

Is There a Literal Hell?

One of the most popular teachings in the modern day christian world is the teaching that there is a place where the unrighteous will be punished and will burn for eternity. Sadly many people reject God all together over this idea, and understandably so, but is there really a place where the unrighteous are punished for eternity? In order to understand if there is a literal place where people burn for eternity we first need to understand where the word "hell" comes from.

- *"For you will not abandon my soul to **Sheol (Hell)**; you will not let your faithful one see the **pit**."* - Psalm 16:10

There are two Hebrew words that are translated into English as the word "hell". The first Hebrew word is "Sheol" and it simply means "grave". In Hebrew "Sheol" is often described as the place where earthworms are found, and earthworms are found in the literal ground. The the word "pit" is referring to a grave pit, or a hole dug in the ground to bury a body. This is how it should read in english:

- *"For you will not abandon my soul to the **grave**; you will not let your faithful one see the **pit (grave pit)**."* - Psalm 16:10

The second Hebrew word that's translated into English as "Hell" is the Hebrew word "Gehinnom". This word originated from the valley of Gehinnom, which was near Jerusalem. In this valley there were several satanic religions that would sacrifice people on an altar, using fire to burn them to death on an altar. This Hebrew word like "Shoel" also means "grave", but it also tells us that a person was killed by fire and as a result went to the grave (died). This word is used instead of "Shoel" because it shows a specific way someone died and went to the grave. This word is not referring to an everlasting fire, it's referring to a very temporary fire which leads to death. Now let's take a look at why the teaching of a literal hell where you burn for eternity is taught.

- *"Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of **eternal fire**."* - Jude 1:7

The great majority of New Testament manuscripts are written in Greek, and in Greek this word "Gehinnom" was shortened into the Greek word "Gehenna". In Greek mythology the Greeks taught there was a place where you burned for eternity if you didn't serve the Greek gods. So what happened is the definition for this word "Gehinnom" was changed from a temporary death by fire to an eternal punishment by fire. Sadly, Pope Constantine ordered all

Hebrew New testament manuscripts to be destroyed in the early 300s A.D. and as a result the definition for Hell changed from the true Hebrew definition to the false Greek mythological definition. However, we now have a couple of surviving New Testament Hebrew manuscripts. Lets compare the Hebrew and the Greek in Jude 1:7

- *"Even as **Sodom and Gomorrha**, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, **are set forth for an example**, suffering the vengeance of **eternal fire**."* - Jude 1:7

What this verse is telling us is that Sodom and Gomorrha are an example of the eternal fire, but are Sodom and Gomorrha still burning? Nope! Now let's read this with the Hebrew New Testament manuscript.

- *"Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering **gehinnom**."* - Jude 1:7

Remember that gehinnom is not an eternal fire, its death by fire (temporary), which then leads to the grave. This is the perfect example of how Greek mythology has changed the understanding of hell from being the grave to a place where people burn for eternity which does not exist. How could God be perfect love and yet torture and punish people for eternity? Both cannot exist:

- *"God is **love**... There is no fear in love: but **perfect love casteth out fear**, because **fear hath punishment**;"* 1 John 16, 18.

Who is responsible for raining down fire from heaven like in Sodom and Gomorrha?

- *"And he (satan) doeth great wonders, so that **he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth** in the sight of men,"* - Revelation 13:13

Now let's compare what Jesus supposedly said in the Greek manuscripts to what He said according to the Hebrew Manuscripts.

- *"Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into **everlasting punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life."* - Matthew 25:45-46

This seems like Jesus is suggesting He will punish the unrighteous for eternity, but now let's look at the Hebrew:

- *"Then he will answer them saying, ' Truly I say to you that every time that you did not do it to some of the insignificant poor ones who belong to me - also to me you did not do it. And these will go into the fire of **Gehinnom**, but the righteous ones will go into everlasting light."* - Matthew 25:45-46

We are seeing here that Jesus isn't speaking of an eternal fire, but just stating a fact that the unrighteous will die by fire and go to the grave. Why will they die by fire and go to the grave? At the end of this earth's history the whole planet will be consumed in fire and be turned to ash. The unrighteous are also consumed by fire at the 2nd death. So who causes the earth to be consumed by fire and who causes the 2nd death?

- *"And the great dragon - called Satan the Destroyer, and **the destroyer of the entire world...**"* - Revelation 12:14 Cochran

In Matthew 25:45-46 Jesus is just stating the fact that the unrighteous will go into the fire of Gehinnom. Notice Jesus never said that He was going to cause this fire, or throw anyone into this fire. It's actually Satan who does it, this is why Bible translations are very important as well as looking at the original language. The Bible has had many revisions and changes by world leaders and their translators, but the Spirit of Christ can lead us to the truth!

- *"However, when He (Jesus), the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."* - John 16:13

If God is truly love and forgiveness like His Son taught us then there is not a place of torment and torture. We simply go to the grave and that's our we're all condition by our own choice. No pain or torment, just sleeping with no conscious thought. But if we choose to abide in God's perfect Love then we are blessed with eternal life! Praise God for His love and forgiveness where He treats even the unrighteousness with gentleness.

- Jesus said: *"But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. **For He is gentle to the unthankful and evil.**"* - Luke 6:35