

DID CHRIST BURN IN HELL?

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PREFACE

REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest**: Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20th century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation—abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

Note: Definitions of references pulled from WikipediA, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.

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DID CHRIST BURN IN HELL TO SAVE US?

Inasmuch as men have begun to teach things along the lines of redemption that do not appear to us to be in accord with basic truths, it seemed good to us, because of the urging of friends, to set forth what we feel the scriptures teach about these things.

We have accepted the fact that salvation is entirely by the death and resurrection of Christ. There are those who teach that salvation is by cremation, that is, that Christ went to hell and had to burn to death and also be born again before our salvation could be complete. Our answer is, "What saith the scriptures?"

STATEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE

1. Christ died as a sinner, and sinners go to a burning hell. Therefore, Christ went to a burning hell.
2. Christ had to die twice to answer the type of the 2 goats of Leviticus 16.
3. The second death He died was a death in hell.
4. Christ, having burned to death in hell, had to be born again.
5. Christ wrestled with Satan in hell for the keys of hell and death.

WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE TEACH?

Let us see what the scriptures teach about the place called hell. This will not be an exhaustive statement.

The word rendered "*hell*" in the Old Testament occurs 65 times: It is rendered "*grave*" 31 times, as "*hell*" 31 times, and 3 times it is translated "*pit*." The word does not occur until Genesis 37:35, where it is rendered "*grave*." The word *hell* occurs first in our English Bibles in Deuteronomy 32:22. In Numbers 16:30, the same Hebrew word, *SHEOL*, is rendered "*pit*." This Hebrew word is never used in the possessive or in the plural. The word for *grave* is used in both senses.

The teaching of the scripture is that hell is in 2 compartments:

- In Deuteronomy 32:22, we read of "*the lowest hell*." This was and is, evidently, the abode of the wicked.
- The other part is where Jesus took the dead thief, and Jesus called it "*paradise*": "*And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in PARADISE*" [Luk.23:43].
- In Matthew 12:40, Jesus had said of Himself that the Son of man would be 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth.

Note the meanings of the Hebrew word *SHEOL*:

- The world of the dead, as if a subterranean retreat ([STRONG'S](#)).
- A subterranean place full of thick darkness where the shades (spirits) of the dead are gathered together (from [GESENIUS](#)). He states further that sheol is derived from the idea of asking for or demanding all without distinction.
- Other Scriptures reveal that it is a place of sorrow and fire. For example, see Luke 16:23-24 and Psalm 18:5.

STATEMENT: CHRIST WENT TO A BURNING HELL

The advocates of the doctrine which we are considering teach that Christ burned to death in that place (sheol). It will be noted that the fires of hell were never designed to destroy in the sense of bringing to nothing, but just to torment.

Also, where is there a text teaching that the righteous ever went to a burning hell? Again, where is there a text to teach that a man, once assigned to a burning hell, ever escaped or was permitted to leave that abode?

I have before me, in a magazine, a sermon which states that “no spirit ever went to hell.” The writer claims that Jesus’ soul burned in hell. If no spirits ever went to hell, what about the angels of 2 Peter 2:4 and of Jude 1:6, and the (seemingly) demons that come out of the Bottomless Pit of Revelation 9:2-3? Those certainly are spirits. It is true that the word in 2 Peter 2:4 is not the usual word for “*hell*”, that is, the Greek word **HADES**, but is **TARTARUS**—we believe it refers to the same place.

Those who teach this claim that, since Jesus died as a sinner He had to be born again. Be it remembered that He was holy before coming to the world. He was holy all His life. He was that “*holy thing*” born of Mary [Luk.1:35]. He was “*the holy child Jesus*” [Act.4:27, 30]. He remained holy even when being made sin for us.

- If He had to be born again, why?
- If He had to be born again, who died for Him?

Let us look at His holiness as portrayed by a type.

- In Leviticus 6:25-29, we read of The Law of the Sin Offering. We read that the Sin Offering was “*most holy*.” Note Leviticus 6:29: “*All the males among the priests shall eat thereof: it is most holy.*”
- There was a most holy place [Exo.26:33-34].
- Israel had an Altar of Burnt Offering; it was most holy [Exo.29:37]. One had to be holy to touch it.
- Also, the Altar of Incense was most holy [Exo.30:10].

- All the furniture of the Tabernacle was to be most holy [Exo.30:29]. Anyone touching the furniture had to be holy.
- The Sin Offering as slain, that is, as dead, was considered so holy that anyone touching it had to be holy. Any garment on which the blood was sprinkled had to be washed in the holy place. The earthen vessel in which it was cooked had to be broken, and a metal vessel had to be scoured and rinsed. Only the priests could eat of it, and it had to be eaten in the holy place [Lev.6:26-29]. That was only a type, but a type pointed to the reality. Christ was the real sin offering. Criminals could be thrown on the trash heap, but not Christ. He made His grave with the rich, and tender hands took His body from the cross, wound it in linen and spices, and gave Him an excellent burial. He was God's sin offering, most holy.

This should give the lie to another matter which has been taught; that in order for His precious body to be so deeply marred as is described in Isaiah 52:14, God let the demons loose on His body in the tomb. What would have been accomplished by that, and what could they have done? No, Christ had done what was necessary, and the work was finished.

If Christ had to burn to death in hell, it would be something of the utmost significance, and yet it is never stated by any of the New Testament writers that Christ burned in hell. Peter quoted David as saying, "*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell*" [Act.2:27]. This was the experience of all the Old Testament saints except Enoch and Elijah. They all went to the heart of the earth, or into upper sheol. It will be noted that nothing is said of a burning hell. Again, Romans 10:7 and Ephesians 4:9 prove that **Jesus went to the heart of the earth**. Granted that He did, is anything said of an experience in a burning hell?

On Ephesians 4:8, Williams gives, "*When He ascended up on high He led a host of captives.*" This gives in part why Jesus went to the heart of the earth. He had predicted that He would [Mat.12:40]. Here the reason for His going was to bring out God's believing people. That abode was prepared of God for those who believed Him before the 1st Coming of Christ.

So let us look at the word rendered "*paradise*" in Luke 23:43. God prepared a garden for Adam and Eve, which we usually call **paradise**. Here in Luke, paradise was the place to which Jesus went after His death. Paradise is now in heaven [2Co.12:4, Rev.2:7]. See where the tree of life is [Rev.22:2]. The word rendered "*paradise*" in Luke 23:43 means, according to Strong's, "a park, an Eden." From Thayer's Lexicon I glean the following:

"A grand enclosure or preserve, a park, shady and well-watered, grove, pleasure ground, that part of Sheol which was thought by the Jews to be the abode of the souls of the righteous until the resurrection."

That description does not sound like a burning hell.

What is the record of Jesus' activities in those 3 days in the heart of the earth? Let us limit ourselves to what the Scriptures teach. The only recorded instances are that He was to be in paradise, and He is said to have preached to the spirits in prison:

*"By which also he went and **PREACHED** unto the spirits in prison." [1Pe.3:19]*

The word rendered **preached** in the above text means "to herald, as a public crier, to be a herald, to officiate as a herald." It always is with a suggestion of formality, gravity, and authority which must be listened to and obeyed. Just why Jesus is said to have spoken to one group only in the above text is another subject, but He did take a message of deliverance to upper sheol, and this is the reason why He went there—this was His activity there. Nothing about burning.

STATEMENT: CHRIST DIED TWICE [LEV. 16, THE 2 GOATS]

Before me is an article that states that **Christ had to die twice** to answer to the 2 goats of Leviticus 16:

- One of whose blood was taken into the holy place, and
- one let go into the wilderness as a scapegoat.

According to the article, Christ's second death was to be a death in hell in order to fulfill the death of the scapegoat.

The idea of His second death is based on a text in Isaiah 53:9, where the word **death** is an intensive plural: "*And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his **DEATH**; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*" The death of Jesus was so violent in so many ways that like Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:23, He was "*in deaths oft.*" "*I die daily*" [1Co.15:31b].

"As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." [Rom.8:36]

"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." [2Co.1:8-9]

Does that mean that Paul actually died every day? No. Neither does Isaiah 53:9 mean that Christ died twice.

All the places where we read of the scapegoat are in Leviticus 16. The scapegoat is never said to die, and death is never mentioned in connection with him. He was a goat of departure, but not of death. One writer said he was let go to die of hunger, loneliness, and thirst, the vultures tearing the flesh away from the dying body. That does not sound like our God, to torment a creature and starve it to death. Let us note what they actually did with the 2nd goat.

- The scapegoat was let go "*into the wilderness*" [Lev.16:10, 22].
- Aaron did not take the goat there, but sent him by "*the hand of a fit man*" [Lev.16:21].

- The goat was said to bear their iniquities to “*a land not inhabited*” [Lev.16:22]. If a man could take the goat into such a place, survive, and return, be sure that the goat could do more. We doubt if there is a place in Palestine where a goat could not find a way to survive.

The word rendered *wilderness* also means “*a pasture, an open field where cattle are driven*” (*STRONG’S*). Also, “*an uninhabited plain country fit for feeding flocks*” (*GESENIUS*); not desert, a pasture.

Note the word translated “*pasture*” in Joel 2:22. So, the death of the scapegoat is never referred to by the Lord. In a figurative sense, it bore away the sins of Israel.

The only thing in the Bible called a “*second death*” is the lake of fire [Rev.2:11, Rev.20:14]. Certainly Christ never entered there.

Jesus and Paul both experienced many things that were akin to death and brought them near death, but they did not die but once (see Col.1:24; Mar.14:33-34). I doubt if any other man could have stood up under Jesus’ grief in the garden. Was this not like death?

Other texts that have been used are found in the Psalms; for example, Psalm 18:5 where we read “*the sorrows of hell*”; this same phrase is used in 2 Samuel 22:6. Both statements are applied, by the advocates of this doctrine, to Christ. In one instance, the word rendered *sorrows* means “*a rope, a noose, a throe*.” It speaks of the limitations the writer found himself in. In Psalm 116:3 “*The pains of hell*” means “*something tight*”; figuratively, “*trouble*.” In all our studies, we need to learn and to make a difference when something is spoken in figurative or poetical language.

- Note Psalm 35:10. Bones do not talk. Was it really the sorrows of hell that gripped the psalmist?
- Jonah 2:2, “*Out of the belly of hell I cried*.” Was Jonah in hell?

To both questions we respond, “No, it is just figurative language.”

STATEMENT: CHRIST HAD TO BE BORN AGAIN

Another statement is that *Christ had to be born again*. If so, who died for Him? Who redeemed Him? Jesus taught that men should repent. He never repented. He taught men to be saved. He never had to be saved in the sense that we are saved.

The Bible teaches that He was the firstborn from the dead [Rev.1:5]; that He is the firstborn of all creation or of every creature [Col.1:15]. This speaks more of a position than of an experience. He was the firstborn of Mary [Mat.1:25]. He is God’s only begotten Son [Joh.3:16]. But where does the Bible state that He was born again in hell, or that He had to be born again as we are, because of bearing our sins in His body? No. He was ever the Holy Son of God from eternity.

STATEMENT: CHRIST OVERCAME SATAN IN HELL

The same article states that **Christ overcame Satan in his dark domain** and took from him the keys of hell and the grave. I challenge anyone to prove that Satan ever had the keys of hell or the grave. In fact, I know of no text that teaches that Satan has ever been in hell. In Revelation 9:1, a key to the bottomless pit will be given to the fallen star—which star we believe to be Satan. He not only is not in hell, he can't even open its door until he is given a key. No, Christ is never said to have wrestled with Satan over anything. He completely defeated Satan with a few quotations from the Bible when He was tempted in the wilderness.

STATEMENT: CHRIST'S SOUL— AN OFFERING FOR SIN

Another point that is made much of is the fact that In Isaiah 53:10-12 it is taught that **Christ's soul was made an offering for sin**. One writer stated that the "lordly, high priestly spirit of Christ carried the warm life blood of Jesus into heaven's holy of holies." Where in the entire Bible does anyone find such language as "*the lordly, high priestly spirit of Christ*"?

Then, this same writer said, the high priestly spirit returned and led the scapegoat down to hell (this, in spite of having said that spirits never go to hell.).

HEED SOUND WORDS

We do well to give heed to the form of sounds words [2Ti.1:13]. No such words as the above are found in the Bible. The writer speaks of the dying body and the scapegoat soul as being laden with humanity's sins. Christ took our sins in His body on the tree, not in hell.

Let us look at the word rendered **soul** in Isaiah 53:12: "*because he hath poured out his **SOUL** unto death.*" The word rendered "*soul*" is frequently translated "*life*." Note...

- "*The **LIFE** is in the blood*" [Lev.17:11]
- The same word is 3 times rendered "*life*" in Leviticus 17:14.

Then, note other uses of the word rendered "*soul*."

- "*The **LIFE** of man*" [Gen.9:5].
- "*For the tree of the field is man's **LIFE***" [Deu.20:19]. Certainly this does not speak of that part of man that is distinct from his body.
- "*Adventured his **LIFE***" [Jdg.9:17].
- "*Thou lose thy **LIFE***" [Jdg.18:25].
- "*If thou save not thy **LIFE** tonight*" [1Sa.19:11].

- “Saul was come out to seek his *LIFE*” [1Sa.23:15].

It is clear from the above Scripture texts that the word rendered *soul* in Isaiah 53, many times refers to “*the whole man*” or “*the body*.” In fact, the same word is translated “*body*” in the following texts: Lev.21:11, Num.6:6, Num.9:6-7, Num.9:10, Num.19:11, Num.19:13, Num.19:16. However, in Job 14:22, it would seem that the word “*soul*” means “*something apart from the body*.”

The word *soul* is rendered so very many ways in our version, that they are too numerous to go into. In particular passages it certainly just speaks of the person [Pro.6:30, Pro.10:3, Deu.12:20-21; also see 1Pe.3:20]. We feel that the passages in Isaiah 53 have the same meaning. God delivered up His Son for us all [Rom.8:32, Joh.3:16]. Who could scripturally say that part of Him died at one place, and part at another?

Did His suffering save us? No one could experience what Jesus did and not suffer. The Scriptures, such as Psalm 22, Psalm 69, and Isaiah 53, show clearly that Jesus went through all that human nature could possibly go through, not only of the physical torments that human cruelty could heap on Him, but that He suffered the wrath of God against sin. However, the Bible never states that His suffering saves us.

THE SOURCE OF OUR SALVATION

What does the Bible teach about the source of our salvation, purchase wise? Let us see what the Scriptures say.

One man shed His blood for the race. The Bible teaches that His blood was holy [Heb.10:29]. We rightly sing, “*There is power in the blood*.” The blood was holy when He was made sin for us. It was holy and is still counted holy after all these years. That blood is called the blood of God [Act.20:28].

It was the shed blood and blood only that was sprinkled on the door posts that saved Israel from the destroyer [Exo.12:13]. God said, “*When I see the blood, I will pass over you*.” “*The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls*” [Lev.17:11]. Then note the following, and I will not quote the texts, just cite their locations:

- Remission of sins by His blood [Mat.26:28].
- The Church purchased by His own blood [Act.20:28].
- Propitiation through faith in His blood [Rom.3:25].
- Washed from our sin in His blood [Rev.1:5; see Rev.7:14].
- Cleansed by His blood [1Jo.1:7].
- Redemption by His blood [Eph.1:7; see Rev.5:9].
- Sanctified by His blood [Heb.13:12].

- Purged by His blood [Heb.9:14].
- Boldness to enter the holiest by His blood [Heb.10:19]. This is into the immediate presence of God.
- The new covenant by and in His blood [1Co.11:25, Heb.10:29].
- Justified by His blood [Rom.5:9].
- Peace through His blood [Col.1:20].
- Made nigh by His blood [Eph.2:13].
- Overcomers by the word of their testimony and the blood of the Lamb [Rev.12:11].

What more is there to be had than that which is provided by the blood?

Man's guilt was infinite. He needed an infinite sacrifice. Jesus Christ was infinite, as Jehovah. That is, He is and was Jehovah. When He hung on the cross, He said "*It is finished.*" Nothing else could be added to that phase of His work. Paul said, "*Without the shedding of blood there is no remission*" [Heb.9:22]. However, with the shedding of blood, there is complete remission.

Question:

- Why did Paul or Peter or John never speak of Christ's burning in hell?
- Why did Luke not write of it?
- Why is James silent on such a great topic as Jesus burning in hell?

Simply because they realized that His blood was sufficient. There was no need to speak of what never occurred and was not necessary for our salvation.

If Jesus died on the cross, then died in hell, was one member of the deity dead? That is, had He ceased to exist? I agree with C. E. Foster's answer to this question, "*It is absurd!*"

We are near the end of the Grace Age. The devil would like to defile us with strange doctrines. We may feel that we glorify Christ by saying such things about Him, and we may feel that we exalt His love more. But when we go beyond the Scriptures, we do not glorify Christ.

Let us limit our knowledge of spiritual things to the Word of God.

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