

CHAPTER 21

Hell Fire!

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 4:1-3 KJV).

Is God an angry judge who tortures helpless sinners ages without end? Is hell a place of never ending torture for lost sinners? If hell does exist, where is it, and can those who are there ever get out?

Common Ideas about Hell

What are the generally accepted common beliefs about hell? As generally understood, hell is the abode of evil spirits. It is the infernal regions where lost and condemned souls go after death to suffer indescribable torments and eternal punishing. Some think it is a place created by God, where He punishes with inconceivable severity, through all eternity, the souls of those people who in this life were wicked and evil, and those who were lost through unbelief. It is believed that these people will be tormented, tortured and burned by an everlasting hell fire for all eternity.

There is more confusion, mixed up ideas and superstitions prevailing about this burning issue of hell than ever before. God defying atheists proclaim that they do not believe God exists, much less a heaven or hell. On the other hand are religious people who believe there is an ever-burning, never ending torturing hell fire that awaits those who do not accept Christ. Sincere, though deceived, these individuals insist that the message from God to mankind is that if a man does not accept and love Jesus during his lifetime, the God of heaven, all-wise, all-loving, all-merciful, will heap unimaginable and excruciating pain in the ever-burning flames of hell upon that soul for all eternity. Many preachers and ministers say hell is the power of the gospel, and that if you remove the punishment of hell and pains of everlasting suffering, no one would accept God's other teachings. Hell becomes the place where God wreaks vengeance on "sinners." If this was true, and the governments of this earth were to follow the example of this "all wise God," then criminals, instead of being put in jail or put to death, should be tortured!

The doctrine of hell this world embraces uses the use of stark fear to force you into acceptance of the gospel. This is not the way the Spirit of God works, because God's

Word says, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7 KJV). God gives you a choice and that is found in the much-preached but little understood "golden text" of the Bible, John 3:16 (KJV): **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."**

Where Did These Ideas Originate?

The Encyclopedia Americana states: "The main features of hell as conceived by Hindu, Persian, Egyptian, Grecian, and Christian theologians are essentially the same." The Western religious leaders from Roman times through the Middle Ages borrowed the doctrine of eternal torture from the pagan philosophers.

Plato was a pagan Greek philosopher, born in Athens, 427 B.C., a student of Socrates. He wrote the famous book *Phaedo*, on the immortality of the soul. This book is the real origin of the modern belief in the immortality of the soul.

Certain writers in the Middle Ages had tremendous influence on the Christian-professing world. Among these influential writers were Augustine and Dante Alighieri. Dante wrote a popular book titled *Divine Comedy*, in three parts, "Hell," "Purgatory" and "Paradise" in about 1300 A.D. It is an imaginative and lurid account of a dismal journey through such a burning hell. Although this book is a comedy and is fiction, this book had such a tremendous impression and influence on the popular Christian thought and teaching that his writings and teachings came to be generally accepted and believed so much that it became the doctrine of Christianity. His *Inferno* was based on Virgil and Plato. The book, *Dante and His Influence* sums up the history of the Christian professing doctrine of hell.

Do people go at death to the fictitious hell of Dante's imagination to be tortured by flames of fire forever, and are they to be brought out to go into a judgment, to see if God had made a mistake in having punished them so long in this "hell"? **If you go straight to heaven or hell when you die, why does God need a Judgment Day? Wouldn't you have already been judged?** Notice Revelation 20:13-14 (KJV): "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [grave] 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." So the dead will come out of their graves to a judgment.

These are the popular beliefs about hell. We find upon close examination that these beliefs actually came from the imagination of pagans who knew not God! What is the truth? How can we find out the real truth about hell? No one has ever come back from such an ever-burning hell to tell us about it. Science knows nothing about it. The starting point for such an investigation can be none other than the very book from which Christians profess to derive their doctrines of hell, the Bible. By stripping away the ancient and medieval myths and fabrication, one can discover the true teaching on the subject. The Bible is the inspired Word of God, by which the creator reveals the truth to

us. By careful study of all the scriptures on the subject we can discover the truth about hell. The truth will surprise you.

Confusion is in the mind of today's professing Christian because he is told either that the Bible does not mean what it say, or that wherever hell is mentioned in the Bible, it is a hell of fire for the eternal torture of the damned. There is more than one kind of hell mentioned in the King James Version of the Bible.

Three Hells!

One of the first surprises is that the Bible speaks of not one but of three different hells! In the widely used King James Version, three totally different Greek words, each with a totally different meaning, are translated by the one English word "hell". The three words are *hades*, *tartaros*, and *gehenna*. Remember we merely read a translation of the Bible from its original languages. The best way to study the original language is with a Hebrew/Greek concordance or Bible dictionary. The new computerized Bible programs with a Hebrew/Greek concordance make this type study very easy to perform. A print out of the verses in the New Testament containing the words "hell," and the Greek words "hades," "tartaros," and "gehenna" is given at the end of this chapter.

The First Hell

In biblical usage, **the Greek word hades, used only 11 times in the New Testament, is roughly equivalent to the Old Testament Hebrew word sheol, meaning grave or pit.** Compare the word hell in Strong's Hebrew and Greek Concordance in:

Psalms 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell**; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

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

Hell is an old English word, and 375 years ago, when the Authorized or King James Version of the Bible was translated; the English commonly talked about putting their potatoes in hell for the winter. The word then merely meant a hole in the ground that was covered up, a dark and silent place, a grave. The word hell in the Authorized version is used as the rendering of all three Greek words: hades, tartaros, and gehenna, each with an entirely different meaning. It is now an entirely misleading rendering, especially in the New Testament passages.

Most modern bible translators admit that the use of the English word hell to translate hades and sheol is an unfortunate and misleading practice. In seeing the word hell, many readers impute to it the traditional connotation of an ever-burning inferno, when this was never remotely intended in the Greek language or in Old English! In its true biblical usage, hades does refer to the state or abode of the dead, but **hades is simply the abode we call the grave. All the dead go to this hell.**

If men immediately when they die go to either heaven or hell, then God's Word would not have said, "For David is **not** ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34) and, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is **both dead and buried**, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day" (Acts 2:29). Peter preached this sermon on Pentecost, 50 days after Christ rose from the grave and ascended into heaven. Yet after Christ was resurrected, David still remained in the grave until this day.

You will be surprised to learn that Jesus Christ himself went to "hell" when he died! In Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, he said, "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:31 KJV). So, according to your Bible, Jesus went to hell! The "hell" where Jesus was for three days and three nights (Matt 12:40) after his crucifixion is translated from the Greek word *hades*. *Hades* simply means the grave or pit. The "hell" where Jesus went was then simply the grave, the rock hewn sepulcher where he was buried. Unless you live until the Second Coming of Christ and are changed from mortal to immortal without seeing death (I Cor. 15:53), you will go to this same "hell."



Figure 1: The Garden Tomb –This is the "hell" (*hades*, the grave) where Jesus was buried.

The description of this hell is clearly defined in Eccl. 9:10 (KJV): "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave [sheol, hades, hell], whither thou goest." Your Bible describes the grave as a very dead place. The grave, "hell," where everyone goes upon death, is a place of neither physical nor mental activity of any kind. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:4 KJV). "For the living know that they will die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten" (Eccl. 9:5 KJV).

Churchmen try to confuse this hades hell by admitting that it is indeed the grave, but going on to explain that only the body goes to the grave while the soul goes elsewhere. This doctrine can nowhere be proved within the pages of God's word. Man does not have an immortal soul. God's Word very clearly says that David, not David's body, is both dead and buried and is not in heaven! And if David is not in heaven, then surely no one else is.

The Second Hell

The second hell of the Bible, *tartaros*, is mentioned only once in the Bible, in II Peter 2:4 (KJV): "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell [tartaros], and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment..."

Following their rebellion to unseat God from His throne (Isa. 14:12-14; Rev. 12:4), the archangel Lucifer (now Satan) and a third of the created angels (now demons) were ejected from heaven (Luke 10:18). They were cast down to tartaros, a place or condition of restraint that God has imposed on the mutinous angels as they await ultimate judgment (Jude 6; I Cor. 6:3).

Tartaros then, is a "hell" that applies only to evil, rebellious angels or demons. Nowhere in the Bible is there any mention of men being put into this particular "hell."

The Third Hell

So far, we have seen that the first hell of the Bible, hades, is simply the grave. The second hell, tartaros, was a place or condition of restraint for demons. What then is the third hell of the Bible? Surely, this hell must be the old fashioned Bible hell, the literal ever-burning inferno, the place of eternal torment of the damned! Or is it?

The Greek word used by the writers of the New Testament for this third hell is *gehenna*? It comes from the Hebrew *Gai Hinnom*, meaning "valley of Hinnom." Hinnom is a deep, narrow ravine located to the south and southwest of Jerusalem. In Old Testament times Hinnom was a place of abominable pagan rites, including infant sacrifice. It was there that the apostate kings Ahaz and Manasseh made their children "pass through the fire" to the god Molech. The rites were specifically celebrated in

Tophet, the "place of abhorrence," one of the chief groves in the valley.

King Josiah of ancient Judah finally put an end to these abominations. He defiled the valley, rendering it ceremonially unclean (II Kings 23:10). Later the valley became the cesspool and city dump of Jerusalem, a repository for sewage, refuse and animal carcasses. The bodies of despised criminals were also burned there along with the rubbish. Fires burned continuously, feeding on a constant supply of garbage and refuse. Jesus Christ and His disciples and apostles after Him used this word gehenna consistently when they were referring to that "hell" which will burn up sinners!

Gehenna and the Lake of Fire

What then does this valley gehenna have to do with hell? Notice, at the end of this age, at the second coming of Christ, the prophesied Beast and False Prophet of the book of Revelation will resist the re-establishment of the government of God by fighting against Jesus Christ. Their fate is revealed by the apostle John: "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 KJV).

Where will this temporary lake of fire, this "hell", be? The prophet Isaiah wrote of this lake of fire prepared for the Beast: "For Tophet [in the valley of Hinnom] is ordained of old, yea, for the king it is prepared, he hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and wood, the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it" (Isa. 30:33 KJV).

One thousand years later, Satan himself will be cast into this rekindled fiery lake where the Beast and False Prophet were cast! See Revelation 20:10. **So Gehenna hell is a symbol for the lake of fire into which the unrepentant are to be cast at the end of time.** This is the only hell in the Bible, which is associated with flames or fire.

But what of the wicked who have died over the many millennia? Does the Bible say that they are now suffering fiery punishment for their sins in a lake of fire? Absolutely not! In the sequence of Revelation 20 the incorrigibly wicked are resurrected to be thrown into the lake of fire after Satan is cast there! Read it for yourself in Revelation 20:15. Do these wicked persons writhe in flames for eternity? No, that is not what the Bible teaches.

The wicked will be burned up in the intense heat of the coming gehenna fire on earth. They will be consumed, annihilated, destroyed! This punishment will be everlasting, permanent, and final. The Bible call it the "second death" (Rev. 20:14, 21:8), from which there is no possibility of a further resurrection.

The Bible does teach eternal punishment, but not eternal punishing. The prophet Malachi provides a graphic description of this punishment: "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up..." (Mal. 4:1 KJV). To the

righteous, God says that the wicked shall be "ashes under the soles of your feet..." (Mal. 4:3 KJV).

Contradicting Scriptures?

Some one is bound to quote other scriptures out of context as supposed proof that God uses hell for the purpose of inflicting never-ending torture on the damned. But one scripture cannot contradict another. "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35 KJV). It is the habit of those who quote scriptures on the subject to use only part of the verses pertaining to the subject; they read a false meaning into them. We must not read our own or desired meaning into any particular passage of Scripture. "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (II Peter 1:20 KJV). Each passage should be interpreted by, and in the light of other texts. Let us look at a few of the most commonly used scriptures on this subject, and understand them in the clear light of God's own Word. Let us see what they really say.

"And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: for 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" (Mark 9:43 KJV). Does that mean burning forever and never being burned up? Try this test. Put a piece of paper in a pan, light it with a match and then don't quench it or put it out for that's what quench means. Very soon the paper will burn up. Then suppose you put it down on the floor and stepped on it. Now it is merely ashes under the soles of your feet, precisely as you Bible plainly says the wicked shall be! In Jeremiah 17:27, God warned the Jews that Jerusalem would be burned, and the fire would not be quenched, unless they repented. In Jeremiah 52:13, you read the account of the burning of Jerusalem. That fire was not quenched! It is not still burning! It just burned itself out.

Others are confused by Revelation 20:10, partly by a mistranslation in the *King James Version*, and partly because they do not let the Bible interpret the Bible. "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."

This is a mistranslation indicating that the beast and false prophet are still in the lake of fire at the time that the devil and his demons are cast into this lake. But the *New English Bible* gives the correct sense of this verse: "And the Devil, their seducer, was flung into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet, had been flung, there to be tormented day and night for ever." This version plus the *Revised Standard Version*, *Today's English Version*, and the *New International Version* all show past tense action.

According to the chronology of Revelation, the beast and the false prophet were cast into the lake of fire at the beginning of God's thousand year reign on earth (Rev. 19:20), but the devil and his demons are not cast into this lake until 1000 years later. By using God's definition of what happens to human bodies when they are cast into fire, we can realize that the beast and false prophet will be burned up just like fat on a hot stove: "But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs:

they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away" (Psalm 37:20 KJV). The beast and the false prophet are human and their human bodies will be burned up when cast into the lake of fire. They won't be tormented day and night forever.

In Matthew 25:41 (KJV) Jesus said, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Jesus here plainly showed that the everlasting fire was prepared for Satan and his angels. He goes on to show that those human beings not judged worthy for eternal life will be cast into this very lake of fire, and verse 46 says: "And these shall go away into everlasting **punishment**." This final punishment which sinners suffer is eternal death by fire, the second death. It is not eternal **punishing**! Once they are burned up and dead they are going to stay dead forever, to cease to exist, this makes the punishment everlasting!

Does this scripture, "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever..." (Rev. 14:11 KJV), contradict the passage which reads, "And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet..." (Mal. 4:3 KJV)? Notice that verse 8 gives the time setting of Revelation 14:11. It is speaking about the impending fall of "Babylon". Verse 9 and 10 say: "...If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark...he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...in the presence of the Lamb" (that is at Christ's second coming). Those who take part in this system of "Babylon" and who receive this frightful punishment from God, have "no rest day nor night" as long as they remain in that land falling under God's wrath! They will either have to flee that area and seek God's mercy or be tormented by sulphurous fumes till they perish. Notice this passage does **not** say that these individuals are being tormented forever in an ever-burning hell. Verse 11 says: "...The **smoke** of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever..." The Bible plainly teaches that flesh and blood is subject to combustion and death. Malachi 4:3 simply means that after the wicked are burned up and turned to ashes, they will be walked upon as ashes under the feet of the righteous.

Lazarus and the Rich Man

At this point you may be thinking about the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, and wondering if the rich man wasn't pictured as being forever in eternal torment. Then do saved mothers up in heaven see the suffering and hear the shrieks of their own lost children down in hell? Would you really want to spend eternity in a heaven where you would be forced to gaze upon your own loved ones who were lost, hearing them frantically screaming to you for help you would be unable to give, watching their agony as they are on fire, yet never burning up? Yet that is the kind of heaven that is portrayed by many religionists that rely on this account of Lazarus and the Rich Man. They say the "saved" go to heaven instantly at death, while the lost leave their bodies and are plunged into an ever burning inferno of eternal torture.

Here is what the Bible really says. The story is found in Luke 16:19-31 where we read: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and

fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried (KJV)."

Notice they both died. Did Jesus say the beggar went to heaven? He certainly did not. He said the beggar "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom". Now what is a bosom? A bosom is the breast of a human being, a loving embrace by the arms of one person about another, an intimate relationship. So Lazarus was carried into an intimate relationship with Abraham. A person, upon being converted and becoming Christ's, enters into an intimate relationship with Abraham. They become the children of Abraham. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed [children], and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29 KJV). That is being taken into Abraham's bosom! Now what was this promise God made to Abraham that the beggar is now an heir to? The promise was not heaven. The promise was the land of Canaan, on this earth. (See Gen. 12:5-7 and Gen. 15:18). It was forever, so the promise included eternal life. The promise was eternal life on this earth. Now when was the beggar to inherit this promise with Abraham? At the resurrection of the just, of course! The Kingdom of God is to be set up at Jerusalem to rule all nations after the second coming of Christ. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven...and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thes. 4:16 KJV). Human mortals receive eternal life, i.e. immortality, and the promises made to Abraham, at Christ's Second Coming. Jesus told one particular group they would see Abraham in the Kingdom (Luke 13:28) because Abraham, now dead, will then be resurrected.

Now let's see what happened to the rich man. Jesus did not say the rich man was taken immediately at that time to an eternally burning hell. He did not say the body was buried but that the rich man himself was plunged immediately into a burning hell. He said the rich man died, and the rich man, himself, was buried. People are buried in a grave and covered with earth.

Now let us continue the story with verse 23: "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented (KJV)."

So the rich man was in a place called "hell" after all. And in this hell he "lifted up his eyes." His eyes had been closed in death, and now there came a time when they opened. What kind of hell was this? Startling though it may be, the rich man was buried in the same kind of "hell" Jesus was buried in! Yes, Jesus died and was buried and in "hell"! (Acts 2:31). Jesus too died and was buried and in "hell" he too lifted up His eyes, when He was resurrected. Now, the word "hell" in verse 23 is *hades* in the Greek and means the "grave", a place of burial in the ground! And this *hades* was the "hell" in

which the rich man was buried.

When does the rich man open his eyes? Jesus did not say here but other scriptures do reveal when. Daniel speaks of the resurrection of the just, and of the unjust: "And many of them that sleep [their eyes closed] in the dust of the earth [their graves, buried in hades] shall awake [lift up their eyes], some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2 KJV). Jesus said: "...The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil [including the rich man], unto the resurrection of damnation [judgment]" (John 5:28-29 KJV). The resurrection of the rich man and all the unsaved will take place after the millennium. It is pictured and described in Revelation 20:11-13. The rich man will not come back to life until a thousand years after Abraham, Lazarus, and all who are Christ's have been made alive at Christ's Second Coming.

The rich man will not be conscious of this great lapse of time. The Bible teaches that the dead have no consciousness and know nothing. See Eccl. 9:5; Job 14:21; Isa. 63:16; and Psalm 146:4. The rich man, then, at the time of his resurrection after the millennium will come to consciousness, open and lift up his eyes, knowing absolutely nothing of the hours, days, and years since he died. To the rich man, it will seem as if he had gone immediately to this state or condition in which he finds himself rising up out of the grave.

Now, when he is resurrected, he sees a flame that torments him. What is this? Scripture describes the final fate of the wicked as being burned up in the lake of fire. So the rich man sees this awful flame of fire, this lake of fire which is about to destroy him forever! He is terrified! What happens when one is suddenly so paralyzed with fear? His mouth goes dry. His tongue sticks to his mouth and throat. The rich man cries out in mental agony: "send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Now if the rich man were in the kind of "hell" most people seem to believe, his whole body would be on fire. You would think he would have called for at least a bucket of water to put out the fire, wouldn't you?

How much water did he call for? He called for just a couple of drops on the tip of a finger. And why did he call for water? To put out the fires of all "hell"? No! He only wanted a couple of drops to cool his tongue because the flame was tormenting him. Why of course! This rich man opened his eyes in his grave in a resurrection. He is resurrected mortal, just as he was before he died, not immortal like Lazarus. He sees this lake of fire. Now he knows the frightful, the awful doom he is to be thrust into, to be burned up, destroyed! He knows he is guilty. He is suffering mental anguish such as he never experienced in his lifetime. His tongue is dry. He breaks out in cold sweat. He cries for a little water on the tip of Lazarus' finger to cool his tongue! He is in a condition of weeping.

Now let's finish the story beginning with verse 26: "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you

cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead (KJV)."

But Abraham and Lazarus were afar off, and no water was brought as they were separated by a great gulf. This gulf is immortality. The rich man had to suffer mentally for his sins. He had his reward in the material things he sought, craved and acquired during his mortal lifetime. Abraham had made clear the utter impossibility of the rich man crossing that gulf into immortality. He had had his chance during his lifetime. He was now doomed to perish in the lake of fire. His last thought flashed finally to his five brothers, as he begs Abraham to send Lazarus to plead with his brothers, lest they come to his terrible fate. Abraham replied they had the writings of Moses and the prophets, but the rich man realized they would not hear these scriptures.

"Nay, father Abraham," he screamed, "but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent"! The rich man knew Lazarus was raised from the dead! This one statement indicates that the whole experience of Lazarus and the rich man was given by Jesus to show the truth of the resurrection and not to teach any immediate going to "heaven" or "hell" at the instant of death. Abraham replied: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

There it is in plain language! The experience of Lazarus and the rich man shows the resurrection from the dead. It is a resurrection from the dead, not from life. It shows man is mortal, which dies, and is dead, not immortal which never loses consciousness and lives forever in an eternal punishing of "hell." Jesus was showing a resurrection, or bringing back to life of one who was dead, of one who had no consciousness whatever of the lapse of centuries and millennia since his death. Lazarus was resurrected to immortality and the rich man as mortal to face his destruction.

Far from illustrating immortality of the soul and an eternally burning torture of hell, Jesus illustrated death, total unconsciousness through the centuries, and the resurrection from death and restoration of consciousness. Second, he illustrated the second death in the lake of fire or gehenna that shall totally destroy the wicked, in which they perish and become ashes under the soles of the feet of the saved. That is the eternal punishment of death, an eternal death, and the second death.

Whom Do You Fear?

Instead of fearing what some misguided preacher may tell us about hell, let us see what Jesus said to fear. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him [God] which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [gehenna]" (Matt. 10:28 KJV). Here we find the clear statement that God can destroy

both our body and soul in Gehenna, or the lake of fire. There is no mention made of burning forever and ever, and yet never quite burning up. But it does speak of destruction.

Speaking of the harvest of the righteous and wicked, Jesus said he would tell the reapers, "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn (Matt. 13:30 KJV)." The tares of course, refer to the wicked, and the wheat to the righteous. When tares or weeds are burned they are literally burned up. Jesus in speaking of the wicked, meant what he said. The fate of the wicked will be Gehenna, or the lake of fire that the Bible mentions. When the wicked, who are mortal human beings, are cast into the lake of fire, they too will literally be burned up and destroyed. That fire is a lot hotter than most people think!

The idea of man being tormented in a burning hell-fire forever is a lie and is used to frighten so many ignorant human beings. Its author is the father of lies, Satan the devil. If you are one who has gullibly believed this doctrine and suffered mental agonies from the fear of a man-made "hell-fire", God help you to study all the scriptures on this subject and find the truth. God does not delight in punishing sinners. He will not take away people's lives because of ignorance or weakness, but because they willfully and knowingly refuse to obey their Creator. "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries (Heb. 10:26-27 KJV)." This is a fearful warning to those who know God's truth and still refuse to obey it!

The Resurrection

Do you know the Bible teaches the resurrection of all who die? Paul said his hope was the hope of the resurrection. As the resurrection is true doctrine, then the pagan myth of an eternal torture in hell, beginning at death, is as deceptive as Satan himself! If all the unsaved, even those who never heard of the name Jesus, are roasting, and screaming in such a hell, and can never get out, how can there be a resurrection. Thank God there is to be a resurrection to judgment, as well as a resurrection to eternal life of the dead in Christ!

Biblical References to Hell

Here are the references to the three kinds of hell mentioned in the text above. These verses are limited to the New Testament of the Bible and are from the *King James Version*.

The 23 Verses of the N.T. Containing the Word "Hell"

In the following 23 verses all three kinds of hell, hades, tartaros, and gehenna are all translated by the english word "hell".

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. -MAT 5:22

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, 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. -MAT 5:29

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. -MAT 5:30

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. -MAT 10:28

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt 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. -MAT 11:23

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. -MAT 16:18

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. -MAT 18:9

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. -MAT 23:15

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? -MAT 23:33

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: -MAR 9:43

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: -MAR 9:45

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: -MAR 9:47

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. -LUK 10:15

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. -LUK 12:5

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

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

He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. -ACT 2:31

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. -JAM 3:6

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; -2PE 2:4

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. -REV 20:13

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. -REV 20:14

The 11 Verses Where Hades is Rendered "Hell"

Remember hades is properly translated as the grave. Try replacing the word hell with "the grave" when reading the following verses.

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt 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. -MAT 11:23

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. -MAT 16:18

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. -

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

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

He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. -ACT 2:31

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? -1CO 15:55

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. -REV 20:13

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. -REV 20:14

The 12 Verses Where Gehenna is Rendered "Hell"

Remember that gehenna is the hell fire where sinners will be burnt up.

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. -MAT 5:22

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, 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. -MAT 5:29

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. -MAT 5:30

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. -MAT 10:28

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. -MAT 18:9

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. -MAT 23:15

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? -MAT 23:33

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: -MAR 9:43

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: -MAR 9:45

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: -MAR 9:47

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. -LUK 12:5

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. -JAM 3:6

The Only Verse Where Tartaros is Rendered "Hell"

Remember tartaros is a place or condition of restraint for the devil and his demon angels.

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; -2PE 2:4