

THY WORD IS TRUTH

WHAT THEN ABOUT HELL?

In the Old Testament the only word translated by the English word “Hell” is “Sheol.” This word “Sheol” is used in the Old Testament 65 times. In 34 places it is translated “Grave” and “Pit,” in 31 places it is translated “Hell,” and in 3 of the 31 places, Ps. 55:15, Ps. 86:13, and Isa. 14:9, the margin explains that “Grave” is meant. While in the other 29 the words “Grave” or “Pit” would make better sense than the word “Hell” with its generally understood meaning.

SOME TEXTS WHERE SHEOL IS TRANSLATED HELL.

For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. (Deut. 32:22.)

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

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. (Ps. 116:3.)

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. (Ps. 139:8.)

Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell. (Prov. 5:5.)

Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. (Prov. 7:27.)

Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men? (Prov. 15:11.)

Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. (Prov.

23:14.)

Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. (Isa. 28:15-18.)

In the New Testament, the Greek word hades corresponds exactly to the Hebrew word sheol. As proof see the quotations of the Apostles from the Old Testament, in which they render it hades. For instance, Acts 2:27, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades,' is a quotation from Psa. 16:10, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in sheol.'

SOME TEXTS WHERE HADES IS TRANSLATED HELL.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt. 16:18.)

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: ... (Matt. 11:23.)

And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (Luke 16:23.)

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. (Acts 2:27.)

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (Rev. 1:18.)

And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with

death, and with the beasts of the earth. (Rev. 6:8.)

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. (Rev. 20:13,14.)

The Greek word *tartaroo* occurs but once in the New Testament, and is translated hell. It is found in "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; (2 Pet. 2:4.)

The word *tartaroo*, used by Peter, very closely resembles *tartarus*, a word used in Grecian mythology as the name for a dark abyss or prison. But the word *tartaroo* seems to refer more to an act than to a place. The fall of the angels who sinned was from honor and dignity, into dishonor and condemnation, and the thought seems to be — 'God spared not the angels who sinned, but degraded them, and delivered them into chains of darkness.'

There is one more Greek word used in the New Testament which is translated by our English word 'Hell,' the word '*Gehenna*.' It is the Grecian mode of spelling the Hebrew words which are translated 'the Valley of Hinnom.' This valley lay just outside the city of Jerusalem, and served the purpose of sewer and garbage burner to that city. The offal, garbage, etc., were emptied there, and fires were kept continually burning to consume utterly all things deposited therein, brimstone being added to assist combustion and insure complete destruction. But a living thing was never cast into *gehenna*. The Jews were not permitted to torture any creature.

So, then, *gehenna* was a type or illustration of the second death — final and complete destruction, from which there can be no recovery; for after that, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," but only "fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (Heb. 10:26,27.)

TEXTS WHERE GEHENNA IS TRANSLATED HELL.

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matt.

10:28.)

But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. (Luke 12:5.)

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. (Matt. 5:22.)

And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. (Matt. 5:30.)

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. (Matt. 18:9.)

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (Mark 9:43-48.)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. (Matt. 23:15.)

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Matt. 23:33.)

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of

nature; and it is set on fire of hell. (James 3:6.)

Perhaps no other scriptures are so frequently quoted in support of the doctrine of a Hell of eternal suffering as Luke 16:19-31.

THE PARABLE OF DIVES AND LAZARUS. (Luke 16:19.)

While this is admitted to be a parable, it is generally treated as if it were a literal statement. To regard it as a literal statement involves several absurdities; for instance, that the rich man went to hades because he had enjoyed many earthly blessings and gave nothing but crumbs to Lazarus. Not a word is said about his wickedness. Again, Lazarus is blessed, not because he was good, or full of faith in God, but simply because he was poor and sick.

If this be interpreted literally, the only lesson to be logically drawn from it is that unless we are poor beggars full of sores, we will never enter into future bliss; and that if now we wear any fine linen and purple, and have plenty to eat every day, we are sure of future torment.

Again, the coveted place of favor is Abraham's bosom; and if the whole statement is literal, the bosom must be literal, and surely would not hold very many of earth's millions of sick and poor.

But why consider absurdities? As a parable, it is easy of interpretation. In a parable, the thing said is never the thing meant; as, for instance, in the parable of the wheat and tares, the Lord explained that wheat meant children of the kingdom, and tares the children of the devil; and similar classes in another parable were represented by sheep and goats. So in this parable, the rich man must represent a class, and Lazarus another class; and the parable as a lesson applies to these classes.

The Rich Man (Dives) represented the Jewish people, which up to, and at the time of the parable 'fared sumptuously,' as the special recipients of God's favors and promises. As Paul said, the Jews had 'much advantage every way, chiefly, because to them were committed the oracles of God' (the Law and the Prophets). The promises to Abraham and David invested that people with royalty, as represented by the rich man's 'purple.' The typical sacrifices of the law constituted them, in a typical sense, a 'holy

nation,' represented by the rich man's 'fine linen' —symbolic of righteousness." (Rev. 19:8.)

The Poor Man (Lazarus) represented the God fearing people of other nations, debarred, until the close of the Jewish Age, from those blessings conferred upon Israel specially. As the linen represented Israel's justification, so the sores represented moral defilement in this class, for whose justification no sin offering had at that time been made. They were not even typically cleansed, and had as yet no share in the rich promises of the kingdom, the 'purple.' They were, on the contrary, outcasts, strangers from Israel's favors. (Eph. 2:11-13.) As to how these ate of the 'crumbs' of divine favor which fell from Israel's table of bounties, and how they accounted themselves as companions of 'dogs,' the Lord's conversation with the Syro-Phoenician woman, who was one of this class, explains." (See Matt. 15:27.)

But there came a change to both of these classes. The 'rich man' (the Jewish nation) died, ceased to exist as a nation, and as the national representatives of God's favors, when those favors were taken from them (Matt. 21:43) and given to some, formerly outcasts."

The 'rich man' class was cast out of favor, into trouble. And from then till now, the Jews as a people have been in torment; yet are hindered by their law prejudices (as a great gulf) from accepting of Christ.

The 'Lazarus' class also died, or ceased from their former condition, and were received into the favor of God." (Acts 10:28-35.) Accepting Christ, these thenceforth were received to Abraham's bosom—that is, they were accepted as the true children of believing Abraham, and the true heirs of the promise made to him." (See Gal. 3:16,29; Rom. 11:7-9,12-25.)