

INVESTIGATION:

A man in a dark blue suit, white shirt, and brown tie is holding a white rectangular sign with both hands. His index fingers are pointing towards the text on the sign. The background is plain white.

Is
there
a hell?

Part 1: Bible References

Laurence Smart
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(www.CanberraForerunners.org)

Don't get stuck in tradition.
Be prepared for the Spirit to
reveal the truth to you.

But, it's a scary
thing to do.



Are you brave enough to
question established
theology?

Why? Because we must be sure our foundational theology (our understanding of God and the spirit realm) aligns with Heaven's reality.

Outcomes?

Our previous discussions

- The Shack
- Blasphemy

Most of what's in the church system was introduced by religion (mainly Romanism) and it's remained unchallenged every since. True, the Reformation changed to salvation by faith and removed the supremacy and influence of the pope, but that was about all. They still continued with clergy, religion, cathedrals, etc., etc. Today we've escaped the 'bells and smells' but Christianity is still a religion of people doing what they think God would like – even the Charismatic and Pentecostal systems.

The concept of hell that we've been taught is a dark place of eternal torture and punishment in a lake of fire



Like Purgatory,
we need to know
that our concept
of hell aligns with
spiritual reality
before we whole-
heartedly accept
is without
reservation



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“Religion has hijacked the gospel, made ‘escaping hell’ its focus and used the threat of eternal damnation to scare people into the Kingdom”

Freedom ARC



“Jesus spoke more about hell than any other subject”

“God’s Son was the great theologian of hell”

THE HELL DELUSION

Christian Myths

'Hell' wasn't Jesus' main topic, the Kingdom was.

The Bible is completely silent about 'hell'.

Pagan Myths

“For the first five centuries, few Christians held a doctrine of eternal torment either for the wicked or for unbelievers. But over time, pagan myths about the afterlife were repackaged and passed off as Christian.”

There are 4 words used in the
Bible which are usually
translated as 'hell'

‘Sheol’ (Hb)

“Sh'owl *sheh-ole'* or shol {*sheh-ole'*}; from 7592; Hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates:--grave, hell, pit.”

‘Sheol’ (Hb)

The meaning is fine, up until the end. Strong has added ‘hell’ as an extra meaning. This is because he decided that some scriptures are talking about ‘hell’.

The real meanings of the word are ‘grave’ or ‘pit’. ‘Sheol’ has no context of punishment in it.

‘Hades’ (Gk)

“Haides *hah'-dace* from 1 (as negative particle) and 1492; properly, unseen, i.e. "Hades" or the place (state) of departed souls:--grave, hell.”

‘Hades’ (Gk)

‘Hades’ is the Greek equivalent of ‘Sheol’ (Hb). It has been translated as ‘hell’ but this is not its meaning.

‘Hades’ is used only 11 times in the NT, of which 4 uses are by Jesus (N.B. some incidences are the same story in different gospels).

‘Hades’ has no relationship with punishment.

Matthew 11:23

“Capernaum...you shall be brought down to Hades [the region of the dead]!” (AMPC)

‘Capernaum, you think you’re so great but soon you’ll be nothing.’

There is no context of punishment here.

Matthew 16:18

“On this rock I will build my church, and the power of death [gates of Hades/the underworld] will not be able to defeat [overpower; conquer; prevail against] it.” (EXB)

‘We, the ekklesia, are going to overcome the grave, so we don’t need to fear death.’

There is no context of punishment here.

1 Corinthians 15:55

“O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (NKJV)

“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (AMP)

There is no context of punishment here.

Revelation 1:18

“I am He who lives, and was dead...and I have the keys of Hades and of Death.” (NKJV)

Jesus has the keys of death and the grave. This is to set people free, not to lock them up.

There is no context of punishment here.

Revelation 6:8

“...behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him.” (NKJV)

This is a personification of ‘the grave’, or the mythical Greek god who rules over the place of the dead.

There is no context of punishment here.

Revelation 20:13

“The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them.” (NKJV)

This is about ‘the grave’. (Note that judgement is after the dead come out of the grave, not before.)

There is no context of punishment here.

Revelation 20:14

“Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.” (NKJV)

Death and the grave are not the end. (The Lake of Fire is another story)

There is no context of punishment here.

Acts 2:27, 31

These are 2 places where 'hades' is used in Acts. Both quote an OT reference to 'sheol', about the Messiah's soul not being left to hades, and his flesh wouldn't see corruption.

The only place where 'hades' appears
to be associated with torment and
punishment is in the story of the rich
man and Lazarus.

Luke 16:23

Luke 16:23

“And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

There are several things to say about this passage:

There are several things to say about this passage:

- This whole story may not be original to Jesus. Its roots can be traced back to the Hebrew traditional text *Gemara Babylonicum*, which dates from Israel's captivity in Babylon.
- The primary characters in the story are not distinguished from one another by righteousness or wickedness but by wealth and social standing.

And...

- This whole section in Luke's gospel is a series of lessons about trusting in riches and failing to help the poor, directed primarily at the religious leaders and their supporters. Jesus' purpose in (re)telling the story was not to give a literal account of what the afterlife looks like.

‘Tartarus’ (Gk)

Tartaroo *tar-tar-o'-o* from Tartaros (the deepest abyss of Hades); to incarcerate in eternal torment:--cast down to hell.

‘Cast down to hell’ is an addition of the author.

‘Tartarus’ (Gk)

It's only used once in the NT where it relates to Greek mythology, identifying the place where the Titans were incarcerated.

2 Peter 2:4

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into Tartarus and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment”

2 Peter 2:4

If the fallen angels were 'reserved for judgement' then they had not yet been judged. So, it would have been unjust to punish them.

Tartarus does not refer to incarceration in eternal torment.

‘Gehenna’ (Gk)

Geena *gheh'-en-nah* of Hebrew origin (1516 and 2011); valley of (the son of) Hinnom; gehenna (or Ge-Hinnom), a valley of Jerusalem, used (figuratively) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment:--hell.

‘Gehenna’ (Gk)

Gehenna is the Greek word for the Valley of Hinnom, a literal geographical feature outside the gates of Jerusalem. It was an evil and dark place, used for a variety of evil acts (including child sacrifice to Molech); literally a place of perpetual fire, a rubbish dump filled with so much trash (including dead bodies during the time of Isaiah) that the fires never went out and worms would never die from lack of food.

‘Gehenna’ (Gk)

During the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army in 70AD, dead bodies were thrown into Gehenna during the siege.

Rather than eternal ‘hell’, Gehenna was a physical place for dead bodies and rubbish.

‘Gehenna’ (Gk)

Jesus used the word ‘Gehenna’ numerous times:

- Matthew 5:29, 30; 18:9;
- Mark 9:43, 45, 47

In these, Jesus illustrates how destructive sin is by using the image of the most disgusting location in Jerusalem

‘Gehenna’ (Gk)

Jesus used the word ‘Gehenna’ here:

- Matthew 10:28
- Luke 12:5

“Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna”.

No mention of punishment or torment. Not even ‘eternal’.

‘Gehenna’ (Gk)

Jesus used the word ‘Gehenna’ here:

- Matthew 5:22

“Whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery Gehenna”.

There’s an unreasonable escalation in punishment for saying, “You fool”.

‘Gehenna’ (Gk)

Jesus is raising the standard of behaviour to include thoughts and emotions, emphasising how powerful our thoughts and words are. He is demonstrating how little it takes to negatively affect us, how just a bit of unresolved anger pollutes our lives and how unforgiveness lands us in a torture chamber of our own making.

‘Gehenna’ (Gk)

Jesus used the word ‘Gehenna’ here:

- Matthew 23:15

“Scribes and Pharisees...you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as yourselves”.

He was saying that their righteousness was as filthy as the dead body pit (‘ritually unclean’).

‘Gehenna’ (Gk)

Jesus used the word ‘Gehenna’ here:

- Matthew 23:33

“You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of Gehenna”

They would end up in the dead body pit during the Roman siege

‘Gehenna’ (Gk)

In all of these, Jesus was talking about Kingdom life here and now. He was not talking about the afterlife (i.e. ‘going to heaven’ or ‘going to hell’).

‘Gehenna’ (Gk)

Lastly, Jame used the word ‘Gehenna’ here:

- James 3:6

“The tongue... is itself set on fire by Gehenna”.

The evil of the tongue corrupts (makes unclean) the rest of the body.

**None of these references have
anything to do with our concept
of hell – eternal torment &
punishment.**

Religion uses the fear of an angry God and the fear of hell to keep us in order.

But God calls us to simply love Him, ourselves and each other: no religious rules, nothing complicated about it. He is not angry with us, He is always the same: loving, faithful and full of grace and mercy. He has never changed.

CONTINUED



Challenge



So, it's your challenge to come to grips with this information

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