

The Word of Truth Ministry Presents

Special Full Length Studies

#SS16

Sheol, Hades and Destruction

Otis Q. Sellers, Bible Teacher

The Word of God makes a clear distinction between knowledge and accurate knowledge. The first is represented by the Greek word *gnosis*, the second by the Greek word *epignosis*. The latter word could be translated full knowledge, exact knowledge, clear knowledge or accurate knowledge. It is possible that all these ideas are contained in the word *epignosis*. Full, exact, clear and accurate knowledge comes as the result of giving earnest heed to the things already known. It is to such knowledge that we are exhorted to go on in the Word of God.

Those who know a truth may rejoice in it for a season; those who go on to full knowledge will rejoice in the truth forever. Clear, accurate, exact and full knowledge is sure to have a powerful influence upon those who enter into it.

No sympathy or fellowship can be extended to those whose desire is only for a rough working knowledge of the Bible – a verse here and there to support their beliefs. God has spoken, and it is the supreme duty of all who fear him to discover and to know accurately just what He has said. A God given desire for accurate and full knowledge does not send us to the heavy theological tomes wherein man has set forth his reasonings about the things of God. It sends us to the living and life giving Word to discover there the truth that has been set forth by inspiration of God.

In the first pamphlet in this series, under title of *What is the Soul*, an earnest attempt was made to produce a help on that subject that would make accurate and full knowledge possible for all who were willing to do the work that is required of those who would enter into the truth of God. My present task is to do the same with *Sheol and Hades*, also to present the truth of *Destruction* because of its relationship to the main subject.

Realizing fully the harmful tendency of many believers to lean entirely upon the teachings of others, I have labored with great care to keep these studies from becoming such a snare. Criticism has been directed at my previous effort because only the tools were supplied. Some felt that I should have done the work and presented the finished product. One reviewer stated that the work was almost entirely analysis without synthesis. The gravity of these subjects, and the strong and fixed prejudices that exist concerning them, has caused me to try to present the message in such a way that it cannot be believed or rejected simply from a casual reading. These pamphlets are written only for those who desire to study and investigate the subject; therefore, they present only such helps as will lead those who study to find the truth for themselves. I have experienced the disappointment that comes from seeing men rashly adopt positions on scriptural subjects without the deep conviction that comes from examining the evidence. Such men never stand in the day of trial, and there is no man who will be tried more severely than the man who adopts a position contrary to the orthodox view of human destiny.

The Words of God

True study of the Word of God demands a study of the words which God has used. God's Word is made up of words given by the Holy Spirit. In one way, these words are like coins. We place upon coins a certain value, and business could not be carried on apart from agreement between buyer and seller as to the value of the coins or notes exchanged. Even so it is with the *words* of God. He has given us a revelation of truth in *words* and upon each one of His words He has placed a certain value. It is our duty to discover the exact value or meaning of the words that God has used. We must never be guilty of cheapening or inflating their value. That is, we must never make a word mean either more or less than God intended it should mean. How is this to be done? How is the exact value or meaning of His words to be discovered? By use of an illustration, I will try to set forth the true method of determining the value that God has placed upon His words.

In the year 1927, when Mr. Calvin Coolidge was President of the United States, he called the newspaper men into his study and gave to each one a slip of paper on which was written these words: "I do not choose to run for President in 1928." Up to that time it had seemed certain that his party would renominate him, and this had caused much discussion and controversy as it involved the third term issue. Mr. Coolidge's announcement was supposed to settle all this, but it settled nothing for the whole matter flared up anew with greater intensity than ever before. The burning question concerned just what he meant by the words "do not choose." What was the strength of the word "choose"? Did he mean by this word that he would not run? Did he mean

that it was not his choice, but that he would be a candidate if his party chose him? What he had said was simple and plain, but what he meant was debated and discussed everywhere and the taciturn Mr. Coolidge refused to enlarge upon his statement. Public interest in the matter became so great that newspaper men tried many devices in order to discover just what he meant by the word "choose."

One reporter determined to consult an authority and he selected as an authority the school teacher who had taught Mr. Coolidge when he was a boy in grammar school. It was her opinion that when Mr. Coolidge used the word *choose* he meant that it was not his choice, but that it did not mean an absolute refusal. She may have been prejudiced by her desire to see her former pupil chosen as a candidate again.

Another reporter determined to go through all of Mr. Coolidge's recorded speeches, search out all occurrences of the word *choose*, and see if, in this way, he could find the meaning of the word as Mr. Coolidge used it. After a careful search of his recorded utterances as State Senator, Lieutenant-Governor, Vice-President, and President, the reporter discovered a number of places where he had used the word *choose*, and in these places the meaning was not open to question. As a result he announced that, if Mr. Coolidge used his words consistently, when he said, "I do not choose," it was the same as if he had said, "I will not." Time soon proved that his method had established the true value of Mr. Coolidge's words.

By this same method, the student of the Word of God can find the true value of the words that God has used. God uses His Words with care. He deals them out by weight and measure, and once He has fixed a value upon them we can rest assured that He will not depreciate or inflate that value.

At the same time we recognize that God uses some words in a flexible manner. Also, that some words have a secondary and derived meaning, but the value or meaning of such words is always fixed by the context. Again, we recognize that all strong words in every language are often used figuratively. This is because their established value and strength permits them to be used in a figurative sense. For example: the word *death* in English has a strong and fixed value. The criminal well knows what it means when the judge sentences him to death. The very strength of this word permits it to be used in a figurative manner. Therefore, in a single issue of the daily newspaper we find these three statements.

"Failure to observe a stop sign brought death to two unidentified persons last night."
"The Court of Inquiry found that an open induction valve had caused death to flood

the submarine. "The army advanced swiftly, their guns spitting death."

These statements demonstrate that since the word death has a strong, fixed value it lends itself to figurative use. If it did not have such value it would result in the greatest possible confusion when used as a figure of speech. A foreigner trying to discover the meaning or value of our word *death* would become hopelessly confused if he tried to establish it from the second and third examples given above. He would probably end up by reasoning that death was either *water* or a *bullet*. When he discovered his error he would also discover that figures do not explain facts. The facts must first be secured, and these will make plain the figures. With these thoughts before us we are ready to proceed to the examination of the words that make up the subject of this pamphlet.

Sheol and Hades

The word *sheol* was breathed by God sixty-five times in the sacred Scriptures. The word *hades* appears eleven times in the New Testament. They are words of profound importance and far reaching significance, and they must not be regarded simply as substitute words which polite people use in place of the word *hell*. The complete identity of these two words has been established by their usage by the Holy Spirit. Two passages are sufficient evidence.

"For thou wilt not leave my soul in *skeol*." Psa. 16:10.

"Because thou wilt not leave my soul in *hades*." Acts 2:27.

I do not believe that the identity of these two words has ever been disputed by any competent witness, so, no detailed proof is given. It is sufficient to say that this pamphlet proceeds with the full assurance that the complete identity of these two words is an established fact. *Sheol* is Hebrew; *hades* is Greek, but both are names of the same thing.

The word *sheol* is translated three different ways in the *King James Version*, as follows:

grave - 31 times

hell - 31 times

pit - 3 times.

When the translators' treatment of the word *sheol* is considered, also their treatment of the word *nepshesh* (soul), it brings to mind an incident set forth in Lewis Carroll's book, *Alice Through the Looking-glass* - a book that delighted and impressed me in childhood days. Humpty Dumpty had used the word "glory" and, as it did not seem to make sense, Alice confessed that she did not know its meaning.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't till I tell you. I meant 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you.' "But *glory* doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument,' " Alice objected. "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less." "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things." "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master that's all."

If the word *sheol* means grave, then it cannot mean hell. If it means either one of these, then it cannot mean pit. It seems that the translators of the *King James Version* translated it *grave* when it spoke of good men going into sheol, and, that they translated it *hell* if it referred to evil men. Just why they ever translated it *pit* remains, to this writer, a mystery.

The truth is that *sheol* does **not** mean *hell*, it does **not** mean *grave*, and it does **not** mean *pit*. This was recognized by the translators of the excellent *American Standard Version*, and they admirably solved the problem by carrying over the words *sheol* and *hades* in every occurrence. This gave these words a place in our English vocabulary, and they are now found as English words in all dictionaries. These two words are nouns, and they have no equivalent in the English language. When such a situation arises, the words should be carried over. As another writer has well said:

"Next to the supreme advantage which the ability to read the Scriptures in the original languages affords, would be the benefit secured if certain important words were transcribed into the English text of the Bible without the confusion and misleading process of translation. Being thus in the text, these transcribed words would at once find a place in our English vocabulary and would soon become as familiar and as understood as are those terms which have been substituted by the translators." (Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D. *Moody Monthly*, January, 1940)

As noted before, the *American Standard Version* has done this very thing with the words *sheol* and *hades*. In it these words are found in the English text. They are nouns, and nouns are names. It is our duty to find just what God would set before our minds when we come upon these words in His Word.

I am convinced that truth on this subject will come only through patient investigation and hearty acceptance of all that God has spoken that has any bearing upon it. A large and fairly well studied library, which stares me in the face as these lines are written, gives witness that no dependable and satisfying truth can ever be

mine as the result of studying the writings of other men. Their writings have been helpful, but on such a subject as we have before us the hesitation, perplexity and confusion is so great that we are forced to turn from them to the Word of God. But, we must not turn to it for the purpose of confirming some forgone conclusion; we must go to it for the sole purpose of finding the truth.

The Orthodox Viewpoint

It is my purpose to present the truth rather than to refute error. However, it seems essential at the beginning of these studies to present the viewpoint that is generally considered to be orthodox today. It is the view generally held by those who classify themselves as fundamentalists. This will clear the ground for further study. My understanding of this viewpoint comes from having been taught it in school, from having studied it in the *Scofield Bible Course*, and from having carefully read about everything that was available in print on the subject. It is a viewpoint that I accepted and proclaimed for more than a decade, and which was abandoned when I began to doubt the truth of my own well worn lectures on the subject, and determined to search out the truth from the Word of God.

It is commonly believed that sheol or hades is "the place of departed human spirits between death and resurrection." It is held that sheol was formerly in two divisions, the abodes respectively of the saved and the lost. The abode of the saved was called "Paradise" and "Abraham's Bosom." To this place (sheol) went both the righteous and the unrighteous, but the righteous were in bliss while the unrighteous were in conscious anguish, torment and suffering. It is further held that at the ascension of Christ a great change took place which affected the righteous who were in sheol. It is held that at His ascension, Christ emptied the Paradise division of sheol and took all who were there into the presence of God in heaven. Since that time, the wicked dead still go to sheol where they are tormented until the day of judgment, after which they are cast into the lake of fire, which will be a suffering far worse than they experienced in sheol. According to this viewpoint, the righteous dead now go, upon death, into the presence of God.

I sincerely believe that the above is an honest summary of the position held today by most fundamentalists. It was my desire for full and accurate knowledge that caused me to see that this position was unscriptural. A few reasons will be sufficient to demonstrate why this viewpoint was found to be untenable.

A careful examination of every one of the seventy-six occurrences of sheol and hades brought the conviction that not one of them conveys the least hint or suggestion that departed human spirits ever went to sheol. The word *spirit* never appears in connection with sheol or hades. To hold that sheol was the place of departed human

spirits between death and resurrection was a gratuitous assumption that could not be supported by a single passage of Scripture. Having been convinced of this by the Word of God it was impossible to teach this and have any conviction that I was speaking the truth. If, before the ascension of Christ, the faithful saints at death went to a division of sheol called Paradise, then they are still there. This is demonstrated by the case of David who died one thousand years before Christ was born. If the commonly accepted view of sheol as a place of two compartments is correct then David went to that section of sheol which housed the righteous dead. There he remained until the ascension of Christ, whereupon, he was taken into heaven. This is the generally accepted view, but it is completely refuted by the plain statement of Scripture. In **Acts 2 :34** we read: "**For David is not ascended into the heavens.**"

The meaning of this statement is crystal clear because of the place it fills in Peter's inspired discourse. He is dealing with a statement from the Psalms which the Jews erroneously applied to David. Peter demonstrates that these words cannot apply to David for they speak of someone who is in the heavens. He boldly states that David is both dead and buried, and that his monument was well known among them. Therefore, he insists, these words could not speak of David, for David is not ascended into the heavens.

Some who have recognized the threat that this plain statement makes against the idea that the saints who died before Christ ascended into heaven with him at His ascension, have sought to explain it by insisting that while both David and Christ are in heaven, yet David did not *ascend* in order to get there. The Greek word here translated *ascended* is a common one. It means *gone up*, and it is so translated in Matt. 20 :17, Mark 3 :13 and thirty-five other passages. If David were in heaven he had to *ascend* or *go up* in order to get there. The specific statement of Peter is, that David had not ascended into the heavens.

The strongest reason for abandoning the position that Christ emptied sheol of the righteous dead at the time of His ascension was that it is not taught directly in the Word; it is supported only by implications and obscure passages that are removed from their contexts. In support of this statement I will quote from the writings of one of the leading advocates of this theory:

"The Old Testament speaks of those who have died calling them 'prisoners' or 'captives'. The 'captives' are promised that they shall be visited after many days (Isa. 24:22) and some of the prisoners are definitely called 'prisoners of hope' (Zech.9:12). The only possible conclusion is that those who were not prisoners of hope were prisoners of hopelessness. Whether represented as having hope or having no hope, both classes are set before us as being God's 'captives' or 'prisoners'. In other words, both the good and the bad, the saved and the lost, the righteous and the unrighteous, went to the same place. But God gives one of the groups something to look forward to."

When we examine the passages referred to we discover what a slender thread this doctrine is hanging upon. In **Isaiah 24 :21-23**, which he offers as proof, we read:

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously."

In Zechariah 9 :11-13 we read:

"As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the strong hold ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee; when I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made them as the sword of a mighty man."

A mere reading of these passages in the light of their contexts demonstrates that they have nothing to do with sheol, nothing to do with the dead, nothing to do with the past, nothing to do with the present. They speak of a future time and refer to those who will be living in that time. The very fact that they would be used by this champion of the fundamentalist viewpoint is a clear demonstration that this theory is supported by implications culled from obscure passages which refuse to give the testimony for which they are called into the witness box.

In order to support the idea of a translation of the righteous dead from sheol to heaven at the ascension of Christ, appeal is made to one of the most obscure passages in the New Testament. I refer to Ephesians 4 :8.

"Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."

It is a violation of every high principle of handling the Word of God to take this passage and force it to support something that it does not teach. Let any student who knows the Greek make a literal translation of this passage and all support for the idea of a translation from sheol will immediately disappear.

The Meaning of Sheol or Hades

By careful observation of the way in which God has used these words the conviction has developed that sheol means *the state of death*. But this phrase must be enlarged upon in order to make its meaning plain.

Scripture speaks of the living and it also speaks of the dead. Those who are cut off from the land of the living go into the state of death. In this state of death they remain until resurrection brings them forth from it. The Lord Jesus was in the state of death (sheol or hades) for three days and three nights. He is not in the state of death now for he was raised from the dead to die no more. He is now among the living, but He is there because of resurrection. Death put Him into the state of death, and resurrection brought Him out of it. There is no single word in English that means the state of death. The Hebrews had a single word for it and that word was *sheol*. God took the Greek word *hades*, purged it of all its associations with heathen mythology, and gave it to us as the exact equivalent of *sheol*. We are still without a single word in English with which we can translate these words, so we are forced to use the descriptive phrase - **the state of death.**

We see a man dying and call it death; we see him after he is dead and call that death. In English we cannot distinguish between the act of dying and the state of one who has died because we lack the words essential to that distinction. **The Hebrew language had a word for the state of death - it was *sheol*.**

The meaning of the word *sheol* is limited to the state of death, for it does not include in any manner any reference to the *condition* of those who are in the state of death. For example, to say that a man is in good health is to describe his *state* but not his *condition*. He may be in good health and very poor, or he may be in good health and very rich. To say that a man is ill is to describe his state, but the word *ill* does not describe his condition. Is he in danger? is he in pain? or is he in comfort? These are the questions one would ask if they wished to know the *condition* of one who is in the state of illness for the word *ill* does not indicate any of the conditions that may be associated with illness. Even so it is with the word *sheol*. It does not indicate in any way the *condition* of those who are in the state of death. The good die and the wicked die, and all go into the state of death. In this state they remain until resurrection brings them out.

The definition that has been given above of *sheol* will be tested and enlarged upon as we examine each verse in which the word occurs. We are now ready to examine every reference.

Genesis 37 :35 "**And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him: but he refused to be comforted: and he said, For I will go down into the grave (sheol) unto my son mourning.**"

This reference is important as it is the first occurrence of the word *sheol*. Jacob believed that an evil beast had killed his beloved son Joseph. He had mourned for him many days, so his sons and daughters attempted to comfort him. But he refused their comfort and told them that his mourning would continue until the day that he went down into the state of death unto his son.

It seems strange that this simple statement would be used by certain teachers to prove that sheol is a place of mourning. Some have done so in order to bolster up their theory that sheol is a place of frightfulness. They should be consistent with their own theories, and since they hold that those in the so-called Paradise section of sheol are in bliss, Jacob, if there, would not be mourning.

It is important that we notice that Jacob spoke of going *down* to sheol. This has been used to support a theory that sheol is a place somewhere in the earth. The word *down* does not always speak of direction for it is also used of state. A man may go down into a mine, or he may go down in rank or position. When we compare the state of the living with the state of the dead it is certainly down in character. Sir Robert Anderson speaks of *death* reducing us and says: "Death is an outrage upon life, a hideous and hateful outrage." That which came in as the result of sin; that which passed upon all men because of sin; that which God calls an enemy, can never be the thing that exalts us. Death will put us into the state of death, and we must not speak of it as exalting us. Let us give this glory to resurrection.

The next three occurrences are so much alike that all three will be quoted and then examined together.

Genesis 42:38 "And he said, my son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave (sheol)."

Genesis 44:29 "And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave (sheol)."

Genesis 44:31 "It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave (sheol)."

I take it for granted that my readers are familiar with the story from which these passages are taken. If not, then they are not ready to study the subject of sheol.

The sorrow of Jacob over the loss of Joseph seems to have been eased in some measure by his delight in Benjamin. When his brothers desired to take him to Egypt to

demonstrate the truth of their statements made to Joseph, Jacob was loathe to let him go for fear that something evil would happen to him on the journey.

If this should be, Jacob said it would bring such sorrow upon him that he would go into the state of death. In other words, he said he would die of a broken heart. These three passages have been used by some men in support of their teaching that sheol is a place of sorrow. No such idea is contained in these passages.

The next two occurrences are similar and will be considered together.

Numbers 16:30 **"But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit (sheol); then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord."**

Numbers 16:33 **"They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit (sheol), and the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the congregation."**

The context of these passages shows that these men were not to die the common death of all men. This would have been ordinary death and burial. A new thing happened to these men for the earth opened up and swallowed them. No man could live who was swallowed up by the earth; therefore, these men died as the result of their experience. They were living men when the earth swallowed them up, but since they could not live through such an experience, it put them in the state of death.

The word *quick* which appears in this passage means living or alive. This has caused some to feel that since these men went into sheol alive they must be alive in sheol. If this should be true then they are the only ones who are alive in sheol for theirs was a strange experience that never happened before or since. A passage such as this should not be used to prove or disprove anything in connection with the subject

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

The language of this passage is highly figurative. It has been used to support a theory of a higher and lower hell, also, to prove that sheol is a place of fire. 2 Thes. demonstrates that anything can be proven by the Bible if one determines to do it, but there is no such teaching in this passage. We can rest assured that God's great truths are not set forth by implications in obscure passages, They are clearly presented in the volume of the Book.

The fire spoken of in this passage begins with God in His anger, It travels to sheol beneath which is the other extreme, and it touches everything that is in between. The passage has reference to the time of tribulation and indignation. Those who are in the state of death shall not escape His judgments, They will be raised from the dead to be judged by God.

I Samuel 2:6 "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave (sheol), and bringeth up,"

This passage is highly illuminating, since the thoughts of the first part are restated in other words in the second part. "Killing" is linked up with bringing down to the state of death. "Making alive" is linked up with bringing up from the state of death. It is plain that when a man is killed, he is dead and not alive. When he is made alive, he is no longer dead.

II Samuel 22:6 "The sorrows of hell (sheol) compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me."

The Hebrew word which is here translated "sorrows" means cords or meshes. It is based upon the thought of a snare made of cords in which the animal once caught tightens itself all the more by its struggles. In the previous passage David speaks of the *waves* of death that had surrounded him and the *floods* of ungodly men that had made him afraid. These passages are Hebrew poetry in which we have a repetition of ideas. This is called parallelism. The words *waves* and *floods* form a true parallelism. The words *sorrows* and *snares* are not parallel in thought. Verse six should be translated:

"The cords (or meshes) of sheol had surrounded me; the snares of death had confronted me,"

The words *cords* and *snares* form a true parallelism. It is the same Hebrew word that is translated *cords* in Joshua 2 :15, and Jer. 38 :6, 11, 12, and 13.

The need for a correct translation here has been emphasized because this passage, along with Psalm 18:5 and Psalm 116 :3, has been used to prove that sheol is a place of sorrow and pain.¹ This seems to reveal wishful thinking on the part of those who do this.

1 Kings 2:6 "Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave (sheol) in peace."

1 Kings 2:9 "Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and know est what thou ought to do to him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave (sheol) with blood."

These statements were made by David in his charge to Solomon. The first statement concerned Joab, and the second concerned Shimei. The severity of these statements are not based upon what they did to David, but upon what they had done to God's anointed king. Most men hope for peace in the closing days of their life, but it was the charge to Solomon that this was not to be for Joab. He was not to enter into the state of death in his old age in peace. Shimei was to enter into the state of death by violence.

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

One man can kill another, and a man can kill himself. Those who go into the state of death can come up no more. Only God can make alive, so God alone can bring up men from the state of death.

Job 11:8 It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell (sheol); what canst thou know?"

This passage glows with great glory when it is properly translated and considered with the context. A free translation of verses 7 and 8 would be as follows:

Can you discover the hidden depths of God? Or can you attain to the furthest limit of the Almighty? What can you do about the heights of the heavens? What can you do about depths that are deeper than sheol?

Job 14:13 "O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave (sheol), that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me"

The frightful affliction that had come upon Job caused him to speak these words. He expressed his longing to be hidden in the state of death. He went on to express his faith that even though he died he would live again.

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

Job 17:16 "They shall go down to the bars of the pit (sheol), when our rest together is in the dust."

These two passages are connected, and if our studies were in the book of Job it would be interesting to retranslate the entire portion in which these words appear. In these words Job expresses the apparent hopelessness of his condition and situation. All he could expect as the result of his affliction was to enter into the state of death.

Job 21 :13 "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to the grave (sheol)."

In refutation of the statement of his friends that he is being afflicted because of some secret sin, Job sets forth the prosperity of those who are openly wicked. He states that even the wicked spend their days in mirth, and then go down into the state of death apart from any lingering illness or great suffering.

Job 24:19 "Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave (sheol) those which have sinned."

The sinners of the past are now in the state of death, and the sinners of the present will go there. The state of death is sure for the sinner, but the righteous may never go into it.

Job 26:6 "Hell (sheol) is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering."

This is one of the most important passages that will come before us; therefore, two other passages which are similar in truth will be considered here.

Proverbs 15:11 "Hell (sheol) and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?"

Proverbs 27:20 "Hell (sheol) and destruction are never full, so the eyes of man are never satisfied."

In these three passages we have the word *destruction* linked up with the word *sheol*. The manner in which these words are linked together seems to suggest that they have some definite relationship, and in order to establish this relationship we will need to be more definite in our understanding of that state which we have been calling the *state of death*. It is evident that any accurate understanding of this rests upon having the scriptural answer to the question - What is death?

I know of nothing that is more plainly and emphatically taught in the Scripture than that death is a return. From the record of creation we know that Adam was *not*, that is, he had no existence before he was created. It is true that the soil from which he was

made was in existence, but that soil was not the man Adam. In the record of his creation we are told that God made him from the soil (dust) of the earth, then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living soul. This is man's creation, and if you reverse the order of creation you have man's death. Let the spirit (the breath of life) return to God who gave it, let the soil (dust) return to the earth as it was and you have the death of man. This is emphatically set forth in God's word of judgment upon Adam.

"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return unto the ground; for out of it you were taken: for you are dust, and unto dust you will return."
Gen. 3:19.

Those who read this verse should ask themselves if they have the faith to believe it, that man is to return to the ground, that he was taken out of the ground, that he is dust, and that he will return to the dust. Or will they deny its emphatic statements by reading the word "body" into it where God has spoken of the man.

This great truth is also set forth in Ecclesiastes 12:7 where, after four things are mentioned which speak of death, it says:

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

At death, no part of man or the man as a whole enters into any new or unknown condition. The man was in the soil before his creation and unto the soil he returns; the spirit (breath of life) which was with God before it was given to man returns to God who gave it. This is the condition of all men in death - it is the state of death.

However, man goes into the state of death with resurrection in view; therefore, at this point in our studies we are able to enlarge our definition of sheol. Whenever we find the word *sheol* (or *hades*) in Scripture it means the state of death **with resurrection in view**. This is apparent in every passage in which it appears except one or two where it is used in a figurative sense.

Since the death of the first man (Abel), God has been taking the spirit (life) of every descendant of Adam back to Himself. The man which was formed out of the dust returns to the dust from whence he was taken, and the spirit which made the man a living soul returns to God who gave it. This is not the end of man, for every man who has ever lived and died has gone into the state of death with resurrection in view. Resurrection does not depend upon redemption, forgiveness or salvation. With Paul, we believe in a resurrection both of the just and the unjust. If it were not for

resurrection, death would be the end of man, but death is not the end for resurrection is in view. If the dead do not rise then death would be the end of man just as it is the end of the animals.

Resurrection is not *reincarnation* where man is reincarnated in his body; it is *recreation* in which man is again taken from the soil and given once more the breath of life (spirit) so that man again becomes a living soul. If it were not for resurrection man's death would be his end, that is, his destruction.

Destruction is the state of death when no resurrection is in view. If the dead rise not, even those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. In Matt. 10 :28 we read:

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."

In Philippians 3 :19 we read:

"Whose end (consummation) is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."

The opening chapters of the Word of God reveal the beginning of man, and familiarity with the whole of God's revelation soon brings the conviction that the man who had a beginning can come to a complete end and be as though he had never been. This is the destruction of man and it is the end of the wicked. Those who declare that the final end of the wicked is destruction are declaring a doctrine that has a solid foundation in the Word of God. It does not need to be supported by deductions and inferences taken from a few carefully chosen passages. It is not deduced or inferred in the Scriptures, but plainly and unequivocally set forth as in the words of our Lord in Matt. 7 :13-14:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

The idea that man is indestructible comes from Greek philosophy and not from the Word of God. The **disciples of Plato, in the time of Christ, held and taught that the soul could not be destroyed.** This philosophy permeated the ancient world and had even found a place among God's people Israel. When the Lord Jesus was among them He took His stand against Plato and his followers by declaring that both body and soul could be destroyed by God in Gehenna.

Anything that has had a beginning can also have an end. That which God has brought into existence He can also put out of existence. He can put man out of existence by taking man's life back to Himself and returning the man to the soil from whence he came. If no resurrection is provided for him then that man has ceased to be.

The moment one declares his belief in the scriptural truth of destruction, those who oppose him always raise the question of annihilation. By so doing they are able to create an unjust prejudice against the teaching of Scripture. I am able to prove that the word *annihilation* never appears in the Word of God. I am also able to prove that the Word of God contains no doctrine of annihilation. I know that those who try to teach it will find that they are devoid of Scripture for proof. I do not believe or teach that anyone is ever annihilated.

But, is there anyone who dares to say that the word *destruction* never appears in the Word of God, or will any be so bold as to say that there is no doctrine of destruction there. Some will say that destruction and annihilation are one and the same, but this is simply a confession that they cannot answer the doctrine of destruction set forth in the Word of God until they have changed its name by calling it something it is not.

The first death comes upon all men because of Adam's sin. By this death man loses the life that became his at birth for that life returns unto God who gave it. It is forfeited because of Adam's sin. The work of Christ in its largest aspect has purchased another life for every man, so, every man will be raised from the dead and live again. Some of these are raised to live again without entering into judgment. The rest are raised to stand in judgment, and of these some will die because of their own sins. This death is the second death. It is identical with the first death except that it does not put men into the sheol state. That is, it does not put men into the state of death with resurrection in view, for that state is destroyed at the same time that the second death takes place. After the judgments of the Great White Throne no man will be in the state of death with resurrection in view. He will have gone into a state where no resurrection is in view. The life that was given him in resurrection will return to God; the soil will have returned to the soil and God will have lost nothing.

Has the reader ever stopped to consider that God is not short of the materials from which man is made. He is not short of soil, and He does not lack the breath of life to make them living souls. He has permitted us to live this once, but this life that makes us living souls has been forfeited because of Adam's sin. The death of Christ has purchased another life for all men, and the Word of God has guaranteed that all men will live again. If we forfeit that life, God will not give us another.

Psalm 6:5 "For in death there is no remembrance of Thee; and in the grave (sheol), who shall give Thee thanks."

These words are from a petition of David in which he prayed for deliverance from a threatened death. He brought in the condition of the dead as an argument. David knew that God desired to be remembered and to be praised. The living can do this but the dead cannot. From this it is evident that David did not understand sheol to be a place where the activities of life are continued. Modern orthodoxy is not in harmony with the inspired statement of David.

Psalm 9:17 "The wicked shall be turned into hell (sheol), with all the nations that forget God."

The word here for turned means returned; therefore, the language in this passage is figurative. The word sheol comes from a root meaning *to ask*. The state of death was the unseen, the imperceptible to man. He could question concerning it, but he could not find an answer. It was naked before the Lord, but it was covered to man. The Greek word *hades* does mean the unseen or the imperceptible. From this we understand the figurative use of sheol. It is used of that which is regarded as going back to its original nothingness. The wicked as a body, and the nations that forget God are going to be returned to nothingness. The reference here is not to individuals, but to that which is formed by individuals.

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

This passage is one of great importance. It is quoted by Peter in Acts 2 :27 and applied to Christ in Acts 2 :31. Those who have been spoiled by the philosophy of Plato, and conceive of the soul as some part of man, read this passage and immediately jump at the conclusion that it was some part of Christ that went to a place called sheol. The soul is the whole man, and when we find the term "my soul" in Scripture it means *I, myself* or *me* as the occasion may require. In this passage the words "my soul" mean *me* and it can be read: "**Thou wilt not leave me in sheol.**" We have already set forth that sheol means the state of death, therefore, we can interpret this as meaning, "Thou wilt not leave me in the state of death." To make this plain I will speak in a personal manner.

I am a man made of soil. I possess life from God, therefore, I am a man who is a living soul. Death is working in me, and some day it will reach its consummation and put me into the state that death brings men into - the state of death. In the state of death, that which came from the soil will go back to the soil, and that which came from God will go back to God. 'When this life goes back to God, and this man goes back to the soil, it will be my soul or me in the state of death. Now let us set it up in this manner.

My spirit returned to God who gave it: plus (2) My body returned to the soil from whence it came, equals (3) Me in the state of death, or (4) My soul in sheol.

When Christ went into the state of death He did so with the firm conviction that He would not be left in it. I will go into it with the same strong conviction that I will not be left in it. My conviction is based on Christ's work for me. His conviction was based on God's Word to Him. Let us remember that it was Christ who was born, Christ who lived, Christ who died, Christ who was buried, Christ who was raised from the dead, Christ who was seen of men, Christ who ascended, Christ who is coming again. Let us cease trying to make a distinction between Christ and His physical body, as if His body died while he lived. We must not say that His spirit went back to God, His body to the tomb, and His soul to sheol as if He were composed of three parts. The first two statements are true, and the third represents a collective restatement of the first two declarations.

Psalm 18:5 "The sorrows of hell (sheol) compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me."

The word here for *sorrows* means *CORDS* or *MESHES*. *Prevented* should be *CONFRONTED*. By these words David tells how near he was to the state of death when God delivered him. Men have used this to prove that sheol is a place of sorrow without bothering to use it to prove that death is a place of snares. If it teaches one, it teaches the other. It does not teach either. David described himself as a hunted creature, surrounded and confronted by cords and snares. Sheol and death had marked him for their prey and were drawing their nets around him. He cried to God and finds deliverance.

Psalm 30:3 "O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave (sheol): thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down into the pit."

David was never in sheol, but apart from the intervention of God he would have been. Therefore, he spoke of his experience as if it had actually been true.

Psalm 31 :17 "Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee; let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave (sheol)."

This imprecatory prayer is not out of harmony with the administration under which David lived.

Psalm 49:14.15 "Like sheep they are laid in the grave (sheol); death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave (sheo!) from their dwelling. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave (sheol) for He will receive me."

This Psalm sets forth the certainty of death for all men. Great wealth cannot buy an extra day of life. Position and character do not alter the necessity of death. Beauty, wisdom, wealth and folly all go into the state of death. David expresses a positive hope of resurrection which will free him from the power of the state of death.

Psalm 55:15 "Let death seize upon them and let them go down quick into hell (sheol): for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them."

In this passage the Psalmist called down destruction upon his enemies. He called for a judgment so swift that they go into the state of death alive. It seems that in Old Testament times when death came so swift that it destroyed the body so that it was never seen again, it was spoken of as a man going into the state of death alive. [Such deaths are unusual, but they do happen. I am familiar with one case wherein a man fell into a great vessel filled with molten iron. At one moment he was seen alive, there was a puff of smoke and in an instant he was gone, and was not seen again either as living or dead. Such a death can be called, figuratively, going alive into sheol. This was what it was called in the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.]

Psalm 86:13 "For great is thy mercy toward me: and Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell (sheol)."

A more literal translation makes this passage clear. "Thou hast delivered me (my soul) from sheol beneath."

Psalm 88:3 "For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave (sheol)."

The entire Psalm in which this passage appears should be carefully read. The word *life* in this instance means a man's history or experiences. These were drawing near to their close; they were at the point of death.

Psalm 89:48 "What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave (sheol)?"

In this passage *death*, which is the act of dying, is linked up with *sheal*, which is the state of death. The first is the door to second, but they must not be confused.

Psalm 116:3 "The sorrows of death compassed me, the pains of hell (sheol) gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow."

This passage has been used to prove that sheol is a place of pain. I have never seen it used to prove that death is a place of sorrow. A more accurate translation would be: "The cords of death compassed me; the narrows of sheol came upon me." This preserves the parallel. He was like a creature driven down a gorge into the toils of death.

Psalm 139:8 "If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: If I make my bed in hell (sheol), behold Thou art there."

This passage speaks of God's omnipresence. The truth is set forth in highly figurative language. No man can ascend into heaven. Apart from God's permission he cannot go into the state of death. If he should, he could not escape from God.

Psalm 141:7 "Our bones are scattered at the grave's (sheol) mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth."

The meaning of this passage is obscure. The language is figurative and the passage must not be used to establish facts.

Proverbs 1: 12 "Let us swallow them up alive as the grave (sheol); and whole, as those who go down into the pit."

The state of death does swallow up men. Every man who has lived and died has been swallowed up by sheol. Think what the population of the world would be if none had ever died.

Proverbs 5:5, 7:27, 9:18 "Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell (sheol)."

"Her house is the way to hell (sheol), going down to the chambers of death."

"But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell (sheol)."

These three passages are related for they refer to the "strange woman" who is so prominent in the book of Proverbs. Her feet are traveling the path that leads to death. Her steps lead to the state of death. Her house is the road to the state of death, and her guests are in the state of death. That the language here is figurative is apparent. The teaching concerns the strange woman, and the passages give no revelation concerning sheol.

Proverbs 15 :24 "The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell (sheol) beneath."

Life, which in this case means the state of the living, is set in contrast with sheol, which is the state of death.

Proverbs 23:14 "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell (sheol)."

The reference here is to the sure judgment that came upon disobedient sons under the law. See Deut. 21 :18-21. The father is warned to exercise proper discipline so that his son will not come under this judgment and go into the state of death.

Proverbs 30:16 "The grave (sheol); and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, it is enough."

Four things are listed that are never satisfied, that never say "It is enough." The first one listed is the state of death. It is always claiming its victims. It will receive men until it is destroyed in God's great destructor - the lake of fire. The sin of Adam has given the state of death a mortgage on every man.

Ecclesiastes 9: 10 "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work; nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave (sheol) whither thou goest."

I do not agree with those who insist that Ecclesiastes is only an inspired revelation of human reasonings. I accept this statement as being a divine revelation concerning the state of those who have died and are in the state of death. In our search for the meaning of sheol we cannot bar the book of Ecclesiastes from the witness stand. We can depend upon the truthfulness and correctness of its testimony. Here is its witness to its own character. **"The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth." Eccles. 12:10.**

This statement is either fact or fiction; it is either truth or gross deception. I accept it as truth and it rules my understanding of the character of Ecclesiastes

The passage under consideration is so important that a more literal translation will emphasize its message.

"Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for there is no work, nor planning, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the state of death where you are going."

Song of Solomon 8:6 "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame."

The teaching here concerns love and jealousy, especially jealousy. We are told that jealousy is as cruel as sheol. I do not suppose that this passage has ever been used to teach that sheol is a place of cruelty, yet it could be used to teach that just as honestly as those passages which are used to teach that sheol is a place of pain and sorrow. However, the fact remains that sheol or the state of death is cruel. Can anyone deny this? It separates the mother from the children, or it robs the family of its sole support. Even though it has resurrection in view, it is cruel.

Isaiah 5:14 "Therefore, hell (sheol) hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it."

Once again it must be noted that the language here is figurative. The teaching concerns Judah, and while sheol is mentioned there is no teaching here in regard to it. When the word *sheol* is used in a figurative sense we must think of it as the unseen or the imperceptible.

Isaiah 14:9, 11, 15 "Hell (sheol) from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations."

"Thy pomp is brought down to the grave (sheol), and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee."

"Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell (sheol), to the sides of the pit."

This passage is important as it is used to prove that there are conversations in sheol. In considering this passage, we must not forget that Isaiah is Hebrew poetry, and, as is usual in poetry the language is highly figurative going even to the point that we call poetic license. I am convinced that the language of Isaiah 14 is the most highly figurative to be found in the Word of God. The difficult nature of this passage must not be minimized, yet the idea that it sets forth a record of men holding conversation in sheol is absurd.

The language here refers to the King of Babylon, yet it goes far beyond him to the god of this age. Isaiah pictures him as he is cast down and the great excitement it causes. Great ones who have gone down before him cry out, "Is it possible that you have become as weak and powerless as we?"

Isaiah 28:15, 18 "Because ye have said, we have made a covenant with death, and with hell (sheol) are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through it shall not come unto us."

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

It is instructive to note how many times death and sheol are linked together as they are in these two passages. Sheol is always connected with death and not with life. Death is a process, but the process has a consummation. We distinguish the process from the consummation by the words *dying* and *death*.

The two passages quoted above have to do with Israel in the time of Jacob's trouble. The fact that a time of great tribulation was to come upon Israel was clearly revealed in the Word of God. The awful sufferings of that time are described in detail. It is evident that some in Israel had determined that this would never come upon them, for they had covenanted to kill themselves when they saw it approaching. God warns them not to take refuge in any such hope. He will disannul their covenant with death and break down their agreement with the state of death. It is revealed in the book of Revelation that suicide will not be possible for those who would use it to escape the wrath of God.

"And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." Rev. 9 :6.

Isaiah 38:10 "I said in the cutting off of my days, 1 shall go to the gates of the grave (sheol), 1 am deprived of the residue of my years."

In the Old Testament, the city gates correspond to our court houses or similar halls of judgment. All legal matters centered at the city gates. Therefore, the word *gate* came to signify the powers or the authority. Hezekiah had been at the point of death. The word of the Lord to him was, "thou shalt die, and not live." This shows that he could not be dead and alive at the same time. Unlike modern traditionalists he did not try to deceive himself into believing that death was desirable and attractive. He prayed unto God, and God added fifteen years to his life. Upon his recovery he wrote the record of his experiences, and they are preserved for us by inspiration. He reveals that when the sentence of death came upon him that he said he would enter into that state where the powers of the state of death would have authority over him.

Isaiah 38:18 "For the grave (sheol) cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down in the pit cannot hope for thy truth."

These are the words of Hezekiah in which he explains why he is so thankful to the Lord for sparing his life. Let us examine these two passages in a more accurate translation.

"For out of sheol no praise comes to Thee: Death hath no song for Thy glory. Nor can Thy truth be the hope of the dead who are consigned to the tomb. The living, shall praise Thee, even as 1 do this glad day."

This is in complete harmony with the truth we learned from Ecclesiastes.

Isaiah 57:9 "And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell (sheol)."

This is a sentence from Jehovah's indictment against Israel. When Isaiah desired a word to use as the figure to express the depths to which Israel had debased herself he used the word *sheol*. The figure is appropriate for the state of death is the lowest state into which man will ever enter. This is true because it is the result of Adam's sin. Death came by sin, and death passed upon all men because all have sinned.

Ezekiel 31:15,16,17 "Thus saith the Lord God; In the day that he went down to the grave (sheol). I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell (sheol) with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth. They also went down into hell (sheol) with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen."

This passage speaks of Pharaoh and not of sheol, even though sheol is mentioned in it three times. These three occurrences demonstrate that sheol does mean the state of death. Pharaoh and his associates are in the state of death. They will be raised to stand in judgment.

Ezekiel 32 :21 "The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell (sheol) with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword."

The highly figurative language of this passage has been used by some to prove that men in sheol speak to one another. However, this passage tells of men in sheol speaking to men on earth. It calls for an existing nation to learn a lesson from those that have passed out of existence. Abel being dead speaks to us of the value of faith. Nations that have passed speak to those that exist. This is the only way in which the dead speak to the living.

Ezekiel 32 :27 "And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell (sheol) with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living."

This passage is a part of lamentation upon Egypt of which the last passage considered is also a part. It speaks of a mighty nation going into oblivion with all its weapons of war.

Hosea 13:14 "I will ransom them from the power of the grave (sheol); I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave (sheol), I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."

This passage is a prophecy. In it the "power" of sheol is equivalent to the "gates" of sheol in Isa. 38 :10. The word *power* is literal, the word *gates* is figurative, but both have the same meaning. Men are ransomed from the power of sheol by resurrection. That is the way that the Lord Jesus Christ was rescued from it, and no one else will ever come out of it in any other way. God has promised to be the plagues of death and the destruction of sheol. The day is coming when both death and sheol will be destroyed. This is set forth in **Revelation 20 :14 "And death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire, This is the second death,"**

Amos 9:2 "Though they dig into hell (sheol), thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down."

Man cannot climb into heaven, neither can he dig into sheol, so the figure of speech used here is hyperbole. It is God's emphatic way of saying that Israel cannot escape his judgments.

Jonah 2:2 "And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and He heard me, out of the belly of hell (sheol) cried I, and thou hearest my voice,"

The fact is that Jonah was in the belly of the great fish, but he calls it the belly of sheol. One teacher deduces from this that "the whale's belly was a place of consciousness from which even prayer may be made, so sheol is a place of consciousness and a place from which prayer was indeed very frequently made under the circumstances which prevailed in Old Testament days." "I When such straws as this are grasped at it demonstrates how bankrupt the orthodox are for Scripture to support their theory. Since no man could live long inside of a fish Jonah's position was equivalent to death apart from divine intervention. It is because of this fact that he calls the belly of the whale the belly of the state of death. It is the language of strong emotion, and he was not attempting to give a discourse on the character of sheol.

Habakkuk 2:5 "Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desires as hell (sheol), and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people,"

We have discovered from previous passages that sheol is never full and is never satisfied. This being true, it makes a perfect symbol of insatiable desire. Most of us realize that the symbol is fitting and appropriate. As we read of or are informed of the passing of those whom we know it seems to be a steady stream. We are inclined to cry out, "Is sheol never full? Is the state of death never satisfied?" The Scriptures reveal that it will go on demanding its victims until it is destroyed.

This closes our examination of the sixty-five occurrences of **sheol**. No one can accuse me of having picked or chosen the references in order to emphasize those that may be used to support some preconception. Having examined the evidence it is plain that if the popular idea of sheol as a place of two compartments is true, the Old Testament knows nothing about it.

Some may be prone to suggest that if I had begun my studies with the story of the rich man and Lazarus I would have a different conception of sheol or hades. However, let no one feel that every other passage has not been before me as each one has been considered. Luke 16 can give its witness in due order, so that in the end our conception of sheol will be in harmony with all that is written.

We come now to a consideration of the eleven occurrences of the word *hades*. Permit me to say at the outset that I exclude from the witness stand all testimony from the pagan Greek philosophers concerning the meaning of this word. Their testimony is not competent. They could only speak out of their profound ignorance of things spiritual since they possessed no written revelation of God.

Hades is the word which the Holy Spirit has chosen to represent the word *sheol*. Our understanding of the word *hades* must be based upon what God has revealed concerning *sheol*. In its primary, fundamental, meaning hades means the unseen. It is something that has never been known and cannot be known by the senses. The root meaning of sheol is *to ask*, in the sense of always being an unanswered question, an unperceived state. It is simple to see how these words are equivalent in their primary meanings.

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

Capernaum was never literally exalted to heaven, therefore, it was not literally brought down into the state of death. Hades here takes the figurative meaning which is best expressed by the word *oblivion*.

Matthew 16:18 "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against it."

The term "gates of hades" here, is identical with the "gates of sheol" in Isa. 38 :10, and is equivalent to the "power of sheol" in Hosea 13 :14. The Lord Jesus knew well that those who confessed Him as the Messiah would be put to death by their enemies and thus come under the power of the state of death. He promised that this power would not prevail against them for He will bring them out of the state of death. It is His promise of resurrection, by which, in His own time He will establish them as His Church.

Luke 10:15 "And thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be cast down to hell (hades)."

This passage is parallel with Matt. 11 :23.

Luke 16:23 "And in hell (hades) he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

This passage is one of exceeding importance because of the use made of it to support every kind of theory in regard to the dead, to punishment, and to the meaning of sheol and hades. The entire passage is deserving of the fullest possible treatment, and is to be the subject of the next pamphlet in this series. The passage in no way contradicts the definition that has been given already to sheol and hades. Without damaging the truth in any way, it can be read, "The rich man died, and was buried, and in the state of death awaiting resurrection he lift up his eyes being in torments." However, honesty forces the admission that this record does apparently destroy the view that has been presented of the condition of those in the state of death, for it presents a scene of activity, conversations, bliss and torment.

It has been said that this passage has been used to prove everything and to contradict everything. It is used to demonstrate the condition of the wicked between death and resurrection, and it is also used to set forth conditions after the resurrection and judgment. Ninety-nine per cent of all that is taught concerning hell is founded on this story, even though all expositors are agreed that hades is not hell. To the superficial reader the story of the rich man and Lazarus appears to be a simple record from the lips of the Lord that reveals the condition of those who are in the state of death. Before any use this to support or to deny some theory they should be able to honestly say that they can answer the following questions that confront every student who makes a penetrating study of this chapter.

Is Luke 16:9 divine instruction? Did the Lord commend the dishonest practices of the unjust steward? Do these things have any bearing on the interpretation of the story of the rich man and Lazarus? Why was a rich man chosen to represent the wicked? Why was a beggar covered with sores chosen to represent the believer and the man of faith? Was the beggar a righteous man, if so, why was he a beggar? (See Psa. 37 :25)

Why did not the beggar look to God for a full meal instead of looking to the rich man for crumbs? Can it be true that he represents the true man of faith? Did the angels carry the beggar to Abraham's bosom? If the rich man saw Lazarus and Abraham in bliss could they see the rich man in torment? If not, why did the rich man have better eyesight? If so, how could Lazarus and Abraham see a man in torment and be happy? Did Lazarus have a finger to dip in water? Did the rich man have a tongue? Why did the rich man appeal to Abraham for mercy? Was Abraham tormenting him? Would you preach verse 25 as a message for today? Are positions in this life reversed in the life to come? If we get good things in this life, will we get evil things in life to come? Why did Abraham say this to the rich man?

Can those who make such free use of the story of the rich man and Lazarus answer these questions? If not, then let them be honest and admit that they have little or no understanding of the message given in Luke 16. There is an answer to everyone of these questions, but let men be sure they have them before they use this chapter to prove or disprove the truth of God.

Acts 2:27, 31 **"Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (hades) , neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."**

"He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell (hades), neither his flesh did see corruption."

In proclaiming the death of Christ, we must not be guilty of denying it in the next breath. The idea that Christ descended into hell and while there preached to certain spirits that were in prison is tradition pure and simple. Christ was in the state of death for three days and three nights. He is where he is now by resurrection. See notes on Psalm 16:10 for a fuller treatment of these p

1 Corinthians 15 :55 **"O death where is thy sting? O grave (hades) where is thy victory?"**

This passage is often quoted to prove that death is no longer death. There is much loose teaching about Christ having taken the sting out of death. Since the sting of death is sin, this idea is false. Men still die because of Adam's sin, and death has passed upon all men because of sin. These great facts were revealed long after Christ had died. Romans 5 :12.

Death is now operating in our bodies and will in time succeed in dragging us down into the state of death. The power of sheol or hades was broken by the resurrection of Christ. It will be broken in the case of ail who are dead when resurrection takes place.

Revelation 1: 1 **"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (hades) and death."**

Keys denote authority. The resurrection of Christ has robbed death and hades of its victory. When the day comes that will manifest the worst development of evil, Christ will be found standing to assure His people that He has authority over death and hades. He will be the destruction of both.

Revelation 6:8 **"And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was death, and hell (hades) followed with him."**

When death rides, the state of death follows. These two are inseparable companions and will be so even in the day of their destruction in God's great destructor - the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:13.14 **"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (hades) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to his works. And death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."**

It is with a shout of praise that the student of the Word of God comes to the last occurrence of the word *hades*. When that point in history marked by this passage is reached, both death and the state of death will have reached their end. The time is after the Kingdom and before the New Heavens and Earth. Never after that time will anyone die for death has been destroyed. Never again will anyone go into the state of death with resurrection in view for sheol-hades is cast into the lake of fire. Those who die the second death will be destroyed both soul and body. They will not be in the lake of fire awaiting resurrection. They have ceased to exist. It is the judgment that was spoken of by Christ when he warned Israel to fear Him who could destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. It is the wages of sin; it is the end of the wicked.

Conclusion

Some wise man has said: "Give light, and the people will find their own way." I have tried to do this in the pages of this pamphlet. If through the helps given here, the student can learn for himself from the Word of God the meaning of sheol and hades, he will have grown in knowledge, even if his findings should not agree with mine.

Throughout this pamphlet, I have resisted the desire to deal at length with related subjects. The subjects of death and destruction have been dealt with briefly out of necessity. Future pamphlets in this series will present these subjects in detail. I trust that any final judgment of this message will be reserved by my readers until all the material is before them.

THE END SS16

CONCORDANCE TO SHEOL

Gen. 37:35 - I will go own into the *grave* unto my son
Gen. 42: 38 - my gray hairs with sorrow to the *grave*
Gen. 44:29 -my gray hairs with sorrow to the *grave*
Gen. 44:31-our father with sorrow to the *grave*
Num. 16:30 -they go down quick into the *pit*
Num. 16:33-went down alive into the *pit*
Deu. 32 :22 - shall burn unto the lowest *hell*
1 Sam. 2:6 -he bringeth down to the *grave*, and bringeth up
2 Sam. 22: 6 - The sorrows of *hell* compassed me about
1 Kgs. 2:6 -his hoar head go down to the *grave* in peace
1 Kgs. 2:9 -his hoar head bring thou down to the *grave*
Job 7:9 -he that goeth down to the *grave*
Job 11:8 -deeper than *hell*; what canst thou know
Job 14: 13 - wouldst hide me in the *grave*
Job 17: 13 - the *grave* is mine house
Job. 17:16 - They shall go down to the bars of the *pit*
Job. 21 :13 - in a moment go down to ,the *grave*
Job 24: 19 - so doth the *grave* those which have sinned
Job 26:6 - *Hell* is naked before him
Psa. 6:5 -in the *grave* who shall give thee thanks
Psa. 9: 17 - The wicked shall be turned into *hell*
Psa. 16:10 - thou wilt not leave my soul in *hell*
Psa. 18:5 - The sorrows of *hell* compassed me about
Psa. 30:3 - brought up my soul from the *grave*
Psa. 31: 17 - let them be silent in the *grave*
Psa. 49: 14 - Like sheep they are laid in the *grave*
Psa. 49: 14 - their beauty shall consume in the *grave*
Psa. 49: 15 - from the power of the *grave*
Psa. 55: 15 - let them go down quick into *hell*
Psa. 86 :13 - delivered my soul from the lowest *hell*
Psa. 88: 3 - my life draweth nigh unto the *grave*
Psa. 89 :48 - his soul from the hand of the *grave*
Psa. 116:3 -the pains of *hell* gat hold of me
Psa. 139:8 -if I make my bed in *hell*
Psa. 141:7 - bones are scattered at the *grave's* mouth
Pro. 1:12 -swallow them up alive as the *grave*
Pro. 5: 5 - her steps take hold on *hell*
Pro. 7 :27 - Her house is the way to *hell*
Pro. 9 :18 - her guests are in the depths of *hell*

Pro. 15:11 - *Hell* and destruction are before the Lord
Pro. 15:24 -may depart from *hell* beneath
Pro. 23: 14 - deliver his soul from *hell*
Pro. 27:20 -*Hell* and destruction are never full
Pro. 30:16 - The *grave*; and the barren womb
Eccl. 9:10 -no work, nor device. . . in the *grave*
S of S 8:6 - jealousy is cruel as the *grave*
Isa. 5: 14 - *hell* hath enlarged herself
Isa. 14:9 -*Hell* from beneath is moved for thee
Isa. 14:11_Thy pomp is brought down to the *grave*
Isa. 14 :15 - thou shalt be brought down to *hell*
Isa. 28: 15 - with *hell* are we at agreement
Isa. 28:18 -your agreement with *hell* will not stand
Isa. 38: 10 - I shall go down to the gates of the *grave*
Isa. 38: 18 - the *grave* cannot praise thee
Isa. 57:9 - didst debase thyself even unto *hell*
Eze. 31: 15 - he went down to the *grave*
Eze. 31 :16 - I cast him down to *hell*
Eze. 31: 17 - They also went down into *hell*
Eze. 32: 27 - gone down to *hell* with their weapons
Eze. 32:21-speak to him out of the midst of *hell*
Hos. 13:14 - ransom them from the power of the *grave*
Hos.13:14 - O *grave*, I will be thy destruction
Amos 9:2 - Though they dig into *hell*
Jon. 2: 2 - out of .the belly of *hell* cried I
Hab. 2:5 - enlargeth his desire as *hell*

Concordance to Hades

Matt. 11 :23 - shalt be brought down to *hell*
Matt. 16: 18 - the gates of *hell* shall not prevail
Luke 10: 15 - shalt be thrust down to *hell*
Luke 16:23- in *hell* he lift up his eyes
Acts 2:27 -wilt not leave my soul in *hell*
Acts2 :31 - his soul was not left in *hell*
1 Cor. 15: 55 - O *grave*, where is thy victory
Rev. 1: 18 - have the keys of *hell* and death
Rev. 6:8 - and *Hell* followed with him
Rev. 20: 13 - death and *hell* delivered up
Rev. 20: 14 - death and *hell* were cast into

