



SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE

Heaven and Hell, The Reality Of Life After Death, Pt. 3

Pastor John Riggs

Main Scriptures:

- 1 Corinthians 15:50–58
- Hosea 13:14
- John 3
- 1 Thessalonians 4
- Luke 16:19–31
- Psalm 88:3–5; 16:8–11; 63:9; 31:3
- Proverbs 30:16
- Isaiah 14:9
- Acts 2:25–31
- Revelation 1:17–18
- 2 Peter 2:4
- Luke 23:42–43
- Matthew 12:40

Key Points:

- Flesh and blood, or perishable bodies, cannot inherit the kingdom of God; a transformation is necessary.
- Not all will experience death; some will be changed instantaneously at the last trumpet.
- The resurrection will result in an imperishable, incorruptible body, refuting the idea of annihilation.
- Death is ultimately overcome by victory through Jesus Christ, not defeat.
- The church needs to be kingdom-minded and adapt its approach to reach the broader community, moving beyond a narrow 'cowboy church' identity.
- The Bible provides sufficient revelation about life, death, and the eternal state, impacting present living.

- Secular 'eternal oblivion' and Christian 'soul sleep' are presented as false teachings about the afterlife.
- The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) illustrates full consciousness and distinct states in the afterlife before Christ's resurrection.
- The terms 'Sheol' (Hebrew) and 'Hades' (Greek) both refer to the abode of the dead, where consciousness is maintained.
- Sheol is the underworld, the realm of departed spirits, distinct from the physical grave.
- The term 'pit' is used interchangeably with Sheol in scripture, indicating a similar destination for the dead.
- David's writings in Psalm 16 prophetically speak of Christ's resurrection and victory over Sheol.
- Hades is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Sheol, referring to the abode of departed spirits.
- Tartarus is a specific place of gloomy darkness for fallen angels, distinct from Hades/Sheol.
- Gehenna, associated with the Valley of Hinnom, symbolizes a place of fire and judgment, becoming a descriptor for hell.
- The lake of fire is the ultimate destination for the unrighteous, representing the second death.
- Jesus' descent into the 'heart of the earth' for three days and three nights is a sign of his victory over death and Hades.
- Before Christ's resurrection, Sheol likely had separate compartments for the righteous and unrighteous, separated by a chasm.
- Christ's ascension involved descending into the lower regions of the earth, triumphing over spiritual rulers and authorities.
- Christians fight from a position of victory, not defeat, because Christ has already triumphed over death and the enemy.

NOTES:

Question and Answer: (answers provided on pages 19-20 of the study)

Q: Can our current physical bodies inherit the Kingdom of God?

Q: What does the Bible say about the resurrection and the body we will have in eternity?

Q: What is 'eternal oblivion' and is it a biblical concept?

Q: What is 'soul sleep' and is it biblical?

Q: What does the parable of the rich man and Lazarus teach about the afterlife?

Q: What do the terms 'Sheol' and 'Hades' mean in the Bible?

Q: What is Sheol according to the Bible?

Q: Did the righteous and unrighteous go to the same place in the Old Testament?

Q: What is the relationship between Sheol and Hades?

Q: What is Tartarus and who is it for?

Q: What is Gehenna?

Q: What is the 'lake of fire'?

Q: What did Jesus mean by being 'three days and three nights in the heart of the earth'?

Q: What was the state of the dead before Jesus' resurrection?

Q: What does it mean that Christ 'descended into the lower regions of the earth'?

Q: How should Christians view their spiritual battles?

Q: What is the significance of the thief on the cross asking Jesus to remember him?

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Sermon Transcript:

Well, how are you enjoying so far our study, our new study in a series called Heaven or Hell, the Reality of Life After Death. Yeah, I'm excited about it as well this morning. Now, we have a lot of things to cover today as normal, but today we may have a little extra. So, um I'm going to try to move fairly quickly through um the scriptures that I have today. Not because um they're not important or they're worthy of our time to spend on them, but because I want you to see so many different passages in understanding what God has revealed to us by his spirit that are for us and for our children concerning this whole entire theology of heaven and hell and the true reality of life after death.

Now, I want to begin with a passage this morning. You don't have to turn there, but you're welcome to because we won't be there long. But please write this down. It is found in Paul's letter to the first his first letter to the church of Corinth, and it's in chapter 15. And I want to read to you eight verses this morning, 50- 58 as we begin and continue with this study. He's going to be quoting also out of the Old Testament prophet uh Hosea. Hosea chapter 13 verse 14. We'll we'll we'll have a section of that that we're going to mention this morning as Paul actually quotes from Hosea out of the Old Testament. In 1 Corinthians chap 15 50, we're going to begin there through 85 58. Paul says, "I tell you this, brothers." This is important. It's for our knowledge, for our information. The Holy Spirit is revealing these truths to us for our benefit, for our for our our understanding and for our children. He says, "Blood, flesh and blood, that is the human body, flesh and blood, notice, cannot inherit the kingdom of God." That's really what he tells Nicodemus in John chapter 3. He's trying to let him know some things here about this reality. He goes on and says, "Nor does perishable," that means those things that are wasting away like your uh the the the vegetables that you've picked out of your garden. How many of you got some really good tomatoes this year? Five of you actually are what we would call good gardeners, right? I don't believe you brought me any. Just saying. Just saying. Oh, you did? Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know. Well, I stand corrected, everyone. And I was uh blessed to receive those tomatoes. Yeah, I'm always a little leery when somebody brings me things with no name. I'm just saying. Okay. I didn't get too sick on those tomatoes. Just saying. All right. Well, it's like that. You know, tomatoes when they're ripe and picked, they don't last very long. Um and this is what Paul is getting at. Perishable. That would be our body, right? The flesh and bone body that we have. It is perishable. And the perishable um does not inherit the imperishable. That means what is coming that will never fade, never rot, never decay. He says, "Behold," what a great word. "I tell you a mystery." Now, this is for our benefit, by the way. We shall not all sleep. Now, when you see the word sleep, that doesn't mean what you did last night for the handful of hours that you rested. When we see the word sleep here, Paul referencing this to those who have died. One of the reasons Paul makes this reference to sleep is because sleep is temporary. It is not final. Now death we know is is in a sense in our minds final. Paul says no. Let me tell you something about death. All who ever die are in a period that will not last forever. Their death that they experience will only be temporary. Now, from those from the beginning of time, it's going to be much longer than for those that die in these last days. But nonetheless, Paul says very importantly, he considers this death to be sleep. Why? Because it's not the end. It's not final. It only is a temporary part of our existence. So he talks about this sleep, but he says, "But we sh so not all are going to sleep." Isn't that incredible to think not every person will experience death? Is that not mind-blowing? I don't know about you, but I'm all for that. I would just assume, let's just go when Jesus comes. But we don't have a choice in that matter. But there will be those that do not die. And he says, "But we shall all be changed." Why is that? Because those that we're going to read about later in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 that are

actually caught up or the rapture, if you will, to be snatched up, their per their their body, this body corrupted by sin that is actually decaying and falling down and apart and aging, right? the one that you're spending so much money on to continue to keep it looking young. This body cannot put on the incorruptible. It cannot enter the kingdom of God. It can't because it's stained by sin and decay. And Paul makes it clear though, not all are going to die, but we're all going to be changed. In fact, the body that we're going to have, we can learn about in this section, which is not for today, is an incredible difference to what we have currently, although it's going to be very recognizable. We're going to learn more about that later. So, let's put a pin in that one. We'll come back to that. But he says we will all be changed. And look how fast this change will happen. It's not going to be like your aging process from birth to death. This change that Paul is speaking of is going to be an instantaneous change. Paul calls it a change in a moment in a twinkling of an eye. Now you see that. Did you see that? My eye twinkled. No, you probably couldn't even see that. That's how fast it was. So, it's going to be instantaneous this change that will happen. And then he gives us information about when this is going to happen. Paul says this incredible thing is going to take place at the last final trumpet. For the trumpet's going to sound and the dead shall be raised imperishable. This this this idea of annihilation, folks, is not biblical. I know it's prominent and popular in some circles within Christianity. It's not biblical. We'll get into that in more detail as we move forward. There's going to be a resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous. Everyone will be resurrected from the dead. And we shall be changed, Paul says, for this perishable body, this body that is aging and and falling apart and experiences sickness all from the corruption of sin of Adam, it's going to be changed. This body will put on imperishable. Isn't that encouraging to know? There's coming a day when the body that we will have, this body resurrected and changed, will be glorious in comparison to the one we now have. It will never ever it's not going to be tainted by sin any longer or the consequences of that sin. And Paul goes on and says, "And this mortal body must put on immortality." Isn't that what the world has been seeking for thousands of years? How can we defeat this enemy called death and live forever? The reality is we are all going to live forever, but not like many people assume. then shall come to pass the saying that is written. Remember, all things have been written for our instruction and for our benefit. And now he's going to quote to these believers in Corinth from the prophet Hosea out of the Old Testament. And he says, "And then this will be coming to pass when all this happens." And listen to this, Christian. This is very encouraging. Hosea says, "Death is swallowed up in victory, not defeat, but victory. Oh, death, where is your victory? Oh, death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin. And the power of sin is the law." That's how you came to know you were a sinner, by the law. The law itself is good, but the result of the law brought death. Because no man can ever, ever, ever, ever keep the law. It's impossible for us to keep the law. And that's why Jesus Christ came to fulfill the law, to do what we cannot do in and of ourselves. Isn't that good news? Wow. It's awesome. And then Paul says, "But thanks be to God who gives us victory through the Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore, my beloved brothers, and that includes the sisters as well, he says, "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Why? because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Now, last week in our study, I probably need to say it last time in our study because of who is going to be listening to this. Last time in our study in this series on heaven and hell, the reality of life after death, we set out to discover some things. We wanted to learn what the Bible has revealed to us about life after death. And we wanted to answer some questions that many have about this coming reality. We know there's lots of ideas out there. We know there's lots of imaginative thought about what happens after death. And you don't have to look very hard or very far to find an unbelievable assortment of things out there for you to consume. But we want

to know what the Bible says. We are a Bible church. By the way, I can't stress this enough. We are a Bible church. In these last days, Christian, please hear me. We need to be kingdom-minded people. We must understand that what God has called us to do encompasses all walks of life. All of them. We here in this church are a Bible believing, preaching, teaching and living church. That's what we are. You need to get this in your head and in your mind. You need to lay aside your concept of cowboy church because that pony has ridden over the horizon. >> It just has. We need to think differently in response to our calling and what God has given for us to do as a mandate in fulfilling the great commission. We need to get serious right now because of our name. We are alienating 90ome percentile of the population in Texoma. Think about that. If I had only the true dayworking cowboys stand up in this church, you would be blown away at how small that number is in this church and in every single cowboy church in this country. We need to think differently. And there is change coming. And I'm telling you this because we don't have time to play around. We got to get serious about what God's called us to do. Amen. >> And people need the Lord. We don't want to be telling 90ome percentile of our community, which I've heard once, I've heard a thousand times, well, I don't want to go there because I'm not a you know what. How crazy is this? How many of you in here, I know some of you would because you like motorcycles. How many of you honestly would go to a biker church? Not very many. Do you know why I wouldn't go to a biker church? cuz I'm not a biker. Do you not see the mindset? You wonder why we we we have to change? It's because we have to be obedient to God. The gospel is for everyone. Everyone. Okay, moving on. Here we go. Right back to it.

So, the Bible has not left us unaware, you all, about life, death, and the eternal state. Aren't you glad? Oh, I'm so thankful for that. But scripture has given us sufficient revelation. God, in other words, in his word has given us revelation so that we can know. We won't know everything, but we're going to have sufficient revelation to have a great grasp and understanding of what is yet to come. And because of what is yet to come, it impacts the way that we live right now in the present life that we've been given. Aren't you grateful for your gift of life? Amen. So God has given us sufficient revelation so that we can know what happens to believers and unbelievers who die. This is important.

Now among atheists and agnostics and others there is this prominent teaching out there. You're going to hear about it in university and other places. It is this thing that teaches what is called eternal oblivion. This is what they believe about their existence afterlife. They use the term eternal oblivion which refers to a nonexistence or nothingness when they die. It gives them a sense of comfort knowing that when they die there is no expectation of something coming that they don't know about. In other words, we just cease to exist. We unplug the computer or the television and the brain goes dead and all the consciousness is over and what we did in this life has absolutely no meaning or purpose whatsoever. It is a philosophical oh philosophy addresses this religious and scientific concept of one's consciousness upon death. There's also a false teaching in Christian circles. I'm not proud to say it, but it's true among Christian circles of what is called soul sleep. Soul sleep. You'll hear about it. This is believed and taught by some circles of Christianity, but primarily you'll also hear it in what is called the 7th Day Adventist Church. Now, their concept of belief when we read their their doctrinal statement in their general conference association material, here's what they say. Death is not complete annihilation. They got that part right. But let's read next. It is only a state of temporary uhoh unconsciousness while the person awaits resurrection. The Bible, they say, repeatedly calls this intermediate state sleep. Well, we've talked about why it's called sleep. Because it's not permanent. The soul, they say, has no conscious existence apart, think about

this, from the body. And no scripture, they say, no scripture, wrong answer. No scripture they say indicates that at death the soul survives as a conscious entity. Wow. What Bible translation are they reading? I know they read the translation of scripture that we read, but something's wrong in their interpretation and understanding of it.

So we last week looked at a scripture or a passage found in Luke's gospel chapter 16 19-31. You remember this. This is the story of that Jesus taught. Now Jesus was teaching this and he's using a story and he's going to illustrate something through teaching others about a meaning that they need to understand. He's going to teach this story. Some people say it's just parabolic language. It's just a parable. Yes. But here's the thing. Even if it's a parable, parables are to teach a spiritual truth. And so Jesus in Luke's gospel 16:1 19-31, he addresses some very important things about two different men. One by whom he even gives the name Lazarus. and they're they're two places that they would go after death. And he's showing the difference here between the righteous and the unrighteous. We found some fascinating truths as we've gone through this particular teaching of Jesus about what happens to people when they die. It reveals that number one, the location that we will go to, or let me put it this way, and I want to want to preface it by this. what we're looking at here in Luke's gospel account of the teaching of Jesus about these two individuals after death. Listen to me. It's very important and it's my belief as we go through here. I'm going to teach you why I think this is true. There's more than one belief. There's two beliefs about this, but I want to demonstrate to you why I believe this way. This is before Jesus Christ's death, his burial, and his resurrection and ascension. This is key. You got to understand this. this in the timeline of when Jesus is teaching this. And we're going to look at lots of scripture today to help you in your minds be able to understand what God has revealed to us about this reality.

Well, we understand that they go to the abode of the dead. And in this abode of the dead, we understand that they are fully conscious. And the place that they go is not just a spiritual place. It is a physical place. And then we learned that these men are fully totally 100% conscious. They have full consciousness. In fact, Lazarus goes to what is called Abraham's bosom and what the Jews refer to and tie together as paradise. And then this other gentleman who had basically everything in life and neglected the things that really mattered in pertaining to how he dealt with the less fortunate and so on so forth. And this is not a social gospel by the way. He goes to hell. But in hell we learn some incredible things. This man that's in hell, he expresses through his own language through the teaching of Jesus. He's in incredible torment there. And there are flames and fire there. And he is thirsty there. And he can physically see across this massive place, across this chasm that separates these two locations in one enormous abode. And he can see and remember and recognize. Think of this. He's able to even look at not a formless spirit, but he recognizes the man Lazarus who used to sit at his gate every day. We can recognize people after we die. Isn't that incredible? And he's remembering things and he says, "Hey, Abraham." Now he's communicating. He's not just He's speaking. He's communicating with Abraham and says, "Hey, Abraham, I'm in torment over here. Would you please get Lazarus to come over? I can see that he's in great comfort and in great peace and he is in fellowship. I can see that. But I'm alone and in torment over here in this place." He goes, "Would you please have Lazarus just not Laz? Yeah, Lazarus dip his finger." Now he's talking about appendages. his finger physical things which we're seeing this demonstrated his finger into water have him come to where I am because I'm in great anguish would he just take whatever water is left and just douse it on my tongue and sizzle some of this anguish away so he's feeling he's seeing he's communicating and then Abraham is going to speak back to him and he's listening and he's hearing and there's a conversation going on. If you're spiritually

asleep, you don't converse with other people. There's a conversation going on here. And then he even remembers, too. He's like, "Oh my goodness, I've got a family back on Earth." And then he remembers his brothers. He even gives the account of the number of brothers he has. And he says, "Hey, please, if you can't do this, would you go to my brother? send Lazarus back from the dead and have him go to my father's house. Not assuming his father's alive, but his father's house. Speaking of his brothers, he says, "Would you please send Lazarus back and please warn my brothers about this place and tell them so what? They will not come to this place of torment." It doesn't sound like we're sleeping to me. And Abraham says, "Hey, they have Moses and the prophets. We're really probably speaking to a Jewish man here." In other words, we have Moses, the law, and we have the prophets. It's already been given. Let them hear Moses and the prophets. Because even if we sent a man back from the dead, they wouldn't believe. Doesn't sound like folks are sleeping to me. It sounds to me like there is full consciousness. In fact, when we get to the book of Revelation, we're going to look at some other scriptures here in a few weeks or maybe even next week. Lord willing, we're going to learn some things about what we'll be doing in heaven. And you remember, heaven is temporary because there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth. Christian. Is that not incredible? Oh my word. Wait till we get to that. And here we are learning these incredible things through the teaching of Jesus Christ, the eternal God, the second person of the triune Godhead. Don't you think Jesus might know a little something about what happens when people die? Yeah, he does.

And so this morning, what I would like for us to do is to look at some other things here. So we we've pretty much destroyed the idea, the theology, the philosophy of science and philosophers and religion that we just cease to exist upon death. We've also pretty much annihilated the whole concept of what some teach is soul sleep, that we just go into a state of like non-existence and we can't exist without the body. And therefore, we're in non-existence until the resurrection where we supposedly then have coherency once again. We're going to see why scripture teaches also in later uh places that this is not biblical. But you're going to hear it today. I want to share that with you so you can address that with others when you hear it. So you can give a good defense for why you believe what you believe. Okay, you ready to get started now? All right, here we go.

Now, as you read scripture, you're going to come across some very interesting words that are descriptive of what is called the abode of the dead. What I first want for us to do is to understand that we have the the scriptures written in different languages. We have primarily the Hebrew in the Old Testament. We have some Aramaic in the New Testament and then primarily Greek. Okay? So when you when you see a word like shol in the Old Testament, it is speaking of the abode of the dead. But when you come to the New Testament, we're reading a translation of Greek. And the Greek word there for shol is the same. It's the Greek word Hades. It's speaking of the abode of the dead. That way we can understand. I want to share that with you as well. And let's look at a few of these things real quick. Hades, if you will. Let's do shol first. It's called by definition. It is the Greek word shol. It's the underworld. It is the place to which people descend at death. Now, we know the body does what? When you die, you take the body and you put it in the ground in dust to dust, ashes to ashes. We return to the ground by which we were formed. Remember, Adam was formed from the dust of the earth. When you die, you were buried in the ground. Your body which is absent of your spirit lays in the grave. But what we're looking at with shol is not speaking of the grave. It's speaking of the underworld where the spirits of men go. In Psalm 88 3-5, I want to share this probably later, but Psalm 88 3-5. I'll try to repeat these. I'm so excited. I'm getting ahead of myself. So, I wish you

were as excited about this as I am. I hope you are. Oh, man. In Psalm 88 3-5, if you don't have time to get there, just pencil these things down and study them this week. Listen to this. For my soul is full of troubles and my life draws near to shol. This is David. I am counted among those who go down to the pit. See, there's another term here that he is associating with the word shol. It's the word pit. You'll see it in scripture. You'll see the word pit. Well, David is including the word pit in definition to be equal to shol. I am counted among those who go down to the pit. I am a man who has no strength, like one set loose among the dead. Like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more. For they are cut off from your hand. Here's Psalm 16 8-11. This is Listen to David here. I have set the Lord. That's Psalm 16, sorry, 8-11. I'm going to go fairly fast, so one of the reasons you can bring your Bibles, and I hope that you do, is because it is what we're all about here. But number two, don't don't feel embarrassed if you're struggling finding where we're going because we're going to be doing some long jumping. But the purpose of this is not to worry about whether your neighbor and you are in a competition. Although we men make everything a competition. I'll get there before he does. You watch. You know, I can say I know what you're thinking. My wife says, "I make everything a competition." Even taking a shower. I'll say, "I'll bet you I can do that in less than three minutes." It's true we do. But that's not what we're doing here. What we're doing is we're learning where things are in the Bible. It's just giving you a better understanding of the landscape of what we're trying to figure out. Kind of like hunting in the back country, the more you hunt the same place. The more you're familiar with the landmarks and where the water is and and all of these things, where the trails are and where the game hang out. You get familiar with it. Man, that's all we're trying to do is help you get familiar with the word of God. So, you just fumble through there. And if you can't find it, write it down. And here we are in Psalm. In Psalm 16:8-11, David says, "I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand." That sounds kind of strange. How is the Lord at David's right hand? Well, it may not be what's going on here. Let's go along here a little further. I shall not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices. My flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Shol. Where's the soul go according to David? Shol, the boat of the dead. Okay, thanks David. Appreciate that. Or let your holy one see corruption. What is corruption? That means decay. See, David here actually is speaking prophetically, as we're going to see here, about someone else. You make known to me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forever more. Isn't that awesome? What we're going to learn about here in a little bit is David is actually speaking prophetically of one who would come. Who's the one who will come? The one that will be the king that sits on his throne forever. Who is that going to be? That's going to be Jesus Christ. this one that God would not abandon his soul to shol or let his body see corruption. It's important. We also in Proverbs 30:16 read this. Shol the barren womb, the land never satisfied with water and the fire that never says enough. Isaiah 14:9. I'm going to go quickly so please forgive me. Shol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come. It rouses as shades to greet you all who are leaders of the earth. It raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations. Now speaking of shol, we know it's the underworld, the place where the dead would go. And listen, from the time of creation all the way through here, we understand according to the Bible that when people died, the righteous in the Old Testament, which were righteous by faith like Abraham or Noah, we understand that they were justified by righteousness, being by faith in God. The righteous in the Old Testament would go to Shol. The unrighteous when they died in the Old Testament would also go to Shol. But there's there's something going on here. They're not going to be going to the same place because the unrighteous are in torment. And as we've just read, the righteous will be in a state of peace. This is interesting. At least it is to me.

Now the word Hades, which is also translated several times as hell in the New Testament. Notice this. Hades is the Greek word for shol. It is the abode of the departed spirits. Speaking of the Greek terminology here, Hades like shol it is the it is the unseen world properly the unseen place the realm in which all dead reside the present dwelling place of all the departed. We're going to see that has changed and we're going to talk about the glorious victory of Jesus Christ. It is also called the grave, hell, place of torment. David, we're quoted here in Acts chapter 2:25 through 31. It's going to be a quote from Psalm. Let me let me go and read this to you. I saw the Lord always before me. It's what we were earlier, but let me read the whole thing. For he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoice. My flesh also will dwell in hope. For you have not abandoned my soul to Hades. or let your holy one see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life, but you um will make me full of gladness with your presence. In Revelation 17 and 18, we read John says, "When I saw him, that is Christ, I fell at his feet as though dead, but he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not. I am the first, the last, and the living one. I died and behold I am alive forever more and I have the keys of death and Hades or hell. We see the word grave oftentimes associated with both of these terms. We also will read of a place called Tartarus. We read about it in Peter's writing. It means to thrust down. It is a place of gloomy darkness. Let me read it to you out of second Peter 2:4. Let me just read these to you. Write them down if you want to study them later. For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell. The word hell there is actually the word Tartarus. I believe it's only used one time, Tartarus. And committed them to chains this place here, Tartarus, which is the abode of the dead. He says here, these angels, God has what? He has committed them to chains of gloomy darkness and to be kept until the judgment. The bottomless pit or the abyss. We read these words in the Bible. We want you to know some meanings of this so you're not confused when you read through scripture. The abyss or bottomless pit. It means um unfathomable depth and especially Jewish concept that is the home of the dead and of the evil spirits. In the New Testament, the word abusus, which is the word abyss, refers to a vast, immeasurable depth or chasm. It is often used to describe a place of confinement for evil spirits or a realm of chaos and destruction. The term conveys a sense of profound death and mystery often associated with the abode of the dead or the place of punishment. Gehenna. You ever seen the word gehenna in scripture? Well, there's the valley of henam. when you when you walk to on the uh the southern side of Jerusalem even today there's the valley where they used to practice very very very pagan idolatrous things including child sacrifice and it was done in the valley and god judged Israel harshly for this it later became a city dump and a sewage drainage and the reason it's associated with this place of hell is because it never day or night ceased to have fire and smoke billowing from the garbage and the trash. So it was given the title of Gehenna. They compared the two, the valley of Henam and Gehenna. They compared the two as being a description of what this place would be, this place of hell. Then we have what we read about the lake of fire. We're going to read about that in our study too as well. That's where the second death will take place, where death and hell itself will be thrown. Why? Because death, like the part we're going to talk about with the righteous, is going to be emptied out as well. Because God is going to resurrect all of the unrighteous who are currently in hell and will be in hell. The torment side will be emptied out because it's appointed unto man once to die and then face the judgment of God. Here's the thing. Every grave in the cemetery over here at Crest View will be emptied out. Whether they are righteous and believing by faith in Christ or they are unrighteous living outside of being in Christ in unbelief, they will be resurrected from the dead. Both the righteous and the unrighteous, but not at the same time. the unrighteous will be raised from the dead and they will stand before the great white throne judgment we read about at the end of the book of revelation where the books are going to be opened and then the book

of life is going to be opened and each one of them will be judged according to the deeds that they've done in the body. Why is that important? Because not everyone in hell will have the same type of punishment. There are people who have never heard the gospel but had light because of God's what? His creation which reveals some very interesting attributes about God. Those individuals who who have not believed the gospel with very little light compared to someone who has had extreme light and rejected the gospel and lived evil wicked ways in spite of knowing this truth. There's going to be a difference there. And then it says that those whose names were not found in the book of life, praise Jesus Christ if your name is in the book of life. Aren't you thankful for that? Scripture says that all of those who do not have their names written in the book of life, they like the antichrist and the false prophet who were thrown alive into the lake of fire prior to this. They will then go what? They will be thrown into the lake of fire where scripture calls this not the first death but the second death. And that's where we get the lake of fire. It's found in Revelation 19. You can read about it if you'd like to. It's very interesting. But it's something that really promotes us to do what we read about last week. That we understanding these truths what should have a vision and a mission for lost people. Hey Christian, please do not be discouraged by lost people simply living like you did before you met Jesus. Why do they live like they live? Because they don't know God. They're just simply doing what is natural to them. It doesn't make it good. It doesn't make it right. No. But if you didn't know Jesus today, where would you be? I know where you would be. You would be outside of the covenant promises of God. You would be living without God in this world without hope. You would still be in your sin. You would be living in a miserable existence outside of knowing Jesus. So that's why in scripture we're told, listen, we don't judge the world. Why? Because they're condemned. And we aren't to disassociate with the world like, "Oh, stay away." No, we are to go to the world understanding we once were in the world and we have come to know the giver of true life. >> No, we judge those within the church very very humbly and very carefully. I don't know where we we got to remember these things in these days. Okay, moving on from the lake of fire, you're also going to see a word like outer darkness, which is actually move used by Jesus in the in uh the the the sermon, I mean the ET discourse here, the Mount of Olives, answering these questions to his disciples. He says, "For to everyone who has will be given more, and he who and he will have an abundance, but for the one who has not, even what he has been will be taken away and be cast the and cast the worthless servant into outer darkness." I say this and I I try to repeat this because I still think there's an a mentality that hell is going to be a big party. It's not going to be a party. It is going to be beyond horror. Beyond horror. Jesus said it's outer darkness in that place. Jesus Christ says, "Not me, not you. There will be weeping and nashing of teeth, grinding teeth, weeping. No poker, no vodka, no players, and no party. I am of the opinion that we're going to look at this shortly that the abode of the dead spoken of here prior to the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension his death burial resurrection and ascension this shol I am of the opinion that it is this vast location with separate chambers two of them with a great chasm fixed between that this is where the dead righteous to the Abraham's bosom side or paradise side was and then this other compartment if you will which would be where the hell side of this where the suffering where the torment where the darkness of all the this is where we find the other compartment and it's fixed Jesus said in his story there in Luke's gospel with this huge chasm that separates the true where where the ones from this side can't go over to here and the ones from here cannot make it over to here. It just adds to the greater amount of suffering. Can you imagine to see all those who in Christ they have peace and joy or in faith in God. They're living in comfort and peace and joy and happiness and experiencing the goodness of God. And over here on this side, you can see it all. The great suffering added to the suffering will be the fact that you can never have it. For there's no second chances on the other side of the dirt. Doesn't exist.

Something that makes me have the persuasion to believe this type of view of what was the place of the dead prior to this being Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Some believe that the unrighteous or the righteous in the Old Testament, they went to heaven. And and and there there's some question uh to things like Enoch, for example, or Elijah. You know, Elijah was caught up into a whirlwind of chariot of fire and he was taken up to heaven. So, there's some

questions about that. But let me show you some reasons why I believe this to be true. You all do your own work and study to see what it is that you firmly believe and persuaded through the spirit of God teaching you through his word.

Let me show you a few things here. Luke 23. Luke 23. We're going to look at verses 42-43. What we're reading about is the account of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ here. Jesus Christ, we know, was put between two thieves. He took the spot of Barabbus because the Jews wanted Christ crucified and Barabbus free and he they chose to set Barabbus free and Christ would be crucified. Isn't this interesting? Jesus Christ died in the place of a known criminal. Jesus Christ took his place on the cross of Calvary. And Jesus Christ has taken your place, paid your penalty, appeased the wrath of God so that you could have his love, his grace, his mercy, and his justification in his righteousness. It's incredible.

But while Jesus was suffering on the cross along with these two known convicted thieves, one of them comes to his senses and he actually tells Christ this. He evidently comes to a faith and belief that Jesus Christ is who he says he is. And when it said king of the Jews and what Jesus was going was going on in all of these things, what does this man do? Listen what he says. He says, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

And what is the response of Christ to this thief, this criminal, this convict who is guilty and who is dying for his own sin, his own crime. Truly, don't you love that word truly? The reason we love it is because God's word is truth. And because truth is so hard to find today in this world, Jesus says, "Truly," we got to catch this. You might underline this in your Bible if you'd like. I say to you, today, what is today? Today, today you will be with me in paradise. That's incredible news, is it not? This man had nothing to offer Jesus. You and I have nothing in our sinful state to offer to Jesus. We just cry out to him for mercy as this man did. And Jesus says, "I tell you today, sir, you will be with me in the place called paradise."

Matthew 12:40, Jesus prior to this says something about a sign that he would give to the Jews and the religious leaders of his day. They were always asking improve yourself. Prove yourself. Show us a miracle. Show us more miracles. They would never ever believe upon the miracles that they emphatically knew were being done by the power of God through the Holy Spirit. And Jesus says, "Oh, by the way, I'm going to give you an undeniable sign. It's not what you think." And listen to what he says in Matthew 12:40. For as just as Jonah, by the way, those of you that think Joah Jonah is just a kind of a funny fairy tale fictitious song or just one of those things in the Old Testament that could never have really happened. Jesus refers to Jonah. He's real in real time in life. The story of Jonah happened exactly the way scripture said it did. Jesus says, "Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish, so will the Son of Man." Who is that? Capitalization, son of man. That is Jesus. He will. So will the Son of Man be? Listen, here's your sign. He says, "Three days and three nights where? Not in paradise. In heaven, where? in the heart of the earth."

Hold on. I thought Jesus said truly truly to the thief on the cross that he would that day be with him in paradise. But Jesus here says the sign that he would give the Jews and to the religious leaders of his day would be the sign of Jonah. three days, three nights in the belly of the fish. Christ said, "I will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Wow.

David in Psalm 63:9, we got a lot of these, so just hang on. But those who seek to destroy my life shall go down into the depths of the what? Earth. What is he speaking of? The same thing Jesus is referring to here and what scripture teaches emphatically. David in Psalm 31-3 says, "I will extol you, oh Lord, for you have drawn me up and have not let my foes rejoice over me. Oh Lord, my God, I cried to you for help and you have healed me. Oh Lord, you have brought my soul from where?" Shol, you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit. What we can see here in scripture is it's a reference to an abode in the heart of the earth.

Jacob nearing his death in Genesis 37:35. You don't have to go there. Let me read this for you. All his sons and all his daughters rose to comfort him at the end of his life. Oh no, not in this spot. This is after he finds out that Joseph he thinks is dead because they betrayed and sold him into slavery. And so they're trying to comfort their father, but he refused to be comforted. And what did he say? He says, "No, I shall go down to Shol to my son mourning." And the father wept.

2 Samuel 7:12, speaking of David, "When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise you up an offspring after you who shall come from your body and I will establish his kingdom." That's what we were reading about earlier when G when David is making a prophecy about Christ who would come from him, who he would be. He says, "My Lord said, the Lord said to my Lord," this is incredible. And and we see here that David would go and he would lay down with his fathers. See the same thing here in Deuteronomy uh 31:16 about Moses. And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers." Daniel, same thing told to him in the end of his life in 12:13. But go your way till the end, and you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of days.

Ephesians 4:8-10. Are you ready? Hopefully, you're not you're this hasn't been too long. I've only got another 12 pages, but I won't go through all of this this morning. I want to read this to help you grasp this. Ephesians 4 8-10. This is just getting warmed up. Ephesians 4:8-10. Christian, this is so important for us because of what we're going to learn here about where we, if we die, before Christ comes, where we will go in Jesus Christ. We're not going to go to a place of non-consciousness. No, no, no, no, no.

Ephesians 4:8-10, therefore it says, speaking of Christ, when he ascended on high, he led something. You know, when a king would come into the city of Jerusalem. when he had battle and they had won the war, he would bring with him, there's this entourage that follow the king as he led his way into the city with great triumph. Great triumph. Christ here, we're going to see, has triumphed. Aren't you glad he has triumphed? And he gave gifts to men. In saying that he ascended, what does it mean but that he also descended into the lower regions the earth? Some interpret this to mean simply to the surface of the earth. But I don't believe that is entirely true. I believe there's more being taught here in reference to rest of scripture in the fact that the lower regions of the earth were what we read about when Christ said that I will what? spend three days and three nights where in the lower regions of the earth. He who descended, it says, is the one who also ascended far above all heavens. Think about the incredible humiliation and exaltation of Christ in Philippians as we read that.

Colossians 2:13-15, notice this. And you were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh. Don't ever forget where you once were. I pray that all the time. I sing that song. Don't let me forget. I don't want to forget what God has saved me from and what he saved me to and what he saved me for. Christian, don't ever forget. You were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh. God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all. How many of our trespasses have we been forgiven? Oh, that's a good good word, isn't it? All our trespasses. What did he do? By cancelling the record of debt. Paid in full. You ever paid something off that you worked hard for? That's a good feeling, isn't it? Here's the difference. Jesus worked hard to pay off your debt and for your sake, it's canceled. Paid in full. That's grace. That's goodness. That's love. And that's mercy. By cancelling the record of debt that stood against us and its legal demands, this he set aside by nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and the authorities and he put them to open shame. Can't you imagine the celebration that must have been going on within the kingdom of darkness. They think they finally have won. Victory is ours. There is no way man can ever be redeemed for we killed the redeemer. No they didn't. No they didn't. He disarmed them thinking they had won. God's only plan from Genesis chapter 3 all the way through. Satan thought he had thwarted the plan of God. But he couldn't. He didn't. And he never will. Satan has been defeated. Christ has triumphed over them. God has triumphed over the enemy in Jesus Christ.

This is incredible good news for us. Yes, we have a battle, Christian. Yes, we have a flesh and we fight daily. But I'm telling you, we fight from a position of victory. That's our position.

1 Peter 3:18-20. For Christ also suffered once for sins. The righteous for who? Unrighteous people. That's you and me and the rest of the world. That he might do what? Bring us to God. Oh, thank God for his goodness. being put to death in the flesh, but he was alive in the spirit in which he went. Think about this, man. What a blow this must have been. He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison. Because they formerly did not obey when God's patience waited in the days of Noah. Isn't that incredible? And God's patience is still being exhibited today because he wishes that no one should perish while the ark was being prepared in which few that is eight persons were brought safely through the water goes there and he proclaims what Christ was to really exhibit through this incredible testimony of Noah and the ark and the flood and destruction that he is the ark. He's the one by which men who enter in will be safe for all eternity. When destruction comes, he's the ark. These were simply pictures and types of what he was to be and fulfill. It's incredible.

Acts chapter 2 25-31. We read this. We're going to skip that one because I've read it to you over and over and over. something I Oh, we're getting late on time. Tell you what. Oh, this is just getting good. We better wrap it up. Okay, for today we're going to see here next week some incredible truths that are revealed to us in scripture so that we can know what happens to believers when they die. And as we're going to learn through this series, and I will say this every single week, Christian, life is an incredible gift that you've been given by God. The enemy wants you to think your life in the sum totality of the years of existence actually are to be accumulated through what you actually achieve and what you actually gain and what you actually put together in this world. Nothing could be further from the truth. Christ has redeemed you to a far far greater purpose than this little system of what society tells you your value is in. And I will say this emphatically, Christian, life is so very good, but the best it's yet to come.

Question and Answers:

Q: Can our current physical bodies inherit the Kingdom of God?

A: No, the Bible teaches that flesh and blood, meaning our current perishable bodies, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These bodies are subject to decay and sin and must be transformed into imperishable, incorruptible bodies.

Q: What does the Bible say about the resurrection and the body we will have in eternity?

A: The Bible teaches that at the last trumpet, the dead will be raised imperishable, and the living will be changed. This new body will be incorruptible, glorious, and no longer affected by sin or decay. It will be a transformation into immortality.

Q: What is 'eternal oblivion' and is it a biblical concept?

A: Eternal oblivion is a secular or philosophical belief that upon death, a person simply ceases to exist, experiencing nothingness. This concept is not supported by the Bible, which teaches about an eternal state and consciousness after death.

Q: What is 'soul sleep' and is it biblical?

A: Soul sleep is a belief held by some Christian groups, suggesting that the soul has no conscious existence apart from the body and enters a state of unconsciousness until the resurrection. The speaker argues that scripture, particularly the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, indicates continuous consciousness after death.

Q: What does the parable of the rich man and Lazarus teach about the afterlife?

A: The parable illustrates that after death, individuals are conscious and experience distinct states: torment in hell (for the rich man) and comfort in Abraham's bosom (for Lazarus). It shows they can see, remember, communicate, and feel, indicating a continued existence and awareness.

Q: What do the terms 'Sheol' and 'Hades' mean in the Bible?

A: 'Sheol' is the Hebrew term used in the Old Testament for the abode of the dead, and 'Hades' is the Greek term used in the New Testament for the same concept. Both refer to the place where the dead reside, and the context suggests continued consciousness.

Q: What is Sheol according to the Bible?

A: Sheol is understood as the underworld, the realm to which people descend at death. It's not just the physical grave but the place where the spirits of the deceased go. While the body returns to dust, the spirit goes to Sheol. It's described as a place of departed spirits, and scripture uses terms like 'pit' in conjunction with it.

Q: Did the righteous and unrighteous go to the same place in the Old Testament?

A: Yes, both the righteous and unrighteous in the Old Testament went to Sheol. However, their experience within Sheol differed. The unrighteous were in a state of torment, while the righteous were in a state of peace, as indicated by scriptural interpretations.

Q: What is the relationship between Sheol and Hades?

A: Hades is the Greek word used in the New Testament that corresponds to the Hebrew word Sheol. Both terms refer to the unseen world, the realm where all the departed spirits reside.

Q: What is Tartarus and who is it for?

A: Tartarus is a specific place of gloomy darkness mentioned in 2 Peter 2:4. It is described as the abode where God committed angels who sinned, keeping them in chains until judgment. It's distinct from Hades/Sheol and is specifically for fallen angels.

Q: What is Gehenna?

A: Gehenna is a term associated with the Valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem. Historically, it was a site for pagan rituals, including child sacrifice, and later became a city dump with perpetual fire and smoke. It is used in scripture as a symbol or description of the place of hell and final judgment.

Q: What is the 'lake of fire'?

A: The lake of fire is described as the place where the second death will occur. It is the ultimate destination for those whose names are not found in the book of life, including the antichrist and false prophet. It represents final punishment and is distinct from the first death.

Q: What did Jesus mean by being 'three days and three nights in the heart of the earth'?

A: Jesus used this statement, referencing the sign of Jonah, to indicate his burial and descent into the 'lower regions of the earth' for three days and three nights. This period is interpreted as a time when Christ triumphed over death and the powers of darkness, disarming them.

Q: What was the state of the dead before Jesus' resurrection?

A: One perspective presented is that before Jesus' resurrection, Sheol had separate chambers. One chamber was for the righteous, often referred to as Abraham's bosom or paradise, where they experienced peace. The other chamber was for the unrighteous, where they experienced torment and darkness. These chambers were separated by a great chasm, preventing passage between them.

Q: What does it mean that Christ 'descended into the lower regions of the earth'?

A: According to Ephesians 4:8-10, Christ's ascension implies he first descended into the lower regions of the earth. This is interpreted not just as his burial but as a significant spiritual event where he triumphed over the rulers and authorities of darkness, leading them captive.

Q: How should Christians view their spiritual battles?

A: Christians are encouraged to understand that they fight from a position of victory, not defeat. Because Christ has already triumphed over death, hell, and the grave, believers can face their struggles with the flesh and the kingdom of darkness with confidence and resilience, knowing the ultimate battle is already won.

Q: What is the significance of the thief on the cross asking Jesus to remember him?

A: The thief's plea, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom,' demonstrates faith in Christ. Jesus' response, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise,' highlights God's grace and mercy, showing that salvation is available through faith and repentance, even at the end of life.