

Scriptures are quoted from a modern language edition derived from the American Standard Version of 1901, which was prepared by 30 of the top American religious scholars. It is likely the most accurate Bible translation widely available.

The doctrine of hell fire is generally understood to be the belief that when people die, those who have not met God's approval will be sent to a fiery place of eternal and agonizing torment. This doctrine is not found in the Bible, despite the claims of those who believe it, and is contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the qualities of Almighty God our Creator.

As to the scriptures quoted by those who believe in the doctrine of hell fire, we will take a look at them a little later in this pamphlet.

One thing that is odd about those who claim to believe in hell fire, that has been long noticed, is that at times their belief seems to be ambivalent. A good historic example of this is the case of Dante Alighieri. He was an Italian poet who in the 14<sup>th</sup> century published an epic poem called the *Divine Comedy*, the first part was called *Inferno*, the Italian word for hell. It is regarded as an allegory, and yet that raises the question why the punishments involved little actual fire. In fact the greatest sinners, and Satan himself, are encased in ice. This view of hell did not seem to be regarded as contradictory to the teachings of the church.

As was pointed out by one preacher who was prominent in the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, those who preach hell fire and claim to believe in it seem to be peculiarly apathetic. Some have asked: If they truly believe, as they claim, that people whom they like, and even love, will be sent to a place of extreme torment and great agony for all eternity, would their efforts to save them from that fate not be far greater than they are. Would they not be far more disturbed, and even frantic to save them from hell fire—if they truly believed the doctrine was literal?

Nowadays, many of the statements by the Churches that teach the doctrine, are often very measured, raising deep questions as to whether they really believe in a literal hell fire.

Among the most avid believers in the doctrine, are those who claim to be “born again” or “saved”. Those who make these claims are generally people who have gone through a short ritual that is not found in the Bible, nor is anyone in the Bible described as having gone through that ritual, but which is cobbled together from snippets of

Biblical text. They claim that this ritual means they are saved and that salvation, according to their claims is irrevocable. It bears a similarity to old-time Calvinistic doctrines.

Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns, had a character, based on a real person, express this doctrine. The partially Anglicized words are: *O Thou, that in the heavens does dwell,/Who, as it pleases best Thyself',/Sends one to heaven an' ten to hell,/All for Thy glory,/And not for any good or ill/They've done before Thee!*

This doctrine has long troubled Bible believing Christians, but the born-againers have taken it a step further, in that the decision as to who will be eternally saved, seemingly regardless of any unchristian conduct, is made, not by God, but by the individual themselves by reciting what is, for all practical purposes, a magical incantation. (Leviticus 19:26; Micah 5:12)

These people believe that those who do not accept their beliefs will suffer extreme burning torture for all time to come, but they will go to a heavenly paradise, despite any wrongs they may have committed. The Bible does not agree.

But what does God say about this doctrine in his Word the Holy Bible? In the Old Testament the word *hell* is used by the King James Version of the Bible (KJV), and many other translations, to translate the Hebrew word *sheol*. However the various translations do not always agree when to translate *sheol* as hell, nor does the King James Bible agree with itself. The word *sheol* appears some 66 times in the text of the Old Testament, but the KJV only translates it as *hell* 31 times. It is translated as *grave* 31 times and as *pit* 4 times.

But if *sheol* really means hell, then why is it translated as hell less than half the time? There is something wrong here. Obviously, if it really meant *hell* in the sense that the churches use that word then it would be translated as hell every time. It is clear that the word simply means the grave as the common end for all mankind. In the Old Testament people both good and bad go to *sheol*.

It is the same with the New Testament. However, there are two Greek words that are translated hell in the KJV. In other translations they are sometimes translated differently. The words are Gehenna and Hades. Gehenna is translated as hell 12 times, and Hades is translated as hell 10 times. Hades is used in the New Testament much the same way that *sheol* is used in the Old Testament, as the common grave of all mankind.

This is why the scriptures speak of Jesus as being in hell. The problem created by the KJV and some other translations rendering both Hades and Gehenna as hell is that both words clearly have different meanings. The fact that in Acts 2:27 and Acts 2:31, it tells us that Jesus is not left or abandoned in Hell shows that to the early Christians it had the same meaning as *sheol*, the common end of all mankind.

The other word that the KJV translates as hell appears 12 times. But the word Gehenna does mean punishment. Gehenna was a narrow valley south of Jerusalem which was used to dump the trash and garbage of the city. Those listening to Jesus knew that to be sent to Gehenna meant to be 'dumped', that is, abandoned by God and destroyed. According to ancient authorities, an area of the dump was kept perpetually burning in order to incinerate carcasses of animals and even dead criminals. (See Gehenna in *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 1, page 879, 1888 Edition.)

It is clear to anyone reading those passages in the Bible with a mind that is honest and open to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and God's Word, that it is a fire that destroys and annihilates that Jesus clearly referred to and not some fiery, cruel, and abhorrent eternal punishment. The doctrine of a fiery hell comes from men, and is inspired by Satan, in order to bring reproach on God. *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.* (1 Timothy 4:1 King James Version)

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# **THERE IS NO**

# **Fiery HELL**

**God's Word exposes  
this doctrine of men  
as false  
and blasphemous.**