

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF HELL

All doctrines in the Bible concerning every subject are **inspired and important**. All doctrines in the Bible are sacred and serious. Most doctrines in the Bible are neglected to some degree and very few churches actually teach doctrine or Systematic Theology.

But of all the doctrines found in the Bible there can be none more neglected or more serious than the doctrine of Hell. To consider the fact that there is a real place where conscious souls go forever as punishment that is identified as Hell is the most solemn of all the doctrines.

Quite frankly the language that is used to describe this place throughout Scripture is scary and sad. So we think it is fitting and extremely important to carefully crawl through Scripture to form the truth of our conclusions about the doctrine and subject of Hell.

QUESTION #1 – What is the source of our information about Hell?

Dr. Chafer observed that the doctrine of Hell does not come from human reason and will not be influenced by human sympathy (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, p. 427). **The source of our information about Hell is the inspired written word of God. Our authority for what we believe about Hell is the written word of God. This is our only authority. The concept of Hell comes from the Bible. It certainly does not come from the feelings or intellect of humans.**

The idea of eternal hell, eternal punishment, eternal condemnation, eternal perdition and eternal damnation is not the kind of doctrine that would ever originate from humans. Humans, quite frankly, don't like this doctrine. We will examine many passages of Scripture in this study but we cite six here to show that **Hell is a stated and revealed Biblical doctrine**:

Matthew 5:22 - Jesus says there is a place where guilty people go that he says is **the fiery hell**.

Matthew 5:29-30 - Jesus says two times there is a place where people are thrown, He names "hell."

Matthew 10:28 - Jesus says to fear God who is able to cast a **soul and body into hell**.

Matthew 25:41 - "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into **the eternal fire** which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;'"

II Thessalonians 1:8-9 - Paul says there is a punishment place that God has for retribution that is a place of "**eternal Destruction**."

Revelation 14:9-11 - John saw a place of God's wrath where one is **tormented with fire and Brimstone**.

Clearly just from these six passages we see that the subject and doctrine of hell comes from the Bible. This is a Biblical doctrine and we need to know Biblical doctrine from God's word.

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QUESTION #2 – Why study the doctrine of Hell?

There are at least six Biblical reasons for this study:

Reason #1 - Because Hell is a Biblical subject God has revealed in His word.

II Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable...” We also know that Paul said we need to be diligent to accurately handle the word of God so we are unashamed people (**II Tim. 2:15**). Our job is to know and defend what God has revealed. Hell is a critical doctrine in the Bible. We are to study and accurately understand what God has revealed.

Reason #2 - Because knowledge of Hell is necessary for a proper perspective of God.
Psalms 7:11; Rom. 9:22

As we will see, the character of God demands the existence of Hell. Hell wasn't created by Satan or humans; it was created by God. His character demands such a place. The more we learn about Hell, the more we learn about the character of God. Most people want to maximize the love side of God and minimize the just side or wrath side, but the subject of Hell doesn't permit that. At the end of the day, or better at the end of life on earth, is a Hell created by God.

Reason #3 - Because knowledge of Hell is necessary to justify the cross-work of Jesus Christ.
II Thess. 1:8-9

For God to actually permit His Son to go through what He went through demands the study of Hell. Dr. Chafer said, “if God could save one soul from one sin by mere generosity, He could save all souls from sin by generosity and the death of Christ thus becomes the greatest possible divine blunder” (*Ibid.*, p. 433). What Jesus Christ did, He did not do for some lightweight reason. He is not dying on a cross to save people from something mundane, He is dying to save them from Hell.

Reason #4 - Because knowledge of Hell is necessary to bring some to salvation. **Jude 23**

The truth is very few churches study the doctrine of hell. In fact, very few even mention it. Most talk about the love of God. But when we carefully read what Jude writes here, it is clear that one of the things that bring people to faith in Jesus Christ is the fear of being cast into eternal fire. Hell should be studied because some people will conclude I don't want to go there.

Reason #5 - Because Hell is necessary to us knowing God will justly right many wrongs.
Rev. 6:10-11

There have been many horrible and evil things done against God's people and Hell is a place to justly settle those scores. People need to know about this place and know why it exists. One may temporarily live a God mocking, Bible hating, Christ rejecting life. But when life is over, eternal Hell will become their forever existence.

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Reason #6 - Because Hell is necessary for us to be encouraged knowing that godly people will forever be blessed and separated from ungodly people who will be forever cursed and punished. **Psalm 7:9; Revelation 21:24-27**

QUESTION #3 – What sources do we reject as a source of our information about hell?

There are four main sources that we reject as our authority:

Rejected Authority Source #1 - We do not base our view of Hell on human reason.

Actually, we will discover that the idea of Hell may be fully supported by human reason. Norman Geisler said, “The existence of hell is supported by many arguments from both the authority of God’s word and the use of human reason” (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, p. 327).

However, the truth is the concept of Hell does not come from human reason, even though Hell is supported by reason. Frankly, humans have a mindset that revolts against such a doctrine. Humans don’t like the doctrine and many, even some believers, try to dismiss it from their minds by using rational arguments.

Humans use their reason to argue against Hell with various humanistic arguments. We will discuss these matters along the way later.

1) Why punish people in Hell and not reform them in Heaven?

God gives people plenty of time to reform and repent; Hell is for those who wouldn’t. Hell is not a temporal place of reform; it is an eternal place of punishment.

2) Isn’t eternal punishment in Hell a little much for temporal sins on earth?

Sins are committed against the Eternal God; if one refuses the gift of Jesus Christ that forgives all sins against the Eternal God, one must pay the Eternal price.

3) How could we be happy in heaven knowing there are loved ones burning in Hell?

Our happiness and worship in heaven will include people being in Hell (Rev. 19:3). Also heaven will be a wonderful happy place where God will wipe away tears (Rev. 21:4).

4) Why would God create people He knew would go to hell?

Nonexistence would be better than existence if there is a Hell.

God has a purpose for everyone. Just because many people die every day in a car accident doesn’t stop those who don’t die from driving.

5) If God’s goal is to save sinners, why have a Hell where people cannot be saved?

God’s only goal is not just to save sinners. The existence of Hell where people cannot be saved satisfies the holiness, the righteousness of God and the justice of God. We will discuss this later. Actually, Eternal Hell is demanded by the character of the Eternal God.

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6) Since people are born sinners and cannot change that, then how is it right to send them to Hell for that?

It is precisely this point that one is born a sinner and does sin, where people are offered Grace, Eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ that will and does change them.

7) Why not just annihilate sinners and not eternally punish them in Hell?

Humans are made in the image of God and cannot be annihilated but live forever.

8) Hell is contrary to the grace and mercy of God, so why would it exist?

Grace and mercy are in the cross of Jesus Christ and the patience of God in putting up with all kinds of abominable sins. God's perfect grace and mercy do not eliminate God's perfect holiness, justice and righteousness.

9) Everlasting punishment is not the same as being everlastingly punished. Why not just punish and have it over forever like Sodom and Gomorrah, rather than have it go on forever? Being created in the image of God means one will live somewhere forever and since faith in Christ brings eternal heaven, rejection of Christ brings eternal hell.

For a good discussion of these arguments see Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, pp. 340-347).

So our authority is not human reason. If it comes down to a choice to believe the word of God or believe what one reasons or rationalizes or argues, we stick with the inspired Scriptures.

Rejected Authority Source #2 - We do not base our view of Hell on human sentiment.

Human sentiment and human sympathy does not determine our doctrine of Hell. Just because someone feels as though they don't want or agree with or accept the doctrine, has nothing to do with whether or not it is true. Truth often initially goes against feelings and sentiment which is why there are so many admonitions to develop sound minds.

Our job is not to defend how humans feel but to determine what God's word says. As Dr. Chafer said, "The theologian...is appointed to discover and defend that which God has revealed" (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, p. 428). God's word takes a higher precedence over human reason and human sentiment.

Rejected Authority Source #3 - We do not base our view of Hell on religious opinions.

There are a variety of religious views on the subject of Hell. For example, some religions have invented the notion that when a person dies they go to some probationary place and may have a chance to get out later and escape. Others have invented their own concepts and opinions of what they think Hell is. Some think it is a party place where all friends in Hell have a good time.

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Jehovah's Witness teach that the soul ceases to exist when a person dies and therefore Hell is a state of non-existence.

Mormons teach that Hell is a temporary place where non-repentant people go to suffer for their sins for a while between their death and resurrection.

Islam believes that Hell is a place with seven layers that features fire and boiling water that is blazing, crushing, raging, scorching, furnace and infernal.

In 1439 AD, the Council of Florence and the Council of Trent (AD 1545-1563) developed their "erroneous doctrine of purgatory." They based their beliefs on the apocryphal book of II Maccabees 12:42. They concluded that a person's soul went to a place of temporary punishment, a limbo place and if prayed for and candles are lit, they can get out and go to heaven rather than Hell.

We don't base our views of Hell on religious opinions or viewpoints; we base our view of Hell on the inspired word of God.

Rejected Authority Source #4 - We do not base our view of Hell on sensational experiences.

Every now and then someone will claim they saw Hell or went to Hell and then came back. They tell a sensational story of how they were permitted to come back. The fact is if they really went to Hell they don't get out and they don't come back. We don't base our view of Hell on any of that. It may make for a riveting story, but not sound doctrine.

But Dr. Chafer really summarized the truth against this religious opinion when he wrote: "Uncounted legions of angels have sinned and for them there is not the slightest intimation to be found in the Bible which extends to them a ray of hope. By divine decree these angels are already consigned to the lake of fire, not under a possible proviso that this doom which be averted if in the meantime they repent; but they are arbitrarily, unrevokably consigned to retribution that without remedy" (*Ibid*, p. 429).

The study of the doctrine of Hell must be based on the word of God for this is the only inspired truth we have on the subject.

QUESTION #4 – What is the root cause of all false information and thinking about Hell?

From the Scriptures, we may conclude that Satan is behind any untruth or twisting of truth or any false views when it comes to real truth about Hell.

Satan is a liar. He has his arsenal of false ministers who are also deceptive liars. They appear as ministers of light, but they proclaim theological distortions and lies. **Satan does not want people knowing the truth of God on any subject, especially a subject like Hell.**

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Jesus Himself said, “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (**John 8:44**).

In that very context, two times Jesus says if anyone keeps My word, he will not taste death, speaking of eternal death (**John 8:51, 52**).

Paul said in **II Corinthians 11:13-15** that Satan has false ministers who proclaim false messages appearing as good ministers.

Naturally, these kinds of devilish ministers are not going to proclaim the truth about Hell.

QUESTION #5 – What are two main theological reasons why humans question the existence of Hell?

Undoubtedly there is a pride within humans that does not want to concede the truth or submit to the truth about any doctrine, especially one like Hell. But when it comes to this doctrine the real issue is people don't know truth about God.

When it comes to admitting the existence of Hell, there are two theological root causes of human speculation that humans, quite frankly, do not know:

Root Cause #1 - Most do not know about the magnitude of sin and guilt as it relates to God.

If God could have forgiven one sin of one person just by overlooking it, He would have compromised His holiness that demands judgment for sin.

Root Cause #2 - Most do not know about the majestic holiness and righteousness of God.

In Proverbs 9:10 we read: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and **the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.**” Clearly one of the basic things to grasp that is a key to understanding God's truth about Hell is the realization that **God is Holy**.

These are two critical issues most humans know very little about. The holiness of God demands Hell because sin is so egregious and offensive to God. Man has little or no sense of sin as it relates to the Holy God.

It is more than just a coincidence to see what David says and predicts in **Psalm 22:1-3**. In this Psalm, David is setting forth precisely what Jesus would cry while taking the full brunt of the wrath of God for sin - “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Right after crying this out, immediately it is written, “**Yet, You are holy**” (22:3).

What we conclude from this is that the extreme punishment of sin, in which one is abandoned by God, is clearly connected to the Holiness of God.

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This is the reason why so many humans fail to understand the reality of and the necessity of Hell. They do not comprehend or even care to comprehend the matter of sin as it relates to the Holiness of God.

QUESTION #6 – Does the Bible teach that Hell is a real place?

This is an important question to answer because many make Hell out to be a thought or state of mind or a present condition of life. Certainly one place to begin is to ask does the Bible teach that Hell is a real place? What does the Bible say?

1. **Matthew 5:22** - Jesus said one who is guilty will go “into the fiery hell.”
2. **Matthew 5:29-30** - Jesus warned that one could be “thrown into hell and go into hell.”
3. **Matthew 8:12** - Jesus said there is a **place** of outer darkness with weeping and gnashing teeth.
4. **Matthew 10:28** - Jesus said fear the one who can destroy body and soul in hell.
5. **Matthew 11:23** - Jesus says to the people of Capernaum that “you will descend to Hades.”
6. **Matthew 13:42** - Jesus said there is a place of fiery furnace with weeping and gnashing teeth.
7. **Matthew 16:18** - Jesus described this place as having “**gates**.”
8. **Matthew 25:41** - Jesus will cause an accursed one to depart from Him “into the eternal fire.”
9. **Mark 9:44** - Jesus says there is a Hell where one may go that is **unquenchable fire**.
10. **Luke 3:17** - John said Jesus would burn up the chaff of rejecters with unquenchable fire.
11. **Luke 10:15** - Jesus said Capernaum would be brought down to Hades.
12. **Luke 16:23** - Jesus said the rich man was in Hades in torment.
13. **Luke 16:28** - Jesus said one in Hell requests brothers not “come to this **place** of torment.”
14. **James 3:6** - James says there is a Hell behind iniquity.
15. **Jude 13** - Jude says men will go to a place of black darkness forever.
16. **Rev. 1:18** - Jesus says he has the **keys** of death and Hades. **Keys imply a real place**.
17. **Rev. 9:2** - John saw a great furnace like a bottomless pit.
18. **Rev. 14:10-11** - John saw a torment place of fire and brimstone that burns forever and ever.
19. **Rev. 20:1** - John saw some scary abyss and an angel had a **key** to it, implying a real place.
20. **Rev. 20:13-14** - Jesus throws all unbelievers into lake of fire.
21. **Rev. 21:8** - There is a lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

Now we ask a simple question: does the language of the Bible teach Hell is a real place? **The obvious answer is “yes.” Also carefully observe who it is that is speaking the most in describing Hell - Jesus Christ.**

Specific References and Inferences to Hell by Jesus Christ

There are 22 specific references and contexts in which Jesus Christ specifically speaks of or alludes to a judgment place of Hell. He refers to this the most of any Person in the New Testament. He is the One who actually knows about this place and what it is like.

- 1) **Matthew 5:22** - Jesus said one may be guilty to go “into fiery hell.”
- 2) **Matthew 5:29-30** - Jesus warned that one could be “thrown into hell.”

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- 3) **Matthew 7:19** - Jesus alludes to the fact that one could be “cut down and thrown into the fire.”
- 4) **Matthew 8:12** - Jesus states there is a place where there is outer darkness and weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- 5) **Matthew 10:15** - Jesus said a judgment would come worse than Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 6) **Matthew 10:28** - Jesus said fear God who can “destroy both soul and body in hell.”
- 7) **Matthew 11:22-24** - Jesus said there would be a judgment descent “to Hades.”
- 8) **Matthew 13:40-42** - Jesus said there is a place of fire where there is weeping and gnashing teeth.
- 9) **Matthew 13:50** - Jesus said one may be “thrown into a furnace of fire” where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
- 10) **Matthew 18:7-9** - Jesus mentions a place of “eternal fire” and “fiery hell” where one may go.
- 11) **Matthew 22:13** - Jesus mentions a place of “outer darkness” where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
- 12) **Matthew 24:51** - Jesus mentions a place where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
- 13) **Matthew 25:30** - Jesus mentions “outer darkness” and “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
- 14) **Matthew 25:41** - Jesus says there is a place one may be judged of “eternal fire.”
- 15) **Matthew 25:46** - Jesus said there is a place of “eternal punishment” and “eternal life.”
- 16) **Mark 9:42-49** - Jesus speaks of judgment of “unquenchable fire,” “hell.”
- 17) **Luke 12:46-47** - Jesus spoke of a place where unbelievers go.
- 18) **Luke 13:28-30** - Jesus spoke of a judgment place of “weeping and gnashing teeth.”
- 19) **Luke 16:23-31** - Jesus speaks of “Hades,” “agony in flame,” “place of torment.”
- 20) **Luke 17:26-29** - Jesus speaks of a judgment of “fire and brimstone.”
- 21) **John 15:6** - Jesus speaks of casting one into fire to be burned.
- 22) **Revelation 1:18** - Jesus says He has the keys of death and Hades.

Now certainly a logical question to ask is why would Jesus Christ refer to this judgment place so many times if it were not a real place? Jesus Christ is referring to this because it is a very real place. He created it. He has seen it. He knows what it is like.

Jesus Christ specifically says that Hell is a real place. We must conclude that the Bible does clearly reveal that Hell is a real place. Just as the Bible reveals that Heaven is a real place, so it also does with Hell.

QUESTION #7 – What are the different words that are used to refer to Hell?

The English word “Hell” is a word that is used to describe a place where souls go when one dies, who are not in a right relationship with God, due to their sin and evil. It is a place of punitive punishment that is a place of fiery torture and torment. The actual Old English word “Hell” (first used around AD 725) does not occur in the O.T. or the N.T., but the word and concept of Hell is actually developed and supported by many words and passages in both the O.T. and the N.T.

The English word “Hell” was used often in the King James Bible some 31 times as a replacement for the actual words used in the Hebrew and Greek Text.

Most of the time the NASV will translate the word as it really is, but it does in rare instances substitute the noun “Hell.” For example, in Matthew 5:22, the Greek literally reads “into the Gehenna of fire” and the NASV translates “into the fiery Hell.”

There are several different words that are used in the Bible that refer to Hell and enable us to form a true doctrine of Hell.

Word #1 - In the Old Testament the word “Sheol” is used to describe where the souls of the dead actually go.

The actual Hebrew word “Sheol” means a hollow, subterranean place (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 798). The word “Sheol” is used about 65 times in the O.T. and is translated into various English words, especially by the King James Bible. The KJV Bible translates this word “Sheol” by the word “Hell” (31 times); “Grave” (31 times), “Pit” (3 times).

A good definition of Sheol is this: **Sheol is the name of a subterranean O.T. place of post mortem existence for all people who died; both believer and unbeliever. It is a subterranean place apparently comprised of two chambers - an upper chamber and a lower chamber. The upper chamber is a place of comfort and the lower chamber is a place of torment.**

If we track the uses of the word, we may observe the following:

- 1) Sheol refers to **the place a dead person goes when he dies.** Job 17:13; Ps. 16:10; Is. 38:10
Once a soul is in Sheol, he does not get out or return to earth. - Job 7:9; 16:22;
II Sam. 12:23

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- 2) Sheol refers to the place where all dead people go - **both believer and unbeliever.**
Gen. 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31 (Jacob)
Numbers 16:30, 33 (Korah, Dathan, Abiram)
Job 14:13 (Job)
Psalm 55:15 (Evil deceitful people)
Proverbs 9:18 (wicked dead in the depths of Sheol)
Isaiah 38:10 (Hezekiah)
- 3) Sheol refers to a place where **the believer's soul exists** that will be delivered by God.
Ps. 16:9-11; 49:15
- 4) Sheol refers to **the deepest part of a place where a soul is that has been cut off from God. This part of Sheol is a dark and deep place upon which rests God's wrath. Those there are alone and cut off from any access to God Psalm 88:3-7**
- 5) Sheol is a place where **sinner and the wicked and enemies of God go when they die.**
Job 24:19; Ps. 9:17; Ps. 31:15, 17
- 6) Sheol is a place that has **depth levels. Proverbs 9:18; Ez. 26:20**
- 7) Sheol has a part to it in **the lower levels that is terrifying - Ez. 26:21**

Now some of the Sheol passages are very informative in forming doctrine about Hell:

- 1. Deuteronomy 32:22** - God says, "for a fire is kindled in My anger and burns to the lowest part of Sheol..." The word "sheol" is an Old Testament used to describe a place where the dead go or dwell. It is clear from this that the lowest part of Sheol is a place of burning fire
- 2. Psalm 9:17** - David writes: "The wicked will return to Sheol even all the nations who forget God." This is more than just a promise that the wicked will die and go to the grave. This is a promise that they will enter a place for the wicked in Sheol. This place, as we learn from N.T. information from Jesus Christ, is a place of fire and torment.
- 3. Psalm 16:10-11** - David writes: "For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol nor will you allow Your holy one to undergo decay." Now this cannot mean that God would not allow David to die and his soul go into eternity. What is stated here is that his soul will not go into the part of Sheol where it is abandoned by God. **Verse 11** says he would be in the presence of God and enjoy eternity forever. The assumption here is that there is a place in Sheol that burns with fire and a place where one is abandoned by God.
- 4. Isaiah 66:24** - Isaiah writes that when God creates a New Heaven and New Earth that those who transgressed God are burning in a fire not quenched, their spirit will not die and they will be an abhorrence to all mankind.. Although "Sheol is not specifically mentioned, it is clear in this O.T. prophecy that there is a place where transgressors are punished where the fire is not quenched.

Word #2 - There is the noun "Hades."

Hades is a N.T. Greek word that is used to describe a place of afterlife punishment. This particular Greek word is often used in the Septuagint to take the place of the noun "Sheol." For example, in Isaiah 38:18, the Septuagint uses the Greek word "Hades," rather than the Hebrew word Sheol.

In Acts 2:27, 31 Luke quotes Psalm 16:10 and replaces the Hebrew "Sheol" with the Greek "Hades." But Hades reveals a great deal about Sheol we would not otherwise know. The Greek word "Hades" is used ten times in the New Testament - **Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27; 2:31; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13; 20:14.**

The noun Hades in the N.T. brings new significant data to the noun Sheol of the O.T.. What we learn is that **Hades is a place that is described as being a hellish, burning place of horrible fiery torment, where an unbeliever goes to exist, until he is cast into the everlasting Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14-15).** Hades describes a place of terrible torment for the wicked (Luke 16:23-25, 28). When one is in this place he cannot get out of it.

Word #3 - There is the noun Abaddon. Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Ps. 88:11; Prov. 15:11; Rev. 9:11

This word is used five times in the O.T. and one time in the N.T.. The emphasis of this word is that this is a place of the ruined dead, a place of destruction (*Ibid.*, p. 1). It is a place of destruction for the unbelieving dead.

Word #4 - There is the place called "Abraham's bosom." Luke 16:22-23, 26

Abraham's bosom is a place of comfort for O.T. believers who died. It is apparently in in close proximity to Hades with a gulf or chasm between the two places (Luke 16:26).

Word #5 - There is the noun Tartaros. II Pet. 2:4

The Greek word is translated into English by the word "Hell" in this verse. It is only used one time here by Peter. In Jewish literature, this word described a place where the wicked are punished. It is a place of punishment for the wicked- both angels and humans.

Word #6 - There is the word Gehenna. Matthew 5:22; 23:33

Jesus uses this very word in **Matthew 5:22** when He warns one may be cast into "the Gehenna of fire." In **Matthew 23:33**, Jesus uses the term when He warns of being condemned and sentenced to this place. So Gehenna is clearly a description of a punishment place where people are casted and burn.

Word #7 - There are the words "the lake of fire and brimstone." Rev. 19:20; Rev. 20:10; Rev. 20:1; Rev. 21:8

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Word #8 - There is the word “abyss.” Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3

This describes a place that is bottomless that is a place of the dead and demons.

Word #9 - There are the words “pits of darkness.” II Peter 2:4

QUESTION #8 – When does a person actually go to Hell?

A person who goes to Hell goes immediately at the moment of death - Luke 16:22-23.

We learn from Revelation 19:2 that one who is sentenced to Hell is sentenced based on a righteous and true judgment. The location difference between the lost and saved is experienced at death.

QUESTION #9 – What is Hell actually like?

Revealed Fact #1 - It is a place of torment. Luke 16:23, 28 - a torturous torment pain

Revealed Fact #2 - It is a place of agony. Luke 16:24 - a horrible suffering type of pain

Revealed Fact #3 - It is a place of very real consciousness.- people in hell aware of many things

1) A person is conscious of the fact that he is missing out on a heaven environment.

Luke 16:23-25

2) A person is conscious mentally, and can see, think and speak. **Luke 16:23-24**

3) A person is conscious of the pain he is in and experiencing. **Luke 16:24**

4) A person is conscious of complete memories. **Luke 16:25, 27-31**

5) A person is conscious of the relief he is not receiving. **Luke 16:24**

6) A person is conscious of the life he lived for himself. **Luke 16:25**

7) A person is conscious of the inescapability of his eternal existence. **Luke 16:26**

8) A person is conscious of the relatives left behind on earth. **Luke 16:28**

9) A person is conscious of the burden he has not to see others end up where he is.

Luke 16:28, 30

10) A person is conscious of the blessed eternity he is missing. **Luke 16:23-24**

11) A person is conscious of the fact that he will never escape or get out of Hell. **Luke 16:26**

12) A person is conscious of the Word of God he rejected. **Luke 16:29-31**

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Revealed Fact #4 - It is a place of darkness. **Matt. 25:30** - very dark place with no light

Revealed Fact #5 - It is a place where people weep and gnash their teeth. **Matt. 13:42; 25:30**

There will be a continual crying and weeping and a continual biting of teeth. It appears to be simultaneous action continually.

Revealed Fact #6 - It is a place of torment forever and ever. **Rev. 14:11; 19:3; Rev. 20:10**

It is clearly stressed that this is a “forever” place. This is an eternal place where one is “forever and ever.” The word “torment” is one that refers to torture. Examine someone by torturing them.

Revealed Fact #7 - It is a place where there is no rest either day or night. **Rev. 14:11**

No rest or relief ever.

Revealed Fact #8 - It is a place of Fire.

- 1) It is a place of unquenchable fire. Matt. 3:12; Mark 9:44, 48
- 2) It is a place called a furnace of fire. Matt. 13:42, 50
- 3) It is a place of eternal fire. Matt. 25:41
- 4) It is a place called “the lake of fire.” Rev. 20:14, 15
- 5) It is called “the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.” Rev. 19:20; 20:10; 21:8

Revealed Fact #9 - It is a place of black darkness. **II Pet. 2:17; Jude 13**

This word “black” describes a gloomy, dark place.

Revealed Fact #10 - It is a place of everlasting disgrace and shame. **Dan. 12:2**

Revealed Fact #11 - It is a place of everlasting contempt. **Dan. 12:2**

People in Hell will not be pitied, but be held in contempt.

Revealed Fact #12 - It is a place of eternal destruction. **II Thess. 1:9**

Revealed Fact #13 - It is a place that does not have the presence of God. **II Thess. 1:9**

Revealed Fact #14 - It is a place that does not have any reflection of God’s glory. **II Thess. 1:9**

Revealed Fact #15 - It is a place of complete judicial abandonment by God. **Matt. 7:23**

Revealed Fact #16 - It is a place of no mercy. **Luke 16:24** - no possibility of mercy or grace

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Revealed Fact #17 - It is a place that has worms that do not die. **Mark 9:48**

Revealed Fact #18 - It is a place that features various dark pits (plural). **II Pet. 2:4**

Revealed Fact #19 - It is a place that apparently has entrance gates. **Matt. 16:18**

Revealed Fact #20 - It is a place to which one descends down, not ascends up.
Matthew 11:23; Ephesians 4:9

Revealed Fact #21 - It is a place where spirits are in prison. **I Peter 3:19**

Revealed Fact #22 - It is a place referred to as a waterless pit. **Zech. 9:11; Luke 16:24**

Absolutely no water anywhere. No water to drink, wash, refresh. Not even a mist to cool.

QUESTION #9 – What is the theological basis for the existence Hell?

The theological basis for the existence of Hell is the perfect attributes of God.

Attribute #1 - The holiness of God demands Hell. Habakkuk 1:13

There are different aspects to the Holiness of God. For example, there is Majestic Holiness in which God is separated in His holiness from every other created thing - Ex. 3:5; 15:11; I Sam. 2:2; Job 15:15-16; Ps. 99:9; 111:9; Is. 57:15; Rev. 15:4). But there is also a Judicial Holiness in which God demands a penalty and payment for sin and provides the legal and judicial means of saving a sinner. Terms such as “righteousness,” “redemption,” “propitiation” and “justification” are all terms that have to do with the judicial side of God’s holiness. (Rom. 3:23-26). This judicial side of God’s holiness means that if one does not have the case legally settled, one will go to Hell. God’s Holiness demands that.

Joshua 24:19 - God’s holiness cannot just overlook sin and forgive it.

Job 34:10 - God is so holy that He cannot ever be connected to any wrong or wickedness.

Habakkuk 1:13 - God’s holiness cannot approve evil or overlook wickedness.

Attribute #2 - The righteousness of God demands Hell. Deut. 32:4; Ps. 9:4; Ps. 89:14;
Rev. 19:2;

Attribute #3 - The perfect justice of God demands Hell. Deut. 32:4; Ps. 9:4; Ps. 9:9; Ps. 89:14

Two aspects to the justice of God: Remunerative and Retributive. Both demand Hell. Perfect Justice demands Hell. God cannot just overlook or forget about sin. Jesus Christ is very clear to point out that judgments are just (John 5:30).

Attribute #4 - The fair judgment of God demands Hell. Ps. 9:8, 16; Rev. 19:2

Leviticus 19:36 demands just decisions and judgments be made in everything. Psalm 19:9 stresses the fact that the judgments of God are all righteous and true.

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Attribute #5 - The sovereignty of God demands Hell. Matt. 13:41-42; Ps. 115:3; Is. 14:27

If man in his evil and sin can escape Hell, man's sovereignty wins over God's sovereignty. God is not in total sovereign control.

Attribute #6 - The proper praise of God demands Hell. Ps. 9:14; Rev. 19:3

Attribute #7 - The love of God that permitted His Son to be crucified demands Hell. Rom 12:9

God's love demands right hatred or it is hypocritical. We cannot possibly begin to appreciate the love of God until we understand that His love and provision for us is that which enables us to escape condemnation (John 3:36; Romans 5:8).

Attribute #8 - The eternality of God that came up with an eternal plan demands Hell.

For Hell to be an eternal place, it must be a place ordained by an Eternal God (Gen. 21:33; Is. 57:15; Lam. 5:19; I Tim. 1:17).

Attribute #9 - The immutability of God demands Hell.

God cannot change in His attitude and treatment of sin - Ps. 102:27; Mal. 3:6; James 1:17; Heb. 1:12).

Attribute #10 - The Omnipotence of God demands Hell.

Luke 12:5 specifically says God is to be feared because He has the power and authority to cast one into Hell. God is the only One with this authority. Man and Satan cannot overpower God.

Attribute #11 - The Unity of God demands Hell.

All three members of Godhead involved in the plan of salvation and the plan of condemnation.

Attribute #12 - The Hate of God demands Hell.

God's hatred is a hatred that is never irrational or overly emotional. God's hatred is rational, reasonable and volitional. God's hatred is always right, just, holy and perfect. Now God makes it clear that His hatred demands a place where He may cast away those He hates forever. In other words, God's perfect hatred demands Hell - Hosea 9:15-17; Psalm 5:4-6; Psalm 11:5-6.

Attribute #13 - The Veracity and Truth of God demands Hell. Num. 23:19; II Sam. 7:28; Rom. 3:4; **Titus 1:2**

When God says there is Hell, there must be Hell for He cannot lie.

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Attribute #14 - The wrath of God demands Hell. Nahum 1:2; Romans 1:18; 2:8-9;
Rev. 15:1; 16:1ff

Attribute #15 - The vengeance of God demands Hell. Nahum 1:2; Rom. 12:19

God's vengeance demands that He takes vengeance and pours out wrath on those who are His enemies.

QUESTION #10 – What is meant by the word “eternal” as related to Hell?

One of the key, critical words connected to Hell is the adjective “eternal.” The word “eternal” is used 65 times in the N.T. and it is used to qualify nouns that are clearly connected with Hell:

- 1) The word “eternal” describes “eternal fire.” **Matt. 18:8; 25:41; Jude 7**
- 2) The word “eternal” describes “eternal punishment.” **Matt. 25:46**
- 3) The word “eternal” describes “eternal sin” that makes forgiveness impossible. **Mark 3:29**
Some manuscripts read “eternal judgment and eternal sin.”
- 4) The word “eternal” describes “eternal dwellings.” **Luke 16:9**
- 5) The word “eternal” describes “eternal destruction.” **II Thess. 1:9**
- 6) The word “eternal” describes “eternal judgment.” **Hebrews 6:2**
- 7) The word “eternal” (olam in O.T., but same in Septuagint) describes “eternal burning.”
Is. 33:14

From these uses of the word “eternal” we may conclude that this adjective is used in connection with the subject of Hell.

The question that needs to be answered is this - why does God use the word “eternal” in connection to Hell and what does the word actually mean? Why didn't God leave out the word “eternal” and just say words like fire, punishment, destruction and judgment? Why did He qualify those nouns with the word “eternal?”

The actual word “eternal” (aiwnos) refers to a space of time without end. Actually the word refers to a space of time without beginning or end (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 15). Joseph Thayer adds that it means something that will never cease, or something that will always be (*Greek Lexicon*, p. 20). Arndt and Gingrich, in their *Greek Lexicon*, say the word emphasizes something “without end” (p. 28).

Mouton and Mulligen, two esteemed grammarians who trace N.T. Greek words in secular usage says, “In general, the word depicts that of which the *end time* horizon is not in view...” (*Greek Vocabulary*, p. 16). Plato, in his use of this word in Greek, the word eternal refers to that which is timeless (Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 198).

We must conclude that when this word “eternal” is used in regard to Hell, **it is referring to a place and punishment that will never end.** This word states that Hell is not a temporal place of punishment, but an eternal place of punishment.

If a person ends up in Hell, it is clearly an eternal place and an eternal existence. What that means is one is being punished in a place of burning fire, judgment and destruction that will never end. One in this place is in this place forever.

QUESTION #11 – What is the false teaching of purgatory?

Many Roman Catholics and Anglicans and Eastern Orthodox Churches believe in a third alternative place where the souls of the dead go called Purgatory.

The false teaching of purgatory is a Catholic doctrine that was introduced and developed from the Catholic Council of Florence in AD 1430 and the Council of Trent in AD 1545-1563.

According to Catholics, purgatory is a period of temporal punishment for sins after death and before heaven. Purgatory is a place of cleansing, purification and sanctification before one enters heaven.

The purpose of this supposed place is to provide a place after the soul leaves the body where sins that could send one to hell are cleansed.

The Council of Trent made this declaration and said it was infallible: “If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged, either in this world or in Purgatory, before the gates of Heaven can be opened, let him be anathema” (Cited from Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, p. 363).

There are five different concepts that Catholics have taught concerning Purgatory:

- 1) Purgatory is a purification place one goes before entering Heaven.
- 2) Purgatory is a place that involves some kind of pain or suffering.
- 3) Purgatory is a place where those there may be helped by the prayers, support and devotion of those living on earth.
- 4) Purgatory is an actual place.
- 5) Purgatory is a place where souls are for a certain temporal amount of time.

The Catholics base their view of purgatory on four main sources:

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Source #1 - The Apocryphal book of II Maccabees.

The Apocryphal books are part of the Catholic Bible and in II Maccabees 12:39-46, the Jews prayed that sins of those who had died would be forgiven them. This is actually where the idea of praying for the dead was originally devised. So the conclusion was there is a place beyond death where sins can be faced and cleansed.

Source #2 - Matthew 5:26

In this verse Jesus says, “you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent.” The Catholics take the position that this means there is a place one may go that is time limited and payment limited, which is purgatory.

The point Jesus is actually making is the point that in this life before one dies, one needs to take care of the sin issues because once one leaves this earth, complete repayment will be impossible.

Source #3 - Matthew 12:32

Jesus says the sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or the age to come. Catholics take the position that this implies that there is the possibility that some sins can be forgiven once one leaves this world.

The point Jesus is making is that if one commits this sin one will never be saved. There is no possibility of forgiveness. This very verse actually refutes the idea of Purgatory which states one there may be saved.

Source #4 - I Corinthians 3:15

Paul says that when a believer faces the Bema Seat judgment of Jesus Christ and did not do any good works, his works will be burned up yet he will be saved “yet so as through fire.” The Catholics take this to mean there is a temporary purification punishment place after death.

The context is rewards or loss of rewards for believers (I Cor. 3:11-15). At the Bema Seat Judgment every believer will give an account of what he/she did. There will be those who are rewarded and those who are not rewarded. This has nothing to do with purgatory.

QUESTION #12 – Why do we reject Purgatory?

There are those who are very confused on this point. J. Oliver Buswell, in his theology, said that he heard more than one supposed fundamental minister say that Christians were so sinful in their behavior that it was only logical that there be a time of purification after death before they entered heaven (*A Systematic Theology of Christian Religion*, p. 322). There are several reasons why we reject this:

Reason #1 - Because Purgatory is nowhere taught in the Bible.

There is not one hint anywhere in the Bible that once one leaves this world, they go to a place where they get a second chance. This is clearly a place that has been invented by men.

Martin Luther, who at one time had been a Catholic, said, "As for purgatory, no place in Scriptures makes mention thereof neither must we in any way allow it; for it darkens and undervalues the grace benefits and merits of our blessed, sweet Savior Christ Jesus."

Reason #2 - Because Purgatory denies the sufficiency of Christ's suffering and cross work.

Shortly before Jesus was crucified, He prayed to His Father and He said that He had "accomplished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4). When Jesus was on the cross, He cried "It is finished" (John 19:30). What that means is the sin case is fully paid for and met by and in Jesus Christ. So there is no other place where someone may go to pay for sins.

Reason #3 - Because purgatory directly contradicts the Bible that teaches when one leaves the body, one goes directly to Heaven or Hell.

Hebrews 9:27 makes it clear that judgment occurs at death. II Corinthians 5:8, Paul says to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. In Philippians 1:23, Paul said that when he died he would "depart and be with Christ." In Luke 23:43, Jesus told the thief "today you will be with Me in Paradise." In Luke 16, both the rich man and Lazarus were immediately in Hades and Abraham's bosom.

Purgatory is in total contradiction to the written word of God.

Reason #4 - Because purgatory is a works based merit system of going to heaven and not a faith based grace system of going to heaven.

It is stressed in many passages that the matter of going to heaven has nothing to do with works and the matter of going to hell has everything to do with works. Romans 4:5 and Romans 11:6 make it clear that works or merit have nothing to do with one going to heaven.

Revelation 20:13-15 that works have everything to do with one going to Hell. So while **a works based merit system will put one into Hell, it will never put one into Heaven.** This in itself refutes the idea of Purgatory.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer discussed the lost estate of man's condition in Ephesians 2:12 and he said, "No more decisive terms could be employed than those which describe men as being without Christ, without promise, without God, and without hope" (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, p. 429).

There is no such place as Purgatory and if one leaves this world without Christ, one will be in Hell without any hope of escape.

QUESTION #13 – Where is Hell located?

At the present time, while we are here on earth, we may start by saying, from our perspective, “Hell is in the unseen world.” **We do know that Hell is located in the opposite direction of God and Heaven.**

There have been two views as to where Hell is actually located:

View #1 - It is a dark black hole that is somewhere in outer space.

View #2 - It is downward in the center of the earth.

Rather than speculate on this, we base our conclusion on a multitude of texts:

- 1) Numbers 16:30-33 - the physical location to this place was a “descent.”
- 2) Job 33, 24, 28 - the location into this pit is “down.”
- 3) Psalm 55:15 - the location is “down.”
- 4) Psalm 63:9 - the location is “the depths of the earth.”
- 5) Proverbs 1:12 - the location for those evil was to “go down to the pit.”
- 6) Proverbs 7:27 - the location to the death chamber was a “descending” location.
- 7) Isaiah 5:14-15 - the location destiny is to “descend” into it.
- 8) Isaiah 14:15 - the individual is “thrust down” to the “recesses of the pit.”
- 9) Ezekiel 26:20-21 - the location is “down”, “lower parts of the earth” “down to the pit.”
- 10) Ezekiel 32:27 - the location was “down.”
- 11) Luke 10:15 - Jesus said Hades was a place where one is “brought down.”
- 12) Ephesians 4:9 - Paul said Jesus “descended into the lower parts of the earth.”
- 13) II Peter 2:4 - Peter says “cast into Hell,” into “pits of darkness.”
- 14) Revelation 9:1-2 - When the pit abyss is open, smoke ascends up.
- 15) Revelation 13:11 - A beast was “coming up out of the earth.”

It cannot be a mere coincidence that all of these passages inform us that the location of this place is down, not up. It is in the depths of the earth.

If we form our conclusions based on what Scripture reveals, we conclude that Hell is not some black hole in outer space. **Hell is a dark place of fiery, eternal, conscious punishment for wicked and sinful unbelievers that is located down in the center of the earth and once one is in this place, he/she never gets out.**

QUESTION #14 – What is annihilationism?

Annihilationism is the false belief that the wicked will not suffer in everlasting hell, but will just be “snuffed out of existence” after the final judgment. This belief is that there will be no place of conscious eternal torment and that after judgment they will experience “non-existence.”

We reject annihilation of the wicked because the Bible teaches contrary to this. Everything we have covered previously to this is contrary to the concept of annihilation.

Those who hold to annihilation do so on the basis of four main arguments:

- 1) Biblical references to the **destruction** of the wicked implies they no longer exist after they are destroyed – Phil. 3:19; I Thess. 5:3; II Thess. 1:9; II Pet. 3:7 The simplest answer to this faulty view is that **destruction is not the equivalent of ceasing to exist. Judgment destruction is not the same as nonexistent extinction.** In I Corinthians 5:5 the word “destruction” is used and it certainly does not mean annihilation.
- 2) Annihilation is more consistent with the love of God than eternal existence of burning in Hell. The simple answer to this is if that is the concept one has of the love of God, their concept is not accurate for **apparently it is consistent with all of the attributes of God, including His love. God’s love is not simply an emotional issue**, but a volitional issue. God in His love provided a way for everyone who wants to escape Hell to escape Hell. Any who want a relationship with Him may have it. In love for the people of this world, He put His Own Son on the cross to take their place. If they do not accept His gift of salvation, they will receive condemnation because they rejected His love.
- 3) Annihilation makes more sense than Hell because it solves the disproportionate time problem of temporal sins and eternal punishment. There are several ways to refute this, but one of the simplest ways is to remember **that temporal sins for a believer does not prevent everlasting life for the believer and temporal sins for an unbeliever does not prevent everlasting condemnation for the unbeliever. Both systems are based on temporary time in life and both systems are eternal.**
- 4) Annihilation is a better option for eternity because a perfect new created universe would be better if there were no wicked existences anywhere. **The simple answer to this is that God’s great glory and character is forever honored at the highest level by the realization that He punished evil and triumphed over it forever.** God’s people will forever honor God and Jesus Christ, knowing they deserve eternal punishment and only escaped it by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

QUESTION #15 – What was the view of Hell in the history of the Church?

Before we examine this, it is interesting to note that Plato, the Greek philosopher (427-347 BC), believed in Hell. He wrote: “Those who have been guilty of the most heinous crimes and whose misdeeds are past cure...are suffering tortures because of their misdeeds, literally suspended as examples in their prison house in Hades...”.

Ignatius (AD 110) said whoever rejects what “the Lord Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, endured on the cross... shall go to hell.”

Polycarp (AD 69-155) said you threaten to burn me with fire that lasts for an hour, “but you are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment reserved for the ungodly.”

Irenaeus (AD 125-202) said God has prepared fit habitations for those right with Him and those who are not. The place for those not right with Him he describes as a place of “prepared darkness suitable to persons who oppose the light.” He said they “shall justly incur punishment and those who avoid the light shall justly dwell in darkness.”

Tertullian (AD 155-225) said that the heathen “deserve our pity...we set before you the promise which our sacred system offers.” “...it threatens with the eternal punishment of an unending fire those who are profane and hostile...”

Justin Martyr (AD 100-165) said the wicked will “undergo everlasting punishment”. He said “hell is a place where those are to be punished...”

Augustine (AD354-430) said there was a place prepared called “the eternal fire of Hell.” An immortal soul must go to one of two places forever. An eternal place of punishment or an eternal place of life.

John Chrysostom (AD 347-407) said we have been made partakers of eternal blessings, “that He might offer us the kingdom of Heaven not that He might cast us into Hell and deliver us to the fire; for this was made not for us, but for the devil; but for us the kingdom has been destined and made ready of old time.”

Anselm (AD 1033-1109), speaking of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross said, “one soul coming forth from torment draws countless souls with him out of hell...”

Thomas Aquinas (AD 1225-1274) said, “It must also be known that the condition of the damned will be the exact contrary to that of the blessed. Theirs is the state of eternal punishment...” He went on to say their punishment is fourfold: 1) Their countenance will be “as faces burned”; 2) They shall “never deteriorate” although burning with fire; they will “never be consumed.” 3) They will be weighed down and “chained” never to get out; 4) They will forever rot “in their dung.”

Martin Luther (AD 1483-1546) said, “the damned will be judged, constantly they will suffer pain, and constantly they will be a fiery oven, that is, they will be tortured within by supreme distress and tribulation.”

John Calvin (AD 1509-1564) said all of us by our own corrupt and depraved nature are “guilty in His sight and by nature the children of hell.”

The idea of praying for dead people to get out of a judgment place came from the apocryphal book of II Maccabees 12:39-45. In that passage the Jews prayed for the dead that their sins might be forgiven them. Catholic theologians say their prayer for the dead is derived from II Sam.1:12; 3:31-35 and then they site the Apocraphal writing of Tobet 4:18.

Catholics cited the possibility of getting out of purgatory in Matthew 12:32 which they claimed left room for not committing sins that would keep one there. They also cite Zechariah 9:11 that present the possibility of God getting out of the pit with no water. They also allude to Matthew 5:28–Jesus says He will not release prisoners until complete repayment of debt.

QUESTION #5 – What are some of the O.T. passages that imply the existence of Hell?

There is no question as we just observed that Jesus Christ is the only One who comes from Heaven who is in the best position to give us fuller knowledge of hell. It is the New Testament that develops the doctrine. But there are some passages in the O.T. that do reinforce the idea.

1. Genesis 3:15 - it is clearly stated as part of the judgment on Satan that there would come one who would “bruise His head.” Now bruising ends up meaning burning. Because in Revelation 20:10, Jesus Christ casts the Devil “into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

5. Daniel 12:2 - Daniel writes: “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.” When we track this through the New Testament we learn that at this resurrection, those in contempt are thrown into “the lake of fire.” These people held Jesus Christ in contempt so for all eternity, they will be burning held in contempt by God.

Even though the full development of the doctrine of hell is not given until the New Testament and much of that revealed by Jesus Christ, Himself, there are glimpses of it.

QUESTION #6 –