

HELL

The Place Everybody There Will Despise Revelation 20:11-15

Hell is not a popular topic, it shouldn't be. It is the worst of the worst of all things horrific. What, however, is it? The tendency is to look at a lot of biblical material as though it is all about the same thing, when it isn't. Additionally, due consideration is not commonly given to the fact that a nonmaterial, spirit realm is described in the Bible by material, temporal images. How, then, can we unravel the mysteries associated with Hell?

Sorting Some Things Out

- The KJV complicates the subject by translating a variety of Greek and Hebrew words using the English word "hell." The problem is that the words in the original languages are not always talking about the same things.
- The Words
 - Sheol in Hebrew and Hades in Greek are words that do not refer to Hell.
 - They have a variety of meanings, all of which either directly or metaphorically refer to things associated with death (i.e. the grave, a place of departed spirits, general negative conditions, death, a deep hole, etc., cf. Ps. 6:5; 16:10; 116:3; Job. 11:8; Deut. 32:22; Amos 9:2; Lk. 16:23).
 - However, all these different usages concern things at a time before Judgment Day, therefore before the beginning of Hell
 - In the New Testament, Hades primarily refers to the place of departed spirits, but can also imply the grave (Lk. 16:23; Rev. 20:13) whereas the Old Testament use of Sheol commonly deals with the grave (Ps. 6:5; 49:14; Job 24:14).
 - Gehenna is the correct Greek word for Hell. While it is a Greek word, it comes from a Hebrew background.
 - In Hebrew, it combines the word for valley (gay) with a family name, Hinnon, originally associated with a portion of a valley beside Jerusalem (Josh. 15:8).
 - It became a place of sacrifice to Molech where children were burned alive (II Kgs. 23:10; II Chron. 33:6) also called Topeth (II Kgs. 23:10; Jer. 19:11).
 - It came to be known as the valley of "Slaughter" as God took vengeance on the crimes committed in that location (Jer. 7:32).
 - In Jesus' time, it was the place where garbage was constantly burned and where the bodies of dead animals and certain criminals' bodies were also deposited—a place you would not want to go to.
 - Tartarus is used one time in the New Testament, and is sometimes translated as "hell" (II Pet. 2:4).
 - This is a specialized waiting place for the Devil and his angels, thus not Hell.

- In Greek mythology, the word was used for an abyss used to confine rebellious gods.

Hell

- The descriptions all speak of horrific conditions such as outer darkness, gnashing of teeth, unquenchable fire, weeping, worms that never die, destruction, eternal punishment, etc. (Matt. 8:12; 9:23; 10:28; 13:50; 25:46; Rev. 20:15; 21:8; Mk. 9:45-46).
- We must remember, however, flesh and blood are not a part of life after Judgment Day (cf. I Cor. 15:50; II Pet. 3:11-13).
- Realizing we are ultimately dealing with the unseen world of the spirit clears up any problems with what would otherwise be self-contradictory ideas, i.e. fire, darkness, and worms all at the same time.
- What does it all mean?
 - No person in their right mind would want to be in Hell.
 - Whatever the spiritual equivalent of the physical horrors listed actually are, they are terrible things.
 - The *finality* of being eternally lost in Hell is, itself, a huge negative (cf. II Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27; 10:26-27; Matt. 25:31).
 - Separation from God is a hideous concept (Matt. 27:46; I Pet. 2:24).
 - Only those whose sins are covered by the blood of Christ can avoid being consigned to Hell (cf. Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:15; 21:26-27).
 - No contact with God's mercy and grace, no hope, agonizing, no escape, no second chance, this is the place known as Hell.
 - Let Hell be avoided at all costs (Matt. 5:30; 18:9)!

We cannot know just exactly what Hell will be like. Our bodies have not been changed from flesh and blood to the state they will be in after the Second Coming of Christ (cf. I Cor. 15:50-54; Jn. 5:28-29). One thing we do know, however, there is nothing good about Hell. Everything about Hell is bad, and bad in the most extreme manner. Hell is truly a place everybody there will despise.

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