

Hell

“...Depart from me, you who are cursed,
into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”
Matthew 25:41

Another NT (New Testament) word that is translated ‘hell’ is the Greek word ‘**Gehenna**’. This comes from the OT (Old Testament) word ‘GeHinnon’. Outside of Jerusalem, there was a valley called the Valley of Ben-Hinnon or GeHinnon.

This valley was notorious for **child sacrifice** during King Ahaz’ reign (720-730BC and **2nd Chronicles 28:1-4**) and King Manasseh’s reign (680-640BC and **2nd Chronicles 33:1-6**). By Jesus’ time, it had become a **garbage dump**.

Jesus says more about Gehenna than any other biblical figure. He relates it to:

- 1) Sodom’s destruction (**Luke 17:29,30**) which is **burning** sulfur. **Genesis 19:24,25**
- 2) a fiery furnace with horrendous **sounds**. **Matthew 13:42,50**
- 3) The wicked are **excluded** from God’s presence and from the life that God had originally prepared for them. **2nd Thessalonians 1:5-10**
- 4) Hell (Gehenna) will be ‘**dark**’ and there will be ‘**terrible sounds**.’ **Matthew 8:12**
- 5) The 2nd death is a **useless** and **ruined** existence. **Revelation 21:8** and **Jude 12,13**
They have become obstinate in their rebellion against God. **2nd Peter 2:12-22**
C.S. Lewis says “the doors of Hell are locked from the **inside**”. In life, they had many chances to repent but NEVER DID and NEVER WILL. Have you ever known people who just make stupid decisions in life and when it doesn’t work out, they **blame** everyone else but themselves? This is that type of person. But remember that God can see the ‘**inside**’ of a person and we can’t. What appears to us as a ‘good’ person may not be at all. They may be full of false pride and false humility. Have you ever judged someone to be a good person only to find out later that your judgement was **wrong**? What about your first love? How many first loves worked out?

Hell

“...Depart from me, you who are cursed,
into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”
Matthew 25:41

Jesus says more about Gehenna than any other biblical figure. He relates it to: (Continued)

6) There seems to be degrees of suffering in Hell (Gehenna). **Luke 12:47,48**

7) Gehenna is eternal. **Matthew 25:46, Mark 9:48** If Gehenna is not eternal, then neither is eternal life; i.e. heaven. **Revelation 14:9-12** Also, since God is eternal and He cannot tolerate evil, they must forever be separated from Him. The suggestion that temporal suffering will lead to repentance is false. God will not force creatures with free will to be reformed. These people have freely chosen to forever rebel against God. In fact, it is merciful of God to forever separate them from Him as being in His and our presence forever would be much worse for them. People in Gehenna will have company but no sympathy. Every person will be despised by every other person. There will be everlasting 'contempt.' **Daniel 12:2**

Gehenna is the eternal state of Hell, while Hades is the temporary or intermediate state of Hell. Gehenna is the exact opposite of the Garden of Eden.

Gehenna is God giving His creatures what they want, a life without Him. God no longer protects them from the full measure of their own actions, their selfishness, greed, pride, etc. Here's a true life example:

An old lady in her eighties or nineties had been jilted as a young lady by her fiancée. She was beautiful, the belle of the ball. They were set to be married when her fiancée fell in love with her sister. He broke off their engagement and married her sister. 65 years later, this old lady was living alone in a musty old apartment with a bunch of cats. There were pictures of herself in the days of her beautiful youth all over the place. For 60 years, her sister and her husband had been calling and asking her for forgiveness, but she wouldn't give it to them. She never saw her family at Christmas, Thanksgiving or any of the other holidays. She said "I'm going to make them suffer for what they did to me." Now, who do you think is really suffering? Her sister and her husband had children, went to all the family holidays, took photos and videos, etc. Are they suffering? Or was the old lady with her cats and musty apartment surrounded by pictures of how beautiful she used to be and refusing to let go of her hatred and bitterness?

*Is there eternal fire in Gehenna? Is there darkness and terrible sounds?
Maybe yes, maybe no.*

**“...Depart from me, you who are cursed,
into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”
*Matthew 25:41***

Jesus related the future Hell (Gehenna) to the Valley of Ben-Hinnon outside Jerusalem. This was a garbage dump where fires were burning all the time. It was **smelly** and **rat-infested**. Could He have used this as a warning that Gehenna is so repulsive a place that you don't want to go there at all? Sometimes these words aren't meant to be literal (*see **Isaiah 13:9-13**; the stars of heaven and the constellation not showing their light is not meant to be literal but it is meant to emphasize a point*). See **Romans 2:8,9** and **Daniel 12:2**. These places speak of **shame**, **trouble**, **distress**, etc. Weeping could mean terrible remorse and grief, while gnashing of teeth could be anger at oneself, Satan, God. **Matthew 13:42** Whether Gehenna is a place of burning fire and terrible sounds or not, IT IS a place so **terrible** that Jesus doesn't want anybody to go there. So much so that He died to make sure we don't have to. These symbols (if they are symbols), point to a reality more **horrific** than the symbols can convey.

Mention CS Lewis "The Great Divorce" and the old Twilight Zone with John Astin and the farm couple's vacation films. Show PowerPoint pictures of The Human Race on screen & our life in eternity...Revelation 20:5,6 21 22.

Hell

The view just expressed is the majority view of evangelical Christians and most theologians. There are two other views though...

1) The view that when you die, whether in Old Testament times or New Testament times, your body goes into the ground and your spirit goes up to heaven to be with God, or to Hell. While this viewpoint has been accepted better than annihilationism, it is nowhere near as accepted as the first viewpoint we talked about.

2) **Annihilationism**: this view says that at the future time of the resurrections, if you're an unbeliever, your resurrected spirit and body will be punished in Hell for a period of time and then your body and spirit will be annihilated. You will no longer exist. Annihilationists claim that since God is a God of love that this is more consistent with that than an everlasting punishment. They also claim that there are degrees of suffering in Hell (***Luke 12:47,48***) and their position further supports that. There are more scriptural reasons for this view but many against it. Probably the biggest one against it is that it changes the definition of '**everlasting**' for unbelievers but not for believers. This belief has been held by a very small number of believers. It has never been a majority or even significant view point.

Further reference (both pro and con) can be found at:
www.theopedia.com/Annihilationism

Lesson 2