

A Clarification Regarding the States of Those Who Die

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An old Indian story tells of “six blind men who were asked to determine what an elephant looked like by feeling different parts of the elephant's body. The blind man who feels a leg says the elephant is like a pillar; the one who feels the tail says the elephant is like a rope; the one who feels the trunk says the elephant is like a tree branch; the one who feels the ear says the elephant is like a hand fan; the one who feels the belly says the elephant is like a wall; and the one who feels the tusk says the elephant is like a solid pipe.”^A All were right, and all were wrong; All were right in one perspective, but missing the truth of the overall perspective.

Among all the teachings in Christendom, probably nowhere is the truth of this parable more applicable than in the teachings of various denominations as to what happens when a person dies. Is the spirit mortal and dies? Is the spirit immortal and remains in some state of limbo after death? Does a righteous person immediately go to heaven and the wicked to hell (also known as Hades) where they are tormented for eternity? Do both righteous and wicked sleep a sleep of death until the judgment? Can one change one's level in some hell or purgatory after which one may ascend upward through the levels to finally exit in paradise?

It is the purpose of this paper to establish as to what the Word of the LORD, particularly Jesus, has to say about the state or states of the dead. While predominantly quoting from the Bible, especially the teachings of Jesus, I will also refer to several other ancient books, books that were part of the scriptures of Jesus's time for clarity. These were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls of the community of Qumran, and in more complete form in other troves of ancient manuscripts. Once one recognizes the truth given to the Prophets, the messengers of God, then one can see the same concepts in the Bible more readily.

Before we start, I would like to give you a caution. Truth is not difficult to understand. However, letting go of or expanding upon our long-held beliefs and teachings can be difficult. To truly describe the whole picture of what an elephant is, it takes a person who can literally see. You may hold onto a part of the elephant, a part of the teaching on death. Let the Word of God lead you to the whole picture, for it is vitally important, something that Jesus emphasized over and over, yet many people miss.

Two main views on death

Among the Christian churches, there are two primary teachings on death or what happens when a person dies.

- 1) The first viewpoint is that whether good or evil, those who die all sleep equally until their resurrection, those who have done good are resurrected unto eternal life (the first resurrection), those who have done evil are resurrected unto condemnation (the second resurrection). The sentences of the latter group is to be meted out on the Judgment Day. This perspective holds that hell (or Hades) is the

^A https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blind_men_and_an_elephant

same as the Lake of Fire to which the wicked are consigned and eventually consumed. The wicked do not burn eternally in the Lake of Fire.

- 2) The second viewpoint is that upon one's death, the souls of the righteous dead go to heaven and the souls of the wicked are consigned to an everlasting hell in which they burn for eternity, where their fire is not quenched, nor their worm of life dies. Jesus brings with Him the souls of the righteous dead at his second coming. The souls of the wicked dead are resurrected for the Day of Judgment and then are cast into Lake of Fire which is just an extension of this eternal burning. A variant is that the souls of those who die are placed in purgatory, a state of limbo or punishment, from which one may climb to higher levels, and eventually exit onto the blessed eternal life when one has been cleansed from the evil done while in the flesh.

What is the truth regarding those who die? Can we look to Jesus for the answer?

Let's first look at **death and hell** and then later **death and sleep**.

Jesus differentiates between death and hell

Jesus, who gave the book of Revelation to John, differentiates between death AND hell in four places (emphasis supplied in the following quotations).

Jesus said in Revelation 1:18 "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I ... have the keys of **hell AND of death.**"

Hell is the KJV translators' usual translation for Hades in the Greek of the New Testament, and generally for Sheol in the Hebrew of the Old Testament.

Revelation 6:8 states, "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was **Death, AND Hell** followed with him."

In other words, John saw in vision a rider named Death who rode out with another rider named Hell following close behind. These states appear to be coexisting.

Revelation 20:13-15 states, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and **death AND hell** delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And **death AND hell were cast into the Lake of Fire.** This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the Lake of Fire."

Please note that the sea, death AND hell gave up the dead which were in them. Also note that **hell AND death were cast into the Lake of Fire**, along with all those whose names were not written in the book of life. From the four usages above, it should be readily apparent that death and hell are two coexisting states of those who die.

Prior to God making a **NEW** heavens (galaxy) and earth, the Lake of Fire consumes **ALL that is in our current heavens**. This includes our earth, our solar system, and our heavens or galaxy. Thus, and here is an important point, **it is impossible for hell to burn for eternity as hell itself will be completely destroyed**. The same applies to those consigned to the Lake of Fire. They will be burned up completely.

So here is the question, if as some teach, the Lake of Fire IS the same as hell, how can hell be thrown into itself? That doesn't really make much sense, does it?

Can we believe Jesus's teaching in Revelation that death and hell are separate coexisting places where the dead may go? Can we trust Him? Let's see if Jesus's other teachings are consistent with this teaching found in Revelation.

If, as some teach, the Lake of Fire IS the same as hell, and hell is the same as the Lake of Fire, how can hell be thrown into itself?

Jesus's Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus - symbolic allegory or profound truth?

In Jesus's parable of the rich man and Lazarus as recorded in Luke, Jesus mentions two states of the dead. One where Lazarus went to sleep on the bosom of Abraham and another where the rich man was tormented in hell. Why? Is Jesus being consistent with what He shared with John in vision in Revelation? I encourage you to read the important footnotes below on understanding the basis for the "bosom of Abraham" and for other sections.

Let me quote Jesus's teaching (I have also boldfaced/emphasized certain phrases that are key to understanding the passage):

Luke 16:19-31

¹⁹ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: ²⁰ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, ²¹ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels **into Abraham's bosom:**

The rich man also died, and was buried; ²³ and **in hell** he lift up his eyes, **being in torments**, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ And 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.**

²⁵ But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now **he is comforted, and thou art tormented.** ²⁶ And beside all this, between us and you **there is a great gulf fixed:** so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

²⁷ Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: ²⁸ For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, **lest they also come into this place of torment.**

²⁹ Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. ³⁰ And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

³¹ And he said unto him, **If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded [about hell], though one rose from the dead.**

“Sleeping on Abraham’s bosom” was a concept that came from *The book of the Law and the Testimony* (Jubilees), an important part of the Hebrew Scriptures of Jesus’s day.^B In Chapter 22, Abraham blesses Jacob, who was the 22nd generation from Creation, and through whom God’s blessed Son of Promise would come. After **blessing** Jacob, the two rested together on Abraham’s bed, with **Jacob lying sleeping on Abraham’s bosom.**^C

Applying this historical precedent to Jesus’s parable was that **one who lay sleeping on Abraham’s bosom was one who was blessed.** I believe that this concept was well-known enough at Jesus’s time that when a Jewish person was about to die, his relatives would gather around him and pray for him that he might be laid on Abraham’s bosom, a **blessed person.**

Now some may say this parable was just an allegory, a fable like those of Aesop which were told just to make a point. But note this fact: Jesus **never** used elements in parables that were not true to life; **ALL** that Jesus taught were based in reality. Of the 24 or so parables in the book of Luke, all were based in reality. “While the story in a parable may

^B Seven times in that book, more commonly known as *Jubilees*, does it call itself, this “law and testimony.” While one does find the phrase “this law” or “the law” in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), nowhere does one find the phrase “law AND testimony,” or even the word “testimony.” There is a clear distinguishing between the two.

^C Here are the relevant verses:

Chapter 22

²⁵ And Abraham ceased commanding Jacob and blessing him.

²⁶ And the two rested together on one bed, and **Jacob slept on the bosom of Abraham**, his father's father and Abraham kissed him seven times, and his affection and his heart rejoiced over him.

²⁷ And (again) Abraham blessed Jacob with all his heart and said: 'The Most High God, the God of all, and Creator of all, who brought me forth from Ur of the Chaldees that he might give me this land to inherit it for ever, and that I might establish a holy seed— blessed be the Most High for ever.'

²⁸ And he blessed Jacob and said: 'My son, over whom with all my heart and my affection I rejoice, may Thy grace and Thy mercy be lift up upon him and upon his seed always. ²⁹ And do not forsake him, nor set him at naught from henceforth unto the days of eternity, and may Thine eyes be opened upon him and upon his seed, that Thou mayst preserve him, and bless him, and mayest sanctify him as a nation for Thine inheritance; ³⁰ And bless him with all Thy blessings from henceforth unto all the days of eternity, and renew Thy covenant and Thy grace with him and with his seed according to all Thy good pleasure unto all the generations of the earth.'

Chapter 23

¹ And Abraham placed two fingers of Jacob on his eyes, and he blessed the God of gods, and Abraham covered his face and stretched out his feet and **slept the sleep of eternity**, and was gathered to his fathers. ² And notwithstanding all this, **Jacob was lying on his bosom**, and knew not that Abraham, his father's father, was dead.

³ And Jacob awoke from his sleep, and behold Abraham was cold as ice, and he said 'Father, father'; but there was none that spake, and he knew that he was dead.

⁴ And he arose from his bosom and ran and told Rebecca, his mother; and Rebecca went to Isaac in the night, and told him; and they went together, and Jacob with them, and a lamp was in his hand, and when they had gone in they found Abraham lying dead.

not be historical, it is true to life, not a fairy tale. As a form of oral literature, the parable exploits realistic situations but makes effective use of the imagination..."^D

Thus, note that Jesus is making several crucial points in this teaching:

- 1) A place of torment (hell) and a place of blessed rest/sleep **coexist** and are not sequential! They are *two* coexistent states of the dead.
- 2) Secondly, hell is real and is mentioned in Moses and the prophets. Here Jesus is making a point that is very important to us today too: "**If thy brethren hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.**" Persuaded regarding what? Look what the rich man says, "...that Lazarus may testify unto my brethren, **lest they also come into *this place of torment.***"

Let Lazarus persuade them that the injustices they commit during their lives and which are unrepented of, lead to the torments of hell! As we noted earlier, **Jesus did not teach in fables**; Jesus is teaching a profoundly important truth that applies just as much to us today as to those to whom Jesus gave this parable! These two coexistent states of the dead consistent with Jesus's teaching in Revelation!

- 3) No transfer, migration or movement can take place between those separate divisions. There is **a large gulf** between them which does not allow passage. Nor is there normally passage back to the realm of the living. **No spirit** will come back from the dead to communicate with the living, **unless** God allows a **complete resurrection**. If a person is resurrected before Christ's second coming, then it is a person of real flesh and blood and **not a disembodied spirit** that will interact with us. Examples of resurrected people in the Bible include: Lazarus, Jairus's daughter, the widow of Nain's son, the son of the widow of Zarephath, the Shunammite woman's son, the dead man thrown into Elisha's tomb, Dorcas, Eutychus, those resurrected at Christ's death, etc. Even in our modern times, there are instances where a person has died, even for multiple days and then come back to life in the flesh. God's power to resurrect has not diminished!

This is a very important fact. As we near the end of time, there will be manifestations of evil spirits appearing as loved ones or persons of renown (e.g., the spirit of Eleanor Roosevelt that Hillary Clinton claimed to communicate with^E). These will appear, deceiving the living, teaching them things that are abominable to God. Note that these are **NOT spirits of the departed**, but rather these are the **spirits of devils**, working miracles to deceive if it were possible the very elect. **Any communication with a spirit or being that is not a truly**

^D https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parables_of_Jesus Dr. Kenneth Boa states that "Parables are extended figures of comparison that often use short stories to teach a truth or answer a question. While the story in a parable is [or may] not historical, it is true to life, not a fairy tale. As a form of oral literature, the parable exploits realistic situations but makes effective use of the imagination...Some of the parables [of Christ] were designed to reveal mysteries to those on the inside and to conceal the truth to those on the outside who would not hear."

^E <https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2015-06-13/hillary-clinton-channels-eleanor-roosevelt-on-the-stump>; <http://www.cnn.com/US/9606/22/hillary.book/>

resurrected flesh and blood person is communication with the demonic realm and strictly prohibited by God!^F

Can we believe Jesus's teaching? Can we trust Him? If we call this parable of Jesus simply a fable, isn't that an insult to Jesus, not hearing His words?

Let's keep looking to Jesus and the Prophets.

Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched

In several of His teachings Jesus references the following passage from the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 66:24 "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm [of life] shall not die, **neither shall their fire be quenched; ...**"

When Jesus or God says something three or more times, He really means it! In the following discourse, Jesus **three times in doublets** refers to the above verse to push the point home (six times unquenchable fire is mentioned!):

Mark 9:43-48

⁴³ And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to **go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:** ⁴⁴ where their worm dieth not, and the **fire is not quenched.**

⁴⁵ And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast **into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:** ⁴⁶ where their worm dieth not, and the **fire is not quenched.**

⁴⁷ And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast **into hell fire:** ⁴⁸ **where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.**

Jesus held this concept so important, so vital that in the book of Matthew (see Matthew 5:29-30 **AND** Matthew 18:8-9), the saying is recorded **TWICE** for emphasis (just in a different order)! Note that the fires of hell are not quenched nor does the worm of life^G die until hell itself is destroyed in the Lake of Fire. Now IF, as some argue, hell and the Lake of Fire are the same, then how truthful is Jesus's teaching that the fires of hell are never to be quenched when inspiration reveals that eventually the Lake of Fire will be quenched (once it has finished consuming what it is intended to consume)? Doesn't the truth make more sense?

^F See https://www.openbible.info/topics/communicating_with_the_dead and <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-bible-on-talking-to-the-dead-701973> (good, but not in complete agreement)

^G This concept of the worm that Isaiah and Jesus are referring to being the worm of life rather than worms/maggots that consume the body comes from the following as shown in vision: "Said the angel, 'The worm of life shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched as long as there is the least particle for it to prey upon.'" White, *Early Writings*, p. 294. That would make sense if one thinks about it. How would literal worms consume a spirit or soul? How would literal worms survive a place of enormous heat and torment?

Here are some more teachings of Jesus pertaining to hell, and they all have a similar theme.

Matthew 5:22

²² But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of **hell fire**.

Matthew 10:28

²⁸ And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to **kill the soul**: but rather **fear him [God] which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell**.

Matthew 11:23

²³ And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt **be brought down to hell**: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

[Think about it: if the entire world will be consumed in the Lake of Fire, then **if hell and the Lake of Fire are the same thing, why would this be a legitimate threat** since ALL cities would suffer the same fate? Capernaum was exalted to heaven by having heaven's King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ, walk, teach and do miracles in it. Yet the inhabitants rejected Him and would be brought down to hell. Jesus is differentiating **the response** here between Capernaum and Sodom.]

Matthew 16:18

¹⁸ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the **gates of hell** shall not prevail against it.

[Think about it: If Jesus has the keys of **hell AND of death**, then by implication, there would be **gates** that have locks. And this goes back to the fact that **unless Jesus unlocks a gate to hell or death, no one is coming back, no one is resurrected**]^H

Matthew 23:15

¹⁵ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the **child of hell** than yourselves.

Matthew 23:33

³³ Ye serpents [scribes and Pharisees], ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape **the damnation of hell**?

Luke 10:15

¹⁵ And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be **thrust down to hell**.

^H Revelation 1:18 "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I ... have the **keys of hell AND** of death." Likely these are symbolic keys and gates, not physical gates or keys as we currently have. Nevertheless, no one gets out of hell or death **unless** Jesus lets them out.

Luke 12:5

⁵ But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: **Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.**

I think you would agree with me that if there is any conflict in understanding that we should turn to Jesus for answers, shouldn't we? It is not my opinion, nor your opinion that matters, only what the Word of the Lord states.

It is not my nor your opinion that matters, only what the Word of the Lord states.

Can we believe Jesus's teaching? Can we trust Him? Hell is a place of torment where the fire is never quenched and where their worm does not die; it is a place where the spirits of the souls of the wicked are consigned upon their death, and where they remain **UNTIL** the great judgment day.

Paul echoes Jesus's position of there being two coexisting states

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul echoed these two states of the dead:

1 Corinthians 15:55 (NKJV) "O **Death**, where is your sting? O **Hades** [hell], where is your victory?"¹

Strangely, some modern versions obfuscate the simple truth by translating two different words boldfaced above as the same:

O death ^(Strong's G2288), where is your victory? O death ^(Strong's G86), where is your sting?"

Does this not seem clear? Death is a state of **sleep** where there is no sense of time. Hades or hell is a state of **torment** where there is no sense of time.

The king of Babylon welcomed to hell?

Isaiah 14:9-11 states, with regards to the king of Babylon:

⁹ **Hell from beneath** is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even **all the chief ones** of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones **all the kings of the nations**. ¹⁰ **All they shall speak and say unto thee,** Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? ¹¹ Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

Notice this **speaking** of other denizens of hell to the deceased king of Babylon, as we will see this speaking in another bible verse quoted a few paragraphs down.

¹ Note that the second boldfaced word as given in Strong's Concordance is G86, the Greek word Hades. Only in this verse does the KJV render the Hades as grave. For a complete list of verses, see: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G86&t=KJV>

What about the prophecies of Ezekiel of armies being sent to hell?

What about the prophecies of Ezekiel, received from the Lord God regarding Pharaoh, king of Egypt, Ashur (Assyria/Nineveh), Elam (Persia/Iran) and others? In the interest of space, I have just excerpted key phrases.

Ezekiel 31 [With regards to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude]
¹⁵ Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when he [Pharaoh and his army] went down to the grave ... ¹⁶ ... when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: ... in the nether parts of the earth.
¹⁷ They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword; ¹⁸ ... thou be brought down ... unto the nether parts of the earth: thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword.

Ezekiel 32 [With regards to Egypt, Ashur, Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom, the Zidonians, and others]
¹⁸ ... cast them down, ... unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit. ... ²¹ The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell ... ²² Asshur is there and all her company: ... ²³ Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave: ²⁴ There is Elam and ... her grave, ... gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth, ... go down to the pit. ²⁵ ... her graves ... go down to the pit: ... ²⁶ There is Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude: her graves are round about him ... ²⁷ ... are gone down to hell ²⁹ There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes... they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with them that go down to the pit. ³⁰ There be the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Zidonians, gone down ... go down to the pit.
³¹ Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, even Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord GOD. ³² For I have caused my terror in the land of the living: and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that are slain with the sword, even Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

It should be pretty apparent that the uncircumcised, the kings and armies, as a result of battle, those slain by the sword were sent down to the nether parts of the earth, went down into the pit, were gone down to hell.

Is there a scriptural basis for this concept of hell as a pit, located in the nether regions of the earth? If not in our current Bible, then where did it come from? And why is Pharaoh able to SEE the other slain armies and be comforted over the loss of his multitude? Let's first look at this interesting story.

Where did Jesus go while He was in the grave?

Peter mentions something rather interesting regarding what Jesus did while He was in the grave:

1 Peter 3:18-20

¹⁸ For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: ¹⁹ By which also **he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;** ²⁰ Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

(and edited for clarity)

¹⁸ For Christ ... being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: ¹⁹ ... went and preached unto the spirits in prison; ²⁰ which were disobedient ... in the days of Noah..."

Paraphrasing, Peter states that while in the grave, by the Spirit Jesus went to preach to the spirits in prison who were disobedient in the days of Noah. Imprisoned where? Due to their rebelliousness and disobedience, they could only have been imprisoned in hell. How could Jesus do this unless He descended into hell where the disobedient were placed?

One can now understand where some major churches get this concept of Jesus descending into hell while He was in the grave. But just because some churches which also have apostate teachings believe this doesn't make it an untruth. It does have a biblical basis, albeit it is only found in one place!

One shouldn't correct error with another error, but rather with truth!

Death as a sleep but observe carefully WHO sleeps in death.

Jesus also referred to death multiple times as a sleep. Later we will learn that sleep in death is predominantly for the friends of Jesus, for the righteous and the innocents. The innocents are those who die younger than the age of accountability.^J

Jesus referred to **his friend** Lazarus' death as a sleep:

John 11:11-14

¹¹ These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, **Our friend Lazarus sleepeth;** but I go, that I may awake him out of **sleep.** ¹² Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. ¹³ Howbeit **Jesus spake of his death:** but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. ¹⁴ Then said Jesus unto them plainly, **Lazarus is dead.** [Lazarus was a believer in Jesus. He was righteous. Therefore he slept the sleep of death]

^J The innocents are children from conception to their 13th birthday. God is merciful and as Jesus said, "for of such in the kingdom of heaven." "According to Jewish law, when Jewish boys become 13 years old, they become accountable for their actions and become a bar mitzvah. A girl becomes a bat mitzvah at the age of 12 according to Orthodox and Conservative Jews, and at the age of 13 according to Reform Jews." (source: Wikipedia). According to Jewish tradition, the sins of a child prior to reaching the age of accountability are imputed or allocated to the parents of the child. It is their duty to raise that child to speak and behave properly.

Jesus referred to the **12-year-old daughter** of Jairus, the synagogue ruler, as sleeping in death as an innocent.

Luke 8:51-53

⁵¹ And when [Jesus] came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. ⁵² And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is **not dead, but sleepeth**. ⁵³ And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that **she was dead**. (see also Mark 5:38-39). [Mark 5:42 states “she was twelve years of age” and thus was an innocent. She slept the sleep of death]

No record is mentioned of Jesus saying that the son of the widow of Nain was sleeping. He was not an innocent.

Besides Jesus, other New Testament authors referred to the death of the righteous or the believers as a sleep: In the following passages, I have underlined portions referring to “we” in reference to we believers, among you (i.e., among the believers) for emphasis.

Acts 13:36

For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell **asleep**, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

1 Corinthians 11:30

For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many **sleep**.

1 Corinthians 15:51

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all **sleep**, but we shall all be changed,

Ephesians 5:14

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that **sleepest**, and **arise from the dead**, and Christ shall give thee light.

1 Thessalonians 4:14

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so **them also which sleep in Jesus** will God bring with him.

1 Thessalonians 5:10

Who died for us, that, whether we wake [are alive] or sleep [are dead], we should live together with him.

“We” refers to “we believers”, those who “sleep in Christ”, those who were practicing followers of Jesus. Note that in each case, those who die **in Christ** sleep a blessed sleep until the resurrection of the righteous.

In the Old Testament, we also see **death as a sleep** ONLY when referring to the righteous.

Psalm 13:3

Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I **sleep the sleep of death**; [David]

Job 7:21

And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away my iniquity? for now shall I **sleep in the dust**; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be. [Job]

Job 14:12

So **man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.**

[This is a good example of how *not* to use just one verse as a proof text but to look at the preponderance of texts for truth.]

Deuteronomy 31:16, 2 Samuel 7:12, 1 Kings 1:21 refer to sleeping with their fathers in the grave, or with respect to Daniel, he would rest in death. Note in each case, those who slept were circumcised, the people of God, vs the uncircumcised that we read about earlier.

Deuteronomy 31:16

¹⁶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, **thou shalt sleep** with thy fathers

2 Samuel 7:12 [The prophet Nathan talking to David]

¹² And when thy [David's] days be fulfilled, and **thou shalt sleep** with thy fathers

...

1 Kings 1:21

²¹ Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king [David] **shall sleep** with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.

Daniel 12 [The angel talking with Daniel]

¹³ But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou **shalt rest**, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

What about Job's plaintive remarks, wishing he had died at birth?

Job 3

¹¹ Why **died I not from the womb**? why did I not give up the **ghost** when I came out of the belly? ... ¹³ For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should **have slept**: then had I **been at rest**, ... ¹⁶ Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; **as infants which never saw light**. ¹⁷ There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the **weary be at rest**. ¹⁸ There the **prisoners rest together**; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. ¹⁹ The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

As an infant dying in the womb (miscarriage) or shortly after birth, Job would have been **an innocent** and thus rested in death. Job also mentions the weary, the servant and those who had an oppressor as resting in death, and we will look at those more later. So the preponderance of biblical evidence is that the **righteous** and **the innocents** rest in sleep after death.

... the preponderance of biblical evidence is that the righteous and the innocents rest in sleep after death.

Are there more states or categories of the dead? What about those who sleep a perpetual sleep, never to be resurrected?

We have looked at two states of the dead, the righteous and innocents who sleep, and the wicked who are placed in hell, a place of torment. But there are some more interesting verses.

Following are several prophetic verses that refer to what appears to be another state of the dead, a **perpetual sleep** from which there is no awakening (i.e., no resurrection). This state is referenced in the writings of other prophetic messengers and likely includes the servants, the oppressed and the weary.

Jeremiah 51:39

In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and **sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake**, saith the LORD. [those complete in transgression, but which shall not wake – I will explain this later]

Jeremiah 51:57

And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall **sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake**, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts. [those complete in transgression, but which shall not wake]

Daniel 12:2

And **many** of them that **sleep in the dust** of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. [note the word **many** (of them), rather than **all** (of them).]

What is **this perpetual sleep** from which one does not wake, and why are **many** raised but not **all**? I will address this in a following section.

How about martyrdom, those who die (are murdered) for being righteous?

Several places in the bible, we find something that seems quite odd IF one believes that **all death** consists of a sleep or that one goes immediately to heaven or hell upon death. Here they are:

Genesis 4:9-11

And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of **thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground**. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

Revelation 6:9-11

⁹ And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar **the souls of them that were slain for the word of God**, and for the testimony which they held:

¹⁰ And **they cried with a loud voice**, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

¹¹ And white robes were given unto every one of them; and **it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season**, until [the number of] their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

So here we have a biblical truth of there being some form of an individual (a spirit or soul) that can petition the Almighty for redress of their grievances. This isn't quite a sleep, is it, nor a form of torment. Yet, it exists.

How many states of the dead are there?

We have seen what appear to be four categories or states of the dead. Is there a place where God discloses **through a prophet** the states of the dead with greater clarity while reaffirming what Jesus taught and the Bible texts referenced earlier? Can we know the truth?

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, we find a clear answer in the book of the **prophet Enoch**, a writing that was to be "a testimony for all nations until the end of time."^K This book was among the books of the **prophets**, revered and quoted by Jesus and His disciples in multiple places in our Bible. When Jesus was referring to the prophets, He included the messages given through the prophet Enoch. Jesus's disciples in their writings at times referred to scenes portrayed in the book of prophet Enoch. In fact, there are 12 or more concepts or teachings in the Bible that appear to derive their basis from the book of Enoch (I cover this in my draft paper, *Is the book of Enoch Genuine?*^L). Understanding it is a necessity in understanding the book of Revelation and several potentially confusing New Testament passages.

More than any other book of antiquity, **the book of Enoch talks about the Word, the Son of Man, the Elect One, the Anointed One**. No wonder the Jews didn't want to keep it as part of their scriptures after they crucified Jesus, the Son of Man, the Promised One. While most want to reject the book of Enoch, thinking it a contrivance dated to several hundred years before the Christ, internal and external verifying evidence strongly

^K http://www.bibleplus.org/endoftime/Book_of_Enoch.pdf. This is NOT an apocryphal book, nor a pseudo epigraphic work, but when examined closely, exactly as it purports to be.

^L http://www.bibleplus.org/endoftime/Is_the_Book_of_Enoch_Genuine.pdf

suggests otherwise. You can find links to my paper giving biblical reasons why the book of Enoch is genuine in the footnote below.^M

Via an angel, God shows the various states of the dead to His prophet Enoch. Here is the passage:

Enoch 22:1-13

¹ And thence I went to another place, and saw a mountain of hard rock.

² And there was in it **four** hollow places [pits], deep and wide and very smooth. How smooth are the hollow places and deep and dark to look at.

³ Then Raphael, one of the holy angels who was with me, answered, and said unto me: 'These hollow places have been created for this very purpose, that the **spirits of the souls of the dead** should ⁴ assemble therein, yea that all **the souls of the children of men** should assemble here. And these places have been made to receive them **till the day of their judgement** and till the period appointed, till the great judgement (comes) upon them.'

I saw (the spirit of) a dead man making suit, ⁵ and his voice went forth to heaven and made suit.^N And I asked Raphael, the angel who was ⁶ with me, and I said unto him: 'This spirit which maketh suit, whose is it, whose voice goeth forth and maketh suit to heaven?'

⁷ And he answered me saying: 'This is the spirit which went forth from Abel, whom his brother Cain slew, and he makes his suit against him till his seed is destroyed from the face of the earth, and his seed is annihilated from amongst the seed of men.'^O

⁸ Then I asked regarding it, and regarding all the hollow places: 'Why is **one separated from the other**?'

⁹ And he answered me and said unto me: 'These have been made that the spirits of the dead might be separated.

- 1) One such a division has been made (for) the **spirits of the righteous**, in which there is the **bright spring of ¹⁰ water**.^P
- 2) One such [a division] has been made for **sinners** when they die and are buried in the earth and judgement has not been executed on them in their ¹¹ lifetime. Here their spirits shall be set apart **in great pain** till the great day of judgment, and **punishment and torment** of those who curse for ever and retribution for their spirits. There ¹² He shall bind them for ever.
- 3) One such a division has been made for the **spirits of those who make their suit**, who make disclosures concerning their destruction, when they were slain in the days ¹³ of the sinners.

^M See http://www.bibleplus.org/endoftime/Is_the_Book_of_Enoch_Genuine.pdf and http://www.bibleplus.org/endoftime/Book_of_Enoch.pdf

^N 2a: an action or process in a court for the recovery of a right or claim; 2b: recourse or appeal to a feudal superior for justice or redress. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/suit>

^O This happened near the beginning of the great Flood when the line of Cain was totally wiped out.

^P Bright also can be translated as glorious. A glorious spring of water, the water of life, a rejuvenating, sustaining stream of water.

- 4) [One such a division] has been made for the **spirits of men who were not righteous but sinners**, who were complete in transgression, and of the transgressors they shall be companions: but **their spirits shall not be slain in the day of judgement nor shall they be raised from thence.**'

¹⁴ Then I blessed the Lord of glory and said: 'Blessed be my Lord, the Lord of righteousness, who ruleth for ever.'

Pretty descriptive, isn't it? Does what Enoch shared match what we looked at Biblically earlier? Very much so. Let's go into more detail.

In Jesus's parable of the rich man and Lazarus He referred to **the Prophets** from the perspective of **His** day, of which Enoch was one and which was used for hundreds of years afterwards by the apostles and disciples. Let's dig deeper into these four divisions or pits (great hollow places). I will match the numbering to the order given above.

1. **Pit of Sleep:** This is a place of peaceful sleep, of rest for the righteous, wherein there is **a glorious spring of water** (likely the restoring and sustaining **water of life**). In Jesus's parable the rich man asked, "... send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger **in water** and cool my tongue; for I am **tormented** in this flame." A few drops of natural water won't quench anyone's thirst, but a drop or two from the water of life can be rejuvenating!

Jesus stated: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, **I am** the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? **God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.**" (Matthew 22:31-32). The context clearly indicates that Jesus was talking in the present tense. Jesus stated, "he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: **for all live unto him.**" Luke 20:38

It is likely that this is the main division into which **the innocents** are placed, those who died younger than the age of accountability. These would include those miscarried, those who died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) through which I lost an infant, or disease, and many of those **who were aborted**. Jeremiah refers to some of these innocents in the following passage:

Jeremiah 2:32-34

Says the Almighty, "Can a virgin forget her ornaments, Or a bride her attire? Yet My people have forgotten Me days without number. Why do you beautify your way to seek love? Therefore you have also taught **the wicked women** your ways. Also on your skirts is found **the blood of the lives of the poor innocents.**"

Jeremiah 19:4

Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place **with the blood of innocents;**

When a woman aborted her pregnancy, the blood resulting from the procedure

would spatter on her skirts. How many millions of lives of poor innocents were ended this way? And in the sacrifices to the god Molech and other idolatrous gods, many babies were sacrificed (“passed through the fire”) as the parents sought a blessing from that idolatrous god.

Note how God designates those who promote or participate in abortion, “Therefore you have also taught **the wicked women** your ways. Also on your skirts is found **the blood of the lives of the poor innocents.**” God will hold those accountable, which is one reason why women who have abortions feel so depressed emotionally afterwards. They intrinsically know they did wrong. This notion of abortion being about women’s health is a deception of the evil one, and in ~86% of cases, is due to sexual intercourse outside of marriage.^Q

2. **Pit of Hell:** This is the place called Hell, Hades or Sheol, a place of torment, of unquenchable fire. David wrote in Psalms 31:17 “O Lord, let me not be put to shame for I call upon you, **let the wicked be put to shame; let them go silently to Sheol.**” (ESV) David knew where the wicked went: to Sheol or Hell. While a number of translations translate the word Sheol as grave(s) or the world of the dead, the Hebrew word (Strong’s Concordance #7585 is She’ol, defined as “Hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates:--grave, hell, pit.”)^R

“Here their spirits shall be set apart in great pain **till the great day of judgement** and punishment and torment of those who curse **for ever** and retribution for their spirits. There He shall bind them **for ever.**”

Note the apparent conflicting terms: “until the great day of judgment” and the English phrase “for ever” in Enoch’s description. In the ancient sacred literature including the Bible, the Hebrew phrase translated as “for ever” is often used at the tail end of a sentence or phrase to mean, “in a **continuing manner** until what we are talking about comes to an end.” It does not mean “unto eternity” or “for infinite time” as westerners or English speakers typically understand it.^S

^Q <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/12/14/upshot/who-gets-abortion-in-america.html>

^R My best guess is that hell is located in the magma beneath the earth’s crust, a place of unquenchable fire and heat. Hell is considered to be located in the “nether regions” of the earth, so this would qualify.

^S Following are a number of examples of the term “for ever” means “in a continuing manner until its end” comes rather than “in perpetuity” or “eternity.” For more, see

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=for+ever&t=kjv&s=Bibles>

“I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame **for ever.**” (Genesis 43:9, see also Genesis 44:32) Judah offered to be a surety or guarantee for his brother Benjamin when Judah needed to take him to Egypt to satisfy Joseph’s demand. Note that Judah could not live for eternity. He would bear the blame in a **continuing manner** for all his life if Benjamin was hurt or lost to Jacob.

“...this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance **for ever.**” (Exodus 12:14. See also vs. 17, 24). Regarding the feast days of the Lord, these were to be kept in a **continuing manner** as an ordinance until the nation of Israel should cease to exist.

The fires of hell while unquenchable, do not burn unto eternity. They burn in a continuing manner until hell itself is destroyed in the Lake of Fire.

3. **Pit of Martyrs:** This is a place for the righteous martyrs **who make petition, appealing to God for justice**. Martyrs are those who are put to death by the wicked for doing right, i.e., for being righteous, for obeying God's commandments and holding onto the testimonies of Jesus.^T **A martyr is not someone who dies in the process of killing others.**^U Note that the martyrs seek redress of their grievances. They make petition or suit to God for Him to act on their behalf.

Note this truth: **God's true Church never persecutes, it only proselytizes. False or pagan religions, if they cannot convince an individual or group to join their cause, may persecute that individual or group.** "Convert or die" is one of their maxims.

One of God's more modern-day messengers has written that the martyrs hold a special place in heaven and around the throne of God. These are given white robes with a red border. Here are several quotations:

"As we were traveling along, we met a company who also were gazing at the glories of the place. I noticed **red as a border on their garments**; their crowns were brilliant; their robes were pure white. As we greeted them, I asked Jesus who they were. He said they were **martyrs that had been slain for Him. With them was an innumerable company of little ones; they also had a hem of red on their garments** [some of the innocents are in this class?]. Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple, and about it were seven other mountains, on which grew roses and lilies. And I saw the little ones climb, or, if they chose, use their little wings and fly, to the top of the mountains and pluck the never-fading flowers. ... " {Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p. 18}

Now Christ again appears to the view of His enemies. Far above the city, upon a foundation of burnished gold, is a throne, high and lifted up. Upon this throne

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee **for ever**. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD." (Exodus 19:9)

When God told Moses that when God would speak with him, the people would believe him in a **continuing manner** all the days of Moses' life (and beyond as well).

"Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him **for ever**." (Exodus 21:6)

When a Hebrew servant agreed to serve his Hebrew master beyond the seven-year limit, he was to serve him in a **continuing manner** until the day of his death.

^T See Revelation 6:9-11 quoted earlier, also Revelation 12:17, 14:12, 22:14.

^U See the Frequently Asked Question section following for more detail. Samson should not be considered a martyr. He has no need to make his petition or suit to God with regards to his death.

sits the Son of God, and around Him are the subjects of His kingdom. The power and majesty of Christ no language can describe, no pen portray. The glory of the Eternal Father is enshrouding His Son. The brightness of His presence fills the City of God, and flows out beyond the gates, flooding the whole earth with its radiance.

1) Nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan, but who, plucked as brands from the burning, have followed their Saviour with deep, intense devotion.

2) Next are those who perfected Christian characters in the midst of falsehood and infidelity, those who honored the law of God when the Christian world declared it void, [the 144,000]

3) and the millions, of all ages, **who were martyred for their faith.**

4) And beyond is the "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, . . . before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Revelation 7:9. Their warfare is ended, their victory won. They have run the race and reached the prize. The palm branch in their hands is a symbol of their triumph, the white robe an emblem of the spotless righteousness of Christ which now is theirs. {Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, p. 665 – numbering and indentation supplied regarding the four groups }

We will look at the martyrs under the altar in Revelation 6:9-11 in detail in a later section.

4. **Pit of Perpetual Sleep:** This category is straightforward. Those who are in this category will be as if they never were. Here is the passage again:

“One such a division] has been made for the spirits of men who were not righteous but sinners, who were complete in transgression, and of the transgressors they shall be companions: but their spirits shall not be slain in the day of judgement **nor shall they be raised** from thence.”

The following bible verses likely refer to this category or division using terms such as “not awake”, and “sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake”

Job 14:12

So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens [our galaxy] be no more, **they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.** ¹³ O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that **thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!** [Job petitioned God to remember him to resurrect him after the tribulation and God’s wrath had passed by]

Jeremiah 51:39

In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that

they may rejoice, and **sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake**, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 51:57

And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall **sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake**, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.

Peasants and citizens who had no choice but to follow a king into battle may be among those not resurrected, depending on their level of command or responsibility. Slaves who were controlled by their masters may not be resurrected. In Hebrew teachings, the sins of a child younger than the age of accountability are attributed to the parents of the child. In a similar sense, the deeds of a peasant soldier or slave are attributed to the king or master who controlled their behavior. This is why hell has its share of kings, presidents, dictators and commanders. These leaders will be held accountable for the sins of their followers which they compelled them to do, as well as for their own sins.

Isaiah 14:9

“Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even **all the chief ones of the earth**; it hath raised up from their thrones **all the kings of the nations**.”

God’s messenger Ellen White in 1858, in *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 1, page 193 wrote,

“I saw that the slave-master would have to answer for the soul of his slave whom he has kept in ignorance; and **all the sins of the slave will be visited upon the master**. God cannot take the slave to heaven, who has been kept in ignorance and degradation, knowing nothing of God, or the Bible, fearing nothing but his master's lash, and not holding so elevated a position as his master's brute beasts. But he does the best thing for him that a compassionate God can do. **He lets him be as though he had not been.**” (See also White, *Early Writings*, p. 276.).

These slaves are placed in this 4th division or Pit of Perpetual Sleep. Applying what White was shown implies that drafted or conscripted citizens and peasants who had no choice but to fight in a war for their king or president, such as referenced in the verses quoted from Jeremiah, are also placed in this category. An example of this is what is happening in Russia during the Russo-Ukrainian war where conscripts in some cases are sent to the front with little or no armor, ammunition or commander leadership.^v

Perhaps that also helps us understand Job’s plea in Job 3:11-19) wishing he could have been an innocent. Then he lumps in the weary, the prisoners (imprisoned by

^v <https://youtu.be/vYOeVViBEek>; https://youtu.be/kV9DLy2NI_8; and others.

an oppressor rather than for committing a crime), and the servant who is finally free from his oppressive master. These latter ones would have been “complete in transgression,” but it appears, never to be resurrected for the Judgment Day.

See the document http://bibleplus.org/endoftime/Is_the_Book_of_Enoch_Genuine.pdf for more details, especially pages 33-41

You can also download the whole book of the prophet Enoch from http://bibleplus.org/endoftime/Book_of_Enoch.pdf

The Pit for the Martyrs and the Souls Under the Altar

Beside the divisions for the righteous and the torments of hell, there is a pit or division for the Martyrs, those who were killed for doing righteousness. This includes Abel who was killed by his brother Cain as mentioned earlier.

Knowing this helps us understand the passage found in Revelation 6:9-11

“And when he [Jesus, the Lamb] had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, **until [the number of] their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.**” (while the KJV doesn’t have “the number”, most modern translations such as the NIV, NLT, ESV, Berean, NKJV, NASB, etc., do include “the number of”.)

Compare that to Enoch 47:3-4

“In those days I saw the Ancient of Days when He seated himself upon the throne of His glory, And the books of the living were opened before Him: And all His host which is in heaven above and His counselors stood before Him, And the hearts of the holy were filled with joy; **because the number of the righteous had been offered,** And the prayer of the righteous had been heard, And **the blood of the righteous been required** before the Lord of Hosts.”

Why a certain number of martyrs? Perhaps Revelation 20 reveals the answer:

Revelation 20:4

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and **judgment was given unto them:** and I saw the souls of them **that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God,** and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and **they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.**”

It appears that God requires a certain number of righteous people to judge the wicked during the thousand years. And who better to sit on those thrones rendering “judgment” than those who gave their lives for His cause?

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:3

“Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?”

Ellen White was shown in vision that those who sit on these thrones will examine each life and together with Jesus determine the sentence that should be meted out against each wicked person for the deeds done while in the flesh. The sentence shall be written against that person’s name in the Book of Death, and that sentence is to be executed in the Lake of Fire.^W

Being a martyr for Jesus our Creator is a position of great honor. If you as a believer are called upon to choose between compromise with the world, the soon-coming Antichrist, or to give up your life at the end of time, I encourage you to stay loyal to Jesus and embrace the opportunity to show your loyalty to and faith in Him. Die willingly holding fast to Jesus, and Jesus will resurrect you to immortality at His second coming.

Consolidating into two classes

While it should be clear that there are four different states of the dead, if we were to consolidate those into two categories, they would be Death and Hell, which is exactly as Jesus splits them.

1. **Death** in the Bible (as generally used) refers to a) the righteous who **sleep**, b) the innocents who sleep, c) those who were martyred for being righteous, and d) those who sleep a perpetual sleep, never to be resurrected. The martyrs died, choosing to obey God rather than Satan or his agents. Revelation described these as **holding onto the testimony of Jesus** and **obeying His commandments**. The innocents are those younger than the age of accountability (there is some arguments as to the exact age, but in the Hebrew mindset, this is generally on the child’s 13th birthday. There are also those who died without much choice while serving a master or king/president/prime minister. These sleep a perpetual sleep from which they will not be resurrected. To **rest in peace** (or RIP as many tombstones state) is the hope of most people when they die.
2. **Hell** on the other hand is a **state of torment** where the souls of those who committed acts or influenced others to commit those acts for which justice (generally the death penalty as defined by God) has not been done to them. There the worm of life does not die, nor is the tormenting fire quenched until the Day of Judgment. I believe that individuals end up in hell based upon committing an act for which being “cut off” or the death penalty was required by God, but not

^W See White, *Early Writings*, pp. 52-54 <https://www.ellenwhite.info/books/ellen-g-white-book-early-writings-ew-10.htm> “After the saints are changed to immortality and caught up together with Jesus, after they receive their harps, their robes, and their crowns, and enter the city, Jesus and the saints sit in judgment. The books are opened—the book of life and the book of death. The book of life contains the good deeds of the saints; and the book of death contains the evil deeds of the wicked. These books are compared with the statute book, the Bible, and according to that men are judged. The saints, in unison with Jesus, pass their judgment upon the wicked dead. “Behold ye,” said the angel, “the saints, in unison with Jesus, sit in judgment, and mete out to the wicked according to the deeds done in the body, and that which they must receive at the execution of the judgment is set off against their names.” This, I saw, was the work of the saints with Jesus through the one thousand years in the Holy City before it descends to the earth.”

administered. The laws of God as given to Moses are the best source of those. In the footnotes below is a partial list of sins for which one is to be cut off or put to death. When the death penalty is dispensed with, when a person deserves the death penalty dies naturally (they didn't have justice served upon them), then their spirit is sent to hell. ^X Since Satan wants all people to go to hell, you can understand why he tempts people to do the behaviors which lead them to end up there, and convinces society that that death penalty is unacceptable.

Just prior to the final Judgment, death, hell and the sea give up the dead that were in them and the Judgment takes place. Then after the Judgment, Satan and his angels, the wicked, death AND hell are thrown into the Lake of Fire which consumes these in their entirety. God does not promise eternal life to the wicked, only the righteous.

Fear God who has the power to cast into hell where you will remain until the Day of Judgment

Jesus warned His listeners:

^X For a list of criteria that may land one in hell, search for the terms “cut off” and “put to death” on BibleGateway.com or click on the links below.
https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?qs_version=NKJV&quicksearch=cut+off&startnumber=1&resultspp=250: When all flesh, a nation or person is “cut off” they are literally put to death. For a Hebrew, not being circumcised, eating leavened bread during the feast of unleavened bread, making a perfume using the sacred formula, profaning the Sabbath day, eating the flesh of a peace offering while ceremonially unclean, eating the fat of peace offering sacrifice, whoever eats blood, those who commit any of the listed abominations as defined by God, whoever offers his children to Molech or engages in idolatry, someone who consults mediums or the spirit realm, who has sex with a sister or step-sister or during the time of a woman's menstrual flow, anyone who does not prepare for the Day of Atonement, failure to keep the Passover when they could have, presumptuous sin, despising the word of the LORD, whoever touches a dead body and does not go through a cleansing process, persistent unfaithfulness of a “land” or country.
<https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=put+to+death&resultspp=250&version=NKJV> is a search for the phrase “put to death.” Actions worthy of death include: striking a human so that he or she dies, striking or cursing a parent, kidnapping a person, allowing a known troublesome ox to kill another human, having sex with an animal, failing to keep the seventh-day Sabbath, working on the Sabbath, committing adultery with another man's wife (both parties shall die), having sex with a parent or step-parent, having homosexual relations, having sex with an animal, a witch, sorcerer, medium, etc., anyone who has a familiar spirit, whoever blasphemes the Lord, whoever wantonly kills a man, any outsider who attempts to play a role in the sanctuary service whether setup/take down or in the role of priest, murdering someone during a fight, a false messenger or prophet who attempts to turn you from the LORD, being a worthless person (disobedient to parents, a glutton and drunkard), a non-virgin woman at her marriage, a rape in the city and staying silent, rebelling or plotting against God's chosen leader, betrayal of family members (brothers, parents, children), fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, or sodomites (any of the LGB behaviors). While wearing the clothing of the opposite gender is considered to be an abomination by God, the death penalty is not directly indicated in the scriptures. Observe that the foregoing list is quite extensive, and Satan is working his hardest to draw humanity into committing one or more of these fatal sins. Fortunately, Jesus can forgive the prior sins and redeem a repentant person from the consequence of hell. But the person must stay “clean” (Go and sin no more, Go and leave your life of sin). But for unconfessed sin, or sins of lifestyle which one hangs on to, there is little hope for that person. It also indicates that those who advocate against the death penalty are not led by God, but by His adversary who seeks to entrap sinners and doom them to hell and then the Lake of Fire, which sadly is the far majority of individuals. “...for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.” Matthew 7:13

Luke 12:5 “But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which **after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell**; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”

Isaiah 24:21-22 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the **host of the high ones that are on high**, and **the kings of the earth** upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as **prisoners are gathered in the pit**, and **shall be shut up in the prison**, and after many days shall they be visited.

Note that these who are “shut up in prison” include the rebellious angels and the kings of the earth who joined with them in their rebellion. Yet, they will be visited after many days. By Whom? By Jesus, the One who hold the keys to Hell as well as Death.

Can you see why Jesus and His disciples taught their listeners to **Fear God**? Fear God who knows your heart, your words, and your deeds. And after you are dead, has the power to cast your spirit into hell, or to let you sleep peacefully until the first resurrection. He knows whether you have forgiven others or not. And if you haven't, your sins will be reinstated to you and you shall pay back what you have done while in the flesh. As Jesus taught in another parable: “And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the **tormentors**, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” (Matthew 18:21-35).

Ignorance of these important truths is not a blessing. For an awareness of these truths is part of the everlasting gospel; it is part of the good news!

Revelation 14:6-7

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having **the everlasting gospel** to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, **Fear God, and give glory to him**; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Now that I have covered the four states of death including sleep and hell in detail, go watch a few videos on YouTube of people who God has permitted in vision to see or experience hell. You may be surprised by the consistency of the stories. While some are hellacious near-death experiences, others were Christians deliberately shown by God in order to warn the world. Here are some example links:

Video Title	YouTube Link
Tamara Laroux Shot Herself, & Went to Hell, Then to Heaven and BACK!!	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGQDkCi-OIY
Life After Death: Visions Of Hell	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVF-ypkzYo8
Man Dies Went To Hell What he Saw Testimony	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrVFfa5IzKTw

Man was Taken by God to See Hell and Warn the World! (Bill Wiese)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmczrxnPYSI
23 Minutes in Hell (Bill Wiese)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lhhEvfSaSA
Man Sees Satan In Hell And Realizes There Is Life After Death! Near Death Experience	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChSvtWtyAKU

Note the many other videos on YouTube reporting the same concepts. It might be easy for some to brush these away. Yet Jesus warned us: **“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”**

Be cautious about videos that tout Near Death Experiences (NDE) as Satan often uses these to broadcast false teachings regarding the “other side.”

Jesus warns all to fear God, obey His commandments, hold onto His words, confess our sins, forgive others, and stay away from Hell. Make sure your name stays written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

Questions and Answers:

What about aborted babies and those who die younger than the age of accountability?

My wife and I lost a son at 10 weeks old so this is an intensely personal question for me. Others have similarly lost young children to disease or cancer. Some women have miscarried a child. Others have aborted their pregnancies. What happens to these babies or developing fetuses? There are several possibilities:

1. In Ellen White's book, *Selected Messages*, Vol. 2, p. she describes what she saw in vision:
"As the little infants come forth immortal from their dusty beds, they immediately wing their way to their mother's arms. They meet again nevermore to part. **But many of the little ones have no mother there.** We listen in vain for the rapturous song of triumph from the mother. **The angels receive the motherless infants and conduct them to the tree of life.**"

This is an incredibly merciful teaching which should be encouraging to all mothers who have aborted or lost a child.

2. The second option is as in the 4th division in Enoch's vision; that deformed fetuses and babies will be as if they had never been. These fetuses or babies were developing or born in the flesh of Adam's post-fall nature. So in that sense, they are numbered with the transgressors, "but their spirits shall not be slain in the day of judgement nor shall they be raised from thence." In God's mercy, these will be as if they had never been.

What about Muslim jihadists who believe that if they kill infidels that they will be taken to paradise and have 72 wives (alt. 70 virgins)?

First of all, in heaven as Jesus said, while there will be many children, the resurrected innocents, there is no giving in marriage, but the redeemed will be as the angels. In several other visions, God has shown that the redeemed, while being recognizable as they were in human form, lack the sexual organs of humans. Subsequently, there will be no sexual pleasures nor procreation in heaven nor in the earth made new. So if the 72 wives (or 70 "houris") did perchance exist, their situation is not going to change and the soul of the jihadist could get mighty frustrated thinking he was going to have a number of women in his harem who were at his beck and call to enjoy sexually.

Secondly, while there will be murderers in heaven, these will have confessed, repented and turned from their sin. Someone who commits willful murder as their final act of life, especially believing that they are "dying in the noblest of all causes,"^Y has **no interest in nor chance for repentance.** The law of God written on the tablets or books of heaven requires that wanton destruction of a life requires the life of the destroyer. That is

^Y <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/jan/12/books.guardianreview5>

heaven's defined justice. That is the death penalty. Note the following law written in heaven.

The Book of the Law and the Testimony 4:31-32

“At the close of this jubilee Cain was killed after [Adam died] in the same year; for his house fell upon him and he died in the midst of his house, and he was killed by its stones; for with a stone he had killed Abel, and by a stone was he killed in righteous judgment. For this reason it was ordained on the heavenly tablets: With the instrument with which a man kills his neighbour with the same shall he be killed; after the manner that he wounded him, in like manner shall they deal with him.”^Z

Those who fight against the death penalty fight against heaven's defined justice! And who ends up in hell? Those who did not receive justice during their lives! All who kill wantonly are to be put to death and if they are not, society *de facto* consigns them to hell. It appears that Satan is behind this movement.

It should be apparent that jihadi militants who kill, thinking they will be granted entrance into heaven do not qualify but rather earn themselves a quick ticket to hell. The delusion that suicidal violence can earn a place in paradise is a deception of Satan. It is easier for these wicked individuals to commit a heinous act than to live a life of righteousness, mercy, forgiveness, purity and obedience to the Creator and Law-Giver, reflecting His wonderful character. The same applies to those who consider Jesus to be useless and set themselves above His law, who dignify behavior that God clearly calls abominations, and support those who commit those abominations. Ezekiel 9 makes it clear that those sealed for protection during the coming time of wrath (and it is coming), are those who sigh and cry (lament and weep) over the abominations done in the land and in the church. How can one sigh and cry over sin if one doesn't even know what the various sins are?

Jesus gave the following warning:

Revelation 14:6-7 “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, ..., Saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come...’”

^Z Chapter 4:4-6, 13-15 “And the LORD reproveth Cain because of Abel, because he had slain him, and he made him a fugitive on the earth because of the blood of his brother, and he cursed him upon the earth. ⁵ And on this account it is written on the heavenly tables, ‘Cursed is he who smites his neighbour treacherously, and let all who have seen and heard say, So be it; and the man who has seen and not declared (it), let him be accursed as the other.’ ⁶ And for this reason we [the angels] announce when we come before the LORD our God all the sin which is committed in heaven and on earth, and in light and in darkness, and everywhere.”

¹³ “And the judgment of all is ordained and written on the heavenly tablets in righteousness –even (the judgment of) all who depart from the path which is ordained for them to walk in; and if they walk not therein, judgment is written down for every creature and for every kind. ¹⁴ And there is nothing in heaven or on earth, or in light or in darkness, or in Sheol [hell] or in the depth, or in the place of darkness (which is not judged); and all their judgments are ordained and written and engraved. ¹⁵ In regard to all He will judge, the great according to his greatness, and the small according to his smallness, and each according to his way.

Is the devil in charge of hell?

The Bible says the devil has the power of death.

Hebrews 2:14

Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might **destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the Devil.**

However, does that mean that he is in charge of hell? Jesus says that He personally has “the keys to death and Hell.” Furthermore, as quoted earlier:

Luke 12:5 “But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him [God the Father], which after he hath killed **hath power to cast into hell**; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”

So God the Father controls **who goes where** based upon that person's decisions during their lifetime.

That being said, there are a number of fallen angels and demons that are also locked up in hell, who await the Day of Judgment. These act as the tormentors that Jesus referred to in Matthew 18:34.

So are there demons and fallen angels currently in hell? Some of the people who have claimed to have seen hell in vision mention reptilian creatures tormenting humans there. Is that possible?

The short answer is yes. According to a number of the books of antiquity including the Dead Sea Scrolls, there are definitely fallen angels,^{AA} demons, and evil spirits in hell and as mentioned in the prior answer, it is likely that they are allowed to torment people. Due to the amalgamation of fallen beings (spirits/angels/watchers) and animate creatures prior to the flood, there was a corruption in the ways (genetics) of the birds, animals and creeping things. Some of the fallen angels (sons of God - Genesis 6:2) took on the characteristics of the serpent (a reptilian nature) and in a misguided attempt to procreate, mingled their genetics with various other species. I believe that effort resulted in what we know as the dinosaurs, reptilian mixed with birds, with mammals, with fish and other aquatic life, with other reptiles, insects, etc. In the book of the Law and the Testimony, it states that the way or genetic path was corrupted for nearly every species on earth. This amalgamation process went on for nearly a thousand years (from the time of Jared Enoch's father to the Flood, which purpose was to destroy these amalgamations and the wicked). The ancient books indicate that the spirits of the mixed offspring upon their deaths became some of the evil spirits that wreak havoc on the world today. For those who want further details, contact me via FaceBook Messenger. It's a rather long story that begins well before the flood and requires additional openness of mind to what the books found among the Dead Sea Scrolls contain.

^{AA} These include the Sons of God, 300 of the watchers who were responsible for the world who sinned with the daughters of men and were bound in chains in the abyss of fire (hell). Multiple ancient books contain this information (Enoch, Jasher, Jubilees) and the Bible alludes to such in 1 Peter 3:18-20; 2 Peter 2:4-7; Jude 6-7.

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Addendum

You may download a copy of this message via the following link:

http://www.bibleplus.org/endoftime/States_of_the_Dead.pdf

For those who would like detailed studies on other topics, go to my public FaceBook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BiblePlus.org/>. You can also read some other articles there that may be helpful for you.

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