH THE SCRIPTURES, for believers are in the unseen world, Hadean Paradise. And furthermore, as God would minister unto a sorrowing heart, and grant such a vision, it would have to be a vision or dream accommodated in the comprehension of the one receiving it, and what they can understand as a place of rest and peace. But this does not mean that we dare base our doctrines upon "visions." We need to be firmly settled in the Word of God; Dreams, visions, experiences, were never meant to be the foundation of our faith. Upon His Word alone we stand! But we do praise God for the way He can condescend to men of low estate, and express to us in ways and means that we are able to grasp, to give us glimpses of greater realities.

Thus, only Christ hath ascended into the heavens; "Whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." [Acts 3:21].

Now we turn to John 3:13, and bear in mind this gospel was written by the apostle John after the Christ had ascended to the right hand of God. This one verse we are quoting was not spoken by Christ, but was inserted by John in his record of the time when Jesus was visited by Nicodemus. Quote: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, BUT HE THAT CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN, EVEN THE SON OF MAN WHICH IS IN HEAVEN."

No man hath yet ascended into heaven, writes John, but the Lord Jesus Christ, who first came down and took on Himself the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The same did conquer death and came forth victorious, and now has gone back to heaven again.

This becomes even plainer when we remember that Christ Himself did not ascend into heaven immediately after His physical death, but after His resurrection. Jesus died and went into the Hadean state where He manifested His victory, was acknowledged as SOVEREIGN LORD, and He spoiled principalities and powers. Finishing His work in that Hadean realm, by resurrection power He returned in a new body to this earth, and then went on to appear in heaven. It was as He was returning from Hades, that He appeared first unto Mary in the garden. And when she recognized her Lord, before she could begin to touch Him, "Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." [John 20:17].

How we love those words of Jesus, "My Father, and your Father; My God, and your God." Tell the brethren about it. Tell them that I am going to ascend to our Father, and then I am coming back to see them. Tell them that they should prepare to see Me in the place where I appointed them to go. (See, Matthew 28:16).

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them,

Peace be unto you." [John 20:19]. Between the time of being seen first by Mary, and then later by the disciples, we note that Christ ascended to His Father and presented Himself as the Lamb that had been slain, and now is alive forevermore. Then He came back to meet with His disciples to declare to them how that He was indeed LORD OF HADES - having conquered death, proving that one could die and live again by the power of God. Yes, He told them to even touch Him so that they might know it was He.

He stayed a while, - "being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." [Acts 1:3]. But the thought we are after right now, is that Jesus ascended AFTER His resurrection, AFTER conquering death. Thus, we daresay, a resurrection change will have to be wrought out in us before we'll ever stand before the throne of the Father. But this doesn't mean that we shall all have to die physically first, for Paul states that some shall be alive and remain until the time of the end of this age, when He appears again. The Word tells us that Jesus Christ is going to appear, and "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." [1 John 3:2]. Then you will experience a resurrection change beyond anything that you can comprehend at this present time. We will have a resurrection indeed! It won't bring us out of some grave, if we are not physically dead at that time, but it will release us from this present corruptible body, and He will "change our vile body so that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself." [Philippians 3:21].

### **Weeping and Waiting In Hades**

The full harvest of joy cannot come until the "age of the ages" when He makes ALL THINGS NEW. But this does not detract from the fact that Paradise is a blessed state; nor that Tartarus is a place where the wicked are further disciplined and corrected. But after all resurrections, then shall all men enjoy the glorious AGE OF THE AGES, the JUBILEE when all things are restored into His life and glory. However, there are resurrections prior to this ultimate, both for the righteous and unrighteous. Those who are fully surrendered to His Lordship, with all iniquity purged out, shall advance into new dimensions of His life, while those who need still further purging and correction will advance into those operations - some even to go through the "lake of fire" prepared for that specific purpose. But it will be a fuller state, either as greater measures of discipline upon the condition when each comes forth in their respective resurrection.

Nor does the fact that there are orders of resurrection change the complete overall picture. But to be in the first resurrection is to enjoy the good things of God sooner, and a guarantee that "on such the second death hath no power." [Revelation 20:6]. Even so, there is a greater blessing yet involved for those who have part in the "better resurrection," [Hebrews 11:35], for they shall share in the glorious work of reconciling the world to God, that He might be ALL IN ALL.

And the rest-- those who do not come up in this first resurrection, will wait out their time in the "Hadean" state until after the Kingdom age is over - "For the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." [Revelation 20:5]. And we might state that there will be some "weeping" while many wait out that time in the Hadean state, realizing that had they obeyed the truth they would not have had the door into the "kingdom" closed to them. But we can press the point even farther, for those who learn their lessons during that time of "Hadean life", and fully yield unto the Lordship of our Saviour, at the end of those years He will bring them forth - wipe all tears from their eyes, and they too, shall enjoy the life of the age of the ages. For God's purpose is progressive in the life of every man, and the Hadean state does not hinder any of this progress. We'll ponder more of this later.

### **The Spirit Continues To Work in the Unseen Realm**

We know that the Spirit of Christ is daily ministering unto mankind in this present life, for He daily loadeth us with His mercies, goodness, grace, and love. With abundant compassion for all of His creation.

And, we believe that the Spirit of God also continues to work in the next state, where the departed spirits go, for we read of Paul's desire, in Philippians 1:23, "For I am a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better..." And yet again, 2 Corinthians 5:8, "Willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

Some have supposed that as soon as you die, if you are a Christian, that you go to be with Christ, right into the highest heavens where He is, but, we have already pointed out by the scripture that no man has yet ascended into heaven. But you do go into a greater realm than this one, and there Christ will manifest Himself in an even further working. The release from this bondage of vanity, and this corruptible body, can prove to be just a progressive step, as one moves in yieldedness to the Spirit. Thus Paul desired to go on to the next state, realizing that it would be far better than this one of present travail. Hold with us a moment and we shall add further comment to that thought. But first take a look at the word "depart," which Paul desired to do, for in the Greek it means: TO LOOSE UP (as an anchor). That makes me wonder how much are we anchored to the things of this world's system, so that we have no burning desire to enter into a closer state of union, where our Lord is more real to us?

But we are willing rather to be absent from this body, and present with the Lord. The word "present" is also very interesting. According to Young's Concordance, it means: "to be among one's own people." (the Lord's saints)," IN PARADISE. How much it means to just be released from the filth of this world which man has so corrupted, and to get into that blessed company of Paradise. Quite a thought, isn't it? Perhaps that is what a lot of people feel would be heaven, though perhaps more correctly we could term it a "haven until." For even the Hadean state of Paradise is not the final goal for which we are striving, it is only an intermediate state where the departed spirits dwell until God's own plans and purposes have been wrought out, and then all progresses into that which lies ahead according to His purpose of the ages.

The record concerning Moses gives us more insight into the realm beyond, as a progressive place of development. For in Deuteronomy 32:48-52, we read how Moses was sent up unto Mount Nebo, to "behold the land of Canaan, which I will give unto the children of Israel for a possession." But he himself was not allowed to go in, "Because ye trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah..." when he smote the Rock twice, rather than just speaking to the Rock, while the Lord provided the water for the people. Therefore, "thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither..." Yet about fifteen hundred years later, when Jesus took Peter, James, and John, up into a high mountain, and was transfigured before them,

"Behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him." [Matthew 17:3].

Now, we have to conclude one of two things: Either God had lowered the standard and qualification, so that now Moses was able to appear IN THE LAND, or else, there had been a progressive purging in Moses so that now he was duly qualified - brought up to God's standard, and able to appear there. Since God does not change His standard of holiness, we must conclude that MOSES WAS CHANGED. A spiritual work had taken place in him, sin was blotted out - "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." [Psalm 32:1]. And now Moses was able to appear and commune with Christ concerning His "decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." [Luke 9:31]. But the point for now, Moses was there, on the mount with our Lord.

We glean a thought from the passage in Revelation 6:9-11, concerning the fifth seal. There we find the souls under the altar (not up with Christ, sharing His glory and throne), and what are they doing? Waiting and crying out, "How long, O lord?" That lets us know that you have emotions in the next world, with the departed spirits....They...questioned how long it would be before the end would come to their waiting there...and it reads on, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth." ...and they were ministered unto, for white robes were given unto them. New degrees of righteousness, deeper love, more forgiveness, ever more to be like HIM. Though they were anxious for some more progress, perhaps even longing for resurrection's dawning hour, they were told to rest yet for a little season; for there were still some others that would become martyrs. However, to cheer them up, to bless them, they were ministered unto, becoming evidence of the Spirit's enrichment in the Unseen realm....

### Brother Eby also said something of the fifth seal which will be inserted here:

"We are the souls under the heavenly, spiritual altar who are crying out to the Lord, asking Him to bring forth true and righteous judgment, to vindicate through us and because of us, the mighty work He has wrought in our lives in preparation for the glorious manifestation of our sonship. Most all Bible students have misunderstood the cry of these souls from under the altar because of the faulty translation of the Greek word *ekdikeo* as *avenge* — that is, *retaliate with vengeance*. The first and primary meaning of the word, however, is '**validate**.' In every language words carry various shades of meaning, they do not generally mean just one thing in one way. Let us always remember that it is usage that best determines the meaning of a word!

"Now let me ask you. Have you ever felt yourself to be in the beautiful presence of Christ? Have you ever seen anyone in the spirit of the Christ who so loved the world, who gave Himself for the world, who reconciled the world, have you seen anyone in the spirit of that Christ threaten their tormentors with judgment, wrath, and personal revenge? Does the Christ who prayed in the agony of Calvary, '*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,*' now threaten vicious retaliation against those who oppose and persecute us? The very thought is an absurdity! It is Jesus Himself who taught us to love our enemies, bless them that hate us, and pray for them which persecute us. That is the spirit and law of the kingdom! And now — shall those whose self-life has finally been completely slain within them by the very testimony of Jesus Christ pray for Him to **avenge their blood** on them that dwell in the earth realm? **I don't think so!** In the light of these great truths it should be clear to every spiritual mind that the Greek word *ekdikeo* must carry here its primary meaning of **VINDICATE**.

"Let us now consider some synonyms of the word 'vindicate.' It means to exonerate, justify, substantiate, confirm, authenticate, attest, and validate. Vindication is the proof of the value of ones innocence, cause or correctness. Vindication is furthermore a validation! What these souls under the altar are crying out for is not revenge, but for God to make the price they have paid worthwhile, to show to those who dwell in the earth realm the true value and meaning of their lives, to validate their call, attainment, and place in God **BY MANIFESTING THROUGH THEM THE POWER AND GLORY OF CHRIST TO DELIVER AND TRANSFORM CREATION**. 'Validate our *blood* on them' is the heartfelt cry of their hearts! Blood stands for life, for the life is in the blood. **Validate our lives on them** — let there be a transforming manifestation and ministry of life out from us by which all men will see and know that we have paid this price to truly be sons of our Father in order to be the salvation of God unto all the ends of the earth!"

— End quote and continuing with *Ray Prinzing's, "Whither Have*

### *The Dead Gone":*

....But there is still further proof in the Word of God as we turn to 1 Peter 3:19-20, "By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometimes were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

"For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." 1 Peter 4:6,

So again we see there has been quite a lot of activity in the Hadean state. When Christ died upon the cross, and went into the unseen world, He went to both parts, Tartarus and Paradise, for He said to the believing man on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," but He also entered the strong man's domain and broke his grasp upon the souls of men, then making an open shew to all of His triumph. He was able to declare Himself as the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the whole creation, and now the great Redeemer, the One who would **ULTIMATELY** bring every one and everything back into harmony with the Godhead again.

Therefore we can state-- Christ not only manifests in this life of His love and mercy, but also in the next realm. And of a truth, we believe that after the great times of judgment have passed, and all sin is conquered completely, then in radiant glory God will reign supreme in the age of the ages, while we fellowship with Him in that blessed harmony. So we see that the present Hadean state is only a step toward greater manifestations of glory, when we shall come sinlessly into the age of the ages.

## **Life in the Unseen World**

Physical death therefore can only separate us from an earthly body, we die out to this life, but we become more alive to the next state, the Hadean state. This next state will be one of two things, either becoming a place for further discipline, the process of judgment, or it can become a place of further growth and development into spiritual perfection.

No doubt many of those in Tartarus will have learned their lesson by the hour of the judgment before God's great white throne, and they will have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and won't need any further discipline. Others will need additional and severer correction, and so will pass on to the lake-of-fire experience for their additional purgings.

The day of Christ cannot fully consummate until that hour when all has been subdued and fully reconciled to God, so, until that time when the Godhead shall become all in all, Christ is still the Mighty Saviour, yesterday, today, and for the ages. And, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." [Philippians 1:6]. Yes, He that has begun a good work in you will continue until it is brought to perfection, and a death to the physical body cannot thwart progress, since Christ holds the keys of death and hades, and HE is Victor over them both.

1 Peter 4:6, "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead..." This word "preached" is the same as the word used when Paul declared, "We preach Christ crucified..." Thus, also, the good news was heralded to those spirits in prison. For what purpose? That they might be judged according to men in the flesh. There was a judging taking place which He preached. What a revival that must have been - and it was successful, for we read that while they were judged according to the flesh, "they were QUICKENED according to God in the spirit." So, you say, that must be a doctrine of second chance? NEVER! Salvation is never by chance, not first chance or second chance, it is only, and always, by the grace of GOD. God's gifts are never by chance. It was not chance that nailed Him to the cross. It was LOVE that foreordained the whole plan of redemption, and is now working it out to its glorious completion.

But consider also, though love will eventually subdue and conquer all, what a heat and fire some will have to endure before they finally yield to the love of the Saviour. Does not the same thing portray itself even in people today? The same boys that never darkened a church door in peace time suddenly find themselves crying out for mercy from God while they huddle in a foxhole on the battle front. What brought all of this about? Might we infer that the Lord brought a little pressure to bear on them, until they would turn and surrender to Him? Truly we serve a God who has specially designed His "ways and means committees" that can gain their attention, put a bend in their pathway, and draw them unto Himself. And we find that He is a mite difficult to ignore, when He is applying the pressure. He said He would "Draw all men unto Me." [John 12:32]. The Greek word for "draw" is "helko", which Strong's Concordance gives to mean: TO DRAW. Resistance might make for dragging, but surrender will come, and then we are simply drawn unto Him. "Draw me, we will run after Thee." [Song of Solomon 1:4]. Praise God!

## **Believers Become Ministering Spirits**

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. [Revelation 14:13]. Those who "die in the Lord" obviously refer to those believers which have yielded their life to Christ, their will is His, and they acknowledge Him as sovereign LORD of their life. Total allegiance, they belong to Him! Then there are two words to be noted: labours" and "works," for they rest from their labours, but their works do follow them. The Greek word for "labours" used here is "kopos" meaning: a beating, wearying out work; and bespeaks of the toil of our earthly pain and travail. While the word "works" is "ergo" which means: acts, deeds, doings; and bespeaks of one's ministry as well. Thus we see that physical death releases us from all the toil and pain of the body, but the true call upon us, that ministry

which He has imparted to us, FOLLOWS US into the realms beyond, where, at His direction, we might continue to serve Him, in a greater expression, to His glory.

Hebrews 1:14 speaks of His messengers, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

As John received his tremendous revelation concerning things to come, "When I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel (messenger) which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and OF THY BRETHREN the prophets, and of them which keep the saying of this book: worship God." [Revelation 22:8-9].

We know that we are "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses..." [Hebrews 12:1], those whom the Lord uses to encourage and strengthen us. There is that blessed communion and fellowship of the saints - however, we do not worship them, nor idolize them, for we would look only "unto Jesus the Author and the Finisher of our faith," [Hebrews 12:2], and let Him provide the help we need through whomever He chooses. Yet it is a tremendous comfort to know that these godly men and women who have gone on before us, are also used in our upbuilding, that we might follow on to know the Lord in His fullness.

## **Conclusion**

We are now living in a time of pressure unparalleled in all history. Yet may the Lord use this to draw many closer to Himself, before more heat is turned on, more pressure applied. May He speedily perfect that which concerneth us. Yet if it so be, that He does call us to Himself by the way of the grave, we know that this is not a hindrance to our progressive development into His likeness, for beyond the veil the work continues. We know not the hour of His appearing - it may be soon enough that many of us will not have to enter that Hadean realm, if we are looking for Him, waiting for Him. He will appear unto His own, and change their mortal bodies, fashion them anew like unto His glorious body, bringing them into immortality, incorruption, the fullness of LIFE. He holds the keys of both death and Hades - HE is conqueror over all, may He indeed be "LORD OF ALL" in our personal life, so that we might enter into the next age with Him, rejoicing in His purpose and plan for the Kingdom.

However, if He tarries, and we, or our loved ones do go by the way of the grave, we know that this does not hinder our progression, and when He does return, He will bring all of us with Him, and together we shall serve Him. Truly, IN HIM IS LIFE, and we need not fear death any longer. Amen!

## **THE RADIANCE OF HIS LIGHT**

By Ray Prinzing

Beyond the veil of mortal frame  
The radiance of His light,  
Doth now the glorious truth proclaim  
He conquers all our night.  
And the shadows of the present  
Can never dim the view,  
Since Christ, the veil in two did rent,  
And light came shining through.  
And so although we walk the path  
That leads beyond the veil,  
We rest secure in Him who hath  
The power to prevail.

For Christ, the Light illumines the way  
Of holiness so pure,  
Empowering us to take the prey  
Which darkness would obscure.  
And so it matters not even now  
Which side the veil we stand,  
The Light eternal doth endow  
His own to understand.  
And walking in the way He leads  
Grows brighter day by day,  
Since light the darkness supersedes, Forevermore to stay.  
And if it be that Paradise  
Shall be my stepping-stone,  
In faith I'll rest until the hour  
I stand before His throne.

— End quote

We pray that *To Where Shall The Grass And Flower Fall?* has served to bless and brought a greater understanding to all who read it.

Some may still fail to see that *hell/hades* can be either bliss or torment. We know, of course, that **the religious persuasion of “HELL”** is so ingrained into our minds that it is almost impossible to see that is neutral. It is like a clay vessel with a lid. It can hold a number of things. The vessel is simply a container, a holding place, a retainer and has no will or power of itself. It is subject to whoever has power over it, and the *Lord* of that pitcher can fill it with things like boiling water, ice water, sand, food scraps, salt, pepper, flour, or anything else of His choosing. It can also be left empty. Regardless of its contents, or lack thereof, the vessel can be called *hell* or *hades*; for inside the pitcher is imperceptible. However, if the lid is removed, the contents can be seen. Therewith, the vessel would no longer be called *hell* or *hades*.

And so it is with a spiritual revelation, the manifestation of the sons of God, or the resurrection. Each reveals everything hidden in *hades*.

We so glad that death and hell are cast into the lake of fire so *there will be no more death, no more tears, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, and all the former things pass away as all things are made new in that wonderworking lake that burns with judging, purifying, consuming fiery, transforming brimstone — Godfire!* Isn't this a much greater narrative than Jesus losing 98% of humanity that was given to Him? So, please dispense with the manmade hell of eternal torment and rejoice in knowing that Jesus will accomplish what He was sent to do, which is most assuredly to save **ALL!**

**So be it according to He who is the Truth – the Living Word that makes all free!**

Elwin R. Roach

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