

Apostle Paul also declares that the "gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23) Thus is emphasized again the hope of a resurrection from the dead for all who have been redeemed by Christ.

What else does **the Bible state regarding death?**

1. How did people get here on earth? God formed man of the dust of the ground. Genesis 2:7.
2. In what way does the Bible describe the dead? Them which are asleep. 1 Thessalonians 4:13.
3. And where do the dead sleep? In the dust of the earth. Daniel 12:2. All are of dust. Ecc. 3:20.
4. What happens to a person at death? The dust shall return to the earth...and the spirit shall return to God. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Ecclesiastes 12:7; 3:20.
5. What is this spirit that returns to God? The body without the spirit is dead. James 2:26. The spirit of God is in my nostrils. Job 27:3. Therefore the breath and the spirit are the same.
6. What is the soul then? God formed man of the dust...and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. Gen. 2:7. Therefore the body (dust) plus the breath (spirit) = a living soul.
7. Can a soul die? The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Ezekiel 18:20. All have sinned. Romans 3:23.
8. Is there anyone with immortality? 1 Timothy 6:17 tells us that only God has immortality.
9. Well, does the dead person know anything? The dead know not anything. Ecclesiastes 9:5.
10. Can the dead praise God? The dead praise not the Lord. Psalms 115:17.
11. How much can we know about God after death? For in death there is no remembrance of thee. Psalms 6:5.
12. Can we work or study after we die? There is no work...nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave. Ecclesiastes 9:10.
13. But don't the righteous go straight to heaven? David is not yet ascended to heaven. Acts 2:34.
14. When did David say he would be satisfied? I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness. Psalms 17:15. And the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. 1 Cor. 15:52.
15. By whom is redemption from the grave? For since by man came death...even so in Christ shall all

be made alive. 1 Corinthians 15:20, 21.

16. What two distinct groups will be resurrected? There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. Acts 24:15.
 17. When will the resurrection of the just take place? For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven...and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 1 Thessalonians 4:16.
 18. When will the resurrection of the unjust take place? And they (the righteous) lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. Rev. 20:4, 5.
 19. But how long will the righteous live? Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Luke 20:36; There shall be no more death. Revelation 21:4.
 20. The cornerstone of Satan's kingdom has been the lie "Ye shall not surely die". This is the lie he told Eve in Eden, and has been telling mankind ever since. And through the ages Satan has worked great miracles through people who claim to receive their power from the dead. The magicians of Egypt (Exodus 7:11); the witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28); the sorcerers (Daniel 2:2); and the damsel (Acts 16:16-18). Satan works just as powerfully today through religious leaders to deceive the unwary by stating that the dead are not really dead but alive, and that they can communicate to the living.
 21. What did God commend to be done to those who teach that the dead are alive? A man...or a woman...that hath a familiar spirit or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death. Leviticus 20:27.
 22. Can the devils work miracles? For they are the spirits of devils working miracles. Revelation 16:14.
 23. How can God's people avoid being deceived? They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Acts 17:11. To the law and the testimony, if they speak not according to this word there is no light in them. Isaiah 8:20.
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There has been a pronouncement by the Pope that the doctrine of hell-fire be more energetically preached by the church as an aid in restraining what has been an almost universal drifting away from God.

The Pope explained that while it is granted that the hope of going to heaven at death is a much-to-be-preferred motive for serving God, it is not as effective as it was hoped, and thus the only alternative is to resume the preaching of hell-fire, that through fear of this terrible punishment, the people might be kept more successfully in line with the church.

Regardless of what effect the Pope's pronouncement will have upon public opinion or upon Catholics specifically, it is very important that all thinking people endeavor to ascertain, if possible, just what the truth is about hell. Is the idea of eternal torture for the wicked actually taught in the Bible? If not, where did it originate? Let us examine these questions briefly and see what we will find.

The word hell itself is of Anglo-Saxon origin, and, before it was used in English translations of the Bible, simply meant a covered or hidden state. For example, the act of burying potatoes in the ground to protect them through the winter was calling "helling" the potatoes. They still follow the custom in Great Britain of helling their potatoes. Putting a thatch roof on a house was called "helling" the house, but it didn't mean to set the house on fire.

In the Old Testament there is only one word that is translated hell in our Common Version of the English Bible. That word is sheol. This word appears in the Old Testament sixty-five times. It is translated hell thirty-one times and pit three times. Obviously this inconsistency of translation has added to the confusion which exists in the public mind with respect to the condition of the dead.

True, the translators of our Common Version of the Bible were not Catholics, but they lived at a time when the papal-inspired doctrine of hell-fire and damnation was quite generally accepted, even in Protestant circles, and naturally this influenced their work to a large degree. Since the original meaning of the word hell, that is, to conceal, or cover, was not so much different from that of the grave, or pit, perhaps the translators took this into consideration and thus eased their consciences in using hell to translate sheol.

But they found it impossible to use the word hell in every instance as a translation of the Hebrew word sheol, for to do so would have put some of the most faithful servants of God mentioned in the Bible in a place of torment, hence they switched back and forth from hell to grave as suited their purpose best.

For example, the very first time the word sheol appears in the Old Testament it is used by the good patriarch Jacob. He is supposed his beloved son Joseph had been slain by wild beasts and was broken-hearted over his great loss. Mourning for Joseph he said, "I will go down into sheol unto my son mourning." (Gen. 37:35) In this text the translators have given us the word "grave," for otherwise it would have revealed that Jacob believed Joseph was in hell and that he expected to go there himself when he died. With the papal meaning of torture which has been attached to the word hell, this would have been too much for the average reader to accept.

The prophet Job prayed to go to sheol, but in translating this prayer the translators gave us the word "grave." (Job 14:13) Job had been going through much hardship and suffering. It had gotten to the point where he felt he couldn't endure it any longer, so he asked God to let him go to sheol where he knew he would be at rest. (Job 3:17-19) Had the translators given us the word hell in this instance, readers of the Bible would have soon learned that the hell of the Bible is not a place of torment, but a condition of unconsciousness--they would know that Job did not ask to go to a place where his suffering would be increased, and where it would last forever.

Another Old Testament prophet defines sheol for us in no uncertain words, saying, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in

sheol, whither thou goest." (Eccl. 9:10) What a wonderful revelation of truth this text would have been had the translators here given us the word hell to translate sheol, instead of the word grave, as they did!

The point is that sheol is the only hell of the Old Testament--the only hell that the people of God were told about for a period of 4,000 years. And what kind of place was it? It was a place of quietness and rest, a condition of unconsciousness, to which, they were taught by the prophets, both the righteous and the wicked go when they die, there to await the time when, by the power of the Creator, they would be restored to life in the resurrection.

The facts concerning hell as they unfold in the New Testament are fully in harmony with what is revealed in the Old. The New Testament was written in the Greek language, and here the Greek word hades corresponds to the Hebrew word sheol of the Old Testament. We know this from the fact that the Apostle Peter, in a sermon he preached on the Day of Pentecost, quoted a text from the Old Testament in which the word sheol appears, and in doing so, he translated sheol by the Greek word hades.

The text Peter quoted on this occasion was that of Psalm 16:10. It is a prophecy of the death and Resurrection of Jesus, declaring that Jesus' soul would not be left in sheol. First of all this proves that Jesus went to the Old Testament hell when He died: and it proves, also, that the Old Testament hell is the same as the New Testament hell. In both these instances the translators used the word hell. Here they were caught in a dilemma, for if they had used the word grave they would have put Jesus' soul in the grave, which would have been correct, but this would not have harmonized with the other papal inspired doctrine concerning the immortality of the soul.

We should be glad that Jesus did go into the Bible hell when he died, for thereby he provided redemption for those who are there. In Revelation 1:18 Jesus Himself states in this connection, saying, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore....and have the keys of hell and of death." The use of the term keys by Jesus is His way of assuring us that he will unlock the great prison-house of death and set its captives free.

This is quite in harmony with the last two uses of the word hell in the Bible--that is, in Revelation 20:13-14. Here John tells us that hell will give up its dead; and that after this, it will be destroyed. The symbol used to describe the destruction of hell is that of a lake of fire. It is generally supposed that the "lake of fire" is the Bible hell, but not so. John tells us that it is the second death, and that in it,

death and hell will be destroyed. Fire is one of the most destructive elements known to science, and the Lord employs it in His Word to picture destruction.

There is another Greek word in the New Testament which is translated hell, and that is Gehenna. This was the name of a deep ravine just outside Jerusalem which was used as a place for the disposal of the garbage and offal of the city. Fires were kept burning in Gehenna in order to effect the destruction of whatever was thrown into the valley.

Because of the circumstances associated with Gehenna, and because Jesus knew that the people of his day would understand His meaning, he used it as a symbol of destruction. Nobody was ever tormented in Gehenna--it was used exclusively for destructive purposes. In fact, the Jews were prohibited from the use of torture of any kind, even of animals.

That Jesus' use of Gehenna was for the purpose of symbolizing destruction, is clear from his statement "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." (Matthew 10:28) The translators use the word hell here as a translation of Gehenna, and it is rather strange that sincere readers of the Bible have not noticed that it is a place of destruction, not of torment.

In another reference to Gehenna, Jesus intensified the picture of destruction by referring to the ever-present worms which infest the dead carcasses. Speaking of adverse attractions which might come into a Christian's life to draw him away from the Lord, and symbolizing these by such highly prized things as hands and eyes, he said it would be better to cut off one's hand, and pluck out one's eye, rather than to cast into Gehenna, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Matthew 5:29, 30; 18:8, 9.

As we have seen, fires were kept burning continually in Gehenna, so that everything that was cast into the valley was destroyed. In the event that a carcass thrown into the ravine should not reach the fires but lodge rather on the jagged sides, these would be destroyed by worms. Thus, by these powerful illustrations, Jesus confirmed the universal teaching of the Bible, that the wages of sin is death, not torment.

The Scriptures teach that "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20), not be tortured eternally. So in telling us that the wages of sin is death, the