

# Fulfilled Prophecies

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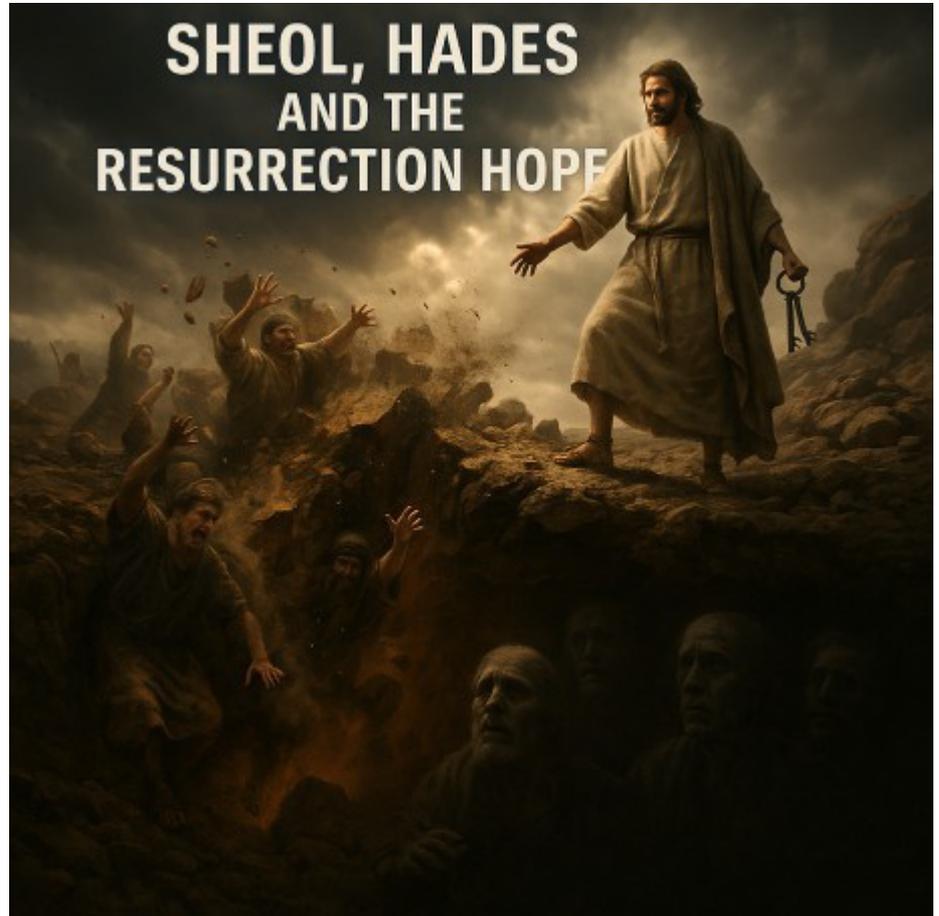
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[Hades - Sheol,  
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By Dan Maines

## **Sheol, Hades, and the Resurrection Hope**

### **Numbers 16:33**

They went down alive into Sheol, with everything that belonged to them; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly.

† Korah and his followers went down alive into Sheol, showing that Sheol is not merely a pile of dirt but a realm that receives both body and soul.

† If Sheol were only the grave, the text would simply say they

died and were buried. Instead, it emphasizes that they went down alive, and only afterward did the earth close over them. † This matches the consistent biblical picture of Sheol as the place of the departed, not annihilation.

† Josephus, Antiquities 4.3.3, describes this same event and says that the rebels were swallowed alive into the earth, emphasizing the divine judgment and the sudden descent, which early Jews understood as going into the underworld, not mere burial.

† Rabbinic commentary, Midrash Rabbah Numbers 18:20, says the earth's mouth was created at the beginning of creation for this very judgment, and that Korah and his company still cry out from beneath the earth. This directly opposes the annihilation view.

### **Job 26:5-6**

The departed spirits tremble under the waters and their inhabitants. Sheol is naked before Him, and Abaddon has no covering.

† Job confirms that Sheol is not mere dirt. He describes trembling spirits, not unconscious nothingness.

† Sheol is naked before God. It is a place under His sovereign sight, not a void where existence ceases.

† If Sheol were only a grave, spirits would not be trembling, nor would it require God's oversight.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls, 4Q491 Songs of the Sage, also describe the realm of spirits trembling before God's presence, which reflects this same ancient understanding of Sheol as a conscious realm.

† The Talmud, Berakhot 28b, speaks of Sheol as a place where both the righteous and the wicked are brought, but with different outcomes. The wicked suffer, while the righteous are comforted. This parallels Jesus' teaching in Luke 16.

### **Psalms 16:10**

For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; You will not allow

Your Holy One to undergo decay.

† David distinguishes between the soul in Sheol and the body undergoing decay.

† Sheol is where the soul goes, the grave is where the body decays. The psalm ties both together but does not confuse them.

† This verse finds its fulfillment in Christ's resurrection. His body did not decay, and His soul was not abandoned to Hades.

† Peter quotes this passage in Acts 2:27-31, applying it directly to Jesus, showing that the early church believed Sheol or Hades was the realm of souls, not a simple grave.

† The Mishnah, Avot 4:17, says, Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than all the life of the world to come, and better is one hour of the bliss of the world to come than all the life of this world. This shows Jewish teachers expected conscious joy beyond death, not annihilation.

### **Luke 16:19-31**

Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day...

† Jesus Himself gives us the clearest picture of Sheol or Hades in this parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

† The rich man, in Hades, is conscious, aware, and in torment. He speaks, remembers, and feels.

† He sees Abraham, recognizes Lazarus, and pleads for mercy. This is not annihilation, but conscious existence after death.

† The division between comfort, Abraham's bosom, and torment in Hades shows there was no single fate of unconsciousness for all.

† 1 Enoch 22 also describes Sheol as divided into compartments, where the righteous and wicked wait separately, which matches Jesus' teaching and shows His parable was consistent with the Jewish worldview of the time.

† Rabbinic tradition in the Talmud, Shabbat 152b, says, The body returns to the dust, but the soul returns to God, and is

judged. This agrees with the biblical teaching that the soul continues beyond death in awareness.

† Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 5, insists that souls remain in awareness after death, awaiting the final resurrection. He directly rejects the idea that they cease to exist.

† Origen, On First Principles 2.10, argues that Hades is a place of conscious waiting, where souls are kept until judgment. He says it is unreasonable to think God would create man with a soul only for it to vanish into non existence.

### **Ecclesiastes 9:4-5, 10**

For whoever is joined with all the living, there is hope; surely a live dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they will die, but the dead do not know anything. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for there is no activity, planning, knowledge, or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.

† Solomon is speaking from the perspective of life under the sun. He is describing what man sees outwardly.

† The dead cannot act in this world, cannot plan, labor, or exercise wisdom here. That does not mean they cease to exist, only that their place in this realm is ended.

† To conclude from this passage that there is no afterlife is to misread the literary purpose of Ecclesiastes, which shows the futility of striving apart from God.

† Other scriptures reveal the conscious existence of the dead, proving Ecclesiastes is speaking of earthly perspective, not ultimate reality.

† Wisdom of Solomon 3:1 says, The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. This Jewish text shows that even before Christ, many Jews believed in conscious existence after death.

† Rabbinic commentary in the Midrash, Genesis Rabbah 100:7, speaks of Jacob not being truly dead but alive in the world to come, showing that Jewish thought always maintained consciousness after death.

† Tertullian, On the Soul 55, writes that Hades is a temporary

receptacle of souls until the resurrection, where both the righteous and wicked remain in awareness. He argues that to deny this is to deny Christ's own teaching in Luke 16.

† Augustine, *City of God* 13.2, teaches that death separates body and soul but does not annihilate either. He says the souls of the dead retain consciousness in Hades until the resurrection.

### **Revelation 20:14**

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

† Death and Hades are destroyed, not because they were illusions or mere dirt, but because they were real powers holding mankind.

† If Sheol were only the grave, how does dirt get thrown into fire. This is symbolic of the destruction of the realm of the dead itself.

† In Christ's finished work, the dead are judged, and death's dominion is broken. This is why Paul can write in 2 Timothy 1:10 that Christ abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

† With Hades abolished, no longer does man wait in that realm. Instead, after death comes immediate judgment and destiny.

† Early church writers like Clement of Rome and Irenaeus also recognized that the destruction of death and Hades meant the completion of Christ's victory over the power of death, not mere soil in the ground.

† Tacitus, though a pagan, noted in *Annals* 6.22 that Romans feared the judgment of the dead and honored spirits with rites, showing that even the unbelieving world believed death led to continued conscious existence.

† The Greek world itself, from Homer's *Odyssey* to Plato's writings, always understood Hades as the realm of the departed souls. Homer describes Odysseus encountering shades of the dead in Hades, all conscious and speaking. Plato in the *Phaedo* and *Gorgias* teaches of judgment after death in Hades. This

shows that when the Septuagint translated Sheol as Hades, they were intentionally drawing on the Greek concept of an underworld of souls, not a pile of dirt.

† Hippolytus, *Against Plato, On the Cause of the Universe* 1, describes Hades in detail as a place of awareness, where both the righteous and the wicked await judgment. He explicitly rejects the view that death is annihilation.

### **Revelation 1:18**

I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

† Jesus holds the keys, meaning He rules over both death and Hades.

† This shows Hades is more than just the dirt in the ground. One does not need keys to unlock dirt.

† Christ's victory over death and Hades is central to the gospel. What once held mankind in fear has been conquered in Him.

† Eusebius in *Ecclesiastical History* records the early church boldly proclaiming that Christ's resurrection proved He had authority over death and Hades, reinforcing this truth.

### **How This Applies To Us Today**

† The false teaching of annihilation robs the gospel of its power. If there were no conscious existence after death (in the OT), Jesus' words about Hades would be meaningless.

† Sheol and Hades remind us that death was once an enemy holding mankind in waiting, but Christ defeated that enemy.

† For the believer, death is no longer a fearful unknown. There is no annihilation, but a conscious presence with Christ. Paul assures us in *Philippians 1:23* that to depart and be with Christ is very much better.

† For the unbeliever, the warning remains that death without Christ leads to judgment. But in Christ, death and Hades are powerless to hold us.

† The witness of Scripture, the Jewish writings, rabbinic

tradition, the Roman historians, the Greek philosophers, and the early Christian apologists all agree. Sheol and Hades were real, conscious realms of the dead, but Christ has conquered them, bringing us assurance and hope.

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

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