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Hades - What Happened To The Hades Of The Rich Man?



By Dan Maines

What Happened To The Hades Of The Rich Man?

Introduction

† One of the most common questions people ask is what happened to the place where the rich man lifted up his eyes in torment and begged for water.

† Was that place still operating after Christ completed His redemptive work and the Old Covenant age ended?

† Did unbelievers receive a new destination after AD 70, or does Scripture teach something entirely different?

† The Bible reveals that Hades was a temporary realm of the dead connected to the Old Covenant world, and that it was ultimately destroyed when God's redemptive plan reached its completion.

The Rich Man In Hades

Luke 16:22-24

Now it happened that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's arms; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades he raised his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his arms. And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'

† Jesus described Hades as the realm of the dead before the completion of redemption.

† The rich man was not in Gehenna, he was in Hades.

† Abraham was also associated with this realm, showing that both righteous and unrighteous dead were awaiting the fulfillment of God's plan.

† The account reflects conditions before the cross and before the full establishment of the New Covenant. (Hebrews 9:8-10)

† The way into God's immediate presence had not yet been fully opened while the Old Covenant system remained standing. (Hebrews 9:8)

Hades Was Temporary Because The Way Into Heaven Was Not Yet Open

Hebrews 9:8

The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing,

† The writer explains that access into God's presence had not yet been fully revealed.

† This explains why Abraham's Bosom existed before redemption was completed.

† The righteous dead awaited the completion of Christ's work.

† Luke 16 reflects this transitional condition before the full opening of heaven. (Luke 16:22-26)

Christ Entered Hades

Acts 2:27, 31

FOR YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES,
NOR WILL YOU ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.

he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay.

† Jesus Himself entered the realm of the dead.

† He was not abandoned there.

† His resurrection demonstrated His victory over death and Hades.

† Christ entered the realm that held the dead and emerged victorious. (Revelation 1:18)

† His resurrection began the process that would ultimately abolish death itself. (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

Death And Hades Were Separate Things

Revelation 20:13-14

And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them; and they were judged, each one of them according to their deeds. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

† Hades and the lake of fire are not the same thing.

† Hades was cast into the lake of fire.

† A place cannot be cast into itself.

† The text distinguishes between Hades and the second death.

Death And Hades Were Destroyed

Revelation 20:13-14

And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them; and they were judged, each one of them according to their deeds. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

† Hades was never presented as an eternal realm.

† Hades gave up its dead.

† Hades itself was then cast into the lake of fire.

† A place that is destroyed can no longer continue functioning.

† If Hades was cast into the lake of fire, then the Hades of Luke 16 no longer exists.

† The destruction of Hades fulfilled God's promise to abolish death. (1 Corinthians 15:26)

† This was part of the consummation of the Old Covenant age. (Hebrews 8:13)

The Last Enemy Was Death

1 Corinthians 15:26

The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

† Paul identified death as the final enemy.

† Revelation shows death and Hades being removed together.

† The destruction of Hades is directly connected to the destruction of death.

† God's redemptive plan culminated in the defeat of death's dominion. (Revelation 20:13-14)

Death Was Abolished

2 Timothy 1:10

but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and

immortality to light through the gospel,

† Paul declared that Christ abolished death.

† Christ broke the power and dominion of death through His victory.

† The reign of death connected with Adam and the Old Covenant world was defeated through Christ. (Romans 5:12-21)

† Revelation 20 shows the final removal of death and Hades.

† The Bible never says a replacement Hades would be created afterward.

Christ Now Receives Believers Directly

2 Corinthians 5:8

but we are of good courage and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

† Believers no longer await entrance into God's presence.

† Paul expected to be with the Lord upon departing the body.

† The hope of the believer is direct fellowship with Christ.

† This differs from the pre-redemption condition described in Luke 16. (Hebrews 9:8)

Philippians 1:23

But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;

† Paul expected departure from the body to bring him into Christ's presence.

† He did not expect to enter a waiting compartment in Hades.

† Being with Christ is presented as the believer's hope.

† Christ's completed work opened the way into God's presence. (Hebrews 10:19-20)

What Happens To Unbelievers?

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.

† Jesus contrasted perishing with eternal life.

† He did not contrast eternal life with eternal life in torment.

† The unbeliever perishes.

† Eternal life belongs only to those who are in Christ. (1 John 5:11-12)

† Scripture consistently presents life as the gift of God and destruction as the fate of the unbelieving. (Matthew 10:28)

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

† The wage of sin is death.

† The gift of God is eternal life.

† Paul presents two outcomes, death or life.

† Immortality is never promised to the unbeliever. (1 Corinthians 15:53-54)

† Eternal life is only found in Christ. (1 John 5:12)

1 John 5:12

The one who has the Son has the life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

† Those who have the Son possess life.

† Those who do not have the Son do not possess life.

† The text does not say they possess endless life in misery.

† It says they do not have life.

† This agrees with Christ's warning that the wicked perish. (John 3:16)

Historical References

† Josephus described Hades as the temporary realm of departed souls in first-century Jewish understanding.

† The early church frequently connected Christ's victory with the defeat of death and Hades.

† The biblical record consistently moves toward the destruction of death rather than its eternal continuation.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't live in fear of Hades because Christ has conquered death.

† Believers possess eternal life now through Christ. (John 5:24)

† Our hope isn't in escaping a future Hades but in the finished work of Jesus.

† The gospel calls people to receive life in Christ today. (John 20:31)

† The contrast remains life or death, not life in one location versus life in another location.

Q Was the rich man in Gehenna?

A No. Jesus specifically said he was in Hades, the realm of the dead. (Luke 16:23)

Q Is Hades the same thing as the lake of fire?

A No. Hades was cast into the lake of fire, proving they are not the same thing. (Revelation 20:13-14)

Q Does Hades still exist today?

A Revelation says death and Hades gave up their dead and were cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:13-14)

Q Did unbelievers receive a new Hades after AD 70?

A Scripture never mentions a replacement Hades after the destruction of death and Hades. (Revelation 20:14)

Q If Hades was destroyed, where do believers go now?

A Believers are absent from the body and present with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23)

Q If unbelievers are annihilated, why does Scripture say eternal punishment?

A The punishment is eternal in its result, not eternal in an ongoing process. Eternal life belongs only to those in Christ. The wicked perish and are destroyed. (Matthew 25:46; John 3:16; Romans 6:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:9)

Q What is the fate of unbelievers according to Scripture?

A The consistent language is perish, destruction, death, consumed, and burned up, rather than endless conscious life. (John 3:16; Romans 6:23; Matthew 10:28; Malachi 4:1-3)

Q Who receives eternal life?

A Only those who are in Christ. (John 3:16; 1 John 5:12)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Luke 16:22-24, Hebrews 9:8, Acts 2:27, 31, Revelation 20:13-14, 1 Corinthians 15:26, 2 Timothy 1:10, Romans 5:12-21, 2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23, Hebrews 10:19-20, John 3:16, Romans 6:23, 1 John 5:12

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Josephus, Discourse Concerning Hades

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