

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth
The Spirit World Lesson #1 Paradise and Hell
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In this lesson we are going to look at two places in the Spirit World. The 1st place that we will look at is called Abraham's Bosom or Paradise and the 2nd place is called Hell. The reason that we will look at these two places together is that they are both spoken of in a key passage that deals with both of them. Remember that we have already discussed who goes to these places and when in the previous lesson of this series. So let us begin our study of these two places.

Where are these two places located?

Both of these places are located in the heart of the earth. Now to prove this we have to compare scripture with scripture which is the only way to study God word effectively. First we see in **Matthew 12:40** that Jesus said he would be in the heart of the earth for 3 days and 3 nights. As we saw in the previous lesson when he died on the cross he told the repentant thief that he would be with him in paradise that day (**Luke 23:43**) therefore we know that paradise is in the heart of the earth. Jesus is also said to have went to hell also in **Acts 2:25-31** and with the fact that hell and Abraham's Bosom were separated by a great gulf this places them both in the heart of the earth.

Key Passage for Abraham's Bosom (Paradise) and Hell : (Luke 16:19-31)

The first thing that people try and do to get around this passage is to say that it is a parable. Therefore they can say that if it is a parable then hell is not a literal place and Jesus was just using it in a figurative sense. But the truth is that this passage is not a parable. Below are 3 reasons why this is not a parable.

- 1) The scripture does not say that it is a parable as it normally does when introducing a parable
- 2) Jesus used proper names of people in this passage which he does not in parables.
- 3) There is a warning that the people will call the subject of hell a parable in **Ezekiel 20:47-49**.

Characteristics of Paradise

- It was a place for the Old Testament saints to go when they died. The two people in the passage that are mentioned are Lazarus and Abraham. (**Luke 16:23-25**)
- It was a place of comfort (**Luke 16:25**)
- It is separated from Hell by a great gulf and no one could go from one to the other (**Luke 16:26**)

Characteristics of Hell

- It is a place where lost people go from Adam until the present.
- It is a place of fire and torment (**Luke 16:23,25**)
- It is said to have gates (**Matthew 16:18**) and these gates keys (**Revelation 1:18**)
- It is also said to have bars (**Jonah 2:1-7**). Note that Jonah is said to cry out of the belly of Hell and he says also there are bars around him. Obviously Jonah died and was resurrected which makes him a type of Christ (**Matthew 12:40**).

Was Paradise Moved?

In **2 Corinthians 12:1-4** we see that Paul says that he knew a man who was caught up to the 3rd Heaven, which is where God is, but he also says that the man was caught up into Paradise. So in Luke Paradise is in the heart of the earth but in 2 Corinthians 12 Paradise is said to be in the 3rd Heaven.

How do we explain this?

In **Matthew 27:50-53** we see that there was a resurrection of some of the Old Testament saints that followed the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. In **Ephesians 4:7-11** Jesus is said to have led captivity captive when he ascended on high. Therefore Jesus moved those in Paradise to heaven when arose from the grave and some of the saints also had a physical resurrection.

The reason that the Old Testament saints could not go to heaven before the resurrection of Jesus Christ is because Jesus had not shed his blood and risen again. Even though they had sacrificed according to the law this was only like a down payment because it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goat should take away sins (**Hebrews 10:4**). This is why they are referred to as being captive, it is not that they were being punished for it was a place of comfort as we have already seen, but they were waiting on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now when a saved person dies after the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the church age they are said to be in the presence of God immediately. (**2 Corinthians 5:8**)

Therefore the compartment where the Old Testament Saints were held in the heart of the earth is now empty. The Old Testament saints have been taken to heaven and that is where saved people now go when they die.

