H E L L, S H E O L, H A D E S, G E H E N N A, T A R T A R U S

IS THERE A PLACE OF LITERAL FIRE
WHERE LOST SINNERS WILL BE
CONFINED THROUGHOUT ETERNITY?

The Bible was written in three languages: Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek. The Bible that we have today is a translation of the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek writings into our language. There are many translations of the Bible, the most popular being the King James Version, which you probably own. The King James overshadows most all of the versions of the Bible in accuracy, beauty, and readableness.

The word "HELL" in the
King James Version

There are four words in the KJV (King James Version) translated "Hell." Of these four words, only one of them is used in the Old Testament. That word is the Hebrew word "Sheol." In the New Testament, the three words translated "Hell" are Hades," "Gehenna," and "Tartarus," all, of course, Greek words.

WHAT DO THESE WORDS MEAN?

We have to go to the Hebrew and Greek for the meaning of these words translated "Hell." The English background of the word "Hell" will not give us the Hebrew and Greek meanings.

(1) The Hebrew word "Sheol" in the Old Testament (KJV) is translated as follows:,
"Hell" - 31 times. Deuteronomy 32:22, "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains." II Samuel 22:6, "The sorrows of hell compassed me about..." Job 11:8, "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" Job 26:6,"Hell is naked be-fore him, and destruction hath no covering." Psalm 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Psalm 16:10, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Psalm 18:5, "The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me." Psalm 55:15, "Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them." Psalm 86:13, "For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast deliv-ered my soul from the lowest hell." Psalm 116:3, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow." Psalm 139:8, "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there." Proverbs 5:5, "Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell." Proverbs 7:27, "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Proverbs 9:18, "But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell." Proverbs 15:11, "Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?" Proverbs 15:24, "The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath." Proverbs 23:14, "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." Proverbs 27:20, "Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied." Isaiah 5:14, "Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it." Isaiah 14:9, "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." Isaiah 14:15, "Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." Isaiah 28:15, "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the over-flowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." Isaiah 28:18, "And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it." Isaiah 57:9, "And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell. Ezekiel 31:16, "I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit... Ezekiel 31:17, "They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword..." Ezekiel 32:21, "The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him..." Ezekiel 32:27, "And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war..." Amos 9:2, "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down." Jonah 2:2, "And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice." Habakkuk 2:5, "Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people."
"Grave" - 31 times. Genesis 37:35, "And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him." Genesis 42:38, "And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." Genesis 44:29, "And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." Genesis 44:31, "It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave." I Samuel 2:6, "The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." I Kings 2:6, "Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace." I Kings 2:9, "Now there-fore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood." Job 7:9, "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more." Job 14:13, "O that thou would-est hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!" Job 17:13, "If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness." Job 21:13, "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave" Job 24:19, "Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned." Psalm 6:5, "For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" Psalm 30:3, "O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit." Psalm 31:17, "Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave." Psalm 49:14, [twice] "Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morn-ing; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling." Psalm 49:15, "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah." Psalm 88:3, "For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave." 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? Selah." Psalm 141:7, "Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth." Proverbs 1:12, "Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit." Proverbs 30:16, "The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough." Ecclesiastes 9:10, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wis-dom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Song of Solomon 8:6, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." Isaiah 14:11, "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." Isaiah 38:10, "I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years." Isaiah 38:18, "For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth." Ezekiel 31:15, "Thus saith the LORD GOD; In the day when he went down to the grave I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him." Hosea 13:14, [twice)"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."
"Pit" - 3 times. Numbers 16:30, "But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall under-stand that these men have provoked the LORD." Numbers 16:33, "They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation." Job 17:16, "They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust."

But actually, the Hebrew word "Sheol" does not mean either "Hell," "grave," or "pit."
Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary says that "Sheol" is "the world of the dead." Young's Analytical Concordance says that "Sheol" is "the unseen state." Smith's Bible Dic-tionary says that "Sheol" is always the abode of departed spirits." Fousset's Bible Dictionary and Encyclopedia says that "Sheol" is "the common receptacle of the dead."
So it is clear that Sheol is not Hell, but the place of departed spirits, irrespective of whether saved or lost. Sheol is simply a term "meaning the state of the dead in general, without any restriction of happiness or misery." (Smith) In many instances where the word is used, how-ever, the reference is clearly to that compartment of Sheol where the wicked are punished. Psalm 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."
(2) "Hades" is the Greek word in the New Testament, which is translated as fol-lows in the KJV: "Hell" - 10 times. Matthew 11:23, "And thou, Capernaum, which art ex-alted 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." Matt-hew 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 shall not prevail against it." Luke 10:15, "And thou, Ca-pernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell." Luke 16:23, "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Acts 2:27,"Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Acts 2:31, "He seeing this before spake of the resur-rection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." Revelation 1:18, "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." Revelation 6:8, "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." Revelation 20:13, "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-elation 20:14, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."
"Grave" - 1 time. I Corinthians 15:55, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" But "Hades," like Sheol, is not Hell, Actually, "Hades" is the corresponding Greek word to the Hebrew word "Sheol," and both have the same meaning.
Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament, says that "Hades" is "the place (state) of departed souls." Young's Concor-dance: "the unseen world." A. T. Robertson, world renouned as a Greek scholar: "Hades is technically the unseen world, the Hebrew Sheol, the land of the de parted." (Word Pictures)
Luke 16:19-31 is a perfect illustration of Sheol (Ha des). This passage draws back the curtain and lets us have a look into "the land of the departed." "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 desir-ing 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; 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 receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And be-side 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.” This passage is a perfect illustration of Sheol (Hades). It draws back the curtain and lets us have a look into “the land of the departed.”
(3) “Gehenna” or “the Gehenna of fire,” is the Greek word that actually means Hell. It is never translated by any other word but “Hell,” and ten of the eleven times the word is used, it is used by the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Here are a list of the passages in which the word “Ge-henna” appears: Matthew 5:22, 29, 30, “But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in dan-ger 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...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. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut if 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.” 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.” Matthew 18:9, “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.” Matthew 23:15, “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 your-selves.” Mark 9:43,45,47, “And if thy hand offend thee, cut if 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... And if thy foot offend thee, cut if 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...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.” 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.” James 3:6, “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.”
The word “Gehenna” is of Hebrew origin, from “valley” and “Hinnom.” “Gehenna is the Valley of Hinnom where the fire burned contin-ually.” (A. T. Robertson)
The Valley of Hinnom was a place near Jerusalem where Ahaz introduced the worship of fire gods, the sun, Baal and Moloch. The Jews under ungodly Mannasseh, offered their children as burnt offerings in this idolatrous worship. Jeremiah 7:31, “And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.” This cruel worship was finally abolished, and later, Josiah made the place a receptacle of dead carcasses and the bodies of male factors (crim-inals), in which worms were continually gender-ing. A perpetual fire was kept to consume the putrifying matter. The place was still in existence at the time of Christ, and the Saviour illustrated somewhat the conditions of Hell, “the Gehenna of fire,” by reference to this valley.
Jesus referred to Hell as the “Gehenna of fire,” into which “both body and soul” will be cast. He said that it is “unquenchable fire” and that “the worm [man] dieth not” in the flame, just as the three Hebrew children of Daniel’s day did not die when cast into the firey furnace (Daniel 3).
Hell is no myth as infidels, Russellites, Universalists, and Modernists would have you believe. Christ did not warn of Hell simply to scare men. He warned of Hell because it is a reality!
(4) “Tartarus,” the fourth word trans-lated “Hell,” is used only once in the Greek New Testament. II Peter 2:4, “For if God spar-ed not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”
Strong’s Greek Dictionary of the New Testament says that “Tartarus” is “the deepest abyss of Hades,” and that the word means “to incarcerate (imprison) in eternal torment.” A. T. Robertson: “The dark and doleful abode of the wicked dead like the Gehenna of the Jews.” Fausset’s Dictionary: “The ‘deep’ or ‘abyss’ or ‘bottomless pit.’”

FIRE IN HELL

Leaving the passages that contain these four words that are translated “Hell,” let us notice some passages that will teach us of Hell with words which we all can easily understand.

Matthew 13:49-50, “So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 25:46, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the right-eous into life eternal.”

Revelation 9:2, “And he opened the bot-tomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.”
Revelation 14:10,11, “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”
Revelation 20:10,15, “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...And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”
Revelation 19:20, “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”
Be not deceived by the deniers of Hellfire. Such false teachers are enemies of your soul. Read these passages for yourself, and cast into the fire the trashy literature that tries to explain away plain statements of God's Word.

"EVERLASTING FIRE"

I have a Watchtower (Russellites or so-called "Jehovah's Witness") book that tries to do away with the fact that the Bible means what it says in such passages as the following:

Matthew 18:8, “Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into ever-lasting fire."

The Greek word for "everlasting" is aionios. The word means ageless; without beginning, without ending, or both. It is used in Romans 16:26 of God "the everlasting [aionios] God." This use of the word should clearly show us the meaning of the word "everlasting."

A. T. Robertson says of the word: "It comes as near to the idea of eternal as the Greek can put it in one word. It is a difficult idea to put into language."
The very same word (aionios) is used to describe the future life of the righteous and the future punishment of the wicked in Matthew 25:46, "And these shall go away into everlast-ing punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." If the punishment of the wicked is limit-ed, we may likewise limit the life of the righteous! But such can not be done.

"FOR EVER AND EVER"

This phrase, "for ever and ever" (eis tous aionas aionon), occurs twenty times in the New Testament:
of God - 16 times;
of saints' future blessedness - 1 time;
of punishment of the wicked and Satan - 3 times Is it likely that the phrase means absolute eternity 17 times, and only a limited period the other three times? Non- sense!

DEATH

Death is never an annihilation. It is always a separation.
Adam's death was a separation from God. Genesis 2:17, "But of the tree of the know-ledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Genesis 3:23, 24, "Therefore the LORD GOD sent him forth from the gar-den of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turn-ed every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."
Christ's death was a separation from God. Matthew 27:46, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
Physical death is a separation of the soul from the body. Luke 16:22, 23, "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 he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."
The second death is the final and eternal separation of the unsaved in the "lake of fire." Revelation 20:11-15, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 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. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." The second death is not annihilation. Revelation 19:20, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Revelation 20:10, "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."
Neither does "destruction" mean annihi-lation. Something can be destroyed without be-ing annihilated. There is much destruction of property, goods, buildings, etc., in war, but such things are not annihilated.
It will certainly be destruction for the unsaved in Hell - destruction of peace, joy, happiness, pleasure, rest; destruction from all that the saints of God have in Heaven; but no annihilation.
If you are lost, reader, then you are doom-ed to eternal separation from God in the Gehen-na of fire, unless you look to Him (Jesus Christ) who was separated that sinners might have life. If you realize your guilt before Him, and are aware that you deserve nothing but Hell because of your sins against the Holy and Righteous God, there is hope for you. Listen:
Romans 5:8,9, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
Christ suffered the Hell - separation from God - for all who will depend wholly upon Him.
I Peter 3:18, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God..."
II Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."
Look to Him for redemption from sin, death, and Hell.

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