



Do the Fires of Hell Come From God? (Part II)

Acts 3:23: (NASB) *And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.*



Several weeks ago, we began to talk about the destiny of sinners as described in the Bible. In Part I of our series, we looked at the biblical phrase *weeping and gnashing of teeth* - to whom it applied and when. We found out that it really has nothing at all to do with any kind of eternal punishment. Today in Part II, we will look at an even more pointed biblical phrase: hellfire. Where does it come from, how is it used and is it referring to eternal torment and torture?

Guest: Joy Thompson (Rick's sister)

There are two entirely different Greek words in the New Testament that must be examined relating to the teaching of eternal punishment. We will look at them one at a time and focus first on how Jesus used them, then we will focus on their wider biblical usage. Our objective will be to see how Jesus was maintaining the true meanings of the words. The first word for review is the Greek word *Gehenna*, which is most often translated "hellfire." The second word, *Hades*, will be featured in Part III of our series.



Here are the first two uses - we have three important questions to ask with each verse we look at:

Who is being spoken to?

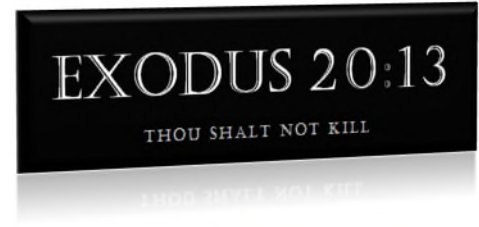
What have they done or could potentially do?

What is the consequence of the thoughts, words or actions in question?

Matthew 5:21-22: (NASB) ²¹*You have heard that the ancients were told, you shall not commit murder and whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.* ²²*But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, you good-for-nothing, shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, Raca (you fool), shall be guilty enough to go into the **fiery hell <1067>**. (Gehenna)*



(Source: Bible commentary by Albert Barnes) *Raca* (You fool). This is a Syriac word, expressive of great contempt. It comes from a verb signifying to be empty, vain; and hence, as a word of contempt, denotes senseless, stupid, shallow-brains. Jesus teaches here that to use such words is a violation of the sixth commandment.



Jesus said by being verbally abusive to your brother, it is as if you murder his reputation.

John said the same:

1 John 3:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. ¹⁵Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

The phrase *Raca* or *you fool* is indicative of someone who hates his brother. This is a high standard beyond literal murder.

**Who
is being
spoken to?**

Matthew 5:21-22, 27-30

**What have they
done or could
potentially do?**

Matthew 5:21-22, 27-30

This is from the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is speaking to his disciples, teaching them they are accountable for their words.

Jesus is in the midst of elevating the principles of the Law and showing his followers how serious their words are in relation to their opportunity for eternal life.

Matthew 5:27-30: (NASB) ²⁷You have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery; ²⁸but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into **hell <1067>**. ³⁰If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into **hell <1067>**.

This is very colorful picture language! It sounds like Jesus is talking about self-mutilation! Why would Jesus, the Great Healer, tell us to rip out our eyeballs?



Jesus is showing his followers how serious their secret thoughts and actions are in relation to their opportunity for eternal life. He explained there is a consequence if such thoughts are allowed. Thoughts can cause us to sin.

Psalms 19:13-14: (KJV) ¹³ *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. ¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.*

What is the consequence of the thoughts, words or actions in question?

Matthew 5:21~22, 27~30

Gehenna!

So, what does this word **Gehenna** mean?
What kind of consequence is Jesus talking about?

Gehenna: Strongs #1067 geena (gheh'-en-nah); of Hebrew origin valley of (the son of) Hinnom; ge-henna (or Ge-Hinnom), a valley of Jerusalem

So, **Gehenna** is the Valley of Hinnom - how does that help us? What happened there?



(Source: Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary) In the time of Jesus the Valley of Hinnom was used as the garbage dump of Jerusalem. Into it were thrown all the filth and garbage of the city, including the dead bodies of animals and executed criminals. To consume all this, fires burned constantly. Maggots worked in the filth. When the wind blew from that direction over the city, its awfulness was quite evident. At night wild dogs howled and gnashed their teeth as they fought over the garbage.

Gehenna was a garbage dump where refuse was continually burned.

Is Jesus saying that if you speak slanderously of your brother or if you lust in your heart or act sinfully, your penalty is to be burned at the local dump? Was there something about this *particular* dump that made it worthy to be a specific example used by Jesus over and over again?



Turns out that this particular valley was specifically known for its history:

Jeremiah 19:2-6: (ASV) ²and go forth unto the **valley of the son of Hinnom**, which is by the entry of the gate Harsith, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee; ³and say, Hear ye the word of Jehovah, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem: thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. (God is angry! Why...?) ⁴Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, that they knew not, they and their fathers and the kings of Judah; and have filled this place with the blood of innocents, ⁵and have built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons in the fire for burnt-offerings unto Baal; which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind: ⁶therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that this place shall no more be called Topheth, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The Valley of Slaughter.



Israel - God's chosen people (!) - at this particular time of Jeremiah, they worshipped idols, Baal particularly, and sacrificed their children in fire. They threw their children - alive - into the fire. God never fathomed such a heartless action! It is such a dark evil that had no sense of the value of life.

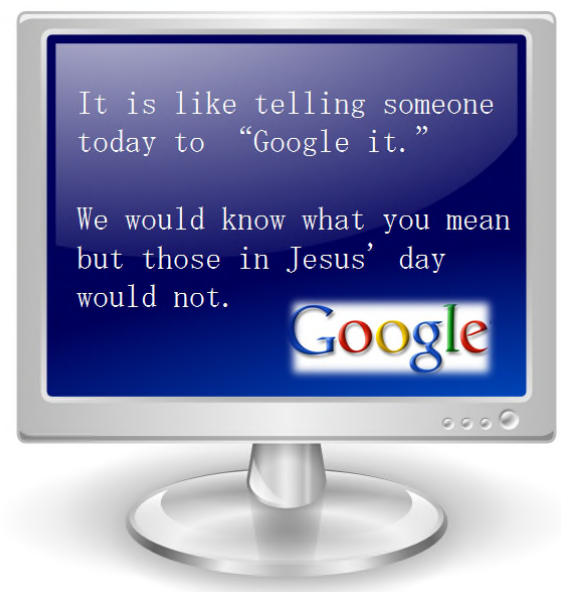
(Source: John Gill's Exposition of the Bible) *That this place shall no more be called Tophet: as it had been, from the beating of drums in it, that the cries and shrieks of infants burnt in the fire might not be heard by their parents: Nor the valley of the son of Hinnom: which was its name in the times of Joshua, and long before it was called Tophet; but now it should have neither names.*

Because this place was the scene of such hideous behavior in the name of a false god, He would have nothing to do with it.

In our day, the drums beat very loudly to distract us from the moral degradation of our society around us.

So, the prophecy in Jeremiah was to show the deep and abiding results of sin. This valley had been the scene of child sacrifices to idols and God's judgment was sure - He would label this location as one of godless death, for that was how Israel had used it.

When the people of Jesus' day heard the word *Gehenna*, they would have all known about that location.





(Source: Biblical commentary Jamieson, Fausset and Brown) *Valley of Slaughter*: It should be the scene of slaughter, no longer of children, but of men; not of "innocents" (Jeremiah 19:4), but of those who richly deserved their fate. The city could not be assailed without first occupying the valley of Hinnom, in which was the only fountain: hence arose the violent battle there.

To attack Jerusalem, one would come through this valley. The bloodiest battles outside of the city would take place there resulting in dead soldiers. It was literally a place of great slaughter - not only of children but of fighting men.

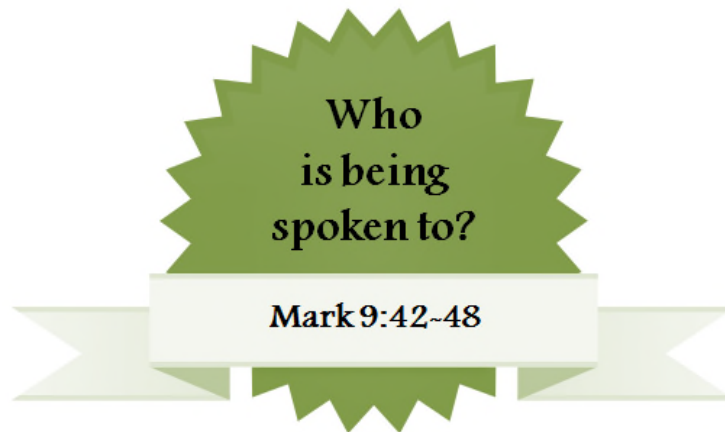
Jeremiah 19:7: (NASB) *I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hand of those who seek their life; and I will give over their carcasses as food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth.*

Gehenna encompassed all that we have just discussed, as it first became a place of heinous idolatry with the live burning of children and then a place of death, defeat and dishonor - a place of FINAL and COMPLETE DESTRUCTION.

Was *Gehenna* meant to be a symbol of torture or a symbol of godless destruction?

To answer this question, we will look into another example of Jesus using Gehenna in his teaching:

Mark 9:42-48: (NASB) ⁴²*Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea.*



Jesus is again speaking to his disciples. (Heads up! This means he is talking to us, so we need to pay attention...) He is *not* speaking to the "everybody else;" just his disciples.



What have they done or could potentially do?

Mark 9:42-48



⁴³If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into **hell <1067>**, into the unquenchable fire, ⁴⁴~~[where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.]~~¹

Now we know why he used the word *Gehenna* <1067>, for at that very moment there was "unquenchable fire" in the garbage dump! His audience would know what he meant by using that metaphor. By his holding a child, (see [Matthew 18:2](#) and [Mark 9:37](#)) they would know the history of that place and get the point he was trying to make.

What is the consequence of the thoughts, words or actions in question?

Mark 9:42-48



What you do can bring you to the consequence of Gehenna!

⁴⁵If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into **hell <1067>**, ⁴⁶~~[where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.]~~²

Joshua 23:6-8: (NASB) ⁶Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left; ⁷That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: ⁸But cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day.

¹ This phrase is not found in the original manuscripts of the Bible and therefore considered not authentic/ added later by the translators.

² Same.



The principle of this is for us to cling to the way of the Lord. Don't go wandering off contrary to His word and principles. How important this is! It is a matter of spiritual life and death for us to follow in His way and not our own.

Where you go can bring you to the consequence of Gehenna!

⁴⁷If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into **hell <1067>**, ⁴⁸where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

Why does Jesus want us to enter the kingdom crippled and not whole and complete? MORE ON THAT SOON...

What you do can bring you to the consequence of Gehenna! But what is the consequence of Gehenna? Let's look at the worms in Verse 48. The "new" factor of undying worms in verse 48 actually sheds some light on this.

(Actually, it's not so new...)

Isaiah 66:24: (KJV) *And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.*

This shows total destruction and dishonor.

(Source: Biblical commentary by C.T. Russell) *That have transgressed*: The Jews had a custom of refusing usual burial to the very vilest criminals, casting their dead bodies into the Valley of Hinnom with the filth of the city, indicating that they should be esteemed as the offscourings of society and that their memory should rot.

So, this imagery of Gehenna is built upon a solid basis of Old Testament history - not on any imagined picture of anything related to torture, for the only torture in Gehenna was done as an *abhorrence* to God. The whole reason to focus on this valley was to see it as a symbol of disgrace and total defeat! IT IS A SYMBOL OF FINAL AND UTTER DESTRUCTION!



The REAL valley of Gehinnom, also known as Gehenna and Hell.



A caller from Connecticut suggests that the book, *Dante's Inferno*, advanced the concept of eternal torment. It defies the law of physics. Can we walk on water? Can we fly? Are we fireproof? Simply said, fire consumes. Our God is a God of love, far away from the hideous idea of eternal torment.

Another Old Testament prophecy - fulfilled after the Day of Vengeance and applies to destroying Satan:

Isaiah 30:33: (NASB) *For Topheth has long been ready, indeed, it has been prepared for the king. He has made it deep and large, A pyre of fire with plenty of wood; The breath of the LORD, like a torrent of brimstone, sets it afire.*



Other Old Testament imagery relating to destruction:

Psalms 37:9-10: (NASB) *⁹For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land. ¹⁰Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; and you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there.*

Be cut off, be no more...

Psalms 37:20: (NASB) *But the wicked will perish; and the enemies of the LORD will be like the glory of the pastures, they vanish - like smoke they vanish away.*

Perish - vanish like smoke...

The fire of Gehenna was a picture of total destruction, disgrace and dishonor in the Jewish culture at that time. The spiritual application is that if we do not do what we should as followers of Jesus, we could be subject to that same disgrace and annihilation.



More of Jesus' teachings using the imagery of Gehenna:

Matthew 10:28: (KJV) *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 <622>** both soul and body in **hell <1067>**.*

One of the great theological debates is whether or not hell is a place where one lives on forever, either in eternal torment or eternal separation from God. Here Jesus used the word *destroy* in conjunction with *Gehenna*.

Here is the Luke version of the same event:

Luke 12:4-5: (NASB) *⁴I say to you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. ⁵But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the one who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into **hell <1067>**; yes, I tell you, fear him!*

Who
is being
spoken to?

Matthew 10:28
Luke 12:4-5

Jesus AGAIN speaks to his disciples, this time it is about courage. He teaches them not to fear the temporary consequences of death that men can inflict.



What have they
done or could
potentially do?

Matthew 10:28

Luke 12:4-5

They are going to go out and preach and will inevitably face opposition and even hostility. Jesus is giving them a lesson on living in an eternal perspective rather than a one human lifetime perspective. They were not to be afraid!

What is the
consequence of the
thoughts, words or
actions in question?

Matthew 10:28

Luke 12:4-5

The consequence is a simple comparison between having your life taken by men and ending a temporary life or having your life taken by God and ending it eternally in FINAL DESTRUCTION! Revelation refers to this as the *second death*, from which there is no second resurrection.

Does the New Testament follow the Old in teaching about destruction?
Matthew 10:28 uses a particular word in describing the consequence of Gehenna - *destroy* - what does this particular word mean?

Destroy: Strongs #622 apollumi (ap-ol'-loo-mee); to destroy fully (reflexively, to perish, or lose), literally or figuratively

If we look at other ways it is used, we can more easily figure out its meaning.

Some uses:

Matthew 2:13: (KJV) *And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to **destroy** <622> him.*

Obviously the meaning here is that of destruction, as Herod wanted to kill the children to end the possibility of a Messiah, not torment them alive.



Matthew 5:29: (KJV) *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should **perish <622>**, and not that thy whole body should be cast into **hell <1067>**.*

Though picture language, the obvious meaning is again total destruction. Jesus is not telling people to literally pull out their eyeballs.

When we want to figure out how Jesus approached a subject, we look at the pattern of his teaching. We look at his words, how he used them and how they fit into the overall picture. He used familiar illustrations to that time period. He used phrases like *fishers of men* to his fishermen Apostles and *sowing the seed of the Gospel* to those from an agricultural society. When referencing complete destruction, Jesus used Gehenna as an example, as this would be the place that best symbolized annihilation to his audience.

Matthew 22:7: (KJV) *But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and **destroyed <622>** those murderers, and burned up their city.*

This is the parable of the marriage feast. Jesus' meaning is again the destruction of life.

Matthew 26:52: (KJV) *Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall **perish <622>** with the sword.*

This word **<622>** is all about dying - not torture!

All of these examples are exactly in line with the Old Testament perspective on destruction:

Psalms 68:1-2: (NASB) *¹Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee before Him. ²As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; As wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish before God.*



Another metaphor: Where does the wax go on a burning candle? It vanishes away. The wicked perish, just like wax melts before a fire.



A caller from Connecticut stated that her husband recently passed away and was cremated. She was setting up her own final arrangements and asked if this was the wrong thing to do.

We do not believe there is anything scripturally wrong with cremation for a Christian. This life will end, but because of the ransom, Jesus will resurrect us from whatever condition our physical bodies were in at death. It will not matter where or how you died or the physical condition of your body.

Did Jesus use the Gehenna imagery with anyone else besides his followers?

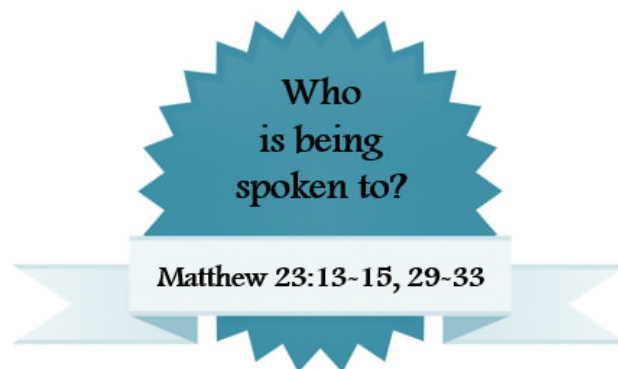
Jesus DID use Gehenna as a stark and serious warning against the religious leaders of his time:

Matthew 23:13-15: (NASB) *¹³But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. ¹⁴["Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive*



~~greater condemnation.]~~³ ¹⁵Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of **hell <1067>** as yourselves.

Jesus at this point is holding an innocent child (see [Matthew 18:2](#) and [Mark 9:37](#)). That is pretty powerful because in talking about the responsibility to not stumble others and to respect their spiritual lives, he used the illustration of Gehenna where children had been brutally killed by fire. The live child is right there in front of them who Jesus is protecting physically and spiritually.



Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees, giving them a lesson of responsibility and a lesson of influence and outlining the potential consequences of the misuse of these qualities. The Pharisees were spiritually accountable for their actions.

Jesus continues this hard lesson, as it is the Pharisees' last chance to accept him:

Matthew 23:29-33: (NASB) ²⁹Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰and say, If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets. ³¹So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³²Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. ³³You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of **hell <1067>**?

Throughout Jesus' ministry, we can see how his reaction towards the Pharisees had to change. He started out very gentle, answering questions with questions. He challenged their way of thinking. But by now, they had enough time to recognize him as their Messiah and to see his teachings were correct. He had to be forceful with them - how could they avoid total and irrevocable destruction with their actions and attitudes?

Consider religion today, specifically those in positions of teaching and oversight. The warning is also for them to not fall into those same traps. They must fulfill their spiritual responsibility given according to Scripture.

³ This phrase is not found in the original manuscripts of the Bible and therefore considered not authentic/ added later by the translators. It is found, however, in both Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47.



What have they
done or could
potentially do?

Matthew 23:13-15, 29-33

At every turn, the Pharisees sought to discredit and disallow Jesus' ministry. They saw him as a problem rather than a prophet and as a rival rather than a Redeemer. As a result, they led the people away towards sin instead of leading them towards their Savior.

What is the
consequence of the
thoughts, words or
actions in question?

Matthew 23:13-15, 29-33

The potential consequence of such godless actions would be Gehenna - a final and disgraceful destruction. (Notice Jesus never says that there is no way out for them, he just says that was their current trajectory - The Day of Judgment is all about the opportunity to change!)

The Apostle Paul was a persecutor of the church when he was known as Saul. We see what his trajectory was as Saul. He was very brutal to the Christians.

We have a contrast between Saul's attitude and what Paul became:

Philippians 3:7-8: (NASB) ⁷But whatever things were gained to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,



He took all the riches of his life and was willing to become "lame" and "crippled," so to speak, to cut off and totally divorce himself from his past perceptions and actions. His contact with Jesus through a vision changed the path of his life. *Pluck out your eyes* - it changed what he saw; *cut off your hand* - it changed what he did; *cut off your foot* - the direction of his life was altered completely.





The Apostle Paul is a perfect example of “walking into the kingdom lame.” In order to leave behind the wrong things, we have to cut them out of our lives. What a lesson!

One last teaching of Jesus where he uses Gehenna - sound familiar?

Matthew 18:7-9: (NASB) ⁷Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! ⁸If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire. ⁹If your eye causes you to stumble pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery **hell** <1067>.

We have now discussed every single instance when Jesus used the word Gehenna.



Observations of Jesus' teachings regarding Gehenna:

- The imagery was meant to show what Gehenna was already known to symbolize - total and disgraceful destruction of those who were completely out of harmony with God.
- Jesus used this imagery primarily with his disciples as a potential and eternal consequence.
- Jesus used this imagery with other dramatic imagery (like cutting off hands, etc.) to show the seriousness of sin, just like the Apostle Paul illustrated how he cut things out of his life to get in line with Christ.
- Jesus used this imagery to warn the Pharisees, as they had knowledge and responsibility. They were spiritually accountable at that time, as they were in charge of the nation when Messiah arrived.
- Jesus never used this imagery to describe the average sinner's path - only those who should have known better.

Matthew 12:41-42: (NASB) ⁴¹The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴²The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

This Day of Judgment is for everyone to have an opportunity to be accountable for what they have done and then come to full knowledge of the Lord. This includes the Gentiles who did not know Jesus and the Jews who did not accept Jesus. The sacrifice of Christ purchased them all.

Ezekiel 16:53-54,60: (NASB) ⁵³Nevertheless, I will restore their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, and along with them your own captivity, ⁵⁴in order that you may bear your humiliation and feel ashamed for all that you have done when you become a consolation to them. ...⁶⁰Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.



Even Sodom and Gomorrah will condemn Israel but the Lord will remember His covenant with them.



A CQ App user asks: Could anyone who lived before Jesus be condemned to hell?

During the Day of Judgment, anyone who ever lived - before or after Jesus - will be judged for their sins, but they will also have the opportunity to be reconciled to God by striving for righteousness.

Does Gehenna appear anywhere else in the New Testament outside of Jesus' own words?

Only once. Here again, disciples are the audience:

James 3:2-6: (NASB) ²For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. ³Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. ⁴Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. ⁵So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! ⁶And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by **hell <1067>**.

James uses Gehenna as an example of how our words can be destructive. The course of life can be spiritual and faithful or can turn to a completely destructive path.

The context here again is to believers. Nowhere in Scripture is the word Gehenna used to describe the path of the vast majority of mankind. It is only to followers and those who were spiritually responsible at that time. If Jesus were trying to warn us of a burning fire of everlasting hell, surely he would have alerted the “everybody else” that they were destined for such an end.

(Note: Part III of this series will look in depth at the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.)

Some of us have more responsibility now. The application of judgment is now for some and later for others.

Hebrews 6:4-6: (NASB) ⁴For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, (describing those who have been blessed abundantly in Christ - they are “all in” and accountable) ⁶and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put him to open shame.

If someone who is “all in” has consciously decided to live in accordance with God's will, then falls away - completely renounces and opposes God and Jesus - their destiny is destruction. This would be someone who understood the ransom of Jesus, lived it and then rejected it.

The vast majority of mankind were never “all in.” In fact, Jesus spoke in parables so that the world would not understand. Satan was once “all in.” He now opposes God and is doomed for destruction. Total destruction is the biblical end for the incorrigible.



recap
recap

Gehenna is a valley in Israel and was used by Jesus and once by James as a symbol of total destruction. What happened in that valley in ancient history was so heinous to God, He said it would now be called the Valley of Slaughter. Carcasses of men in battle were left there to rot. In the time of Jesus, this valley was used as a dump. Sulfur was constantly thrown in to keep the fires burning 24/7. The maggots worked around the edges of the pit so that anything not consumed by the fire, they would break down. It was a symbol of disgrace because dead bodies of criminals were thrown in there in lieu of an honorable burial.

Acts 3:23: (KJV) *And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be **destroyed** <1842> from among the people.*

The destruction verse 23 is talking about is in context of verse 21:

Acts 3:21: (KJV) *Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*

We see the full opportunity: Once the times of restitution are given to the world (called *the time of healing and the time when the word of the Lord will cover the earth like the waters cover the sea* - then will be the time for the rest of mankind's (those who did not follow Jesus in their lifetime; the "everybody else") full opportunity to walk in righteousness. If they choose not to accept Christ as their personal Savior and walk in his way, their end result will also be Gehenna - but that is only after the chance for full knowledge and opportunity.

John 5:28-29: (NAS) ²⁸*Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice, ²⁹and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.*

Back to Acts:

Acts 3:23: (KJV) *And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be **destroyed** <1842> from among the people.*

Destroyed: Strongs #1842 exolothreuo (ex-ol-oth-ryoo'-o); to extirpate, to destroy out of its place, destroy utterly, to destroy completely, wipe out, to pull up by the root, to cut out by surgery

During the Times of Restitution, the rest of the world will become accountable the way true followers are now.

Destruction: Strongs #684 apoleia (ap-o'-li-a); ruin or loss (physical, spiritual or eternal)

Matthew 7:13: (KJV) *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to **destruction** <684>, and many there be which go in there at.*

Philippians 3:19: (KJV) *Whose end is **destruction** <684>, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.*

Whose end is destruction, NOT torture or torment!



Destruction: Strongs #3639 olethros (ol'-eth-ros); (to destroy; a prolonged form); ruin, i.e. death, punishment

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: (ASV) ⁷and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, ⁸rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: ⁹who shall suffer punishment, even eternal **destruction <3639>** from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might.

At that time, everyone will have been accountable. At this time, Jesus was focusing on his followers. His teaching was primarily focused on drawing people to him to become the body of Christ. He talked to them specifically about their accountability. He was not talking to the rest of the world at that point, who would have an opportunity to learn and understand things later.

The total destruction of Gehenna is reserved only for those who, after full opportunity to accept Him, deny God. We can be comfortable in the assurance of God's mercy!

*So, do the fires of hell come from God?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Joy!) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition of CQ Rewind!***

Summary

All the instances Jesus uses the word hell/Gehenna:

Matthew 5:22: (KJV) *But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell <1067> fire.*

Matthew 5:29-30: (KJV) ²⁹And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into **hell <1067>**. ³⁰And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into **hell <1067>**.

Matthew 10:28: (KJV) *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 **hell <1067>**.*

Matthew 18:9: (KJV) *And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into **hell <1067>** fire.*

Matthew 23:15: (KJV) *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of **hell <1067>** than yourselves.*

Matthew 23:33: (KJV) *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of **hell <1067>**?*



Mark 9:43: (KJV) *And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into **hell <1067>**, into the fire that never shall be quenched:*

Mark 9:45: (KJV) *And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into **hell <1067>**, into the fire that never shall be quenched:*

Mark 9:47: (KJV) *And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into **hell <1067>** fire:*

Luke 12:5: (KJV) *But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into **hell <1067>**; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.*

The only other New Testament use of Gehenna:

James 3:6: (KJV) *And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by **hell <1067>**.*

More Old Testament imagery showing the result of destruction for the incorrigible:

Psalms 37:1-2: (NASB) *¹Do not fret because of evildoers, be not envious toward wrongdoers. ²For they will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb.*

Wither and fade...

Psalms 37:9-10: (NASB) *⁹For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land. ¹⁰Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; and you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there.*

Be cut off, be no more...

Psalms 37:20: (NASB) *But the wicked will perish; and the enemies of the LORD will be like the glory of the pastures, they vanish—like smoke they vanish away.*

Perish - vanish like smoke...

Psalms 37:34: (NASB) *Wait for the LORD and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it.*

Cut off...

Psalms 69:24-28: (NASB) *²⁴Pour out Your indignation on them, and may Your burning anger overtake them. ²⁵May their camp be desolate; May none dwell in their tents. ²⁶For they have persecuted him whom You Yourself have smitten, and they tell of the pain of those whom You have wounded. ²⁷Add iniquity to their iniquity, and may they not come into Your righteousness. ²⁸May they be blotted out of the book of life and may they not be recorded with the righteous.*

Be blotted out of the book of life... (To be blotted out, you had to be written there to begin with.)

Psalms 1:4-5: (NASB) *⁴The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away. ⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.*

Driven away like chaff in the wind - they perish...



Another account of Gehenna (the Valley of Hinnom) from Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 7:30-33: (NKJV) ³⁰For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight, says the LORD. They have set their abominations in the house, which is called by My name, to pollute it. ³¹And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into My heart. ³²Therefore behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when it will no more be called Tophet, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room. ³³The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one will frighten them away.

So, looking at this place, Gehenna, it is obvious that it held a very specific meaning in Jewish history. Its meaning was associated with such an abhorrence for evil, idolatry and torture that the land itself was called unclean and was only used as a refuse dump.

(Source: John Gill's Exposition on the Whole Bible) but the Valley of Slaughter; or, "of the slain," as the Targum; from the multitude of those that should be killed here, at the siege and taking of Jerusalem by the army of the Chaldeans; or that should be brought hither to be buried; see Jeremiah 19:11 and see Gill on Jeremiah 7:32.

Romans 8:6: (KJV) *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Finally, notice the contrast - death vs. life and peace...it is simply death; not death and torture or death and flames - it is death - the end of life.