

What does Hell mean in the Bible?

My goal here is to show an error in the teaching of Jesus after His death on the cross descend into hell, tormented, and beaten by Satan and his demons till God said enough, and/or then somehow beat the devil and took the keys of death and hell away from him.

We will always have disagreements in the Body of Christ - even the Apostles did in the book of Acts (Acts 15:36-40) so that is not my concern - but it is another thing to propagate an error as truth when it comes to our atonement.

Make no doubt Hell does exist, but you have to define it properly to apply it to Scripture, or rightly divide and apply the Word.

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” – 2Tim2:15 KJV

I do realize discussions like this are sometimes fruitless. Then again even if some do search Scriptures to prove me wrong, then my goal here is complete (Acts 17:11).

Methodology:

Let us be clear, the Word will never contradict itself, nor will it go against the Spirit, or the Father’s will. This is the foundation I will build on. These three - the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost (Spirit) are one and as so will not go against each other in thought or action.

“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” - 1 John 5:7 KJV

While I know anyone can prove anything they want in the Bible - entire denominations have sprung from one or two topics, even verses, I want differentiate myself by weighing heavily on the SPIRIT of the Word and not just the LETTER of the Word.

I will be mostly using the King James Bible (KJV) and will refer to other versions as needed, but feel the KJV has stood the test of time so to speak. Ironically the KJV word “Hell” conflicts the proper translation of the Aramaic word “Sheol” in the Old Testament, and the Greek word “Hades” in the New Testament.

The word "Hell" occurs 31 times in the Old Testament.

All 31 of those times, the word translated "Hell" is the Hebrew word "Sheol."

While the English word "hell" has connotations as a place of punishment for the condemned, Sheol does not have such connotations.

Definitions:

HELL: <http://youall.com/HELL/lexhebgreek.htm>

Strong's Concordance:

Sheol: usually viewed as the realm of the "souls of the dead"
H7585 שְׁאוֹל she'ōl she'ōl
sheh-ole', sheh-ole'

From H7592; hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates: - grave, hell, pit.

Hades: realm of the "souls" of the dead, translation of *Sheol*
G86 ᾍδης hadēs hah'-dace

From G1 (as a negative particle) and G1492; properly unseen, that is, "Hades" or the place (state) of departed souls: - grave, hell.

Using the King James Concordance in the free E-Sword program available on the internet, the Hebrew word "Sheol" actually appears 65 times in the OT.

Sheol is translated as:

- Hell 31 times;
- Grave 30 times;
- Pit 3 times; and
- Graves once.

The list to the right is from:

www.pugetsoundbible.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/hell2.gif

HELL

and shall burn unto the lowest <i>h</i>	Deut 32:22	7585
The sorrows of <i>h</i> compassed me	2Sa 22:6	7585
deeper than <i>h</i>	Job 11:8	7585
<i>H</i> is naked before him, and	Job 26:6	7585
The wicked shall be turned into <i>h</i>	Ps 9:17	7585
thou wilt not leave my soul in <i>h</i>	Ps 16:10	7585
The sorrows of <i>h</i> compassed me	Ps 18:5	7585
and let them go down quick into <i>h</i>	Ps 55:15	7585
my soul from the lowest <i>h</i>	Ps 86:13	7585
the pains of <i>h</i> gat hold upon me	Ps 116:3	7585
if I make my bed in <i>h</i> , behold,	Ps 139:8	7585
her steps take hold on <i>h</i>	Prov 5:5	7585
Her house is the way to <i>h</i>	Prov 7:27	7585
her guests are in the depths of <i>h</i>	Prov 9:18	7585
<i>H</i> and destruction are before the	Prov 15:11	7585
that he may depart from <i>h</i> beneath	Prov 15:24	7585
and shalt deliver his soul from <i>h</i>	Prov 23:14	7585
<i>H</i> and destruction are never full	Prov 27:20	7585
Therefore <i>h</i> hath enlarged herself	Is 5:14	7585
<i>H</i> from beneath is moved for thee	Is 14:9	7585
thou shalt be brought down to <i>h</i>	Is 14:15	7585
with <i>h</i> are we at agreement	Is 28:15	7585
agreement with <i>h</i> shall not stand	Is 28:18	7585
didst debase thyself even unto <i>h</i>	Is 57:9	7585
when I cast him down to <i>h</i> with	Eze 31:16	7585
They also went down into <i>h</i> with	Eze 31:17	7585
of <i>h</i> with them that help him	Eze 32:21	7585
which are gone down to <i>h</i> with	Eze 32:27	7585
Though they dig into <i>h</i> , thence	Amos 9:2	7585
out of the belly of <i>h</i> cried I	Jonah 2:2	7585
who enlargeth his desire as <i>h</i>	Hab 2:5	7585
shall be in danger of <i>h</i> fire	Mt 5:22	1067
whole body should be cast into <i>h</i>	Mt 5:29	1067
whole body should be cast into <i>h</i>	Mt 5:30	1067
to destroy both soul and body in <i>h</i>	Mt 10:28	1067
shalt be brought down to <i>h</i>	Mt 11:23	86
the gates of <i>h</i> shall not prevail	Mt 16:18	86
two eyes to be cast into <i>h</i> fire	Mt 18:9	1067
the child of <i>h</i> than yourselves	Mt 23:15	1067
can ye escape the damnation of <i>h</i>	Mt 23:33	1067
having two hands to go into <i>h</i>	Mk 9:43	1067
having two feet to be cast into <i>h</i>	Mk 9:45	1067
two eyes to be cast into <i>h</i> fire	Mk 9:47	1067
heaven, shalt be thrust down to <i>h</i>	Lk 10:15	86
killed hath power to cast into <i>h</i>	Lk 12:5	1067
in <i>h</i> he lift up his eyes, being	Lk 16:23	86
thou wilt not leave my soul in <i>h</i>	Acts 2:27	86
that his soul was not left in <i>h</i>	Acts 2:31	86
and it is set on fire of <i>h</i>	Jas 3:6	1067
sinned, but cast them down to <i>h</i>	2Pet 2:4	5020
and have the keys of <i>h</i> and of death	Rev 1:18	86
was Death, and <i>H</i> followed with him	Rev 8:8	86
<i>h</i> delivered up the dead which	Rev 20:13	86
<i>h</i> were cast into the lake of fire	Rev 20:14	86

Foundation: <http://www.biblestudying.net/cosmo-5.html> (Paraphrased)

In the Old Testament and in particular, prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, those who died in faith were not permitted to go into the presence of God because atonement had not yet been provided.

Sheol simply refers to the abode of the dead in general, not particularly the place of the punishment for the wicked. In fact, Sheol was divided into two compartments, one for the righteous dead and one for the wicked dead. And, more specifically, the Jewish concept of Sheol was the "underworld," or in other words, a place within the earth, underneath the surface world.

Now, what do we learn from Jesus' description in this parable?

First, we see that the place of the dead is divided into two compartments separated by a gulf so that those on either side cannot go to the other side. However, the fact that Abraham and the rich man are able to communicate indicates that, although divided, these compartments are in the same general overarching location.

Second, we see that the beggar is taken to the side on which Abraham resides. This side of the place of the dead is a place of comfort. And the name for this portion of the place of the dead (where the righteous) go was "the Bosom of Abraham." As we will soon see, this place of the righteous dead was also known as "Paradise."

Third, we see that the rich man goes to the other side of the gulf, which is described as a place of fiery torment.

Here, in the words of Jesus' himself we have corroboration for the Jewish concept of Sheol. And not only that, but Jesus' words also align perfectly with 1 Samuel 28, where the prophet Samuel is depicted as arising out of the earth.

Additionally, in **Luke 23:43** we find Jesus on the cross about to die and he promises the thief that "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

What does Jesus mean here by Paradise? Did he mean he and the thief were going to the garden of Eden? Did he mean he and the thief were going into the presence of God in heaven?

Well, since as we have shown, the Jewish concept of Jesus' day as upheld by both 1 Samuel 28 and Jesus himself in Luke 16, was that the righteous dead such as Samuel, Abraham, and the beggar Lazarus, was a place within the earth.

So, as a matter of precedent, we should conclude that this "righteous" thief was going, not to heaven and the presence of God, but to the place of the righteous dead within the earth, the Bosom of Abraham. Thus, the term Paradise would simply be another synonym for the Bosom of Abraham.

The Greek word translated Paradise in Luke 23:24 is "paradeisos." For the Greeks, paradeisos referred to the Persian concept of a well-watered grove, garden, park, or hunting ground, which for the Greeks was a part of hades set aside for the heroic among others and as distinguished from the portion of hades where some of the dead were tortured.

1 Peter 3:18-21;4:6 tells us more.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, **being put to death in the flesh**, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 **By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;** 20 **Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing,** wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.
...4:6 For for this cause **was the gospel preached also to them that are dead**, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Biblical references clearly defines the location as two zones.

Old Testament:

1Samual 28:6-20

11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.
12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.
13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.
14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.
15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?...

New Testament:

Luke 16:19-31 King James Version (KJV)

¹⁹ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:
²⁰ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,
²¹ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.
²² 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;
²³ And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.
²⁴ 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.
²⁵ 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.
²⁶ And beside 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.
²⁷ Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:
²⁸ For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.
²⁹ Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.
³⁰ And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.
³¹ And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.