

QUESTION: What is the difference between the Lake of Fire and Hades?

ANSWER: The King James version uses the word "hell" for both the Lake of Fire and for Hades, while most newer translations use the Greek word, Hades, and Hebrew word, Sheol. Hades is the place of the dead, located in the center of the earth. It is called **Hades** (Greek) in the New Testament, and **Sheol** (Hebrew) in the Old Testament. Hades was divided into two parts: (1) a place of **torment for the unbelievers**; and (2) a place called "Abraham's bosom" in Luke 16, which was a place of **comfort for Believers**. Jesus went into Hades (for the three days between His death and His resurrection, Matthew 12:40) and took out all the spirits (souls) of those who had **died believing God and trusting in Him**, and took them up to heaven (Ephesians 4:8-10). The only ones left in Hades NOW are the unbelievers, those who died rejecting Christ, and for them it is a place of torment. Their spirits are waiting for the resurrection and Judgment Day. Before Jesus' death and resurrection, Believers did not go directly into the presence of God when they died. Now, the **spirits** of ALL BELIEVERS IN CHRIST go directly and immediately to heaven (II Corinthians 5:6-8), and there they wait for the resurrection of their BODIES.

- **Read Luke 16:19-31** (verse 22-24) "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the ANGELS into Abraham's bosom (place of safety & comfort). The rich man also died and was buried. And **being in TORMENTS in Hades**, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for **I am TORMENTED in this FLAME.**'"
- **Psalm 28:1** "To You I will cry, O Lord my Rock; do not be silent to me, lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who **go DOWN to the pit.**"
- **Psalm 49:15-17** "But God will redeem **my SOUL from the power of Sheol**, for He shall receive me. Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dies he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not **DESCEND** after him."
- **Psalm 55:15** "Let death seize them; let them **go DOWN alive into Sheol**, for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them."
- **Psalm 63:9** "But those who seek my life, to destroy it, shall go into **the LOWER PARTS of the earth.**"
- **Ephesians 4:8-10** "Therefore He says, '**When He ascended on high**, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.' (Now this, 'He ascended' - what does it mean but that He also first **DESCENDED into the lower parts of the earth?** He who descended is also the One who **ascended** far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)"
- **John 20:17** "Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, '**I am ascending to My Father** and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"
- **Matthew 12:40** "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man (Jesus) be **three days and three nights** in the **HEART** of the earth."
- **Psalm 16:10** "For You will not leave **my soul in Sheol**, nor will You allow Your Holy One (Christ) to see corruption (decay)."

We see from these verses that Hades or Sheol is below, in the lower parts of the earth. We see that Jesus said He would be there for three days and three nights, and He cannot mean in His tomb, because His tomb was carved out of rock in the side of a hill, ABOVE the ground. His body was in the tomb for three days, but **His spirit went into Hades** to preach to the souls/spirits there who were "in prison" (see I Peter 3:19-20), and to release the souls of all the Believers (He led "captivity" - the captive spirits), and take them up to heaven when He

ascended to the Father. David prophesied in Psalm 16:10 that **his soul would not be left in Sheol**, and he also prophesied of the resurrection of Jesus when he said that God would not leave His Holy One, the Messiah, to decay in the grave.

WARNING! - Do not think that any of this is teaching that there is a Purgatory! When a person dies their soul/spirit goes immediately to one place or the other, depending on whether they have believed in God's only begotten Son and Savior, Jesus Christ. Purgatory does not exist, but is a man-made teaching of the Roman Catholic religion, and it teaches that there is a second chance after death. The doctrine of Purgatory was invented by one of the Popes in order to make more money and keep people in bondage to the Roman Catholic religion, because it teaches that by giving money or buying "masses" one can gradually get a person out of Purgatory and into heaven. The Bible says in Hebrews 9:27 "it is appointed for men **to DIE once**, but after this **the JUDGMENT**." There are NO second chances after death.

IN SUMMARY: There are actually two places referred to as "hell" in the Bible: Hades and the Lake of Fire.

Hades (Sheol) -

Location - in the center of the earth; consists of two parts: 1. "Abraham's Bosom", a place of comfort for Believers; and 2. The Place of the Unrighteous Dead, which is a place of torment for the unbelievers.

Occupants - 1. In "Abraham's Bosom" - none, it has been emptied out; all Believers go directly to heaven now. 2. In the Place of the Unrighteous Dead - All the souls/spirits of the unsaved. They are awaiting the resurrection of their bodies, after which they will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment "and anyone who is NOT found written in the BOOK of LIFE will be cast into the LAKE of FIRE" (Revelation 20:11-15).

The Lake of Fire -

Location - unknown, possibly "outer space"

Occupants - no one is there now; Satan, his demons, and all the unsaved will be there for all eternity, but not until AFTER the Great White Throne Judgment. Revelation 20:10, "And the devil, who deceived them, was **cast into the LAKE of FIRE and brimstone** where the beast and the false prophet are. And **they will be TORMENTED** day and night FOREVER and EVER."