

046: Not the Hell You Might Think (based on Ch. 4 in *The Savior of All Men*)

Over the gate to Hell in Dante's Inferno are these haunting words:

- "All hope abandon, ye who enter in!"
- Dante, a staunch Roman Catholic, believed what virtually all evangelical Christians believe — that Hell is eternal and, therefore, an endless place of torment for unbelievers.
- But is that what the Bible teaches?
- The English word Hell is used twenty-three times in the King James Version of the New Testament.
- But the Greek words are most important, because I am not convinced that any of the three Greek words refer to what we think of as Hell.
- In my opinion, the English Bible translators should have simply transliterated these three Greek words, using their actual place names rather than "interpreting" as Hell.

In this episode we will examine the three Greek words that have traditionally been translated Hell in the KJV and other English Bibles.

- First, is Tartarus
- The Greek word Tartarus is used only once in the New Testament.
- 2 Pet. 2:4 God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.
- Tartarus is a term from Greek mythology and refers to the deepest abyss of the underworld where enemies were locked up.

- According to Peter, it is the place where God locked up the fallen angels that sinned before the Flood of Noah's day, who chose to leave their heavenly sphere of dwelling and came to Earth, taking on human bodies, and cohabiting with human women.
- Tartarus is never used in the Scriptures with respect to humans, so we can ignore this place, since it has no pertinence to our discussion about Hell.

The second Greek word that has traditionally been translated Hell in the KJV and other English Bibles is Hades

- The Greek word Hades is used ten times in the New Testament.
- It was the realm of the dead in Greek mythology, associated with the Greek god of the same name.
- To the Jews, Hades was the equivalent of Sheol, the Hebrew word used in the Old Testament for the grave.
- We know this because, in his sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2), Peter quotes from Ps. 16, where the psalmist refers to Sheol.
- But Peter uses the Greek word Hades in translation, referring to the same place.

Sheol in the Old Testament was never a reference to Hell or a place of torment —

- though many English Bibles, including the KJV, did not hesitate to translate it Hell on several occasions — nor did it include a realm called Paradise or Abraham's bosom.
- It was simply the grave, the place where the dead sleep while awaiting resurrection and judgment.
- According to scholar Philip Johnston:

- “Sheol means the underworld, the realm of the dead ... associated with worms, maggots and dust ...The term was frequently translated as ‘hell’ in the Authorized or King James Version. However, the Hebrew Bible never indicates any form of punishment after death, so this translation is inappropriate.”
- Regarding Sheol, the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia adds:
- “It means really the unseen world, the state or abode of the dead ... In its darkness, stillness, powerlessness, lack of knowledge and inactivity, it is a true abode of death; hence, is regarded by the living with shrinking, horror and dismay (Ps 39:13; Isa 38:17–19), though to the weary and troubled it may present the aspect of a welcome rest or sleep (Job 3:17–22; 14:12 f).”

So when Peter uses the Greek word Hades, he is merely using it as the Greek equivalent word for Sheol — the place of the dead as he understood it from the Hebrew.

- Peter is not referring to the Greek mythological concept of conscious souls either being tormented or enjoying Paradise.
- Philip Johnston continues:
- “In later, intertestamental literature Sheol/Hades was divided into separate compartments for the righteous and the wicked, and 1 Enoch 22 specifies three or four separate compartments. However, the Old Testament texts do not assert this.”
- The Pharisees of Jesus’ day had adopted some incorrect thinking from the Greeks, namely, the transmigration of souls (similar to reincarnation), and Hades as having compartments for the wicked (a place of torment) and the righteous (Paradise, or Abraham’s bosom).

- Neither of these teachings are found in the Old Testament Scriptures.

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16), Jesus uses the Pharisees’ own incorrect thinking against them.

- The Pharisees believed they were righteous and, therefore, would receive a great inheritance in the kingdom.
- Quite the contrary was the case, so Jesus turned their own teaching upside down, showing them in parabolic form they would be severely judged in the age to come while the poor, whom they oppressed, would prosper and inherit a place of reward in the kingdom.
- The poor (pictured by Lazarus in the parable) were the humble down-and-outers — the tax collectors and harlots — who repented at the preaching of John the Baptist.
- The rich (pictured by the rich man in the parable) were the up-and-outers — the scribes and Pharisees — who refused to repent.
- They were of the mindset that they did not need to repent, on the assumption that they were already automatic inheritors via their heritage in Abraham.

That same mindset pervades Christianity in the 21st century.

- Many believers assume they will be automatic inheritors at the Judgment Seat, on the basis of their relationship with Christ as children of God. But that is not correct.
- Paul points out in Rom. 8:16-17 that all believers are children of God and therefore His heirs.
- But we become joint-heirs with Jesus to co-rule with Him only to the extent that we suffer with Him.
- Inheritance is according to works done in faith.

- Thus, Luke 16 is a parable that Jesus used to turn the Pharisees' expectation of reward in the kingdom on its head.
- Because of their greed and covetousness and selfishness, they could expect judgment rather than millennial inheritance.
- Hades (the grave) is used in the parable to picture that once this life is over, the roles of the Pharisees (the greedy rich) and the "sinners" (the humble poor) will be reversed in the next age.
- The humble ones who repented will dine with Abraham at the Marriage Supper (depicted by Abraham's bosom), while the Pharisees will suffer tremendous loss (portrayed by the flames).

As a result of misinterpreting the Luke 16 passage, many Christians believe that Hades is a temporary place of hell-like torment where unbelievers go until they are resurrected to be judged by Jesus at the Great White Throne after the Millennium.

- That is incorrect and, unfortunately, has crept into our thinking as believers.
- Much more will be said on this in later episodes.
- The other way Jesus uses the word Hades in the New Testament is found in:
- Matt. 11:23 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.
- Capernaum had a tremendous advantage.
- Jesus Himself ministered there on several occasions and did many mighty works in that city.

- In fact, He even made it His Galilean home after being expelled from His hometown of Nazareth by the angry Jews.
- Jesus claims that if Sodom had seen His mighty works, they would have repented and never have been destroyed.
- Thus, the people of Capernaum, having missed a divine opportunity to repent and inherit a place in the kingdom of the heavens, will die and go to Hades (the grave) instead.

Interestingly, the apostle Paul used the word Hades only once, and John used it four times in the book of Revelation.

- In all five of those instances, Hades is coupled with Death, clearly illustrating the partnership of death and the grave that will ultimately be defeated by Jesus (through resurrection).
- Paul triumphantly proclaimed, "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55).
- As has been clearly demonstrated, Hades is not a burning Hell in the Scriptures.
- It is the Greek equivalent to the Old Testament word Sheol, which is essentially the grave.
- The Jewish audiences of Christ and the apostles would have known this.
- It is only in modern times that the waters have been muddied through mistranslation of the word as Hell, which should never have happened.

I am thankful that some English Bible versions, including the New King James Version, have chosen to transliterate the Greek word Hades, rather than translate it.

- However, most have translated Gehenna as Hell, which makes a theological statement.

- The King James choice to translate both Hades and Gehenna as Hell has caused tremendous confusion, because it leads most readers to think of a place of burning torment.
- Yet none of the three Greek words translated Hell in English Bible versions mean a place of burning torment.
- Why did the King James translators do this, thereby setting the pace for all to follow?
- Though we cannot condone their translation decision, we can at least understand their rationale for having done so.
- Barnhart's Dictionary of Etymology records that the original meaning of hell comes from the Gothic word halja, which means "one who covers up or hides something."
- Thus, hell would have been understood as the place where the dead are "covered up" or "hidden."

The nineteenth century Anglican clergyman, F.W. Farrar (1831-1903) adds this:

- "Archbishop Usher (sic) ... tells us that ... to hell the head used to mean "to put on a hat," and a "hellier" meant a "slater" (roofer). It was the name given to the place under the Exchequer Chambers where the king's debtors were confined. It was used also for the place where a tailor flung his shreds.
- Farrar goes on to say: (Use of the word hell) is unfortunate because it has acquired a sense of endlessness which is not once predicated either of Sheol, or Hades, or ... of Gehenna. It is a fact, which any reader can at any time verify for himself, that duration of time is never so much as mentioned in the Bible in connection with Sheol or Hades and if he be a candid seeker after truth, he can soon learn by study that it is neither

predicated of Gehenna, nor formed any part of the normal Jewish conception of that metaphorical word."

So perhaps the Greek words Hades and Gehenna were translated Hell in the King James Bible of 1611 because the translators were thinking of being covered over or hidden, through death, in the grave.

- But Barnhart reveals something more disturbing about the etymology of the word Hell.
- "Old Norse Hel (from Proto-Germanic halija "one who covers up or hides something") was the name of Loki's daughter who ruled over the evil dead in Niflheim, the lowest of all worlds. It might have reinforced the English word 'as a transfer of a pagan concept to Christian theology and its vocabulary.'"
- I would really like to know how this word Hell made its way into our English Bibles.
- As I've already mentioned, it is a mistranslation that conjures up ideas of burning and torment in passages where the original does not intend that meaning.

That brings us to the third Greek word translated Hell in most English Bibles, including the King James and New King James Versions.

- Gehenna is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew term GeHinnom, meaning Valley of Hinnom.
- Unlike Hades — the grave, which cannot be seen — Gehenna was a visible place outside the walls of Jerusalem that was known to the Jews.
- Gehenna is used twelve times in the New Testament, and the Hebrew equivalent is used thirteen times in the Old Testament.
- Never in the Old Testament does it refer to Hell and, as we shall see, neither does it in the New Testament.

- Other than one brief usage in the book of James — James 3:6, “The tongue is set on fire by Gehenna” — the word is used exclusively by Jesus in the Gospels.
- Thus, it is always used with a Jewish audience, never with Gentiles.
- (James is writing to Jewish believers).
- The word is used only with Jewish audiences, because only the Jews would have known about Gehenna, or the Valley of Hinnom, seeing that it was a geographic location.
- We can easily conclude that Gehenna was used by Jesus and his half-brother James to refer to a temporary, earthly place of judgment, not a place of endless torment.

Before exploring the contexts where Jesus referred to Gehenna, it is important to understand the Old Testament history of the Valley of Hinnom.

- The Valley was located just outside the walls of Jerusalem and was sometimes called Tophet, because Tophet was an area in the Valley where some heinous activities took place, giving it a shameful reputation.
- 2 Chron. 28:3 He (Ahaz) burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.
- Ahaz, king of Judah, actually offered his children as a sacrifice to Molech in the Valley of Hinnom!
- His grandson Manasseh did the same.
- 2 Chron. 33:6 He (Manasseh) caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and

consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.

God used Manasseh’s grandson, good king Josiah, to defile the shrine of Tophet or Gehenna, so that it could never again be used for idolatry or the sacrificing of children.

- 2 Kings 23:10 He (Josiah) defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech.
- God ultimately cursed the valley and designated it a mass grave where the slain inhabitants of Jerusalem would be buried.
- Jer. 7:30-32 “For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight,” says the LORD ... “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 did not command, nor did it come into My heart. Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “when it will no more be called Tophet, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room.”

By cursing the Valley of Hinnom in this manner, is God condemning the nation to unending Hell?

- No, He is pronouncing temporal judgment on the nation for her sins.
- This is the point in history when the valley changed its status from a place of idolatry to a place of shame, where refuse was thrown, including excrement, and offal, and even the bodies of criminals, those whom they wanted to desecrate and treat shamefully.
- When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC, bodies of Jews were thrown in the newly-dubbed Valley of Slaughter.

- The same happened in AD 70, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.
- The prophecy was fulfilled time after time again.
- Consequently, throughout Jewish history, up to the time of Christ, the Valley of Hinnom was known to the Jews as a garbage dump, identified as a place of humiliation and shame because of its awful history.
- Fires continually burned in Gehenna, slowly consuming the refuse, and thereby helping to control the overwhelming stench.

The book of Isaiah mentions that Gehenna will also be a place of burning in the Millennium.

- Those who transgress against the Messianic king will receive the death penalty and be cast into Gehenna, which will be used as a temporal judgment.
- Isa. 66:23-24 It shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD. “And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched.”
- The sight of Gehenna will serve as a warning and deterrent to those considering rebellion against Messiah.
- Incidentally, a dump such as this attracts flies and fly larvae, known as maggots (“worms”).
- The worm population never dies.
- The garbage is their perpetual breeding ground.
- Furthermore, the fires never go out.
- They are essential to burning up the gases produced by the natural process of bacterial decomposition.

In the parallel text to Matt. 5, found in Mark 9, Jesus quotes Isa. 66:24 repeatedly.

- Mark 9:43-44 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell (Gehenna), into the fire that shall never be quenched—where “their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”
- Mark 9:45-46 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell (Gehenna), into the fire that shall never be quenched—where “their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”
- Mark 9:47-48 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell (Gehenna) fire —where “their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”

Is Jesus using Gehenna as a metaphor for Hell, the place of so-called unending punishment?

- No, rather, He is using it as a metaphor for the punishment (negative reward) of Israelites and, by application, church-age believers — who persist in sinning.
- Instead of “entering into life” — a term that refers to millennial inheritance, as we saw in the previous episode, those who do not live righteously will be ashamed, for they will not be rewarded.
- Again, Jesus is speaking metaphorically. He is not literally suggesting that sinning Israelites or church-age believers cut off a hand or foot or pluck out an eye to keep from sinning, lest they go to Hell.
- He is urging us to do whatever is necessary to live righteously so we can inherit a place of ruling in the coming kingdom rather than being consigned to Gehenna-like shame, which is the earthly realm of the

kingdom, described in the Gospels as “outer darkness,” literally, “the darkness outside” (another metaphor).

The earthly realm of the kingdom will be relatively dark in contrast with the bright New Jerusalem, which has no natural light, for Jesus is its inherent light source.

- Those believers relegated outside the New Jerusalem will feel naked and ashamed, for they will not be in the presence of Jesus and will not have clothing of light (glorification).
- Unfaithful Jews will apparently be excluded from the promised land in the Millennium.
- They will have to live amongst the nations, which will be quite a stigma of shame.
- Gehenna is not referring to Hell at all, despite the poor translation choices of Bible translators (including the KJV).
- By inserting the word Hell for the Hebrew word Gehenna (which they should have transliterated), the Bible translators actually interpreted Scripture according to their theological beliefs.
- That is a serious violation of the rules of literal Bible translation.
- In so doing, they re-shaped the thinking of generations of Christians thereafter. What a tragedy!

It is vital to remember, when interpreting passages such as the Sermon on the Mount, that Jesus is talking to believers, not to unbelievers.

- In fact, they are called “disciples,” those believers who have chosen to pay the high price of following Jesus.
- When that is kept in mind, these passages come alive and have tremendous practical applications.

- How, then, are we to interpret these difficult passages about “radical amputation?”
- Matt. 5:21-22 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.”

Notice the terms raca and you fool.

- They are terms of contempt and derision.
- Jesus warns that if you say, “Raca,” which means “empty one” or “worthless person” — you will be judged by the council (the Sanhedrin).
- If you say, “You fool!” which is the Greek word moros, from which we get our English word moron (the idea of calling someone dull or stupid (to be derogatory) — then you will go to Hell (Gehenna).
- It’s certainly not nice to call people these awful names contemptuously, but is Jesus really teaching that by using such language you will go to Hell?
- If Hell is here referring to the lake of fire, then Jesus is essentially saying this: “If you, in a burst of anger, call someone empty and worthless, you will face judgment by the Sanhedrin (that’s the council).
- But if you, in a burst of anger, call someone a moron, a stupid blockhead, you will face judgment in the lake of fire.”

Huh? That logic doesn’t register with me.

- Is the one term of contempt (raca) more contemptuous than the other (moros)? No!

- What makes more sense is if Jesus is referring to the same judgment in both cases for breaking God’s law.
- In other words, if you use derogatory terms when speaking to your brethren, you will be judged by the council, the Sanhedrin.
- If they deem it serious enough, you will face capital punishment, and your body will be thrown into the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna), a place of shame and regret.
- Jesus is using Gehenna as a metaphor for the shameful judgment that will come upon the Jews for living lawlessly and not repenting (which culminated in destruction by Rome in the year AD 70).
- He is also using Gehenna as a metaphor for the shame a Christian will face at the Judgment Seat if they can’t get victory over the sins of anger and hatred.

Those who use contemptuous speech or have contemptuous thoughts in their heart toward another person are guilty of breaking God’s law — Exod. 20:13 You shall not murder.

- That is, they are essentially spiritual murderers.
- Lawbreakers — according to Matt. 5:19 — will be least in the kingdom.
- As we learned in the previous episode, that means they will not reign with Jesus in the New Jerusalem.
- Indeed, at the Judgment Seat their anger, hatred, and lack of love will be exposed, their works will burn up, and they will be ashamed — weeping and gnashing their teeth throughout the Millennium — consciously regretting their choices that led to a shameful verdict.

Another use of Hell/Gehenna is found in Matt. 5:27-30:

- 27 You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not commit adultery.”

- 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
- 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.
- 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.
- The same principle applies as in the earlier verses.
- Those who lust in their heart and mind are guilty of breaking God’s law — Exod. 20:14 You shall not commit adultery.
- That is, they are essentially spiritual adulterers.

The prevailing attitude of many of Jesus’ listeners was that mere conformity to the letter of the law was all God required.

- Jesus took the matter further, emphasizing conformity to the spirit of the law.
- Remember: Jesus is speaking to believers, warning, “If you want to inherit the kingdom, then stop your sinning at any cost.
- You might have to practice radical amputation.”
- The writer to the Hebrews put it this way:
- Heb. 12:1-2a Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.
- The phrase “causes you to sin” in the verses from Matt. 5 is the Greek word skandalizo, which means “to scandalize.”

- It is the idea of “entrapping, causing to be tripped up or enticing to sin.”
- Here’s the idea: If your eye or hand cause you to stumble, take radical measures to control it!

A commentator explains it this way:

- “If thy tablet offend thee, sell it. If thy smart phone offend thee, get thee a ‘dumb’ phone. If thy computer offend thee, secure it. If thy TV offend thee, cancel your service. If thy magazines offend thee, burn them. If thy e-books offend thee, delete them. If thy music offend thee, destroy it. If a website offends thee, block it.”
- Whatever you must do to keep from stumbling and being enticed, do it, so that you can inherit the kingdom.
- Otherwise, at the Judgment Seat, the fire will try your works and reveal your secrets and — like the effect of Gehenna — you will be exposed and ashamed, sent to the darkness outside.

In the parallel text (Mark 9:43-48, that I quoted earlier), it seems Jesus likens Gehenna fire to the Judgment Seat fire:

- Mark 9:49 For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt.
- To understand the metaphor, two facts are essential:
- Fact #1: In Matt. 5:13 Jesus refers to believers as “the salt of the earth.”
- Fact #2: Salt was to be added to the Old Testament grain offerings — Lev. 2:13 Every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt..
- What is the Application?
- As a believer, you are a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1).
- One day the quality of your sacrificial offering will be judged.

- Your soul will be seasoned with salt — the “salt” of fire — and the fire will either reveal the beauty of your works (as gold, silver, precious stones) — or it will consume your works (as wood, hay, stubble).
- Thus, Jesus is reminding of the judgment to come and the need to prepare.

What about Gehenna used in other contexts?

- Matt. 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
- The context of Matt. 10 is not the Sermon on the Mount, but Jesus is once again talking with His disciples.
- That is clear in the context.
- He is now ratcheting up the pressure on these men, to help them prepare for coming judgment.
- As has already been demonstrated, Gehenna was a form of temporal, physical punishment.
- But at the Judgment Seat, Jesus will also judge the soul of believers.
- Indeed, that is the very purpose for the Judgment Seat!
- Thus, Jesus encourages His disciples to live righteously and not to fear man, for man can merely punish the body, whereas God recompenses both body and soul.

As mentioned earlier, Gehenna is also a metaphor for national judgment upon Israel for disobedience.

- From our historical perspective, that judgment came in AD 70, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, including the temple.
- But at the time of Christ’s ministry, the judgment was yet future and not known to the Jewish people.
- That is why He warned them of impending judgment for their disobedience if they did not repent.

- Because the Pharisees were the spiritual teachers of Israel, Jesus rebuked them harshly for leading the people astray.
- Matt. 23:13 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.
- Matt. 23:15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.
- Matt. 23:33 Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

What is Jesus saying?

- He is condemning them by essentially saying, “Pharisees, you are making Gehenna converts (i.e., lawbreakers), people of shame and reproach, worthy of judgment.
- You will be subject to Gehenna judgment!
- You will be least in the kingdom; your converts will be least also (5:19-20).”
- Tragically, these Pharisees and others like them who were living disobediently, did not take heed, and were later killed by the Romans and their bodies were dumped into the Valley of Hinnom.
- The prophecy was fulfilled.
- Israel was judged physically and temporally.
- They will be judged spiritually by Jesus when they are resurrected.
- Commentator Joseph Dillow points out that the equating of Gehenna with unending conscious torment was first introduced a couple of centuries after Christ, in the Pseudepigrapha and the Mishnah, and later crept into the Talmud and other writings.

- He says, “No Jewish sources prior to the time of Christ associate Gehenna with eternal damnation.”

The error made its way into the thinking of Jewish theologians in the Dark Ages, and, unfortunately, crept into Roman Catholicism and later the Reformation.

- Even English Scripture translations, starting with the King James Version of 1611, translated Gehenna as Hell, as the translators chose to look through the lens of their Reformation theology rather than literal translation.
- Milton’s Paradise Lost (published in 1667) also referred to Gehenna as Hell.
- The error has remained, largely unchallenged, ever since the Reformation!
- The only reference to a Hell-like place of punishment in the Scriptures is Rev. 20 — the lake of fire.
- We will examine this place in a later study.

Are we going to allow errors that crept into the church centuries after the time of Christ determine the meaning of Gehenna for us?

- Or should we define Gehenna based on the Old Testament and what would have been in the minds of Jesus and first century Jews?
- The answer should be obvious.
- I have heard it said that Jesus spoke more about Hell than He did about Heaven, but I am compelled to set the record straight.
- Jesus used the word Gehenna eleven times, and those references have nothing to do with Hell.
- He used the word Hades four times, and Hades is the equivalent of Sheol, which means “the grave.”

- In contrast, He used the word “Heaven” one hundred fifteen times, with more than a quarter of those referring to the kingdom of heaven.
- I would submit that the heart of the Savior is to prepare us for the heavenly ruling realm of His kingdom.
- Are you preparing for the kingdom?
- I challenge you to Think on These Things!