

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

“And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and treated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen. Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.” (Matt. 22:1-15.)

The word in the Mark 9 verses above translated Hell, is gehenna, not hades. The Hebrew word sheol, and its equivalent hades, often translated Hell in our version, mean the invisible world – the unseen world of spirits – of spirits both bad and good. They are sometimes used to represent the grave – the invisible abode of dead bodies – but this use is figurative. Sheol among the Hebrews (as well as hades among the Greeks), means the invisible world of spirits. It was in sheol, where the patriarchs are represented in dying as being “gathered to their people.” “Gathered to their people” is recorded as something distinct from burial, and as preceding burial, and this shows us the meaning of sheol, and hades, and that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is taught by being recognized in the Old Testament. Abraham *“gave up the ghost...and was gathered to his people,”* before his burial in the cave of Machpelah. It certainly could not mean Machpelah, for Abraham had no people there – Sarah was the only one buried there. Moses was *“gathered unto his people,”* and so was Aaron, and their graves were solitary. It was in sheol Jacob expected to meet his son. The common name of grave in the Hebrew is keber. In the Greek it is taphos, or some equivalent word. Sheol, translated “Hell,” sometimes means that part of the invisible world in which the wicked are punished till the judgment, as in the verse, *“The wicked shall be turned into hell (sheol), and all the nations that forget God.”* It certainly here cannot mean the grave, for those who are not wicked, and

who do not forget God, go to the grave, as well as the wicked and all the nations that do forget Him.

It cannot simply mean the place of spirits good and bad, for then there is no sense in saying that the wicked and the nations that forget God go there, for certainly if all people go there after death, they will go. Speaking of the people in two classes, and saying that one class – the wicked class – go to sheol when they die, implying that the good class do not go there, shows that the word here means the place of future punishment. It is so used by Solomon in the verse, ***“Thou shalt beat him [i.e., thy child] with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell”*** (sheol) – whether he correct his child or not he will go to the grave and invisible world.

The Greek equivalent of sheol is hades. It, also, sometimes means the place of future punishment for the wicked, as in: ***“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; And in hell (hades) he lift up his eyes, being in torments...”*** (‘torment’ as a state of misery.) (Luke 16:22-23.) John says ***“Death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”*** (Rev. 20:14.) This certainly means the wicked only. Now the word tartaros is never used except as the prison of the wicked. Like the angels that sinned.

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;”
(2 Peter 2:4)

“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”(Jude 6)

Gehenna is a word used 12 times in the New Testament. It is a compound of two Hebrew words Ge and Hinnom – valley of Hinnom. This valley was southeast of Jerusalem, near the city. Here was an image of Moloch, Baal, or the Sun and here the idolatrous Jews, in the worship of their false god, burned their children alive. It is also called Tophet, from toph, meaning a drum, because the cries of the burning children were drowned by the beating of drums. Josiah who abolished the worship of Moloch, to render this valley odious turned all the filth of Jerusalem into it. The dead bodies of animals and of malefactors were thrown into it. The sewers of Jerusalem emptied their filthy contents into it. To consume this filth a fire was kept there perpetually burning. The valley, by a natural law of all ideas, became the symbol of cruelty, misery, pollution, and of perpetual burning. Thus, its name was transferred to the place of punishment for the wicked, and is so used. Let us read some of the Scriptures in which Gehenna is used and mark well the consistency and beauty of them.

“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 body and soul in hell (Gehenna).”
(Matt. 10:28)

“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 (Gehenna) than yourselves.”(Matt. 23:15)

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

Isaiah spoke of the awfulness of the coming Day of the Lord.

“The burden of which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see. Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles. I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness.

The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man’s heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land. Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword. Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished. Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.” (Isa. 13:1-22)

“The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is

brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts. The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: That I will break the Assyrian (Obama) in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?” (Isa. 14:4-27)

The Holy Spirit spoke concerning these matters, by the mouth of Ezekiel:

“Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the

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iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.”
(Ezek. 28:11-19)

I love you. Amen.