

## 23.03.2013 – HADES, SHEOL, GEHENNA – Marian

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Today, we have some issues to discuss and we want to explain them in the light of the Word of God. So may the Lord guide us as we will discuss about matters that are important and perhaps some of them are less important, but still worth knowing.

The first thing is that in Polish there is a name “hell” [“piekło” in Polish]. This name is used in a completely disordered manner and, on this account, many things that should be visible for believers are hidden. This word is put in different places that talk about something totally different. So I would like you to set down of where a particular word is in the Bible in order to know it and then the image will begin to uncloud.

We will start with the land of the dead. Let’s see what is written in Matthew 11,23:

“And as for you, Capernaum: ‘Will you be exalted to heaven? You will go down to the netherworld.’ For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.”

There is the word “hell” here [in the Polish version]. Where will Capernaum go down? What image of hell do people in Poland have? In Poland, this word tells in some way because Catholicism taught certain things and this word tells people something.

But there is no word “hell” here. Here’s the word “Hades”. Hades is the land of the dead. So it is as follows:

“And you, Capernaum, will go down to Hades!”

Then, we will be able to read what’s happening in Hades and what experiences people go through in Hades. I think that it could have been made on purpose to hide the truth from people. You will even see that when Jesus goes there, the word turns around and people say a different word even though there is still the same word there. People manoeuvre with words and we’re going to reveal it today so that all this verbal manoeuvre is removed so that we can see it clearly.

So here, in Matthew 11,23, it’s written “Hades”. Hades is the underworld, the world of the dead, the tomb. There you go down, to the dust. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. It awaits us all, unless the Lord comes before. If we die, we will all get there.

Matthew 16,18:

“And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.”

Here, we can read: “the gates of hell [in the Polish version]/ of the netherworld shall not prevail against the Church”, but it should be “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against the Church”. It means that the gates of Hades cannot stop the Church. This place isn't our destination. We have a victory. Another image appears again. If it's the land of the dead and everyone gets there, both the righteous and the unrighteous will get there. Does the flesh of the righteous go elsewhere than that of the unrighteous? Both are placed in graves and they are buried in the same soil. Was Jesus in the tomb? Yes, He was there for three days.

Today, we want to look only into a fragment of this “hellish” lesson to see where exactly it's written about the land of the dead in the Bible and where it's said about Gehenna and suffering.

Acts of the Apostles 2,27:

“...because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld, nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption.”

See what the word here is: “because you will not abandon my soul to the abyss” [in Polish version]. Here is the same word – “Hades”. Why suddenly it was changed in Matthew into “hell” and here into “abyss”? Why does someone manoeuvre the words trying to explain something? Why do we say “abyss” with Jesus, but say “hell” with others? Because it wouldn't fit for Jesus to be in hell so the word “abyss” is put there. What does the word “abyss” say? What do you mean by this word? To what abyss will you not abandon my soul? Do you have any idea what is being said here? Probably not because I have no idea either. Do you understand? Certain words are used, but they don't really say anything to you – to the person who reads the Bible. But if you read “Hades” both here and there, then you understand what the Word of God is saying. “Because you will not abandon my soul to Hades”, that is, in the land of the dead. Then you finally understand it.

“Nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption.”

What does “corruption” mean? What do you mean by “corruption”? You turn into dust. Your flesh perishes and you turn into dust. “Nor will you suffer my flesh to turn into dust.”

In Acts of the Apostles 2,31 there is exactly the same thing:

“...he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that neither was he abandoned to the netherworld nor did his flesh see corruption.”

Here comes the word “abyss” again [in the Polish version], but this is “Hades”. Nor did His flesh see corruption, that is rotteness.

So where was Jesus buried when He died? In the tomb and it is the place of the land of the dead. In the same land where were those who had died earlier. This is the land of the dead. And the word “Hades” appears there all the time.

So Jesus didn't stay in “Hades”. Jesus had left the land of the dead and He lives.

In the Book of Revelation 1,18, Jesus says:

“...the one who lives. Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys to death and

the netherworld.”

Again, here in place of the word “hell” [which is in the Polish version] should be used the word “Hades” – “I hold the keys to death and to Hades”.

The Book of Revelation 6,8:

“I looked, and there was a pale green horse. Its rider was named Death, and Hades accompanied him.” [in the Polish version it is: “and the hell accompanied him”]

“And the hell accompanied him” – again, here is the word “Hades”, not “hell”. “And Hades, the land of the dead, accompanied him.”

“They were given authority over a quarter of the earth, to kill with sword, famine, and plague, and by means of the beasts of the earth.”

When they were killed, they went to the land of the dead.

The Book of Revelation 20,13:

“The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. All the dead were judged according to their deeds.” [in the Polish version it is: “then death and hell gave up their dead...”]

It should be: “then Death and Hades gave up their dead”.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> verse it is:

“Then Death and Hades were thrown into the pool of fire. (This pool of fire is the second death.)” [in the Polish version it is: “Then Death and hell were thrown...”]

We should read it as follows: “Then Death and Hades were thrown into the pool of fire. (This pool of fire is the second death.)” Neither the land of the dead nor death was needed for those who suffered death. What God doesn’t consider as precious to Himself was thrown into this place.

This word also occurs in Jesus’ parable when He talks about the rich man and Lazarus. In this parable there is also the word Hades, not hell. I think it’s worth reading and pondering what Jesus wanted to say by this parable.

When we read the Old Testament, we can find there a Hebrew word for the land of the dead, that is Sheol. Sheol is the same as Hades. In Hebrew it’s Sheol, in Greek – Hades. This is the same – the land of the dead, the place of silence, of oblivion, of contamination and of destruction. Every man gets there. Is it clear for us? The human flesh goes to this place and it undergoes decay. Both your flesh and mine will also undergo decay unless the Lord returns. Even if He returns, the flesh and blood won’t enter His Kingdom and we will have to be transfigured.

Let’s look how the Word of God speaks of the land of the dead in the Old Testament.

The Book of Genesis 37,34-35:

“Then Jacob tore his garments, put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned his son many days. Though his sons and daughters tried to console him, he refused all consolation, saying, “No, I will go down mourning to my son in Sheol.” Thus did his father weep for him.” [in the Polish version it is: “I will go down mourning to my son to the grave.”]

I will go down mourning to my son in Sheol. He knew that his son was where death was. And when I die, I will go down there too (like David with his child of adultery). “I will go down to the grave” means “I will go down to Sheol”, to the land of the dead.

The Book of Numbers 16,30:

“But if the Lord makes a chasm, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them with all belonging to them, and they go down alive to Sheol, then you will know that these men have spurned the Lord.” [in the Polish version it is: “and they go down alive to the underground”]

And again, they will go down alive to Sheol, to the land of the dead, not to the underground. We know that the earth parted, they fell into it and it closed.

We can see a lot of graves. People go to cemeteries and see decomposition there. These bodies perish and people know that it's possible to bury another person after some time. This is where a man goes when he dies. Since there is a land of the alive, there is a place for the dead too.

We will also talk about what the Word of God says about what's happening in the land of the dead.

We can read about the beautiful experience of the prophetic word which Hannah says in 1 Samuel 2,6:

“The Lord puts to death and gives life, casts down to Sheol and brings up again.”

Beautiful words of revelation, aren't they? This is not the end. For a man who goes to Sheol, to the land of the dead, it doesn't mean that this is the end. A lot of people think that this is the end, they will be buried and that's all. No. The Lord also brings up from there. It's not only that the person dies, but also he or she can come back to life. There comes a time when the Word of the Lord will be also fulfilled in this matter. At that time, Hannah already had a beautiful recognition through the revelation of the Holy Spirit and she could utter such precious and important words about God. At least this fragment has been translated well: “the land of the dead” [in the Polish version there is also a phrase “the land of the dead” in brackets after “Sheol”].

Job 17,11-16:

“My days pass by, my plans are at an end, the yearning of my heart. They would change the night into day; where there is darkness they talk of approaching light. If my only hope is dwelling in Sheol, and spreading my couch in darkness, if I am to say to the pit, “You are my father,” and to the worm “my mother,” “my sister,” where then is my hope, my happiness, who can see it? Will they descend with me into Sheol? Shall we go down together into the dust?”

Can a man take something there? The Word of God says: “Naked I was born, so naked I shall depart”. Job knew Sheol was the land of the dead. Some people were even saying: “I wish I had died”. They knew this was the land where nothing was happening.

Psalm 49,16:

“But God will redeem my life, will take me from the hand of Sheol.”

These people had wonderful hope in their hearts. God will receive me. Even though I die, but I know that the day will come when God will receive me. These people had hope in God even though they faced death.

Psalm 6,6-11:

“For in death there is no remembrance of you. Who praises you in Sheol? I am wearied with sighing; all night long I drench my bed with tears; I soak my couch with weeping. My eyes are dimmed with sorrow, worn out because of all my foes. Away from me, all who do evil! The Lord has heard the sound of my weeping. The Lord has heard my plea; the Lord will receive my prayer. My foes will all be disgraced and will shudder greatly; they will turn back in sudden disgrace.”

The enemies may sometimes think that when we kill him, we will shut his mouth. However, his mouth will open and it will praise God when God receives him. This is the beauty of the experience and these God's people were aware of it.

These are the places we want to have in our minds. This is the same land, the same place because people die in both the new and the old covenants.

Psalm 89,49:

“What is man, that he should live and not see death? Who can deliver his soul from the power of Sheol?  
*Selah*”

What man can live, and live, and live, and avoid death? We know that even the longest-lived man on earth (962 years old) finally died. What man can live and avoid death, and save his soul from the power of Sheol? A man himself has no such possibility. When a man dies, everything ends and he cannot change anything – for the better or for the worse. He goes away the same as he died. As long as he lives, he can change things, but when he dies, everything ends.

Proverbs 15,11:

“Sheol and Abaddon *lie open* before the Lord; how much more the hearts of mortals!”

The words “Sheol” and “Abaddon” are used here. The word “Abaddon” means a place of destruction and perdition. So Sheol, the land of the dead and the place of destruction and perdition are open to the Lord. He has an insight into everything. Nothing can disappear from before Him. He has the insight into every place, into the land of the dead as well as into human hearts. It's not a separate place where God no longer has influence and action. God can bring a person to life from this place. In the Book of Ezekiel we can read about the valley of dry bones when a prophet is to do what God says. And then, the breath of the Almighty begins to work. Bones begin to come together, they put themselves back together, flesh grows back on the person and it covers him or her with skin. It's just an image showing that God can do anything.

Ecclesiastes 9,10:

“Anything you can turn your hand to, do with what power you have; for there will be no work, no planning, no knowledge, no wisdom in Sheol where you are going.”

There is no movement there, everything is inert and waiting for its time. The dead no longer have anything to do with what is happening on the ground, in the land of the living. They don't know what's happening to their children anymore, whether they are well or not – not a bit of it. Living in these difficult times, we have to remember to be aware of the fact that the Word of God speaks in this way.

Isaiah 14,9-15:

“Below, Sheol is all astir preparing for your coming; awakening the shades to greet you, all the leaders of the earth; making all the kings of the nations rise from their thrones. All of them speak out and say to you, “You too have become weak like us, you are just like us! Down to Sheol your pomp is brought, the sound of your harps. Maggots are the couch beneath you, worms your blanket.” How you have fallen from the heavens, O Morning Star, son of the dawn! How you have been cut down to the earth, you who conquered nations! In your heart you said: “I will scale the heavens; above the stars of God I will set up my throne; I will take my seat on the Mount of Assembly, on the heights of Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will be like the Most High!” No! Down to Sheol you will be brought to the depths of the pit!”

You will be brought down. This is an image that is to show a kind of surprise: could it be the one who wanted to make himself like the Most High? Many kings who thought great things about themselves, many people who thought they were gods, Christs and many other people are buried there. But the One who was authentic is not there. He walked out of there. The Word of God says very clearly to me and to you: “But God raised Him up on the third day and gave Him everything.”

Isaiah 38,10-12:

“In the noontime of life I said, I must depart! To the gates of Sheol I have been consigned for the rest of my years. I said, I shall see the Lord no more in the land of the living. Nor look on any mortals among those who dwell in the world. My dwelling, like a shepherd's tent, is struck down and borne away from me; you have folded up my life, like a weaver who severs me from the last thread.”

Hezekiah was already aware because God had told him: “Prepare yourself, you will die.” Hezekiah felt so sorry for his own life, so God gave him 15 more years of life on earth. Isaiah who brought this message to Hezekiah, turned back by God, brought him another message: “I heard your prayer, I looked at your tears. You aren't yet going to the land of the dead, to the land of silence. You can still praise me here for 15 years. I let you stay among the living.”

Psalms 115,17:

“The dead do not praise the Lord, not all those go down into silence.”

Everything ends there.

Therefore, the land of the dead is the place where both thinking and acting end. They are all equal there – a lord and a slave, a king and a subject. It doesn't matter who's in what grave. It's one and the same land of all dead, no matter their status, wealth – in general, no matter what. Every person is treated there equally and these people perish there.

Now we will see the word “Gehenna”.

Matthew 5,22:

“...and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ will be liable to fiery Gehenna.” [in the Polish version there is “to Gehenna”]

There is nothing of hell here. It’s no longer Hades or Sheol. Now, this is a different place. As we will see, Gehenna has more to do with the pool of fire. However, it hasn’t happened yet. Nobody has yet been thrown into the pool of fire. Even the greatest ungodly people on earth haven’t yet ended up there. Neither the devil, nor the false prophet, nor the beast, nor those who belonged to the devil have ended up there yet. Nobody has ended up in this place yet. However, this place is prepared for all who don’t belong to God to go and end up there. They are not His beloved ones. They became enemies because of rebellion, their antipathy to God and because of living against His will.

Matthew 5,29:

“If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna.”

This man will end up in the land of the dead anyway, but in this case it’s told about other place than the land of the dead – about the place of the second death. The same is written in Matthew 5,30.

Matthew 10,28:

“And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.”

In Gehenna, that is, in the pool of fire. This pool of fire doesn’t exist in Hades and Sheol. This is a different place than Hades and Sheol. We have read that Hades was also thrown into Gehenna, into the pool of fire.

Matthew 18,9:

“And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into fiery Gehenna.”

Matthew 23,15:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You traverse sea and land to make one convert, and when that happens you make him a child of Gehenna twice as much as yourselves.”

Therefore, you make him a man who will end up in the pool of fire. Let’s see, it would look like they gain, but for what purpose do they do it?

Matthew 23,33:

“You serpents, you brood of vipers, how can you flee from the judgment of Gehenna?”

After all, their father – the father of lies – goes there.

Mark 9,43:

“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire.”

We repeat these lines. The same word is everywhere here, but it's about something completely different.

In Mark 9,45 and 9,47 this is the same: “thrown into Gehenna”.

Luke 12,5:

“I shall show you whom to fear. Be afraid of the one who after killing has the power to cast into Gehenna ; yes, I tell you, be afraid of that one.”

Cast into Gehenna. You can find it in the Book of Revelation. What is cast into Gehenna there? Let's see what God casts into this place. You should rather be afraid of the One who can cast into Gehenna what doesn't belong to Him, what didn't want or rebelled and followed the devil, what preferred to live for the devil than for God and what dies on earth. One day, God will take all these people out of the land of the dead, bring them to justice and then cast them into the pool of fire. It's just like Jesus says in the parable: “Go and cast him”. Those who don't abide in Christ wither, are cut off and cast into the fire.

The righteous or the unrighteous dies, but only the unrighteous will be cast into Gehenna. The land of the dead is for everyone, but Gehenna is only for those who live against God. These are two different places, but they are marked with the same word – hell.

We can exactly see it in Revelation 20,15:

“Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the pool of fire.”

James 3,6:

“The tongue is also a fire. It exists among our members as a world of malice, defiling the whole body and setting the entire course of our lives on fire, itself set on fire by Gehenna.”

How much evil the tongue can do when people say things so recklessly to each other. The place of all evil is Gehenna, where there will be only evil.

Revelation 20,10:

“The Devil who had led them astray was thrown into the pool of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

Many people don't know this place from the Bible. The devil won't torment people in Gehenna – it is he who will be tormented in Gehenna as well as the false prophet, the beast and all other people who belonged to him. All of them will suffer torment there. This isn't a place where the devil can be cruel to other people. This is the place where the devil will suffer the same torment as all those who belonged to him.

God won't leave the devil a place where he can still do evil. The devil will experience it himself – the torment of the pool of fire and the torment of the second death.

When we look in this way, we can see what the Bible wants to say to us about the dead and their land. And when God no longer needs it, then the earth, the human works – in general, everything will be removed, including the land of the dead and death. As we have read, death, the land of the dead and the devil who deceived will also be cast into the pool of fire. All those who weren't listed in the book of life will be cast into the pool of fire. This is the place where everyone will suffer torment. Nobody will torment the other, but everybody will suffer torment. There won't be anybody in this place who won't be tormented, who would torment somebody and who wouldn't be tormented himself. Only God knows what kind of torment it is. We can try to guess or leave it and don't deliberate. If God tells of the torment, it will definitely be something difficult, something for ever, something that those who end up there will be aware of the fact that it's impossible to get out of there. The pool of fire has nowhere to be thrown. The end is right there.

The devil goes crazy because he knows that he has little time. He knows that now is his time to try to deceive and delude people, lead them astray, make them worse than they were before, so that they deceive others too and so that they work for the devil and not for God. He tries to cheat people, so that they think the way the devil wants them to think.

If we just leave the word "hell", at this point somebody wants believers to think this way. But if we put there the words that explain it explicitly, then we can see that the image is opening to us and we begin to understand what God is talking about in these places.

For example, when it says about angels in 2 Peter 2,4:

"For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but condemned them to..."

Not to Hades and not to Sheol. The Greek word is used here: "Tartarus" – yet another place (in the Polish Bible the word "abyss" is used).

Now, maybe we will talk about a fragment from the Bible that shows the dead and also shows an element that, if misunderstood, confuses the thinking of Christians. It's in the Gospel according to Saint Matthew 27,50-54. When you read it, what do you think?

"But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many. The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they saw the earthquake and all that was happening, and they said, 'Truly, this was the Son of God!'"

What conclusions do you draw from reading this passage from the Bible? What did the centurion see? What did convince him? The centurion saw Jesus Christ crucified and he also saw the phenomena described here – it got dark and the earth quaked. He couldn't see that the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two. He couldn't see it, but it's described here that this is exactly what happened. The path has been opened for you and me.

But now we can read here as follows:

“...tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection...”

At that moment, the centurion didn't see it. Jesus didn't rise from the dead until three days later and the centurion had already judged then that He truly was the Son of God. Therefore, it's certain that at the moment when the centurion spoke the following words: “Truly, He is the Son of God”, he didn't see the resurrection of the saints.

And did Jerusalem see these people walking in its streets immediately after Jesus' resurrection? No. Absolutely not. It's not about Jerusalem at all.

“...they entered the holy city and appeared to many.”

And they entered the holy city. Jerusalem isn't the holy city. Now you can see how carefully you should read the Bible. Just read the Epistle to the Galatians and you will see the difference between Jerusalem and the holy city.

See, if it had actually happened that the tombs had opened, there would have been two resurrections. What's more, it would have been so sensational that all people would have talked about it and even the apostles would have used it to say: “You've seen it. Haven't you seen how those who died walked?”

I want to show you something. Let's open the Book of Isaiah 7,10-16:

“Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: Ask for a sign from the Lord, your God; let it be deep as Sheol, or high as the sky! But Ahaz answered, “I will not ask! I will not tempt the Lord!” Then he said: Listen, house of David! Is it not enough that you weary human beings? Must you also weary my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; the young woman, pregnant and about to bear a son, shall name him Emmanuel. Curds and honey he will eat so that he may learn to reject evil and choose good; for before the child learns to reject evil and choose good, the land of those two kings whom you dread shall be deserted.”

The Lord himself will give you a sign. Therefore, we have a right to expect it to happen during the lifetime of Ahaz and of those who were there at that time. Ahaz lived 735 years before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. About 735 years passed before what the prophet said happened. Who saw this sign? Simeon, Anna and others. Time is different with God than it does with people.

Let's open the Gospel of Matthew 1,18-23:

“Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means *God is with us*.”

About 735 years passed and the Word was made. Who of them lived to see the day? They were all long

dead. But God says to people: "I will give you a sign". People are still on earth and they see this sign.

We must also see the Word and time.

Here, when we read the Gospel of Matthew, the Word is separated by time. Matthew knows there will be a resurrection and he says it will also happen. It will happen that the tombs will open and many bodies of saints will come out of these tombs. They will leave their tombs and enter the holy city. Then, we will go towards the holy city.

When the apostle Paul writes the Epistle to the Corinthians, he explains certain things that can be helpful in this meditation. He even mentioned some people who claimed that the resurrection had already happened and he gave them over to Satan so that they would be edified not to blaspheme God because when Christ comes, then there will be the resurrection. Therefore, Matthew certainly didn't blaspheme God, just time is separation. Nobody knew it yet, but Matthew knows it will happen and he writes about it. This is hope for believers.

Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 15,1-11:

"Now I am reminding you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you indeed received and in which you also stand. Through it you are also being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. After that he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one born abnormally, he appeared to me. For I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been ineffective. Indeed, I have toiled harder than all of them; not I, however, but the grace of God [that is] with me. Therefore, whether it be I or they, so we preach and so you believed."

Here, the apostle doesn't mention such an important issue. However, he mentions Jesus who appeared to many people after His resurrection. And we have to see it. In this case, the period of time from Christ's resurrection to the saints' resurrection is a time that also has to pass.

This is really beautiful when we look at it, we see the truth of the gospel and we see what God wants to say to us. We are impressed that the Lord wants to inspire hearts with hope, not to delude them. But all those who don't belong to God will be deluded. The Lord wants to save us and fill us with the Word of truth. That's why it's so important that the truth of God fill our insides.

Therefore, no one saw the open tombs then except for one tomb, that of Jesus Christ, which was empty. All the others were still closed and they are closed to this very day. The land of the dead still exists and keeps those who sleep there until they return. The apostles also said: "They fell asleep". The Lord said: "Lazarus fell asleep, I'm going to wake him up". They didn't understand, so He said clearly: "Lazarus is dead".

Then, we can be sure that there has been no partial resurrection.

When we open the Epistle to the Hebrews, we can read beautiful words there. There is a fragment that also

shows it. Hebrews 11. We can read about men of God and about God's people. In the 10<sup>th</sup> line we read:

"...for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and maker is God."

But this city doesn't exist yet. If it were on earth, they would go there very quickly. But it doesn't exist. Therefore, they are pilgrims, exiles and they make a pilgrimage to go in there. They want to be ready and they know this is the city for saints. That's why, they abide in God, cleave to Him, sigh, cry to Him, cry and rejoice that there is God who can help them get through. They believe in Him, not in themselves. They stay with Him. And they die without reaching their goal, but they believe that one day God will raise them from the dead and then they will get in clothed there. Everyone dies.

Hebrew 11,13: "All these died in faith. They did not receive what had been promised but saw it and greeted it from afar and acknowledged themselves to be strangers and aliens on earth..."

It's beautiful to have such a heart. I know it's not here yet, but I know there is God, the Builder, and He's working fine on it. I want to be in this place, I want to be able to get in there. Thus, we prepare ourselves and build each other up these days. We want to help each other so that everyone wins and belongs to God. This isn't religion, this is reality.

Let's read the 39<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> lines of this chapter:

"Yet all these, though approved because of their faith, did not receive what had been promised. God had foreseen something better for us, so that without us they should not be made perfect."

The dead won't anticipate the living and the living won't anticipate the dead. We will all experience the same at the same time. Since we belong to God, we will experience the same together. No one will anticipate anyone, no one will be faster and no one will be later.

Hebrew 11,13: "All these died in faith. They did not receive what had been promised but saw it and greeted it from afar..."

They greeted it from afar by faith. They didn't receive it. But they will receive it when they rise from the dead and this is the great hope of God's people for you and me.

Let's see one thing that relates to what we read. Why does time disappear and fades away as if it wasn't in what Matthew writes there? It looks as if there was no time, as if it was happening in one sequence. In the Epistle to the Ephesians 2,6, we can read:

"...raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus..."

Everything is already raised up in Christ. We already have eternal life in Christ, but it still needs this time for this to be fulfilled.

In the Book of Revelation it's written that someone who looks like a son of man is sitting on the cloud and an angel comes out of the temple, and says: "Take and reap the harvest, for the time to reap has come". This fragment comes from the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Revelation:

Revelation 14,14-15: "Then I looked and there was a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud one who looked

like a son of man, with a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Another angel came out of the temple, crying out in a loud voice to the one sitting on the cloud, *Use your sickle and reap the harvest, for the time to reap has come, because the earth's harvest is fully ripe.*"

We have already been raised up in Him, so this time may not function. And the Lord, as our resurrection, will come back for us. Paul has written about it in the Epistle to the Philippians – to have a participation in His resurrection, to reach that day and rise from the dead. To have a participation today, to sit in Christ at the right hand of God today as it's written in Ephesians. Today! It's beautiful to have such faith and the certainty that by abiding in Christ, even if I die, I will live. I'm already there! This is my place and I enjoy this place. I'm still here on earth, I can still die if the Lord doesn't come back. But this is my place because I have already risen from the dead in Christ. Although time has yet to pass, it has already happened in Christ. When we died in Him, we were also raised up in Him, we also sat at the right hand of the Father in Him and we will be forever with Him. This is the promise and this is the confidence of God's people with whom we come back. And even if we were to die, we know that He will be the last one who will stand over our tomb. Then our eyes will see our Beloved Lord Jesus Christ along with Job who told about it. Praise the Lord!

Now, let's see this holy city. Revelation 21,1-2:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem..."

A new Jerusalem on a new earth. This is the holy city. That's why, they could neither rise nor enter there yet.

Revelation 21,9-11a: "One of the seven angels who held the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come here. I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." He took me in spirit to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It gleamed with the splendor of God."

Here you have a place, man of God, in the holy city. You are part of this city by belonging to it. And nobody can get in there unless he or she abides in Christ. Nobody can be a part of God's glory unless he or she is the part of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, and sitting at the right hand of God. This is our place – the place of God's promise given to us from God. And praise the Lord that we can already fortify ourselves with this place, reinforce each other and cheer each other up. It's very important that we can have these places from the Word clearly placed in our hearts. There are various places in the Bible that foolish people explain incorrectly and that's why they harm themselves and others. Whoever deceives someone may turn out to be the offender. You need to be careful. When we read about the resurrection, what do we read then? The Lord Jesus will come to wake us up from sleep.

With what I just said, we could go anywhere in the Bible and it would be clean. I don't care what other people said about it, whether they say in various ways. I only care what God says about it. We can't be afraid of the truth because someone may take offense at us because of the truth. There will always be someone who gets offended. People also took offense at Jesus. We can't let ourselves be stopped in the truth because a deceived person will take offense at us. We must walk in truth to save ourselves and live in truth to save ourselves. That's why God has sent us the Spirit of truth to lead us into the truth so that we wouldn't be deceived and deluded.

I think what we've said so far is obvious and you have made a mental note, and you can also see it while reading the Bible. Read it in the following way: Hades, Sheol, Gehenna and then you won't get confused. Then, other places start opening up too and telling you what's true. If we were to look into the dead today, we would have to spend too much time with it. There are many places in the Bible that deal with it. I can just indicate the topics to you. I think we'll be looking into it for a while to talk about it and so that we don't have any misconceptions about it. It should be obvious because the Word of God says it.

People are determined to die once and then there is a judgement. It's not like that: to die, hell and the judgement. It should be like that: to die and then the judgement and a verdict. There is nothing between death and judgement. A man can add or take away nothing. The judgement will decide how you and I have lived on earth. Our deeds go with us and they will stand with us before the Judge who will judge us.

Therefore, the dead wait for the judgement. Today we experience God's judgement and, luckily, we can still say: "God forgive me, purify me with Your Blood, Lord. I understand that I did something wrong and this is a sin. Lord, I don't want to die in this sin. Purify me with Your blood." If you have to reconcile, you need to do it. We are experiencing it today and today is the time to purify ourselves and put things right. When a man dies, he won't change anything. He won't put any things right and won't change anything for the worse or for the better. It can't get any worse or any better. You can neither lose your eternity nor gain it when you die if you didn't have it during your life.

Thus, let's look at Jesus Christ who died like the son of man, descended into Hades, was in the tomb for three days and then was called from death to life.

People who read the Epistle of Peter often overlook that Jesus didn't ascend to these imprisoned angels until after His resurrection, and not after His death. The teachings of hell say that when Jesus died, His body was placed in the tomb and He went there to visit. The Lord didn't go anywhere, He was dead. He didn't even go to the Father. He says: "Don't touch me for I haven't yet been to my Father." The Lord was just dead – like any human is. If we read the Bible as it's written, then we will acknowledge and understand it in a normal way.

What did Lazarus, who was dead and was called, tell that was there in that death? We don't read anything. The resurrection. It's beautiful. We all like these words of Job: "I know, I know that He will stand at my grave. My body is jagged, but I know that He will stand there and my eyes will watch Him."

How lucky it is when you have it in your heart. They knew: "I will fall in this tomb, my body will perish, but He will stand at my dust, at my rotten body and call me, and then I will go out to be with Him forever." And this was the hope of everyone, both of the Old Testament and of the New Testament. It was their hope. You can read about such places that tell of death and of immortality. This is such a great hope for you and me – immortality. "In the midst of death, He brought immortality to light in Christ Jesus." There is still hope for you and me because immortality is something we will clothe when we rise from the dead. And in this way, point by point, we can see it all. All of this is described in the Bible and we will look into it later on. I want you also be able to look and look for it. However, the most important thing is to know the truth. If I know the truth, even if people say something, it won't fool me because I do know the truth.

When I read the Bible and observe this Word being fulfilled, all these lies fleeing from the truth, I can see an almighty God's light that illuminates and shows that this is the truth.

Do you know how much angels want to see us? Even the angels really want to see it. They want to see us

when we are clothed and like them. Then, they will meet us. Jesus will come with them for this wonderful meeting. I think it's worth being with God, reading the Word of God, praying and thinking over each of these issues. It's good to talk about how we live and how we live together because it depends where we end up, whether we end up in Gehenna or not.

Jesus says that if someone doesn't repent, then: "I will erase your name from the book of life." How important it is to remember to belong to Him. Seriously, we must be genuinely concerned about it. Not intimidated. The Word of God doesn't intimidate us, but it gives us hope. Jesus came to save us. But to be saved, to be free people on this earth thanks to Jesus, to love Him for what He has done for us and still does every day for me and you, we must also have His decisions in our hearts. May God help us navigate this Word along with the Holy Spirit and understand it. Let our Bible tell us clearly in selected passages whether it's Hades, Sheol (this is the same, but it comes from the Old Testament and the New Testament, in Greek and in Hebrew – the same land) or Gehenna. The land of the dead is the place where both you and I can end up. There is the way out of there. But there is no way out of the pool of fire and of Gehenna. Better none of us end up there. May God help us in it. Amen.