



REVELATION

Understanding the Apocalypse

Radical Word Bible Study

Episode 14

October 2, 2025



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REVELATION: Understanding the Apocalypse

Revelation 2025

Opening Comments

- **Check Hard Drive capacity.**
- **Switch to PowerPoint**
- **RECORD**
- Welcome to episode 14 of the Radical Word Bible Study.
- I am Rick Lancaster, and we are coming to you live from our podcasting studio in Murrieta, California at Calvary Chapel French Valley.
- We have a service every Sunday @ 9:30 am.
- We are streaming this Bible Study live on Rumble, Facebook, and YouTube.
- It is listed under Radical Word Bible Study with Rick Lancaster wherever you get your podcasts.
- If you are listening to the podcast and would like to tune in to the live stream, you can go to radicalword.com and click on one of the links at the top of the page every Thursday at 6:30pm PST.
- If you are interested in staying up to date with what is happening at The Radical Word, click the link in the description for this video.
- Also, I publish a daily devotional that I send out by email.
- I will include a link to that as well.
- Today is Thursday, October 2, 2025.
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- Turn to **Revelation 1** as we continue a series: **REVELATION: Understanding the Apocalypse.**
- Let's pray now and then get into our text for tonight.
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **REVELATION: Understanding the Apocalypse**
- **Review**
- Let's do a quick review of the first nine verses.

- John opens the book telling us what it is about – the Revelation of Jesus Christ.
- Revelation includes a description of the end of the world, that is not what it is about.
- Revelation is about Jesus Christ and the revealing of Him and His kingdom at the Second Coming.
- All the end of the world stuff is God judging this wicked, God-hating, Christ-rejecting world in preparation for Jesus to come and set up His kingdom.
- Verse three promises a blessing for those who read, who hear, and who keep or obey the things in the book of Revelation.
- The human author, John, is introduced in verse four.
- Also, the original recipients of the book are mentioned, seven churches in Asia.
- Paul opens with a blessing of grace and peace from eternal God and from Christ Jesus.
- In verse seven, Paul conveys a sense of urgency in that Jesus will come suddenly and without warning.
- And then in verse 9, Paul describes his circumstances when he received the Revelation.
- He was in exile on the small island of Patmos.
- It was a desolate place with no natural water source or food.
- John was there because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.
- John wouldn't stop talking to people about God's Word or Jesus so they exiled him in the hopes they could keep him quiet.
- Instead, God gives him the Revelation.
- God used for good what man meant for evil.
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- John then shares how he received the vision.
- **Revelation 1:10**
- 'the Lord's Day' only occurs here.
- The general consensus is that this is John's way of referring to Sunday.
- There are a couple of reasons why we can accept that.

- First, Jesus was raised from the dead on a Sunday. **Matthew 28:1**
¹ Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.
- According to the Jewish reckoning of time and days of the week, the Sabbath, Saturday is the seventh day.
- It also appears to be when the disciples regularly gathered. **Acts 20:7**
⁷ Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.
- There are a few other verses like those.
- Because the phrase ‘the Lord’s Day’ only occurs once in the Bible tells we shouldn’t be dogmatic that it is Sunday.
- If someone believes it is a different day of the week or that it means something else, let them.
- Before we argue about something like this we should ask ourselves, does it really matter what day of the week it is?
- I believe it is referring to Sunday, but if you want to believe it was Thursday, or Tuesday, or National Black Licorice Day – go ahead.
- It is not the day that matters but what happened on that day.
- John says he was ‘in the Spirit’ – this is a total surrender of the mind and will to the Spirit of God.
- He was in an attitude of surrendered worship of God.
- Paul describes a similar thing happening to him **2 Corinthians 12:1-4**
¹ It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: ² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. ³ And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—⁴ how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.
- Peter also experienced this in Acts four when he received the vision of the sheet being let down from heaven with unclean animals.
- This is when we completely abandon ourselves to the Holy Spirit.
- It is possible for any believers to get there, but it is a function of faith and so mature faith makes us more available to getting into this state.
- This is how we should all long to worship God.
- Jesus said this was how God wants to be worshipped. **John 4:23-24**

²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

- This is not talking about where we go to sing spiritual songs and perform religious duties.
- It is about your whole life being an expression of worship to God.
- John is deliberately focusing His heart and mind on God and interacting With God the Holy Spirit.
- When we gather is a great time to practice getting into the Spirit, but we should strive to walk in the Spirit as much of our life as possible.
- Like anything in the faith, it is about spiritual discipline.
- You need to train yourself to walk in the Spirit.
- What prevents us from being ‘in the spirit’?
- Here are five quick things that will hinder us from being in the spirit.
- **First - Fear of the supernatural!**
- Some people are afraid that God might do something “weird” with them if they give in to the Holy Spirit.
- God is not weird, so He won’t cause you to do or experience anything weird.
- The supernatural things of God are not something we should be afraid of.
- **Second - Lack of faith or weak faith!**
- To experience the supernatural things of God, we must know, believe, and obey God.
- If you do not sense yourself walking in the Spirit and His power, pray and ask God if it is an issue of faith.
- If it is, ask Him to grow your faith in that area.
- **Third - Distractions of worldly things!**
- We live in a world where we are bombarded daily by things trying to draw us away from the Lord and walking in the Spirit.
- Troubles, trials, and tribulations can be some of those things that hinder our connection to the Spirit.
- Those things might hinder it but they can’t prevent it.
- Remember where John is, in exile on the miserable island of Patmos.
- We should also remind ourselves that John was in his nineties.

- It is more likely to be less meaningful distractions that block our attempts to be in the Spirit.
- Lack of knowledge!
- Fifth - **Fear of what the Spirit might lead us to do!**
- This is similar to the second one.
- If you walk in the Spirit, He is likely to lead you somewhere your flesh does not want to go.
- Right after Jesus was baptized, the Spirit led Him out into the wilderness where He went 40 days without food and was tempted by the devil.
- Where there is faith, there is no fear.
- Trust God – the Holy Spirit where God’s grace cannot keep you.
- It is my desire, it should be every Christ-follower’s desire that the Holy Spirit would lead us to something radical.
- Every believer is indwelt with the Holy Spirit, and we can operate in the Spirit.
- Because we are creatures of fallen flesh, we struggle between two realities – walking in the flesh and being in the Spirit. **Galatians 5:16-18**

¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

- Our faith helps us to yield more of our life to the Spirit and resist the influence of the flesh.
- If you have any questions on any of that, put them in the chat or send me an email to rick@radicalword.com.
- Being ‘in the Spirit’ doesn’t guarantee some radical spiritual experience, it just makes us available for the Spirit to speak and move in us.
- While in this state John hears a voice, loud and distinct.
- While in the Spirit, John hears a loud (great) voice.
- He recognizes that it is a voice but there is something significant about this voice.
- Notice the phrase ‘as of a trumpet’ – was it a voice or a trumpet – those are two different things.

- As we interpret the book of Revelation, we must try to put ourselves in John's perspective.
- In some cases, he was a natural man viewing the supernatural which he then tried to describe using natural terms.
- In other cases, he was a first-century man trying to describe things from far in the future – at least 1,900 years in the future.
- Imagine showing John a pistol and then asking him to describe it to people whose understanding of projectile weapons consisted of bows and arrows.
- He might describe the sound like thunder and the bullet like an invisible arrow.
- We have to be careful not to try to force a 21st-century perspective upon the interpretation.
- John heard a great voice – 'as of a trumpet' suggests that it demanded his attention.
- One last thing before we move on.
- There are no unimportant or unnecessary words in the Bible.
- Notice where the voice came from – from behind.
- My mind asks the question – why?
- Why not appear in front of John?
- In this vision, John is not going to be a passive observer, like binge-watching a show – he is going to be an active participant.
- Next John is told what his role is.
- **Revelation 1:11**
- The first question we should ask here is, 'Who is speaking?'
- In verse 13, John sees one like the Son of Man.
- Son of Man was the title Jesus used most frequently for Himself.
- It communicated His association to mankind through His human birth to Mary.
- It is Jesus speaking.
- 'Alpha and Omega' = first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.
- Greek is not the official language of heaven – it is the language that John was writing in.
- If John were writing in English, Jesus would have identified Himself as the A and the Z.

- Jesus is the alphabet, language, vocabulary, and the grammar of God.
- If we want to talk to God, it will be through Jesus. **John 14:6**
- ⁶ **Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**
- ‘Alpha – Omega’ – four times in the Bible – all in Revelation.
- All of them re referring to Christ Jesus.
- Same is true in the next description.
- ‘the First and the Last’ – Reveals Christ as eternal God.
- Was before anything and will outlast everything. **Isaiah 41:4**
- ⁴ **Who has performed and done *it*, calling the generations from the beginning? ‘I, the LORD, am the first; and with the last I *am* He.’**
- Also points to the reality that there are no gods, except the Triune God of whom Jesus is the second Person. **Isaiah 44:6**
- ⁶ **Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; besides Me *there is* no God.’**
- ‘What you see, write in a book’ – this is the first of 12 times John is instructed to write what he sees.
- Interestingly, in chapter 10 John sees something he is told not to write about.
- But that is for later.
- Once written the book was to be sent by messenger to seven churches in Asia. **Map of Seven Churches**
- Notice they are listed in the order that a messenger would travel if they were going to all seven.
- In chapters 2 and 3, individual sections are written to each of the seven churches.
- Three of these churches, Ephesus, Thyatira, and Laodicea appear elsewhere in Scripture.
- Four appear only here in Revelation, Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, and Philadelphia.
- All seven cities existed at the time of the Revelation.
- Some of them have very long histories.
- The natural question, why did Jesus call out these seven churches?
- They were not the only ones in the region.
- There were also Colossae, Hierapolis, Antioch, and Troas.
- Numbers often have symbolic meaning in Scripture.

- Three is the number of perfection, usually associated to God.
 - Seven is often symbolic of completeness, totality, wholeness.
 - So, the common interpretation of why these seven is that they are representative of all churches.
 - Once we get to chapters 2 and 3, we will also apply a couple of other interpretations to these seven churches, but that is for another time.
 - John's role in the Revelation is to be a faithful witness.
 - I have often thought what a blessed thing this is for John.
 - He saw the glorified Christ, and God, and the angelic beings, and heaven.
 - He did also have to witness the horrors of the Tribulation period and witness the working of the Antichrist.
 - God is preparing to do something in the future, and He wants His people to be prepared for it, and to be motivated to prepare others.
 - I imagine it would be a blessing and a burden.
 - The more I grow in my understanding of Revelation, the more excited I am to see these events take place.
 - But at the same time, my is burdened for those who will have to endure life as God is pouring His wrath out.
 - So, John hears this thunderous voice and turns to see who it is.
 - **Revelation 1:12-13**
 - So, John hears this voice and naturally turns to see who it is.
 - Instead of seeing the One who spoke, he first sees seven golden lampstands.
 - The natural question, what do the seven lampstands represent?
 - Thankfully, this is one of those times when the Bible interprets the symbol for us. **Revelation 1:20**
- ²⁰ **The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.**
- We'll get to the stars in verse 16.
 - The lampstands are the seven churches which are representative of all churches.
 - Gold symbolically represents royalty or high value.
 - Jesus is seen standing in the midst of the lampstands.
 - This speaks of His closeness to the churches.

- Jesus promised to always be with His church. **Matthew 28:18-20**
¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

- The number seven here also reminds of the lampstand inside the Holy Place of the tabernacle/temple of the Jews.
- It was a single lampstand with seven branches.
- Here there are seven individual lampstands.
- That points to the fragmented nature of the church.
- Even though it is fragmented it is one church in Christ.
- And then when you think of verse four and the Holy Spirit being described as the seven Spirits, you get a sense that He is everywhere present with all the churches.
- Both the Jewish Menorah and these seven golden lampstands, they exist to shine forth the light.
- The lampstand does not actually produce light that is done by the oil (a picture of the Holy Spirit in the church).
- The church simply holds and reflects the light the Holy Spirit produces.
- The light is Jesus (John 8:12).
- Once Jesus ascended back to the Father, that responsibility fell to the church. **Matthew 5:14-16**

¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

- We have a responsibility to let the light of the Holy Spirit shine out of us.
- That takes us back to walking in the Spirit.
- The more you walk in the Spirit, the of the light of Jesus Christ shines out of you.
- The next few verses contain a description of Christ in heaven.
- This is the Christ we will spend all of eternity with.
- He is not the humble carpenter we see depicted in the gospels who didn't even have a place to lay His head.

- **Revelation 1:14**

- Many of these descriptions will be repeated in chapters 2 and 3 – pointing to how Jesus relates to individual churches and believers.
- ‘head and hair were white like wool’ – points to wisdom and experience.

- Also points to His eternity. **Daniel 7:9**

I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool.

- ‘flame of fire’ – omniscience, infallible insight, inescapable scrutiny.

Hebrews 4:13

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must* give account.

- Used 2 other times in Revelation.
- Once in letters to the churches, then in chapter 19 as Jesus returns in power.
- Fire is used in different ways.
- For the people of God, it is used for purification.
- For God’s enemies, it is used for judgment.
- Jesus looks into the church, and our lives, wants to purify it.
- We’ll see that more in the seven letters.

- **Revelation 1:15**

- ‘feet were like fine brass’ – or bronze. Bronze or brass speaks of judgment.
- Fine brass, refined = perfect judgment.

- Jesus is the perfect judge. **John 5:22-24**

²² For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. ²⁴ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

- ‘sound of many waters’ – speaks of undeniable authority.
- Stand next to a large waterfall, like the Niagara – no voice can be heard over the sound of the water.
- Jesus when He speaks in this form will overpower every voice.
- There are some who demand God speak so that they will believe.
- When Jesus does come back it will be to judge this wicked world and it will be too late.

- Their blasphemous voices will be drowned out.
 - More description continues...John continues.
 - **Revelation 1:16**
 - Right hand speaks of fellowship – also authority, this speaks of sovereign possession, power, protection, and control.
 - Every time we Jesus described in heaven in relation to the throne of God it is at the right hand.
 - This was the place of highest honor. **Hebrews 12:1-2**
- ¹ Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- It also has a sense of acceptance. **Matthew 25:31-33**
- ³¹ When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.
- That text goes on to say the sheep on the right are accepted and welcomed into the kingdom and eternal life.
 - The goats on the left are rejected and will go away to everlasting punishment.
 - ‘seven stars’ explained in verse 20 = ‘angels’
 - Talk more about it when we get there
 - ‘mouth – sharp two-edged sword’ **Hebrews 4:12**
- For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- Speaks of truth, as well as keen and accurate verdicts.
 - ‘countenance like the sun shining’ = glory, divine nature.
 - John had seen something of this before **Matthew 17:1-2**
- Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.
- In all this we see Christ in His perfections.
 - Similar description in Daniel 10
 - But we see Him primarily as Judge.
 - In His first Coming, Jesus was Savior, Servant.

- In His Second Coming, Judge, and King.
 - In the letters to the seven churches – He is judging them for purification and reward. **1 Peter 4:17-18**
- For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now “If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?”**
- We should take that seriously.
 - What would Jesus say to the church you attend or to you personally.
 - Then starting in chapter 6 judging the world for its rejection of Him.
 - John opened our text today saying he was a brother and companion in the tribulation kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.
 - John was exiled to the island of Patmos and may have had to do hard labor in the mines or quarries on the island.
 - And yet in verse 10 it says that he was ‘in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day’.
 - In the midst of what must have been very difficult circumstances for a 90+ year old man, he was in the Spirit.
 - While I am certain that God was doing a special work in John, I believe there is a reality that we all need to understand.
 - It was while John was ‘in the Spirit’ that he received this radical revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - John was in a desperate situation – exiled by the Emperor of Rome.
 - There was no reason for him to believe that he would ever leave that island.
 - John was on Patmos and in the Spirit.
 - To me that says that it is possible to be in the midst of difficult circumstances and still be in the Spirit.
 - It was while John was in the Spirit that he received the Revelation.
 - If we want a greater revelation of Jesus, which we should, we need to be ‘in the Spirit’.
 - What does it mean to be ‘in the Spirit’?
 - Here are three quick things that will enable us to get into the Spirit
 - First – **Know God**
 - The better I know God, the easier it is to get into the Spirit.
 - We get to know God by **Attending to His Word.**

- A regular, serious diet of God's Word will, over time, enable you to get into the Spirit.
- Second – **Trust God.**
- The harder your circumstances are, the harder this is to do.
- You see, trusting God means **accepting the circumstances** of your life as sovereignly arranged or allowed by God.
- John was exiled to the island of Patmos, not a resort location.
- If you are struggling to trust God, to accept the circumstances of your life, go back to the first thing – Get to know God better, the better you know Him, the easier it is to trust Him even on your own Patmos.
- Third and final thing – **Wait on God.**
- God doesn't always reveal Himself to us immediately.
- John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day – day set aside by early Christians to worship God = Sunday.
- John was in an **Attitude of Worship** when the revelation came.
- We get to know God by attending to His Word which makes it easier to trust Him and accept our circumstances which makes it easier for us to wait on Him and maintain an attitude of worship.
- It was in this condition that John was given a vision of the Risen Christ.
- All of us need to see Jesus more clearly
- And we are going to do that if we can get into the Spirit
- The Spirit is in you, yield yourself to Him and let Him show you Jesus.
- John then tells us what he did when He saw the glorified Christ
- **Revelation 1:17-18**
- This vision overwhelms John's senses and he falls as a dead man at the feet of Christ.
- Remember, John was intimately familiar with Christ.
- In John 13:25, he was the one who leaned back against Jesus to ask Him who the betrayer was.
- For three years John lived and traveled with Jesus.
- He listened to Him teach, he watched Jesus perform countless miracles.

- John was there when Jesus died and saw Him after He had risen from the dead.
- But one look at Jesus as he is now in heaven and John falls down as dead – it is too much to handle.
- This is Jesus, the perfectly holy righteous judge.
- It is possible that confronted with Christ's divine perfections that John was painfully aware of his own imperfections, sensing maybe that he was worthy of Christ's judgment and eternal condemnation.
- 'He laid His right hand on me' – right hand = acceptance.
- 'Do not be afraid' = John was afraid.
- This would be the response of anyone confronted with the holiness and glory of the risen Christ.
- This is a prayer we ought to regularly bring before the Lord, lay Your hand upon my life
- Then gives four reasons not to be afraid
- 1st reason – **First and Last**
- This is a claim to deity. **Isaiah 44:6**
Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God.'
- The first reason not to be afraid is that Jesus Christ is God.
- Right hand of acceptance – Jesus, God the Son accepts you.
- 2nd reason – **Lives and was Dead.**
- Speaks of our redemption.
- Jesus died for our sins, because he lives, we know that God accepted His sacrifice on our behalf. **James Hamilton, Jr.**
The reason that John shouldn't be afraid is not that Jesus isn't scary. The glory of the risen Christ is terrifying!
- The reason not to be afraid is because John is covered by the blood of Jesus' sacrifice for John's sins.
- Philippians 2:10 tells us that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow.
- If John, who knew Christ as well as he did, and served Him for as long as he did, fell at Jesus' feet, so will each of us.
- We will all fall at his feet – those who are His will feel the hand of His acceptance and comfort.
- Those who have rejected Him will feel the hand of His judgment.

- 3rd reason – **Alive Forevermore.**
- This gives us hope, both in this life and for heaven. **Hebrews 7:25**
Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
- We don't need to be afraid, Jesus is in heaven right now, praying for us.
- 4th reason – **Keys of Hades and Death**
- Keys are emblems of authority and access.
- Keys to my car – gives me authority and access to my car.
- Hades = region of departed souls – soul is immortal.
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- Death = dominion over the body – occurs when soul departs the body.
- Hades = OT Sheol – where souls go after death.
- This is not the same as hell – place of eternal punishment – **Sheol, Hades, and Hell**
- The Glorified Christ says to John, “I have the keys of Hades and of Death.”
- The question that is often posed is, “Are Hades and Hell the same thing?”
- No, they are not.
- And it is important to understand the difference because there is a lot of confusion in the world on this topic.
- As believers, we need to understand our relationship to these places and also of those who are not believers.
- The human soul is immortal.
- At conception life begins.
- Every time a human life is conceived God creates a human soul and that soul is created to live forever; it is immortal.
- The physical body is not.
- Eventually all people will die, except those taken in the Rapture.

- It is where the soul goes after death that makes this topic pertinent to all of us.
 - The abode of the dead.
 - Throughout the Bible, from the earliest pages of Genesis, there is a sense that people knew that the end of physical life was not the end.
 - It is also clear that people in the Old Testament didn't have a clear understanding on this topic.
 - This is because many doctrines in the Bible were revealed over a great period of time.
 - This is called progressive revelation.
 - This is one of the reasons we need to read and study the whole Bible.
 - **Sheol**
 - In the Old Testament the word 'Sheol' (H7585) is used to describe the abode of the dead; the place where the souls of the dead go.
 - In the Hebrew this word is used dozens of times.
 - It is translated many ways into the English Bibles. "into the grave" Genesis 37:35 – "into the pit" Numbers 16:30 – "Hell" Psalm 55:15 and "Sheol" Psalm 18:5.
 - This word was used to describe the destiny of both the wicked and the righteous.
 - It is also clear that there was a hope that "Sheol" was not the final destiny of the righteous. **Psalm 49:13-15**
- ¹³ This is the way of those who are foolish, and of their posterity who approve their sayings. Selah. ¹⁴ Like sheep they are laid in the grave [Sheol]; death shall feed on them; the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall be consumed in the grave [Sheol], far from their dwelling. ¹⁵ But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave [Sheol], for He shall receive me.**
- Old Testament thought was that Sheol was the place where the dead abode.
 - The wicked received the punishment they deserved there while the righteous dead awaited resurrection and deliverance from the grave.
 - Many different opinions about exactly what that meant were developed.
 - Thankfully, Jesus came and explained things for us.
 - **Hades**

- The word Hades (Strong's # G86) is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Sheol.
- Everywhere you see the word Hades, it has the same meaning as Sheol. **Matthew 16:18**

¹⁸ **And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**

- **Hell**
- We see the English word Hell used throughout the Bible.
- Every occurrence (18 times) of the word Hell in the Old Testament is a translation of the Hebrew word Sheol, which was discussed earlier.
- If you study the places that the translator used the word Hell rather than 'the grave', 'the pit', or 'Sheol' you get the sense that it was used almost exclusively when referring to the wicked who die.
- In the New Testament two Greek words are translated as Hell.
- One time in 2 Peter 2:4 the Greek word Tartarus (Strong's # G5020) is used to describe the fate of 'the angels who sinned'.
- Turn to **Luke 16 [Logos]**
- The other 12 occurrences in the New Testament are a translation of the Greek word 'Gehenna' (Strong's # G1067).
- As we get into the New Testament it is clear that a distinction is being made between these two concepts: Sheol/Hades and Hell.
- Thankfully, Jesus gave us a teaching in Luke 16 that gives us some clarity.
- the rich man and Lazarus –
- **Luke 16:19-31**
- This parable by Jesus gives us the clearest teaching in Scripture regarding the nature of the abode of the dead, Sheol/Hades.
- Jesus tells of two men, a rich man who had everything going for him but was far from God, and about a man named Lazarus who begged at the rich man's door.
- Lazarus had nothing but was right with God.
- Both died and went to the abode of the dead.
- The rich man ended up in Hades (Sheol), while Lazarus was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom.
- Jesus tells us that the rich man was 'in torments', which means he was suffering terribly.

- The rich man was conscious of his suffering, and also aware of his surroundings.
- As he looked around for relief, he saw Lazarus being comforted by Abraham.
- The rich man begs Abraham to send Lazarus to him that he might receive some relief from his suffering.
- Abraham responds **Luke 16:25-26**

But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

- From this we learn that there is a distinction made at the time of death about which side of the abode of the dead that a person ends up on.
- The wicked dead end up on the side of torment and the righteous dead go the side of the comfort of Abraham.
- From this we also learn that the time to choose to believe and trust in Jesus cannot be delayed.
- The choice must be made on this side of death.
- Once a person dies, their fate is determined.
- Up to and including the time of Christ when someone died, they went to Sheol/Hades; the wicked to the place of torment and the righteous to the side of the comfort of Abraham.
- Then Jesus died for the sins of the whole world and changed everything.
- Setting the captives free.
- Jesus' death accomplished infinitely more than we can possibly imagine.
- One of the mysteries of His death is where He was and what He was doing after He died.
- The Bible tells us that He went to Hades/Sheol after He died. **1 Peter 3:18-20**

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹ by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

- As a man, He went where all men go after death.
- But as God He was not constrained to one side of Hades, nor was He prevented from leaving when He was ready to.
- And leave He did on the third day.
- But when He left, He didn't leave alone. **Ephesians 4:7-10**
⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.
⁸ Therefore He says: "*When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.*" ⁹ (Now this, "*He ascended*"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)
- After Jesus 'preached to the spirits in prison' He ascended out of Hades and emptied the side of Abraham's comfort and took the righteous dead to heaven to await the resurrection from the dead that all the righteous will experience when Christ comes again.
- **Abode of the dead today**
- So, the natural question then is 'What happens when someone dies now?'
- One of two things will happen at the time of death depending on the reality of a person's faith.
- The world is divided into two parts, the wicked and the righteous.
- The wicked are those who have rejected Jesus as their Savior and the righteous are those who have received Him as their Savior.
- **Abode of the wicked dead today**
- If someone dies today without Christ, they depart and go to Hades, to the place of torment.
- Here they will await in torment for the final judgment, what we know as the White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20 after the Millennium is completed.
- This is not Hell. We'll discuss Hell a little later.
- **Abode of the righteous dead today**
- Someone is considered righteous, not based on their own righteousness, but on the righteousness of Christ.
- Upon receiving Christ, we are cloaked in the righteousness of Christ and are destined to be with Him forever.
- When a Christian dies today, they go to be with the Lord.
- Jesus said to the thief on the cross beside Him: **Luke 23:43**

⁴³ And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

- Based on 2 Corinthians 12:4 and Revelation 2:7 we know that Paradise is heaven.
- When a believer dies, since the cross they go directly to be with Jesus.
- Paul said something like that: **2 Corinthians 5:6-8**

⁶ So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

- When a believer dies today, they immediately go to be with the Lord.
- And in His presence, we wait for the resurrection of the body at the time of the Rapture. **1 Corinthians 15:50-53**

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

- While the Bible doesn’t state specifically what believers will be doing while they wait, they will be in the presence of the Lord so we know it will be amazing. **Psalms 16:11**

¹¹ In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- Some have asked me what about babies or the mentally ill.
- God is perfectly good.
- Babies are innocent – I believe they go straight to be with Jesus.
- King David lost a very young son because of David’s sin. **2 Samuel 12:22-23**

²² And he said, “While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who can tell *whether* the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’ ²³ But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

- David believed he would see his son again.
- Anyone who has never had a chance to choose to accept or reject Jesus is probably going to heaven.
- **Hell**
- Earlier I said that Hades is not Hell.
- Hades is the dwelling place of the wicked dead, but they will not dwell there forever.

- At the White Throne Judgment Hades will be emptied of its occupants. **Revelation 20:13**
- ¹³ **The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.**
- After the wicked dead are judged they are not sent back to Hades.
- In fact, the very next verse in Revelation tells us that Hades is dispatched. **Revelation 20:14**
- ¹⁴ **Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.**
- After that follows the fate of those who rejected the grace of God and rebelled against His rule in their lives. **Revelation 20:15**
- ¹⁵ **And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**
- The ‘lake of fire’ is Hell.
- When we think or talk about hell, this is where we are talking about.
- Sheol or Hades are temporary dwelling places of the wicked.
- The lake of fire or hell is the place of eternal punishment of the wicked.
- In Revelation 20:14 we are told that being cast into the lake of fire is the second death.
- We have a saying in the church, “Live once, die twice. Live twice, die once.”
- By that we mean, as humans we are all destined to live at least once and to die at least once.
- If we receive Jesus Christ, John 3 tells us that we will be born again, made spiritually alive (Ephesians 2), though we will all eventually die physically, we will not face the Second Death (Revelation 20:14).
- If someone does not receive Christ as their Savior, they remain spiritually dead.
- If they die in that state, they go to Hades to await the final judgment and then are cast into the lake of fire, the Second Death.
- That doesn’t mean that they are destroyed or as some say annihilated.
- They will live forever in the lake of fire in their spiritually dead state suffering for their rejection of God’s amazing grace.
- What is Hell?
- Wayne Grudem in his “Bible Doctrine” says this, “Hell is a place of eternal conscious punishment for the wicked.”

- God in His infinite grace has always made a way for people to be in a right relationship with Him.
- And throughout time people have rejected His grace.
- To reject God and His grace is to be wicked.
- Those who rebel to the end of their life, die in their sins and are labeled by God, the Righteous Judge, as wicked forever.
- Because they have rejected God and His grace there is no place for them in His kingdom.
- Hell was originally created by God to punish Satan and his fallen angels (Matthew 25:41).
- But after the fall of man, it also became the destiny of all who would rebel against God's grace, especially the grace of the sacrifice of God's only Son, Jesus.
- Jesus said more about Hell than anyone in the New Testament.
- In Matthew 25:41, He referred to it a place of 'eternal punishment' in contrast to the fate of those who put their trust in Him He says in verse 46 of the same chapter have 'eternal life'.
- The choice is simple, eternal life with Jesus or eternal punishment in Hell.
- Some of the descriptions of Hell ought to put a sense of fear into the heart and mind of anyone who is resisting the call of God on their life.
- In Mark 9:43 Jesus refers to Hell as 'unquenchable fire' and in verse 48 says it is a place 'where their worm dies not die, and the fire is not quenched'.
- In Matthew 25: 30 Hell is characterized as being 'outer darkness'.
- Jesus also said in **Matthew 13:41-43**
⁴¹ **The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.**
⁴³ **Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!**
- 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'
- Hell is a terrible place.
- If you are a Christian, praise God that you will never have to go there.
- If you are not a Christian, or are not sure, repent of your sins, and confess your need for Jesus to save you.

- Put your trust in Him and ask Him to save you from this horrible fate.
- **Conclusion**
- In summary, Sheol and Hades are referring to the same place, the temporary abode of the dead.
- Until Christ died on the cross both the wicked and the righteous went there, where they were separated.
- The wicked went to the place of torment, and the righteous went to Abraham's bosom, or place of comfort.
- After Jesus died He emptied the place of comfort and took all the righteous dead to heaven where they await the resurrection of the body.
- The wicked dead still go to Hades, the place of torment, to await the final judgment.
- Those who die in Christ now go directly to heaven to be with the Lord.
- At the Final Judgment after the Millennium, all wicked dead from all time will be judged and sent to the 'lake of fire, or Hell to be tormented for their sins forever.
- If you have any specific questions on the topics above, please do not hesitate put them in the chat or send me an email at rick@radicalword.com.
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- **Closing Comments**
- For those of you watching the live stream, thank you for your participation.
- If anyone has any questions, please connect with me.
- You can email me at rick@radicalword.com.
- You can also connect with me on social media.
- Let's close with a word of prayer.
- God bless you all. Until next time, go be radical with Jesus.