

## **QUESTION: What does it mean in Matthew 27:51-53 when it says some Old Testament saints were raised from the dead when Jesus was raised?**

**ANSWER:** The Old Testament saints (holy ones, true believers) such as Moses, Abraham, Elijah, and of course many whose names we do not know, were the SECOND PHASE of what Rev. 20:6 calls the "First Resurrection." The "Second Resurrection" is for unbelievers only, who will then be judged and thrown in the Lake of Fire (also called "The Second Death" - see Rev. 20:12-14, 21:8).

**FIRST PHASE** - Jesus's resurrection

**SECOND PHASE** - Old Testament saints (Matthew 27:51-53). Timing: immediately following Jesus' resurrection.

**THIRD PHASE** - The Body of Christ. This phase is usually called "The Rapture." (I Thessalonians 4:13-18, I Corinthians 15:50-54). Timing: immediately BEFORE the seven years of Great Tribulation.

**FOURTH PHASE** - Tribulation Believers (see Rev. 20:4-5). Timing: immediately AFTER the seven years of Great Tribulation and BEFORE the thousand year reign of Christ.

After the thousand years are over (Rev. 20:5), the "rest of the dead" will be resurrected. We are not told if there will be any believers who came to Christ during the Millennium, but for the most part, these will be UNBELIEVERS. The Antichrist and his false prophet are the first ones to be thrown in the Lake of Fire (see Rev. 19:20).

- **Revelation 20:6** "Blessed and holy is **he who has part in the FIRST RESURRECTION**. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."
- **Matthew 27:51-53** "And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and **the graves were opened**, and many **BODIES OF THE SAINTS who had fallen asleep were RAISED**; and COMING OUT OF THE GRAVES **AFTER HIS RESURRECTION**, they went into the holy city and appeared to many."

**Definition: "AFTER HIS RESURRECTION" - NO ONE could be bodily resurrected from the dead until Jesus WENT FIRST.** CHRIST is the FIRSTFRUITS of the resurrection and FIRSTBORN from the dead (see Colossians 1:18, I Corinthians 15:20). **No one's soul or spirit could go directly into the presence of God BEFORE JESUS opened the way** (that is what the VEIL IN THE TEMPLE being TORN IN TWO symbolizes). See also John 14:1-6, Hebrews 11:32-40 - Jesus had to GO FIRST and PREPARE **the WAY for us to come into the Father's presence**. So then, where DID **the souls of the Old Testament believers** go until they were united with their RESURRECTED BODIES at the time of Jesus' resurrection? Before Jesus came, EVERYONE WHO DIED went to HADES (Greek name) (also called SHEOL in the Old Testament). **Hades was divided into two parts**: one for the RIGHTEOUS DEAD, which was called Abraham's Bosom, and was a place of COMFORT and a WAITING PLACE until Christ would come. The other part is a PLACE OF TORMENT, and is a WAITING PLACE for the UNRIGHTEOUS DEAD until the Great Judgment.

- **Read Luke 16:19-31** (Verses 22-23) "So it was that the beggar died, and was **CARRIED BY THE ANGELS** to ABRAHAM'S BOSOM. 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." (Verse 26) "And besides all this, **between us and you there is a GREAT GULF fixed** (an unbridgeable gap, chasm, abyss), so that those who want to PASS from here to you CANNOT, nor can those from there PASS TO US."

**Definition: "ABRAHAM'S BOSOM"** - This denotes a place of COMFORT, as in saying Abraham's LAP, or that Abraham is HUGGING ONE TO HIS CHEST (bosom). This name was used to describe the TEMPORARY PLACE where **the SOULS of the RIGHTEOUS dead** would go BEFORE CHRIST.

- **Read Ephesians 4:8-10** "Therefore He says, 'When He (Jesus) 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?**"

**Definition: "He LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE"** - Jesus EMPTIED OUT the part of Hades with the SAINTS of God, the SOULS of the RIGHTEOUS DEAD, and **He LED THEM up to heaven**. He was able **to LEAD these CAPTIVES OUT of their CAPTIVITY**, because He was victorious over Satan at the cross (see Colossians 2:14-15) and **He now holds the KEYS** OF DEATH and HADES (see Rev. 1:17-18). Their SOULS were REUNITED with their BODIES which came out of the graves when Jesus rose from the dead. In like manner, the SOULS (and spirits) of ALL THOSE WHO HAVE DIED IN CHRIST will be reunited with their NEW bodies at the "Rapture" (see I Thess. 4:13-18, I Cor. 15:50-54).

**Definition: "LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH"** - Hades is located in the lower parts of the earth. There is NO ONE LEFT in the "Abraham's Bosom" part, because Jesus emptied it out. However, all the SOULS of the UNBELIEVERS, the UNRIGHTEOUS DEAD, are STILL WAITING in Hades until the Great White Throne Judgment (see Rev. 20:11-15). If a person died TODAY, rejecting Christ, their soul and spirit would go to Hades, the place of torment, to await their resurrection and the Judgment. Also, every unrighteous person (the Bible calls them "the wicked") since CAIN is STILL WAITING THERE. **This IS NOT Purgatory!** The teaching of a purgatory, where one can somehow atone for one's sins (or "purge" them away), is a **MAN-MADE DOCTRINE**, an invention of the Roman Catholic popes TO ENSLAVE PEOPLE to that religious system. **It is not found in the word of God.**