

Great Doctrines of the Bible
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Hell

Introduction

No other subject of doctrine could make us more sober minded or sorrowful, even to the point of weeping, than the doctrine of HELL. If a place exists where unbelieving Christ-rejecters will endure anguish and torment for all eternity, this surely must be the most awesome truth we could possibly contemplate. No one should teach or preach this doctrine lightheartedly or matter-of-factly, but with the utmost seriousness and great compassion. It is the purpose of this study to thoroughly and clearly present what the Bible teaches concerning this truth. May God give us minds to grasp and hearts to understand its significance.

Importance of this Lesson

- While today, the fact of God's love is being proclaimed in excessive amounts, the message of retributive justice, inevitable judgment, God's wrath, and everlasting hell fire is rarely heard even in fundamental circles. One of the purposes and the importance of this lesson is to show the vast amount of attention the Bible devotes to this subject.
- Even the Lord Jesus, for example, had twice as much to say about HELL as He did about HEAVEN. Its importance looms even larger, when we realize that all human beings who die without Christ will spend eternity in The Lake of Fire.
- Deliverance from HELL is part of "the great salvation" we have in Christ. Woe be to the preacher who fails to warn sinners to "flee from the wrath to come." May the study of this lesson give you a burning, yearning heart to see men saved.

THE LESSON

I. BIBLE WORDS WHICH USUALLY, THOUGH NOT ALWAYS, ARE TRANSLATED "HELL"

In the Authorized or King James Version of the Bible, four words are usually translated hell"

- A. SHEOL – This word is found only in the Old Testament and is identical to the New Testament word HADES.
 - Psalm 18:5, "The sorrows of hell (Sheol) compassed me about:..."
 - Psalm 116:3, "...The pains of hell (Sheol) gat hold upon me:..."The word *Sheol* here and in many Old Testament references could be translated "death" or "the grave," since Sheol was thought of as the place for all departed souls, godly or ungodly.
- B. HADES – This is the Greek and New Testament word which is the equivalent of the Old Testament SHEOL.
 - Matthew 11:23, "...thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to HELL (Hades):..."
 - Revelation 1:18, "I am He...and have the keys of hell (Hades)..."*Hades*, the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Sheol, contained both "Abraham's Bosom" and "a place of torment" and was the place of all departed souls until the resurrection of Christ.
- C. TARTAROS – Found only once in the New Testament in 2 Peter 2:4, "For God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (Tartaros)..." These rebellious angels were placed in Tartaros, which is neither Sheol nor Hades, but a special place where they are chained in darkness and awaiting judgment.
- D. GEHENNA – This was the place in the Valley of Hinnom where human sacrifices were once offered (2 Chronicles 33:6), and where the endless burning of rubbish reminded the Jews of the ceaseless judgment of the wicked.

- ◆ *Matthew 10:28*, “...but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Gehenna).”
- ◆ *Luke 12:5*, “Fear Him, which after He has killed, hath power to cast into hell (Gehenna)...”

II. THE USE AND MEANING OF BOTH “SHEOL” AND “HADES” IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

A. SHEOL

1. An Old Testament word that is variously translated:
 - a. Hell (*Psalm 16:10*) – “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (Sheol)...”
 - b. The grave (*Genesis 37:35*) – “For I will go down into the grave (Sheol)...”
 - c. The pit (*Numbers 16:30*) – “And they go down quick into the pit (Sheol) ...”
2. Sheol, in the Old Testament, was viewed as the place to which ALL the dead go and the end toward which all human existence flows. This is why it is often referred to as the equivalent of the grave.
 - a. Jacob to Reuben – “then shall ye bring down my gray hairs...to the grave (Sheol)” (*Genesis 42:38*).
 - b. Job – “O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave (Sheol)... (*Job 14:13*).
3. Viewing things purely from outward and natural circumstances, the natural man sees Sheol as simply the grave or the end of life itself (*Ecclesiastes 9:5,10*); however, the Old Testament scriptures make perfectly plain that Sheol was an actual place where:
 - a. The wicked are placed and turned (*Psalm 9:17*).
 - b. Sorrows are experienced (*Psalm 18:5*; *2 Samuel 22:6*).
 - c. Pain is felt (*Psalm 116:3*).
 - d. Satan and the wicked will be cast and remain fully conscious (*Isaiah 14:9-17*).
4. When Jonah was in the belly of the great fish, it is written, “...out of the belly of hell (Sheol) I cried” (*Jonah 2:2*). He was in Sheol, yet very much alive.
5. Remember, that the Hebrew word *Sheol* is identical to the New Testament Greek word *Hades*; and, therefore, like Hades, was compartmentalized, being divided between paradise (Abraham’s bosom), and the place of torment, as we shall see.

B. HADES – Most likely, this word was derived from the word “hado” which meant “all-receiving.”

1. Like *Sheol*, the word *Hades* is often translated *hell* in some versions. However, neither Hades nor Sheol should be thought of as merely the grave, the pit, death or hell, since it was a definite place or region to which ALL SOULS, saved and unsaved, went prior to the ascension of Christ. The godly believers in the Old Testament, and prior to the resurrection of Christ, did not go to hell. They went to paradise or Abraham’s bosom, (*Luke 16:22*), a part of Hades and/or Sheol.
2. The word *Hades* is found four times in the Gospels: *Matthew 11:23*; *16:18*; *Luke 10:15*; and *16:23*.
3. Other uses:
 - a. It is used with reference to the soul of Christ (*Acts 2:27, 31*).
 - b. Christ said He had the key to it (*Revelation 1:18*).
 - c. John said it was to give up those who are in it at the final judgment, and that it, along with sinners, would be cast into The Lake of Fire (*Revelation 20:13-14*).
4. Hades must not be thought of as the permanent abode of lost souls, but as a temporary, intermediate stage between death and Gehenna – The Lake of Fire. Sinners are “reserved” there until the Day of Judgment. (*2 Peter 2:9*).
5. From the passage in *Luke 16:19-31*, we learn that Hades, like Sheol is divided into two sections:
 - a) Abraham’s bosom for the saved (verses 22-23).
 - b) The place of suffering for the unsaved (verses 22-23).
 - i) This is a place of torment (verses 23-24).
 - ii) This is a place where sinners in anguish could view the blessedness of saints (verses 23-24).

- iii) This is a place where sinners have full use of their senses. The rich man could see, feel, hear, speak and remember while he was in torment (verses 23-31).
- iv) This is a place from which there is no escape (verse 26).

Note: Hades, then, is a word used to reveal the awful condition of the unsaved between death and the final judgment and the blissful situation of believers between death and the ascension of Christ.

III. THE MEANING AND USE OF GEHENNA

- ◆ *This is the word that indicates the real HELL, the everlasting HELL, the HELL of anguish, wailing and suffering, the HELL of judgment and damnation.*
- ◆ *The word is used twelve times in the New Testament and all but once, the word was uttered by the Lord Jesus Christ. (The word is found in Matthew 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5 and James 3:6).*
- A. The Greek word *Gee'nna*, pronounced "gehenna," is derived from the Hebrew *Ge-Hinnon*, the valley of Tophet (W.E. Vine).
- B. Gehenna is the place in The Valley of Hinnon (Scofield's notes), where in ancient times, human sacrifices were offered (Jeremiah 7:31), and where there was an endless burning of rubbish which symbolized for the Jewish people the eternal judgment of God upon the wicked.
- C. Gehenna, according to the Lord Jesus, is a place:
 - 1. Into which both soul and body of sinners will be cast (Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:5).
 - 2. Of judgment and eternal damnation (Matthew 23:33).
 - 3. Where the fire is never quenched (Mark 9:44). The phrase, "and the fire is not quenched" is identical in meaning with *The Lake of Fire* (Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14-15).

IV. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GEHENNA AND THE LAKE OF FIRE

- A. Since the phrase Jesus used to describe Gehenna, "Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43-47), is identical in meaning to The Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14), then Gehenna and The Lake of Fire are the same place.
- B. Gehenna or The Lake of Fire
 - 1. Is the final and eternal place and state of unbelievers:
 - a. Hades and all who are in it are cast into Gehenna or The Lake of Fire after the millennium and after the judgment of The Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15).
 - b. The Lake of Fire is said to be "for ever and ever" (Revelation 14:11; 20:10), or literally, *unto the ages of the ages*.

V. GEHENNA – THE FOREVER PLACE

- A. Since this phrase is also used to characterize the glory of God (Galatians 1:5), the dominion and reign of God (1 Peter 4:11, Revelation 1:6), and God himself (Revelation 1:18; 4:9-10), it plainly means ETERNAL in the sense of unending.
- B. 2 Thessalonians 1:9 says that sinners are to be sentenced to everlasting punishment.
- C. 2 Peter 2:17 and Jude 13 state clearly that the judgment of false teachers is FOREVER.
- D. All of this, of course, silences those who teach annihilation, soul-sleep, and purgatory.
 - 1. Gehenna is called THE SECOND DEATH (Revelation 2:11; 20:6,14; and 21:8).
 - 2. The Second Death in contrast and comparison to the first or physical death when sinners go to Hades to await the judgment of The Great White Throne (Revelation 20:13).
 - 3. The Second Death is the "so great a death" (2 Corinthians 1:10).
 - 4. The Second Death is the ETERNAL separation from God of sinners who die in their sins (John 8:21, 24).
- ◆ *Further proof that HELL is not annihilation or soul-sleep can be found by comparing Revelation 19:20 with Revelation 20:10. After 1000 years, The Lake of Fire is a place where the Beast and the False Prophet ARE, not WERE.*

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VI. WHAT THE LORD JESUS TAUGHT US ABOUT THAT PART OF HADES WHERE THE UNSAVED ABIDE UNTIL AFTER THE MILLENNIUM.

- A. It was originally prepared for Satan and his angels (Matthew 25:41). Hell is not only a place (Luke 16:28), but a specially prepared place occupied with real people. For example, the Pharisees (Matthew 23:33) and hypocrites (Matthew 24:51).
- B. It is a place of unquenchable FIRE (Mark 9:43; Matthew 5:22; 13:42).
- C. It is a place where sinners will weep and wail and gnash their teeth (Matthew 13:42; 8:12; 22:13; 24:51 and 25:30).
- D. It is a place of “outer darkness” (Matthew 25:30; 8:12). Sinners are already living in darkness (Ephesians 5:8; Acts 26:18), and are a part of the kingdom of darkness, (Colossians 1:13). “Outer darkness,” a characteristic of “the second death,” is that eternal separation of the sinner from the light of TRUTH, the light of Christ and His Gospel and the light of God. NO DAY THERE!!!
- E. It is a place of judgment and damnation (Matthew 23:33; 25:46). Hell will be a just sentence upon those who reject the Gospel of Christ and fail to repent.
- F. It is a place that is fixed (Luke 16:26), is everlasting (Matthew 25:41,46), and from which there is no escape, surcease or change (Luke 16:26; Matthew 23:33).
- G. It is a place where “the worm dieth not” (Mark 9:44) [perhaps referring to the ability to remember (Luke 16:25)] and where sinners will retain use of all their faculties in the midst of perpetual torment (Luke 16:19-31).
- H. It is a place where there will be no fellowship, no filial relationships, no freedom, no forgetting, no felicity, no faith and no forgiveness. (My personal thoughts taken from Luke 16:19-31.)
- ◆ *If the terms used seem severe or figurative, keep in mind that the reality is generally more severe than the figure.*

VII. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE TEACHING OF A LITERAL HELL (**Memorize the Arguments.**)

- A. Fire would consume. Remember, HELL is a special place with special fire. Moses viewed a burning bush that was not consumed (Exodus 3:2). The three Hebrew boys cast into a furnace of fire were not even singed (Daniel 3:19-27).
- B. It is incompatible with the love of God. While God surely loves the sinner, he hates sin. The world seems to constantly forget that God is just and holy, demanding repentance and faith. Sinners must choose. God is no respecter of persons (Romans 11:32; 2:11). Jesus and John, whom we most associate with love in the Bible, had by far the most to say about hell. Also, bear in mind that God could not show grace and mercy toward the sinner, until His justice was satisfied.
- C. Purgatory. The Bible does not allow for any temporal or intermediate stage from which sinners might escape. All who are in Hades will be cast into The Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:13-14).
- D. Soul-sleep and annihilation, have already been adequately answered. Bear in mind that hell is a **punishment**, (Matthew 25:46). You cannot punish a dead or unconscious person. Furthermore, there would be no need for the unbeliever to be resurrected if there is to be annihilation (John 5:29).
- E. Those who never heard the Gospel cannot be lost. Keep in mind that God is a JUST God and will hold such responsible for obeying the light they have (Romans 1:19-20).

VIII. THE LOGIC OF A LITERAL HELL

- A. “That there is to be retribution for sin and a reward for the righteous must be held to be beyond question and must be recognized as an unchangeable law,” William Evans.
- B. If there is no HELL, Christ must be branded a liar, and His deity and authority denied.
- C. If there is no HELL, God must be charged with the folly of sending Jesus to die to save us from a place that does not exist.
- D. If there is no HELL, the Bible is false, and the world is without a source of absolute authority concerning morality and salvation.
- E. There must be a HELL if sin is a fact. Only the willfully blind can deny it. Sin results in death (Romans 6:23). Hell is the second death (Revelation 20:14). Sin and sinners are to be in hell forever (Revelation 20:13-15 and 21:8).

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- F. There must be a HELL, if man is immortal. Man is a living soul (Genesis 2:7). Everyone lives forever, somewhere (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29). There must be a hell for those who spurn heaven.
- G. There must be a HELL, if God is just (Revelation 15:3). Being just, God must bring sinners to account (Romans 14:12; Hebrews 9:27; Acts 17:30-31). Sinners will be judged (Psalm 9:17; 2 Peter 2:9; Matthew 13:40-42).

Conclusion:

The truth in this lesson should send us to our knees in gratitude for God's saving grace. Not one of us is worthy of heaven. We are but sinners and saved through God's loving kindness. These thoughts have been prepared and written with much earnest prayer that God will use them to awaken in your heart a fervent love for lost souls. Whether we understand it fully or not, hell remains an awful fact. As we "throw out the life line," let us be faithful to warn sinners of "the wrath to come."

GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE
EXAM—LESSON 16

Questions to be answered by every student enrolled in the Rogma International Free Bible Study Course

Name _____

Address _____

1. The lesson on hell is important because: (Value 3 points)
 - a. God would never send anyone there.
 - b. a person who dies without receiving Christ goes to hell.
 - c. hell is not a real place.
2. The meaning of *Sheol* is: (Value 3 points)
 - a. “death” or “the grave.”
 - b. the place where God put the rebellious angels.
 - c. the place for the souls of everyone who died until the resurrection of Christ.
3. The meaning of *Hades* is: (Value 3 points)
 - a. the place of endless judgment.
 - b. the place God put rebellious angels.
 - c. the place for the souls of everyone who died until the resurrection of Christ.
4. The meaning of *Tartaros* is: (Value 3 points)
 - a. “death” or “the grave.”
 - b. the place where God put the rebellious angels.
 - c. a place of endless judgment.
5. The meaning of *Gehenna* is: (Value 3 points)
 - a. a place where rebellious angels are chained.
 - b. a place of endless judgment of the wicked.
 - c. a place where the dead souls of all believers stay until Christ comes again.
6. The Old Testament used the word *Sheol* because it: (Value 4 points)
 - a. is the most accurate description of hell.
 - b. means the end of life.
 - c. was considered the place toward which all human existence flowed.
7. **Mark** the verse that shows us *Sheol* was an actual place where pain is felt. (Open Bible) (Value 3 points)
 - a. Matthew 11:23
 - b. Psalm 116:3
 - c. Revelation 1:18
8. How many sections were there in *Hades*? (Value 3 points)
 - a. one
 - b. four
 - c. two

9. The residence of the wicked in Hades will terminate at the time of the: (Value 3 points)
- a. Rapture.
 - b. Tribulation.
 - c. Great White Throne Judgment.
10. Who has the key to *Hades*? (Value 3 points)
- a. Satan
 - b. Christ
 - c. The Holy Spirit
11. What other place is identical to *Gehenna*? (Value 3 points)
- a. Hades
 - b. Lake of Fire
 - c. Tartaras
12. *Gehenna* is called “the Second Death” because: (Value 4 points)
- a. people will die two times.
 - b. it is in contrast to the first or physical death.
 - c. it is the time a person goes from *Gehenna* to heaven.
13. God prepared *Gehenna* (hell) for: (Value 3 points)
- a. unbelievers.
 - b. very wicked sinners.
 - c. Satan and his angels.
14. Matching: Place the letter in the Bible reference column in front of the correct description. (Open Bible) (Value 16 points)
- | | |
|--|------------------|
| _____ place of fire that never goes out | a. Matthew 25:30 |
| _____ place of darkness | b. Matthew 23:33 |
| _____ place of judgment | c. Mark 9:43 |
| _____ place of wailing and gnashing of teeth | d. Matthew 13:42 |
15. What three things do we learn about Hades from Luke 16:19-31? (Open Bible) (Value 15 points) (Fill in the blank spaces)
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

16. Answer each of the following two arguments against hell being a real place by filling the blank spaces in the answers with choices from these words: **(Not all these words will be used)** *burning house; four; burning bush; holy; anger; ashes; three; repentance, righteousness; scorched; faith.*

a. Argument: *A fire burns things up until there is nothing left.* (Value 16 points)

Answer: Moses saw a _____, but it did not burn into _____.

The _____ Hebrew boys were thrown into a fire, but their clothing was not _____.

b. Argument: *God is a God of love and would never put people in hell forever.* (Value 12 points)

Answer: God is also _____ and He demands _____ and _____.

DECISION TIME

I know that Hell is a real place but that Christ has given Himself a ransom for me and paid the price of His own life by dying on the cross for me. I accept the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior at this moment, and believing that He is truly God, I repent from my sins and forsake them.

Signed _____ Date _____ 20__

(Doing this will not give you a better grade, but we would like you to tell us about this decision so that we can encourage you.)