

## HELL

Through me lies the road to the city of grief.  
Through me lies the pathway to woe everlasting.  
Through me lies the road to the souls that are lost.  
Justice impelled my mighty architecture:  
The Power Divine, and primal love and wisdom  
Surpassing all, have here constructed me.  
Before I was created, nothing was  
Save things eternal.  
I shall last forever.  
Abandon hope, all ye who enter here!

*(Dante Alighieri, "The Divine Comedy - The Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso",  
from a translation by Lawrence Grant White, New York, Pantheon Books, 1948, page 4-5.)*

### AN OVERVIEW OF REFERENCES TO HELL

In **The Holy Bible, I Thessalonians 1:5-10**, "All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you (*Matthew 25*) and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from Heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. **He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be *punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed.*** This includes, you, because you believed our testimony to you."

In, **The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel**, (1897), Dr. Walther is quoted. "**It is a damnable heresy to speak of Hades, as modern theologians do, where man will have another chance to be converted.** Incalculable harm is done by this doctrine. May God keep you from embracing it!"

In, **The Great Divorce - A Fantastic Bus Ride from Hell to Heaven, A Round Trip for Some But Not for Others**, (*MacMillan Publishing Company, 1946, page 38-39.*) C.S. Lewis writes,

"Well, it's obvious by now, isn't it, that you weren't quite right. Why, my dear boy, you were coming to believe in a literal Heaven and Hell!"

"But wasn't I right?"

"Oh, in a spiritual sense, to be sure. I still believe in them in that way. I am still, my dear boy, looking for the Kingdom. But nothing superstitious or mythological..."

"Excuse me. Where do you imagine you've been?"

"Ah, I see. ***You mean that the grey town with its continual hope of morning (we must all live by hope, must we not?), with its field for indefinite progress, is, in a sense, Heaven, if only we have eyes to see it? That is a beautiful idea.***"

"I didn't mean that at all. Is it possible you don't know where you've been?"

"Now that you mention it, I don't think we ever do give it a name. What do you call it?"

"We call it Hell."

In, **A Summary of Christian Doctrine - A Popular Presentation of the Teachings of the Bible**, (*Edward W.A. Koehler, D.D., second revised edition prepared for publication by Alfred W. Koehler, 1952, page 311.*) "We should not allow our imaginations to run wild (e.g., Dante's Inferno.) but must confine ourselves to what Scriptures say. ... (***Hell is) not annihilation, but eternal rejection and (banishment) from the blissful presence of God*** ... (Matthew 25:41) 'weeping' indicates pain and despair, while

'gnashing of teeth' indicates raging and helpless fury. ...The suffering of the lost is intensified by the fact that they are aware of the bliss of the saints in Heaven. ...They are tormented in body and soul. (Matthew 10:28, Luke 16:23, 24.) It is idle to speculate on the nature of this fire and of these torments; let us rather give heed that we never experience them. *There is no relief from the torment of Hell.* ... This presentation of eternal damnation is so repugnant to many that they mitigate it by proposing a universal restitution. This idea suggests that after a shorter or longer period of suffering...all the lost will finally be restored to the communion of God. **The Apology to the Augsburg Confession declares "Christ...shall condemn the ungodly to be punished with the devil without end.** (Article XVIII, Triglot, page 335). There will be varying degrees of punishment. "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the man who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows." (Matthew 12:47-48) "But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. ... But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you." Thus, (Hell may be) more tolerable for someone who never heard the Gospel, than for someone who heard the Gospel and rejected it. The place of Hell cannot be fixed geographically. Some cite descriptions as concrete clues to its whereabouts. **But their context clearly indicates that they are figures of speech, not hints of location. All descriptions are meant to encourage us to flee from the wrath to come.** (Matthew 3:7, 12.)

In, Luther's Small Catechism - (edited by C. Gausewitz - NPH, 1956,) Hell is defined as "**The final condition** and place of the unbelievers and evil angels condemned by God to eternal punishment." **Damnation is defined as, "everlasting punishment in hell."**

In, The World's Great Religions, (by the Editorial Staff of Life, 1958), Hell is cited in the replication of the Apostles Creed, "descended into hell." The publication presents the parable of the tares and the wheat with its reference to "furnace of fire, wailing and gnashing of teeth," as well as the 1 Corinthians warning, "...drinketh damnation to himself," (KJV), but does not expand on the idea at all.

In, Unger's Bible Dictionary - (Merrill F. Unger, Moody Press, Chicago, 1966.) **Hell is "a term which in common usage designates the place of future punishment for the wicked.** In many instances, other meanings are expressed by this term, which must be recognized to prevent any mistakes and confusions. In some cases, it refers to the grave, in others to the place of disembodied spirits without any necessary implication as to their happiness or unhappiness. This fact, however, does not militate against the correctness of the belief indicated by the common use of the term, a belief which rests upon many passages of Scripture for its support"

**The "Seminary Dogmatics Notes", 1978**, in section E. Eschatology, part 3, Eternity, point 1 state, "**The wicked, persistently rejecting Christ, will suffer eternal damnation in hell. It is a fact, as real as eternal salvation, is essentially a separation from God. The place of damnation is hell, a "somewhere", whose "location is not revealed** (though) it is customary to refer to Heaven as above and Hell as below the earth." However, this is a subjective attempt to illustrate the vast difference between the experience of one and the other.

In, Living Religions, (third edition, Mary Pat Fisher, 1991), in the chapter on "Christianity", "hell" is referred to, and that only in passing in a quote from an interview with a Roman Catholic missionary.

The NIV Nave's Topical Bible 's listing (Zondervan, 1994.) states, "In the NIV, 'hell' usually translates the Greek *ge-ena* and *hades*, but is conceptually the same as the Hebrew *Sheol*, usually rendered 'grave,' the unseen world and abode of the dead. ... **In the NT hell is the unseen world...a place of torment...and of captivity for fallen angels."**

In, **A History of the World's Religions**, (*eleventh edition, David S. Noss, 2003*), in the two chapters that describe the “opening phase” and “the religious development” of Christianity, there is no reference to Hell or to eternal punishment.

In, **Heaven and Hell**, (*Brian Keller, NPH, 2007, p. 95.*) we are told, “We can be just as certain that there is a hell as we are that there is a heaven. ... The Bible teaches that both are real.” ... **“(Those in Hell) will know that they could have been in Heaven. This thought will torture them for all eternity.”**

## CURRENT ACCEPTED DEFINITIONS AND USAGES

**Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus**, (*Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1976*), provides the following definition, “**a place or state of the dead or of the damned**, <went to hell for his sins>,” and accompanying synonyms: “abyss, barathrum, Gehenna, hades, inferno, netherworld, Pandemonium, perdition, pit, Sheol, Tophet. Related words would be, “limbo, Styx, Tartarus.” Idioms would be, “the hot place, infernal regions, place of torment.” **The antonym: “heaven.”**

**Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary**, (*Eleventh Edition, 2003*), defines Hell as

1. a. a nether world in which the dead continue to exist : HADES  
b. **the nether world of the dead and the demons in which the damned suffer everlasting punishment.**- often used in curses (go to ~) or as a generalized form of abuse (the ~ with it)  
c. Christian Science: error. See 2b, sin
2. a. a place or state of misery, torment, or wickedness (war is ~ W.T. Sherman)  
b. a place or state of turmoil or destruction (all ~ broke loose)  
c. a severe scolding; also FLAK, GRIEF (gave me ~ for coming in late)  
d. unrestrained fun or sportiveness (the kids were full of ~) -often used in the phrase *for the hell of it* often to suggest action on impulse or without a serious motive (decided to go for the ~ of it)  
e. an extremely unpleasant and often inescapable situation (rush hour ~)
3. archaic: a tailor's receptacle
4. used as an interjection (~ I don't know!) or an intensive (hurts like ~) (funny as ~); often used in the phrase *hell of a* (it was one ~ a good fight) or *hell out of* (scared the ~ out of him) or with 'the' or 'in' (moved way the ~ up north) (what in ~ is wrong, now?)
5. used idiomatically
  - from hell: being the worst or most dreadful of its kind hell on; very hard on or destructive to (Constant traveling is hell on your digestive system.)
  - hell or high water: difficulties of whatever kind or size (She will stand by her convictions come hell or high water.)
  - hell to pay: dire consequences (If he is late there'll be hell to pay.)
  - what the hell: used to express a lack of concern about consequences or risks; (It might cost him half his estate, but what the hell.)

## BIBLE PASSAGES CONTAINING THE WORD “HELL” - KJV

It should be noted that the English word “hell” is a translation of Hebrew and Greek words. However, the word itself is a descendant of Middle English from Old English; akin to Old English *helan*, “to conceal”, Old High German *helan*, Latin *celare*, Greek *kalyptein*, before the 12th century. The references which use each of the following words and which are listed in the addendum were found in Robert D. Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Holy Bible, eighth edition, revised, 1952, and in, The NIV Complete Concordance, compiled by Edward W. Goodrick & John R. Kohlenberger III, 1981.

**In the Old Testament, “Hell,” is an English translation of the Hebrew word, she-ol, the “unseen state.”** The general idea is “the place of the dead.” Translated variously as “hell,” “grave,” “pit,” and “death.” However, in addition to the focus on temporal death, physical death, there are enough hints and, in some places, more than hints, of the difference in the conditions of those who have left our physical reality behind, but still experience another plane of existence.. Some depart to an enjoyable afterlife. Others depart to a miserable afterlife. *See addenda A for examples.*

**There are those passages in the KJV Old Testament where sheol is translated as “hell.”** The KJV translators simply translated every use of sheol as, “hell.” The NIV translators took the contexts into consideration in an attempt to distinguish between the use of the word as a reference to “grave,” “pit,” or, (physical) “death.” *Those OT KJV passages are listed in addendum B*, together with the NIV 84 translations for the same passages. In every reference where “sheol” appears, the ESV simply capitalizes it, “Sheol.” So the ESV translations are not reproduced in addenda B.

**“Hell” in the New Testament is a translation of the word “Hades”,** from the Greek word, *a-dayz*, the unseen world. A term only found in the NT, it is comprehensive, similar in significance to *sheol*. It refers to the underworld or region of the departed, the intermediate state between physical death and physical resurrection. However, our Lord clearly associated judgment and suffering with the condition of some of the inhabitants of “hades,” thus teaching that there is another plane of existence whose experience is “unpleasant.” *See addenda C* for the use of this word in the NT.

**The Valley of Hinnom**, Greek, *ge-en-a*, Gehenna, was a place where, during the Jewish apostasy, the rites of Moloch, were celebrated. (I Kings 11:7) It was converted by King Josiah into a place of abomination where dead bodies were thrown and burnt. (II Kings 23:13, 14.) Hence the place served as a symbol, and the name was appropriated to designate the abode of lost, i.e., condemned spirits. The term was used by our Lord in this way. Thus it is properly translated as “hell,” when referring to the eternal state of the lost after their resurrection. There is a need to study contexts to insure which definition should be applied, i.e., merely “death,” that is, to be separated from the temporal / material world (all people die) or, “hell,” that is, to be relegated to permanent separation from God’s presence and all his blessings, forgiveness, salvation, resurrection. *See addenda D.* Once again, KJV is first, NIV 84 follows in parenthesis, ESV is italics.

**Tarturus** is drawn from ancient Greek mythology. It was said to be a deep abyss used as a dungeon for torment and suffering for the wicked. **According to Plato in *Gorgias*, @400BC, the place where souls were judged after death and the wicked received punishment.** According to news reports dated April 2, 2013, in southwestern Turkey, near Istanbul, Italian archaeologists claim to have discovered the cave entrance that served as the origin of the idea of a “gate to Hell.” **The Greek root, *tar-ta-ra-o*, means to incarcerate.** This word is used only once in all of the NT. **2 Peter 2:4.** “... but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;...” (KJV) “...but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment...” (NIV 84) “...*but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; ...*”. (ESV)

**Many phrases found in Scripture are meant to serve as figures of speech, descriptive or illustrative in nature in respect to the experience of Hell.** We can relate to them and, in doing so, come to grips with

the “unpleasant” nature of Hell. It is important to remember that, at death, “the dust (body) returns to the ground it came from,” and the “spirit returns to God who gave it.” (Ecclesiastes 12:7.) “It is appointed to each person once to die and then the judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27). Prior to Jesus’ return and the physical resurrection of all flesh, the experience of Heaven or Hell after death is not a physical one. However, it does impact on a given individual’s personhood, the spirit or soul, that which is immortal, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. (Some propose the notion that, in respect to an actual passage of time, one’s existence in the timeless estate of Heaven or Hell moves instantaneously from physical death to Jesus’ return and resurrection. Others propose that “Hell” is just the general resting place of all those who suffer physical death. After the resurrection of all flesh, the final condemnation and imprisonment will be declared and the souls of those who rejected Jesus remanded to a physical Hell.)

**Many passages propose that a spirit can be in pain.** If you have had dealings with the mental state of chronic depression, you have witnessed such pain. Some types of stress, largely presented as an emotional state, can impact on the physical well-being of a given person. Therefore, it is not difficult to relate to those descriptions which speak of a painful *intellectual, emotional, spiritual* existence after death. However, when Jesus returns in glory, all people will be resurrected, in the sense of receiving a physical body, a “shell,” for their spirit, once again. Then Heaven will be the new pristine physical universe and Hell will become a physical environment / experience, also. In reference to the “perfection” of pain as a consequence of being given a new physical shell, *Inferno* offers,

(Dante) I said to him, “O master, will these torments  
After the mighty sentence, be increased,  
Or mitigated, or remain unchanged?”

(Virgil) And he replied, “Your science teaches you  
That true perfection has the greatest sense  
Of pleasure -- hence, the greatest sense of pain.  
Though these ill-fated souls cannot arrive  
At true perfection, yet they will be nearer  
After the Judgment Day, then now.” (*op cit, Inferno, page 11.*)

The key that opens up the revelations about Hell is to summarize the Bible’s presentation of death as “separation from God’s blessings,” that is, “shut out from the presence of the Lord and the majesty of his power.” (1 Thessalonians 1:5-10) As physical death means to be separated from any and all of God’s temporal blessings, which are bestowed upon both the righteous and the unrighteous, so eternal death is to be separated from all of God’s blessings, temporal and spiritual, for eternity. Consider one of the contrasts between Hell and Heaven. In Hell, there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, a great and endless bitterness. In Heaven, God shall wipe every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more mourning, but only pleasures at God’s right hand forevermore. References to this contrast abound. **See addenda E for the “unpleasant” aspect of Hell.** The KJV is in normal font. The NIV 84 is the (parenthetical presentation.) The ESV is in *italics*.

## THE ORIGIN OF HELL AND NATURE OF ITS INHABITANTS\_

Originally, Hell was created by God as a “prison” for those angels who rebelled against Jehovah’s singular (unique) superior authority. They expected to be served by the human race. It was beneath them to be either Jehovah’s servants, or the servants of human beings. In the Old Testament, in Isaiah 14:12-15, the reference to Satan’s pride is reflected in the description of the arrogance of the king of Babylon. It suffices to reveal this same arrogance in Lucifer, the shining one. “...I will raise my throne above the stars of God...I will make myself like the Most High.” (See also Ezekiel 28:11-19.) In addition, we have the following testimonies.

1. **Rebellion and defeat.** And there was war in Heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in Heaven. The faithful angels fought back and overpowered Lucifer and his angels. They were defeated and “lost” their place in Heaven; the cancerous infection was removed. The great dragon was hurled down --that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. (Revelation 12:7-9)
  
2. **Creation of a “prison” existence with restricted mobility / interaction; the “vicious dog on a chain“ existence.** And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home, these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment, on the Great Day. ... (Jude 6) One day, the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. ... The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself, do not lay a finger.” (Job 1:6) ‘Legion’ begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. (Luke 8:31) God did not spare Satan and his rebel angels from judgment, nor did He plan for their redemption. He prepared a “prison” for them. They are “cursed,” separated from God. They are “bound” with everlasting chains, limited in their activity by God who serves as “warden.” They are placed into “gloomy dungeons.” Misery is their state of mind. They are “kept in darkness.” They never were and never will be privy to the details of God’s plans and purposes. They are “held for final judgment,” the public confirmation of their “no parole” status on Judgment Day. (*For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Hebrews 2:16*)
  
3. **Hell is their constant emotional and mental existence.** In so far as a spirit can feel humiliation, pain, bitterness, and rage, that is all the demons know. They have lost their place in Heaven. They have been hurled to earth. As presented in the opening chapters of The Book of Job The best they can expect is to be used in the service of God, to his glory, a humiliating thing since they hoped to rule over him. They are nothing more than dogs chained by their Master and only allowed as much room to roam as He may allow.
  
4. **Those who live in rejection of God’s grace in Jesus Christ stand condemned already,** (John 3:16-18) **and will be “sent” to that same level of experience/existence:** “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matthew 25:41) Jehovah sees no need to create a separate hell for human beings. And misery loves company. Satan and the other demons seek to “break down“ faith in Jesus so that those who reject Jesus will be condemned to join them in hell where they then can “commiserate” with one another. However, Satan has no authority to send anyone to Hell. Yet, while in Hell, both he and the demons have a limited amount of movement and interaction with the human race; he may “roam through the earth and go back and forth in it.” (Job 1) They are the “spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms,” about whose schemes we are warned, and against whose schemes Christians are well armed. (Ephesians 6:6-10) Since seeking the counsel of witches and mediums was condemned by Jehovah -Leviticus 19:31, Isaiah 8:19-22- some argue that consulting a witch to bring up Samuel’s spirit and the ensuing appearance of Samuel’s “ghost” argues for the ability of fallen angels to mimic a deceased human’s appearance and personality and be used by God to further the hardening of those who already have rejected their relationship with Jehovah. Note Paul’s testimony, “Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, *whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.*” (1 Timothy 1:20)

## THE EXPERIENCE OF HELL.

In the first place, without the use of metaphors, figures of speech, what Hell is like would be difficult to communicate to flesh and blood creatures bound by the restrictions of time, the physicality of this universe, the misconceptions of self-righteousness, the philosophy that there is always “light at the end of the tunnel,” and the “mulligan” attitude / philosophy reflected in the false teaching of reincarnation. In addition, though life on earth may be miserable for some of its people some of the time, for all of its people some of the time, and for some of its people all of the time, there is no experience of this universe that can compare to being separated from all of God’s blessings, spiritual and temporal, all of the time. But, as in the fellowship of the Holy Christian Church on earth, or in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, we may have a “foretaste” of Heaven, so in the various afflictions of this world there may be a “foretaste” of Hell. In addition, by God’s planned inspiration of all of its contents, the Holy Bible only provides what may be described as a progressive revelation about Hell. Briefly reviewed, progressive revelation means that a given teaching is evident and can be supported from Genesis through Revelation (the whole counsel of God), however its essence and its details become more clear as we ‘progress’ from the Old Testament scriptures through to the end of the New Testament scriptures. In other words, in respect to any subject, it is wisdom to gather the whole counsel of God together (systematic theology) rather than rely on only one passage. In addition, it would be a mistake to forget that certain passages incorporate figures of speech while others are meant to be taken on face value.

### **Sidebar A. - Progressive Revelation: a brief review using examples.**

**1. The Trinity:** Scripture progresses from the rather abstract Genesis 1:26, “Let us make man in our image,” pronouns to the more specific naming of “us” and “our”, as found in Matthew 28:18-20, “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

**2. Satan, the devil:** From Genesis 3:1, “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the animals the LORD God had made,” the anonymous possession of an animal by some unnamed being, we are led to the more specific naming and nature of that being in Revelation 12:9, “the great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.”

**Sidebar B. - The Bible as literature:** It also is important to distinguish between literary types in reading and understanding God’s revelations. Some examples would be

**1. Historical narrative** - most of the Bible consists of, or contains, historical narrative. Examples would be Genesis, Joshua, 1 Samuel, Daniel, Matthew, Luke (1:1-3), Acts (1:1-4), Paul’s Epistles, Revelation 1:9-10. Because the Holy Spirit controlled the writing process, the descriptions are to be taken as accurate to what actually happened, as if a reporter had been there to see and record his observations.

**2. Poetic imagery** - However, the Bible often utilizes figures of speech to communicate not only the event, but also the emotions accompanying the event. The Psalms provides numerous example of this. In that songbook, poetry often is an accurate description of history, but in describing or predicting history, the Holy Spirit may use images that characterize a person or describe an event in a figurative fashion, as in Psalm 22. “When I was woven together in the depths of the earth” (Psalm 139:15) is a figurative description of David’s growth and development in his mother’s womb. No one would expect to find knitting needles in her womb, or to find it constructed of mud and rock. A form of expression may be used to convey meaning or heighten effect often by comparing or identifying one thing with another that has a meaning or connotation familiar to the reader or listener. It is important in interpreting Scripture that we do not impose how we would use the figure of speech today, but rather how it was understood and utilized by the people of the time at which it was written.

**3. Symbols** - The Bible often uses iconic images familiar to the people of the day or numerology as it was understood in ancient times to represent an idea or a concept. Examples: Daniel 2:36,ff. Daniel 7 - 12.

Revelation 1:11, Revelation 1:19-20. Symbols often represent concepts or principles. The number ten in Hebrew numerology represents the concept of completion or perfection of an action or governing principle. Cubing ten takes that concept to what we would call the “nth” degree of completion. So, a thousand years (10 x 10 x10) is not merely 1,000 - 365 day years, but represents the total era of time during which certain principles will govern the experience of the people on earth, both believers and unbelievers. Jesus doesn’t really have a double-edged sword coming out of his mouth, but his words can both bless or condemn those who hear them. We call this the principle of Law and Gospel.

**4. Understanding the literary type within its context determines appropriate interpretation (rephrasing, rewording,) and application.** Such interpretation may be categorized as

**A. inference**, “From this statement it follows that...”, If the Bible states that, “Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit,” it follows that the Old Testament prophets were controlled by the Holy Spirit as they proclaimed their revelations to God’s people.

**B. deduction**, moving from a general or universal principle to a specific statement “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” The Holy Spirit controlled the writing process when Paul dictated his epistles, and when John wrote his Gospel. So whatever they wrote is “the very word of God”, not just Paul’s take or John’s take, and so possibly errant or exaggerated, but God the Holy Spirit’s accurate recreation in writing of Jesus’ words or Jesus’ actions.

With a firm grasp of the Bible as divinely inspired literature, we can now seek to understand **the experience of Hell**. However, again, we have to be careful that we recognize and so properly interpret the various literary styles used to describe it. From all the passages that refer to it, both those incorporating figures of speech and those that use direct language, we may garner the following summation.

**“The nature of (form of) eternal damnation consists in eternal banishment from the sight of God, or, in other words, in being forever excluded from communion with God.” (F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics, Volume III, page 545.*)**

To suffer death is to be separated from God’s blessings; physical death is to be separated from all God’s physical blessings, spiritual death is to be separated from all God’s spiritual blessings, eternal death is a separation from any and all of God’s blessings for eternity.

## INTERPRETING “HELLISH” PASSAGES

Bill Wiese, author of 23 Minutes in Hell, claims that “(God) wanted me to be able to tell others that there will be literal (meaning physical) pain in Hell.” To accomplish this, Wiese claims that God sent him to Hell for twenty-three minutes. (*page 103*). The Bible certainly teaches physical pain as part of the resurrection experience of those who die in rejection of Jesus Christ. As time and space bound creatures who can only relate in a concrete fashion to three dimensions, we distinguish between what is “now” in Heaven, in Hell, and on earth, that is, physical in this universe, spiritual in Heaven and in Hell, and what “will be” in the future, at the resurrection of all flesh, that is, the new physical wonderland of a universe restored / recreated in perfection, and a “prison“ erected to hold Satan and those who reject Jesus forever. Thus, the current and exact nature of the misery suffered by the spirits of those who died in rejection of Jesus Christ would be difficult to describe, except as it might relate to negative emotional states.

Mr. Wiese seems to defeat his own purpose in recording his trip hen he writes, “I saw the pit - a mile across and consumed with fire. I saw the liquid fire that falls like rain. I felt the extreme heat, and I smelled the stench of burning things. I do not believe the scripture references are merely symbolic or allegorical; I believe they speak of real fire. There are many important scriptures and I urge you to read each one of

them so that you can make your own informed decision. ... **What God's Word says is far more important than the story of my visit to that place.**" (*23 Minutes in Hell, Bill Wiese, page 104-105.*)

Doing just that, establishing what God's word says, rather than relying on out of body experiences / revelations will enable us to respond intelligently, that is, with Biblically sound argument, to the melodramatic impressions some have about Hell by providing less theatrical, but just as direct warnings about its nature.

## IS THERE FIRE IN HELL, THE KIND USED TO COOK MEAT ON A GRILL?

**Psalm 37:20.** *"But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away."* The following is NIV. *But the wicked will perish: The LORD's enemies will be like the beauty of the fields, they will vanish--vanish like smoke.*

One of Mr. Wiese's weaknesses is that he does not recognize context; the topic of this passage is times of disaster. It does not address the experience of Hell. It uses figures of speech such as "vanish like smoke" to establish the difference between the way believers and unbelievers will respond to the sudden, unexpected loss of some or all of their temporal blessings. The reader is asked to focus on the spiritual blessings the Lord provides as those which will sustain a believer when he is confronted with disaster in his life. An unbeliever, when he loses his temporal blessings, is losing everything he has.

**Malachi 4:1-3.** "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things," says the LORD Almighty.'

The subject of this passage is Judgment Day, when Jesus returns in glory. As such, it does not address the experience of Hell, but the destruction of this current universe and the downfall of its presumptuous rulers. "burn like a furnace," "set them on fire," "not a root or branch," "sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings," "leap like calves released from a stall," "ashes under your feet", are all figures of speech meant to emphasize the impact of that Day. The end of the domination of the earth by corrupt people will be initiated by the return of Jesus Christ in glory. Believers will experience unbridled joy at his return. This is meant to increase the anticipation of Judgment Day on the part of the believer and to warn the unbeliever to forsake his evil ways.

**Matthew 13:42** "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, ... there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

The subject of this passage also is Judgment Day. It does address the existence and/or experience of Hell. It will be the punishment for the hypocrites who infected the church on earth with false teaching and led God's people astray. "weeds pulled up and burned in the fire...weed out...throw...into the fiery furnace..." are all figures of speech that dramatize with effect the nature of the experience of Hell. Thus, by this description, hypocrites are called to repent before that Day. Believers are encouraged to anticipate that

Day. In the final analysis, it teaches us that God knows those who are true to Him and there will be punishment for those who pretend to be devoted to His Son.

**Luke 16:24** "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'"

This passage's primary focus addresses the power and effectiveness of God's word. Hell is portrayed as a tangent to that main theme. It is portrayed as a place whose torment and agony can not be diminished by the unbeliever's memories of his "good life" before his physical death and personal judgment. The passage does use figures of speech. However, we usually do not take this section to mean that the experience of Hell includes a physical reality prior to the resurrection; that does not make the threat of its torment and agony any less real. Nonetheless, relating the experience of Hell usually depends on imagery that plays on our five senses and our emotions.

The key truth presented here is that God's word is more powerful and effective than any testimony a "ghost" might give to people on earth. It is just as powerful and effective a tool in convincing an unbeliever of the endless agony of Hell as Jesus' resurrection was the most powerful and convincing proof of the efficacy of his redemptive work. Believers should trust in the power of God's word to work as it is presented to others. If someone rejects God's word and lives an, "eat, drink, and be merry" existence devoid of a spiritual relationship to God in Christ, he should be told that he is on the path to the torments of Hell. This passage may be used to testify to the reality of those torments to those who reject Jesus.

It also may be used to counter the claims of spiritists and mediums. Their claims to be in touch with people who have passed to "the other side" rarely, if ever, have those people communicating a horrible, painful after life. First of all, communication from the "other side" should always be suspect, since God forbids contacting the dead on behalf of the living. Perhaps our Lord forbids this because he knows that it is a demonic ploy to convince us through such contact that the afterlife is all good all the time. (*The seminal reflection on this aspect of modern spiritism is James Pike's, The Other Side.*)

**John 15:6-8** "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." This passage emphasizes the vital necessity of retaining one's relationship with Jesus Christ through constant study and application of His word in order to be productive as one of his disciples. It does confirm that Hell is the final consequence of rejecting Jesus, preceded by a life empty of any spiritual significance. Vine, branches, bear much fruit, branch thrown away and withering, thrown into the fire and burned, bear much fruit are all figures of speech used to emphasize that principle truth, based on the common well known experience of pruning a fruit tree. They are meant to convey the fact that if a person cuts himself off from Jesus Christ and his word, that person will become spiritually insignificant and eventually be cut off from Jesus forever, that is, condemned to Hell.

**Jude 5-7** "Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire."

The focus of this passage is the warning that the Lord will not let his grace be taken for granted. In the past, those who mocked His deliverance, His superior nature, or His will with their rejection, that is, with ungodly behavior, or rebellion, were summarily destroyed. This should serve as a warning for those whose open rebellion is a reflection of their rejection of the superiority of God and his leadership, his offer of grace through His Son. This may be reflected in a variety of ways, but, significantly, in an openly immoral lifestyle. This passage does address the existence and/or experience of Hell. It is the final and eternal divine destruction of those who reject him. Kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains, eternal fire all serve to provide a dramatic impact for the reader. It warns the reader not to deceive himself into thinking that God can be mocked.. Past history shows that God will not be mocked. If you live a life that indulges your sinfulness, from that lifestyle you will reap His destruction in Hell. (Galatians 6:7)

**Revelation 9:1-5** “The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.”

This passage portrays the ever-increasing deceptive influence and devastating mental / emotional impact that Satan and his demons may have on those who reject God’s will as revealed through His Son, Jesus Christ. Such have no power to endure the tribulation that is going to come upon the inhabitants of the earth. (See Matthew 24) Indirectly, this passage addresses the existence and/or experience of Hell; that it exists as the permanent “prison” experience of the demons. Though they always be aware of that separation from God, God may use them to rebuke and try those human beings who stand in rejection of God, or even believers who need their understanding of their relationship to God “fine-tuned.” (Job) The ‘star’ who holds the ‘key’ to the ‘abyss’ is Jesus Christ. (See Revelation 1:18) This section confirms what we learn in the book of Job; Satan is controlled by God. Even using that demon, Jehovah may seek to focus the attention of the human race and every member of it on their dire spiritual condition and the consequences of rejecting God’s solution as found in Jesus. It is important to keep in mind that the majority of Revelation is one of *semian*, semaphores, symbols. Few, if any of those, are to be taken on face value alone. Properly interpreted, they capably relate the experience of Heaven, Hell, and earth’s last days. Though spiritual deception will run amok in the world in the last days, Jesus’ disciples need not be panicked by such deceptions. Rather, we should be aware of how terrifying it is to live without Jesus by our side and the indwelling Holy Spirit’s Scripture-based wisdom. For the unbeliever, this section is a rebuke and instructive in respect to how one may gain stability in the face of the last days.

**Revelation 14:10** “A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.’ This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.”

The subject of this passage is the terrible consequence of rejecting God’s salvation in Jesus; Hell is God’s furious punishment for rejecting Jesus and living in service to one’s sinful nature and, consciously or unconsciously, Satan’s rule. Figures of speech fill this passage. The key is to treat all of them that way. It

is inconsistent to take one on its face value, and not do so with all the others. The passage also addresses believers in the same fashion and spirit of Psalm 73, especially its last section, verses 21-28, a parallel to verse 12 above.

It teaches the reader that God will be faithful to his promise to condemn to Hell those who indulged their sinful nature while they lived on the earth. Though we might see them, “getting away with murder,” their behavior is a reflection of their servitude to Satan and to their own sinful nature, and they will be punished severely. We are asked to be patient and wait on the Lord’s timing. For, *As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O LORD, you will despise them as fantasies. Psalm 73:20.*

The best segments of Bill Wiese’ book are summations by theologians which he cites near the end of his book. They certainly summarize well what we should keep in mind; not the details of the experience, but the overall principle of Hell’s agony and God’s desire that we avoid it at all costs.

*At death, man’s soul leaves his body and goes either to Heaven or Hell...those who are impenitent and unsaved shall be cast into outer darkness forever. Sadly, we declare that we believe in the conscious eternal punishment of the unsaved.* (Bill Wiese, page 158, quoting Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church theological statement on the final state of man.)

*The doctrine of Hell should lead us to appreciate more than we do the love and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ...From how much we have been spared. The doctrine of hell should make believers supremely contented, grateful to God in every circumstance of life.* (Bill Wiese, page 158, quoting from Edward Donnelly’s book, Heaven and Hell.)

*Eternal punishment is not eternal annihilation. Surely they will not be raised to life at the last day only to be annihilated.* (Meaning there will be a physical resurrection of the damned, at which time their hellish experience will continue, but then, also as a physical experience, not just a mental, emotional, spiritual one.) (Citing Jonathan Edwards, on page 159)

*The fear of Hell restrains men from sin. Hell is compared to Sodom, when it was all on fire. Whatever the miseries of Hell are, they will be eternal. The duration of their misery cannot be measured...This makes every part of their misery infinite...Men may well say, “Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?”* (Solomon Stoddard, page 160-161)

Based on his experience, which he believes has been confirmed by Scripture, Mr. Wiese proposed and answered several questions about the nature of Hell. The questions and his answers are found in chapters 8 and 9 of his book. The chapter is entitled, “Important Facts About Hell?” Our goal is not to dispute the existence of hell, but to insure that we make the Scriptures our only guide and that we read them accurately in the fashion God has given them to us. As Mr. Wiese often states in his book, the Scriptures revelations far outweigh his personal experience. We will review his POV to provide contrast to what the Bible actually teaches.

## WHERE IS HELL LOCATED?

“I believe that Scripture states that presently it is at the center of the earth.” (Wiese) His Scriptural basis for this follows. Only the pertinent phrases are cited. But their context does not justify his conclusion, as we well know. **Numbers 16:32-33, KJV.** “As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart and **the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them**, with their households and all Korah’s men and all their possessions. They **went down** alive into the grave...” **1 Samuel 28:13-15.** “The woman said, ‘I see a spirit coming **up out of the ground.**’ ” **Psalm 63:9.** My soul clings to you; your right hand

upholds me. They who seek my life will be destroyed; **they will go down to the depths of the earth. Isaiah 26:19.** You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; **the earth will give birth to her dead. Ezekiel 26:20, KJV.** **I will bring you down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of long ago. I will make you dwell in the earth below, as in ancient ruins, with those who go down to the pit...** “ **Ezekiel 31:14, KJV.** "No other trees so well-watered are ever to reach such a height; they are all destined for death, **for the earth below, among mortal men, with those who go down to the pit. Matthew 12:40.** , so the Son of Man will **be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. .” Ephesians 4:9.** "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." (What does "he ascended" mean except that **he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?**

What we may conclude is that, at the present ‘time’, Hell may very well be located somewhere. But where, and how that where overlaps our own plane of existence, this universe, is difficult to determine. Its residents may be everywhere around us, “cast down to earth,” “roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it,” and furious, scheming to destroy our faith in Jesus. This seems to be Scripture’s focus. It does not focus on the place, but the interactions with demonic beings in seeking to distract all human beings in general, and divorce believers in particular from the salvation earned for us all. Their goal is to undermine and destroy the faith the Holy Spirit has planted in us. Thus, they may even occupy certain geographical regions as their “turf” and seek to prevent the ministry of Jehovah’s angels, even while imprisoned in Hell. Daniel 10:13’s record of the “prince of the Persian Kingdom” is one example of this. Contemporary “hauntings” that sometimes provide evidence of unexplained phenomena might be explained as such schemes, as well.

It could be useful to define Hell as another dimension. At least Satan, if not all fallen angels, may appear in the presence of their Warden, Jehovah, while remaining under his sovereignty, and in their imprisoned estate. (Job 1) They may hold theological discussions with the faithful angels who do always behold the face of our Father in Heaven. However, demons are not allowed to challenge The Lord’s omniscience. (Jude verse 9) Demons are allowed to process information from their “imprisoned experience” to people here on earth, even to deceive Jesus’ chosen disciples. Sometimes we might be fully aware that the information shared seeks to alienate us from God and Jesus. Sometimes it is processed with a subtlety that we do not recognize, as when Satan entered Judas, or when Satan asks to sift Peter like wheat. Thus, “Get behind me, Satan!” is directed at Peter’s well intentioned attempt to discourage Jesus’ mission. Demons are even allowed to possess human beings and other living things, while still aware of their personal condemnation and the future public declaration of their unending imprisonment. This is the case in Luke 8:26-33, in Jesus’ interaction with “Legion.” Note Legion’s concern that they not be thrown into the abyss.

Whatever the actual location might be, earth, bound to our time and space, but with no sensual ability to engage in its wonders, or a dimensional experience, an overlapping of the current dimension of Hell with our own, our defense against their invasions of our living space and our consciousness are described as awareness of their existence, discernment of their schemes, and battling their attacks with the spiritual weapons that can defeat them (Ephesians 6:10-18).

## WILL YOU HAVE A BODY IN HELL?

Weiss states, “I certainly did. My body appeared the same as the one I have now, except there was no blood or water in it. Life exists in the blood, and water represents life.” Again, Mr. Wiese’s explanation includes an allegory. And by describing his body as not being a real body, he undermines the nature of his experience as real. The evidence Weiss cites for his experience. **Proverbs 1:12** If they say, "Come along with us; let's lie in wait for someone's blood, let's waylay some harmless soul; let's **swallow them alive**, like the grave, and **whole, like those who go down to the pit; Matthew 10:28** “...can destroy both soul

**and body in hell.” Luke 16:24** "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and **cool my tongue**, because I am in agony in this fire.' **Ecclesiastes 12:7** Remember him--before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well, and **the dust returns to the ground** it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

There is no doubt that every human being will experience a physical resurrection. Every human being will receive a new “shell” to encapsulate the unique personality, intellect, emotions, and recalled experience that constitutes a given human being’s spirit, or soul. And as two human beings who left this existence and their physical bodies “behind” centuries before they appeared to Jesus, Moses and Elijah could testify to the fact that it is possible for God to surround the soul with flesh, for a time, and later, in the resurrection of all flesh, for the rest of eternity. Whether or not the resurrection body will be exactly like the current physiology is open to speculation. That in certain ways it will surpass the capability / sustainability of bodies once infected by the systemic flaw of a sinful nature is certain. “...nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ... We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:50-51)

Jesus declared, “But do not be surprised at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out --those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.” (John 5:28-29) I would not be surprised if someone who rejected Jesus was given a new body. But to have such a body imprisoned, incapable of enjoying any freedom to explore and develop the new heaven and earth, to have such a perfection, but not be able to utilize it seems to be the worst kind of Hell to experience. “Currently,” the spirits of those residing in Hell are imprisoned spirits. In the Resurrection, a spirit in a new body, but imprisoned for “life” everlasting, with no chance for parole, is going to be Hell’s worst punishment.

### ARE THERE PRISON CELLS AND BARS IN HELL?

**Proverbs 7:27:** Her house is a highway to the grave leading down to **the chambers of death**. **Isaiah 24:22:** They will be herded together **like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison** and be punished after many days. **Isaiah 14:17:** ... the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let **his captives go home?** **Lamentations 3:9:** ...**he has weighed me down with chains**. Even when I call out or cry for help, he shuts out my prayer. He has **barred my way with blocks of stone...Lamentations 3:55, KJV:** I called on your name, O LORD, **from the depths of the pit**. You heard my plea: "Do not close your ears to my cry for relief." You came near when I called you, and you said, "Do not fear." **Job 17:16, KJV:** Who can see any hope for me? Will it go down to **the gates of death?** Will we descend together into the dust?" **Job 38:17:** Have you seen the **gates of the shadow of death?** Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? **Psalms 9:13:** ...Have mercy and lift me up from **the gates of death**, ...that I may declare your praises in **the gates of the Daughter of Zion** and there rejoice in your salvation. . **Jonah 2:6,** ... I sank down; **the earth beneath barred me in forever**. But you brought my life up from the pit, O LORD my God. **Matthew 16:18:** ...and on this rock I will build my church, **and the gates of Hades** will not overcome it. **Revelation 1:18:** ...**And I hold the keys of death and Hades.** ” **Revelation 20:1:** ...**having the key to the Abyss** and holding in his hand **a great chain**. ...He threw him into the Abyss, and **locked and sealed it over him...**

Weiss takes these as concrete descriptions of the construction elements in Hell. There is little need to refute his notion, based on the easily made assessment of all the above presentations as figures of speech. Most of them cannot even be utilized to suggest solid, three dimensional constructions in Hell in any way, shape, or form. It is sufficient for these passages to be used to note that Hell is an arraignment,

condemnation, judgment, and imprisonment determined and controlled by Jehovah. That is all that any of these passages are intended to portray, where they reflect on the nature of Hell.

## IS THERE A BIBLICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE DEMONS AS BEING DEFORMED, GROTESQUE, AND RANGING IN SIZE FROM ENORMOUS TO SMALL?

**Genesis 6:2-4**, When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, **the sons of God** saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." **The Nephilim** were on the earth in those days--and also afterward--when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown. **Jude** - "...which talks about angels (fallen) who didn't stay within their proper domain, but left their abode and then gave themselves over to sexual immorality." And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--**these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment** on the great Day. **Deuteronomy 3:11** - "*the remnant of giants*" (Only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaites. His **bed was made of iron and was more than thirteen feet long and six feet wide**. It is still in Rabbah of the Ammonites.) **2 Samuel 21:20** ...In another battle with the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite, **who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod**. In still another battle, which took place at Gath, there was **a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot--twenty-four in all**.

Based on the above, Weiss writes, "*It is reasonable to conclude that the unusually large size of men was a direct result of contact with the fallen angels.*" His conclusion reveals an inability to utilize context in drawing conclusions. It begs the question that it is even angels that are referred to in Genesis 6. It begs for proof that angels have a body at all, that, if they had a body, the size of the body they have is verified by his personal experience and not the Scriptures, that they can have reproductive sex, and that such sex may result in hybrid human beings. This is more the stuff of Greek and Roman mythology. It cannot be "reasonable" unless there is actual revelation in scripture that supports the conclusions. Weiss adds, "*The fallen angels themselves were **probably** also very large. (A single word condemns his whole thesis as **speculative.**) These evil angels were cast down to hell as mentioned in Jude 6-7 and 2 Peter 4. This is very well explained in Charles Missler's tapes, who in my opinion is one of the most exceptional scholars and teachers on the earth today.*" (Italics are quotes from Wiese's book.) They were not angels. They were the unbelieving warrior-masters of the earth. Believers failed to avoid them, but rather sought to amalgamate with them through intermarriage.

## CAN DEMONS TORMENT PEOPLE ON EARTH?

**1 Kings 18:28**, At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." So they shouted louder and **slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed**. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

**Job 2:7**, **So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores** from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes. His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God

and die!" He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

**Matthew 8:28**, When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, **two demon-possessed men** coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. **"Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"** Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs." He said to them, "Go!" So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water.

**Luke 22:31**, "Simon, Simon, **Satan has asked to sift you as wheat.** But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."

**Ephesians 6:16**, Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, **with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.** Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should."

In the Bible, there is sufficient evidence that demons may be allowed to afflict and in some cases may even possess human beings. Obviously, temptations may be set in motion by demonic influence. Even temporal setbacks may be set in motion by the same. (Job) Dr. Malachi Martin's book, Hostage to the Devil, provides convincing evidence that such affliction and possession is also a modern day phenomena. It is less likely that demons can possess a believer, though believers are warned that the devils scheme to lead them away from their relationship with the Lord.

## IN SUMMATION, WHAT THEN IS HELL?

Hell exists as an objective and separate reality from any location in this known universe. It was created by God as "imprisonment for fallen angels," also known as demons, after they rebelled. This rebellion took place after the creation of this universe. It is not fraudulent, illusory, mythological, but it is not a physical part of this plane of existence. Currently, as we relate to time and space, it is not be a specific place. However, in experiencing its existence the condemned lives of those who inhabit it may "overlap" our own, allowing for a certain amount of interaction between demons, condemned souls of human beings, and the human race.

How God manages to imprison angels or a human spirits, indeed tens of thousands, if not millions of both, is not a part of the Bible's revelation, or something any living human being has experienced. Several concrete illustrations are used to enable us as humans to perceive the nature of the imprisonment, but not the method of imprisonment. However, it is clear that the imprisonment limits/controls a demon's or a human spirit's freedom. A certain level of overlapping activity / interaction with this universe may be

granted by God to serve his purposes, as was the case with Job, Judas and Peter. Certain types of human activity might invite and result in interaction with demons, such as those practiced in spiritism, seances, and divination. But it does not 'free' them from their imprisonment. They are still subservient to God. He is the "jailer," the "warden." That control continues even while a condemned angel is interacting with a human being. All the cases of demonic possession recorded in the Bible make this very clear.

While the absence of freedom is one aspect of the experience of Hell, it is not the only negative experience. The Bible makes it clear it is a place where a spirit knows torment, agony, pain, bitterness, anger, separation from any and all of God's spiritual blessings. At the same time, it does not limit all communication between imprisoned demons, human spirits, and God Himself, his faithful angels, or even human beings in Heaven or on earth. Again, Satan's conversation with God in Job, Jesus' presentation of the history of the rich man and poor Lazarus, and the dialogue between Jesus and Legion make this clear.

Because, we can only relate to these as punishments experienced by non-corporeal spirits, both demons and humans, again, how a spirit is able to "feel," that is, sense, or experience such things is not part of the Bible's revelation. The Bible does give us concrete reference points that enable us to relate to the extreme degree of suffering in Hell, (fire, gnashing of teeth, outer darkness, weeping, furious, Satan's emotional / intellectual state as described in the book of revelation, lake of fire, etc.,) and so helps us understand that the suffering of Hell is something to be avoided at all costs.

Hell shall become a physical reality when Heaven becomes a physical reality, in the Resurrection, on Judgment Day. For every human being shall be resurrected, given a physical body. (John 5:28-29) But the focus in Jesus' teaching is not on the nature of each person's or even each location's physicality, but the opportunity to share glory with Jesus or condemnation with the demons. (Matthew 25:34, 41) The longest revelation on the nature of the post-resurrection glory of the believer is found in 1 Corinthians 15. The longest passages that seek to relate the post-resurrection nature of Heaven (Revelation 21 & 22) and Hell (Revelation 18, 20:10,) use hyperbolized figures of speech to make the point that, after the resurrection, Hell is physical place, an eternal imprisonment, where mourning over the loss of every temporal blessing formerly enjoyed during the time of the earth's existence is exacerbated by having a physical body. After the resurrection, for believers, Heaven will be the new physical universe to explore and develop, a complete and sensual exposure to the presence and glory of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and the physical glories of the new heaven and earth.

For the appeal of Heaven's perfect fellowship, think of the reaction of the disciples after the Transfiguration and how they longed to maintain that experience for themselves and others. For the horror of Hell, consider a fish removed from its natural environment, but unable to expire, continually thrashing about, experiencing but never dying from the lack of oxygen.

"Also (the Lutheran confessors at Augsburg) teach that at the Consummation of the World Christ will appear for judgment, and will raise up all the dead; He will give to the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys, but ungodly men and the devils He will condemn to be tormented without end. They condemn the Anabaptists, who think that there will be an end to the punishments of the condemned men and devils. They condemn also others, who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed." (Augsburg Confession, Article XVII: Of Christ's Return to Judgment.) Thus the Inferno's, "abandon hope, all ye who enter here." For there no such thing as conditional immortality, or annihilation, but only the constant awareness of what one might have enjoyed, and what one is eternally condemned to experience.

Gerhard, a highly regarded Lutheran theologian wrote, "*It is wiser to be concerned about escaping this eternal fire by true repentance than to engage in an unprofitable argument as to the nature of this fire.*"

Chrysostom, an ancient, but still widely respected commentator on the Bible's revelation said, ***“We search not where it (Hell) is, but how we may flee it.”*** See Matthew 3:1-12. Note John the Baptist's call to repentance emphasized by the warning of burning chaff with unquenchable fire. See Matthew 8:11-12. There Jesus condemns the un-repentance of some listeners by emphasizing the outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth. See also Paul in Romans 2:5. Their hardness of heart is condemned with the warning that such a spiritual condition stores up wrath.

Regardless of its “location”, the nature, variety, and degree of its experience, or any other factor that might be gleaned from Holy Scriptures, I would rather invite someone to join Jesus in His Father's house as opposed to rejecting that offer and knowing they will wind up in a stinking landfill.

**In the final analysis, this is all we know and all we need to know: God gave us his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved. Whoever does not believe shall be condemned. (John 3:16, Mark 16:15-16)**

## ADDENDAS

### ADDENDA A. Passages that imply a punishment after death.

**Psalm 28:3**

*Do not drag me away with the wicked, with those who do evil, who speak cordially with their neighbors, but harbor malice in their hearts.*

**Isaiah 33:14**

The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: *“Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?”*

**Isaiah 66:24**

*“And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind,”* (says the LORD.)

**Daniel 12:2**

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth *will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.*

### ADDENDA B. OT passages containing the word “sheol.” The NIV’s translations are in parentheses.

**Deuteronomy 32:22** - For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest **hell**, ...

(For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that burns to the realm of **death** below.)

**2 Samuel 22:6** -

The sorrows of **hell** compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me.

(The cords of the **grave** coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me.)

**Job 11:8**

It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than **hell**; what canst thou know

(They are higher than the heavens --what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the **grave** --what can you know?)

**Job 26:6**

**Hell** is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.

(**Death** is naked before God; destruction lies uncovered.)

**Psalm 9:17**

The wicked shall be turned into **hell**, and all the nations that forget God.

(The wicked return to the **grave**, all the nations that forget God.)

**Psalm 16:10**

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see decay.

(...because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.)

**Psalm 18:5**

The sorrows of **hell** compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me.

(The cords of the **grave** coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me.)

**Psalm 55:15**

Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into **hell**: for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them.

(Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the **grave**, for evil finds lodging among them.)

**Psalm 86:13**

For great is thy mercy toward me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest **hell**.

(For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths of the **grave**.)

**Psalm 116:3**

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of **hell** gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

(The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the **grave** came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.)

**Psalm 139:8**

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in **hell**, behold, thou art there.

(If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the **depths**, you are there.)

**Proverbs 5:5**

Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on **hell**.

(Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the **grave**.)

**Proverbs 7:27**

Her house is the way to **hell**; going down to the chambers of death.

(Her house is a highway to the **grave**, leading down to the chambers of death.)

**Proverbs 9:18**

But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of **hell**.

(But little do they know that they dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the **grave**.)

**Proverbs 15:11**

**Hell** and destruction (are) before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

**Death** and destruction lie open before the LORD -- how much more the hearts of men!

**ESV: Sheol and Abaddon**

**Proverbs 15:24**

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from **hell** beneath.

(The path of life leads upward for the wise to keep him from going down to the **grave**.)

**Proverbs 23:14**

Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from **hell**.

(Punish him with the rod and save his soul from **death**.)

**Proverbs 27:20**

**Hell** and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

(**Death** and destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man.)

**ESV: Sheol and Abaddon**

**Isaiah 5:14**

Therefore **hell** hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

(Therefore the **grave** enlarges its appetite and opens its mouth without limit; into it will descend their nobles and masses with all their brawlers and revelers.)

**Isaiah 14:9**

**Hell** from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at they coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

(The **grave** below is all astir to meet you at your coming; it rouses the spirits of the departed to greet you-- all those who were leaders in the world; it makes them rise from their thrones-- all those who were kings over the nations.)

**Isaiah 14:15 - this regarding "Lucifer."**

Yet thou shalt be brought down to **hell**, to the sides of the pit.

(But you are brought down to the **grave**, to the depths of the pit.)

**Isaiah 28:15 - this in regard to consorting with false gods**

Because ye have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with **hell** are we at agreement;

when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.

(You boast, “We have entered into a covenant with death, with the **grave** we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place.)

**Isaiah 28:18**

And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with **hell** shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.

(Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the **grave** will not stand. When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by, you will be beaten down by it.)

**Isaiah 57:9**

And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto **hell**.

(You went to Molech with olive oil and increased your perfumes. You sent your ambassadors far away; you descended to the **grave** itself!)

**Amos 9:2**

Though they dig into **hell**, thence shall, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down.

(Though they dig down to the depths of the **grave**, from there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down.)

**Jonah 2:2**

I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of **hell** cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

(In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From the depths of the **grave** I called for help, and you listened to my cry.)

**ADDENDA C. Hell in the New Testament, adayz, similar to “sheol” in the OT.  
NIV 84 in (parenthesis) ESV in italics**

**Matthew 11:23 -**

And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to **hell**:

(And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the **depths**.)

*And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to **Hades**.*

**Matthew 16:18**

...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of **hell** shall not prevail against it.

(...and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of **Hades** will not overcome it.

*(...and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of **hell** shall not prevail against it.)*

**Luke 10:15**

And thou...shalt be thrust down to **hell**

(No, you will go down to the **depths**.)

*You shall be brought down to **Hades**.*

**Luke 16:23**

in **hell** he lift up his eyes, being in torments...

(In **hell**, where he was in torment, he looked up...)

*and in **Hades**, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes...*

**Acts 2:27**

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell**, neither will thou suffer thine Holy One to see decay.

(...because you will not abandon me to the **grave**, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.)

*For you will not abandon my soul to **Hades**, or let your Holy One see corruption.)*

**Acts 2:31**

...resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in **hell**, neither his flesh did see corruption.  
(...resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the **grave**, nor did his body see decay.)  
*...resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to **Hades**, nor did his flesh see corruption.*

**Revelation 1:18**

I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of **death**.  
(...and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and **Hades**.)  
*and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and **Hades**.*

**Revelation 6:8**

And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and **Hell** followed with him.

(I looked and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and **Hades** was following close behind him. **They were given permission...**)

*And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and **Hades** followed him.*

**Revelation 20:13**

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and **hell** delivered up the dead which were in them:

(The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and **Hades** gave up the dead that were in them...)

*And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and **Hades** gave up the dead who were in them,*

**Revelation 20:14**

And death and **hell** were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

(Then death and **Hades** were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

*Then Death and **Hades** were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

**ADDENDA D. KJV is first, NIV 84 in (parenthesis), ESV in italics**

**Matthew 5:22**

But whosoever shall say, "Thou fool," shall be in danger of **hell fire**.

(But anyone who says, "You fool!" will be in danger of the **fire of hell**.

*and whoever says, "You fool!" will be liable to the **hell of fire**.*

**Matthew 5:29, 30**

...and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell...and not that thy whole body should be cast into **hell**.

(than for your whole body to be thrown into **hell**...than for your whole body to go into hell.)

*than that your whole body be thrown into **hell**...than that your whole body go into hell.*

**Matthew 10:28**

...but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in **hell**

(Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in **hell**.)

*Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in **hell**.*

**Matthew 18:9**

...rather than having two eyes to be cast into **hell fire**

(...than to have two eyes and be thrown into the **fire of hell**.)

*...than with two eyes to be thrown into the **hell of fire**.*

**Matthew 23:15**

and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of **hell** than yourselves.

(and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of **hell** as you are.)

*and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of **hell** as yourselves.*

**Matthew 23:33**

...how can ye escape being the **damnation of hell?**  
(How will you escape being **condemned to hell?**)  
*...how are you to escape being **sentenced to hell?***

**Mark 9:43**

...it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into **hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched.**

(It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into **hell, where the fire never goes out.**)

*It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to **hell, to the unquenchable fire.***

**Mark 9:45**

...than having two feet to be cast into **hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched.**

(...than to have two feet and be thrown into **hell where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.**)

*It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be **thrown into hell.***

**Mark 9:47**

It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into **hell fire where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.**

(It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into **hell where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.**)

*It is better to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into **hell where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.***

**Luke 12:5**

Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power **to cast into hell;**

(Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to **throw you into hell.**)

*...fear him who, after he has killed, has authority **to cast into hell.***

**James 3:6**

...and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is **set on fire of hell.**

(sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself **set on fire by hell.**)

*...setting on fire the entire course of life, and **set on fire by hell.***

**ADDENDA E. - Descriptions of the “unpleasant” nature of Hell, as separation from God’s blessing.  
KJV first, NIV 84 in (parenthesis), ESV in italics.**

**Isaiah 66:24,**

for their **worm** shall not die, neither shall their **fire** be quenched; and they shall be an **abhorring** unto all flesh.

(their **worm** will not die, nor will their **fire** be quenched, and they will be **loathsome** to all mankind.)

*For their **worm** shall not die, their **fire** shall not be quenched, and they shall be an **abhorrence** to all flesh.*

**Matthew 3:12,**

...but he will burn up the chaff with **unquenchable fire,**

(burning up the chaff with **unquenchable fire**)

*but the chaff he will burn with **unquenchable fire.***

**Matthew 13:42,**

And shall cast them into a **furnace of fire;** there shall be **wailing and gnashing of teeth.**

(They will throw them into the **fiery furnace,** where there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth.**)

*...and throw them into the **fiery furnace.** In that place there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth.***

**Matthew 22:13,**

...and cast him into **outer darkness;** there shall be **weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

(throw him **outside,** into the **darkness,** where there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth.**)

*cast him into the **outer darkness**. In that place there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.*

**Matthew 25:41,**

...into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: ...  
(...into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.)  
*into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

**Matthew 25:46,**

... **go away** into everlasting punishment: ...  
(...**go away** to eternal punishment, ...)  
...*go away* into **eternal punishment**

**Luke 16:23, 24,**

And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments...**cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.**

(In hell, where he was in torment...**cool my tongue, because I am in agony I this fire.**)

*And in Hades, being in torment...cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this fire.*

**Revelation 9:2,**

And he opened the **bottomless pit**; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as **the smoke of a great furnace**;

(When he opened **the Abyss**, smoke rose from it like the smoke from **a gigantic furnace**.)

*He opened the **shaft of the bottomless pit**, and from the shaft rose smoke like the **smoke of a great furnace**,*

**Revelation 14:11,**

And the **smoke of their torment** ascendeth up for ever and ever: and **they have no rest** day or night...

(And the **smoke of their torment** rises for ever and ever. **There is no rest** day or night...)

*And the **smoke of their torment** goes up forever and ever, **and they have no rest, day or night**...*

**Revelation 20:10,**

And the devil that deceived them was **cast into the lake of fire and brimstone**,...and shall be **tormented day and night for ever and ever**.

(And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, ... They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.)

*and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

**Revelation 20:14,**

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.

(Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.)

*Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.*