

“The more thou searchest, the more thou shalt marvel.”
(2 Esdras 4:26)
Thou Shalt Marvel

An Extract Out Of Josephus's Discourse To The Greeks Concerning Hades (The unseen state. Ed)

1. NOW as to Hades, wherein the souls of the of the good things they see, and rejoice in the righteous and unrighteous are detained, it is necessary to speak of it. Hades is a place in the world not regularly finished; a subterraneous region, wherein the light of this world does not shine; from which circumstance, that in this region the light does not shine, it cannot be but there must be in it perpetual darkness.

This region is allotted as a place of custody for souls, ill which angels are appointed as guardians to them, who distribute to them temporary punishments, agreeable to every one's behavior and manners.

2. In this region there is a certain place set apart, as a lake of unquenchable fire, whereinto we suppose no one hath hitherto been cast; but it is prepared for a day afore-determined by God, in which one righteous sentence shall deservedly be passed upon all men; when the unjust, and those that have been disobedient to God, and have given honor to such idols as have been the vain operations of the hands of men as to God himself, shall be adjudged to this everlasting punishment, as having been the causes of defilement; while the just shall obtain an incorruptible and never-fading kingdom. These are now indeed confined in Hades, but not in the same place wherein the unjust are confined.

3. For there is one descent into this region, at whose gate we believe there stands an archangel with an host; which gate when those pass through that are conducted down by the angels appointed over souls, they do not go the same way; but the just are guided to the right hand, and are led with hymns, sung by the angels appointed over that place, unto a region of light, in which the just have dwelt from the beginning of the world; not constrained by necessity, but ever enjoying the prospect of the good things they see, and rejoice in the expectation of those new enjoyments which will be peculiar to every one of them, and esteeming those things beyond what we have here; with whom there is no place of toil, no burning heat, no piercing cold, nor are any briars there; but the countenance of the and of the just, which they see, always smiles them, while they wait for that rest and eternal new life in heaven, which is to succeed this region.

This place we call The Bosom of Abraham.

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(There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 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; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 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. 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. 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. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five

brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. Luke 16:19-31)

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Unique phrase found in a parable of Jesus describing the place where Lazarus went after death (Luke 16:19-31). It is a figurative phrase that appears to have been drawn from a popular belief that the righteous would rest by Abraham's side in the world to come, an opinion described in Jewish literature at the time of Christ. The word kolpos [kovlpo"] literally refers to the side or lap of a person. Figuratively, as in this case, it refers to a place of honor reserved for a special guest, similar to its usage in John 13:23. In the case of Lazarus, the reserved place is special because it is beside Abraham, the father of all the righteous. The phrase may be synonymous to the paradise promised to the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43). Together these passages support the conviction that a believer enjoys immediate bliss at the moment of physical death.

Sam Hamstra, Jr.

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4. But as to the unjust, they are dragged by force to the left hand by the angels allotted for punishment, no longer going with a good-will, but as prisoners driven by violence; to whom are sent the angels appointed over them to reproach them and threaten them with their terrible looks, and to thrust them still downwards.

Now those angels that are set over these souls drag them into the neighborhood of hell itself; who, when they are hard by it, continually hear the noise of it, and do not stand clear of the hot vapor itself; but when they have a near view of this spectacle, as of a terrible and exceeding great prospect of fire, they are struck with a fearful expectation of a future judgment, and in effect punished thereby: and not only so, but where they see the place [or choir] of the fathers and of the just, even hereby are they punished; for a chaos deep and large is fixed between them; insomuch that a just man that hath compassion upon them cannot be admitted, nor can one that is unjust, if he were bold enough to attempt it, pass over it.

5. This is the discourse concerning Hades, wherein the souls of all men are confined until a proper season, which God hath determined, when he will make a resurrection of all men from the dead, not procuring a transmigration of souls from one body to another, but raising again those very bodies, which you Greeks, seeing to be dissolved, do not believe [their resurrection].

But learn not to disbelieve it; for while you believe that the soul is created, and yet is made immortal by God, according to the doctrine of Plato, and this in time, be not incredulous; but believe that God is able, when he hath raised to life that body which was made as a compound of the same elements, to make it immortal; for it must never be said of God, that he is able to do some things, and unable to do others.

We have therefore believed that the body will be raised again; for although it be dissolved, it is not perished; for the earth receives its remains, and preserves them; and while they are like seed, and are mixed among the more fruitful soil, they flourish, and what is sown is indeed sown bare grain, but at the mighty sound of God the Creator, it will sprout up, and be raised in a clothed and glorious condition, though not before it has been dissolved, and mixed [with the earth].

So that we have not rashly believed the resurrection of the body; for although it be dissolved for a time on account of the original transgression, it exists still, and is cast

into the earth as into a potter's furnace, in order to be formed again, not in order to rise again such as it was before, but in a state of purity, and so as never to be destroyed any more.

And to every body shall its own soul be restored.

And when it hath clothed itself with that body, it will not be subject to misery, but, being itself pure, it will continue with its pure body, and rejoice with it, with which it having walked righteously now in this world, and never having had it as a snare, it will receive it again with great gladness.

But as for the unjust, they will receive their bodies not changed, not freed from diseases or distempers, nor made glorious, but with the same diseases wherein they died; and such as they were in their unbelief, the same shall they be when they shall be faithfully judged.

6. For all men, the just as well as the unjust, shall be brought before God the word: for to him hath the Father committed all judgment : and he, in order to fulfill the will of his Father, shall come as Judge, whom we call Christ."

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1 Peter 3:18-20 also mentions regarding the above: "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: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 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.

"The Lake of Fire and Brimstone signifies a fire burning with brimstone; the word 'brimstone' or sulfur defines the character of the fire. The Greek word THEION translated 'brimstone' is exactly the same word THEION which means 'divine.' Sulfur was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks; and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense. In Homer's Iliad (16:228), one is spoken of as purifying a goblet with fire and brimstone. The verb derived from THEION is THEIOO, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to dedicate to a god (See Liddell and Scott Greek-English Lexicon, 1897 Edition).

To any Greek, or any trained in the Greek language, a 'lake of fire and brimstone' would mean a 'lake of divine purification.' The idea of judgment need not be excluded. Divine purification and divine consecration are the plain meaning in ancient Greek. In the 'standard theology' explanation, this fundamental meaning of the word is entirely left out, and nothing but eternal torment is incorrectly associated with it."

Universalism\

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HANSON, D. D. Boston and Chicago Universalist Publishing House 1899

∩And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." ∩

(1 Corinthians 15:28)

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People of the Keys