

The Very Brief Survey of the Doctrine of Hell

1. Introduction

Hell is a doctrine, a reality that is very much ignored by the evangelical community. Yet, that Person, Who being Incarnate Love spoke more about this great truth than any other in all of Scripture. The Savior Himself warned against the place where there will be “wailing and gnashing of teeth”; the place where the “worm dieth not” (Mat 25:41-46).

Hell exists because God is a Holy-Righteous God and His very nature DEMANDS that He judge sin and unrighteousness. The doctrine of Hell should be one that brings us to a somber position as to our own sinfulness, our own inability of self-righteousness; for should it not be for the Grace of God and the finished Work of Christ, “we would all be men and women most miserable”.

The reality of Hell teaches us the enormous price to be paid if any one of us were to be saved. God the Father had to literally “give up” his only Beloved son, in order to bring about the salvation of any of us-sinners. Each of us and our sin brought about the death of Christ, in that God the Father saw fit to save those whom He loved; saving us (the Body of Christ) to a heavenly hope, and Israel and her Gentiles to an eternal, righteous earth.

There are essentially two main “hells” in Scripture:

- Hades (with its constituent “sections”)
- Lake of Fire

Hades is composed of several sections and provides a temporary holding place, where the Lake of Fire is the final torment experienced by all those who hate and reject God’s Gift - His Son.

The following sections provide a very brief synopsis of the various places that make up the total doctrine of Hell. Each section below briefly describes a portion of the graphic as illustrated in Figure 1.¹

2. Brief Comments on the Grave

There are two words that refer to what we call the grave – Geber (Hebrew) and Mnemion (Greek). Both refer to the earthly-place where the body of a deceased person lies. We call it the grave; a cemetery is made up of graves. The grave is merely the place on earth where the bodies of men and women return to dust. Given the Biblical World-View, death itself is evidence of the fallen nature of man.

3. Hades

The English word “Hades” is literally a transliteration of the Greek word ᾗδης. Our main text for understanding the place of Hades is Luke 16:19-31².

Lazarus and a rich man know each other throughout this life. Given the context of Like 16, both men are Jewish. This sets the context for understanding this accounting. Within the Jewish hope, those who have plenty are to make sure they take care of those who are without. In so doing, the rich publicly manifest their salvation. The Rich Man (notice that he is not referred to by his name, only Lazarus the Elected of God) NEVER helped Lazarus, thereby manifesting his reprobation³ here on earth.

Hades is generally believed to be in the center of the earth. This would explain much (Isa 5:14). A complete concordance of ᾗδης is as follows: Mat 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; 1 Cor 15:55; Rev 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14.

¹ Adopted from Larkin, Clarence, **Dispensational Truth**, Larkin Estates, Philadelphia (Glenside), PA, 1918, p.951/2.

² This accounting of the Rich Man and Lazarus is NOT Parabolic. Typically, Parables do not contain formal names, and in this case, Lazarus is clearly identified.

³ See Rodabaugh, Stephen, **Manifest Reprobation**, Trinity Grace Fellowship, Pittsburgh, PA. Circa 1986.

3.1. Abraham's Bosom

Abraham's Bosom is that section of Hades where all of the departed saints (Kingdom Saints) go. It is called Abraham's Bosom because Abraham is the "faith-father" of Israel's Hope and the father of the nation. Abraham was called the Friend of God⁴ and thereby is identified with all of the Jewish saints of God. Abraham's Bosom is a temporary-waiting place. The Jews are waiting for the Millennial Kingdom (Isa 60:1-11; Dan 12:13), whence they shall be resurrected and physically enter into that Kingdom, while the Gentiles wait for the "end" of the Millennium, whence they shall be resurrected and glorified and spend eternity on a perfect earth (Job 14:6-15; 19:23-27; Rev 21:23-27). Notice that unlike the Rich Man, Lazarus is comforted in death [vs.22]. Lazarus is Jewish. For the Body, we go immediately to be with the Lord (2 Cor 5:6-9).

3.2. The Fiery Section

The other side of "Hades" resides a place of fire and torment. This is the place where all reprobates from all time are temporarily held. The purpose of this place is to provide a temporary holding-place of torment for the reprobates of all time, waiting to be judged and condemned to spend eternity in the final hell. By their very nature these reprobates hate God, and God by His very nature must judge these condemned sinners. God is a God of due-process and will bring about His righteousness.

Notice several things in this account: (1) That this section of Hades is made up of flame [vs.24]; (2) That people from this section can see those in Paradise (Abraham's Bosom) and visa versa [vs.23]; (3) That there is personal and visual recognition of people [vs.23]; (4) That people have some type of body, similar to that which the person had on earth (given #3 above) [vss.23, 24]; That people have cognitive ability [vss.24-31].

3.3. The Great Gulf

A Great Gulf (Chasm [only here] - χασμα) separates the two main sections of Hades. It is small enough that people can speak to each other between the main sections, and large enough that no one can go between the two main sections. If we correlate this Great chasm with the Great Abyss in Revelation, then a remarkable scene is provided and many elements are brought to light.

The Great Gulf, also know as the "Bottomless Pit (Abyss - αβυσσος) is seen in Rev 9:1-11, as the source of the First Woe. This is also the place where Satan will be bound for 1000 years after the Millennial Kingdom (Rev 20:1-3). A complete concordance of αβυσσος is as follows: Luke 8:31; Rom 10:7; Rev 9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3.

3.4. Tartarus

Tartarus (English borrowed the word directly similar to Hades) is a most remarkable place, as recorded Biblically and in other ancient literature. Tartarus is literally the place were the Sons of God (Fallen Angels⁵ - Gen 6) are imprisoned, waiting to be released and start the "nephilimic" activity all over again (after the Rapture of the Body). We can correlate this angelic breeding with Zech 6 and Rev 6. The Sons of God in Gen 6 are angels that left their "First Estate" took upon themselves human form and had relations with the antediluvian woman. The progeny of this "union" are called the Nephilim. Gen 6 provides for us the historic basis for the pagan myths (Greek, Roman, Nordic, etc.). Upon the judgment of the Flood were taken and placed in "chains of darkness" waiting for Rev 6 and finally to be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire.

See 2 Pet 2:4 (ταρταρω – cast into Tartarus, to tartarize) and Jude 6.

The pagan accounts of Tartarus speak of prisons on the sides of walls in the Abyss. The angels imprisoned in these pit-caves are the "fathers" of the Nephilim.

⁴ Christ called Israel his friends (Jn 15:13-15), while members of the Body at the time of His crucifixion were called "Enemies" (Rom 5:10). This is yet another Pauline distinctive.

⁵ These are the angels of whom Jude says "left their first estate" and are imprisoned in chains and in darkness. Pagan sources talk about caves in the sides of the "pit", where the Titans have been imprisoned by Zeus.

3.5. Brief Comments on Sheol

A few comments are needed on Sheol. Sheol is the Hebrew word typically referring to Hades (Greek). Confusion has arisen when dealing with Sheol because it is a word that is used BOTH for Hades and the grave. Not understanding this has caused many to fall into the heresy of “soul sleep” and / or “annihilationism”.

Sheol = Hades + Grave. Thus, when we run across the word Sheol, if we know that it has both of these usages, then the context will tell us which one to use. We need only the Hebrew text to avoid the Doctrine of Soul Sleep.

4. The Great White Throne Judgment

The Great White Throne Judgment recorded for us in Rev 20:11-15 is the time and place for all reprobates to be judged according to their sins, sentenced, and cast into the final hell forever and ever. Tartarus and the fiery section of Hades all give up their dead to be judged, condemned, and to be sent to their second death (20:14). The Great White throne Judgment introduces us into the final Hell in our study – Gehenna (γέεννα).

5. The Lake of Fire

The Lake of Fire known in the Greek tongue as γέεννα and in the Hebrew tongue as Tophet is the final hell where all of the reprobates end up. The reprobates are judged according to their sins and cast into the final Lake of Flame and Torment. It is the place where Anti Christ and False Prophet are thrown into alive (Rev 19:20).

A complete concordance of Tophet is: 2 Kings 23:10; Isa 30:33; Jer 7:31, 32(2); 19:6, 11-14.

A complete concordance of γέεννα is: Mat 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mk 9:43, 45, 47; Luk 12:5; Jam 3:6.

Tophet was the Hebrew name for the valley where the Pagans and Israel forced their children to pass through the fire of Molech. The practice was utterly destroyed by King Josiah.

In Rev 19:20 we are provided a remarkable description of the Lake of Fire. It is said to be a lake of fire burning with brimstone. However, the Greek word for “brimstone” is literally θειος, which comes from the word family θεος meaning God. Thus, the Lake of Fire is quite distinct in torment than Hades. Where in Hades the flame is naturally caused (being in the center of the earth probably by molten rock), the flame or torment of the reprobate in Gehenna comes from being DIRECTLY connected to the Holy Righteous Brimstone. The pagans say they will become gods, in fact, they are directly coupled to the Godly Flame and tormented forever.

Rev 20:10 using the Granville Sharp Rule, utilizes the Figure of Hendiadys to describe the Lake of Fire - Gehenna. The phrase lake of fire and brimstone (του πυρος και θειου)⁶, where the second noun becomes an adjective of the first. This phrase should have been translated “godly-fire”.⁷

Recall the nature of the torment of Hades. A characteristic of the Hades' torment is that it is with others – people can talk to each other, touch each other, and commiserate with each other. In other words, there is a sense of “comradery-in-suffering” in Hades. In Tophet there is no such “comfort”. Gehenna is called “Outer Darkness” in Mat 8:12; 23:13; 25:30. This means that the reprobate, being DIRECTLY connected to the Godly Flame, is suffering all by himself; there is no sense of comradery, no one with which to discuss things, no one in which to find comfort. It is God and the reprobate TOGETHER, ALONE. Every atom in one's existence is on fire, being directly connected to God; the very fabric of one's psyche is burning, and there is no hope of comfort or end of torment. Utter pain and despair - **truly a sinner in the hands of an angry God.**

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23)

“For by grace [unmerited favor] are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God” (Eph 2:8)

⁶ θειου comes from the θεος word family.

⁷ This discussion on the discussion on θειος needs to be looked into in greater detail and the specific usage verified.

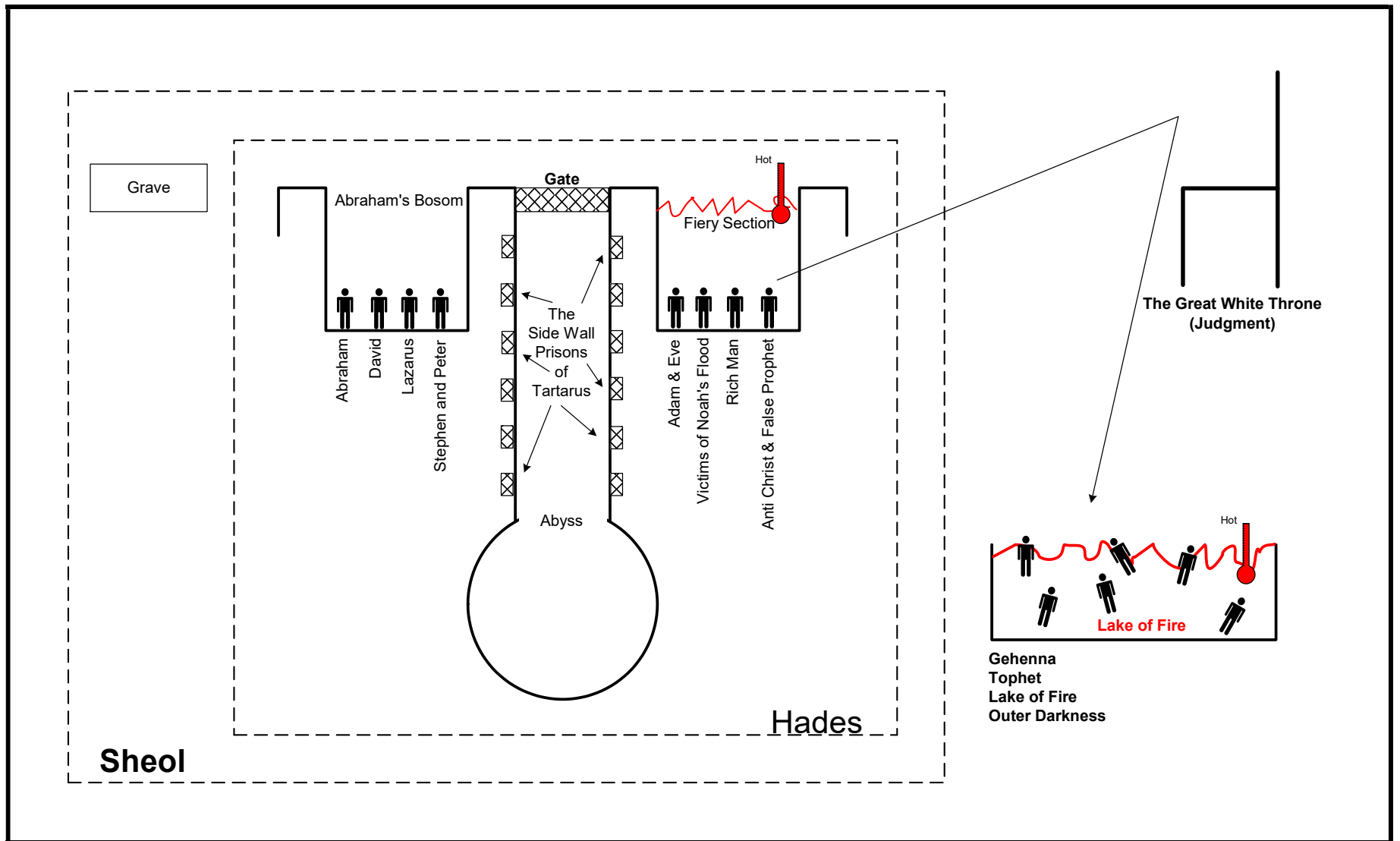


Figure 1. The Graphical View of the Hell of Scripture