

# **Hell is Not Endless Punishment**

by Mitch Kuhn

## *Introduction*

Most Churches and Pastors today teach that everyone is going to be judged after this life and that they will either enter eternal bliss with God or suffer eternal torment in Hell. I believed these same things since I was a small child and then began to teach others when I realized that there were eternal consequences to these beliefs.

I spent a year as a full time missionary in Pisa, Italy working for Campus Crusade for Christ. I took a year off after my sophomore year of college because the reality of eternal damnation hit me like a ton of bricks. The only logical thing to do in light of my belief in eternal torment was to spend my life telling others about salvation through Christ to avoid hell and dwell in heaven forever.

Most people think that Italy is Catholic, but in reality only the older generations are practicing Catholics. Most young Italians think that the bible is a bunch of fairy tales. As we began to talk with students at the University of Pisa it became abundantly clear that they could not understand what we were telling them about salvation through Christ.

Our team leader read us these verses in 2 Corinthians and explained that the only way someone could believe the truth of the Gospel and be saved was if God himself removed the veil from their eyes.

2Co 3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ.

2Co 3:15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.

2Co 3:16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

I had never quite realized before how powerful this blindness was. I talked with literally hundreds of students and other Italians that year and only two expressed any interest in what I was preaching. I'm not sure if either of them ever really fully grasped what I was trying to teach them . This verse became quite clear to me.

[Joh 6:44](#) No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

I remember sitting in my bed in Pisa realizing that the only reason I was saved from this hell that I so dreaded was that God randomly chose me to be given eyes to see.

So a few years later after returning from Italy I had this thought "If Christ died for everyone and if God is the one that opens and closes eyes then why can't everyone be saved?" This then led to the thought, "does hell really exist as I have been taught?"

I got on the internet and did a search for "hell". One of the first things I found was a paper by Thomas Thayer written in the 1850s called "[The Origin of the Doctrine of Eternal Punishment](#)".

In this profound paper, Mr. Thayer clearly demonstrates that the doctrine of hell and eternal torment was not a Jewish teaching and was most certainly not taught by Christ and the Apostles. While everything that Mr. Thayer says is not true scripturally, he helped to legitimize my thoughts and got me to see that I had been taught pagan lies all of my life and not the true doctrine of Christ.

In the following pages I'm going to show you from the scriptures how eternal torment was never mentioned anywhere in the Old Testament but was a very well developed theology among pagan cultures that significantly influenced the Jews and early Christians. The true Gospel of God, that all will be saved, has been hidden from the masses of Christianity. I hope and pray that this study will be used to set you free and open your eyes to the truth.

### **Adam and Eve**

Here is the warning that God gives to Adam and Eve about what will happen if they disobey and break his command to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

[Gen 2:17](#) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

He simply said "you will die", and nothing more.

Here is the description of the punishments given to Adam, Eve, and the serpent.

Gen 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

Gen 3:16 Unto the woman he said, **I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception;** in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed is the ground for thy sake;** in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Gen 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

Gen 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: **for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.**

Notice that all of the punishments are temporal in nature, meaning that they are not said to last forever. In verse 19 God even says "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This is a very odd way to explain being burned in hell forever...if that was indeed the true fact of Adam and Eve.

## Cain

Let's see if the first murderer in the bible was warned of this eternal torment to come.

Gen 4:10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

Gen 4:11 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

Gen 4:12 **When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.**

Gen 4:13 And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

Cain is quite dismayed over his punishment which involves difficulty in cultivating the ground along with being a fugitive and vagabond in the earth, but there is absolutely no mention of eternal torment.

So God has some mercy on Cain and says that he will avenge anyone that would kill him seven fold, and gives him a mark to keep him safe.

Gen 4:14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

Gen 4:15 And the LORD said unto him, **Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.** And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

God has mercy upon the first murder and reduces his concern of being killed by others, so why would he not have mercy upon those who cry unto him for all of eternity out of the torturous fires of hell? Do you see the terrible inconsistency here if God will torment some forever?

### **Noah and the Flood**

God was angry with the sin upon the earth in Noah's time and causes a world-wide flood to destroy everyone but Noah and his family.

Gen 6:11 **The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.**

Gen 6:12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

Gen 6:13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, **I will destroy them with the earth.**

God does not say that he will torment these disobedient and sinful people in hell for all eternity. He simply says that he will destroy them.

Gen 7:23 **And every living substance was destroyed** which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.

### **Sodom and Gomorrah**

What do we learn from Sodom and Gomorrah?

Gen 18:20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, **and because their sin is very grievous;**

Gen 18:21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether

according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

Gen 19:24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah  
**brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;**

Gen 19:25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities,...

Again there is no mention of eternal torment after their destruction. Sodom and Gomorrah are actually mentioned in the book of Jude in the New Testament.

Jud 1:7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, **are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.**

This verse is often used to support the doctrine of eternal hell fire, but is the city of Sodom and Gomorrah still burning with fire today? Obviously no it's not, so this example demonstrates that the punishment is not eternal.

Here is the truth of the matter:

Pro 26:20 **Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out:** so where *there is* no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

Once the wicked city and its inhabitants were destroyed, **the fire went out.** We will cover this in detail later in the study, but the word translated as "eternal" in most English translations is the Greek word "aionios" and does NOT mean eternal. It means lasting for an unspecified period of time. It is better translated in Young's Literal as "of fire age-during".

The fire of God's judgment burns until all the evil is gone and then the judgment stops and we are **SAVED.**

1Co 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he **himself shall be saved;** yet so as by fire.

What's being burned is our evil works, not a literal person burning in hell fire.

## **Curses in Deuteronomy**

When God gave Israel the law, he described in detail the consequences for disobedience, but there is no mention of eternal torment. I'm taking the time to show you all of these verses because I want it to be abundantly clear that eternal torment is a pagan doctrine.

Deu 28:14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Deu 28:15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

Deu 28:16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.

Deu 28:17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.

Deu 28:18 Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

Deu 28:19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

Deu 28:20 The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.

## **What about Suicide?**

Some people teach that suicide is the worst sin you can possibly commit. Was there any warning of eternal torment for committing this grievous act?

2Sa 17:23 Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled a donkey, and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died; and he was buried in his father's tomb.

Again, there is no mention of the eternal fate of this person. That seems like quite a grievous omission if eternal torment is in fact true.

## **Just Recompense**

Let's consider for a moment the justice of God. In Hebrews we are told that every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward.

**Heb 2:2** For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

In the courts of the world, the punishment is equivalent to the crime committed. The worst thing you can do in this life is kill another human being and the punishment for this in many places is death. What could man possibly do that deserves ETERNAL TORMENT? Is God not capable of teaching us to be obedient and delivering us from our evil thoughts and actions? Is he less just than the carnal men that rule this world?

### **The Hebrew Word for Hell**

The word translated as hell in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word "sheol", H7585.

In the King James Version it is translated as follows:

31 times: grave

31 times: hell

3 times: pit

These words most often are the place of the dead which is simply the grave.

**Gen 37:35** And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the **grave** unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

**Job 7:9** As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the **grave** shall come up no more.

This word is also used to express distress or deliverance from great danger.

**Job 17:11** My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.

**Job 17:12** They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness.

**Job 17:13** If I wait, the **grave** is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.

**Job 17:14** I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.

Psa 30:2 O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.  
Psa 30:3 O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the **grave: thou hast kept me alive**, that I should not go down to the pit.

David did not die but is using the grave to express the great danger that he was delivered from by the Lord. He even says in verse 3 that he has been **kept alive** so that he should not go down to the pit.

Job even asks God to "hide him in the grave" from all the wrath and trials that are upon him. If this is a place of eternal torment then why would Job be asking God to hide him there?

Job 14:13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

Now let's look at some verses where the KJV translates sheol as hell.

Deu 32:22 For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest **hell**, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.

Deu 32:23 I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them.

Deu 32:24 **They shall be burnt with hunger**, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust.

Deu 32:25 The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs.

Deu 32:26 I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men:

So with a mind tainted with the pagan doctrine of eternal torment, these verses in Deuteronomy seem to be referring to there being fire and burning in hell (the grave). However, look at verse 24, "they shall be BURNT with hunger". God is using fire and the grave (hell) just like David does in Psalms, as a way to describe great trials. The chapter continues on describing very physical and temporal consequences for disobedience.

All of the following verses would make much more sense to be translated as "grave", because saying the English word "hell" brings to mind all of the pagan doctrines that are not a part of Jewish doctrine.



**2Sa 22:6** The sorrows of **hell** compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;

**Job 11:8** *It is* as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than **hell**; what canst thou know?

**Psa 9:17** The wicked shall be turned into **hell**, *and* all the nations that forget God.

**Psa 16:10** For thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell**; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

### **Moses was Aware of Endless Punishment**

Moses was taught all the ways of the Egyptians, and yet never mentions any of their pagan doctrines related to eternal torment.

Act 7:21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

Act 7:22 **And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.**

Here is a quote that describes the Egyptian teachings on the afterlife.

Those souls whose scales of good had outweighed their scales of bad would be granted permission to enter the blissful afterlife. On the other hand those whose scales of bad deeds were heavy would be handed over to the Devourer of the Dead, which was the Egyptian equivalent of hell."<sup>1</sup>

So Moses was well aware of this doctrine of eternal torment and never made any mention of it in his writings for Israel. Moses did however consistently warn the people to not go after the false gods of other nations, of which he was well aware. This is compelling evidence that eternal torment was certainly NOT a Jewish teaching.

### **Jewish Teachings on the Afterlife**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/articles/egypt/Egyptian-Afterlife-Beliefs/3182>

The Jewish teachings of afterlife were actually quite vague. There are a number of references to a future resurrection, but no detailed teachings on the subject. Here are some of those verses:

Psa 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (Sheol); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Psa 49:15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.

Hos 13:14 **I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death:** O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

Isa 25:8 **He will swallow up death in victory;** and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

Eze 37:1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

Eze 37:2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

Eze 37:3 And he said unto me, **Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.**

Eze 37:4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

Eze 37:5 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

Eze 37:6 **And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.**

### **Heathen Doctrine of Eternal Punishment**

After Israel was set free from slavery in Egypt, they were exposed to different variations of the doctrine of eternal torment through many different cultures. Here is a quote from Mr. Thayer.

Among the ancient pagans, the belief in a hell of some sort was very general, if not universal. It was known by various names, as Orcus, Erebus, Tartarus, and Infernus or Inferna, whence our expression "infernal regions," &c. The views current respecting it were different at different periods, and

among different nations, according to the degree of civilization, and the genius of the people.<sup>2</sup>.

Virgil wrote the Aeneid between 29 and 19 BC. In his book he quite vividly describes Hell.

"At Hell's dread mouth a thousand monsters wait; - Grief weeps, and Vengeance bellows in the gate; Base Want, low Fear, and Famine's lawless rage. And pale Disease, and slow, repining Age: Fierce, formidable Fiends the portals keep, With Pain, Toil, Death, and Death's half-brother Sleep. There Joys, embittered by Remorse, appear, Daughters of Guilt; here storms destructive War. Mad Discord there her snaky tresses tore; Here stretched on iron beds the Furies roar; And close by Lerna's hissing monster stands Briareus dreadful with a hundred hands; There stern Geryon raged; and all around Fierce Harpies screamed, and direful Gorgons frowned."<sup>3</sup>

Here are two quotes from Mr. Thayer that describe the prevalence of these doctrines among pagan cultures and their use to control the common people, most of which originated in Egypt.

Any one at all familiar with the writings of the ancient Greeks or Romans, cannot fail to note how often it is admitted by them that the national religions were the inventions of the legislator and the priest, for the purpose of governing and restraining the common people. Hence, all the early lawgivers claim to have had communications with the gods, who aided them in the preparation of their codes. Zoroaster claimed to have received his laws from a divine source; Lycurgus obtained his from Apollo, Minos of Crete from Jupiter, Numa of Rome from Egeria, Zaleucus from Minerva, &c. The object of this sacred fraud was to impress the minds of the multitude with religious awe, and command a more ready obedience on their part. Hence Augustine says, in his "City of God," "This seems to have been done on no other account, but as it was the business of princes, out of their wisdom and civil prudence, to deceive the people in their religion; princes, under the name of religion, persuaded the people to believe those things true, which they themselves knew to be idle fables; by this means, for their own ease in government, tying them the more closely to civil society." B. iv 32<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://tryingthespirits.com/study\\_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf](http://tryingthespirits.com/study_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf) Pg. 34

<sup>3</sup> *Pitt's Aeneid*, vi 385, &c.

<sup>4</sup> [http://tryingthespirits.com/study\\_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf](http://tryingthespirits.com/study_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf) Pg.36

Egypt has been called the "Mother of Superstitions," and her whole religious history shows the propriety of the appellation. Greeks and Romans, Lawgivers and Philosophers, acknowledge their indebtedness to her in this respect, and freely credit her with the original invention of the fables and terrors of the invisible world; though it must be allowed that they have improved somewhat upon the hints given, and shown a wonderful inventive faculty of their own<sup>5</sup>.

Israel was surrounded by pagan nations after being set free from Egypt and had a habit of following after their gods. Thus, the need for these kinds of warnings, are in Deuteronomy.

Deu 6:13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

Deu 6:14 Ye **shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you;**

Deu 6:15 (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

Deu 6:16 Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.

Deu 6:17 Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee.

Northern Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians in 722 BC, while the southern kingdom was captured by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Israel was no longer a sovereign nation and was just passed from one empire to the next. Alexander the Great and the Greek empire came into power in 333 BC, and then Judea was made a Roman province in 6 AD. During all of Christ's life Israel was under Roman rule.

The Jews struggled to obey God's commands and not follow after other gods when they were an independent people, and this undoubtedly got worse when they were taken into captivity. The last book of the Old Testament was written around 445 BC, after the temple in Jerusalem had been rebuilt. From 445 BC until John the Baptist coming on the scene to prepare the way for Christ, there were no prophets in Israel.

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<sup>5</sup>[http://tryingthespirits.com/study\\_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf](http://tryingthespirits.com/study_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf) Pg. 37

The prophets played a very important role in rebuking the people for their disobedience and leading them back to the Lord. Without their presence it was far easier for Israel to follow after other gods and absorb pagan doctrine.

Malachi was the last book of the Old Testament written around 445 B.C. and even at that time that there was already tremendous corruption and disobedience in Israel including the priests. If the priests were corrupt then what does that say about the condition of the people they were supposed to be teaching?

Mal 2:7 **For the priest's lips should keep knowledge**, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

Mal 2:8 **But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi**, saith the LORD of hosts.

Mal 2:9 Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

Here is a quote from Thayer regarding the great corruption of the Jews during the silence of the prophets.

It is allowed on all hands that the Jews in our Savior's time believed the doctrine of future endless punishment; that it was a part of the common faith. Of course, as the doctrine is nowhere to be found in their Scriptures, the question arises, where did they find it? At the close of the Old Testament Scriptures they did not believe it; at the beginning of the New they did.

Between these two points of time there was an interval of some four hundred years, during which there was no prophet in Israel. Malachi was the last of the Hebrew prophets, and from him to Christ there stretches this waste period of four centuries, when the Jews were without any divine teacher or revelation from heaven. And all this while they were in constant and close intercourse with the heathen, especially the Egyptians, the Greeks and Romans, who held the doctrine in review as part of the national faith. From these, therefore, they must have borrowed it, for it is certain that they could not have obtained it from any inspired source, since none was open to them during this period.

Beside, they were, all this time, as one might infer from their previous history, departing further and further from the law, and growing more and

more corrupt; till at last they had, as the Savior charges upon them, utterly made void the law of God by their traditions. Mark viii 9, 13<sup>6</sup>.

Mar 7:5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

Mar 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Mar 7:7 **Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**

Mar 7:8 **For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men,** as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

Mar 7:9 And he said unto them, **Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.**

Mar 7:13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

Here are a few more quotes about the corruption of the Jews from Mr. Thayer and sources that he quotes in his paper.

"This corruption, which began in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus (B.C. 283), soon spread into Palestine, and everywhere disseminated among the Jews a taste for metaphysical subtleties and mysteries." Again, he says: "Under the Ptolemies the Jews began to learn the Egyptian and Oriental theology, and to incorporate those foreign dogmas with their ancient creed." And once more he says: "Some among them were so unfaithful to their country and their God, as to court the favor of the conqueror (Antiochus Epiphanes), by mixing Pagan tenets and superstitions with their own sacred doctrines and ceremonies."<sup>7</sup>

"Josephus, who wrote about one hundred and fifty years later, says of the Pharisees: "They believe that souls have an immortal vigor in them, and that under the earth (in Sheol or Hades) there will be rewards and punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life. The latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison; but the former shall have power to revive and live again." This, it will be seen, is a great advance on the Old

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<sup>6</sup> Pg. 45

<sup>7</sup> [http://tryingthespirits.com/study\\_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf](http://tryingthespirits.com/study_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf) Pg 46-47

Testament Sheol or under-world. We find nothing of this sort among the patriarchs or prophets."<sup>8</sup>

"From the time of the captivity, more especially from the time of the subjection of the Jews, first to the Macedonian empire, and afterwards to the Roman, as they had a closer intercourse with Pagans, they insensibly imbibed many of their sentiments, particularly on those points where their law was silent, 10 and wherein by consequence they considered themselves as at greater freedom. On the subject of a future state, we find a considerable difference in the popular opinions of the Jews, in our Savior's time, from those which prevailed in the days of the ancient prophets. As both Greeks and Romans had adopted the notion that the ghosts of the departed were susceptible both of enjoyment and of suffering, they were led to suppose a sort of retribution in that state, for their merit or demerit in the present. The Jews did not adopt the pagan fables on this subject, nor did they express themselves, entirely, in the same manner; but the general train of thinking in both came pretty much to coincide."<sup>9</sup>

Here is a further description of the Pharisees and Saducees. There is also some information on the Essenes, also called the Dead Sea Sect.

### **The Pharisees**

The most important of the three were the Pharisees because they are the spiritual fathers of modern Judaism. Their main distinguishing characteristic was a belief in an Oral Law that God gave to Moses at Sinai along with the Torah. The Torah or Written Law was akin to the U.S. Constitution in the sense that it set down a series of laws that were open to interpretation. The Pharisees believed that God also gave Moses the knowledge of what these laws meant and how they should be applied. This oral tradition was codified and written down roughly three centuries later in what is known as the Talmud.

The Pharisees also maintained that an afterlife existed and that God punished the wicked and rewarded the righteous in the world to come. They also believed in a messiah who would herald an era of world peace.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://tryingthespirits.com/study\\_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf](http://tryingthespirits.com/study_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf) Pg 48

<sup>9</sup> Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. centuries iiii, iv Murdock's Translation.

Pharisees were in a sense blue-collar Jews who adhered to the tenets developed after the destruction of the Temple; that is, such things as individual prayer and assembly in synagogues.

### **The Sadducees**

The Sadducees were elitists who wanted to maintain the priestly caste, but they were also liberal in their willingness to incorporate Hellenism into their lives, something the Pharisees opposed. The Sadducees rejected the idea of the Oral Law and insisted on a literal interpretation of the Written Law; consequently, they did not believe in an afterlife, since it is not mentioned in the Torah. The main focus of Sadducee life was rituals associated with the Temple.

The (sect of the) Sadducees disappeared around 70 A.D., after the destruction of the Second Temple (see below). None of the writings of the Sadducees survived, so the little we know about them comes from their Pharisaic opponents.

These two "parties" served in the Great Sanhedrin, a kind of Jewish Supreme Court made up of 71 members whose responsibility was to interpret civil and religious laws.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Dead Sea Sect**

A third faction, the Essenes, emerged out of disgust with the other two. This sect believed the others had corrupted the city and the Temple. They moved out of Jerusalem and lived a monastic life in the desert, adopting strict dietary laws and a commitment to celibacy.

The Essenes are particularly interesting to scholars because they are believed to be an offshoot of the group that lived in Qumran, near the Dead Sea. In 1947, a Bedouin shepherd stumbled into a cave containing various ancient artifacts and jars containing manuscripts describing the beliefs of the sect and events of the time.

The most important documents, often only parchment fragments that had to be meticulously restored, were the earliest known copies of the Old Testament. The similarity of the substance of the material found in the scrolls to that in the modern scriptures has confirmed the authenticity of the Bible used today.

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/sadducees\\_pharisees\\_essenes.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/sadducees_pharisees_essenes.html)



For these very reasons Christ spoke this warning to his disciples.

Mat 16:6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Mat 16:7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.

Mat 16:8 Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

Mat 16:9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

Mat 16:10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

Mat 16:11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

Mat 16:12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

I hope that I have demonstrated clearly to you that eternal torment was a pagan doctrine that the Jews adopted from the pagan cultures around them. When Jesus Christ begins his ministry, the religious teachers of Israel, the Pharisees and Sadducees, were deeply corrupted and teaching the traditions of men and not the commands given to their ancestors by God.

## **Does the New Testament Teach Endless Torment?**

When we read most English translations of the bible the word hell does appear in the New Testament. We immediately apply a pagan understanding to these verses because to anyone that speaks English, hell is almost always implies eternal torment in the afterlife.

Here is how many times the word hell appears in various translations:

King James: 23

English Standard Version: 14

New King James: 13

Young's Literal: 0

Concordant Literal: 0

Notice how the literal translations NEVER use the word hell. This is because

there are other English words that better represent what was being said in Greek and do not bring with them the preconceived notion of eternal torture. We will cover the Greek words translated as hell in just a moment.

We must keep in mind that everything in the New Testament is based on the Old Testament. In the time of Jesus and the Apostles, the only scriptures they had were those of the Old Testament, until some of the Apostle's letters began to be circulated. Therefore they are constantly quoting the Old Testament scriptures and explaining the mystery that had been hidden behind the symbols of the Old Testament.

Col 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

Col 1:26 **Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations**, but now is made manifest to his saints:

1Co 4:6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men **above that which is written**, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

What was written? The Old Testament! The phrase "it is written" is used often in the New Testament and always refers to a quote from the Old Testament.

The first recorded words of Jesus' public ministry were him reading a quote from Isaiah 61:1-2.

Luk 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

Luk 4:17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias (Isaiah).

And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

Luk 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

Luk 4:19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

I'm pointing this out because Jesus and the other Apostles were speaking from a Jewish point of view. They believed what was written in the Old

Covenant and their understanding of God's word was not tainted by pagan doctrines. This is very important to understand as we examine the various Greek words translated as hell.

## Greek Words Translated as Hell

### Hades:

Let's first look at the word "hades".

#### **G86**

ᾍδης hadēs *hah'-dace*

From [G1](#) (as a negative particle) and [G1492](#); properly *unseen*, that is, "Hades" or the place (state) of departed souls: - grave, hell.

Here is a quote from Mr. Thayer's paper regarding this word.

1. HADES. This word occurs eleven times, and is rendered "grave" once, and "hell" ten times. It may be profitable first to consider what one of the most accomplished orthodox scholars says in regard to it. "In my judgment," says Dr. Campbell, "it ought never in Scripture to be rendered *hell*, at least in the sense wherein that word is universally understood by Christians. In the Old Testament the corresponding word is *Sheol*, which signifies the state of the dead in general, without regard to the goodness or badness of the persons, their happiness or misery. It is very plain that neither in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, nor in the New, does the word *hades* convey the meaning which the present English word *hell*, in the Christian usage, always conveys to our minds. The attempt to illustrate this would be unnecessary, as it is hardly now pretended by any critic that this is the acceptation of the term in the Old Testament."<sup>11</sup>

There are four verses where Jesus himself uses the word *hades*. He clearly had a Jewish understanding of *hades* and knew quite well that the Old Testament did not teach eternal torment. He uses this word just like David does in Psalms, to express great calamity.

[Mat 11:23](#) And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, **shalt be brought down to hell**: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

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<sup>11</sup> [http://tryingthespirits.com/study\\_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf](http://tryingthespirits.com/study_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf) Pg. 56

**Psa 9:17** The wicked shall be turned into **hell**, *and* all the nations that forget God.

Psa 86:13 For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest **hell**.

Remember that David was not resurrected, but rather was delivered from great calamity.

Here is a better translation of these three verses:

Mat 11:23 YLT And thou, Capernaum, which unto the heaven wast exalted, unto **hades** shalt be brought down, because if in Sodom had been done the mighty works that were done in thee, it had remained unto this day;

Psa 9:17 YLT The wicked do turn back to **Sheol**, All nations forgetting God.

Psa 86:13 YLT For Thy kindness is great toward me, And Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest **Sheol**.

Hades is the Greek equivalent of Sheol, so when Christ is using this word, we must realize that he is referencing the Jewish idea of the grave and not the pagan Greek doctrine of Hades that brings with it the doctrine of eternal torment. It is merely a word used to express great calamity.

One of the most famous verses where Jesus uses the word Hades is in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. The most important thing to point out is that this is a PARABLE. A parable is a made up story to communicate a point and even if they reference real people these things have not literally happened.

This parable found in Luke 16 is actually one of a series of parables that start in Luke 15.

Luk 15:1 Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

Luk 15:2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, **This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.**

Luk 15:3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

The Pharisees and scribes were in the group hearing these parables and were murmuring against Christ. Then after they overheard another parable that Christ spoke to his disciples, they derided him.

Luk 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

So the parable about Lazarus and rich man was spoken as a rebuke against the Pharisees.

Luk 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

Christ commonly spoke parables containing things that were a part of people's lives. The parable of Lazarus and the rich man was actually a known story among the Jews.

Here is a quote from Mr. Thayer's paper.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus furnishes another example. "And in hell (hades) he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." It will be remembered that the Jews had borrowed their ideas of torment in a future state from the heathen, and of course they were obliged to borrow their terms to express this. Accordingly, after the manner of the Greeks, Hades, or the place of departed spirits, is represented as receiving all, as Sheol did, good and bad; but we have also the additional idea of separate apartments or districts, divided by a great gulf or river; on one side of which the blessed are located, and on the other side the damned, near enough to see each other, and converse together, as in the case of Abraham and the rich man.

It must also be remembered that this is only a parable, and not a real history; for, as Dr. Whitby affirms, "we find this very parable in the Gemara Babylonicum." The story was not new, then, not original with Christ, but known among the Jews before He repeated it. He borrowed the parable from them, and employed it to show the judgment which awaited them. He represented the spiritual favors and privileges of the Jews by the wealth and luxury of the rich man, and the spiritual poverty of the Gentiles by the beggary and infirmity of Lazarus; and while the former would be deprived of

their privileges and punished for their wickedness, the latter would enjoy the blessings of truth and faith.<sup>12</sup>

Here is a section of the parable in Luke.

Luk 16:22 So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

Luk 16:23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Luk 16:24 "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

Luk 16:25 But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

Luk 16:26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

Remember back to what the Pharisees were saying at the beginning of this series of parables.

Luk 15:2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, **This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.**

They were the rich man in the parable looking down upon poor Lazarus. Jesus was pointing out they will indeed incur judgment for what they were doing, and he uses a known story to do so. It in no way teaches eternal torment.

Why did Christ speak in parables?

Mat 13:10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

Mat 13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Just like the majority of those listening to the parables in Christ's time did not understand the true meaning, in the same way most Christians today do

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<sup>12</sup> [http://tryingthespirits.com/study\\_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf](http://tryingthespirits.com/study_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf) Pg. 57

not understand that this parable is speaking about them and not someone else. This is a parable about you and me.

We are hypocrites just like the Pharisees when we do not realize that we look down upon and despise others.

Mat 7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

When we have been doing evil and we realize we are suffering the judgments of God for this, we will cry out for mercy just like the rich man.

Luk 16:24 "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

And we are then told that it is impossible to pass from this side of torment to the other side of peace.

Luk 16:26 NKJV And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

Notice what Christ says in another parable about a rich man entering heaven.

Mat 19:23 NKJV Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 19:24 And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Mat 19:25 When His disciples heard it, **they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"**

Mat 19:26 But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "**With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.**"

It is impossible to avoid the fiery torment that the rich man suffers but is this the eternal fire of hell as we have been taught? Fire in the scriptures is used to destroy what is wicked and to purify.

1Co 3:15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so **as through fire.**

1Pe 4:12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the **fiery** trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

1Pe 4:13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

Jer 5:14 Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts: "Because you speak this word, Behold, I will make My words in your mouth fire, And this people wood, And it shall devour them.

So the rich man will actually be saved by the flames, because it will destroy the evil that is within him. The Pharisees hearing these parables had no idea what Christ was saying, because they were thinking physically according to their pagan doctrines. They had not been given the spirit of God to understand the mystery of salvation through judgment.

Let's now consider the prophecies of Christ not being left in Hades.

Act 2:27 NKJV FOR YOU WILL NOT LEAVE MY SOUL IN HADES, NOR WILL YOU ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO SEE CORRUPTION.

Act 2:29 NKJV "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the Patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Act 2:30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,

Act 2:31 **he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.**

Christ was not delivered from eternal torment in hell and he did not stay in the GRAVE. Remember that Hades is the direct translation of the Hebrew word Sheol which means "the grave".

Psa 16:10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

Did you know that death and hell (Hades) will be destroyed?

1Co 15:26 **The last enemy *that shall be destroyed is death.***

1Co 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1Co 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the



saying that is written, **Death is swallowed up in victory.**  
1Co 15:55 **O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?**

Many teach that the lake of fire is hell which to them is a place of eternal torment. Have you ever read these verses?

Rev 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (Hades) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Rev 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

So death and hell deliver up their dead to be judged, and then death and hell are cast into the lake of fire. We know that death is destroyed, so hell (Hades) must be destroyed as well. If there is no death, and no Hades, then where will people be tortured forever?

The truth is that the judgment we fear is actually what saves us.

Here is a link to a series of studies on the Milk Doctrines found in Hebrews 6. This series explains how judgment is the way God will save all.

### [Milk Doctrine Studies](#)

#### **Gehenna**

This word is used 12 times in the New Testament, all of which are spoken by Christ except one use in James.

#### **G1067**

Γέεννα *geenna* *geh'-en-nah*

Of Hebrew origin ([[H1516](#)] and [[H2011](#)]); *valley of* (the son of) *Hinnom*; *gehenna* (or *Ge-Hinnom*), a valley of Jerusalem, used (figuratively) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment: - hell.

Here is a quote from Schleusner, a distinguished lexicographer and critic, that discusses the origin of the word "Gehenna".

*"Gehenna, originally a Hebrew word, which signifies valley of Hinnom. Here the Jews placed that brazen image of Moloch. It is said, on the authority of the ancient Rabbins (Rabbis), that to this image the idolatrous Jews were wont not only to sacrifice doves, pigeons, lambs, &c., but even to offer their*

own children. In the prophecies of Jeremiah (vii 31), this valley is called *Tophet*, from *Toph*, a drum; because they beat a drum during these horrible rites, lest the cries and shrieks of the infants who were burned should be heard by the assembly. At length these nefarious practices were abolished by Josiah, and the Jews brought back to the pure worship of God. After this they held the place in such abomination that they cast into it all kinds of filth, and the carcasses of beasts, and the unburied bodies of criminals who had been executed. Continual fires were necessary in order to consume these, lest the putrefaction should infect the air; and there were always worms feeding on the remaining relics. *Hence it came, that any severe punishment, especially an infamous kind of death, was described by the word Gehenna, or hell.*"<sup>13</sup>

When Jesus uses the word Gehenna, he is directly referring to these passages of Jeremiah. Tophet is another name for the valley of the son of Hinnom, or Gehenna.

Jer 7:31 And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.

Jer 7:32 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place.

Jer 7:33 And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beast of the earth; and none shall fray them away.

Jer 7:34 Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.

Jer 19:11 And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, **as one breaketh a potter's vessel**, that cannot be made whole again: **and they shall bury them in Tophet**, till there be no place to bury.

To put these verses in context, look at what was said by Jeremiah just one chapter earlier.

Jer 18:3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

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<sup>13</sup>Expositor for Sept. 1838; Schleusner's Lexicon on Asbestos; Iliad, lib. i. 599; Cruse's Eusebius, lib. vi., chap. 41. Note on page 259.

Jer 18:4 **And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.**

Jer 18:5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

Jer 18:6 **O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?** saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

God is clearly going to break these people like a clay pot and bury them in Tophet, the place where the most terrible acts of disobedience were committed. But, he also says that He will make it again another vessel.

Remember this verse from earlier:

1Co 3:15 **If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.**

This phrase "make this city as Tophet", is meant to express complete and utter destruction, not eternal torment.

Jer 19:12 Thus will I do unto this place, saith the LORD, and to the inhabitants thereof, **and even make this city as Tophet:**

Jer 19:13 And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods.

Remember also that the Old Covenant promises redemption and salvation.

Eze 36:25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

Eze 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Eze 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Immediately following in Ezekiel 37 we are given this prophesy of the resurrection.

Eze 37:1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

Eze 37:2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there

were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.  
Eze 37:3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.  
Eze 37:4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.  
Eze 37:5 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:  
Eze 37:6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Israel did not understand what was being promised, but this mystery is revealed in the New Testament.

1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Another study in the Milk Doctrines series in on resurrection.

<http://tryingthespirits.com/milk-doctrines/>

So when Jesus Christ spoke of Gehenna, he was referring to the stories of Tophet in the book of Jeremiah. He knew that Jeremiah 18 spoke of both the destruction of the clay vessel (Israel) and the vessel being made new, symbolizing their redemption.

So now let's read these following verses with this new perspective.

Mat 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, **shall be in danger of hell fire.**

This is not eternal fire but is a warning that God will destroy our wicked works... remember the promise to make the vessel new as well from Jeremiah 18:4.

Mat 5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into **hell** (Gehenna).

Mat 5:30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into **hell** (Gehenna).

Is Christ saying that we should literally pluck out our eye or cut off your hand? No, it is a warning that wicked works will be judged because the fire of Gehenna symbolizes God's Judgment.

Mat 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of **hell** (Gehenna) than yourselves.

A child of Gehenna refers to someone that is disobeying God's commands just like the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees. Keep in mind that we all break God's commands and will suffer the judgment symbolized by Gehenna fire. This judgment is painful but does work for our good.

Heb 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Heb 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Heb 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

## **Tartarus**

### **G5020**

Τάρταρος tartaroō *tar-tar-o'-o*

### **Definitions:**

1. The name of the subterranean region, doleful and dark, regarded by the ancient Greeks as the abode of the wicked dead, where they suffer punishment for their evil deeds; it answers to Gehenna of the Jews to thrust down to Tartarus, to hold captive in Tartarus 14

"Thurst down to Tartarus, and hold captive in Tartarus" are examples of how this word are used.

2. Tartarus, or Tartaros (Greek: Τάρταρος, from τάρταρον "tartar encrusting the sides of casks"), is the deep abyss in ancient Greek mythology that is used as a dungeon of torment and suffering for the wicked. A part of Hades (or the underworld) and, in turn, below Uranus (sky), Gaia (earth),

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/tartaroo.html>

and Pontus (sea), Tartarus is the place where, according to Plato in Gorgias (c. 400 BC), souls were judged after death and where the wicked received punishment. Like other primal entities (such as the earth and time), Tartarus is also a primordial force or deity.

Tartarus was used as a prison for the worst of villains, including Cronus and the other Titans who were thrown in by Zeus. Uranus also threw his own children into Tartarus because he feared they might overthrow him. These mishaps included the "hundred-handed-ones", the "cyclops" and the "giants".<sup>15</sup>

Just as Gehenna brought powerful memories of destruction for the evil of the Jews, so does Tartarus do this for the Greeks. The Romans adopted much of their mythology from the Greeks, and the Romans were ruling over Israel at the time of Jesus' ministry and writings of the Apostles thus making this reference to Tartarus quite powerful and relevant to Peter's audience. In modern times this would be like saying, "your life will be a living hell". It's an expression that carries great weight and power given the common beliefs about hell.

So in the following verses Peter is explaining that false prophets will arise, and both these false prophets and those that follow them will suffer judgment from God. He is going to make a reference to Tartarus to express how those living in disobedience are trapped in the abode of death until judgment. Anyone that is carnally minded is spiritually dead. We have a carnal mind while we are yet living, so we can be physically alive and spiritually dead at the same time.

Rom 8:6 **For to be carnally minded is death**; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Luk 9:60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

2Pe 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

2Pe 2:2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

2Pe 2:3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not

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<sup>15</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tartarus>

slumber.

2Pe 2:4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, **but cast them down to hell (Tartarus) and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;**

The word angel in the Greek and Hebrew both mean messenger. This is not only a spiritual being as we have been often taught but rather can refer to any messenger, which can be a prophet or teacher in the scriptures.

o Greek (G32) – aggelos

o Hebrew (H4397) - mal'âk

We have been these false teachers and have been or will be judged for our false teachings. We have also followed the wisdom of men and believed the lies of the false teachers in the world and in the churches. Until our time comes to be judged we are held in the abode of death, Taratrus, held with chains of darkness, awaiting judgment.

Pro 4:19 The way of the wicked is as **darkness**: they know not at what they stumble.

Joh 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, **and men loved darkness rather than light**, because their deeds were evil.

Joh 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

Anyone that does evil loves the darkness rather than the light and is symbolically trapped in that darkness until Christ drags them to the light to be reprov'd and judged. Peter is saying we all will be judged for the evil that we do.

2Pe 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, **and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:**

I hope and pray that by now you can see how neither Jesus nor any of the Apostles taught that there would be eternal torment in hell. They all taught that there are severe consequences for evil and that we will all be judged for what we do. While this judgment feels quite grievous and severe as it is happening to us, we will eventually learn to be obedient and then experience the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

Heb 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

### **The Greek Word Translated as Eternal**

Most Bible translations that Christians use today have terribly mistranslated the word "aion" and "aionios" as eternal or forever and ever.

Here is the strong's definition of this word.

#### **G165**

αι' ὄν αιὼν ahee-ohn'

From the same as G104; **properly an age; by extension perpetuity** (also past); by implication the world; specifically (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future): - age, course, eternal, (for) ever (-more), [n-]ever, (beginning of the, while the) world (began, without end). Compare G5550.

Here is another form of "aion" that we will look at as well. It is basically the adjective form of "aion". So for example: hour is to hourly as aion is to aionios.

#### **G166**

αι' ὄνιος αιῶνιος ahee-o'-nee-os

From G165; perpetual (also used of past time, or past and future as well): - eternal, forever, everlasting, world (began).

In order to support the false doctrine of eternal punishment in hell these words have been distorted from their original meaning. Properly it means "an age" as Strong's indicates above. However, the translators and commentators "extend" the definition to perpetuity.

Here are some examples of how different Bible versions translate this one word. First let me point out that the same word G166 is used in both places in this verse. The first time it is "eternal" then the SAME WORD is used for "time" or "world".

Titus 1:2 in the hope **of eternal (G166)** life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning **of time (G166)**,



Tit 1:2 NKJV in hope of **eternal (G166)** life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time **(G166) began,**

Tit 1:2 ESV in hope of **eternal (G166)** life, which God, who never lies, promised before the **ages (G166)** began

Tit 1:2 (New Living) This truth gives them confidence that they have **eternal(G166)** life, which God—who does not lie—promised them before the **world (G166)** began.

Do you see how conflicting this is? Here is the definition of our English word "eternal".

**Eternal-** "without beginning or end; lasting forever; always existing (opposed to temporal): eternal life."

- Dictionary .com

How can the same word that supposedly means "without beginning or end" be translated as time, ages, and world. All of these have a beginning and as we will see later the ages and the world will come to an end.

Here are two literal translations that are far more accurate:

(Tit 1:2 CLV) in expectation of life **eonian**, which God, Who does not lie, promises before **times eonian**

(Tit 1:2 YLT) upon hope of life **age-during**, which God, who doth not lie, did promise before **times of ages**,

To underscore this point, let's look at a few other verses:

Rom 16:25 KJV Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the **world (G166)** began,

(Rom 16:25 CLV) Now to Him Who is able to establish you in accord with my evangel, and the heralding of Christ Jesus in accord with the revelation of a secret hushed in **times eonian (G166)**,

I want to show you how badly the translators twist the Greek in order to make it fit their doctrine. Notice that there are TWO Greek words behind the translation of the word "world".

Rom 16:25 NowG1161 to him that is of powerG1410 to stablishG4741 youG5209 accordingG2596 to myG3450 gospel,G2098 andG2532 theG3588 preachingG2782 of JesusG2424 Christ,G5547 accordingG2596 to the revelationG602 of the mystery,G3466 which was kept secretG4601 since the **world began,G5550 G166**

The first word is "G5550 - chronos" meaning time, and the second "G166- aionios" meaning pertaining to an age. In the KJV they just ignore both words, and translate it as "world". To demonstrate the inconsistency, there is a different word used to refer to the world:

### **G2889**

Κόσμος kosmos kos'-mos

Probably from the base of G2865; orderly arrangement, that is, decoration; by implication the world (in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants, literally or figuratively [morally]): - adorning, world.

Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the **world (G2889)**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Mat 5:14 Ye are the light of the **world (G2889)**. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Aionios and kosmos are clearly two very different words with very different meanings. When the writers of the New Testament wanted to talk about the physical world, they used kosmos, and when they wanted to discuss the ages they used aion or aionios. To translate both as world is very misleading. Remember, God has caused this to hide the meaning from the masses.

Let's look at one more example, this time in the NIV.

2 Tim 1:9 NIV He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before **the beginning of time,**

This is the exact same phrase as Romans 16:25, chronos aionios. This should be translated as "times eonian", or the "times of the ages". However

NIV inserts a word that is not in the Greek. There is not a word for "beginning" in the Greek. Look for yourself below:

2Ti 1:9 Who hath saved<sup>G4982</sup> us,<sup>G2248</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> called<sup>G2564</sup> us with an holy<sup>G40</sup> calling,<sup>G2821</sup> not<sup>G3756</sup> according<sup>G2596</sup> to our<sup>G2257</sup> works,<sup>G2041</sup> but<sup>G235</sup> according<sup>G2596</sup> to his own<sup>G2398</sup> purpose<sup>G4286</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> grace,<sup>G5485</sup> which was given<sup>G1325</sup> us<sup>G2254</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> Christ<sup>G5547</sup> Jesus<sup>G2424</sup> before<sup>G4253</sup> the **world began,<sup>G5550</sup> <sup>G166</sup>**

### **G5550- chronos G166- aionios**

Nowhere in all of the scriptures does "aionios" ever mean the beginning or began, yet this is how they are translating the word here. These are just a few of the examples of how "aionios" is not translated correctly.

Here is a section of Mr. Thayer's paper that describes how Greek authors use the words aion and aionios, which clearly demonstrates that it does NOT mean eternal.

2. Usage of Greek Authors. The Greek writers constantly employ these words in a way to exclude the idea of endless, and to illustrate the meaning of indefinite time, the duration to be determined by the general scope of the subject.

Plato has the phrase "eternal (aionios) drunkenness;" but one can hardly believe he meant endless drunkenness.

Eusebius, one of the early Christian writers, speaking of the Phoenician philosophy as presented by Sanchoniathon, says of the darkness and chaos which preceded creation: "They continued for a long eternity" - (dia polun aiona). Here the word is qualified by long, showing that eternity means simply age or time indefinite, long or short.

"And these they called aionios, eternal, hearing that they had performed the sacred rites for three entire generations." In Solom. Parab. This eternity was three generations long, or about one hundred years. "Alter not the eternal boundaries." If "eternal" implied endless, they could not be altered.

In a poem ascribed to Errina Lesbia there is a similar use of the adjective "greatest" in connection with aion - "the greatest eternity that overturns all things," &c., ho megistos aion. The greatest eternity implies a less one; and is demonstrative proof that the noun aion and the adjective aionios convey

the idea not of strictly endless duration, but only of duration indefinitely continued.

Philo and Josephus wrote in Greek, though Jews by birth. The former uses the very phrase found in Matt. xxv 46, "everlasting punishment" - kolasis aionios - as follows: - Speaking of the manner in which certain persons retaliate an injury, he designates it as "a deep hatred and everlasting punishment." Of course the everlasting punishment in this case is inflicted by men in this life, and cannot, therefore, last much above "three-score years and ten."

Josephus employs the word in such phrases as these: "the everlasting name of the patriarchs;" "the everlasting glory of the Jewish nation," which ended two thousand years ago; "the everlasting reputation" of Herod; "the everlasting worship" in the temple, which also ceased nearly eighteen hundred years ago; "the everlasting imprisonment" to which John, the tyrant, was condemned by the Romans, though it could not continue but a few years at most.

These Jewish-Greek authors were contemporary with the New Testament authors, and are therefore good authority for the usage and meaning of the words in review, embracing both the Greek and Jewish elements. Philo and Josephus, Matthew and Luke, allowing for the difference in education, stood in the same relation to the Greek language, and the Jewish usage of it, and what may be affirmed of one may be affirmed with equal force of the others. And, surely, nothing is more obvious than that the first named did not understand the words aion and aionios as meaning anything more than indefinite time.

Another decisive fact is this: The Sibylline Oracles, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and others of the Christian Fathers, who are acknowledged believers and teachers of the final restoration, often use the phrases "everlasting fire," "everlasting punishment," &c., in regard to the wicked. Nothing can more conclusively show that the expressions are not to be taken in the sense of endless; for, though they believed in everlasting punishment, they also believed it would end in the restoration of those who suffered.<sup>16</sup>

3. Scripture Usage. The Scripture usage will be found in perfect harmony with the foregoing facts. The Hebrew word, which is the equivalent of the Greek, is thus used: "I will give thee the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession." Gen. xvii 8. And in verse 12, the covenant of circumcision is

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<sup>16</sup> [http://aionios.com/study\\_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf](http://aionios.com/study_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf) Pg. 70

called "an everlasting covenant." And yet the Jews were driven from the land of Canaan, and the covenant of circumcision was abolished, eighteen hundred years ago! So the priesthood of Aaron is called "an everlasting priesthood," and yet it was put aside by God's authority, and the priesthood of Christ set up in its place. Exod. xl. 15.

Now, did Jehovah use this word "everlasting" to mean endless? If He did, then He has broken His promise to the Jews in three several instances; or, if not this, the priesthood of Christ is an imposture, and the old Covenant of the Law is still in force! See, also, Levit. xvi 34, xxv 46; Exod. xxi 6.

Jonah ii 1-6, is another illustration, where "forever" lasted only three days and three nights! showing the folly of arguing for the endlessness of punishment on the strength of such elastic words as these. The punishment of Jonah is described by the term "forever," though it lasted only seventy-two hours; and there is no more reason for supposing the term to mean endless in other cases, when applied to punishment, than here. There is no more authority for saying the "everlasting punishment" of Matt. xxv 46, is endless, than for saying the "forever" punishment of Jonah, or the "everlasting priesthood" of Exod. xl. 15, is endless.

Here is a marvelous quote from Mr. Thayer's paper that demonstrates thoroughly that the Greek and Hebrew words translated as everlasting without a doubt do not have that meaning in scripture.

"We see the word everlasting applied to God's covenant with the Jews; to the priesthood of Aaron; to the statutes of Moses; to the time the Jews were to possess the land of Canaan; to the mountains and hills; and to the doors of the Jewish temple. We see the word forever applied to the duration of a man's earthly existence; to the time a child was to abide in the temple; to the continuance of Gehazi's leprosy; to the duration of the life of David; to the duration of a king's life; to the duration of the earth; to the time the Jews were to possess the land of Canaan; to the time they were to dwell in Jerusalem; to the time a servant was to abide with his master; to the time Jerusalem was to remain a city; to the duration of the Jewish temple; to the laws and ordinances of Moses; to the time David was to be king over Israel; to the throne of Solomon; to the stones that were set up at Jordan; to the time the righteous were to inhabit the earth; and to the time Jonah was in the fish's belly. We find the phrase forever and ever applied to the hosts of heaven, or the sun, moon, and stars; to a writing contained in a book; to the smoke that went up from the burning land of Idumea; and to the time the Jews were to dwell in Judea. We find the word never applied to the time the fire was to burn on the Jewish altar; to the time the sword was to remain in

the house of David; to God's covenant with the Jews; to the time the Jews should not experience shame; to the time the house of David was to reign over Israel; to the time the Jews were not to open their mouths because of their shame; to the time those who fell by death should remain in their fallen state; and to the time judgment was not executed.

But the law covenant is abolished; the priesthood of Aaron and his sons has ceased; the ordinances, and laws, and statutes of Moses are abrogated; the Jews have long since been dispossessed of the land of Canaan, have been driven from Judea, and God has brought upon them a reproach and a shame; the man to the duration of whose life the word forever was applied is dead; David is dead, and has ceased to reign over Israel; the throne of Solomon no longer exists; the Jewish temple is demolished, and Jerusalem has been overthrown, so that there is not left "one stone upon another;" the servants of the Jews have been freed from their masters; Gehazi is dead, and no one believes he carried his leprosy with him into the future world; the stones that were set up at Jordan have been removed, and the smoke that went up from the burning land of Idumea has ceased to ascend; the righteous do not inherit the earth endlessly, and no one believes that the mountains and hills, as such, are indestructible; the fire that burnt on the Jewish altar has long since ceased to burn; judgment has been executed; and no Christian believes that those who fall by death will never be awakened from their slumbers. Now, as these words are used in this limited sense in the Scriptures, why should it be supposed that they express endless duration when applied to punishment?"<sup>17</sup>

So now with this new understanding of the words aion and aionios let's examine all the scriptures that supposedly support the doctrine of eternal torment.

Jud 1:7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of **eternal fire**.

We discussed this verse much earlier in this paper and saw that the fire that burned Sodom and Gomorrah is certainly not burning today and therefore it is NOT eternal.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://aionios.com/study\\_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf](http://aionios.com/study_notes/origin.of.endless.punishment.pdf) Pg. 70-72

Jud 1:12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

Jud 1:13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness **for ever (aion)**.

We saw earlier in 2 Peter 2:4 that the disobedient are reserved in darkness to be reserved for judgment. How can this mean forever if it is a temporary state of bondage in darkness until judgment?

2Pe 2:4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, **but cast them down to hell (Tartarus) and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;**

2Th 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

2Th 1:9 Who shall be punished with **everlasting** (aionios) destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

This destruction is thorough and complete resulting in our salvation, and undoubtedly it is not a perpetual never ending punishment.

Rev 14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth **up for ever and ever**: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Here is a better translation of this verse:

Rev 14:11 YLT and the smoke of their torment doth go up **to ages of ages**; and they have no rest day and night, who are bowing before the beast and his image, also if any doth receive the mark of his name.

In Greek ages of ages is aionios aionios, which is the same grammatical construction as holy of holies, hagon hagon. Just as holy of holies indicates that of all the holy places this is the most holy, so does ages of ages point out that of all the ages, the ages of judgment are the most important. The ages of judgment are when our process of salvation begins. This study covers this topic in far greater detail.

<http://aionios.com/2012-09/ages-eons/>

Heb 6:2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of **eternal judgment**.

Eternal judgment is the last of the Milk Doctrines which describes a process of judgment that lasts for a period of time long enough to chasten us from all evil and make us like Christ.

### Milk Doctrines

Our last verse is a quote from Christ himself.

Mat 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting (aionios) punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

It has been clearly demonstrated that Christ did not mean the punishment was eternal but rather an intense process that destroys all of the evil within us.

So this question follows, "If punishment is not eternal, then is life in Christ not eternal?"

The life of this age is to know Jesus Christ and his doctrine, and to do what he commands.

Joh 17:3 And this is life eternal (aionios), that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

This age is the age in which all of mankind is brought to the knowledge of Christ and saved. After this is accomplished, the age of salvation is over, but that does not mean that we cease to know Christ or dwell with him because we will then be immortal.

1Co 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on **immortality**.

After death is destroyed and everyone has been redeemed, then the fullness of God's spirit will be within all.

1Co 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, **that God may be all in all**.

God has no beginning and no end. If his Spirit is within us and we are



immortal then we will forever dwell with him and the rest of humanity in perfect unity.

Here is an article by Mike Vinson for more on this topic.

### [What is Life Aionios](#)

## Conclusion

I hope and pray that God will give you the ability to see that he is not going to torture anyone forever, but rather desires that all men will be saved and accomplishes this through his righteous judgment.

1Ti 4:10 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, **who is the Saviour of all men**, specially of those that believe.

1Ti 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;  
1Ti 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

God wills that all men are to be saved, and he does all his pleasure.

Isa 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, **and I will do all my pleasure**:

Here are Jesus Christ's own words.

Joh 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, **will draw all men unto me**.

The understanding that hell is not eternal torment and that God is going to save all men through a process of judgment is part of the Milk of the word of God. If you are just now realizing this marvelous truth, then it is a joyous time to finally see the true Gospel of God. You are now a babe in Christ. You will need to study and learn the Milk Doctrines, and then progress beyond that to strong meat of the word. There are many more mysteries of God hidden in his word to be discovered.

1Pe 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may

grow thereby

Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Please study these doctrines thoroughly:

### [Milk Doctrine Studies](#)

Pray that the Lord would make you humble and teachable like a little child, for you have only scratched the surface of the mysteries of God.

Mat 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 18:4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Please feel free to write or call with any questions you may have.

You will probably want to read the following article about the truth of heaven in light of this new understanding of hell.

### [What and Where is Heaven](#)

With much love in Christ,

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