



Living Scripture w/Wednesday Night Crew
Week 20 – 1 Corinthians 15 What Happens After This World?
<http://www.realchurch.org/wednesdaynight/>

SHEOL [SHE ole] — in Old Testament thought, the abode of the dead. Sheol is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek *Hades*, which means “the unseen world.”

Sheol was regarded as an underground region (Num. 16:30, 33; Amos 9:2), shadowy and gloomy, where disembodied souls had a conscious but dull and inactive existence (2 Sam. 22:6; Eccl. 9:10). The Hebrew people regarded sheol as a place to which both the righteous and unrighteous go at death (Gen. 37:35; Ps. 9:17; Is. 38:10; death, NIV; Deut. 32:22; the realm of death, NIV), a place where punishment is received and rewards are enjoyed. Sheol is pictured as having an insatiable appetite (Is. 5:14; Hab. 2:5; the grave, NIV).

However, God is present in sheol (Ps. 139:8; hell, NKJV; the depths, NIV). It is open and known to Him (Job 26:6; Prov. 15:11; Death, NIV). This suggests that in death God’s people remain under His care, and the wicked never escape His judgment. Sheol gives meaning to Psalm 16:10. Peter saw the fulfillment of this messianic psalm in Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 2:27).¹

HELL—the place of **eternal** punishment for the unrighteous. The NKJV and KJV use this word to translate *sheol* and *hades*, the Old and New Testament words, respectively, for the abode of the dead.

Hell as a place of punishment translates *Gehenna*, the Greek form of the Hebrew word that means “the vale of Hinnom”—a valley just south of Jerusalem. In this valley the Canaanites worshiped Baal and the fire-god Molech by sacrificing their children in a fire that burned continuously. Even Ahaz and Manasseh, kings of Judah, were guilty of this terrible, idolatrous practice (2 Chr. 28:3; 33:6).

The prophet Jeremiah predicted that God would visit such destruction upon Jerusalem that this valley would be known as the “Valley of Slaughter” (Jer. 7:31-34; 19:2, 6). In his religious reforms, King Josiah put an end to this worship. He defiled the valley in order to make it unfit even for pagan worship (2 Kin. 23:10).

In the time of Jesus the Valley of Hinnom was used as the garbage dump of Jerusalem. Into it were thrown all the filth and garbage of the city, including the dead bodies of animals and executed criminals. To consume all this, fires burned constantly. Maggots worked in the filth. When the wind blew from that direction over the city, its awfulness was quite evident. At night wild dogs howled and gnashed their teeth as they fought over the garbage.

Jesus used this awful scene as a symbol of hell. In effect he said, “Do you want to know what hell is like? Look at the valley of Gehenna.” So hell may be described as God’s “cosmic garbage dump.” All that refuse to be made fit for heaven will be turned away into hell.

The word *Gehenna* occurs twelve times in the New Testament. Each time it is translated as “hell.” With the exception of James 3:6, it is used only by Jesus (Matt. 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5). In Matthew 5:22, 18:9; and Mark 9:47, it is used with “fire” as “hell fire.” So the word hell (*Gehenna*) as a place of punishment is used in the New Testament by Him who is the essence of infinite love.

In Mark 9:46 and 48, hell is described as a place where “their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.” Repeatedly Jesus spoke of outer darkness and a furnace of fire, where there will be wailing, weeping, and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28). Obviously this picture is drawn from the valley of Gehenna.

The Book of Revelation describes hell as “a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14-15; 21:8). Into hell will be thrown the beast and the false prophet (Rev. 19:20). At the end of the age the devil himself will be thrown into it, along with death and hades and all whose names are not in the Book of Life. “And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev. 20:10).

Because of the symbolic nature of the language, some people question whether hell consists of actual fire. Such reasoning should bring no comfort to the lost. The reality is greater than the symbol. The Bible exhausts human language in describing heaven and hell. The former is more glorious, and the latter more terrible, than language can express.²

Hell (“conceal”), the place of woe for the departed. “Hades” is the New Testament name for “Sheol,” which was conceived as a place where the souls of all dead resided (Ps. 16:10; Matt. 11:23; Acts 2:27). The KJV also has hell as its

¹ *Nelson’s new illustrated Bible dictionary*. 1995 (R. F. Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, R. K. Harrison & Thomas Nelson Publishers, Ed.). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.

² Hayford, J. W., & Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1995). *Hayford’s Bible handbook*. Nashville, TN; Atlanta, GA; London; Vancouver: Thomas Nelson Publishers.



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translation of Gehenna, a valley outside Jerusalem that Jesus used as a symbol of woe for lost souls. For believers, He said that Hades would be Paradise (Luke 23:43); for the godless, it would be “Gehenna” (cf. Luke 16:22, 23).³

What Is Paradise? Is It Different than Heaven?

Paradise is a place of blessing where the righteous go after death. The word *paradise* is usually used as a synonym for “heaven” (Revelation 2:7).

When Jesus was dying on the cross and one of the thieves being crucified with Him asked Him for mercy, Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Jesus knew that His death was imminent and that He would soon be in heaven with His Father. Therefore, Jesus used “paradise” as a synonym for “heaven.” The apostle Paul wrote of someone (probably himself) who “was caught up to paradise” (2 Corinthians 12:4). In this context, *paradise* obviously refers to heaven.

There has always been a separation of believers and unbelievers after death (Luke 16:19–31). The righteous have always gone to paradise; the wicked have always gone to hell. For right now, both paradise and hell are “temporary holding places” until the day when Jesus Christ comes back to judge the world based on whether or not individuals have believed in Him. The first resurrection is of believers who will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive rewards based on meritorious service to Him. The second resurrection will be that of unbelievers who will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment of God. At that point, all will be sent to their eternal destination—the wicked to the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11–15), and the righteous to a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21–22).

There are cases in which *paradise* can refer to the Garden of Eden, such in the Douay-Rheims translation of Genesis 3:8, which speaks of Adam and Eve hiding “amidst the trees of paradise.” The context of the word will determine whether it refers to heaven or Eden.⁴

PARADISE (*park, garden*)—a place of exceptional blessedness, happiness, and delight; a descriptive name for heaven. Originally paradise was a Persian word meaning “a wooded park,” “an enclosed or walled orchard,” or “a garden with fruit trees.” Traditional Hebrew theology held that the dead descended to **sheol*. After the emergence of belief in the resurrection, however, this view was drastically modified. In the period between the Old and New Testaments, the Jews believed that, after the resurrection, the righteous would go to Paradise, a place much like the Garden of Eden before the Fall.

In the NKJV the word *paradise* occurs only three times (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7). To the repentant thief on the cross Jesus said, “Today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). Various commentators have pointed out that when a Persian king wished to bestow upon one of his subjects a special honor, he made him a “companion of the garden.” The subject was chosen to walk in the king’s garden as a special friend and companion of the king. Thus, Jesus promised the thief that he would be a companion of the King of kings, walking with Christ in the garden of heaven.⁵

Paradise. “Garden of God.” The Hebrews originally used a word which they applied not only to ordinary gardens but also to God’s garden in Eden (Gn 2; 3; Is 51:3; Ez 28:13). Comparatively late in their history, they adapted from the Persian language the word which afterwards became “paradise”; it appears three times in the OT referring to a park or orchard (Neh 2:8; Eccl 2:5; Sg 4:13). Later still, when the OT was translated into Greek, there was a Greek form of the same word, and the translators used it extensively for “garden”; for Greek-speaking Jews, the garden of Genesis 2 became *paradeisos*.

The idea of the original Persian word was that of an enclosure or walled garden. It referred particularly to the royal parks of the Persian kings and this was how the Greeks came to know it. Both ideas fit well with the Hebrews’ picture of a

³ MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (A. Farstad, Ed.) (xlviii). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ Got Questions Ministries. (2002–2013). *Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

⁵ Hayford, J. W., Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1995). *Hayford’s Bible handbook*. Nashville, TN; Atlanta, GA; London; Vancouver: Thomas Nelson Publishers.



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garden where the Lord God walked (Gn 3:8) and from which his subjects could be excluded (Gn 3:24). Further important features of the Genesis paradise were its fruit trees and its rivers.

By NT times this picture of God's garden had developed in various ways, which are paralleled, not unexpectedly, in the folk-beliefs of many nations. Like the Golden Age of Greek and Roman mythology, paradise was first of all something belonging to the remote past. But the Jews came to believe that it still existed in some undiscoverable place; like the Elysian Fields, it was inhabited by the deserving dead. Then, with ever more elaborate descriptions of its glories, they wrote of its eventual reappearance at the end of this age.

Thus, in the idea of paradise converge all myths of another world, past, present, and future, where death and evil have no place. The NT witnesses to the truth which is at the core of all such beliefs. Paradise is the place into which, as an actual but otherworldly reality, Paul was once mysteriously "caught up" during his lifetime (2 Cor 12:3). It is also the place where the penitent thief on the cross was promised he would be, with Christ, immediately after his death (Lk 23:43). The third and last NT reference, a similar promise (Rv 2:7), tells us in addition that paradise is where the tree of life grows, and so identifies it both with the original world of Genesis 2 and with the future world of Revelation 22, complete with the life-giving tree and river, the encircling wall, and the presence of the King.⁶

All this points to the Resurrection!

(Acts 17:30-31 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent,³¹ because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead.)

Slide #18

Resurrection Facts:

Prophesied in Old Testament

Psalm 16:10

¹⁰ *For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption*

Slide #19

Resurrection Facts: Over 500 Witnesses

John 20:19 & Luke 24:36 & John 20:26 Jesus Appears to the Disciples

Matthew 28:16-20 The Great Commission

Mark 16:14

Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and He rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after He had risen.

Acts 10:41

Not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after He rose from the dead.

- **Over 500 Witnesses**

⁶ Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). [Paradise](#). In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 2, pp. 1614–1615). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.



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John 20:26

²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. ^(A) Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ^(B) “Peace be with you.”

John 20:19

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

¹⁹ ^(A) On the evening ^(B) of that day, the first day of the week, ^(C) the doors being locked where the disciples were ^(D) for fear of the Jews, ^(a) Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ^(E) “Peace be with you.”

Luke 24:36

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

³⁶ As they were talking about these things, ^(A) Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!”

Mark 16:14

¹⁴ Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.

Acts 10:41

⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

Slide #20

Resurrection Facts

Secured our justification

According to Paul, “if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins” (15:17; see Rom. 4:25). Christ’s resurrection, not merely His death on the Cross, secured our justification. His resurrection was a sign of God’s approval of Christ’s sacrifice for our sins. In short, no Resurrection equals no forgiveness of sin.

Romans 4:22-25

²² That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” ²³ But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, ²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

²² *And because of Abraham’s faith, God counted him as righteous.* ²³ *And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn’t just for Abraham’s benefit. It was recorded* ²⁴ *for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.* ²⁵ *He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.*

Slide #21

Resurrection Facts

“Firstfruits” to show us the way

1 Corinthians 15:20

²⁰ *But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.*

The resurrection of Christ was designed to reveal what lies ahead for those who put their trust in Jesus (15:20–57). Christ serves as both an example and a guarantee of what we can expect. Because He has conquered death (15:26, 27, 54–57), we need not fear death. Because He now enjoys a glorified body, we also can expect to inherit a “spiritual body” (15:44–46) after this mortal one wears out.

Slide #22

Resurrection Facts



Our dead, physical body will one day be resurrected.

1 Corinthians 15:42 *It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever.*

Slide #23

Resurrection Facts

We will, once again, be duo in nature:

Resurrected body (physical) reunited with our Soul (spiritual)

1 Corinthians 15:43-44

⁴³ *Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength.* ⁴⁴ *They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies.*

Resurrection Facts

- Jesus is the power of the Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:45; John 11:25

Resurrection Facts

- Our physical bodies will be altered. With Jesus as our example, what will our resurrected bodies look like? Be able to do?

1 Corinthians 15:51-54

John 20:25-27

Luke 24:31, 36, 51

- When will our resurrection will take place?

1 Corinthians 15:53

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18