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### Hades the New Testament Equivalent of Sheol

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HADES THE NEW TESTAMENT EQUIVALENT  
OF SHEOL

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by

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June 1952

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Object of Paper

The object of this paper is to show the relationship between the Old Testament word Sheol and its New Testament equivalent. The burden of this paper lies in the question: Is Hades the New Testament equivalent of Sheol? This paper then is a study of the words Sheol and Hades to see whether Hades in the New Testament is used in the same way and for the same meaning or meanings that Sheol is used in the Old Testament. This study will point out, besides the relations between Sheol and its equivalent, the unity in the teaching concerning Sheol and its New Testament equivalent. This latter object is of course secondary to the former and main object; it is really a resultant object of the former. The sources for this study are mainly the Old and New Testaments in their original languages. However, to have as a background the thoughts and words of others many secondary sources were used which deal with this or that aspect of the problem here faced in this study. Though the influence of others can never be wholly disavowed in a paper of this sort in forming conclusions, nevertheless the findings and conclusions for the most part are based on the Scriptures alone. Only thus could this study be of highest value. A repetition

of what others have said on a subject which the Scriptures alone can be the source in the first place would not be worth the effort of such a study. And since the Scriptures have been my primary source the problem of this paper has been approached with great humility and with the prayer that the Lord and Giver of life, the Lord Jesus Christ, would grant strength of purpose and mind to carry out this project. For in dealing with the holy Scriptures only that individual who has been blessed with the Holy Spirit in his endeavors can hope to make a success of his undertaking. Therefore this paper has been undertaken not with the mind of a scholar but of a Christian student subject to the Word of God.

A study of Sheol and its equivalent or equivalents in the New Testament pertains to only a part of that Biblical teaching which deals with eternal damnation, eternal punishment. As such, it represents just the beginning of an effort to determine from Scripture the true and real picture of hell, eternal punishment, the lot of the wicked after death. This paper and study will be of interest and will serve a useful purpose only if it is taken in connection with the whole picture that the Bible presents concerning eschatology, and more specifically, in this case, with the after-life of the wicked. What picture does the Bible present of hell, the judgment, of the after-life of the wicked, of eternal damnation? This paper is the beginning of such a

study to find the answer to these questions. If it is looked upon as being this, then this study will be of value. And it is with this attitude that this paper is undertaken to show the findings concerning the problem of this study. The horribleness of hell and eternal punishment can be overcome only by the eternal life in Christ Jesus - the wrath of God can only be overcome by the love and forgiveness of God in Christ Jesus.

#### Possible New Testament Equivalents of Sheol

The words in the New Testament which could at first glance portray the meaning or meanings of the Old Testament word Sheol, שְׁאוֹל, are the following: Gehenna, γέεννα, Hades, ᾅδης, Abussos, ἄβυσσος, Tartaros, τάρταρος, Kataxthonios, καταχθόνιος, and Thanatos, θάνατος. It is not the purpose here to show why of all these words Hades is the only equivalent of Sheol - this will be shown when the study of Hades is taken up. The study then will revolve around these two words, Hades and Sheol - the other five New Testament words will only be briefly considered to show why they can not be equivalents. Under the study of each word background material will first be presented which will include the general meaning of the term, its etymology, a history of the word where it will give aid in arriving at the etymology or general meaning, and the occurrences of the word in the Old and New Testaments. Then each occurrence

of the word will be taken into consideration in its context to determine the meaning and the usage of the word. Then in the closing chapters the relationship between Sheol and its New Testament equivalent will be treated - this being based on the findings from the study of each word.

#### The Usage of the Word "hell" in the Authorized Version

Before this introduction is concluded the word "hell" in the Authorized Version will be reviewed briefly to show how it is used since this is the word the Authorized Version predominantly uses to translate Sheol and Hades. The English word "hell" seems to have originated from the Anglo-Saxon word helan, to hide.<sup>1</sup> Webster gives the following meanings for the word "hell" which seem to be in use today:

1. The place of the dead, or of souls after death; the grave; - corresponding to the Hebrew Sheol, and the Greek Hades.
2. The place or state of punishment for the wicked after death; the abode of evil spirits, corresponding to Gehenna, Tartarus....<sup>2</sup>

The word "hell" appears fifty-four times in the Authorized Version - in both the Old and New Testaments.<sup>3</sup> Every

① 1A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures In The New Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1930), III, 31.

<sup>2</sup>Webster's New International Dictionary Of The English Language, edited by William Allen Neilson (2nd edition, unabridged; Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1949), p. 1158.

<sup>3</sup>James Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance Of The Bible (18th printing; New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), p. 1158.

occurrence of "hell" in the Old Testament is a translation of Sheol.<sup>4</sup> In the New Testament "hell" is used twelve times to translate Gehenna, ten times to translate Hades, and once to translate the word Tartaros.<sup>5</sup> Does the Authorized Version use the word "hell" to translate every instance of Sheol in the Old Testament and every instance of its possible equivalents in the New Testament? This can easily be found out when concordances are consulted. In the Hebrew Old Testament the word Sheol appears sixty-six times.<sup>6</sup> Of the sixty-six times that Sheol appears the Authorized Version translates it twenty-one times with the word "hell."<sup>7</sup> Thus it can be seen that the Authorized Version does not use "hell" to translate Sheol in every instance; in fact it translates the word Sheol as "hell" only one-third of the total instances that Sheol appears in the Old Testament. What other words the Authorized Version uses to translate Sheol will be seen in the next chapter when the meaning of Sheol is treated. In the New Testament the Authorized Version uses "hell" to translate every occurrence of Gehenna and

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testament Concordantiae Hebraicae Atque Chaldaicae (Lipsiae: Viet et Comp, 1846), II, 1136.

<sup>7</sup>Strong, op. cit., p. 478.



Hades and Tartaros.<sup>8</sup> Thus from this little observation it can be seen that the translators of the Authorized Version looked upon the three Greek words Hades, Gehenna, and Tartaros generally speaking as having the same meaning. And they also regarded these three Greek words as having the same meaning as Sheol did in some instances in the Old Testament. Whether or not they were correct in these regards will be seen from this study.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MEANING OF SHEOL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The word Sheol in the Hebrew language is a most interesting subject for study. Some of the mysteriousness in which it is shrouded will become apparent when it is learned that it is impossible to arrive at its meaning from the study of its etymology. In fact, the etymology is not definitely known or can not be definitely arrived at. Thus the meaning of the word has to be decided upon from its usage. And this leads over to the second point that causes the word to have a mysterious surrounding. Because the meaning of the word has to be determined from its usage and context and not from its etymology, many many different meanings have been suggested and much has been written as to the significance of this word from many different viewpoints. However, and this has lent much to the mysteriousness of the word, much of what has been written about Sheol has not been based on sound scientific research and good exegetical study, but rather on tradition and one's own pious opinion. But this has changed in the last few decades, and some good work has been done in fixing the meaning of the word Sheol. This has caused much of its mysteriousness to vanish, but nevertheless it is still a clouded word and in comparison to other studies in exegesis the word has only had its surface scratched.

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This chapter which deals with the meaning of Sheol is not to add to the knowledge of the word, but rather to obtain a foundation for the study of the connection between Sheol of the Old Testament and Hades of the New Testament. The emphasis of this paper and study is to show the relationship between Sheol and its New Testament equivalent and not research on the word itself.

The word Sheol appears sixty-six times in the Old Testament under both the masculine and feminine forms.<sup>1</sup> And it is used with four different prepositions. Thus Sheol appears in seven different forms or phrases:  $\text{שְׁאוֹל}$ ,  $\text{שְׁאוֹלֵי}$ ,  $\text{שְׁאוֹלֵיךְ}$ ,  $\text{שְׁאוֹלֵיךְ}$ ,  $\text{שְׁאוֹלֵיךְ}$ ,  $\text{שְׁאוֹלֵיךְ}$ , and  $\text{שְׁאוֹלֵיךְ}$ .<sup>2</sup> Just to make the statistics complete, it appears thirty-nine times as  $\text{שְׁאוֹל}$ , four times in the phrase  $\text{שְׁאוֹלֵיךְ}$ , three times in  $\text{שְׁאוֹלֵיךְ}$ , five times in  $\text{שְׁאוֹלֵיךְ}$ , four times in  $\text{שְׁאוֹלֵיךְ}$ , ten times in  $\text{שְׁאוֹלֵיךְ}$ , and once in  $\text{שְׁאוֹלֵיךְ}$ .<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting to note how some of the well-known versions translate this word. It has already been pointed out somewhat how the Authorized Version translates Sheol; however, here is added what has been omitted above. The

<sup>1</sup>Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae Atque Chaldaicae (Lipsiae: Viet et Comp, 1846), II, 1136.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Authorized Version translates the word Sheol thirty-one times with the word "hell," thirty-one times with the word "grave," three times with the word "pit," and once with the word "depth." Luther in his translation of the Bible used the word Hoelle for Sheol in every instance except four, Genesis 37:35, 42:38, 44:29, and 44:31, where instead he used the word Grube. The translators of the Septuagint used the word ᾆδης sixty times, the word θάρακος three times, and the word ὁ ὁρός twice to translate the word Sheol. From this it can be seen that both Luther and the Septuagint translators used one word almost consistently to translate Sheol while the translators of the Authorized Version used two words to translate Sheol.

In the study of this word Sheol this portion of the paper has been divided into the following parts. First will be given a general meaning of the word, as far as this is possible, basing it upon the Old Testament and general observations together with its etymology. Then the Old Testament uses of the word will be shown. Finally, the conclusions that can be drawn from such a study will be given.

#### General Meaning of the Word Sheol

It will be best to start this portion with a few quotations which deal in a general way with the meaning of Sheol to show and point out the diverse opinions which are held. In a general way Otto Baab refers to Sheol as the underworld,

the abode of the dead which he describes thus, "The abode of the dead is a place of darkness and decay. It is a land of blackness, of shadow, gloom, and deep darkness...a place of ruin and destruction...."<sup>4</sup> Baab speaks of Sheol as the "deepest recesses of the world, as the heavens refer to the highest reaches of the known universe."<sup>5</sup> Again he says, "Although all men are destined to descend to Sheol - and this place is, consequently, not a place of punishment... yet the wicked will go to the underworld...."<sup>6</sup> Charles Russell in his little book maintains that, "Sheol means a hidden state, a place beyond that can not be seen but by faith."<sup>7</sup> He calls Sheol a "place beyond," a very vague conception, to say the least. Jennings has a peculiar note on Sheol:

The Hebrew cries after his dead as it were, and his ear listens in vain for an answer. Ah, it is "Sheol," the place that gives no answer to the hungry question, Where? "Man dies, and wastes away, he giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" Aye, where: No answer; then it is "Sheol," the place that gives no answer to all our questions.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Otto J. Baab, "Death and the Hereafter," The Theology of the Old Testament (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1949), p. 209.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>7</sup>Charles T. Russell, The Bible on Hell (Brooklyn: International Bible Students Association, 1920), p. 13.

<sup>8</sup>F. C. Jennings, "Sheol of Hades," Our Hope (August, 1945), p. 126.

Thus to Jennings it seems that Sheol represents the after-life. A more accurate meaning is given by Mercer in his article, "The Destiny of the righteous in Israel." He says:

The present generally accepted opinion of Old Testament students with regard to Sheol is that it was considered in Israel to be the common abode of all dead persons, there being no distinction in destiny between the righteous and the wicked.<sup>9</sup>

The Jewish Encyclopedia describes Sheol as:

...underneath the earth, it is very deep, it marks the point which is the greatest possible distance from heaven, though it is spoken of a land it is usually a place with gates and seems to have been divided into parts, here the dead meet without distinction, the dead continue after a fashion their earthly life, silence reigns and oblivion faces those who enter - thus it is known as "Dumah," the abode of silence.<sup>10</sup>

An interesting note on Sheol as to its meaning in the cyclopaedia of M'Clintock and Strong says:

According to the notions of the Jews, sheol was a vast receptacle where the souls of the dead existed in a separate state until the resurrection of their bodies. The region of the blessed during this interval, or the inferior paradise, they supposed to be in the upper part of this receptacle; while beneath was the abyss, or Gehenna (Tartarus), in which the souls of the wicked were subjected to punishment.<sup>11</sup>

These two men think that from this idea of "the region of the blessed..." Rome got her idea for purgatory, or at least

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<sup>9</sup>S. A. B. Mercer, "The Destiny of the Righteous in Israel," Anglican Theological Review, IV (1921), 185.

<sup>10</sup>The Jewish Encyclopedia, edited by Isidore Singer (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1907), XI, 282.

<sup>11</sup>J. M'Clintock and James Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), IX, 662.

partly from this Jewish notion. It seems that of all those who gave an opinion as to the general meaning of Sheol Heidel came the closest to the real meaning in his great work when he says:

Sheol is generally translated with "the realm of the dead." It denotes the subterranean spirit world, the grave, the state or condition of death, and the brink of death, or the like.<sup>12</sup>

From these diverse quotations it can readily be seen that among scholars there is a wide latitude as to the meaning of Sheol, and that it is difficult to put into a short sentence or phrase a general meaning of the word. After having made a study of the word and its every occurrence in the Old Testament, it seems that in a general way Sheol refers to the after-life as personified by our English word "death" or "the realm of the dead," and then more specifically to the underworld or the abode of the wicked and condemned in the after-life. Thus Sheol is the word that the Jews used in the Old Testament first to portray death as in opposition to life, and then they used the word also to portray the abode of the wicked, the counterpart of our English word "hell." These two usages and meanings and distinctions are clearly shown and brought forth from a study of the word as used in the Old Testament.

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<sup>12</sup>Alexander Heidel, The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c.1946), p. 173.

The etymology of the word Sheol and what has been said about it can be briefly stated. It seems that most scholars are agreed that it comes from one of two words: either  $\text{שאל}$ , or from  $\text{שול}$ . Here however they divide. Shahal ( $\text{שאל}$ ) means as pointed out by Jennings "to ask, to demand," when he says, "The word is probably derived from 'Shahal,' to ask, to demand; and is supposed to allude to the neversatisfied demands of the underworld...."<sup>13</sup> Luther according to Dau<sup>14</sup> seems to have accepted Shahal as the etymology of Sheol. However, it seems that most or at least a majority of the scholars follow Gesenius who believes that Shoal ( $\text{שול}$ ) is the true etymology of Sheol. Shoal according to Gesenius<sup>15</sup> means a hollow or a subterranean place. Gruber following Gesenius says:

The Hebrew word Sheol is generally understood to have originally meant a cavity or a hollow, from a root meaning to make hollow. From this it came to mean a subterranean place, and hence the underworld; and later it was used more specifically for the place of future punishment.<sup>16</sup>

Farrar has an interesting note concerning Shoal as to the

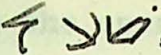
<sup>13</sup>Jennings, op. cit., p. 122.



<sup>14</sup>William Dau, "Sheol Passages in the Old Testament," Theological Quarterly, X (1906), 25.

<sup>15</sup>W. Gesenius, Hebrew And Chaldee Lexicon, translated from the German by Samuel P. Tregelles (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), p. 789.

<sup>16</sup>L. Gruber, What after Death (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1925), pp. 18-9.



etymology of Sheol. He says, "It seems to be akin to , 'hollow of the hand,' the outside of the world being regarded as a somewhat bent hand, the covered inside of the hand being Sheol."<sup>17</sup> Other scholars like Baab and Sutcliffe take neither side and leave it an open question as to whether Shahal or Shoal is the root word for Sheol. McNaspy also follows the view of not committing himself when he says:

Its very etymology...is still debated. Some trace it to the root  meaning "to dig," and suggesting an underground cavern, like the English word "hell" related to "hollow." Another root,  has also been proposed, meaning, "to ask," and implying the demanding, insatiable devourer of men, or possibly the questioning of the dead, or divination.<sup>18</sup>

Thus as can be seen from these quotes and opinions the etymology of the word Sheol is still debated, but in the end it really makes little difference since the etymology of Sheol has little or no influence on its meaning as pictured by the Old Testament. Gesenius<sup>19</sup> has the best note on this, that is, on the meaning of Sheol taking its etymology into consideration, when he thinks of Sheol as a deep subterranean place full of darkness where the dead are gathered.

It is necessary here to deal with a problem that always

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<sup>17</sup>F. W. Farrar, Mercy and Judgement (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1881), p. 372.

<sup>18</sup>Clement J. McNaspy, "Sheol in the Old Testament," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, VI (July, 1944), 326-33.

<sup>19</sup>Gesenius, op. cit., p. 798.

comes up when the etymology of Sheol is considered and that is the question as to whether the concept of Sheol or even the word itself is borrowed from the Assyrian and Babylonian languages. Of course this problem will not be solved in this paper; it is merely cited so as to make this section on the etymology of the word Sheol complete. Many believe that the Hebrew word Sheol and its concept were influenced by and possibly taken over from Assyro-Babylonian sources, and others say that this is not the case. It seems to be true and generally accepted that Assyro-Babylonian descriptions of the realm of the dead have their parallels in the ideas covered by Sheol as expressed by Singer:

...it is certain that most of the ideas covered by the Hebrew "Sheol" are expressed also in the Assyro-Babylonian descriptions of the state of the dead, found in the myths concerning Ishtar's descent into Hades....<sup>20</sup>

Though these parallels exist between Sheol and expressions of the Assyro-Babylonian state of the dead, there is no common agreement among scholars which Assyro-Babylonian word could be a root word for Sheol. Some believe that Sheol was taken from the Assyro-Babylonian word Shualu which has the "assumed meaning, 'the place where the dead are cited or bidden,' or 'the place where the dead are ingathered.'"<sup>21</sup> Others believe that the idea of Sheol was taken over from

⑦ <sup>20</sup>Singer, op. cit., p. 283.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

what the Babylonians said about Arallu which Mercer calls the Babylonian "Sheol" and which means "'the far-away land which is not revealed,' a place where 'the soul of life perishes,' 'the house whence he who enters returns not'..."<sup>22</sup> Some of the descriptions of the Babylonian "Sheol" are strikingly similar to the picture that Sheol presents. Mew says that according to the story of Istar's descent into the underworld the Babylonian underworld "seems to have been an immense mansion in the earth's center, bounded by seven strong walls and a great river."<sup>23</sup> Arallu, the Babylonian "Sheol," was the abode for the wicked where they suffered punishment.<sup>24</sup> Heidel in his publication on the Gilgamesh Epic says in speaking of the Babylonian underworld:

Death was not conceived as the absolute end of life or as effecting the complete annihilation of conscious vitality. Rather, it meant the separation of body and spirit, the decay of the former and the transfer of the latter from one mode of life or existence to another: while the body was laid to rest in the ground, the spirit descended to the underworld to sojourn there throughout eternity.<sup>25</sup>

Though there are many similarities between the concept of Sheol and the Babylonian "Sheol," there are also many

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<sup>22</sup>Mercer, op. cit., pp. 186-7.

<sup>23</sup>James Mew, Traditional Aspects of Hell, Ancient and Modern (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Company, Limited, 1903), p. 12.

<sup>24</sup>Mercer, op. cit., pp. 186-7.

<sup>25</sup>Heidel, op. cit., pp. 138-9.

dissimilarities. Mercer<sup>26</sup> points out that though Arallu was a place of punishment for the wicked, it was also a dwelling place for the righteous where they "dwelt at ease." Of course many will say that Sheol was also a dwelling place for the righteous along with the wicked. However, this is not the case as will be seen when the study of the Old Testament usage of the word Sheol is undertaken. Another striking difference is that which Heidel points out when he says:

While the Babylonian nether world had its own pantheon, the Old Testament Sheol was under the control of the same God who governed heaven and earth and all that is therein.... He is the only ruler of Sheol recognized in the Old Testament. The contention that in the early period of Hebrew history Sheol was thought to be beyond the limits of God's control or jurisdiction lacks biblical confirmation.<sup>27</sup>

It seems that the best attested and sanest view of this question whether Sheol has an Assyro-Babylonian origin or not is that one takes the word Sheol to be of independent origin and assumes that if there was any borrowing the Babylonians borrowed their concept of hell from the Hebrews.<sup>28</sup>

Before the main study of the word Sheol is taken up, the Old Testament usage of the word, it seems best to first list and point out other Old Testament words which are used in place of Sheol or more particularly as synonyms of it.

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<sup>26</sup>Mercer, op. cit., pp. 186-7.

<sup>27</sup>Heidel, op. cit., p. 182.

<sup>28</sup>Singer, op. cit., p. 283.

There are chiefly four words which the Old Testament seems to use as synonymous with Sheol: Abaddon,  $\aleph \aleph \aleph \aleph$ ; Shachath,  $\aleph \aleph \aleph$ ; Bor,  $\aleph \aleph$ ; and Maweth,  $\aleph \aleph$ .

Heidel says of these words:

Synonyms for Sheol, particularly in the sense of "the grave," are abaddon, "destruction," "place of destruction" (Job 26:6; 28:22; Ps. 88:12; Prov. 15:11); shahath, "pit" (Job 33:18-30; Ps. 30:10; 55:24; Is. 38:17; 51:14; Ezek. 28:8; etc.); and bor, "pit" (Ps. 28:1; 30:4; 88:5; Is. 14:15, 19; 38:18; Lam. 3:55; Prov. 28:17). In some passages, such as Job 38:17, also the word maweth ("death"), designating the underground spirit world, occurs as a synonym for Sheol; but such cases are not so numerous....<sup>29</sup>

Gesenius<sup>30</sup> says that Abaddon means a place of destruction, an abyss, and that it is nearly synonymous with Sheol. It comes from the verb  $\aleph \aleph \aleph$  meaning to be lost, to be destroyed. Sutcliffe quoting from the Oxford Hebrew Lexicon says that "Abaddon is described by Professor Briggs as the 'place of ruin in Sheol for lost or ruined dead.'"<sup>31</sup> Sutcliffe says that the word Shachath comes from the verb Shuach meaning "to sink down." He says:

The word would, therefore, seem properly to mean an open depression or excavation. Such an open pit can be artificially covered over to make it a trap for catching the larger wild animals, for which the word is several times used....<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Heidel, op. cit., p. 177.

<sup>30</sup>Gesenius, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

<sup>31</sup>Edmund F. Sutcliffe, The Old Testament and the Future Life (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1946), p. 43.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

Bor is another word used in the Old Testament along with Shachath for the concept of Sheol. Both words picture Sheol as a deep pit or abyss. Sutcliffe says of Bor:

Sheol is also referred to as bor or the pit. It will help to an appreciation of the force of this word to examine first its earthly applications. Its original meaning seems to have been a hole in the earth.<sup>33</sup>

He further says, "This word bor with its meaning of a hollow underground space was a suitable designation for the subterranean abode of the dead."<sup>34</sup> Maweth according to Gesenius has four uses: "death," Ps. 7:14; "the place or abode of the dead, i.e. Hades," Job 28:22; "fatal disease, pestilence," Jer. 15:2, 18:21; "destruction," Prov. 11:19, 12:28.<sup>35</sup>

A matter of interest here is the name that the Old Testament uses for the dwellers in Sheol. The Old Testament uses the word Rephaim eight times in referring to those who are abiding in Sheol: Is. 14:9; 26:14,19; Ps. 87(88):11; Prov. 2:18; 9:18; 21:16; Job 26:5.<sup>36</sup> According to Gesenius the word Rephaim, רִפְּיִים, comes from the verb רָפָא meaning to heal, and it means feeble, weak, sick.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 36-7.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>35</sup>Gesenius, op. cit., p. 461.

<sup>36</sup>Sutcliffe, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>37</sup>Gesenius, op. cit., p. 776.

Sutcliffe has an interesting note on the word Rephaim taken from two inscriptions:

It is an interesting fact that this name of Rephaim occurs in two Phoenician inscriptions. That of Tabnith, priest of Astarte and King of Sidon, is dated about 300 B.C. and is in the Museum at Constantinople. He expresses the wish that if any one should open his sarcophagus or disturb him he may have no "seed among the living under the sun nor resting-place with the Rephaim." That of Eshmunazar is of approximately the same date and is housed in the Louvre. He too was King of Sidon, and prays that any who open his resting-place or carry his sarcophagus away or otherwise interfere with it "may have no resting-place with the Rephaim nor be buried in a grave nor have a son or seed in their stead," and other evil wishes follow. Both these texts imply clearly that it is possible for the dead not to join the Rephaim, presumably through being left unburied. This shows that Rephaim is not the name of all the shades of the dead, but only of those who have come to rest, presumably in the common resting-place of the dead. This is on the assumption that the name had the same connotation both in Hebrew and in Phoenician, but it has to be borne in mind that the same word sometimes has more or less varying meanings in kindred languages.<sup>38</sup>

#### The Old Testament Usage of the Word Sheol

From a study of the passages in the Old Testament in which Sheol appears it seems, as stated above, that there are in the main two different ways that the Old Testament uses the word Sheol. First, the Old Testament uses the word Sheol ✓ to designate the abode of the dead as opposed to life here on earth. After an individual dies, Sheol receives him - in this sense no committment is made as to where the individual

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<sup>38</sup>Sutcliffe, op. cit., p. 48.

goes at death, whether to hell or to paradise. About one-half of the times that Sheol appears in the Old Testament it is used in this way, to designate the realm of the dead - the word grave is usually used to portray the idea of the realm of the dead in the English language. When Sheol is used to designate the realm of the dead, it is implied that all persons, no matter what their status is whether righteous or unrighteous, go there. Secondly, the Old Testament uses the word Sheol to designate the abode of the wicked, the place where the unrighteous go, in the after-life as opposed to the place or abode of the righteous. In this second usage only the unrighteous and wicked go to Sheol. These two usages are fairly evenly divided in the number of times that the word occurs. Sheol designates the abode or realm of the dead about thirty times and the realm of the damned, hell, also about thirty times. At the outset of this study of the Old Testament usage of the word Sheol this should be made clear: it is not always possible to distinguish these two meanings. Many times the two usages are so close together that the significance can be either the realm of the dead or the realm of the damned. Such instances will not be considered, for there are many many passages on the other hand where the distinction is clearly shown. It is these passages that this study will consider. First the individual passages will be taken up in the Old Testament which are good examples of the particular meaning, showing how they mean



one of the two usages, and then in a general way it will be pointed out what these passages say concerning the realm of the dead and the abode of the wicked.

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That the Old Testament uses the word Sheol to designate the realm or abode of the wicked, hell, as opposed to the abode of the righteous in the after-life can be clearly seen from such passages as Isaiah 5:14, 14:9-15, Psalm 139:8, 9:18, Job 21:13, 24:19, Amos 9:2, Song of Solomon 8:6, Proverbs 15:24, and Job 11:8. There are many other passages that could be pointed to, but these are the clearest in showing that Sheol was used by the Old Testament writers for the abode of the wicked. Heidel in speaking about the usage of the word Sheol for the concept of the realm of damned says:

And as regards Sheol, in particular, we have evidence that it, in the signification of the subterranean realm of the spirits, applies to the habitation of the souls of the wicked only. This can be gathered from Psalm 49, which, like Psalm 73, deals with the problem of divine retribution.<sup>39</sup>

He also maintains that Numbers 16:30-33, Deuteronomy 32:22, Psalm 139:8, Amos 9:2, Isaiah 14:13-15, 7:11, 57:9, Job 11:8, 26:6, Psalm 49:16, and Proverbs 5:11, 24 show that Sheol is used in the Old Testament, besides meaning in a general way

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<sup>39</sup>Heidel, op. cit., p. 184.

the realm of the dead or the grave, to mean the abode of the wicked.<sup>40</sup> Dau says, "Sheol occurs in four places as a designation of locality, distinct from earth and in contrast with heaven." He then lists Job 11:7-8, Psalm 139:8, Proverbs 15:24, and Amos 9:2 as these four places. He further says, "To render sheol by 'grave' in these passages would not only be manifest bathos, but as regards the passage in Proverbs it would be absolutely meaningless."<sup>41</sup>

The first passage taken up for this study is the well-known passage of Isaiah 14:9-15.<sup>42</sup> This passage reads as translated:

9.) Hell (Sheol) below was disturbed at you when it met you at your coming; it made naked (bare, made known to the eye) for you its inhabitants including all the leaders (literally it means he-goats) of the earth; it raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. 10.) They all will speak and they will all say unto you, "You also have been made weak (destroyed) even as we; you are now like us (you are now in the same state as we). 11.) Your splendour has been brought down to hell (Sheol), the sound (music) of your harps also; under you worms have been spread out and your covering will be worms." 12.) How you have fallen from heaven O Lucifer (literally, morning star) thou son of the morning; how you have been cut down to the earth, you who have laid low all the nations. 13.) But you, you said in your heart, "I will go up to the heavens,

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 173-4.

<sup>41</sup>Dau, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>42</sup>In the study of these passages the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Old Testament was used, and thus the numbering of the different passages is according to the Hebrew text and not according to the Authorized Version or the Septuagint. The translations that appear throughout this paper are those of the author.

over the stars of God I will exalt my throne and I will dwell in the mount of assembly in the extreme regions of the north. 14.) I will go up upon the high places of the clouds, I will most assuredly be compared (likened) to the Most High." 15.) Only now you will be cast down into hell (Sheol), unto the extreme (farthest) regions of the pit.

To get the true sense of this passage it must be considered in its context. In the previous chapters the prophet Isaiah had warned both Israel and Judah of the coming wrath and judgment of God because of their false worship and idolatry and social injustice and in general their rebellion against God in their sins. The prophet told them what would happen if they did not repent of their sins and return to God - the fall of Israel as a nation and their captivity, the fall and destruction of Jerusalem and Judah. But the people did not listen to him even though Isaiah pleaded with them to repent and warned them of the coming destruction. Isaiah then describes the destruction of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria, Assyria's destruction in turn by the Lord, and the future state of Israel under the reign of the Messiah. Isaiah then proceeds to describe the coming destruction of the other nations round about Israel and Judah because of their sins against both Israel and Judah and thus against God Himself. Among these nations is Babylon because of her destroying Judah and becoming by her sinful power ruler of the world. In this description of the judgment and destruction of Babylon the words and events of the passage under consideration occur. And it is in the light of this context, the Lord's destruction

of Babylon, that this passage must be considered. The immediate context of Isaiah 14:9-15 tells us of the complete political overthrow of Babylon by the Medes, 13:17-22.

Isaiah then describes the joy of all peoples at the fall of Babylon, 14:3-8, and the astonishment of the inhabitants of Sheol at the fall of the mighty Babylon, 14:9-11. From verse twelve until the end of the chapter the prophet continues to describe the end of Babylon, adding also the destruction of Assyria and Philistia. In the light of the context it can be seen that Sheol is here in this passage of Isaiah 14:9-15 a place of retribution for Babylon because she destroyed the nations of the earth.

Looking at the passage itself it can be seen that the word Sheol appears three times, verses 9, 11, and 15. The Authorized Version translates Sheol in verses nine and fifteen with the word "hell," and in verse eleven with the word "grave." Luther in his translation used the word Hoelle in all three occurrences. The Septuagint translators used the word Hades, and in the Vulgate the word Infernos is used to translate these three occurrences. Thus it can be seen that the translators of four famous translations, with the exception of the Septuagint, used words for Sheol in this passage which mean and picture a place of punishment - the word Hades also can mean and refer to a place of punishment as will be shown in the second part of this thesis. In verse nine Sheol is spoken of as containing inhabitants who are

alive. The people of Sheol would arise and meet Babylon at her coming, and they would speak to her and chide her. Isaiah is here foretelling the fall and destruction of Babylon. And to emphasize this destruction he describes not only Babylon's political fall but also her punishment after she has entered the after-life, her punishment in the place of retribution. Isaiah does this by vividly depicting the scene in which the inhabitants of Sheol mock and chide Babylon because of her terrible destruction. In this description the prophet is not speaking of a political death or destruction, but rather of Babylon's sad lot in the after-life. Sheol is never used as referring to life on this earth but always to the after-life. And so this scene in which Isaiah pictures the inhabitants as living and moving about can not refer to this life on earth nor can it refer to the realm of the dead where there is no life. Sheol also is never used for the righteous in heaven, but always either for the realm of the dead or as the place of punishment for the wicked.<sup>43</sup> The Hebrew word that is used for the inhabitants of Sheol here in verse nine is the word Rephaim, spoken of above. Now it can be argued that Rephaim is used and refers only to the inhabitants of the realm of the dead, as pointed out by Sutcliffe from two inscriptions.<sup>44</sup> However, as Sutcliffe

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<sup>43</sup>Heidel, op. cit., p. 186.

<sup>44</sup>Sutcliffe, op. cit., p. 48.

himself states, this opinion is based only on the assumption "that the name had the same connotation both in Hebrew and in Phoenician."<sup>45</sup> Since the Hebrews used the same word to designate both the realm of the dead and the place of punishment for the wicked, it does not seem unlikely that they would also use the same word to designate the inhabitants of the realm of the dead and the inhabitants of the abode of the wicked. In verses eleven to fifteen the word Sheol is used in contrast to heaven. Babylon sought to reach heaven and be like God, but instead she would be brought down to Sheol. If Sheol is here taken in the sense of the realm of the dead, the sting and the repute would be taken out of these words of curse that Isaiah is pronouncing upon Babylon. But if Sheol is taken to mean the abode of the wicked, then the full force of these words is kept - Isaiah would have hardly spoken of the realm of the dead as a place of retribution, such an interpretation robs this passage of its full meaning. In verse fifteen Isaiah says that Babylon will be cast into Sheol, and not only into Sheol but also into the extreme regions of Sheol, the Hebrew here uses the word Bor meaning pit - Sheol and Bor are here used synonymously. Thus it would seem from this that there are in Sheol different regions or parts or degrees. This could hardly be the case of the realm of the dead where among the dead there are no

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

degrees of difference. The contrast between heaven and Sheol that Isaiah here shows can be likened to the contrast that our Lord makes in Matthew 11:23 and Luke 10:15 between heaven and Hades when He spoke of Capernaum being brought down to Hades instead of being exalted to heaven.

Sheol then in this passage of Isaiah 14:9-15 refers to the abode of the wicked and can rightfully be translated with the English word hell. From a summary of the reasons why Sheol here refers to the abode of the wicked it can be seen that Sheol can not mean the realm of the dead or the after-life; The context clearly points out that Isaiah in this passage is speaking of Sheol as a place of retribution, the famous versions as pointed out translate Sheol here with words that mean the place of punishment, the inhabitants of Sheol are here spoken of as alive, Isaiah is not speaking here of a political death but of eternal death and punishment, the fact that Sheol is here contrasted with heaven, and also the fact that Sheol in this passage is spoken of as having different regions and degrees.

The next passage that will be considered is the passage in Job 24:19. This passage reads as translated:

Drought and also heat will drink up (consume, absorb) the waters of snow (that is, melted water from the snow); in like manner will hell (Sheol) consume (seize, take hold of) those who have lived in sin.

This passage is important because it brings out the fact that Sheol is a place of punishment for the wicked. It is

true that because of sin the penalty of death, that is, physical death, has been put upon all mankind and thus in this sense all will go to Sheol, that is, the realm of the dead. However, in this passage in Job only the wicked are being spoken of, not all mankind in general, not the righteous. And the passage says that "those who have lived in sin" will be consumed by Sheol. That is, the wicked will receive their reward by being consumed by Sheol. [In the context (chapter 24) Job speaks about how the wicked many times in this life here on earth go without receiving punishment for their wickedness.] But then he says that though they may escape punishment and judgment in this life here on earth, they nevertheless will receive judgment and punishment for their wickedness and life of sin in the after-life in that Sheol will consume them like draught and heat consume the melted waters from the snow. Now it is true that Sheol taken in the sense of the realm of the dead will consume all mankind like heat consumes water because of the curse of sin. And this passage could be taken to refer to this curse of sin upon all mankind both the wicked and the righteous if it were not for the fact that here Job is speaking about the wicked, not about the righteous or mankind in general. In other words, [Job is here implying that what is true of the wicked, that they will be consumed because of their sin and wickedness, is not true of the righteous. For Sheol to the righteous, though they will pass through it as all mankind must,



is not a place of punishment. To the wicked on the other hand Sheol, as brought out by this passage, can be a place for punishment - although not always, because there are many passages in the Old Testament which speak of all mankind going to Sheol at death, Isaiah 38:10, Psalm 89:49, Habakkuk 2:5. While Sheol can be a place of punishment for the wicked, it is never a place of punishment when it is used in connection with the righteous] - the Old Testament does not use the word Sheol in this way when speaking of the righteous, it is always used when in reference to the righteous in its wider sense, in the sense of the realm of the dead. Sheol also is never used to refer to the blessed state of the righteous in the after-life, it is used only in the sense of the realm of the dead when referring to the righteous.<sup>46</sup> Now if it would be held that Sheol refers in general to the after-life, either to the grave or to death in a general way, the passage would not give a clear meaning, for you are then robbing it of real significance. [If Job were here using Sheol in the sense of the realm of the dead or the after-life, then the wicked could say to Job, "What kind of punishment is that? We have nothing to fear; all must die. The same punishment that you say we will suffer because of our wicked living you also will suffer, for all men die. You die because of your righteous living; we die because of our wicked living. That

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<sup>46</sup>Heidel, op. cit., p. 186.

then doesn't make sense. Why should we then give up our pleasurable wicked life if in the end we will all suffer the same fate anyway?" And they would be right if Sheol here meant the realm of the dead. But if Sheol here means the realm of the wicked, the place of punishment for the wicked, then the passage is clear, and it can be seen why Job then warned the wicked about their wicked living by saying that Sheol would consume them. Thus Sheol in this passage must mean and refer to the realm of the wicked and damned if it is to be understandable and the meaning clear.

Another passage which brings out the fact that Sheol can have the meaning of the abode of the damned and a place of punishment is Psalm 9:18 which reads as translated:

The wicked will be brought to hell (Sheol), all the nations who are forgetting God.

Here again if Sheol is taken in the sense of the grave or the realm of the dead, the passage is difficult to understand. For here again the fact that Sheol can be a place of punishment and retribution is brought out. This is never true when Sheol is used for the realm of the dead, for in that sense all men go to Sheol. But here only the wicked are spoken of as going to Sheol as a result of their sinful and wicked living. If Sheol then means here the abode of the wicked in the after-life, the passage gives a clear meaning. Sheol then is a place of fear for the wicked.

Before this part of the study of the word Sheol is brought to a close two more passages will be considered which will help to bring out clearer the fact that the Old Testament does use the word Sheol in the sense of hell. These two passages are Proverbs 15:24 and Canticles 8:6.

A very interesting passage is that of Proverbs 15:24. It reads as translated:

The path (way) of life to the upright is towards the above to the end that he may escape from hell (Sheol) below.

Sheol is here spoken of as something that can be escaped from, that can be avoided. Now it can be said that one many times will speak of death and the grave as something that can be avoided if one leads a sane healthy life. This use of the word death or grave in the English language however is an inexact use of the words since no one can really escape death or the grave; it is a so-called figure or manner of speech. What is meant is that one can enjoy a long life and health if one leads a well-balanced life, or that one can push back death if a life of order and commonplace rules of health are followed. But one would be hard put to prove that the Hebrew language had such a use in connection with the word Sheol, though Sheol is sometimes used in the Old Testament to symbolize afflictions and misfortunes experienced in this life - a use which will be taken up later in this study of the Old Testament usage of the word Sheol. And this one would have to prove if Sheol is here translated

and taken to mean the realm of the dead. For no one can escape the grave or death no matter what kind of a life he would lead since both the righteous and the wicked go to Sheol in the sense that it is the realm of the dead. Since it can not be shown that there can be such a use of Sheol, to use it in such an inexact way, the only logical meaning of Sheol in this passage is that it refers to the abode of the wicked, hell. Because only in this sense could the upright escape Sheol, and only this meaning gives a clear and understandable picture for the righteous will not go to Sheol the abode of the wicked in the after-life while he will go to Sheol the realm of the dead. Thus the upright will escape Sheol, the realm of the damned. To render Sheol here as the realm of the dead "would be absolutely meaningless."<sup>47</sup>

Another interesting passage that uses the word Sheol in the sense of the realm of the damned is that of Canticles 8:6 which reads as translated:

Place me upon your heart as a seal, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong like death, jealousy is hard (treats, deals harshly) like hell (Sheol) - the flames of it (that is, of jealousy) are the flames of fire, that is, the flame of God (lightning).

Here Sheol is used to describe the harshness of the emotion jealousy. One could say here, "The ire of jealousy burns hot like the flames of hell," to get a clearer meaning of

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<sup>47</sup>Dau, op. cit., p. 27.

this picture where Sheol is used to describe the harshness of jealousy. In the first part of the passage love is compared to the strength of death, that is, the durability of love is compared to the strength of death. Death is so strong that no one can escape it; love is so strong and enduring that it can not be overcome or killed when it is treated shabbily - death in this passage is a translation of the Hebrew Maweth. Then jealousy is compared to the harshness of Sheol. Now Sheol could mean the grave or the realm of the dead here in this passage if it were not for the appendage that is added in the Hebrew. This added appendage, "the flames of it are the flames of fire..." brings into this description where we have a comparison of jealousy and Sheol the picture of fire. Now nowhere in the Old Testament is fire ever associated with the concept of either death or the realm of the dead, no matter whether the word Maweth or Sheol is used. And since this is the only instance in the Old Testament where the concept of fire is used with the word Sheol, it might appear unfair to say that you have to take Sheol here to mean the abode of the wicked, hell. However, since in the New Testament many times fire is associated with the concept of hell, Matthew 5:22, Mark 9:47, Luke 16:23-24, James 3:6, Revelation 20:9-15, in connection with both Hades and Gehenna, it is not assuming too much or doing violence to the passage or to the word Sheol to say that since fire is here associated with Sheol it undoubtedly

points to the meaning of the abode of the wicked and not to the realm of the dead or to the after-life in general since fire is never associated with the grave or death. Again if this Sheol is rendered with the English grave or realm of the dead, much of the meaning of the passage is taken away. It is much more meaningful to say, "Jealousy burns hot like hell," than to say, "Jealousy burns hot like the grave."

Although the Old Testament does not leave us with as complete a picture of hell as the New Testament does, nevertheless, it does give us some idea as to the description of hell. (The following facts about hell ought to be pointed out which the word Sheol brings out. Hell is pictured as being the direct opposite of heaven, the opposite extreme of heaven, Isaiah 14:9-15, Psalm 139:8, Job 11:8, Isaiah 7:10. Hell is the place or the abode of the wicked and the damned in the after-life, Isaiah 5:14, 14:9-15; Psalm 55:16, 9:18; Proverbs 5:5, 7:27, 9:18, 15:11; Job 21:13, 24:19; Ezekiel 31:16. Hell is pictured as below the earth, Proverbs 15:24. There is an escape from hell in the after-life, a way of life that does not end in hell, Proverbs 15:24, 23:14. If the passages of Hosea 13:14 and Psalm 49:16 are added then this escape is pictured and described as a ransom that God has provided to free men from the power of hell. Suffering experienced by man here on earth is sometimes compared to the pains of hell, 2 Samuel 22:6, Psalm 18:6, 116:3. Hell is under the control of God, not some other god as some have

proposed, Amos 9:2, Psalm 139:8. Did the Old Testament people and writers associate fire with hell? The passage Canticles (Song of Solomon) 8:6 seems to point to the fact that the concept of fire in connection with hell was not a foreign idea at all. Although these are not all of the contributions that the Sheol passages make to the concept of hell in the Old Testament, these are the most important. It should be stated especially that the picture of hell that Sheol presents is a further testimony to the fact that the Old Testament writers did use many times Sheol when they wanted to speak of the abode of the wicked in the after-life as opposed to the abode of the righteous.)

## 2. Sheol used for the Concept of the Grave

The second main use of the word Sheol in the Old Testament is that which refers to the abode of the dead as opposed to the realm of the living, life here on earth before death. That the Old Testament uses the word Sheol in such a way can be seen from such passages as Isaiah 38:10, Jonah 2:3, Psalm 89:49, 141:7, Job 7:9, 17:13, 17:16, Ecclesiastes 9:10, Psalm 16:10, Genesis 37:35, 42:38, 44:29, 44:31, Numbers 16:30,33, and Isaiah 7:11. These of course are not all the passages that use the word Sheol in this meaning, but they are the most outstanding and clearest. Heidel<sup>48</sup> seems

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<sup>48</sup>Heidel, op. cit., p. 175.

to think that Sheol used in the sense of the realm of the dead comes close to the meaning of the Hebrew word Queber, קבר, which is the word used to designate a sepulcher, an individual grave.<sup>49</sup> While Dau on the other hand thinks differently when he says:

Thus understood, sheol may be rendered by grave, provided grave be not understood as a person's sepulcher or burying place, but in the general meaning of region or place of the dead. The Hebrew language has a special word for sepulcher, קבר. A person's queber can be located, it is dug or built or made, it is touched by living people, but none of these things are ever predicated of sheol. Queber occurs in the plural, sheol never.<sup>50</sup>

In the interest of showing that Sheol can refer to the grave Heidel says, "In the sense of the future restingplace of the body, Sheol occurs also on an Aramaic papyrus from a Jewish community in Egypt."<sup>51</sup>

The first passage in the Old Testament that will be considered is that of Isaiah 38:9-10 which reads as translated:

9.) The writing of Hezekiah the king of Judah when he was sick and when he had recovered from his affliction.  
10.) I myself said in the quiet of my days (that is, the days of rest and quietness in my life), "I will go to the gates of the grave (Sheol); I must forego (I will not have) the remainder of my years."

These verses are taken from the prayer of thanksgiving which

<sup>49</sup>Gesenius, op. cit., p. 722.

<sup>50</sup>Dau, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>51</sup>Heidel, op. cit., p. 175.



Hezekiah offered to God after he was delivered from pending death. In the previous verses of this chapter<sup>52</sup> Isaiah had come to Hezekiah, king of Judah, and had told him to set his house in order for he was to die. Then Hezekiah prayed to God to spare his life, and God answered his prayer by telling him that he would give him fifteen more years to live. Then follows the prayer of thanksgiving in which the verses under consideration are included. It is important to remember that this prayer of thanksgiving was offered by Hezekiah after being delivered from death and the grave, not from hell or the realm of the damned.

Sheol is here used in connection with the Hebrew word  $\text{שַׁעַר}$ , which means gate, portal.<sup>53</sup> Thus Hezekiah in his prayer is speaking about the gates of Sheol. Heidel maintains that figurative expressions like "the gates of Sheol," Isaiah 38:10, and "the bars of Sheol," Job 17:16, refer to the confining barriers of the supulchral chamber,<sup>54</sup> and that they are not to be taken "any more literally than such figurative expressions as 'the hand of Sheol,' i.e., the power of Sheol (Ps. 49:16; 89:49; Hos. 13:14), 'the mouth of Sheol' (Ps. 141:7; Is. 5:14)...."<sup>55</sup> The "gates of

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<sup>52</sup>Isalah 38:1-6.

<sup>53</sup>Gesenius, op. cit., p. 843.

<sup>54</sup>Heidel, op. cit., pp. 178-9.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

Sheol" here refers to the entrance of Sheol, the entrance of the realm of the dead. It is not necessary to maintain that this expression "the gates of Sheol" refers in a concrete sense to the portal or entrance to the tomb or grave, but rather in a general way it refers to death as the entrance into the realm of the dead, the grave in the wider sense - grave not in the sense of an individual tomb or pit in the ground.<sup>56</sup> Thus the expression "gates of Sheol" is a figurative manner of speech referring to the entrance of the realm of the dead which is death - no live person enters Sheol.

Hezekiah states in his prayer that which Isaiah the prophet had said would come about, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live,'"<sup>57</sup> when he says, "I will go to the gates of the grave; I must forego the remainder of my years." Isaiah did not say that he, Hezekiah, would be damned, but merely that he would die and would no longer live. If in his prayer Hezekiah had used Sheol to refer to the realm of the damned, hell, and not to the realm of the dead, the grave, he would then be interpreting the words of Isaiah, in fact he would

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<sup>56</sup>Sheol is never used as a synonym of Queber as Heidel maintains (p. 175), but rather as Dau points out (p. 32) Sheol is always used in the wider sense when referring to the realm of the dead, never to an individual's grave or tomb.

<sup>57</sup>Isaiah 38:1 (according to the Authorized Version).

be adding to them, to mean that he was to go to the place of the damned, not just merely to die as Isaiah had said he would. That Hezekiah would interpret the words of Isaiah thus is hardly warranted - the burden of proof lies with those who would thus take this interpretation. For if Hezekiah used Sheol to refer to the realm of the wicked, why then did he not pray to be delivered from eternal damnation in hell instead of merely being delivered from pending death? To a righteous man like Hezekiah, 2 Kings 18:3-6, surely his being saved from eternal death in hell would be more important than a few more years of life here on this earth. That Hezekiah did pray to be delivered from pending death and not from the place of the damned in the after-life can be seen from the answer that God gave to him, "Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years."<sup>58</sup>

It is interesting to note how the different versions translated this expression "gates of Sheol." Luther translated it with the word Höllentpforte, Jerome used the words ad portas inferi, the Septuagint used the words πύλας ᾗσου, and the Authorized Version translates it with the words "the gates of the grave."

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<sup>58</sup>Isaiah 38:5 (according to the Authorized Version).

The next passage which will be considered to show that the Old Testament uses the word Sheol to sometimes refer to the realm of the dead as opposed to the state of life here on the earth is Psalm 89:49. This verse reads as translated:

What man is there who is living and will not see death; will he deliver his life from the hand (power) of the grave (Sheol)?

This is perhaps one of the clearest passages in the Old Testament which point out the fact that the Old Testament does use the word Sheol as a term for the realm of the dead. Here the Psalmist is speaking about death, and of the fact that all men taste death, that no man escapes death, when he says, "What man is there who is living and will not see death...?" The Hebrew word used here is the usual word for death, Maweth. To fortify his statement that no man can escape death he further adds, "Will he deliver his life from the hand of the grave (Sheol)?" Thus in this statement Maweth and Sheol are used as parallels. They are used parallel to each other to serve in a question which, expecting a negative answer, says that no man can escape death and Sheol - actually the second half of the sentence elucidates the first half. Thus the Psalmist could have said, "There is no man living who will not see death; there is no man living who can deliver his life from Sheol." Thus from this passage it can be seen that all men go to Sheol at death - other passages which point this out are 1 Kings

2:6,9, Isaiah 38:10, Habakkuk 2:5. However, as has been pointed out in an earlier portion of this study, there are other passages which show that not all men go to Sheol at death, Proverbs 15:24, 23:14 - here of course Sheol means the realm of the wicked in the after-life where only the unrighteous go, Psalm 55:16, Proverbs 5:5,7, Job 21:13. But in this passage, Psalm 89:49, where Sheol is spoken of as a place where all men go upon death and where it is spoken of in connection with death, it must mean the realm of the dead, the grave, the place of the dead as opposed to the realm of the living. Sheol can not here refer to the realm of the damned as opposed to the realm of the righteous in the after-life, as it does in many other passages, since then this passage could not be used in connection with death and speak of all men going to Sheol.

One other passage, or group of passages, will be considered before bringing this portion of the paper to a close and that is the passage of Genesis 37:35 which reads as translated, "For I will go down to the grave (Sheol) unto my son mourning." This passage or phrase is repeated three more times, Genesis 42:38, 44:29, 44:31. All four passages refer to the sorrow and anguish of Jacob brought about by the supposed death of his son Joseph, Genesis 37:31-33. The passage in Genesis 42:38 reads, "...then you will cause my gray hairs to go down to the grave in sorrow." In Genesis 44:29 it reads, "...then you will cause my gray hairs to go

down to the grave in sadness." In Genesis 44:31 it reads, "...and your servants will cause the gray hairs of your servant our father to go down to the grave in sorrow." In Genesis 37:31-35 Jacob is brought the news and evidence of the supposed mishap of his son Joseph, and he concludes from it, as the deceiving sons wanted him to do, that Joseph is dead. This struck Jacob down with deep anguish and grief, for Joseph had been his favorite son, Genesis 37:3. Jacob then spoke the words after refusing comfort from his family, "For I will go down to the grave unto my son mourning." Joseph meanwhile had been sold into slavery in the land of Egypt, Genesis 37:36. However, the Lord was with him, and he prospered, so much so that he became the ruler of all Egypt under the Pharaoh, Genesis 39:41. While Joseph was ruler of Egypt, second only to the Pharaoh, a great famine came about in Egypt and in all the surrounding lands, including Palestine where Jacob and his sons were living, Genesis 41:54-57. To avoid starvation Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to obtain food. However, Jacob who recognized his brothers sent them back in order to test them, demanding that their younger brother Benjamin be brought to him before he would deal with them in a friendly manner, Genesis 42. However, Jacob would not let the brothers take his youngest son, who had become his favorite after Joseph, to Egypt, because he was afraid something might happen to him as in the case of Joseph. And if Benjamin would also be

taken away from him then he would go down to the grave in sorrow, he would have sorrow the rest of his days, Genesis 42:36-38. The two other passages, Genesis 44:29, 44:31, are spoken in the same setting and connection as Genesis 42:38.

From these passages it is clear that Jacob was referring to his death when he said that he would grieve the death of his son till he would go down to Sheol, "For I will go down to Sheol unto my son mourning." Now if Sheol here meant and referred to the realm of the wicked, it would mean that Jacob had known that Joseph had at death gone to the place of the damned, hell. This is of course altogether against the context for Jacob could not have known where his son Joseph had gone at death, whether to the realm of the righteous or to the realm of the damned. Jacob spoke of Sheol as a place where at death he would join his son. He would certainly not do this if he meant this to be the realm of the damned. However, if Sheol is taken in the sense of the realm of the dead, then Jacob could speak of Sheol as a place where he would join his son. Dau says in this connection:

It is safe to say that a single circumstance has caused the consistent rendering of "hell" for the Hebrew sheol to appear inadmissible: sheol in the Old Testament is also a place to which godly persons expect to go in the hour of death. In his passionate grief over the loss of Joseph Jacob exclaims: "I will go down into sheol unto my son mourning," Gen. 37:35. He supposes Joseph to be in sheol, and that dying of broken heart, he will

soon join him there.<sup>59</sup>

It is a little significant to note that to Luther these four passages brought out so strongly the fact that Sheol can be used to refer to the grave specifically in the Old Testament that he translated Sheol with the word Grube and not with Hölle, the word that he used otherwise to translate Sheol - these four passages are the only instances where Luther translated Sheol with Grube, in all other occurrences he used the word Hölle. The Authorized Version also used the word grave to translate Sheol in these four instances. The Septuagint used Hades, while Jerome used the word Infernos.

Could Sheol in these four passages refer to the realm of the righteous in the after-life? The fact that in Genesis 37:35 the word Yarath,  $\overline{\text{ך}}\overline{\text{ד}}$ , to go down, is used with Sheol would point to the fact that Sheol could not here refer to the realm of the righteous. Heaven or paradise is never spoken of as being below, while many times Sheol is spoken of as being below when referring either to the realm of the damned or to the realm of the dead, Proverbs 15:24, Isaiah 14:9-15, Psalm 39:8, Job 11:8.

What does the Old Testament have to say about the realm of the dead or the grave in the way of description or definition? Although again the Old Testament does not give us as

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<sup>59</sup>Dau, op. cit., pp. 25-6.



clear a picture of the realm of the dead and of the resurrection as the New Testament does, nevertheless, it does furnish us some information. Of course here is given only the picture of the realm of the dead that the word Sheol presents, and thus the whole picture that the Old Testament presents of the realm of the dead is not complete. All go to the realm of the dead at death, no matter what the status of the individual is, for no one escapes the realm of the dead, neither the righteous nor the unrighteous, 1 Kings 2:6,9, Isaiah 38:10, Psalm 89:49, Habakkuk 2:5, Genesis 37:35. Once an unrighteous person dies and enters the realm of the dead there is no longer a chance for forgiveness and mercy, Isaiah 38:18, Psalm 6:6, 88:6. Once a person dies and enters the realm of the dead there is no return to life here on earth, Job 7:9-10. There is no life in the realm of the dead, Ecclesiastes 9:10. There will be a resurrection from the realm of the dead, the grave, Psalm 16:10. Dau says concerning Sheol when it is used for the realm of the dead:

In a general way, then, any person's entering the realm of death may be called his descent into sheol, namely, in so far as he dies, passes from the land of the living, his fate beyond not being specially taken into account. In this sense going down to sheol is predicated of holy men, or of all men. The holy writers in such passages refer to what appears to human eyes. And it accords with such a view of sheol to represent it as a state in which there is "no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom," Eccl. 9:10.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

Thus the two major uses of the word Sheol found in the Old Testament are: The realm of the damned in the after-life as opposed to the realm of the righteous; the realm of the dead which a person enters at death as opposed to the land of the living. It should be here said again that it is not always possible to keep this line of distinction clear throughout the Old Testament. As will be shown further on in this study, there are instances where Sheol could be taken in either meaning or both. Also there are many passages in which Sheol occurs where not every one is in agreement as to which use is referred to. However, as has been pointed out, there are also many passages in which Sheol occurs where it is plain and clear which use is being referred to; it is the most outstanding of these passages that have been used to demonstrate that in the Old Testament Sheol was used by the writers in two different ways. Was Sheol used for any other concept in the Old Testament besides these two main uses? This will be discussed in the following portion of this paper.

### 3. Sheol used for other Concepts and Meanings

While in the main the Old Testament seems to have used the word Sheol in two different meanings, the realm of the damned and the realm of the dead, there are some occurrences of the word Sheol which do not seem to fit either of these two meanings. These occurrences will be very briefly

discussed under three divisions: where Sheol seems to have been used to portray death in a general way as the entrance to the realm of the dead, the grave; where Sheol seems to have been used to portray pain and misfortune; where Sheol seems to have been used to designate both the realm of the dead and the realm of the damned without making a distinction between them, or where it seems to have been used in such a way that it could mean either the realm of the wicked or the realm of the dead.

⑧ Though the usual word for death in the Hebrew is Maweth, it seems that sometimes the word Sheol was used in this sense, death, when spoken in connection with the realm of the dead. Sheol would then in this case refer to death as the entrance to the realm of the dead which would also be portrayed by Sheol. Now when Sheol is used both for death and for the realm of the dead one wonders what difference it makes or whether a distinction is made or not. Of course in the end it makes little difference whether a distinction is made or not because there is little difference between death and the realm of the dead. However, since death is the entrance to the realm of the dead, and since this distinction seems to be made when death is used in connection with the realm of the dead, especially when both death and the realm of the dead are portrayed by the word Sheol, this distinction ought to be shown and pointed out even though one may not agree with it if the full use of

the word Sheol is to be attained. An example of this is Ezekiel 32:21,27. Here Sheol could be very easily taken as death in verse twenty-one and in verse twenty-seven it could be taken to mean the realm of the dead. In verse twenty-one Sheol would refer more to the entrance of the realm of the dead, death, rather than to the realm itself, while in verse twenty-seven it seems that Sheol refers to the realm of the dead. These two verses would then read as translated:

21.) The mighty ones (heroes) of the strong will speak to him from the midst of death (Sheol); with his helpers (allies) they have gone down (that is, gone down in battle); the uncircumcised were destroyed (laid down to rest in death), slain by the sword. 27.) And they will not lie down with the strong who have fallen of the uncircumcised who have gone down to the grave (Sheol) with all their weapons of war; and they placed their swords beneath their heads, and their iniquity was upon their bones because they were the terror of the strong in the land of the living.

An example where Sheol could be taken to mean death in connection with another word is that of Psalm 88:4-6 which reads as translated:

4.) For my soul has been full of troubles (satiated with troubles), and my life has drawn nigh to death (Sheol). 5.) I have been reckoned with those who go down to the pit (the Hebrew Bor, with those who go down to the grave); I am like a man who has no strength. 6.) My bed is among the dead like the slain who lie in the sepulchre (the Hebrew Queber) who are no longer remembered and who are separated from your hand (the hand of the Lord).

This is a most interesting passage, for the Hebrew words Bor and Queber are here used with Sheol. Sheol would point to death as the entrance to the realm of the dead, while Bor

and Queber would point to the grave. Bor here would point to the realm of the dead while Queber would point to the individual's tomb in the realm of the dead.

② Very similar to the meaning of death, for which Sheol sometimes seems to have been used, is that "in which Sheol is used as a figure of speech to denote extreme misfortune, seemingly inescapable death, the brink of death, or the like, Psalm 30:4, 86:13, Jonah 2:3."<sup>61</sup> In Psalm 30:4 we read as translated:

O Lord, you have caused my soul to go up from the pangs of Sheol (Sheol most likely in the sense of death); you have kept me alive, kept me from going down to the pit (Bor here in the sense of the grave).

Another good example for this meaning of Sheol is that of Jonah 2:3 which reads as translated:

And he said, "I called out unto the Lord because of my distress and he heard me; from the belly (inside) of Sheol (here in the sense of death) I cried and you hearkened to my voice."

In both of these passages it would be difficult to take Sheol to mean grave or death or hell in the literal sense since a deliverance was made in both cases from Sheol. Especially where Jonah cries out for help from Sheol. If he were dead he could hardly have cried out, and if he were in the realm of the damned the Lord would not have hearkened to his voice. It thus seems best to take Sheol here in the figurative sense to refer to the pains or pangs of death or

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<sup>61</sup>Heidel, op. cit., p. 177.

of hell.

There are some passages in the Old Testament which seem to use Sheol in such a way that it is difficult to say which meaning or use is meant - whether Sheol is to mean the realm of the dead or the realm of the damned. In these passages where it is difficult to decide the exact meaning of Sheol, Sheol could mean either the realm of the dead or the realm of the damned or both without making a distinction between the two meanings. Such passages as Deuteronomy 32:22, Hosea 13:14, Psalm 49:16 seem to point to the fact that Sheol was used in such a way that no distinction was made as to its exact meaning - if such a distinction was made, it is not clear which meaning Sheol points to. In Deuteronomy 32:22 we read as translated:

For a fire has been kindled in my anger, and it has burned unto the lowest Sheol. And it has devoured the earth and its produce, and it has kindled the foundations of the mountains.

The anger here is the anger of the Lord in His wrath against the sinner. Some maintain that this passage uses Sheol to refer to the realm of the wicked, hell. For instance, Dau says:

Sheol is the place where the judgement of God and His dire vengeance overtakes the evildoers. Korah's rebel band went down to sheol, Numb. 16:30, and all the congregation of Israel witnessed this shocking spectacle. The event was recorded for future generations. If an Israelite in later years was asked: What became of Korah: would he have said: He was buried? To froward Israel, to people who provoke God with their vanities is held up for their warning a fiery sheol,

Deut. 32:22...<sup>62</sup>

Now at first glance it does seem that Sheol here means hell, especially since  $\aleph \text{ ש } \aleph$ , fire, here is used in connection with Sheol. However, fire is really connected with  $\eta \text{ א } \eta$ , the anger of the Lord, and not with Sheol at all. Sheol possibly here is used figuratively to point to the depth and the fierceness of the wrath of God, and thus Sheol here seems to have been used in a general way. As for Numbers 16:30, there Sheol refers not to the realm of the wicked but rather to the realm of the dead.

Another passage where Sheol seems to have been used without a distinction being made as to its meaning is that of Hosea 13:14, along with Psalm 49:16. The passage in Hosea reads:

From the hand (power) of Sheol I will set them free,  
from death (Maweth) I will redeem (buy back) them.  
Where are your plagues (your destruction) O death  
(Maweth)? Where is your power of cutting off (of separating one from God) O Sheol?

This passage is a good example where Sheol means both the realm of the dead and the realm of the damned without a distinction being made. The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:55 renders Sheol with the Greek word *θάνατος*, death, in quoting this passage in the New Testament. Though Paul's quotation is not a literal translation of Hosea but more of a paraphrase, Thanatos, death, is the best translation of

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<sup>62</sup>Dau, op. cit., pp. 27-8

Sheol in this passage. For here Sheol really points to the close connection between the grave and the realm of the damned, for both separate man from God. This is just what death really is, separation from God - in hell, this separation is made permanent. And this is what Christ our Lord overcame by His death and resurrection. Of this close connection between death, or the grave, and damnation in hell Dau says:

Now, there is a well-known connection between death and damnation, between the grave and hell. Both are punitive measures of divine justice against the sinner. Death begins, damnation completes, the execution of God's wrath. Damnation is another form of death, the second death, the death without end. Accordingly, death and sheol are named in the very closest connection....All must die, because all have sinned. For the same reason all have merited damnation. Mortality and eternal destruction are the common lot of men, the grave and hell their common goal. By His plan of redemption God has not abolished death and hell; He has provided an escape from eternal death.<sup>63</sup>

In conclusion it should be pointed out that the number of occurrences where Sheol is used to mean either death or misfortune or where the meaning is not exactly clear is very small in comparison to the total number of times that Sheol occurs in the Old Testament, and that the passages containing the two main uses of the word far outweigh those having the latter meanings of the word.

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-1.



### Conclusion

Sheol thus is one of the words which is used in the Old Testament to refer to the realm of the wicked or the damned in the after-life as opposed to the realm of the righteous. It is also used to refer to and mean the realm of the dead, the grave, as opposed to the realm of the life here on earth. In the first meaning only the wicked are subject to Sheol; in the second use all men are subject to Sheol. These two uses and meanings of the word Sheol are by far the most predominant, and since this is so it is not wrong to say that in the Old Testament the word Sheol has two meanings or is used to refer to two different concepts. However, Sheol does seem to refer sometimes to death in general as the entrance to the realm of the dead, also to misfortune where it is likened to the pangs of death or hell, and then there are a very few occurrences which seem not to make any distinction between the two chief meanings - especially where Sheol seems to have been used to point out the close connection between death and eternal damnation. But since these latter meanings of the word Sheol are so few in number, and since even these occurrences are not free from doubt, it is not deemed necessary to consider them in the overall meaning or use of the word Sheol in the Old Testament - except for the fact that they should be mentioned to give a complete picture of Sheol. Thus Sheol in the Old Testament has these two uses as stated

before, the realm of the damned and the realm of the dead.

Before this portion of the paper is brought to a close a few observations should be pointed to which have been derived from this study of the word Sheol in the Old Testament that were not emphasized in the main part of this study.

Sheol in the Old Testament is never used in the sense of referring to the realm of the blessed in heaven, to the realm of the righteous in the after-life. This fact alone would not permit a meaning and use of Sheol which would make no distinction in the manner and way the writers of the Old Testament used this word - a meaning where Sheol would always refer in a general way to the after-life, the beyond, as opposed to life here on earth. There seems to have been a development in the use of Sheol in the Old Testament. For the earliest instances that Sheol appears to have been used for the concept of the realm of the wicked are during the time of David and Solomon - the first books in the Old Testament which use Sheol in this way are Psalms, Job, Proverbs, and the Canticles. Before the time of David and Solomon Sheol seems to have been used only to designate the realm of the dead, the grave. The only passage that would militate against this is Deuteronomy 32:22; however, it is improbable that Sheol here refers to the realm of the wicked as has been pointed out earlier. After the time of David and Solomon, however, both uses of Sheol are quite evident. Thus it seems that Sheol at first had only one meaning, that of the realm

of the dead, and that it was not until later in the history of the Old Testament that Sheol came to be used to designate and take on the additional meaning of the realm of the damned. From this it would seem that the original Old Testament meaning and use of Sheol was the realm of the dead, and that the meaning of the realm of the damned was an added and superimposed meaning. Accordingly it would have been more logical to treat the general meaning, the original meaning, of Sheol first instead of the added meaning which came later into use. Thus this study could have gone from the usus generalis to the usus specialis, but it seemed better to discuss the controversial aspect of Sheol first. Leupold thinks that the word Sheol had this development. He says:

Now Sheol in earlier Hebrew literature is the common place or abode for all the departed and is, therefore, as vague as "afterworld" or "grave." It asserts nothing about the state of the departed who have gone there. Much later it becomes the term that describes the abode of the wicked.<sup>64</sup>

Thus in the Old Testament the writers used a word, Sheol, to designate both the place of the damned and the place of the dead. In doing this they pointed to the fact of the close connection between death and eternal damnation in hell, both the result of sin. Does the New Testament have a similar word that it uses for both of these meanings to show the close connection between them? The remainder of

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<sup>64</sup>H. C. Leupold, Exposition Of Genesis (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1942), p. 1058.

this paper will be an answer to this question.

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been mentioned in the New Testament as being in the land of Israel at the time of the Lord's coming. It is a list of the names of the persons who were living in the land of Israel at the time of the Lord's coming, and who were mentioned in the New Testament as being in the land of Israel at the time of the Lord's coming. It is a list of the names of the persons who were living in the land of Israel at the time of the Lord's coming, and who were mentioned in the New Testament as being in the land of Israel at the time of the Lord's coming.

That the New Testament is a book which was written by the apostles and other persons who were living in the land of Israel at the time of the Lord's coming, and who were mentioned in the New Testament as being in the land of Israel at the time of the Lord's coming, is a fact which is well known to all who are acquainted with the history of the Christian Church. It is a fact which is well known to all who are acquainted with the history of the Christian Church, and who are acquainted with the history of the Christian Church. It is a fact which is well known to all who are acquainted with the history of the Christian Church, and who are acquainted with the history of the Christian Church.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MEANING OF HADES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Does the New Testament have a word which covers the same concepts as Sheol in the Old Testament? Does the New Testament have a word which is an equivalent to Sheol in the Old Testament? If so, what is the relation between these two words, do they present the same picture? The remaining chapters of this paper will deal with these questions and problems.

That the New Testament has a word which represents the same concepts as Sheol in the Old Testament can be seen and pointed out in a study of the Greek word Hades. For Hades was the word used by the New Testament writers to translate Sheol, and the word that they used to portray the same concepts as Sheol does in the Old Testament. Thus Hades is the New Testament equivalent of the word Sheol; they are interchangeable as to their respective meanings and uses. That this is so the immediate chapter will point out and demonstrate. Then in the following chapter it will be shown why the other possible equivalents for Sheol, Gehenna, Tartaros, Kataxthonios, Abussos, and Thanatos, are not and can not be such equivalents.

### General Meaning of the Word Hades

From a study of the occurrences of the word Hades in the New Testament it can be said that in a general way Hades has two meanings: in a narrow sense it refers to the abode of the damned in the after-life as opposed to the realm of the righteous, and in a wider sense it refers to the realm or abode of the dead as opposed to life here on earth. That Hades has such uses in the New Testament will be shown when the New Testament usage of the word is taken up. But first before the New Testament usage of Hades is undertaken a review of the historical background of the word will be given in order to obtain a better understanding of the word.

The word Hades has a very interesting history behind its use in the New Testament. Much more is known, historically speaking, about Hades than about Sheol, and also more is known about its source and origin. All scholars today are agreed as to the etymology of Hades, namely, that it comes from privative  $\alpha$  and  $\delta\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\nu$ , not to see, and means that which "is out of sight,"<sup>1</sup> the "invisible place where departed spirits were supposed to dwell."<sup>2</sup> Thus it was the unseen or

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<sup>1</sup>J. M'Clintock and James Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), IV, 9.

<sup>2</sup>William W. McLane, "An Historical Study of Hell," Homiletical Review, XXIV (September, 1892), 207.

the invisible world,<sup>3</sup> the nether world, the infernal regions.<sup>4</sup>

Pearson says of Hades:

The New Testament word which corresponds to the Old Testament word Sheol is Hades. It was used in the Septuagint as the translation of Sheol. It is derived from the Greek idein, to see, with "alpha privative" added, and means "the unseen world," "the nether world," "the realm of the dead." In its original significance it was almost the exact counterpart of the Hebrew Sheol, the chief difference being that it was divided into two compartments, one for the good and one for the evil.<sup>5</sup>

Thus from its etymology it can be seen that Hades was to the Greek language what Sheol was to the Hebrew language, with the difference that was pointed out above by Pearson. The historical significance of the word Hades lies in the fact that it was taken over by the non-Palestinian Hebrews when, especially in Alexandria, the Greek language for all practical purposes became their language, replacing the Hebrew. It became especially their literary language after the world had become Hellenized under Alexander and his successors. And so in a historical study of the word Hades one is compelled to study the ancient Greek-pagan usage of the word and also the usage of the word among the Hebrews after they

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<sup>3</sup>L. Gruber, What after Death (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1925), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament, being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Nove Testamenti, translated revised and enlarged by Joseph H. Thayer (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1889), p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>Fred B. Pearson, "Sheol and Hades in Old and New Testaments," Review and Expositor, XXXV (July, 1938), 309.

had taken it over and then to contrast this use and meaning of Hades among the later Hebrews with the use and meaning of the word Sheol, its counterpart, among the early Hebrews.

At first Hades in Greek literature referred to the god of the underworld, the nether world, and it was not until later that it came to refer to the underworld. Thus Meyer maintains that Hades in Greek Mythology at first meant "the lord of the lower world, a brother of Zeus, and the husband of Persephone (Proserpine)."<sup>6</sup> This Hades, the god of the underworld, was "as the god wealth...also called by the Greeks Pluto; and he is the same as the Roman, Orcus, or Tartarus."<sup>7</sup> Pearson speaks of this god, Hades or Pluto, thus:

He ruled over "the abode of the shades." He was described as having such fierce and inexorable character that, of all the gods, he was most loathed by mortals. The sacrifices offered to him were black sheep and the person offering the sacrifice turned away his face. Thus was shown the attitude of the Greeks toward the unseen world.<sup>8</sup>

Liddell and Scott<sup>9</sup> concur in the opinion that the word Hades was first used to designate the god of the underworld, Pluto,

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<sup>6</sup>Louis C. Meyer, "The use of Hades in the New Testament" (Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1940), p. 11.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Pearson, op. cit., p. 309.

<sup>9</sup>H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon (8th revised edition; New York: American Book Company, 1897), p. 21.



when they maintain that in Homer Hades was only a person, the god of the nether world, and that it was not until later that the word came to denote a place, namely the grave and death. Later in the classical writers this god of the underworld, Hades or Pluto or Orcus, came to personify the realm of the dead.<sup>10</sup> And thus the word Hades in pagan Greek literature came to stand for death or the grave as opposed to life here on earth.<sup>11</sup> It came to be:

The invisible lower or subterranean world in which dwelt the spirits of all the dead; the world of shades; the abode of the departed. The souls in Hades were believed to carry on there a counterpart of their material existence, those of the righteous without discomfort, amid the pale, sweet blooms of asphodel, or even in pleasure, in the Elysian Fields, and those of the wicked amid various torments. The lower world was surrounded by fiery and pestilential rivers, and the solitary approach was guarded by the monstrous three-headed dog Cerberus to prevent the shades from escaping to the upper world.<sup>12</sup>

By the time of the writing of the New Testament then the word Hades was used among the pagan Greeks in both their common speech<sup>13</sup> and in their literature<sup>14</sup> to refer to death, the grave, the world beyond this life. Hades as the realm of the

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<sup>10</sup>M<sup>c</sup>Clintock and Strong, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>11</sup>Gruber, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>12</sup>Meyer, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>13</sup>James H. Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary Of The Greek Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Limited, 1949), p. 9.

<sup>14</sup>Gruber, op. cit., p. 21.

dead contained two parts: "The one containing an Elysium or bliss for the good, the other a Tartarus of sorrow and punishment for the wicked."<sup>15</sup> Thus Hades was the abode of both the wicked and righteous in the after-life.

When the Jews began to use the Greek language, when they took over the use of the word Hades, it was well established as to its meaning: the realm of the dead including a place for both the righteous and unrighteous. It is quite interesting to note how they used the word - what concept and meaning the Jews or Hebrews put into the word Hades. For the Jews when they took over the word Hades, used it for the Hebrew word Sheol.<sup>16</sup> As has been pointed out earlier in this paper Sheol in the Old Testament had mainly two uses or meanings: the realm of the dead and the realm of the wicked. One would then expect that Hades when taken over by the Jews would have the same two meanings. However, this was not the case. Evidently shortly after the last book of the Old Testament was written, Sheol changed slightly in its meaning and use among the Jews - most likely because of the influence of the Hellenistic world of which the Jews were a part. For one finds that the Jews, between the period of the Old and New Testaments and throughout the

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<sup>15</sup>M. Clintock and Strong, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>16</sup>A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures In The New Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, c.1930), I, 132.

New Testament period, used Hades almost identically the same way that the pagan Greeks used it. Robertson<sup>17</sup> declares that as the Greeks divided Hades into two compartments, Elysium and Tartarus, so the Jews divided Hades into two compartments, Abraham's bosom and Gehenna. To the Jews Hades was the abode of the dead, an abode both of the wicked and of the righteous, until the resurrection would take place.<sup>18</sup> At death every soul went to Hades, the righteous went to Abraham's bosom, the unrighteous went to Gehenna; in Gehenna the wicked received temporary punishment while in Abraham's bosom the righteous received certain pleasures; at the resurrection all the souls would be raised from Hades<sup>19</sup> - Josephus in his article on Hades gives a very descriptive picture of Hades, its two compartments, and the descent into Hades. To the Jews then Hades was the realm of the dead which contained both a place for the wicked and one for the blessed, and Hades was only a temporary place until the resurrection - thus the only difference between the pagan-Greek and the Jewish view of Hades was this temporary status of the Jewish Hades. The difference between the meanings of

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>18</sup>Flavius Josephus, "An Extract Out Of Josephus's Discourse To The Greeks Concerning Hades," The Life And Works Of Flavius Josephus, translated by William Whiston (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, n.d.), p. 901.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

Sheol in the Old Testament and Hades as used by the Jews during the New Testament era was this that in Hades there was a place for the righteous where they enjoyed heavenly pleasures and that this abode in Hades was only temporary, while in Sheol as used in the Old Testament there was no place for the righteous and Sheol for the wicked was not a temporary condition. The Jews undoubtedly received from the pagan Greeks the idea of a place for the righteous in Hades, but where they received the idea and concept of the condition in Hades being only temporary is not certain for the pagan Greek had no concept of a resurrection from Hades.

In this lay one important point of difference between the Jewish and the heathen hades, originated by the diverse spirit of the two religions, that to the believing Hebrew alone the sojourn in sheol appeared that only of a temporary and inter-mediate existence. The heathen had no prospect beyond its shadowy realms; its bars for him were eternal; and the idea of a resurrection was utterly strange alike to his religion and his philosophy.<sup>20</sup>

Thus it can be seen that there is a difference between the way the Jews before and during the time of the writing of the New Testament used Hades and the way the New Testament writers used the word - if the reader here will accept for the sake of argument the view that in the New Testament Hades means the realm of the dead and the realm of the damned. For Hades as used in the New Testament never refers to the abode of the righteous in the after-life, Hades only refers

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<sup>20</sup>M'Clintock and Strong, op. cit., p. 9.

to the righteous when it means the realm of the dead. Hades as such in the New Testament does not designate the place for the righteous in the after-life, but it does designate the place of the wicked. Hades refers only to the righteous when it means the realm of the dead in general as opposed to the realm of life here on earth. As Pearson points out:

Was Hades considered a place of two compartments, one for the righteous and one for the wicked? As stated above, the early Greeks so divided Hades. In the early Hebrew period Sheol was not thus divided, but in later times both Jews and Greeks believed in a two-compartments Hades. It can hardly be questioned that this idea was almost universal in the time of Jesus. It is exceedingly doubtful, however, that such a view is taught in the New Testament.<sup>21</sup>

Also Hades as used in the New Testament when referring to the abode of the wicked is not temporary as the Jews so conceived of Hades. There is then this clash between the New Testament, concerning the use of Hades, and the concurrent Jewish usage of the word. How this came about can not be explained in detail. Most likely, as pointed out above, the Jews were influenced by the Hellenization process, which affected all people, to the extent that their view of Sheol and Hades was changed from that of the Old Testament to one more in conformity with the pagan-Greek concept - although there is also a difference between the Jewish Hades and the pagan-Greek Hades as pointed out above. And the New Testament writers in wanting to stay with the Old Testament con-

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<sup>21</sup>Pearson, op. cit., pp. 311-2.

cept of Sheol rather than with the popular Jewish concept of Sheol and Hades, though they used the word to portray Sheol in the New Testament, used it in the sense of the Old Testament. As Gruber points out:

Hades in the New Testament, as also Sheol in the Old Testament, is not divided into two parts, the one for the blessed, called Elysium and the other for the lost, called Tartarus. This was indeed the conception of heathen mythology, but the inspired writers did not so use the term Hades.<sup>22</sup>

M'Clintock also points this out:

A careful examination of the passages in which these words occur will probably lead to the conclusion that they afford no real sanction to the notion of an intermediate place of the kind indicated [Roman purgatory], but are used by the inspired writers to denote the grave - the resting-place of the bodies both of the righteous and the wicked; and that they are also used to signify hell, the abode of miserable spirits.<sup>23</sup>

It is interesting to note that Rome was influenced much by the Jewish concept of Sheol and Hades, the concept that Hades is an intermediate or temporary state, when she formed her doctrine of purgatory.<sup>24</sup>

In conclusion it can be pointed out that the word Hades had three different concepts: the Jewish concept, the pagan-Greek concept, the concept of Hades which the New Testament writers used - this latter concept of Hades corresponding to Sheol in the Old Testament. Generally speaking Hades refers

<sup>22</sup>Gruber, op. cit., pp. 22-3

<sup>23</sup>M'Clintock and Strong, op. cit., IX, 662.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

to the after-life, the realm of the dead in a broad sense. This is the only general meaning that will cover the three different significances and viewpoints of the word. If a more specific meaning is wanted, then one of the three views of the word will have to be taken.

#### The New Testament Usage of the Word Hades

The word Hades, ᾍδης, appears ten times in the New Testament: Matthew 11:23, 16:18, Luke 10:15, 16:23, Acts 2:23,31, Revelation 1:18, 6:8, 20:13,14.<sup>25</sup> In this study of the New Testament usage of the word Hades all of the occurrences of Hades will be considered. It is of interest to point out how the more famous translations rendered Hades. Jerome in the Vulgate used in every instance the word Infernos; Luther in his translation used in every instance the word Hoelle; the translators of the Authorized Version used in every instance the word "hell;" and the Revised Standard Version used the word "Hades," really not a translation at all but rather a transliteration, in every instance except one, Matthew 16:18, where the word "death" is used instead. In taking up the study of the word Hades in the New Testament the same procedure will be followed that was followed in the study of Sheol in the Old Testament. Under

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<sup>25</sup>W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, A Concordance To The Greek Testament (Reprinted from the third edition, 1926; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1950), p. 21.

each concept of the word Hades which the New Testament brings out the passages themselves will be considered, and then a few observations will be made as to the picture that the New Testament gives for each concept - the concepts being the realm of the damned and the realm of the dead.

Before the study of Hades in the New Testament is undertaken, a few observations as to the New Testament meaning of Hades as given by others will serve to show that not all are agreed as to its New Testament meaning. Robertson says:

Hades is the unseen world, Hebrew Sheol, but here it is viewed as death itself "considered as a rapacious destroyer" (Hackett). It does not mean the place of punishment, though both heaven and the place of torment are in Hades (Luke 16:23). "Death and Hades are strictly parallel terms: he who is dead is in Hades" (Page).<sup>26</sup>

Robertson here seems to lean to the Jewish concept of Hades. But when he speaks of Hades in connection with the passage in Revelation chapter twenty he says:

Etymologically Hades is the unseen world where all who die are as opposed to this visible world, but in actual use Hades is sometimes treated as the abode of the unrighteous (Luke 16:23).<sup>27</sup>

Pearson says of Hades:

Hades is a place of suffering of punishment for sin. This conception was growing among the Hebrews long before New Testament times. Sheol had come to have a definite connection with sin and judgement. It meant the humiliation and destruction of the wicked.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Robertson, op. cit., III, 31.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., VI, 464.

<sup>28</sup>Pearson, op. cit., pp. 312-3.



Gruber says of Hades:

It is thus always used in the New Testament of a place with which terror is associated, and in some instances it is clearly used for a place of retribution, as in the case of the rich man, who opened his eyes in Hades, a place of anguish (Luke 16:23-24).<sup>29</sup>

Temme says of Hades:

The Greek word for hell is "hades," and opponents confidently assert that "hades" always means the grave, or the state of death of believers and unbelievers. But this is not true. A careful examination of the use of this word in the New Testament shows beyond doubt that it means hell in the orthodox sense of the term. It has not that wider meaning of sheol.<sup>30</sup>

Meyer in beginning his study of the word Hades in the New Testament maintained:

According to the information obtained from this brief survey, it would be difficult to find justification for the view that hades can mean only hell. Although there is no indication whatsoever that hades is used in the New Testament to designate "the god of the lower regions," we shall see that its use closely approximates that of the classics, namely, "the common receptacle of the dead." However, I wish to state at this time that I do not consider hades to be an "abode" or "place," but merely the "state of disembodied spirits."<sup>31</sup>

This will suffice to show that in general most of the scholars who have expressed themselves on the subject agree that the word Hades as used by the New Testament writers is a different concept than that of either the pagan Greeks or of the Jews though they may differ as to its exact meaning.

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<sup>29</sup>Gruber, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>30</sup>H. E. Temme, "Sheol-hades-hell-what?" Queensland Messenger, VIII (July 10, 1934), 98.

<sup>31</sup>Meyer, op. cit., p. 12.

Meyer is almost alone in his view of the New Testament Hades,<sup>32</sup> and it is difficult to understand his view.

### 1. Hades used for the Concept of Hell

In the study of the word Hades in the New Testament four of the occurrences out of the ten refer to the realm or abode of the damned in the after-life, Matthew 11:23, 16:18, Luke 10:15, 16:23. It is used in this meaning of the realm of the wicked in three different ways: as the opposite of heaven, as representing the opposition to Christ's Church, and as the dwelling place for the unrighteous. The first of these that shall be considered are the two passages which depict Hades as the opposite of heaven, Matthew 11:23, Luke 10:15.

The passage in Matthew 11:23 reads as translated from the Greek, together with its immediate context:

20.) Then he began to reproach those cities in which many of his mighty works had been done, because they had not repented. 21.) "Woe unto you, O Chorazin; woe unto you, O Bethsaida; for if in Tyre and in Sidon these mighty works had been done which have been done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and in ashes. 22.) Howbeit, it shall be more endurable (tolerable) for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgement, I say, than for you. 23.) And you O Capernaum, will you be exalted up to heaven? You will be brought down to hell (Hades), for if in Sodom the mighty works which have been done in you would have been done, it would be remaining to this day. 24.) But I say to you that it will be more endurable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgement than for you."

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

The parallel passage in Luke 10:15 reads as translated with its immediate context:

13.) Woe unto you, O Chorazin; woe unto you, O Bethsaida; for if in Tyre and Sidon the mighty works had been done which have been done in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and in ashes.

14.) Howbeit, it shall be more endurable (tolerable) for Tyre and Sidon in the judgement than for you.

15.) And you, O Capernaum, will you be exalted up to heaven? You will be brought down to hell (Hades).

Here in these two passages Hades is contrasted with heaven, οὐρανός. For the Savior in addressing the city of Capernaum tells her, "...will you be exalted up to heaven? You will be brought down to hell." Hades is pictured by our Lord as the direct opposite of heaven. Thus Jesus depicted the end and judgment of these cities because they did not repent at His preaching and performing of mighty miracles. Pearson<sup>33</sup> contends that Jesus had this in mind when He addressed these cities. Lenski<sup>34</sup> also maintains that our Lord used Hades as the "opposite of 'heaven'" in this passage and that it can not mean merely the realm of the dead. So also Gruber<sup>35</sup> takes Hades here to be the very opposite of heaven. There are two factors in this passage which point to the fact that Hades here has the meaning of the realm or

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<sup>33</sup>Pearson, op. cit., pp. 312-3.

<sup>34</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1932), pp. 434-5.

<sup>35</sup>Gruber, op. cit., p. 21.

abode of the damned and not merely the after-life in general or the abode of the dead. The first has been pointed out above, namely, that Hades is here the direct opposite of heaven. In the second place, Hades is spoken of and pictured by our Lord as a place of retribution. The first point is of course the weakest and would not be a sound argument if it would be standing alone.

Many times in our English mode of speech heaven and earth will be spoken of as being opposites when great distances or differences in two objects are emphasized. Possibly the Greek language also had such a mode of expression in their vulgar speech. This could also be the case in this passage when our Lord speaks of the city of Capernaum as being brought down to Hades instead of being exalted to heaven if it were not for the fact that the bringing down of Capernaum symbolizes the judgment of Capernaum because the people did not repent - Capernaum here of course symbolizes the people and it is used collectively to mean the people of that city. Thus Capernaum here is not merely being humiliated or being brought down to a low estate. It is true that Capernaum was blessed very much because our Lord had made it His headquarters during His ministry and had done many mighty works there. Thus it was exalted to a very high degree, and Capernaum could here be spoken of as being brought low and humbled if Hades here were brought into contrast only with heaven. But Hades here is not only spoken of in contrast to

heaven but is also referred to as a place of retribution, that is, Capernaum is being condemned because of its unbelief. The fact also that in Jude seven Sodom and Gomorrah are described as undergoing a punishment of eternal fire would point out that the same judgment awaits Capernaum. If Hades here referred to the after-life in general, the realm of the dead as opposed to the realm of life here on earth, it would not be a place of condemnation or retribution for the people of Capernaum since Hades in that sense would be the abode and punishment for all mankind. It is true that Hades is a place where all people go at death in the sense that it is the realm of the dead, for all die and must enter the grave. And in this sense Hades is a punishment because death is the result of sin. However, Hades in the sense of the realm of the dead, though it is the result of sin, yet it is not a place of retribution for the righteous, for the righteous also go to Hades in the sense that it is the realm of the dead. But Hades is definitely here spoken of as a place of retribution in this passage because our Lord speaks of judgment as a result of unbelief. Hades is thus mentioned in connection with judgment. This being the case, it can not mean or refer to the realm of the dead or the after-life in general, for Jesus is here making Hades the result of unbelief. Hades in the sense of the realm of the dead is not a result of unbelief but is the result of sin, the curse of sin over all mankind. If Hades is here spoken of as the

result of unbelief, then it must be taken to mean or refer to a place for those who rejected our Lord, who did not repent. Hades in the sense of the realm of the dead is not a place for those who rejected Jesus and His teachings, for also the righteous go to the realm of the dead at death. Thus if this passage is to make sense, Hades must be taken in the sense of the realm of the damned in the after-life. Could Hades here be a place where both the unrighteous and the righteous go at death but to two different compartments, the righteous to a place in Hades where they would experience joy and happiness and the unrighteous to a place in Hades where they would experience woes and afflictions - thus having the concept of the Jewish and pagan-Greek idea of Hades? This can not be so because of three reasons: Hades in the New Testament as Sheol in the Old Testament is never spoken of in connection with the reward of the righteous in the after-life but always in the sense of a place of retribution for the wicked or in the sense of death as the result of sin; secondly, Hades is here contrasted with heaven, it is here its opposite: thirdly, Hades for the New Testament writers was the equivalent for Sheol, and Sheol was never divided into two compartments. In considering this question whether Hades in the New Testament could have two compartments this must be kept in mind: the two compartment idea of Hades was a perversion of the original meaning of this word brought about by the contact between the pagan Greeks

and the Jews in the period of Hellenization. If one holds to the idea of the two-compartment Hades also for its use in the New Testament, then he has to prove and show that he is not foisting upon the use of the word in the New Testament the perverted Jewish concept of Hades. When the study of the passage Luke 16:23 is taken up it will be seen beyond any doubt that the New Testament writers did not divide Hades into two chambers, for in this passage Abraham's bosom is contrasted with Hades instead of the word Gehenna as one would expect if Hades as used in the New Testament was divided into two parts. The real judgment then of the people of Capernaum, as Hades points out, is eternal death, for that is what the realm of the damned really is, a place where the wicked will forever suffer a life without God.

The next passage that will be considered depicts Hades as the representative of the opposition against the Church of Christ, the one Holy Christian Church, Matthew 16:18.

This passage reads as translated:

And I say to you that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell (Hades) will not prevail against it.

It is interesting to note that this is the only occurrence where the Revised Standard Version translates Hades. All other occurrences of Hades the translators did not translate but merely transliterated it; here they translated Hades with the word "death." The Authorized Version translates Hades here with the word "hell;" Luther with the word Hoelle;

Jerome used the word Infernos. This passage will not be used to establish the fact that the New Testament writers used the word Hades to refer to the realm of the damned in the after-life - Matthew 11:23 and Luke 16:23 are used for this purpose - but this passage is used merely to show another way how the writers of the New Testament used the word Hades in the sense of the realm of the damned. It has been shown above that Hades in the sense of the realm of the damned was used as the direct opposite of heaven and as a place of retribution. Here it will be seen that Hades as the realm of the damned was used by the New Testament to represent the forces of evil against which the Church of Christ is opposed. Our Lord here tells His disciples that His Church will not be overcome by the gates of Hades,  $\pi\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\alpha\iota \alpha\dot{\iota}\delta\omicron\upsilon$ . No one would here deny that Hades is used in this passage as the force of evil which is opposed to the Church of Christ or as the representative of the forces of evil. The question then to be considered is whether Hades, as the force of evil, refers to the realm of the dead, the after-life, or to the realm of the damned in the after-life. Is this evil force which is opposing the Church of Christ Death, the realm of the dead, or is it Hell, the realm of the damned? In considering this question two things must be kept in mind: it is evident that Hades here is an active force which has power at its disposal, and that as the opposing force against the Church of Christ it is active now. The translation of



Hades if it is to be accepted must meet these two conditions. If Hades here refers to the realm of the dead or to death, does it meet these two conditions? The realm of the dead or death is most certainly active now in that every day people are passing at their death into the realm of the dead, but it can not be said that the realm of the dead or death is an active force against the Church of Christ. However, if Hades is here taken as the realm of the damned much more meaning can be derived from this passage, for this meaning of Hades does meet these two conditions that this passage sets forth concerning Hades. Hades as the realm of the damned, and thus also the realm of the devil and his evil angels, Jude six, is active now in that Satan and all of the evil forces at his command are continually attempting to seduce men away from the Church of Christ. Here of course Hades as the realm of the damned represents the evil forces, sin, man's sinful flesh, Satan and his evil angels, the world, which are opposed to the Church of Christ, since the place of the damned itself is understood not to be a force but merely representing the force here in this passage. Thus Hades in this passage if understood to mean the realm of the damned as representing the evil forces against the Church of Christ has much meaning, much more than if Hades were to mean merely the realm of the dead or the after-life. For Hades in this latter sense could hardly represent the forces of evil when it could also at the same time represent

the forces of good, for Hades in this latter sense contains both the righteous and the unrighteous. Lenski very aptly says:

In speaking of the foundation on which he will build his church, Jesus is thinking of her mighty enemies. Though the articles are missing with  $\pi\acute{\upsilon}\lambdaαι \ \alphaἰ\delta\omicron\upsilon$ , both nouns are definite. On "hades," see 11,23. "The unseen place" is here viewed as a mighty fortress, the opposite of the sacred Temple of Christ; and the  $\pi\acute{\upsilon}\lambdaαι$ , or portals of hades, are figurative for the mighty warring hosts that issue from these portals. It is impossible thus to make "hades" mean "the realm of the dead," the hypothetical place to which all the souls of dead men descend til judgement day. How could "the hades" of such a place war against the church on earth? Here "hades" must mean hell, the abode of the devils, whose one object is to destroy the church.... The implication is that hell's gates shall pour out her hosts to assault the church of Christ, but the church shall not be overthrown (Rev. 20:8-9).<sup>36</sup>

In one other instance Hades in the New Testament refers to the realm of the damned, and that is in Luke 16:23. Although this is not an exposition of the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, nevertheless to get the full context of this passage in which Hades appears it is best to have a look at the whole parable, Luke 16:19-21. It reads as translated:

19.) Now there was a certain rich man, and he was continually clothed in purple and fine linen feasting (making merry) sumptuously every day. 20.) And a certain beggar by the name of Lazarus who was full of sores had been laid at his gate, 21.) and who desired to be fed from the crumbs which continually fell from the table of the rich man, and moreover dogs always came and licked his sores. 22.) Now it came to pass that the beggar died and he was carried by the angels

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<sup>36</sup>Lenski, op. cit., pp. 608-9.

to the bosom of Abraham; and the rich man also died and was buried. 23.) And in hell (Hades), being in torment (torture), he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham from a distance and Lazarus in his bosom. 24.) And he crying out said, "Father Abraham, have mercy (pity) upon me and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering horrible pain in this flame." 25.) And Abraham said, "Son, remember that you received your good things during your life-time, and Lazarus in a similar manner evil things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are suffering. 26.) In addition to all these things there has also been fixed between you and us a great (large) chasm, so that those who wish to cross from here to you are not able to do so, nor can they cross over from there to us." 27.) And he said, "Then I pray (ask, beseech) you, O father, that you send him to the house of my father, 28.) for I have five brothers, so that he may solemnly testify to them, lest they also should come to this place of torture." 29.) But Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear (hearken to) them." 30.) But he said, "Not so, father Abraham, but if a person (someone) from the dead should go to them, they would repent." 31.) But he said to him, "If they do not hearken to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if some one should rise from the dead."

Two very important points are brought out by this parable: Hades is put into opposition to the bosom of Abraham, the dead are immediately judged, that is, the unrighteous immediately upon death go to the place of torment and the righteous to the place of blessing. This passage also, as did Matthew 11:23, points out the fact that Hades is a place of retribution. As stated above both the Jews and the pagan Greeks divided Hades (also Sheol in the case of the Jews, Hades being the equivalent of Sheol to the Jews) into two compartments - one compartment for the blessed in the after-life and another for the damned. The Jews called the compartment for the righteous Gehenna. As stated above also,

this Jewish view of Sheol and Hades was not the original or the Old Testament meaning of the word but rather a perverted idea which came about from their contact with the pagan-Greek world. Now the question is: did the New Testament writers as stated above use Hades as the equivalent of the Old Testament word Sheol, or did they use it according to the prevailing Jewish usage of the word at the time of the New Testament era? The use of Hades in Luke 16:23 answers this question. Pearson says concerning this question:

The only passage that bears directly on this question is Luke 16,23 ff. According to some students, the place of torment was not Hades itself, but was only in Hades. Broadus and other eminent scholars have held this view. Schofield thinks this view prevailed until the Ascension of Christ but not afterward. Willcock (The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary, in loco) says, "There can be no doubt that in the representation of the state of matters in the future world, as given in this parable, Christ used figurative language, in accommodation to the prevailing Jewish ideas of his time, rather than reveal that world as it is." David Smith agrees with this suggestion (The Days of His Flesh, p. 317). Some things in the parable must not be overlooked. One is, that Jesus emphasized the great distance - "afar off" - between the abodes of the rich man and Lazarus, whereas, according to David Smith, the Rabbis taught the abodes of the blessed and the doomed were near together - only a span between them, or according to another, only a wall. Again, Jesus places an impassable chasm between them, indicating that "the sentence is irrevocable, the separation eternal" (Smith). The whole picture is very different from the current idea of Hades. Dr. Vos seems to be correct in stating that "the distinction is not between 'the bosom of Abraham' and Hades as antithetical and exclusive...." Hades seems to be used here for the practical equivalent of "hell" or "Gehenna." Hell is from the Anglo-Saxon word helan, to hide, conceal, and originally was synonymous with the Hebrew Sheol or Hades,

where the idea of suffering for sin is prevalent.<sup>37</sup>

As Pearson points out, some take Hades in the Jewish meaning and maintain that Hades here includes both the place of torment and the place of blessing. This indeed would be the correct Jewish view of Hades at the time that the New Testament was being written. For this is what Josephus gives testimony to when he says:

For there is one descent into this region (Hades), at whose gate we believe there stands an archangel with an host; which gate when those pass through that are conducted down by the angels appointed over souls, they do not go the same way; but the just are guided to the right hand, and are led with hymns, sung by the angels appointed over that place, unto a region of light, in which the just have dwelt from the beginning of the world; not constrained by necessity, but ever enjoying the prospect of the good things they see, and rejoice in the expectation of those new enjoyments which will be peculiar to every one of them, and esteeming those things beyond what we have here; with whom there is no place of briers there; but the countenance of the fathers and of the just, which they see, always smiles upon them, while they wait for that rest and eternal new life in heaven, which is to succeed this region. This place we call The Bosom of Abraham.<sup>38</sup>

Thus to the Jews both "The Bosom of Abraham" and Gehenna were in Hades. However, does the New Testament use Hades in such a way? No, it does not. For if that were the case why was not the word Gehenna used here instead of Hades? For the real opposite according to the Jewish concept of the bosom of Abraham was not Hades but Gehenna. In this passage Hades

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<sup>37</sup>Pearson, op. cit., pp. 311-2.

<sup>38</sup>Josephus, op. cit., p. 901.

is described in such a way that it is made the synonym of Gehenna: the rich man is in torment and is in horrible pain because of a flame of fire. Now no one would deny that this was the Jewish view and concept of Gehenna, but yet here in this passage where the concept of Gehenna is described the word Hades is used. The only likely explanation for this is that the writer knew that he was describing Gehenna according to the Jewish view and that he used the word Hades here as a synonym of Gehenna. Else why would he have used a word which did not fit the description that he gave? No Jew would have done this, that is, ascribed to Hades a description which in reality was the concept of Gehenna. Unless you say that the writer of this passage, who was Luke a companion of Paul, made a mistake when he described Hades with the concept of Gehenna. This could hardly be the case. Luke knew what he was doing; he used Hades as a synonym for Gehenna. Most likely he could have used Gehenna, and this would have been more correct according to the Jewish view, but he chose instead to remain with the Old Testament concept of Sheol and used Hades. Luke thus used Hades in opposition to the bosom of Abraham, something that was entirely foreign to the Jewish concept of Hades. And Hades thus can here mean only the realm of the damned, for only then would it be the opposite of the bosom of Abraham, paradise. Hades would not be the opposite of paradise if it here referred to the realm of the dead or the after-life in general. Hades

is here definitely described as a place of torment and retribution, an association which is never made when the realm of the dead is being spoken of. Bruce<sup>39</sup> who maintains that Hades as well as Sheol merely refers to the realm of the dead and that they contain the two compartments of the Jewish concept nevertheless here says concerning this passage in Luke that Hades seems to equal hell, "the place of torment, and of course Lazarus is not there, but in Paradise...." According to this passage in Luke Hades does not contain the bosom of Abraham, paradise. This together with the facts that Hades is here definitely a place of retribution, that Hades is put into opposition to paradise, that Hades is here used as a synonym of Gehenna, that Hades is here described as a place of torment, that Hades is not an intermediate place until the Judgement as the Jews believed since both Lazarus and the rich man were judged before entering paradise and Hades respectively, shows that Hades refers to the realm of the damned and not to the after-life, the realm of the dead. If one holds that Hades here refers to the realm of the dead and not to the realm of the damned, he meets problems that are too difficult to solve.

From these three passages in the New Testament where Hades occurs, Matthew 11:23(Luke 10:15), 16:18, Luke 16:23,

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<sup>39</sup>Alexander B. Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," The Expositor's Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n.d.), I, 589.

it can be seen that the New Testament writers did use Hades to refer sometimes to the realm of the damned in the after-life as in opposition to the realm of the righteous. The fact that Hades can and does in the New Testament refer sometimes also to the realm of the dead, the after-life, will be pointed out in the next portion of this paper.

What description of hell, the realm of the damned, does Hades give and portray in the New Testament? The following things can be pointed out: the realm of the damned is the direct opposite of paradise, the realm of the righteous, Luke 10:15; it is a place of retribution and damnation for the wicked, Matthew 11:23 (Luke 10:15), Luke 16:19-31; there is pain and torment in the realm of the damned, Luke 16:23,24; fire is associated with hell and depicted as the material cause for pain and torment, Luke 16:24; the realm of the damned is presented as the force which is fighting against the Church, Matthew 16:18; and there is a deliverance from the realm of the damned, Acts 2:25-28.

## 2. Hades used for the Concept of the Realm of the Dead

It seems that the New Testament uses the word Hades in reference to the realm of the dead, the grave, in opposition to life here on this earth four times. All four of these occurrences appear in John's Apocalypse, 1:18, 6:8, 20:13,14. It is significant that in all four instances Hades is mentioned in connection with death, *θάνατος*. These passages



will be considered very briefly since all are closely connected in thought.

The first passages to be considered are Revelation 1:17-18 and 20:13-14 which read as translated:

17.) And when I saw him, I fell at (before) his feet as a dead man, but he placed his right hand on me saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, 18.) the Living One indeed, for I was dead, but behold I am alive now and forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of the grave (Hades)."

Here in this passage the Lord is relating to John that He is the all Powerful One by stating that He controls both death and Hades. He has the keys to unlock the power of death and Hades, to destroy death and Hades. Another passage in which Hades occurs in the sense of the realm of the dead is Revelation 20:13-14 which reads as translated:

13.) And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and death and the grave (Hades) gave up the dead who were in them, and each one was judged according to their works. 14.) And death and the grave (Hades) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, that is, the lake of fire.

In these two passages death and Hades are pictured as enemies which the Lord will destroy at His second coming, for they will be compelled to give up the dead within them and then will be cast "into the lake of fire." The Lord has the keys to death and Hades and thus has the power to release the inhabitants of both and then to destroy them, that is, death and Hades. Thus from these two passages we see that death and Hades will continue to have sway over mankind until the Day the Lord destroys both of them. Death here is the ever

present enemy of man; no one can or will escape death, it being the result and curse of sin. Death here is physical death, that is, the cessation of life here on earth through which all men pass when they enter the realm of the dead, the grave. Death here is not the eternal death, eternal separation from God. This is so because eternal death, eternal separation from God, will never cease, for the realm of the damned will never be destroyed. But here death is spoken of as being destroyed. Since this is true of physical death, it is best to take death here as referring to the cessation of life here on earth. This death will be destroyed together with Hades.

But now what does Hades here refer to? We have already seen that Hades in the New Testament can mean and refer to the realm of the damned. Does it have the same meaning here in these two passages? Hades is spoken of as being destroyed on the Day of our Lord. If Hades here refers to the realm of the damned, this means that the realm of the damned will be destroyed on the Day of Judgment. Is this true? The testimony of Scripture points to the fact that the realm of the damned, everlasting punishment, will not cease or be destroyed. Such passages as Matthew 25:41, 3:12, 18:8, Mark 9:43-48, Daniel 12:2, and many others point to the fact that eternal punishment and the realm of the damned will not be destroyed nor cease. But here Hades is spoken of as being destroyed on the Day of the Lord. Also Hades is here

said to be cast into "the everlasting fire." This can only refer to everlasting hell fire, mentioned in Scripture in Matthew 3:12, 13:42, 18:8, 25:41, Mark 9:44, Isaiah 33:14. Hades is also spoken of as giving up its dead on the Last Day. Thus Hades can hardly here refer to the realm of the damned, hell. Hades in these passages must refer to the realm of the dead, if these passages are to have a clear meaning. The realm of the damned will not be destroyed on the Day of Judgment, but the realm of the dead, the grave, will be destroyed; the realm of the damned will not be thrown into the "everlasting fire," but the realm of the dead will be thrown into the fire; and the realm of the damned will not give up its dead on the Day of our Lord, but the realm of the dead will give up its dead. Thus from these evidences it can be seen that Hades can hardly refer to the realm of the damned in these passages, but that it rather refers to the realm of the dead.

Do death and Hades here refer to the same thing, that is, are death and Hades both representatives of what is referred to as cessation of life here on earth? Death and Hades can be taken in that sense, but it seems that a difference is brought out, though it really makes little difference in the end. It seems here that death is the great enemy, cessation of life, and that Hades as the realm of the dead here is the receptacle of the victims of death. So Moffatt thinks when he says:

Death as Sin's ally must be destroyed along with Sin, while Hades, the grim receptacle of Death's prey... naturally ceases to have any function.<sup>40</sup>

The other passage where Hades seems to refer to the realm of the dead rather than to the realm of the damned is that of Revelation 6:7-8 which reads as translated:

7.) And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast saying, "Come." 8.) And I saw, and behold a green horse, and he who was sitting on it, his name was Death, and the grave (Hades) followed after him, and power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with death and by the wild beasts of the earth.

This passage is somewhat like the two above in which Hades refers to the receptacle for the victims of death. Death seeks out its victims and then they are deposited in Hades, that is, in the grave, the realm of the dead. Only instead of the end of death and Hades being spoken of, here they are mentioned as having sway over a part of the earth to destroy. The determining point in this passage as to whether Hades here refers to the realm of the damned or to the realm of the dead is the kind of destruction that is meant. Is this a spiritual destruction that is being described? If so, then Hades would refer to the realm of the damned. Or is this a physical destruction? If so, then Hades would refer to the realm of the dead, the grave. It seems best to take this destruction as referring to a physical destruction.

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<sup>40</sup>James Moffatt, "The Revelation Of St. John The Divine," The Expositor's Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), V, 477.

For here death and Hades are given power over a part of the earth to destroy "with sword and with famine and with death and by the wild beasts of the earth." These instruments of death and Hades are not instruments of the realm of the damned, but rather they seem to be the weapons of the realm of the dead. Thus this passage gives the picture of death stalking about claiming its victims and Hades in the sense of the grave following after swallowing up the victims of death. In the light of the whole context, chapters six to nine, it seems that the destruction that is pictured so vividly in symbolic imagery is a physical destruction that is to be carried out before the Day of Judgement as a call to repentance. Of course if this call to repentance goes unheeded, then spiritual destruction will follow from which there will be no repentance. Thus it seems that here death and Hades are a part of this whole destruction which is a call to repentance. If this is the case, then Hades refers to the realm of the dead rather than to the realm of the damned.

Thus from these passages in Revelation it can be seen that the New Testament does use the word Hades also to refer to the realm of the dead. In this usage of the word where Hades refers to the realm of the dead no commitment is made as to whether the individual who is entering the realm of the dead is to be in the abode of the righteous or the abode of the unrighteous, whereas in the case when Hades is used

in the sense of the realm of the damned a commitment is of course made.

Does Hades as the realm of the dead give any description? Although not much is said about the realm of the dead in the way of description, there are some points of interest concerning the realm of the dead that are given. Our Lord Jesus has power over the realm of the dead and of course over death, Revelation 1:17-18. The realm of the dead will be destroyed, Revelation 20:13-14. Death and the realm of the dead, the grave, are always connected, for death is the entrance to the grave, Revelation 6:7-8. The realm of the dead does have sway over man, for all men at death enter the abode of the dead, Revelation 6:7-8.

In closing this portion of this study it should be brought out that since all the passages in which Hades refers to the realm of the dead are to be found only in the Apocalypse, there is a little difficulty in arriving at the exact meaning of the word Hades used in the sense of the realm of the dead. Nevertheless these passages show that the New Testament does use the word Hades sometimes to refer to the realm of the dead.

### 3. Where the Meaning of Hades is not Distinguished

Does the New Testament use the word Hades to refer to any other concept besides that of the realm of the damned and the realm of the dead? As far as can be determined from

the study of the word in the New Testament there is no other use for the word than the two mentioned above. However, Hades, as Sheol in the Old Testament, seems to have been used where the distinction between the concept of the realm of the damned and the realm of the dead is not clear. This seems to point to the fact that the New Testament also as the Old Testament in its use of Sheol does regard the realm of the damned and the realm of the dead as closely connected, so close that sometimes no distinction is made between them and that in such an occurrence Hades refers to both meanings and concepts at the same time. Such a use of Hades seems to be brought out in the passage of Acts 2:25-27 where Hades occurs in verse twenty-seven, Hades also appears in verse thirty-one but only as a repetition of verse twenty-seven. This passage reads as translated:

25.) For David says concerning him, "I continually saw the Lord before me at all times, for he is at my right hand, so that I might not be cast down. 26.) Because of this my heart was made glad and my tongue sang for joy, and furthermore my flesh will abide in hope. 27.) For you will not leave (abandon) my life (soul) in Hades, neither will you give over (deliver) your Holy One to see corruption (destruction)."

This passage is a quotation of Psalm 16:8-10. Luke in quoting these verses in Psalm 16 followed the Septuagint word for word. Hades here is a translation of Sheol which was used by the writer of this Psalm, being King David. Psalm 16:8-10 reads as translated from the Hebrew:

8.) I have continually set the Lord before myself (before my sight), for he is at my right hand; I will not

totter (shake, stumble). 9.) Therefore (because of this) my heart is glad and my soul leaps for joy; my flesh also will rest securely. 10.) For you will not abandon my soul (seat of life) to Sheol; you will not allow (suffer, permit) your Holy One to see corruption (destruction).

The verses of this passage are a part of Peter's discourse on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:14-36. Peter here quotes Psalm 16 as a witness to the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, saying that David spoke concerning His resurrection. For in the twenty-fourth verse of Acts 2 Peter says, "Whom God raised up having destroyed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it." And then follows the quotation of the verses in Psalm 16 as an Old Testament witness to the fact that what Peter is saying concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ is true. Thus Sheol and Hades must refer to and mean the realm of the dead, for that is the interpretation that Peter puts upon these words since he used this passage from the Psalms as a witness to the resurrection of Christ. As Pearson says:

As used in this passage it means simply "the unseen world," or "the realm of the dead." The point of argument is that the risen Christ is the fulfilment of the prophetic Psalm, that Christ has conquered death. Hades here seems to be synonymous with death.<sup>41</sup>

But Hades, and also Sheol, has a much deeper meaning here than merely the realm of the dead. Peter in his sermon before that first Pentecost crowd of people was not merely

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<sup>41</sup>Pearson, op. cit., p. 310.



showing and pointing out to the people that Jesus had been raised, had conquered death by His resurrection. It goes much deeper than that. He was also giving witness to the fact that this Jesus whom they had killed and whom God had raised from the dead was the Christ, the promised Messiah, the Savior of the world. Jesus not only conquered death in His work of redemption but also sin, the guilt of sin, Satan, and the Law. He did so by His death on the cross; by the shedding of His innocent blood Jesus the Son of God conquered sin, death, and the devil. And His resurrection from the dead was God's seal and testimony to the fact that Christ's sacrifice on the cross was the real and only propitiation for the sins of the world. And thus when Jesus was raised from the dead on that first Easter morn this was the act to show that He had conquered Satan and his evil forces and death and sin. And so when Peter and David gave witness to Christ's resurrection by saying, "You will not leave my life in Hades, neither will you give over your Holy One to see corruption," they were testifying to more than just the fact of Jesus' resurrection. They were also bearing witness to the whole work of Jesus' redemptive work. They saw through the resurrection not only the conquering of death but also the conquering of sin and Satan and of hell, eternal damnation and death. For if Christ had not been raised, then there would not have been a redemption for mankind. Hence, when our Lord said in speaking to the Father, "You

will not abandon my life to Hades (Sheol)," He was not only referring to the grave, the realm of the dead, but also to the power of Satan and sin over mankind, and thus to the realm of the damned which is the realm and power of Satan and sin. Thus Hades and Sheol in the sense of the realm of the dead really refer here to eternal death and eternal damnation. And thus what the realm of the damned really is, is eternal death, eternally being cut off from God. The realm of the dead here is a picture of eternal death together with the realm of the damned.

So then, Hades also, like Sheol in the Old Testament, does seem to have this special use and meaning: when the close connection between physical death, termination of life here on earth, and eternal death was to be shown then the word Hades or Sheol was used. The close connection between physical and eternal death is this: physical death symbolizes or signifies eternal death; the grave signifies or is a taste of the realm of the damned. For both physical death and eternal death are the result of sin, and if it were not for the redemptive work of Jesus Christ physical death would then have been the beginning or the ushering in of eternal death. And so, to the unrighteous, the unbeliever, physical death becomes eternal death; the realm of the dead becomes the realm of the damned.

### Conclusion

Before this portion of this study is brought to a close, a few points should be mentioned. In the Gospels Hades is used only to refer to the realm of the damned. Hades used in referring to the realm of the dead occurs only in John's Revelation. The earliest and strongest meaning of Hades then as portrayed by the New Testament is the realm of the damned. With such a limited number of occurrences it is practically impossible to see or detect any shift of meaning or evolution in the use of the word, as in the case of the word Sheol in the Old Testament, or to show the real primary meaning of Hades. In the case of the word Sheol in the Old Testament where Sheol occurs many times and where the writings in which Sheol occurs cover such a long period of time and history it is quite possible to detect both a shift and an evolution in the meaning and use of Sheol, as was pointed out above in the previous chapter, and also it is possible to come to a fairly accurate conclusion as to the primary use and meaning of the word. This can not be done in the case of the word Hades in the New Testament.

From this study it can be seen that Hades is an equivalent of the Old Testament word Sheol. Both of the words have a two-fold meaning and use: the realm of the dead, the realm of the damned. Both of the words also are used when the close connection between death and eternal death,

between the realm of the dead and the realm of the damned, is pointed out. Whether there are any other words that are or could be equivalents of Sheol, and whether Sheol and Hades are exact equivalents will be considered briefly in the following chapters.

Thus the main emphasis of this study is brought to a close, that of the study of the two words Sheol and Hades in the Old and New Testaments respectively. The following chapters are conclusions and results built upon this study of these two words.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE GENERAL MEANING OF OTHER NEW TESTAMENT WORDS USED FOR THE CONCEPT OF HELL

Are there any other words in the New Testament which could be equivalents of the word Sheol? It has been shown that the word Hades in the New Testament is an equivalent of the word Sheol in the Old Testament. Are there any other New Testament words which are synonyms of Hades and thus equivalents of Sheol? This will be answered in this chapter.

In the introduction of this study it was stated that in the New Testament there are five other words besides Hades that could be equivalents of Sheol. These five words are: Gehenna, Γέεννα ; Abussos, Ἄβυσσος ; Kataxthonios, Καταχθόνιος ; Tartaros, Τάρταρος ; and Thanatos, Θάνατος. The scope of this paper does not permit a study of these words as was done in the case of the words Sheol and Hades. However, a brief survey of each will be given in order to come to a conclusion concerning each word.

Gehenna

The word Gehenna appears in the New Testament twelve times,<sup>1</sup> Matthew 5:22,29,30, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15,33; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6. As can be seen, all the occurrences of Gehenna are in the Gospels except the occurrence in James 3:6.

The etymology of the word Gehenna forms a very interesting story and description. It is really not a Greek term at all but rather "a technical Hebrew religious term," and the Greek term Gehenna is a transliteration of the Hebrew term.<sup>2</sup> Thayer<sup>3</sup> says that it is from the Hebrew word

גֵּהֶנְנִים נִסְיָא, Nehemiah 11:30; more fully from גֵּהֶנְנִים נִסְיָא נִסְיָא, Joshua 15:8, 18:16; 2 Chronicles 28:3; Jeremiah 7:32; also from גֵּהֶנְנִים נִסְיָא נִסְיָא, 2 Kings 23:10; and that it means and refers to the valley of the son of lamentation or of the sons of lamentation, the valley of lamentation.

Thayer further says by way of description:

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<sup>1</sup>W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, A Concordance To The Greek Testament (Reprinted from the third edition, 1926; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1950), p. 157.

<sup>2</sup>F. W. Farrar, Mercy and Judgement (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1881), p. 184.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament, Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti, translated revised and enlarged by Joseph H. Thayer (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1889), p. 111.



either *Φάραξ υἱοῦ Ἐννόμ*, Jeremiah 7:32, 2 Kings 23:10, or *Φάραγος Ὀνόμ*, Joshua 15:8. Thus the Septuagint sometimes translates the Hebrew expression and at other times transliterates it. By the time of the New Testament era the translation had entirely given way to the transliteration, and the transliteration had become fixed as *Γέεννα*.

*Γέεννα* . *Thayer*  
Gehenna, or "the valley of the son of Hinnom," at first had no evil significance at all, it was merely a valley southeast of Jerusalem with no special significance attached to it - no more than to any other valley, of which there were many in the immediate environment of Jerusalem. During the period of the divided kingdoms the worship of fire-gods was introduced, perhaps already at the time of Ahaz.<sup>7</sup> The fire-god that some of the Jews took over as their god was Moloch whom they worshiped in the form of a bull offering up their children in fire. The valley of the son of Hinnom was used for this purpose. Because the Jews had to give up their children for sacrifice unto this fire-god Moloch, many of them abhorred this form of worship and anything connected with it. When under King Josiah this pagan and idolatrous form of worship was done away with, the Jews rejoiced greatly but never forgot the horrible practise. They never forgot

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<sup>7</sup>J. M'Clintock and James Strong, Cyclopaedia Of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), III, 764.



that it took place in the valley of Hinnom, and so that valley ever afterwards had this stigma connected with it. And so it was fitting for them to use this valley later on, as the city of Jerusalem grew, for a "sewer and garbage burner" and place of disposal.<sup>8</sup> And in order that this sewage and refuse might be done away with a fire was kept continually burning, "brimstone being added to assist combustion and insure complete destruction."<sup>9</sup> However, no living thing was ever thrown into Gehenna, for the Jews were never permitted to torture any thing that was alive,<sup>10</sup> although the bodies or bones of dead criminals and animals were many times cast into Gehenna to insure complete destruction.<sup>11</sup> Thus in time "because it was the receptacle of filth and all things which defiled Jerusalem and because of the ever-burning fire which continually fed on this refuse and filth, it became later on an image or representative of the abode of wicked and everlasting punishment."<sup>12</sup> Thus at the time of the New Testament era Gehenna was this place where all refuse was burnt and it represented the abode of

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<sup>8</sup>Charles T. Russel, The Bible on Hell (Brooklyn: International Bible Students Association, 1920), p. 23.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>L. Gruber, What after Death (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1925), pp. 23-4.

<sup>12</sup>M'Clintock and Strong, op. cit., p. 764.

the damned. And so whenever the word Gehenna was used by the Jews they were referring to the abode and realm of the damned in the after-life. Thus Singer<sup>13</sup> says that Gehenna in the eyes of the Jews "became a figurative equivalent for 'hell.'"

The Jews at the time of the New Testament era had a very vivid conception and picture of Gehenna as hell, the place of the damned. They pictured hell as a place situated deep in the earth and immeasurably large - "The earth is one-sixtieth of the garden, the garden one-sixtieth of Eden, Eden one-sixtieth of Gehenna; hence the whole world is like a lid for Gehenna."<sup>14</sup> The fire of Gehenna which never goes out is sixty times as hot as earthly fire.<sup>15</sup> There is a constant smell of sulfur in Gehenna caused by the fire, and it is forever dark despite its great masses of fire.<sup>16</sup> Farrar<sup>17</sup> points out that Gehenna was for the Jews not so much a place of torment but a place "for the purification of the most wicked," and as such it was not "eternal." When an individual entered Gehenna, it was not to be an everlasting

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<sup>13</sup>Isidore Singer, The Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1907), V, 582.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Farrar, op. cit., pp. 182-9.

abode and punishment.<sup>18</sup> In the end he either escaped by being delivered or by being annihilated, this was true in the case of all except the "very worst apostages, and possibly even for them."<sup>19</sup>

Did the New Testament writers use the word Gehenna for the same concept as did the Jews? It seems that the New Testament does use Gehenna for the same concept of hell as did the Jews. Of course the New Testament does not give an exact detailed description of the place of the damned in the after-life as some of the Jews held. Nor is Gehenna as hell an intermediate state in the New Testament, but it is rather a place of eternal punishment. In the New Testament Gehenna, as in the Jewish view, is a symbol of the future place of punishment in the after-life.<sup>20</sup> And as Russel<sup>21</sup> points out the New Testament writers used it as a type or illustration of eternal death and everlasting punishment. As the valley of Gehenna outside of Jerusalem with its ever-burning fire was a picture of the place of everlasting punishment to the Hebrews, so it was also to the early Christians and to the writers of the New Testament. It may be of some significance

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Frank Biggart, "What do we mean by Hell?" And Then the Judgement (Glasgow: Robert Maclehose and Company, Ltd., 1946), pp. 65-85.

<sup>21</sup>Russel, op. cit., p. 24.

to note that of the twelve times that Gehenna appears in the New Testament seven of the occurrences appear in Matthew who wrote to the Jewish Christians - an eighth occurrence of the word Gehenna appears in the epistle of James which was also written to the Jewish Christians.

Thus as Gehenna appears in the New Testament it could not be an equivalent of Sheol in the Old Testament even though Sheol does appear sometimes in the Old Testament referring to the place of the damned. For while Sheol, as has been shown above, has a double use and meaning in the Old Testament, Gehenna does not have this double meaning for Gehenna is never used for the realm of the dead but only as a picture of the realm of the damned.

#### Abussos

The word Abussos appears nine times in the New Testament, Luke 8:31; Romans 10:7; Revelation 9:1, 9:2, 9:11, 11:7, 17:8, 20:1, 20:3.<sup>22</sup> Abussos comes from a privative and bathus meaning, deep.<sup>23</sup> In the pagan-Greek world the word meant bottomless or boundless and it was used to refer to "the great deep, the sea, the abyss, bottomless pit."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Moulton and Geden, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>23</sup>A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures In The New Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1930), II, 120.

<sup>24</sup>H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon (8th revised edition; New York: American Book Company, 1897), p. 3.

Thayer<sup>25</sup> maintains that Abussos means an immeasurable depth, an abyss, a pit, and that in the New Testament it refers to a very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth and that it is the common receptacle of the dead and also the abode of demons. Robertson<sup>26</sup> also agrees that in the New Testament Abussos is used for two different concepts: on the one hand it refers to the common receptacle of all the dead, and on the other it is used to refer to the abode of Satan and his evil demons or spirits. That the New Testament does use the word Abussos to refer to these different concepts can be readily seen when the passages in which the word occurs are consulted. In Romans 10:7 Abussos refers to the common receptacle of the dead, in Luke 8:31 it refers to the abode or home of the demons or evil spirits, while in Revelation 20:1-3 it refers to the abode or home of Satan the chief of the evil spirits. Of the nine instances of the word in the New Testament Romans 10:7 is the only occurrence where Abussos refers to the receptacle of the dead. All the other occurrences refer to the abode of the evil spirits.

The Septuagint uses the word Abussos to translate three different Hebrew words:  $\square \uparrow \text{ } \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow$ ,  $\uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow$ , and  $\uparrow \uparrow \uparrow$ .<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Thayer, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>26</sup>Robertson, op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>27</sup>Edwin Hatch and Harry A. Redpath, A Concordance To The Septuagint And The Other Greek Versions Of The Old Testament (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1892), p. 1.

According to Gesenius<sup>28</sup>  $\beth \text{ } \aleph \text{ } \beth$  was used by the Old Testament writers to refer to the "ocean" or to the "sea," and then also to "gulf" or "abyss," and sometimes to a "wave." The word  $\beth \text{ } \aleph \text{ } \beth$  has the meaning in the Old Testament of "the depth of the sea, abyss."<sup>29</sup> While  $\beth \text{ } \aleph \text{ } \beth$  refers to "a broad space."<sup>30</sup> As can be seen the Septuagint uses the word Abussos in a very broad sense to refer to almost anything of immense space or of a great depth, while in the New Testament, as shown above, Abussos was used in a very restricted sense.

Is Abussos as the New Testament used it an equivalent of Sheol? Abussos in the New Testament comes much closer to the use of Sheol in its two meanings in the Old Testament than Abussos does in the manner in which it is used in the Septuagint. Abussos as can be seen also comes much closer to the double aspect of the meaning of Sheol than the word Gehenna. Both Sheol and Abussos refer to the realm of the dead as a common receptacle for all the dead without making any distinction between the destination of the righteous and the unrighteous. Both Sheol and Abussos also refer to the realm of the damned. However, Sheol when used to refer to the realm of the damned always speaks of it as a place of

<sup>28</sup>Gesenius, op. cit., p. 857.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 705.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 764.

retribution and punishment for the wicked and unrighteous, while Abussos when used to refer to the realm of the damned always speaks of it as a place or abode or home of Satan and his evil spirits. And here is where the difference lies, Sheol refers to hell as eternal death and separation of man from God while Abussos refers to hell as the abode of the evil spirits. And so strictly speaking Abussos is not an exact equivalent of Sheol as the word Hades is.

### Kataxthonios

The word Kataxthonios appears only once in the New Testament, Philipians 2:10.<sup>31</sup> It does not appear at all in the Septuagint. So it can be said that Kataxthonios is a word that the writers of the Scriptures did not commonly use, Paul being the only one to use it and that only once. It seems that the word was used in the pagan-Greek world for the subterranean place of those who dwell in the world below, the place of the departed souls in the underworld.<sup>32</sup> The papyri seem to illustrate also that the word was used for the place of the departed souls in the after-life.<sup>33</sup> Souter in

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<sup>31</sup>Moulton and Geden, op. cit., p. 539.

<sup>32</sup>Thayer, op. cit., p. 338.

<sup>33</sup>James H. Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary Of The Greek Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Limited, 1949), p. 335.

his little lexicon<sup>34</sup> maintains that Kataxthonios meant "under the earth, subterranean." And so also Paul used it in this way in his letter to the Philippians. It seems that in a general way the word referred to the underneath part of the earth. In this use it does not seem specifically to refer to the realm of the damned, but rather to anything which is pictured as underneath the earth, which would include both the realm of the dead in a general sense and also the realm of the damned and the evil spirits. Thus anything that is or can be pictured as under or beneath the earth can be said to be in this subterranean place under the earth, Kataxthonios. It can then be said that all persons at death enter this place, Kataxthonios, and that when the word is used it refers in a general way to the souls of the dead and to the evil spirits. From this brief description of the word it can readily be seen that Kataxthonios is not an equivalent of the word Sheol.

#### Tartaros

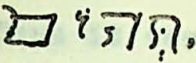
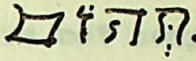
The word Tartaros appears in the New Testament only once, 2 Peter 2:4, and there only in a verb-form, *ταρταρώσας*.<sup>35</sup> And it appears only two times in the

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<sup>34</sup>Alexander Souter, A Pocket Lexicon To The Greek New Testament (8th reprint of the 1916 edition; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 129.

<sup>35</sup>Moulton and Geden, op. cit., p. 934.



Septuagint, Job 41:24, Proverbs 30:16.<sup>36</sup> In Job 41:24 the Septuagint uses Tartaros to translate the Hebrew word  "gulf, abyss" - as shown above the Septuagint uses also Abussos to translate .<sup>37</sup> In Proverbs 30:16 it seems that Tartaros is not a translation but rather an insertion on the part of the Septuagint translators.

In Homeric Greek it seems that at first Tartaros was a prison or place where the wicked in the after-life suffered punishment and that it was not a part of Hades at all, as it became in later Greek usage.<sup>38</sup> Homer describes Tartaros or Tartarus as "a deep gulf beneath the earth, with iron portals and a brazen threshold, as far below Hades as heaven is from earth."<sup>39</sup> The opposite of Tartarus was Elysium which was the place of the blessed in the after-life, paradise, and also was at first not a part or department of Hades.<sup>40</sup> McLane says that Tartarus:

...seems to have been raised up into Hades as the prison in which the wicked suffer the punishment due for their crimes. Elysium also was moved down to Hades and became the place where the good were blessed with purest pleasures. These two places, which seem originally to have been regarded as the abodes of good and

<sup>36</sup>Hatch, op. cit., p. 1337.

<sup>37</sup>Gesenius, op. cit., p. 857.

<sup>38</sup>William W. McLane, "An Historical Study of Hell," Homiletical Review, XXIV (September, 1892), 207.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

evil spirits of a divine order, became the places for the administration of the rewards and punishments of men.<sup>41</sup>

Thus it seems that at first both Tartarus and Elysium were at the extreme opposites and were not compartments of Hades. This is an important fact to consider when the basic meaning of Hades is under consideration. Hades at first did not contain the two compartments, Tartarus and Elysium; this came to be the case later on. Liddell and Scott<sup>42</sup> also maintain the same opinion when they say that Tartarus was "as deep below Hades as earth below heaven." It was not till later that Tartarus became a compartment of Hades. Of course as a compartment of Hades, Tartarus continued to keep the same meaning, the abode of the wicked in the after-life.

At the time that the New Testament was written Tartarus was to the pagan Greeks as Gehenna was to the Hebrews.<sup>43</sup> Tartarus was the compartment in Hades in which the wicked suffered punishment; Gehenna was the compartment in Sheol, according to the Jewish view, in which the wicked suffered.<sup>44</sup> It seems that this is the meaning of Tartarus in 2 Peter 2:4

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Liddell and Scott, op. cit., p. 1528.

<sup>43</sup>Thayer, op. cit., p. 615.

<sup>44</sup>Robertson, op. cit., I, 133.

where according to Gruber<sup>45</sup> it is evidently used for the place where the fallen angels are reserved for the final judgment. Thus Tartaros in the New Testament is the place or the abode of Satan and his evil angels - as has been shown above, Abussos is also used for this purpose. In contrast to Gehenna it can be said that Tartaros refers to the abode of the damned as the home of Satan and his evil angels, thus it is almost a synonym of Abussos, while Gehenna refers to the punitive aspect of the abode of the damned. Tartaros then can not be an equivalent of Sheol.

#### Thanatos

Of all the words considered in this chapter as possible equivalents of Sheol the word Thanatos seems to be the closest to being an equivalent. The word Thanatos will not be examined in this paper, for that is a study in itself. Here it is merely mentioned as a possible equivalent to make this portion of the study complete. Just a few items concerning the word will be mentioned here.

The word Thanatos appears in the New Testament some 117 times.<sup>46</sup> And according to Thayer<sup>47</sup> it has four different meanings or shades of meanings in the New Testament:

<sup>45</sup>Gruber, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>46</sup>Moulton and Geden, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>47</sup>Thayer, op. cit., pp. 282-3.

1) physical death, separation of the soul from the body, John 11:4; Acts 2:24; Philippians 2:27,30; Hebrews 7:23; 2) that misery of the soul caused by sin which begins on earth and increases after the death of the body, 2 Corinthians 3:7; James 1:15; 3) the state of the wicked and damned in hell, eternal death eternal separation from God, Romans 1:32; Revelation 2:11; 4) death in the widest sense, all miseries arising from sin, physical death as the loss of a life consecrated to God, Romans 5:12; 6:21; 5:14,17,21. For our purpose, it must be remembered that Thanatos in the New Testament signifies physical death which ends a person's life here on earth, and eternal death, the state of the damned in hell. Thus from this it would seem that Thanatos is also along with Hades an equivalent of Sheol. Is this true? Is Thanatos an equivalent of Sheol in the New Testament as well as Hades?

In the Septuagint the word Thanatos is used to translate the Hebrew words  $\text{מָוֶת}$ ,  $\text{מָוֶת}$ ,  $\text{מָוֶת}$ ,  $\text{מָוֶת}$ ,  $\text{מָוֶת}$ ,  $\text{מָוֶת}$ ,  $\text{מָוֶת}$ , and  $\text{מָוֶת}$ .<sup>48</sup> Thus it is apparent that the Septuagint uses the word Thanatos to translate a wide variety of Hebrew words among which is included the word Sheol. However, by far the greatest number of times that the Septuagint uses the word Thanatos it is to translate the words Maweth,  $\text{מָוֶת}$  and

<sup>48</sup>Hatch, op. cit., pp. 623-5.

Mouth, 770 . While it does use Thanatos to translate Sheol a few times, the word that the Septuagint uses by far the most times to translate Sheol is the word Hades.<sup>49</sup> Thus for the translators of the Septuagint the word Thanatos was not the word they used to translate Sheol but rather Hades.

While it is true that the New Testament uses the word Thanatos to translate Sheol, 1 Corinthians 15:55, and uses it to refer to the damned in hell, nevertheless the New Testament does not use Thanatos as an equivalent of Sheol. For this purpose, as has been shown, the word Hades is used. Thanatos is used in the New Testament to refer to the state and condition of the damned in hell and not to the abode or place as Hades and Sheol do. The same can be said for Thanatos in referring to death. Thanatos refers more to the event of dying while Hades and Sheol refer more to the place of the dead, the grave in the wider sense as the realm of the dead. Of course the words Thanatos and Hades sometimes are used in almost the same meaning, and this is not to be denied. But to maintain that Thanatos is an equivalent of Sheol as Hades is an opinion that can not be held or proved.

Of the words in the New Testament that are possible equivalents of Sheol none is the equivalent of Sheol as Hades is, though Thanatos does come close in some instances. And so it can rightfully be maintained that in the New Testament

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

Hades is the equivalent of Sheol; as has been shown, in all of its occurrences in the New Testament it denotes the same concept or concepts as Sheol.

#### TESTAMENT WORDS FOR HELL

The relationship between the words in the New Testament which have the meaning or refer to the realm of the damned, hell, or to eternal death is one of much interest. A study of all of these words would bring out a clear picture of hell and eternal death, a picture that the New Testament most assuredly brings out. This study will not here be undertaken; it is not the purpose of this paper. However, no study of the word Hades would be complete without a comparison between it and the other New Testament words which are used to portray the picture of hell and eternal death. This chapter will be a very brief summary of such a comparison.

Hades in the New Testament, as has been shown in this study, has two meanings and uses: the realm of the dead and the realm of the damned. It has also been shown how and possibly why Hades has this double meaning and use in the New Testament: to show the close relationship between physical death and eternal death, between the realm of the good and the realm of the damned. And so when the whole picture of hell and eternal death is viewed Hades represents eternal death, the eternal state of being cut off and separated from

## CHAPTER V

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HADES AND THE OTHER NEW TESTAMENT WORDS FOR HELL

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God. That is, Hades brings forth the picture of the place where this eternal separation takes place.

While Hades represents the abode where the eternal separation from God takes place, that is, this aspect of hell, Gehenna represents and pictures the physical suffering aspect of hell. That is, Gehenna stresses the fact that there is physical pain and anguish in hell, this pain being caused by fire.

Abussos on the other hand refers to hell as the abode of Satan and the evil angels and spirits. Abussos speaks of hell as the home for Satan and all of his forces, as a home base from which Satan goes out to attack mankind. This home of Satan Abussos pictures as a deep pit or abyss.

Kataxthonios does not specifically refer to hell but rather to anything under the earth. In the eyes of the New Testament writers there were three divisions in the universe: heaven, earth, and Kataxthonios, Philippians 2:10. Kataxthonios thus represents anything under the earth, which includes the realm of the dead and hell. So then, in the whole picture of hell, it can be said that Kataxthonios pictures and represents hell as being under the earth.

Tartaros in its use in the New Testament is almost synonymous to Abussos, for it too pictures hell as the abode of Satan and his evil spirits. However, Tartaros does add this one thing to this whole picture of hell. While Abussos pictures the home of Satan as a deep subterranean pit or



abyss, Tartaros pictures the home and abode of Satan as a place full of fire continually burning.

Thanatos refers to the state and condition of the damned in hell, that is, it refers to the eternal death aspect of hell, to the state of being eternally cut off and separated from God. It is difficult to distinguish between Hades and Thanatos when they are both used to refer to eternal death, hell. However, this usually can be maintained. Hades refers more to the place or abode where this eternal death takes place while Thanatos refers more to the state of eternal death. Of course in the end there is really no difference. They both refer to eternal death.

Thus while the New Testament uses different words for the concepts of hell and eternal death, it does not use each word to draw a picture independent of the others. Though each word has its own particular connotation concerning hell and eternal death, yet when they are all brought together, they form one complete picture with each word becoming a part of this whole portrayal. They do not clash and contradict each other. Rather they complement each other; each has its own facet to contribute to the picture of hell and eternal death. In this picture of hell and eternal death no one word abrogates or displaces another. For instance, Hades is

not displaced by Gehenna as Gruber<sup>1</sup> seems to think it will be on Judgment day, that is, Hades being the abode of the wicked from death until the resurrection and then Gehenna becoming the abode of the damned in the place of Hades.

This is not the case. No one word can be displaced by another without marring the entire picture that the New Testament presents of hell and eternal death.

From this very brief summary of the relation between the New Testament words which refer to the realm of the damned it can be seen that the New Testament does present a real and concise picture of hell and eternal death. Of such a picture Hades is but a part.

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<sup>1</sup>L. Gruber, What after Death (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1925), p. 22.

## CHAPTER VI

### DO SHEOL AND HADES PRESENT THE SAME PICTURE

As this paper has thus pointed out, Hades is the New Testament equivalent of Sheol. Since they are equivalents, they should present the same picture. Is this true? Does Hades present the same picture of the realm of the dead and the realm of the damned as does Sheol? This will be briefly discussed in this chapter.

#### The Relationship between Sheol and Hades

Since little is known of the historical background of the word Sheol, it is difficult to compare the two words from this viewpoint. However, there are some points that can be shown and brought out when the backgrounds of each word are considered with respect to each other. The background of each word has already been given. This will not be repeated; here only the differences will be pointed out. First, it can be noticed that the etymology of each word is different: Hades from its etymology has the meaning, "not to be seen," a place where there is nothing but darkness; Sheol from its etymology has the meaning, "a hollow," a place which is an immense abyss or hole in the ground. Hades at first was used for the mythological god of the underworld, Pluto. Sheol on the other hand was never used either for

any god of the heathen peoples surrounding the Hebrews or for Jehovah. Whether the word Sheol was ever used before the time of the Hebrews to designate a god of the underworld is not known. The first time that Sheol appears in writing, Genesis 37:35, it designates the realm of the dead, the world beyond life here on earth with no distinction being made between the abode or state of the righteous from that of the unrighteous.

Thus it can be seen that the background of each word is different and that the source, as far as can be determined, of each word is also different. The fact that Sheol is a Hebrew word and that Hades is a Greek word also serves to point out the different backgrounds of each word. As far as can be determined, Sheol was not a loan word. The Jews did not borrow it nor its concept from the peoples surrounding them. And so the writers of the Old Testament used Sheol as they found it to be used among their contemporary people; they did not change it or alter its concept and meaning to fit their need. The writers of the New Testament on the other hand faced a different situation in their use of the word Hades. The word that they used was a loan word from the pagan-Greek world. And so they had to change its concept and meaning to fit their need, to fit it to the use of an equivalent of Sheol. For Sheol in its historical setting, that is, as it was used among the Jews of the Old Testament era, was not an equivalent of Hades as it was used among the

pagan Greeks. And although the Jews at the time of our Lord used Sheol and Hades for the same concept, they used them for a perverted concept of the original significance of the Old Testament Sheol. It was not until the writers of the New Testament used Hades that it was used as a true equivalent of Sheol in the Old Testament. For the writers of the New Testament when they used Hades changed it to fit the Old Testament concept of Sheol - the Jews on the other hand had changed the concept of Sheol to fit the pagan-Greek concept of the underworld in their use of Hades.

So it can be seen from this brief sketch that the relationship between Sheol and Hades was quite divergent as we see it from the point of view of the New Testament writers and look back into the history and use of each word.

#### The Use of the Word Hades in the Septuagint

Did the translators of the Septuagint view Hades as a true equivalent of Sheol as did the writers of the New Testament? That is, did the translators of the Septuagint view Hades as an equivalent of Sheol or Sheol as an equivalent of Hades - did they use Hades after they had changed the Old Testament view of Sheol into the pagan-Greek view of the underworld, or did they change Hades to fit the Old Testament concept of Sheol as the New Testament writers did? This question can not be answered so as to give a complete and final answer. However, after it has been seen how the

Septuagint uses the word Hades a conclusion can be arrived at.

The Septuagint uses the word Hades ninety-nine times - really seventy-two times since twenty-seven of the occurrences of Hades appear in the apocryphal books.<sup>1</sup> The Septuagint

uses Hades to translate six different words:  $\eta \dot{\iota} \eta$ .

$\eta \dot{\iota} \eta$ ,  $\eta \dot{\iota} \eta$ ,  $\eta \dot{\iota} \eta$ ,  $\eta \dot{\iota} \eta \zeta$ , and  $\eta \dot{\iota} \eta$ .<sup>2</sup>

From this it would seem that the Septuagint looks upon the word Hades as a word covering a number of meanings and that it was not wholly an equivalent of Sheol.

However, when the use of the word of Hades in the Septuagint is examined a little closer, it can be seen that this is not true. The Septuagint uses the word Hades sixty-one times out of the seventy-two times that it occurs to translate the

word Sheol; of the remaining eleven times that it uses the word Hades it uses Hades twice to translate  $\eta \dot{\iota} \eta$ , twice

to translate  $\eta \dot{\iota} \eta$ , three times to translate  $\eta \dot{\iota} \eta$ ,

once to translate  $\eta \dot{\iota} \eta$ , once to translate  $\eta \dot{\iota} \eta \zeta$ ,

and twice it uses Hades where there is no Hebrew word for it.<sup>3</sup>

Of the five words besides Sheol that the Septuagint translates with Hades, three are sometimes used as synonyms of

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<sup>1</sup>Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, A Concordance To The Septuagint And The Other Greek Versions Of The Old Testament (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1892), p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Sheol. The Septuagint uses two other words to translate Sheol, as shown above, *θάνατος* and *Αόρατος*.<sup>4</sup> However, these instances are so few in number that they can hardly be classified as words that the Septuagint uses to translate the word Sheol.

Thus as can be seen from this brief review, the Septuagint translators consistently used the word Hades to translate the Old Testament word Sheol, and that the Septuagint translators did consider Hades an equivalent of Sheol. As to the question whether the Septuagint translators viewed the concept of the underworld as the pagan Greeks viewed it or as Sheol in the Old Testament pictured it, it is best to take the view that they looked upon Hades as being an equivalent of Sheol, that is, that the Septuagint translators remained true to the Old Testament conception of Sheol as the New Testament writers did and did not cling to the pagan-Greek conception of the underworld when they used the word Hades.

#### The Unity of Sheol and Hades - The Picture that Sheol and Hades Present

Are Sheol and Hades exact equivalents; is Hades an exact equivalent of Sheol? From the evidence that has been

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<sup>4</sup>Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae Atque Chaldaicae (Lipsiae: Viet et Comp., 1846), II, 1136.

gathered from this study of these two words it can be said that Hades is an exact equivalent of Sheol. The disadvantage that is faced in a problem or question like this is the fact that Hades is used in the New Testament only one-sixth of the number of times that Sheol is used in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, enough material can be gathered from the occurrences of Hades in the New Testament to say that it is an exact equivalent of Sheol, that is to say, that Hades as it is used in the New Testament does not go beyond the use and meaning of Sheol as it is used in the Old Testament and that the meanings of Hades in the New Testament are the same meanings of Sheol in the Old Testament.

Hades in the New Testament and Sheol in the Old Testament do present the same picture of the realm of the dead and of the realm of the damned. The realm of the dead, the grave, is described by both Hades and Sheol as a place where all men go at death, Revelation 6:7-8, Isaiah 38:10; and there will be a resurrection from the realm of the dead, Revelation 20:13-14, Psalm 16:10. Of course there are certain particulars of the realm of the dead that Sheol speaks about of which Hades says nothing and also things that Hades mentions about which Sheol says nothing. But these are not contradictions but rather additional points which go to make the picture of the realm of the dead as presented by Scripture more complete. In connection with Hades for instance we are told that the realm of the dead will be destroyed on



the Day of Judgment, Revelation 20:13-14, while in connection with Sheol we are given the information that there is no life in the realm of the dead, Ecclesiastes 9:10. Concerning the realm of the damned both Hades and Sheol picture it as a place of retribution for the wicked in the after-life, Luke 16:19-31, Psalm 55:16; and that it is the exact opposite of heaven, Matthew 11:23, Job 11:8, etc. Here again both Hades and Sheol each add particulars which the other does not, as brought out above.

The real unity of the two words Sheol and Hades lies in the fact that they both point out the horribleness of the realm of the damned in that it is eternal death, an eternal separation from God. For both Sheol and Hades give the picture that as physical death cuts one off from the land of the living, so eternal death, the realm of the damned, cuts off the wicked from God forever. And that is the real contribution that Hades and Sheol make and give to the picture of hell that the Bible presents. All the other words used in the Scriptures to picture hell and aspects of it all speak about the physical torture endured there or some other aspect of it. Hades and Sheol are the only words used in Scripture which portray and picture what hell really is. And that is the picture which tells us that hell is a place where the wicked are forever cut off from God. Now there are a few other words in the Scriptures which also portray hell as eternal death, eternally being cut off from God, Thanatos

for instance. However, when these words are used this way to portray hell as eternal death, they are really being used as synonyms for Sheol and Hades, for these words in and of themselves do not picture hell as eternal death. Hades and Sheol are the only words in Scripture which portray hell as being eternally cut off from God, as eternal death. In this possibly lies the reason why these two words, Sheol and Hades, are sometimes used to mean and refer to physical death, for physical death in the Scriptures is a picture and symbol of eternal death. Thus if Hades and Sheol were lacking from the Scriptures, then the real aspect of hell would be lost. This then indeed is the true picture that Sheol and Hades present, and this is the true unity of these two words which makes them exact equivalents, and that is, to repeat, that hell is eternal death, eternally being cut off from God. To say that Sheol and Hades refer only to the realm of the dead or to the after-life in general is to lose the whole significance of the two words in the Scriptures. For physical death is of importance for consideration only if it is to symbolize eternal death in hell. To restrict the meaning and use of Sheol and Hades to the realm of the dead is to rob them of their full use in Scriptures, namely to point to and picture eternal death.

The chief study that would have to be traced up to gain a description of eternal death is a study of the word Abvatos. The real part then that the words Sheol and

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

Sheol and Hades are the two words that Scripture uses to portray hell as the place of eternal death, as the place where the wicked are forever cut off from God and face nothing but God's wrath. The other words in Scripture which are used to portray hell are used to describe hell as a place of physical torment and a place of fire and pain. However, this is not the real aspect and meaning of hell. The real meaning of hell is to be forever cut off from God. This meaning is brought out by the two words of Sheol and Hades.

As stated in the introduction of this paper, the study of the two words Sheol and Hades is only a part of the whole study of the doctrine or teaching of eternal death, the lot of the wicked and damned in the after-life. The part that a study of the two words Sheol and Hades plays in this whole teaching of eternal death is to show that hell, the place of the damned in the after-life, is a place where eternal death takes place, that is, to show that hell is eternal death. Just exactly what eternal death is, what is all involved in being eternally cut off from God, these words do not say. The chief study that would have to be taken up to gain a description of eternal death is a study of the word Thanatos, *θάνατος*. The real part then that the words Sheol and

Hades play in this concept and teaching of the lot of the wicked in the after-life is that they identify hell and eternal death. If it were not for these two words, then hell and eternal death would be pictured separately from each other. But Sheol and Hades very emphatically bring out the fact that hell and eternal death are not something separate but rather that they are the same thing. For a picture of hell one has to turn to the words Gehenna, Tartaros, etc. For a picture of eternal death one has to turn to Thanatos. But the fact that these two concepts, hell and eternal death, are really the same thing is alone brought out by Sheol and Hades. This then is the part that Sheol and Hades play in the whole concept of hell and eternal death, to show that hell and eternal death are the same thing and that hell really is eternally being cut off from God. As Mayer so aptly says:

The description of hell as a place of fire and brimstone is apt to minimize the real meaning of hell. Hell in its real essence is to see the angry face of God through all eternity and to experience in one's conscience the guilt and responsibility for having revolted against the holy and righteous God.<sup>1</sup>

That hell is such a place is brought out by the words Sheol and Hades.

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<sup>1</sup>F. E. Mayer, "Human Will in Bondage and Freedom," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXII (October, 1951), 744.

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