

1. **Life After Death** - Awareness of life after death will influence our life before death, which will influence our life after death.

At Death:- Ec 12:7 *Then shall the dust [out of which God made man's body] return to the earth as it was, & the spirit shall return to God Who gave it..(Amp)* - Our Make-up = spirit, soul & body (1Th 5:23) of which the body is mortal & dies but our immortal spirit & soul live on & return to God who decides our destiny.

cf. Jesus on the cross, Lk 23.46...*Jesus..said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'"*

2. **Our Destiny after Death**

Old Testament (OT, up to Christ's resurrection)

- people who died, went to 'Sheol' (Heb. = 65x in OT)

- KJV mistranslates it 'Hell' & also call it 'the pit' or 'the grave' (eg. Dt 32.22, Nu 16.30 & Ge 44.31)

The Righteous

eg. Jacob in Gen 37.35^{RSV}... *I [Jacob] shall go down to Sheol ['the grave' KJV] to my son, mourning;* Abraham (Gen 25.8, cf. Lk 16.23); Job (Job 14.10-14); the Psalmist Ps 49.15 etc..

The Unrighteous:- Ps 9:17^(RSV) *The wicked shall depart to Sheol ['hell' KJV], all the nations that forget God.-* 'forget' (Heb. oblivious to, ignore)

- Gk. equivalent = Hades (10x in NT eg. Lk16.23^{NKJV} *And being in torments in Hades, the rich man lifted up his eyes & saw Abraham afar off, & Lazarus in his bosom.*) - hi-lights a separation of the 2 ie. at least 2 levels.

3. **Location of Sheol/ Hades**

- many references to going **down** to it, eg. Ge 37.35; Num 16.31-33^{RSV} Korah, Dathan, Abiram *went down alive into Sheol; & the earth closed over them, & they perished from the midst of the assembly.*

Exact Location:- Jesus had a short visit to fulfil prophesy as the Messiah (Ps 16.10, Acts 2.23-32^{RSV} ³¹*he foresaw & spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.*)

- between His death & resurrection for 3 day & 3 nights (Mt 12.38-40 *For as Jonah was 3 days & 3 nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be 3 days & 3 nights in the heart of the earth.*)

- in the heart (Gk. middle, centre) of the earth.

4. **Description of Sheol/ Hades**

- Dt 32.22 '*lowest Hell (sheol)*' - suggest levels

cf. Lk 16.19-31...²²*The beggar died & was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died & was buried; ²³& in hades, being in torments, he looked up & saw Abraham afar off, & Lazarus in his bosom, ²⁴& cried, saying, Have pity on me, father Abraham, & send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water, & cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. ²⁵Abraham answered, Son, remember that you, in your lifetime, received good things, & Lazarus received evil things; but now he is comforted, & you are in torments. ²⁶& besides all this, between us & you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us. ²⁷& he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, ²⁸for I have 5 brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment....*

Top Level:- 'Abraham's bosom' for the righteous dead - place of comfort.

Middle Level:- for the conscious, unrighteous dead.

- far below top level with no passing between levels - place of relentless torment & flame (v23-24)

Bottom Level 2 Pe 2:4 *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell & delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵& did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of 8 people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;*

'**hell**' Gk. 'TARTAROO' or 'deepest abyss (bottomless pit) of Hades'

- spirits who sinned (fallen angels) in Noah's day imprisoned here until Rev 9 judgement, when released.

General Description:- place of captivity, a prison with bars, gates & keys (2 Sam 22.6, Job 17.16, Ish 38.10, Mt 16.18, Rev 1.18)

- had the power to hold souls = death's sting & grave's (Hades) victory (1 Co 15.54-57)
- Devil had the **keys** (dominion), given in Eden - Devil's HQ (Mt 16.18)
- Ps 49:15^{RSV} *But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me*

A **redeeming** price had to be paid by God to effect release - all the OT saints look forward to that day

5. **Jesus' Visit to Hades**

- for 3 days/nights between His death & resurrection (Mt12.40)
 - Hades had no power to hold Him as He was sinless. **NB.** His resurrection proved He was sinless & hence the Son of God (Ro 1:4^{NKJV} *...declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*)
 - On the cross, Jesus spoke to the thief & called it **Paradise**
- Lk 23.43... *Today you shall be with Me in Paradise.*
- this would refer to the top level which he visited to encourage & complete the faith of the OT saints.
 - His death on the cross secured victory over the Devil, man's redemption & release from Sheol/Hades

Preached to The Imprisoned Spirits (demons)

1 Pet 3.19.. *He went & preached to the spirits in prison; ²⁰Who, in the days of Noah, were disobedient; but God in his mercy kept back the punishment, while Noah got the ark ready...*

- 'preached' = declared (not evangelised) His victory over His enemies at the lower level.

Took Hades' keys from Satan, unlocking the prison gates to free captives, Rev 1:18. *I am He who lives, & was dead, & behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades & of Death.*

6. **His Resurrection**

- ^{KJV}'led captivity captive', Eph 4:8-9 *When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, & He gave gifts to men. ⁹Now surely this 'He ascended' implies that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth.*

ie. ascends with the righteous dead in Paradise, to heaven

- they collect new resurrected bodies on the way up (Mt 27:52 *& the graves were opened; & many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³& coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city & appeared to many.*)
- appears that Paradise itself ascends. cf. 2Co 12:4.. *he (Paul) was caught up into Paradise & heard inexpressible words...*

Post Cross saints:- Now *'to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord'* (2 Cor 5.8)

- go directly to heaven when they die.

Our Resurrection:- is at the Rapture (1Thes 4.14-17, 1Co 15.51-57), accompanied by the 1st judgement for the house of God at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2Co 5.10) & rewards are given (1Co 3.11-15, Rev 22.12)

7. **Hell (Gk. Gehenna)** - its role now takes centre Stage

- From Heb. root 'ge-**hinnom**' = a valley in Jerusalem
- Jer 32.35 place of child sacrifice in the fire to Molech ie. place of torment.
- Deep narrow steep-sided ravine (inescapable) which was the cesspit of Jerusalem.
- into it was cast smelly rotting rubbish, dead animal & criminal bodies who were eaten by worms
- A fire was kept burning to consume Jerusalem's rubbish

Gehenna = Place of fire, a lake of fire, hell fire (Mt 5.22, 18.9, Re 19.20, 20.10-15).

- defined as Outer darkness & a place of weeping & gnashing of teeth (Mt 25.30)

- implies total hopelessness & separation from God's presence
- place of everlasting torment, despair & distress (2 Th1.8-9, Re 20.10)
- no reference of anybody going there until the 2nd coming of Christ.

8. Christ's Return To Earth (Mt 25.31-46)

- will bring a judgement at the throne of His Glory:-
- **on the 'goats'** resulting in everlasting punishment in everlasting fire (v41,46)
- this is not Hades as Hades is a temporary holding place for the dead & will itself, be cast into this lake of fire at the end of Jesus' 1000 year reign on earth (Re 20.7-15).
- Hades is the forerunner to the lake of fire & has similar characteristics.
- the 'goats' will follow the beast (antichrist) & his false prophet who are the first people cast into this lake at Jesus' return. Re 19.19-20 *And I saw the beast & the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against Him who sits upon the horse & against his army. ²⁰Then the beast was taken, & with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast & those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*
- **the 'sheep'** will inherit Kingdom described as Jesus' millennial reign on earth from Jerusalem. (see Rev 20)

9. Jesus' Millennial (1000 years) Reign (Re 20.1-10)

- following Jesus' return to earth, Satan is bound in the lower level of Hades for 1000 years & then cast into Gehenna.

Re 20:10 *The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire & brimstone where the beast & the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day & night forever & ever.*

10. Final Judgement (The Great White Throne)

Re 20.11 *And I saw a great white throne, & One who sat thereon; from His presence fled earth & sky, & no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great & small, standing before the throne; & books were opened, & another book-the Book of Life-was opened; & the dead were judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the books. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead in it. And death & hell delivered up the dead in them. And each one of them was judged according to their works. ¹⁴Then Death & Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

- Death, Hades & all its' occupants are cast into gehenna (14-15) NB. Death & Hades are also spirits (Re 6.8).
- all who receive the mark of the beast shall join them (Re 14.9-11)
- this judgement is the resurrection of condemnation, Jn 5:28 *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹& come forth; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, & those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*
- they receive immortal bodies having teeth Mt 25.30, a body Mt 5.29, hands, feet & eyes Mk 9.43-48 etc.

11. The Plan of Salvation - Ac 3:20 *And He shall send Jesus Christ...²¹whom heavens must receive until the time of restoration of all things.*

- Jesus died to restore us back to our original estate - with immortal bodies, in eternal relationship with Him, ruling on a restored earth with Him - saved from the penalty & consequences of sin as described above.