

A BIBLICAL TEACHING
OF

HEAVEN & HELL

ETERNAL DESTINY



2 Buckskin Road
Greenville, SC 29607-5107
www.biblespeaks.org
e-mail: thebiblespeaks@charter.net



Keith Ekberg

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is God's judgment upon your sin, and have heaven, God's gift of eternally dwelling in His very abode and presence. First, by seeing yourself as a sinner (Rom. 3:23), and having a holy hatred for your sin (Prov. 8:13). Secondly, by seeing that your personal sins will bring upon you not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is eternal separation from God in hell (Rom. 6:23, Rev. 20:11-15). Third, be willing by God's help to repent of your sin, which means to turn away from your life of sin and turn to the Savior (Acts 17:30). You can do this by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ alone for your salvation and deliverance from the penalty of your sin by just calling out to Him and asking Him to save you, a condemned sinner (Rom. 10:9.10.13). Do it today!

25:41 states, “*Then shall He say also into them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*” The Lord has prepared a permanent place of everlasting fire (*gehenna*) for the devil and his angels (see also Rev. 20:10).

IV. Who Will be Sent to Hell?

Scripture gives the answer in John 3:18, “*He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son.*” II Thessalonians 1:7-9 , “*when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.*” Revelation 20:15, “*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*”

Conclusion

The Scripture tells us that those who go into eternal hell fire are the people who have “*not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*” (John 3:18). They have not trusted alone in the Lord Jesus perfect work on the cross of Calvary. This is an act of disobedience. The Lord says, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,*” (Acts 16:31). “*This is His commandment that we should believe on the name of His son Jesus Christ,*” (I John 3:23). Therefore, because of their rejection of Christ, they are cast into the eternal lake of fire.

What about you my friend? Where will you go? If you do not see yourself as a sinner (Rom. 3:23) and if you do not obey the Gospel, you will be cast into the lake of fire (Rom. 6:23, II Thess. 1:7-9). You can avoid **hell**, which

IS HEAVEN A REAL PLACE?

One of the most enjoyable subjects through out the history of mankind is the subject of Heaven. Men have discussed, debated, and written much concerning Heaven, its description, and who will enter in through its pearly gates. Men’s views and opinions of Heaven are endless, but the views or opinions of men do not matter, because Heaven is God’s dwelling place. What it is, where it is, and who enters its gates will be entirely determined by God and His Word. The word Heaven is found 331 times in the Old Testament Scriptures and 254 times in the New Testament Scriptures. Let us look at God’s Word, the Bible, to see what He says about His Heaven.

The questions we want to consider are:

- I. What Is Heaven?**
- II. Where Is Heaven Located?**
- III. Who Enters Heaven’s Gates?**

I. What Is Heaven?

In the physical sense, Heaven can mean the entire sky (Pro. 25:3). Heaven is primarily the abode or the dwelling place of God, the place where He rules and reigns from His throne (Ps. 11:4, 103:19, Isa. 66:1). According to the Gospel of Matthew, Heaven is a kingdom ruled over by God (Matt. 4:17). Matthew is the only Gospel that uses the phrase “*the kingdom of heaven*” 32 times. Mark, Luke, John, Acts, and several epistles use the phrase “*kingdom of God*” 64 times. The “*kingdom of heaven*” and the “*kingdom of God*” are one and the same. It is a heavenly kingdom over which God rules.

Heaven is not only a place, but it is a kingdom. Like all

kingdoms there is a king, and there are laws by which the king rules his kingdom or citizens. This king happens to be God Himself. Psalms 103:19 states, *“The LORD hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all.”* We read in Matthew 3:2, *“The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* God’s kingdom is very near or approaching. It is not just speaking of mere physical distance, but God’s rule and reign is as close as one’s submission to his king. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 17:20-21, *“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! Or, lo there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”*

In Matthew 6:10 we find that the Lord taught His disciples to pray, *“Thy kingdom come.”* Whose kingdom is this? Jesus wanted His disciples to pray for the Father’s kingdom to come by His will being done *“on earth as it is in heaven.”* We see here that God’s heavenly kingdom has a rule in itself, and God’s desire is for His rule or will to be done on earth just like it is done in Heaven. What does this mean? In a kingdom there is not only a king and laws to rule that kingdom, but there are citizens over which this king rules. God’s kingdom or His rule begins in each individual heart as they submit to His will.

II. Where Is Heaven Located?

Heaven is the dwelling place of God (II Chron. 30:27, Ps. 20:6, Matt. 5:34, 45, 48). It is also a realm where Christ rules and reigns as King. This can be at any location.

The word Heaven is used of different locations in the Bible.

1. Birds fly in the heavens or the air (Gen. 7:23, Matt. 6:26)
2. Rain comes from the heavens (Gen. 8:2, James 5:18)
3. Clouds of heaven or the place where clouds are

twelve references we have learned that *gehenna* is a place in which the soul and body will face eternal destruction. It will be an everlasting fire that is never to be quenched and where the body worm will never die. In this place God will judge mankind with eternal punishment for their rejection of His Son the Lord Jesus and His death for them on the cross (II Thess. 1:7-9). The fire and flames of *gehenna* are eternal, literal flames, which is called the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).

The Bible uses the word *aionios* (eternal or everlasting) 39 times in the New Testament. The same word refers to both eternal and everlasting life in John 3:15, 16, 36 and eternal, everlasting fire and punishment in Matthew 18:8; 25:41-46, and Jude 7. The Bible also uses the same root word *alou* 101 times, translated *forever*. In Revelation 4:9-10; 5:14; 10:6, this root word refers to God who lives for ever and ever, and in Revelation 19:3, 20:10 the root word refers to punishment that is forever and ever.

The One Occurrence of the Greek Word Tartarus

We will now look at the third Greek word *tartarus* that is translated as *hell*. There is only one passage in the New Testament in which this word is found, *“For God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down into hell [tartarus], and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment”* (II Pet. 2:4).

Fallen angels are placed in chains of darkness and reserved unto judgment. In Jude 6 we find that fallen angels are *“reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”* Only fallen angels are consigned to this place called *tartarus*; no humans are found in this place. These angels are in *tartarus* until the judgment of the great day, which probably refers to the Great White Throne Judgment, where believers will judge angels (I Cor. 6:2-3). *Tartarus* also is a temporary place of punishment for some of the fallen angels. Matthew

Matthew 23:14-15, *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: there fore ye shall receive the greater damnation. 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 two-fold more the child of **hell** than yourselves.”* Matthew 23:33, *“Ye serpents, ye generations of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of **hell**?”*

- 8.-10. Mark 9:43,45, and 47 contain the next three occurrences of the word *gehenna* (hell), the place where fire will not be quenched. Mark 9:44 is a partial quotation of Isaiah 66:22-24, and the Lord Jesus is teaching that these two places are one and the same. Mark 9:43-44, *“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two hands and go into **hell** [*gehenna*] into the fire that shall not be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”* This *gehenna* fire according to the Lord Jesus, will be a fire that will not be able to be quenched or extinguished but will continue on forever. The maggot, death worm, will gnaw on those there eternally, for they will have a resurrected body unto damnation (John 5:29). God will design this body unto damnation, so that it will be able to eternally endure the fires and worms of *Gehenna* without being consumed.
11. Luke 12:5, *“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.”* *Gehenna* is a place into which dead people will be cast, thrown or hurled into eternal judgment.
12. James 3:6c, *“and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”* In this last passage we see that *gehenna* is a place of fire. So out of all the

(Gen. 1:8, Matt. 24:30)

4. The area where the stars and planets are (Gen. 1:17; 22:17, Mark 13:25)
5. The place where Christ ascended (Acts 1:10)
6. The place where Christ is interceding or praying for us (Heb. 9:24)
7. Where God’s holy dwelling place is (II Chron. 30:27)
8. The place called Paradise
II Cor. 12:2,4 - speaks of the third heaven or paradise
Luke 23:43 - where Christ and the thief went
Rev. 2:7 - where God’s throne is
(All three passages refer to going into God’s very presence in Heaven.)
9. Where believers appear above in glory (Col. 3:2-4)
10. There is a new Heaven and a new Earth (Rev. 21:2)

In Revelation 21:1-2 the Apostle John saw a new Heaven and a new Earth, and he also saw the New Jerusalem coming down from God. This Heaven is the third heaven mentioned in II Corinthians 12:2-4 or God’s dwelling place. The New Jerusalem, the Holy City, was prepared or finished as a bride for her husband. It is interesting to note, that in John 14:2-3 Christ said to His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them (as He was going to His Father). Then in Revelation 21:2 this place that Christ was going to prepare is now finished, and is seen coming down from God out of Heaven. This is the city Abraham was looking for in Hebrews 11:10 for *“he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.”* The New Jerusalem could be like a satellite city for it comes down from God out of Heaven and it will be a light for the whole Earth (Rev. 21:23-26).

Let us look at twenty-two characteristics of the New Jerusalem that comes down from God out of Heaven.

1. God will dwell with men (Rev. 21:3).
2. There will be no tears, sorrow, or death there (Rev. 21:4).
3. God will make all things new (Rev. 21:5).
4. God will give to him *“that is a thirst of the fountain of the water of life freely”* (Rev. 21:6).
5. This Great City, the Holy Jerusalem, will continually have light emanating out from it, and this light is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Rev. 21:11a, 23).
6. The City is built with jasper - a stone as clear as crystal (Rev. 21:11b).
7. This City has twelve gates named after the twelve tribes of the Children of Israel (Rev. 21:12-13).
8. The walls of the City will have twelve foundations named after the twelve Apostles of the Lamb (Rev. 21:14).
9. The measurement of the City will be equal in its measurement in length, breadth, and height which is 12,000 furlongs or 1,342 miles, or as it is often said 1,500 miles square (Rev. 21:15-17).
10. This City will be a sparkling crystal prism. When the light of the Lamb shines from within it there will be displayed a rainbow of colored light emanating from it through out the whole earth (Rev. 21:23-25).
11. The wall of the City is made of Jasper – clear as crystal, which is as clear as glass with a gold cast to it. The wall will be 144 cubits or 216 feet high (Rev. 21:17-18).
12. The foundations of the City’s wall will be made of twelve precious stones with twelve layers. (Rev. 21:19-20).
13. The twelve precious stones of the foundation of the wall are as follows:

The 12 Occurrences of the Greek Word Gehenna

1. Matthew 5:22c, *“Whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of **hell** [gehenna] fire.”* Here gehenna is a place of fire.
2. Matthew 5:29b, *“For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish; and not that thy whole body should be cast into **hell** [gehenna].”*
3. Matthew 5:30b, *“For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish; and not that thy whole body should be cast into **hell** [gehenna].”*
4. Matthew 10:28, *“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** [gehenna].”* (The last 3 references—Matt. 5:29-30; 10:28—use the words **perish** and **destroy** which both come from the same Greek word. All three deal with the eternal destruction of the soul. They do not use the word *fire*, but it is implied.)
5. Matthew 18:8b-9, *“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. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, rather than having two eyes to be cast into **hell** [gehenna] fire.”* *“For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish; and not that thy whole body should be cast into **hell** [gehenna].”* Gehenna is described here as eternal fire where a person is cast or hurled. The same Greek word for eternal fire is the same Greek word for everlasting life in John 3:15-16. Gehenna is an eternal place of fire; it will never end. We can compare this passage to Matthew 13:41-42, although the word *gehenna* is not used, it clearly describes.
- 6.-7. In Matthew 23:14-15 and Mathew 23:33 we are taught that *gehenna* (hell) is a place of damnation, judgment, and punishment on the unbelieving lost.

ruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”
 Revelation 1:8, “*I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of Hell [hades] and of death.*”

8. Revelation 6:8a, “*And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and His name that sat on him was Death, and Hell [hades], followed with him.*”
9. Revelation 20:13, “*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [hades] delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works.*”
10. Revelation 20:14, “*And death and hell [hades] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*”
 In these last four references (Rev. 1:8; 6:8; 20:13; 20:14) death is physical death, and **hell (hades)** is where the immaterial part (spirits) of lost mankind are held. Death, the curse upon mankind for his sin against God, comes to an end. **Hell** or **hades** the place of temporary punishment of lost mankind also comes to end, when the lost souls of mankind in hell are cast into their eternal punishment, the lake of fire.

III. Is Hell Temporary or Eternal?

Let us now look at the twelve occurrences in the New Testament of the word **hell** when it is translated from the Greek word **gehenna**. As we look at these twelve passages we will find the answer to the third question in our study. Is Hell a temporary place or an eternal place? We will clearly see that it is an eternal place with no end to its torment. This word **gehenna** is a place of fire and torment where only the lost and unbelieving go. Out of the 12 occurrences of the word **gehenna**, 11 are found in the Gospels, and all 11 occurrences are uttered by the Lord Jesus Christ. The twelfth occurrence is found in James.

Jasper - clear as crystal

Sapphire - diamond-like and blue

Chalcedony - an agate stone, sky blue with stripes of other colors through out

Emerald - bright green

Sardonyx - red and white

Sardius - reddish

Chrysolyte - transparent stone, golden

Beryl - sea green

Topaz - yellow-green, transparent

Chrysoprasus - a shade of green

Jacinth - violet

Amethyst - purple

**This is a spectrum of brilliant colors
to display the Glory of God.**

14. The gates of the City will be made of twelve individual pearls - one huge pearl for each gate (Rev. 21:21a).
14. The streets of this City will be made of gold - clear as crystal (Rev. 21:21b).
15. There will be no temple in this New Jerusalem for the Lord God (Father) and the Lamb (Son) are the temple of this City (Rev. 21:22).
16. There will be no need of the sun, moon, or stars for the Light of the Lamb will be the Light of this City (Rev. 21:23-26).
17. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life can enter this City (Rev. 21:27).
18. A river will flow out of the Throne of God and the Lamb (Rev. 22:1).

19. The Tree of Life will be in the middle of the street of this City, and it will bear twelve different kinds of fruit (Rev. 22:2).
20. We will see the Lamb's face (Rev. 22:4a).
21. We will have the name of the Lamb upon our foreheads (Rev. 22:4b).

The book of Revelation closes with the Lord Jesus saying three times, "*I come quickly*" (Rev. 22:7, 12, 20). The last words of the Apostle John in Revelation 22:20 are, "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*"

III. Who Enters Heaven's Gates?

Why is it that not every one who says, "*Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*" (Matt. 7:21). Does this mean merely outward conformity? NO!! But we do know that according to Matthew 7:13-14 that the way into the kingdom of Heaven is straight and narrow, and only a few find it. I Corinthians 6:9-10 states that "*know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*" They who practice these sins and never repent or turn away from their practice shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Acts 17:30). But if they do repent of this lifestyle, they will enter the kingdom of God like many of the Corinthians did as recorded in I Corinthians 6:11. Those who only do good works, like those in Matthew 7:21-23, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. In Romans 3:20 we read more about this truth, "*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*" (see also Gal. 3: 10-11; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-6) A person does not

corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised again, saw no corruption." This passage is drawing upon Psalm 16:10 where David says, "*For Thou [LORD] will not leave [abandon] my soul [my body] in **hell [sheol—grave]**, neither will Thou suffer [allow] Thy Holy One [Christ] to see corruption.*" (Remember this Psalm is Hebrew poetry called Synonymous Parallelism. The second line repeats in different words the truth of the first line.) In connecting Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:27, and 13:36 we see that *sheol/ hades* are both *translated hell*, meaning here the *grave*. For Acts 13:34-37 is comparing death and resurrection. Acts 13:36 describes the event of David's death and his body was to decay, but it would not be left in that state, it would be resurrected because Psalm 16:8 says, "*My flesh also shall rest in hope.*" Christ's body would not see corruption or be given over to decay (Acts 13:37), for the Father would keep His body from the natural decaying process and raise the third day. Christ, the resurrected one, is the first fruits of the believers that sleep, (I Cor. 15:20-21). Christ's spirit went immediately to the Father in heaven (Luke 23:43). These two occurrences of *hades* clearly indicates that *hades* is referring to the *grave*.

7. I Corinthians 15:55, "*O death, where is thy sting? O **grave [hades]**, where is thy victory?*" The entire chapter of I Corinthians 15 is known as the resurrection chapter. The last part of this chapter tells us when the resurrection body will be given to believers in the Lord Jesus (I Cor. 15:51-52). This will happen at the rapture of the church when Christ meets His church in the air. Verses 53-57 of I Corinthians 15 clearly indicate that this is not of the soul or spirit but of the body, "*For this corruptible must put on incor-*

4:24 the word *tormented* appears and is the same Greek word as *torments* in Luke 16:23. It was used of people that were tormented with various diseases. The word *tormented* found in Luke 16 verses 24 and 25 are both from a different Greek word than the word used in Luke 16:23. This word stresses mental or emotional torment. The words *tormented* and *torments* clearly point to both physical and mental torment. Christ is teaching here that **hell (hades)** is a real place where there is real torment in fire. Luke 16:26 states, “*between us [Abraham and Lazarus] and you [the rich man] there is a great gulf fixed.*” The great gulf or impassable chasm was very large and could not be crossed. Remember this passage does not teach a two compartment theory of Abraham’s bosom in which all Old Testament saints went to the blessing side of **hades** and unbelievers like the rich man went to the torment side of **hades, hell**. The Bible does not teach this at all, this was a tradition taught by some early Jewish Rabbis. Abraham’s bosom is in God’s presence in Heaven, which is up, and the rich man was in Hell, which is down.

5. Acts 2:27, “*Because Thou wilt not leave My soul in **hell [hades]**, neither will Thou suffer Thy Holy one to see corruption.*”
6. Acts 2:31, “*He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in **hell [hades]**, neither his flesh did see corruption.*” The word **hell** in Acts 2:27, 31 should be translated “**grave,**” because it is quoting the Old Testament *sheol* in Psalm 16:10. We also need to look at Acts 13:34-37, “*And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you for the sure mercies of David wherefore He saith also in another Psalm, Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see*

enter God’s Heavenly kingdom by mere good deeds, nor do they enter if they practice any sin without turning from it.

How then can a person enter God’s kingdom? Christ was asked this question by Nichodemus in John 3:4. Entrance into God’s heavenly kingdom comes only by a birth, a spiritual birth. Jesus said it this way, “*Ye must be born again*” (John 3:7). How is a person born into God’s kingdom? First, you must see yourself as a sinner before God (Rom. 3:23), “*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*” A sinner is one who has failed to obey the will of the King (God) and has not glorified or exalted Him to His rightful place in their lives. That means that he is in rebellion to God and His rule over his life. Romans 3:24-25 teaches that we are “*justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*” In order to be made just or right so we can enter God’s Kingdom, we must believe that what Christ did on the cross was a perfect work, to purchase our salvation.

Secondly, the channel God uses to give us salvation is His grace, which is God’s unmerited or undeserved favor to us. This belief is not mere intellectual understanding or acceptance, but a heart belief. Can you do what Romans 10:9-10, 13 says, “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*” If you are believing or trusting **alone** in Christ’s perfect work on the cross and are willing, with God’s help, to turn from all your sin to God, then you have true saving faith and belief. God is not asking you to stop all

or part of your sins first before He saves you, because that would be salvation by works and self-reformation. God is commanding us to repent. *“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commanndeth all men every where to repent”* (Acts 17:30). Will you let God help you turn to Him today? If you would trust only Christ’s perfect work on the cross and His shed blood for the forgiveness of your sins, then you would enter the kingdom of God or heaven. God would be your King, God’s will or Law would be your will, and you would be His subject.

Conclusion

What a beautiful and glorious place Heaven will be to live in. A place where we can dwell in God’s presence eternally with no sin, sorrow, or death. Anyone can have this experience, but remember Heaven belongs to God. It is His home. A person can only enter the gates of Heaven by obeying the rules that God has given. If His rules are not obeyed there is only one other place that a person can go, and that is Hell.

one time from the Greek word *taratus*. We will first look at the 11 occurrences of *hell* as it is translated from the Greek word *hades*.

The 11 Occurrences of the Greek Word Hades

Let us briefly mention the meaning of the word *hell* or *hades*. It comes from an old Saxton word that meant *to cover* and indicated *a covered or deep place*. The Greek word *hades* literally means *a place that is completely absent of all light, a very dark place*.

1. Matthew 11:23, *“And thou Capernaum which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell [Hades]: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.”* In this verse **hell (hades)**, which is located down, is the place of lost spirits and is the result of judgment on unbelief.
2. Matthew 16:18, *“And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of **hell [hades]** shall not prevail against it.”* Here the word **hell or hades** has a reference to death itself. Christ was going to build His church upon the truth of Peter’s statement, *“Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.”* Since He was soon to die (vs. 21), the kingdom of the resurrection will overcome the kingdom of death (*hades*). I Corinthians 15:55, *“O death, where is thy sting? O grave [hades], where is thy victory?”*
3. Luke 10:15 is a parallel passage to Matthew 11:23-24. In this passage *hades* is the result of judgment on unbelief, and it is also located down, the place of lost dead spirits.
4. Luke 16:23a, *“And in hell [hades] he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.”* This place is also down for the rich man looked up and saw Abraham. It was there in *hades* that he was in torment. In Matthew

ment theory is true, then what happened after the transfiguration of Christ in Luke chapter 9. Did Moses go back down to Abraham's bosom away from God's heavenly abode, and Elijah went back to God's heavenly abode (II Kin. 2:9-11) where Enoch also is (Gen. 5:24). NO! They both appeared in glory for they both came from God's very presence (His heavenly abode), and therefore went back to God's very presence in His heavenly abode.

II. Is Hell a Place with Literal Fire and Torment?

There is only one verse in the Old Testament that uses the word *fire* to describe *sheol* or *hell* and that is Deuteronomy 32:22, "*For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell.*" There is a passage in the Old Testament that speaks of fire and torment, but it does not use the word *sheol* or *hell*. This passage is Isaiah 66: 22-24, and it is quoted in Mark 9:44 where the word *hell* or *gehenna* is used. Isaiah 66:24 states, "*And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched ; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.*" Christ Himself tells us what this verse means by quoting part of this verse three times in Mark 9:44, 46, 48. According to Jesus Christ *hell* is a literal place with real literal fire. Christ says in Mark 9:43-44, "*To go into hell into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*"

The New Testament reveals much more about eternal hell fire. The word *hell* in our English New Testament appears 24 times and it is translated from three different Greek words. It is translated 11 times from the Greek word *hades*, 12 times from the Greek word *gehenna*, and

IS HELL A REAL PLACE?

One of the most sobering subjects for any Bible teacher or preacher is the subject of Hell. This subject is not an enjoyable subject to deal with, but it is necessary to deal with the Scriptural teaching about this place called Hell. The Lord Jesus described this place called Hell more than He described Heaven. Out of the 24 occurrences of the word *hell* in the New Testament 15 of those were spoken by Christ Himself. Since the Lord Jesus gave such warnings concerning this place called Hell, then we must know and understand what the Bible teaches about Hell. We will approach this study by asking four basic questions.

I. Is Hell a Real Literal Place or

Merely a Figurative Place?

II. Is Hell a Place with Literal Fire and Torment?

III. Is Hell Temporary or Eternal?

IV. Who Will be Sent to Hell?

I. Is Hell a Real Literal Place or Merely a Figurative Place?

Let us look at the clear Bible statements concerning Hell. In the Old Testament Scriptures, originally written in Hebrew, we find the Hebrew word *sheol* which appears 64 times in the Old Testament. The translators of our English Bible translated the Hebrew word *sheol* three different ways: 30 times it is translated the *grave*; 31 times it is translated *hell*; and 3 times it is translated *pit*. *Sheol* can mean the grave, the place or realm of the dead, and the nether world. This Hebrew word is only found one other time outside of the Bible in the Jewish *Elephantine Papyr*.

In this document it means **grave**. The Old Testament gives very little detail of a future life after death. Job said in Job 19:25-26, “For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

The development of life after death (Hell) and the resurrection are left for the New Testament. This development, which begins in the Old Testament and continues in the New Testament is called Progressive Revelation. In Progressive Revelation God first introduces a truth with a few details, and as time progresses God reveals more and more about that truth.

Sheol and the Grave

Let us look at several passages where our Hebrew word **sheol** is translated **grave**. Job 7:9 says “as the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.” Job believed that he, as a believer, would go to this place called **sheol**, rightly translated the **grave**. Job 21:13 says, “They spend their days in wealth; and in a moment go down to the grave.” Here we see that the unbeliever goes into this place called **sheol**, again rightly translated **grave**.

In Psalm 6:5; 89:48, we have examples of Hebrew poetry. Hebrew poetry does not rhyme like our English poetry does. The kind of Hebrew poetry in these verses is called synonymous parallelism, where the second line repeats in different words the truth of the first line. For example: **death** and **grave** are synonymous in the following three verses.

Psalm 6:5

“For in **death** there is no remembrance of Thee:
in the **grave** who shall give Thee thanks?”

Psalm 16:10

“For Thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell** [grave]; neither

Ephesians 4:9-10 states, “Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.” The ascension here refers to Christ’s ascension into Heaven. The descension into the lower parts of the earth refers to Christ first coming down to earth in His incarnation. So He descended first in His incarnation, then suffered, died, rose, and ascended to heaven in order to give gifts to His bride. The compartment theory is not taught in Scripture. “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:8) covers all saints of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Problem with the Compartment Theory

Some people teach a compartment theory in which (prior to Christ’s resurrection) all Old Testament believers and unbelievers went into a place called Hades, which had two compartments. One side was a place of blessing for believers and the other side was a place of torment for unbelievers. This theory is based on Luke 16:22-26 where they say Abraham’s bosom is the place of blessing, but not Heaven where God dwells, and that **hell** or **hades** is the place of torment and fire. This passage does not teach a two compartment theory prior to Christ’s death on the cross, nor does any other passage teach this. Those who hold this view say that Old Testament saints could not enter heaven, God’s dwelling place, until Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead. The problem with this point is that the Scriptures do not support this position.

Let us go back to Moses and Elijah, they were both on the Mount of Transfiguration, and Luke 9:31 teaches that both of them appeared “in glory.” How could they both appear in glory unless they had been in God’s very presence in His heavenly abode (II Chron. 30:27)? Colossians 3:4 states, “When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” If the compart-

The New Testament Teaching of Life After Death for All Believers

Paul gives instruction concerning life and death for both the Old Testament and the New Testament saints in II Corinthians 5:8, “*To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord,*” and in Philippians 1:23, “*Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better.*” Paul did not teach that this only applied to New Testament saints to support the two compartment theory. Some people say that Ephesians 4:8 teaches that after Christ arose from the dead He let all believers out of Abraham’s bosom to enter into heaven with Him. This verse is only understood when we realize that it is a quotation from a Messianic Psalm, Psalm 68:18, “*Thou [Messiah] hast ascended on high, Thou has led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord might dwell among them.*” Ephesians 4:8 speaks of Christ ascending to heaven, “*when He ascended up on high He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*” The words *captivity captive* are not a picture of Christ leading His beloved bride into the heavenly home that He has prepared for her. These words were used to describe a king or military leader taking his prisoners captive whom he had captured in battle. This phrase “*gave gifts unto men*” refers to what a king did when he came back from a victory in battle and has taken a spoil. He then divided the spoil or gifts among the soldiers and the others who remained at home. When the Lord ascended into heaven, He led captive His prisoners— sin, Satan, death, and all who are in rebellion against Him whom He captured in battle and defeated on the cross of Calvary. Then He gave spiritual gifts to His people as an evidence of the victory won over His enemies. These gifts would be used to further the victory in the individual lives of all believers, “for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” Ephesians 4:12.

wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.”

Psalm 89:48

“What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?”

In Psalm 6:5 and 89:48 **death** and the **grave** are synonymous. In Psalm 16:10 **hell (grave)** and **corruption** are synonymous. Most of the time the word **sheol** means just the **grave**, even when **sheol** is translated **hell**. There are four other examples of synonymous parallelism in Hebrew poetry that we need to look at.

II Samuel 22:6

“The sorrow of hell [sheol - grave] compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me.”

Psalm 116:3

“The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell [sheol - grave] got hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow.”

Proverbs 5:5

“Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell [sheol - grave].”

Proverbs 7:27

“Her house is the way to hell [sheol - grave], going down to the chambers of death.”

In these four verses **death** and **hell** are synonymous, because they are one and the same. It should read **death** and the **grave** not **hell**. It would be more accurate to translate **sheol** as the **grave** in these four verses.

Sheol and Punishment

Does the word **sheol** ever indicate **punishment**? Deuteronomy 32:22, “*For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell.*” This verse seems to teach that **sheol (hell)** is where God’s anger and fire are. Psalm 9:17, “*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*” This verse indicates that the

word **sheol (hell)** means more than the **grave**. Proverbs 27:20, “*Hell [sheol] and destruction [abaddon] are never full, so the eyes of man are never satisfied.*” In this verse the destruction could refer to the destruction that is in the grave (corruption and decay), but it could also mean the destruction that is everlasting.

Revelation 9:11 says that the angel of the bottomless pit is called by the same Hebrew word **abaddon** (destruction). Isaiah 14:12-15 describes the rebellion of the angel, Lucifer, who became Satan. The result of his rebellion is seen in verse 15, “*ye shall be brought down to hell [sheol] to the sides of the pit*” (see also Rev. 20:1,3,10). Since Satan is an angelic being, he would not need a grave. This reference does not refer to the **grave** but to an eternal destruction. **Sheol** clearly means the **grave**, the place of the dead ones for both believers and unbelievers, in at least four verses (Deut. 32:22, Ps. 9:17, Prov. 27:20, Isa. 14:15), and yet it also means that God’s fire, anger and destruction are there.

Sheol Meaning the Grave and Punishment

Why does **sheol** mean both the **grave** and a **place of punishment**? In the Old Testament God was beginning to teach mankind what life after death was all about. Like any good teacher would do, God takes us step by step and reveals more and more about a certain subject. Then over an extended period of time God uses the Hebrew word **sheol** in the Old Testament and the three Greek words of the New Testament (**hades, gehenna, tararus**) to teach us about the **grave, hell, and eternal destruction**. We are beginning to see that hell is a real literal place.

Sheol Regarding Believers and Unbelievers

When referring to believers, the Old Testament Hebrew word **sheol** means only the **grave** (Gen. 37:35; Job 7:9; Ps. 16:10-11). When referring to unbelievers **sheol** is used to mean both the **grave** (Prov. 5:5; 7:27) and the

realm of the dead where lost souls are kept till judgment (Ps. 9:17; Pro. 27:20; Isa. 14:8-10). Based upon what we have learned, I believe the Bible teaches that all believers from the Old Testament times and the New Testament times go immediately into the Lord’s presence at death. In Luke 23:43, the Lord Jesus says to the thief on the cross, “*Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.*” It was that day that the spirit of the Lord Jesus and the spirit of the thief would go to paradise or heaven, not when He later ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50-51). It was that day, Wednesday, when the Passover lamb was to be slain (Ex. 12:3-6) that His Spirit went to His Father. For He said in His last saying from the cross in Luke 23:46, “*Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost [His Spirit].*” But the Lord’s spirit returned to His now glorified body on the third day when He arose from the dead.

Paradise is another name for heaven, God’s dwelling place. Paul says in II Corinthian 12:2,4 that he was caught up into the third heaven, into paradise. The only other occurrence of the word **paradise** is in Revelation 2:7, “*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*” Revelation 22:1-3 states that the tree of life is where the throne of God is. The tree of life in the Garden of Eden is a different tree (Gen. 2:8-9), because that tree was destroyed in Noah’s flood. In Luke 9:30-32 God records the transfiguration of Christ, when Moses and Elijah appear with Christ. Moses, according to Deuteronomy 34:5-6, experienced physical death and was buried in the land of Moab. Elijah did not experience physical death according to II Kings 2:9-11 but he “*went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*” Yes, even Old Testament saints went to heaven when they died.