

Additional Notes for GP Lesson 21
1 Peter 3:18-22

In our discussion last week, we noted that 1 Peter 3:19-20 are challenging for Bible interpreters and scholars.

KJV: “by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime 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.”

NLT: “So he went and preached to the spirits in prison – those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood.”

MEV: “by whom He also went and preached to the spirits in prison, who in times past were disobedient, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.”

The two challenges are these:

1. Who are the spirits?
2. What did He preach?

This led us to the discussion of the four theories that we reviewed last week. When we discussed the 4th theory. See below the notes from last week:

“The fourth theory says the ‘spirits in prison’ are wicked beings and Old Testament believers. Those who hold this view say that Christ descended into hades between His death and resurrection to make an announcement to all wicked spirits, and to release the Old Testament saints being kept there in a special compartment or space. Paul declares that Jesus “descended first into the lower parts of the earth” and “led captivity captive” (Ephesians 4:8-10). Some Bible scholars see a dual purpose for our Lord’s descent into hades. They say He first announced to fallen angels that He had conquered sin and paid its penalty. Then, contending that the believers of the ages before Calvary were not fully forgiven until Christ had presented His sacrifice, they maintain that He went to them immediately after his death to take them to heaven. This view can be held only if one is convicted that the ‘compartment’ theory of hades is biblical, and that Old Testament saints were not permitted to enter heaven until Jesus had died on the cross.”

That led to the need for additional notes to answer those two questions and to discuss the compartment teaching. Let’s look at the ‘compartment’ interpretation based on scriptures.

In the Old Testament, hell or hades is the Hebrew word ‘Sheol.’ It is translated as grave, hell, or pit. It means the unseen world, the state or abode of the dead, and it equivalent to the Greek word ‘Hades’ which word in use in the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, hell or hades is the Greek word 'Hades' which means the house of hades, the abode of the dead itself. In most uses in the N.T, it is rendered as 'hell.' The Greek conception of Hades was that of a locality receiving into itself all the dead but divided into two regions: one a place of torment and the other of blessedness. This pagan Greek view should not be transferred to the New Testament. The New Testament teaching is based on the Old Testament 'Sheol.'

Parable of the Lost Soul – Luke 16:18-31. (READ) Many scholars believe that Jesus is relating an actual event rather than a parable. But it is included in so many writings as a parable. In reality, it would not matter whether it is a parable or an actual event. It does not distract from the truth of the teaching.

The parable in Summary:

- The rich man had everything necessary for comfort in this life. Lazarus did not even have the bare necessities in this life.
- Both men die and the situation is completely reversed. Lazarus has every comfort imaginable and the rich man becomes a beggar in misery.
- The rich man, now the beggar, seeks assistance from the one he had refused assistance to in this life, and now, it is refused him. There are multiple torments in hell. The fire, the thirst, the remembrance of deeds both done and undone.
- The man so unconcerned with others in this life now is vitally concerned. He desires Lazarus to be sent with the message of salvation to his five brothers.
- The Lord is in effect telling us that we can endure all kinds of discomfort and hardship in this fleeting, brief life so that we might be accounted worthy to escape the suffering eternally, in the life to come. He is also teaching a concern for our fellow man while we have opportunity to render assistance.
- At that time of Jesus telling of this event, hell was divided into two compartments: Upper Sheol or Upper Hades- also called paradise or Abraham's bosom. Lower Sheol or Lower Hades- the place of torment.
- There was a great gulf between the upper and lower parts.
- Upper Sheol was a place of comfort for the righteous dead.
- Lower Sheol was a place of torment for the wicked dead. In lower Sheol there is fire, thirst, remembrance of actions done and undone. The wicked are not destroyed. They have their memory, their senses, and they cannot get out of the place they have been confined to, and they cannot communicate with the living.

Facts about Lazarus:

1. He was a beggar full of sores which the dogs licked, v. 20-22.
2. He laid at the rich man's gate to beg for the crumbs of his table, v. 21.
3. He died and his body was buried, v. 22.
4. His soul and spirit were carried by the angels to paradise, v. 22.
5. He was with Abraham and all the redeemed, v. 23.
6. He was in comfort: no hell, no torment, no crying for mercy, no regrets of the past, and no thirst or punishment in hell, v. 23-25.

7. He retained soul and spirit faculties – capable of enjoyment of eternity with God, v. 24-26.

Facts about the Rich man:

1. He was clothed in purple and fared sumptuously every day, v. 19.
2. He died and his body was buried, v. 22.
3. His soul went to hell (hades/sheol), v. 23.
4. He was in torment, v. 23-25, 28.
5. He possessed eyes that could see and distinguish people, v. 23.
6. He cried for mercy and begged for Lazarus to bring a drop of water to cool his tongue, v. 24.
7. He still had a tongue, eyes, memory, voice, reasoning abilities, concern for his brethren, and all other soul passions and spirit faculties.

Facts about this story:

1. The rich and the poor must prepare for the next life (Accept Christ) or be lost in the next life (eternity).
2. The rich and the poor will both die and be buried.
3. The saved are carried by angels into paradise which was then in the lower part of the earth, Matt. 12:40 and Ps. 16:10,
Matt. 12:40 – “For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.”

Ps. 16:10 – “For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your holy one to rot in the grave.”

But Since the work of Christ:

Eph. 4:8-10 – “That is why the Scriptures say, ‘When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people.’ Notice that it says, “he ascended.” This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. And the same one descended is the one who also ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.”

Heb. 2:14-15 – “Because God’s children are human beings – made of flesh and blood – the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.”

The righteous go to heaven:

2 Cor. 5:8 – “Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord.”

Phil. 1:21-24 – “For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better. But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So, I really don’t know which is better. I’m torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live.”

Heb. 12:22-23 – “No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels is a joyful gathering. You have come to the assembly of God’s firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have not been made perfect.”

Rev. 6:9-11 – “When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of all who had been martyred for the word of God and for being faithful in their testimony. They shouted to the Lord and said, “O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you judge the people who belong to this world and avenge our blood for what they have done to us?”

4. The unsaved go to hell when they leave their bodies, v. 23.
 5. Only God can put one into hell, v. 22-32.
 6. Souls are immortal in heaven and hell, v. 22-32.
 7. Fire and torment are in the present and eternal hell, v. 22-32.
 8. Unsaved people are confined in hell until the judgment, v. 26.
 9. Satan, angels, demons, and men will be put into eternal hell, Matt. 8:29; 25:41; Jude 6-7.
- Matt. 8:29 – “They began screaming at him, “Why are you interfering with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before God’s appointed time?”

Matt. 25:41 – “Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.’”

Jude 6-7 – “And I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged, God has kept them securely chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the great day of judgment. And don’t forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God’s judgment.”

It can be said that this literal story is about two beggars: one begged in this life, the other in the life to come.

False teachers will attempt to say that this story represents the Jews and Gentiles, in hopes to do away with the reality of eternal hell and eternal punishment or even the reality of a temporary hell or eternal torment.

Jesus is declaring in plain terms the reality of immortality of the soul, the consciousness of souls after leaving the body, the fact of different places for the righteous and the wicked between death and the resurrection of the body and the truth of torment for the wicked and bliss for the righteous.

Parable of the Lost Soul or Parable of the Rich Man & Lazarus

Luke 16:19-31

In the Center of the Earth:

Abraham's Bosom
or Paradise

