

Hades

The New Testament was originally written in Greek. The Old Testament scriptures used by the early Christian church were actually a Greek translation of the Hebrew bible, later called the Septuagint or LXX. It was in use more than 150 years before the time of Jesus. The Hebrew word for the grave (figuratively or generally, the grave, where the dead reside, not a specific grave or graves) is "Sheol." Sheol's Greek counterpart in the Septuagint and the New Testament is "Hades." In Sheol the concept of a conscious soul is not found. Instead we find instances such as [Psalms 6:4,5](#), where King David fearing for his life prays for deliverance. He reasoned that since God loved him [and in order to continue that relationship], God should save him from death because the dead cannot proclaim his name or praise him from "Sheol." [or "Hades" in the Greek]. Sheol was where *all* the dead came to rest whether righteous or unrighteous. In [Ecclesiastes 9:5,6](#) Solomon (considered traditionally to be the author) says, that the dead don't know anything (including what is going on in the earth) neither do they have any emotions. Jesus said the day was coming when all those in the graves would hear his voice and be resurrected to be judged. [see [John 5:28,29](#)] The Old Testament prophet Daniel describes this same event in [Daniel 12:2](#). He describes the righteous and unrighteous dead as sleeping. The New Testament often describes death as sleep. When they are resurrected or as Daniel says, "wake up" the unrighteous experience shame. The implication is they were not experiencing this before they were resurrected. Here is an Old Testament verse referencing a future New Testament event and still the dead before they "awaken" don't appear to be experiencing any emotions or know their fate until the resurrection!

To the Greeks *Hades* was not only the grave but an unseen underworld in the depths of the earth where the souls of the dead resided in a conscious state. The use of the Greek language and even Greek culture influenced the acceptance of concepts not found in the Old Testament. Many Jews in Jesus' time had incorporated the idea of a conscious soul in a dark underworld after death. Yet, if you take every instance (except Luke 16:23 - the rich man and Lazarus - which is discussed later) where Hades is used in the New Testament you could substitute "the grave" just like the Old Testament usage. In fact some of the verses are actually quotes from the Old Testament. In [Revelation 20:13](#) the sea, death and Hades, delivered up the dead that were in them for judgment. We're talking bodies here, not disembodied souls, unless the sea by some new teaching is some sort of repository for the souls of the dead. Likewise death and Hades give up the bodies that are in them. Verse 13 could read, "And

the ocean gave up the dead [bodies] that were in it, and death and the grave surrendered the dead [bodies] that were in them; and they were judged [and sentenced] according to what they did [in life]." This verse is not saying some of the dead came out of death and some out of the grave. Death and the grave are often used together as companion expressions [see [Hosea 13:14](#), [1 Corinthians 15:55](#)] and of course at the end of life, one directly follows the other.

It doesn't help the consistency of interpretation when most English translations also use "Hell" for the Greek word "Hades." Hell stirs up all kinds of images. Remember "Hades" is not "Gehenna." It is not a fiery place of judgment and destruction. And there is no fiery place of destruction until the future judgment.

I've included the following link from an English translation that doesn't substitute "Hell" for "Hades." [\[see all verses in the New Testament where Hades is used\]](#)