

So What Is The Difference Between Hell, Sheol, Hades, and The Lake Of Fire?

Much of our misunderstanding about Hell is due in part to the mis-translation of 2 key words: **Sheol** in the OT and **Hades** in the NT

Sheol is found 65 times in the Bible

It is translated "**the pit**" 3 times; "**the grave**" 31 times and "**Hell**" 31 times

Hades is found 11 times and is translated as "**Hell**" 10 times and "**grave**" once

Sheol / Hades refers to a place of temporary torment that we might refer to as the immediate (or present) Hell

Sheol is used to describe the realm of the dead. It simply means "*the place of the dead*" or "*the place of departed souls/spirits.*"

The New Testament Greek equivalent of **Sheol** is **Hades** which is also a general reference to "*the place of the dead*"

At the time of their death... the souls of those lost without Jesus go directly to Hades

There they suffer in torment until the time of The Great White Throne Judgment when they will be resurrected and cast into The Lake Of Fire

The Souls Of All The Lost Who Have Died Through The Ages Are There Today

Both the Greek and Hebrew words speak of the same place... that place we understand and believe to be the present Hell

But translation of these words becomes somewhat problematic because **Sheol** is translated "**grave**" as often as it has "**Hell**"

This has left some to mistakenly believe and teach that **Sheol** and **Hades** are only references to the grave

The most common word for "**grave**" in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word **qe'ber**.

qe'ber is found 64 times in the OT

It is translated "**grave**" 34 times; "**sepulcher**" 26 times; and "**burying place**" 4 times

From the differences between how **Sheol** and **qe'ber** are used, it becomes obvious that **Hell** and the Grave cannot be the same thing

And the Greek word **Hades** is used 11 times in the NT being rendered **Hell** 10 times and **grave** once

Death is linked with **Sheol** and **Hades** at least 33 times in the Scriptures

These connections give us a clear distinction between the "*outward man*" (The Body) and the "*inward man*" (The Soul)

Death is the grave and it claims the physical part of man, the body

Sheol / Hades claims the separated, spiritual part of man, the soul

Psalm 89:48 speaks of the time when the soul is separated from the body

The body is given over to death where it will decay, while the soul is assigned to **Sheol/Hades** to await the final judgment

At The Great White Throne Judgment, the body and soul of the lost will be reunited

At that time, "*death and Hades*" will deliver up the dead that are in them. (Revelation 20:13)

Their bodies will be raised from the grave and reunited with the soul which will come out of Sheol/Hades to be judged by Jesus Christ

Matthew 12:40 - Jesus said that He was in the heart of the earth, which is where we believe that **Sheol/Hades** is located. (Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:25-32)

The heart of the earth gives reference to something much deeper than a simple place of burial for a man's body barely under the surface of the earth.

Paul affirms this when he writes that before His ascension the Lord Jesus descended "*into the lower parts of the earth*" Ephesians 4 : 9

Before the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, everybody who died went to **Sheol/Hades** to a place called Paradise

At the time, Paradise was divided into 2 regions.

One was a place of torment while the other was a place of blessing, referred to as Abraham's Bosom (Luke 6 : 22-25)

Luke 23 : 42-43 - The Lord Jesus told the repentant thief that he would join Him in Paradise that same day

When Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He ascended to the Father, taking the saints who were in Abraham's Bosom to heaven with Him (Ephesians 4:8 says He took "*captivity captive*")

The fact that Paradise was moved to heaven is confirmed by Paul in 2 Corinthians 12 : 3-4 where he speaks of a man who was "*caught up into Paradise*" where he "*heard unspeakable words*"

With Jesus Christ's work now complete, believers who had been confined to **Sheol/Hades** were taken to Heaven to wait in God's presence until the time of their resurrection after which they will enter His Kingdom on Earth

There is another word which is translated as Hell in our English Bibles - Gehenna

(Matthew 5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33
Mark 9:43,45,47, Luke 12:5; James 3:6)

At least 11 times, Jesus uses this violent, disgusting place of filth to illuminate His point about the evil awaiting those who reject God the Father and His offer of salvation.

Jesus uses **Gehenna**, a real place folks could relate to, as a word-picture to help people comprehend the dangers they face

(Matt. 13:42) - **Gehenna** is described in Scripture as a “*furnace of fire*”

“*everlasting punishment*” (Matt. 25:46)

“*black darkness*” (2 Pet. 2:17)

“*the second death*” (Rev. 2:11)

“*a lake of fire burning with brimstone*” (Rev. 19:20; 20:10; 21:8).

The Lake of Fire is a term used in only a few verses near the end in the book of Revelation

Hell, outer darkness and **The Lake Of Fire** are all terms describing the final destination of those who reject Christ

The Lake of Fire is a literal place of everlasting fire originally created by God as a place of punishment for Satan and the angels that followed him in his rebellion against God (Matthew 25:41)

Because it is referred to as the place of “*outer darkness*” (Mat. 8:12; 25:30), it is believed to be located at the farthest reaches of the creation

The Beast and False Prophet will be the first occupants of The Lake Of Fire (Rev. 19 : 20)

Satan will eventually join them. (Rev. 20:10)

Other unbelievers, currently now in Hades, will join them at the end of the millennium. (Rev. 20 : 11-15)

VERSE 14 - The Lake of Fire is called the “*second death*.”

Verse 14 - Both death and Hades (...the temporary destination of the unsaved dead) will also be cast into the lake of fire

Verse 15 - Every person whose name is not in The Book Of Life will be cast into the lake of fire

There is no one in The Lake Of Fire at this time but it will one day hold a vast multitude.

It can rightly be viewed as The Future And The Final, Hell because it is where all of the wicked from all ages will finally end up.

There is one more word that is translated as Hell, used only once in the N.T.

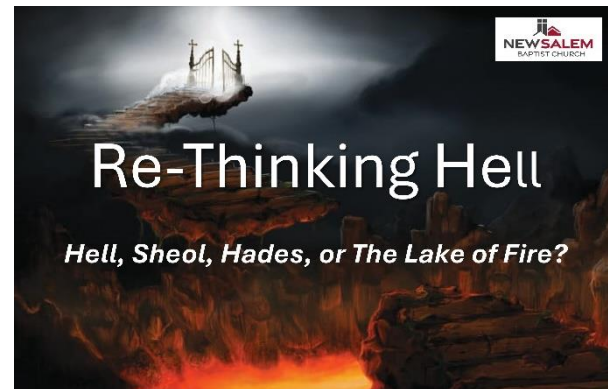
2 Peter 2:4 - The Apostle Peter used the word **tartarus** in reference to the angels that sinned that God delivered to **Sheol/Hades** to await judgment

The word, from Greek mythology, refers to the place of punishment for the most wicked

It is not clear if Peter was using this word in reference to **Sheol/Hades** in a general way, or if he was referring to a specific compartment where a certain class of fallen angels are confined awaiting final judgment

Either way, this passage teaches that there IS a place of confinement in which a particular group of beings are being held until the time of their judgment

This is totally consistent with the overall Biblical teaching about the existence and purpose of **Sheol/Hades**



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