



How HOT is Hell???

The Bible says that the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). What does that really mean? Does it mean that sinners will all die, or does it mean that sinners will all live forever and be eternally tortured in never ending fire? There are many views on what happens in the hereafter and this newsletter attempts to take a very careful look at what the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) says about this subject.

Was a Hell of torment taught in the Old Testament?

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word translated “hell” is “Sheol”. It is used 66 times in total, and half of the time it is also translated “grave”. The Jews in the Old Testament saw “Sheol” as the end result for everyone. They made no distinction between good or bad –all ended up in “Sheol”. The following examples are texts where “Sheol” has been translated differently.

Evil: (Psalms 9:17 KJV) The wicked shall be turned into **hell**, and all the nations that forget God.

Good: (Job 14:13 KJV) O that thou wouldest hide me in the **grave**, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

Evil: (Psalms 55:15 KJV) Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into **hell**: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.

Good: (Psalms 6:5 KJV) For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the **grave** who shall give thee thanks?

As we can see from these texts, if all were translated “grave”, the implication would be quite different. From Job 14:13, we see that Job wished he was in the grave (dead) because of all the difficulty he suffered. Is it logical to think that he wished he was in “hell” to be tormented eternally? He was already being “tormented” by the trial he was going through, so reason suggests that Job’s understanding of “Sheol” was the grave, death.

Was a Hell of Torment taught in the New Testament?

In the New Testament there are a few Greek words translated “Hell”: Gehenna, Hades and Tartaroo. Gehenna is of Hebrew origin meaning the Valley of Hinnom. In the time of Jesus, the Valley of Hinnom was used as the garbage dump of Jerusalem. Into it were

thrown all the filth and garbage of the city, including the dead bodies of animals and executed criminals. To consume all this, the fires burned constantly and the result was utter destruction.

“Hades” occurs 11 times in the New Testament, and in the King James translation, it is translated “hell” 10 times and “grave” once. The NIV translates the same word as “the depths”, “hell”, and “the grave”, and then in some cases, it doesn’t translate at all and leaves the word as “hades”. Hades is the equivalent word to “Sheol” in the Hebrew, and if we look at scriptures from both testaments, we can see where this application can be made.

(Psalms 16:10 NIV) because you will not abandon me to **the grave (sheol)**, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

(Acts 2:27 NIV) because you will not abandon me to **the grave (hades)**, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

Acts 2:27 is quoting the scripture from Psalms 16:10, and is referring to Jesus. The KJV translates both these words “hell”, but if this were the case, was Jesus in Hell being burned and tortured before he was resurrected?

What does this mean?

This means that a God of love, mercy, and justice would never consider eternal torment as a just punishment for Adam’s sin (see Jer 32:33-35). The penalty for that sin is death (Gen 2:17, Rom 5:12). Fortunately, God gave His only-begotten son, so that we might have a resurrection from death to life. In this second chance, Satan will be bound (Rev 20:2), and all will have the opportunity to come to a full knowledge of the truth (1Tim 2:4).

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