

**Where In HELL
Did That Word
HELL
Come From**



Where In HELL Did That Word HELL Come From? And What The *HELL* Does It Mean?

Hell is not a Hebrew word, Hell is not a Greek word, Hell is not a Latin word. Hell is an English word from the Saxon's (Germanic Peoples) that literally means to cover, or hide: paralleling the word grave.

[Hell] A word used in the King James Version (as well as in the Catholic Douay Version and most older translations) to translate the Hebrew she'ohl' and the Greek hai'des. In the King James Version the word "hell" is rendered from she'ohl' 31 times and from hai'des 10 times. This version is not consistent, however, since she'ohl' is also translated 31 times "grave" and 3 times "pit." In the Douay Version (Catholic Version) she'ohl' is rendered "hell" 64 times, "pit" once, and "death" once.

In 1885, with the publication of the complete English Revised Version, the original word she'ohl' was in many places transliterated into the English text of the Hebrew Scriptures, though, in most occurrences, "grave" and "pit" were used, and "hell" is found some 14 times. This was a point on which the American committee disagreed with the British revisers, and so, when producing the American Standard Version (1901) they transliterated she'ohl' in all 65 of its appearances. Both versions transliterated hai'des in the Christian Greek Scriptures in all ten of its occurrences, though the Greek word Ge'en-na (English, "Gehenna") is rendered "hell" throughout, as is true of many other modern translations.

Concerning this use of "hell" to translate these original words from the Hebrew and Greek, Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (1981, Vol. 2, p. 187) says: "HADES . . . It corresponds to 'Sheol' in the O.T. [Old Testament]. In the A.V. of the O.T. [Old Testament] and N.T. [New Testament], it has been unhappily rendered 'Hell.'"

Collier's Encyclopaedia (1986, Vol. 12, p. 28) says concerning "Hell": "First it stands for the Hebrew Sheol of the Old Testament and the Greek Hades of the Septuagint and New Testament. Since Sheol in Old Testament times referred simply to the abode of the dead and suggested no moral distinctions, the word 'hell,' as understood today, is not a happy translation."

It is, in fact, because of the way that the word "hell" is understood today that it is such an unsatisfactory translation of these original Bible words. Webster's Third New International Dictionary, unabridged, under "Hell" says: "from . . . helan to conceal." The word "hell" thus originally conveyed no thought of heat or torment but simply of a 'covered over or concealed place.' In the old English dialect the expression "helling potatoes" meant, not to roast them, but simply to place the potatoes in the ground or in a cellar.

The meaning given today to the word "hell" is that portrayed in Dante's Divine Comedy and Milton's Paradise Lost, which meaning is completely foreign to the original definition of the word. The idea of a "hell" of fiery torment, however, dates back long before Dante or Milton. The Grolier Universal Encyclopaedia (1971, Vol. 9, p. 205) under "Hell" says: "Hindus and Buddhists regard hell as a place of spiritual cleansing and final restoration. Islamic tradition considers it as a place of everlasting punishment." The idea of suffering after death is found among the pagan religious teachings of ancient peoples in Babylon and Egypt. Babylonian and Assyrian beliefs depicted the "nether world . . . as a place full of horrors, . . . presided over by gods and demons of great strength and fierceness." Although ancient Egyptian religious texts do not teach that the burning of any individual victim would go on forever, they do portray the "Other World" as featuring "pits of fire" for "the damned."—The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria, by Morris Jastrow, Jr., 1898, p. 581; The Book of the Dead, with introduction by E. Wallis Budge, 1960, pp. 135, 144, 149, 151, 153, 161, 200.

"Hellfire" has been a basic teaching in Christendom for many centuries. It is understandable why The Encyclopaedia Americana (1956, Vol. XIV, p. 81) said: "Much confusion and misunderstanding has been caused

through the early translators of the Bible persistently rendering the Hebrew Sheol and the Greek Hades and Gehenna by the word hell. The simple transliteration of these words by the translators of the revised editions of the Bible has not sufficed to appreciably clear up this confusion and misconception.” Nevertheless, such transliteration and consistent rendering does enable the Bible student to make an accurate comparison of the texts in which these original words appear and, with open mind, thereby to arrive at a correct understanding of their true significance - November 10, 2005

THE ENGLISH WORD HELL

Tooke, John Horne, 1736—1812, English philologist.

Philology etymologically, is the study of ancient texts and languages. The term originally meant a love (Greek philo-) of learning and literature (Greek -logia).

In the academic traditions of several nations, a wide sense of the term "philology" describes the study of a language together with its literature and the historical and cultural contexts that are indispensable for an understanding of the literary works and other culturally significant texts. Philology thus comprises the study of the grammar, rhetoric, history, interpretation of authors, and critical traditions associated with a given language.

“John Horne, Tooke” would be a considered a foremost authority on words and their meaning.

The English word Hell grew into its present meaning. Horne Tooke says that hell, heel, hill, hole, whole, hall, hull, halt and hold are all from the same root. "Hell, any place, or some place covered over. Heel, that part of the foot which is covered by the leg. Hill, any heap of earth, or stone, etc., by which the plain or level surface of the earth is covered. Hale, i.e., healed or whole. Whole, the same as hale, i.e., covered. It was formerly written whole, without the w, as a wound or sore is healed, or whole, that is, covered over by the skin, which manner of expression will not seem extraordinary if we consider our use of the word recover. Hall, a covered

building, where persons assemble, or where goods are protected from the weather. Hull, of a nut, etc. That by which a nut is covered. Hole, some place covered over. 'You shall seek for holes to hide your heads in.' Holt, holed, hol'd holt. A rising ground or knoll covered with trees. Hold, as the hold of a ship, in which things are covered, or the covered part of a ship." The word was first applied to the grave by our German and English ancestors, and as superstition came to regard the grave as an entrance to a world of torment, Hell at length became the word used to denote an imaginary realm of fiery woe.

King James footnote on Psalms 16:10

—hell (KJV): The word hell, from the Saxon {hillan} or {helan,} to hide, or from {holl,}, a cavern, though now used only for the place of torment, anciently denoted the concealed or unseen place of the dead in general; corresponding to the Greek [adev,] i.e., [o aidev topos,] the invisible place and the Hebrew {sheol,} from {shaal,} to ask, seek, the place and state of those who are out of the way, and to be sought for.

Hades (Easton Bible Dictionary)

That which is out of sight, a Greek word used to denote the state or place of the dead. All the dead alike go into this place. To be buried, to go down to the grave, to descend into Hades, are equivalent expressions. In the LXX. (SEPTUAGINT) this word is the usual rendering of the Hebrew sheol, the common receptacle of the departed (Gen 42:38; Psa 139:8; Hos 13:14; Isa 14:9). This term is of comparatively rare occurrence in the Greek New Testament. Our Lord speaks of Capernaum as being "brought down to hell" (Hades), i.e., simply to the lowest debasement, (Mat 11:23). It is contemplated as a kind of kingdom which could never overturn the foundation of Christ's kingdom (Mat 16:18), i.e., Christ's church can never die.

In Act 2:27-31 Peter quotes the LXX. version of Psa 16:8-11, plainly for the purpose of proving our Lord's resurrection from the dead. David was left in the place of the dead, and his body saw corruption. Not so with Christ. According to ancient prophecy (Psa 30:3) he was recalled to life.

The word "Hades" of the New Testament is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Sheol" of the Old Testament (Acts. 2,27, Psalm 16:10). What happens in Hades, or rather Sheol, Ecclesiastes tells us: "for in the Sheol, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom." (Ecclesiastes 9:10) and "For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten." (Ecclesiastes 9:5; see also Psalm 89:49; 139:8; Numbers 16:30). "The Lord brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the Sheol and raises up." (1. Samuel 2:6). Everybody goes to Hell/Hades, whether they are good or bad or whether they believe or not (John 5:28-29; Job 3:11-19, 14:13; Ez 32:18-32; Ps. 31:17; Dan. 12:2).

Hell (Smith's Bible Dictionary)

In the Old Testament this is the word generally and unfortunately used by our translators to render the Hebrew Sheol . It really means the place of the dead, the unseen world, without deciding whether it be the place of misery or of happiness. It is clear that in many passages of the Old Testament Sheol can only mean "the grave," and is rendered in the Authorized Version; see, for example, (Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 1 Samuel 2:6; Job 14:13) In other passages, however, it seems to involve a notion of punishment, and is therefore rendered in the Authorized Version by the word "hell." But in many cases this translation misleads the reader. In the New Testament "hell" is the translation of two words, Hades and Gehenna . The word Hades, like Sheol sometimes means merely "the grave," (Acts 2:31; 1 Corinthians 15:55; Revelation 20:13) or in general "the unseen world." It is in this sense that the creeds say of our Lord, "He went down into hell," meaning the state of the dead in general, without any restriction of happiness or misery. Elsewhere in the New Testament Hades is used of a place of torment, (Matthew 11:23; Luke 16:23; 2 Peter 2:4) etc.; consequently it has been the prevalent, almost the universal, notion that Hades is an intermediate state between death and resurrection, divided into two parts one the abode of the blest and the other of the lost. It is used eleven times in the New Testament, and only once translated "grave." (1 Corinthians 15:55) The word most frequently used (occurring twelve times) in the New Testament for the place of future punishment is Gehenna

or Gehenna of fire . This was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned; a fit symbol of the wicked and their destruction. See: See Hinnom
Dr. Adam Clarke

Dr. Adam Clarke says: "The word Hell, used in the common translation, conveys now an improper meaning of the original word; because Hell is only used to signify the place of the damned. But as the word Hell comes from the Anglo-Saxon *helan*, to cover, or hide, hence the tiling or slating of a house is called, in some parts of England (particularly Cornwall), *heling*, to this day, and the covers of books (in Lancashire), by the same name, so the literal import of the original word Hades was formerly well expressed by it."---Com. in loc. Footnote Psa 115:18

The ancient Greeks believed in the survival of a soul (*psy·khe'*, the word they also used for the butterfly). They called Hades the realm of the dead and believed it was ruled over by a god of the same name. In his book *Orpheus—A General History of Religions*, French scholar Salomon Reinach wrote of the Greeks: "A widely spread belief was that [the soul] entered the infernal regions after crossing the river Styx in the boat of the old ferryman Charon, who exacted as the fare an *obolus* [coin], which was placed in the mouth of the dead person. In the infernal regions it appeared before the three judges of the place . . . ; if condemned for its crimes, it had to suffer in Tartarus. . . . The Greeks even invented a Limbo, the abode of children who had died in infancy, and a Purgatory, where a certain mild chastisement purified souls." According to *The World Book Encyclopedia*, souls that ended up in Tartarus "suffered eternal torment."

In Italy the Etruscans, whose civilization preceded that of the Romans, also believed in punishment after death. The *Dictionnaire des Religions* (Dictionary of Religions) states: "The extreme care that the Etruscans took of their dead is explained by their conception of the nether regions. Like the Babylonians, they considered these to be places of torture and despair for the *manes* [spirits of the dead]. The only relief for them could come from propitiatory offerings made by their descendants." Another reference work declares: "Etruscan tombs show scenes of horror that inspired Christian paintings of hell."

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