

might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

"**Pit**" – 3 times, as in Job 17:16: "They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust."

But actually, the Hebrew word "Sheol" does not mean either "Hell," "grave," or "pit." It means "the unseen world" or "the place of departed spirits." Notice how it is defined:

Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary says that "Sheol" is "the world of the dead."

Young's Analytical Concordance says that "Sheol" is "the unseen state."

Smith's Bible Dictionary says that "Sheol" is "always the abode of departed spirits."

Fausset's Bible Dictionary and Encyclopedia says that "Sheol" is "the common receptacle of the dead."

So Sheol does not strictly refer to Hell, but to **the place of departed spirits**, irrespective of whether saved or lost. Sheol is simply a term meaning "the state of the dead in general, without any restriction of happiness or misery" (Smith). In many instances where the word is used, however, the reference is clearly to that compartment of Sheol where the wicked are punished (see Psalm 9:17).

2. "Hades" is the Greek word in the New Testament which corresponds to "Sheol" and is translated as follows:

"**Hell**" – 10 times, as in Matthew 11:23: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."

"**Grave**" – 1 time: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor 15:55).

But "Hades," like Sheol, does not strictly or exclusively refer to Hell. "Hades" is the corresponding Greek word to the Hebrew word "Sheol," and both have the same meaning.

Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament says that "Hades" is "the place [state] of departed souls."

Young's Concordance: "the unseen world."

A.T. Robertson, world-renowned Greek scholar: "Hades is technically the unseen world, the Hebrew Sheol, the land of the departed" (Word Pictures).

I urge you to read Luke 16:19-31, where a perfect illustration of Sheol (Hades) is given. This passage draws back the curtain and lets us have a look into both sides of "the land of the departed."

3. "Gehenna," or "the Gehenna of Fire," is the Greek word that strictly means **Hell**. It is never translated into any word but "Hell," and eleven of the twelve times the word is used, Christ Himself uses it ("Gehenna" – Matt 5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15; 23:33; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6).

The word "Gehenna" is of Hebrew origin derived from "valley" and "Hinnom." "Gehenna is the Valley of Hinnom where the fire burned continually" (A.T. Robertson).

The Valley of Hinnom was a place near Jerusalem where Ahaz introduced the worship of fire gods, the sun, Baal and Moloch. The Jews under ungodly Manasseh offered their children as burnt offerings in this idolatrous worship (Jer 7:31). This cruel worship was finally abolished, and later Josiah made the place a receptacle of dead

carcasses and the bodies of malefactors (criminals), in which worms were continually gendering. A perpetual fire was kept to consume the putrifying matter. The place was still in existence at the time of Christ, and the Saviour illustrated somewhat the condition in eternity, in "the Gehenna of fire," by reference to this valley.

The Lord Jesus referred to Hell as the "Gehenna of fire," into which "both body and soul" will be cast (Matt 10:28; Luke 12:5). He said it is "unquenchable fire" and "the worm [man] dieth not" in the flame (Matt 3:12; Mark 9:44), just as the three Hebrew children of Daniel's day did not die when cast into the fiery furnace (Dan 3), or the burning bush that Moses beheld was not consumed (Exo 3:2).

Hell is no myth as infidels, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Universalists, and Modernists would have you believe. Christ did not warn of Hell-fire simply to scare men. He warned of Hell-fire because it's a reality!

4. "Tartarus," the fourth word translated "Hell," is used only once in the New Testament (2 Peter 2:4).

Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament says that "Tartarus" is "the deepest abyss of Hades," and that the word means "to incarcerate [imprison] in eternal torment."

A.T. Robertson: "The dark and doleful abode of the wicked dead like the Gehenna of the Jews."

Fausset's Dictionary: "The deep, or abyss, or bottomless pit."

So this word strictly refers to the place where the unsaved are confined in Divine judgment.

Fire in Hell?

Leaving the passages that contain

these four words translated "Hell," notice some passages which teach of Hell in words that even a child can understand.

"So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just. And shall cast them into **the furnace of fire**: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 13:49,50).

"And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a **smoke** out of the **pit**, as the **smoke** of a **great furnace**; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the **smoke of the pit**" (Rev 9:2).

"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be **tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And **the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever**; and they have **no rest day nor night**, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (Rev 14:10,11).

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into **the lake of fire and brimstone**, where the beast and the false prophet are, and **shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever**" (Rev 20:10).

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet... These both were cast alive into a **lake of fire burning with brimstone**" (Rev 19:20; Also see Rev 20:14,15; 21:8; Matt 5:22; 25:41; 2 Peter 3:7; Jude 7).

Be not deceived by the deniers of Hell-fire. Such false teachers serve Satan and are enemies of your soul. Read these passages for yourself, and cast into the fire the deceptive literature that cunningly "explains away" plain statements of God's Word.

Everlasting Fire

Jehovah's Witnesses' magazines are always denying that the Bible means what it says in such passages as this:

“Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee: cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into *everlasting fire*” (*Matt 18:8*).

You've heard it said, “Death ends all.” But does it? Our Lord chose His words carefully. The Greek word for “everlasting” is *aionios*. The word means *ageless* – *without beginning, without ending, or both*. It is used in Romans 16:26 of God: “the *everlasting* [*aionios*] God.” This use of the word should clearly show us the meaning of the word “everlasting.”

The Greek scholar A.T. Robertson says of the word: “It comes as near to the idea of eternal as the Greek can put it in one word. It is a difficult idea to put into language.”

Christ used the very same word (*aionios*) to describe the future life of the righteous and the future punishment of the wicked – “And these shall go away into *everlasting* [*aionios*] punishment: but the righteous into life *eternal* [*aionios*]” (*Matt 25:46*). If the punishment of the wicked is limited, we may likewise limit the life of the righteous! But such cannot be done.

For Ever and Ever

This phrase, “for ever and ever” (*eis tous aionas aionon*), occurs 20 times in the New Testament: *of God* (16 times); *of saints' future blessedness* (1 time); *of punishment of the wicked and Satan* (3 times). Is it likely that the phrase means “absolute eternity” 17 times, and only a limited period the other three times? Nonsense!

Death

Death is never an annihilation, or a ceasing to exist. It's always a separation.

Adam's death was a separation from God (*Gen 2:17; 3:23,24*).

Christ's death was a separation from God (*Matt 27:46*).

Physical death is a separation of the soul from the body (*Luke 16:22,23*).

The second death is the final and eternal separation of the unsaved in the “lake of fire” (*Rev 20:11-15*). That the second death is not annihilation read again two of the verses quoted above: Revelation 19:20 and 20:10.

Destruction

Neither does “*destruction*” mean annihilation. It's ridiculous to think that something cannot be “destroyed” without being annihilated! The Bible says Egypt was “destroyed” by the plagues (*Exo 10:7*); but Egypt was still there. The idolater was to be “utterly destroyed” (*Exo 22:20*); but he was still there, just dead. The Canaanites were “utterly destroyed” (*Num 21:3*); but the Canaanites still existed, just many of them were dead. Consider the saints in Jerusalem “destroyed” (*Acts 9:21*); and Jerusalem's “destruction” (*Lam 3:48*); and the ungodly in the broad way leading to “destruction” (*Matt 7:13*); and the wicked punished with “everlasting destruction” (*2 Thess 1:9*).

In *none of these* is the Bible speaking of “destruction” as a *ceasing to exist*, anymore than “total destruction” left by an earthquake means “total annihilation,” or “total destruction” left by the ravages of war. In these, there is much destruction of property, goods, buildings, etc., but such things are not annihilated!

It will certainly be destruction for

the unsaved in Hell – destruction not of their being, but of their well-being, of all peace, joy, happiness, pleasure, rest; destruction from all that the saints of God have in Heaven; but no annihilation. The unsaved still exist.

Salvation in Christ

If you are lost, reader, then you are doomed to eternal separation from God in the Gehenna of fire, unless you trust in Christ who was separated from God on Calvary's cross that sinners might have eternal life in Heaven.

Consider your guilt before Him, and the fact that you deserve nothing but Hell because of your sins against a holy and righteous God. Listen: “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (*Rom 5:8,9*).

Christ suffered Hell – separation from God (*Mark 15:34*) – for all who will depend wholly upon Him. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (*1 Peter 3:18*). “For God hath made Him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (*2 Cor 5:21*).

Look to the Lord Jesus Christ for redemption from sin, death, and Hell. Believe in Him and you shall be saved (*Acts 16:31*). Embrace Him as your very own Lord and Saviour, and receive the forgiveness of all of your sins. □

—by Bob L. Ross

THE REALITY OF HELL

“Hell” “Sheol” “Hades”
“Gehenna” “Tartarus”

Is there a place of literal Fire where lost sinners will be confined throughout eternity?

The Bible was written in 3 languages:

- Hebrew (Old Testament)
- Chaldee (portion of Daniel)
- Greek (New Testament)

The Bible that we have today is a translation of the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek writings into our language. There are many translations of the Bible, the most popular being the King James Version (KJV).

The Word “Hell” in the KJV

There are four words in the KJV translated “Hell.” Of these four words, only one of them is used in the Old Testament. That is the Hebrew word “*Sheol*.”

In the New Testament, the three words translated “Hell” are “*Hades*,” “*Gehenna*,” and “*Tartarus*,” all Greek words.

What Do These Words Mean?

1. “*Sheol*” is the Hebrew word and is translated as follows:

“*Hell*” – 31 times, as in Psalm 9:17: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”

“*Grave*” – 31 times, as in Ecclesiastes 9:10: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy