



Has the Bible Been Mistranslated and Misunderstood? (Part IV)

2 Timothy 3:16: (NASB) *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.*

Special Guest: David Stein



For any Christian, understanding the Bible and its message should be of paramount importance. The fact that the Bible is a collection of books and letters written in ancient times by various authors presents a challenge to this understanding. We need to learn what is authentic, what is mistranslated and how it all harmonizes. We continue our exploration of how we got our Bible and how the process of translation from the original languages requires precision in order to get the truths God intends. This is a necessary exercise because the Bible is the foundation of our faith. We depend upon an accurate and honest assessment of what it teaches so we, in turn, can believe and spread the true gospel message.

Joining us again for our Bible mistranslation series is our brother in Christ, David Stein. David is an elder of the Allentown, Pennsylvania, Bible Students.

Here is a short summary of our earlier mistranslation series: Episodes 1151, 1152 and 1153.



- ⦿ We examined how the Bible came to be compiled and what is meant by the “canon” of the Bible.
- ⦿ We looked at writings that did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the canon of the Bible.
- ⦿ We reviewed the sayings of Jesus with respect to the Scriptures and how he quoted copiously from the Hebrew Scriptures in his teachings.
- ⦿ We considered the question of why there are so many translations and what value these have.
- ⦿ We listed the many modern-day tools and references we have to comprehend the meaning of the original languages of the Bible.
- ⦿ We found “spurious” Scriptures - meaning, they were not in the original writings but were added sometime afterward.
- ⦿ We began a study of mistranslations that obscure the true meaning of the original languages.

Let’s continue with mistranslations that obscure meaning. Let’s look at several simple examples of mistranslations that are not earthshaking but still notable.



Acts 12:4: (KJV) *And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after **Easter** <3957> to bring him forth to the people.*

Is Easter a mistranslation?



Over a year ago, we received a detailed explanation from a listener explaining his perspective on why he believed the word *Easter* is *not* a mistranslation. He did a fine job putting together arguments in favor of it, but if we examine it further, we will see why it is a mistranslation.

The King James Version and its precursor, the Tyndale translation, are the only English translations of the Bible to use the term *Easter*. *All other English translations* use a reference to the Jewish spring festival of *Passover*, *pascha*, or *the feast of unleavened bread*.

Passover/Easter: Strong's #3957
(Greek: πάσχα) *pascha*; the Passover (the meal, the day, the festival or the special sacrifices connected with it)

This word is used 29 times in the New Testament. In every other occasion in the King James Version, it is translated into English as *Passover*.



Our listener found fault with us for not making a distinction between *the days of unleavened bread* and the *Passover*. He stated that distinction was one reason why he felt that the King James Version correctly translated the word *pascha* as *Easter*. He believes the *Passover* is its own day and *the days of unleavened bread* are their own distinct festival days after the *Passover*.

This verse addresses his argument:

Luke 22:1: (KJV) *Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.*



Here the *feast of unleavened bread* is synonymous with the *Passover*. *Passover* can refer to the animal sacrifices, the meal, or as in this case, it refers to the entire feast. We do not see a scriptural basis for an exception from translating it as *Passover*.

King Herod was an Edomite and the ruler of the Jews. Certainly he would have recognized the importance of the festival and therefore would have put aside dealing with the Apostle Peter until after the eight days of *Passover* (not Easter) were completed.

This is one of those cases where the mistranslation in the King James Version does not affect too much, as the creation of Easter Sunday follows pretty closely the time of *Passover* every spring.

Here is another example of a simple mistranslation:



John 12:32: (NASB) *And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.*

This is an issue with an addition, not a mistranslation. If we check the original Greek, we do NOT find the word *men*. It was supplied by the translators. The original manuscript says, *I...will draw all to myself*. *Men* may seem to be a



natural addition here, but it narrows the meaning of Jesus' words. Jesus had a larger view of the matter. The death and resurrection of Jesus does more than the redemption of men.

For instance, note the large-scale of inclusion in this verse:

Colossians 1:19-20: (NASB) ¹⁹For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross, through him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

This Scripture does not say Jesus will only reconcile all men to himself, but ALL things are reconciled to God through Christ's death. According to the Bible, the death of Jesus reconciles *things on earth and things in heaven*. When we consider that there has been a rebellion of the fallen angels, we can see this is so. Jesus was certainly aware of the scope of his putting things back in order. His sacrifice on the cross was the necessary act of faith and obedience that would permit him to destroy everything out of harmony with God's law and bring healing and oneness to all creation. Supplying that one word, *men*, changes the fullness of Jesus' meaning and detracts from the magnitude of Jesus' sacrifice and the comprehensiveness of God's plan.



1 Corinthians 6:2-3 says the Lord's people will judge angels. Those faithful ones who comprise the bride of Christ will have the privilege of helping with the reconciliation work and the judging of men and angels.

Correcting even the simple and seemingly insignificant mistranslations helps us round out our biblical knowledge.

What about unicorns in the Bible? What about Jesus telling us to hate our families? What about the coming end of the world?

It cannot be overstated that the Bible is ancient, and therefore needs close attention when we read things that just do not seem right. Our job here is to find the true meanings, as well as observe how they fit into the overall harmony of God's word. Such discovery is a responsibility and a privilege!

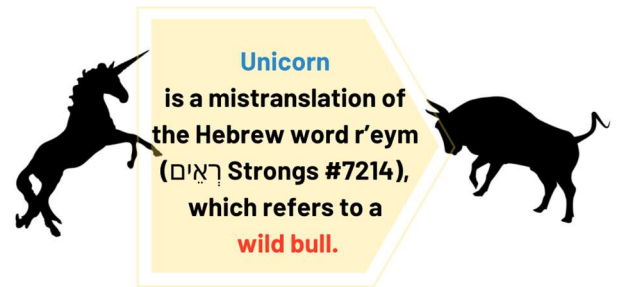
Here is another mistranslation that does not affect the faith of a dedicated Christian, but it does supply detractors with a little ammunition for mocking:




Job 39:9-10: (KJV) ⁹Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? ¹⁰Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?



To be fair to the King James Version's translators in the year 1611, not even the scientists of the time were sure whether unicorns really existed. In fact, one authoritative work of the time by the 16th century naturalist, Conrad Gesner, referred to unicorns in his writings. In fact, he tells his readers how to tell a true unicorn horn from a knock-off! Consequently, the King James Version has nine references to unicorns.



In our next text, we see how a word taken in the colloquial (common, current) meaning presents us with a problem:

 Luke 14:26: (NASB) *If anyone comes to me, and does not **hate** <3404> his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.*

Hate: Strong's #3404 *miseo*; love less

By any account this is harsh language. But according to scholars of Koine Greek (the common Greek spoken by the public) *miseo* does not quite mean hate as we understand the word. Instead, it means “to separate from” or “to prefer less.” Jesus was not telling his followers to hate their own life and family; rather, he was showing us the necessary priorities we must have to be his followers. We have to put our discipleship and service to God above earthly bonds.

The word hate may be the single English word that comes closest, but it is too harsh in our current meaning to work in this context. The thought would be clearer that *the true disciple puts Christ ahead of all else in his life*, including preserving his own life. The true disciple “prefers less” the earthly to the heavenly allegiances.



However, we are also required to take care of our own:

1 Timothy 5:8: (ASV) *But if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.*

Once we have that heavenly focus, the earthly responsibilities will fall into place.

Think of this example not as hate, but as “loving less”:

1 John 3:13-15: (NASB) ¹³*Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world **hates** <3404> you.* ¹⁴*We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.* ¹⁵*Everyone who **hates** <3404> his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

The harshness of the word *hates* as it is used by John here is more justified. But there is the warning that our feelings for others can convict us, and we need to be careful not to hate others.



This is the same word Jesus used, but Jesus was looking to make a point that would catch his listeners and make them think deeply about what he was saying. He often “pushed the envelope” to make his point and force his followers to look from a radically different non-Jewish lens. This word is not a mistranslation but is misunderstood.

We, as Christians, are frequently the subjects of cruel jokes because of our prophetic expectations about the end of the world.

Actually, Scripture predicted such scoffing:



2 Peter 3:3-4: (NASB) ³Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.

We hear this frequently when preaching or witnessing to others: “You believe in the ‘end of the world’ - what a joke!” They misunderstand what this Scripture is saying. The misunderstanding is often set up by mistranslations.

But doesn’t the Bible teach this very thing?

Matthew 13:39: (ASV) and the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the harvest is the *end of the world*; and the reapers are angels.

Matthew 13:49: (ASV) So shall it be in the *end of the world*: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous,

Matthew 24:3: (ASV) And as he sat on the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the *end of the world*?

Matthew 28:20: (ASV) teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the *end of the world*.

As we talk about these various Scriptures, we have chosen specific translations to highlight. In this series of verses, we used the American Standard Version (ASV). This phrase does not appear in the more modern translations. But the King James Version and American Standard Versions are still used extensively, so we need to address mistranslations that have been corrected in more modern versions.

We have here another example of a mistranslation. A review of the Greek quickly demonstrates the correct thought.

End of the world - the Greek word translated *world* is Strong’s Concordance <165> *aión*, αἰών. This word means “age,” as in a period of time. It does not mean the physical world in which we live. If Jesus had intended that, the Greek word would have been *kosmos*, κόσμος, <2889>, which means “order” or “arrangement” and refers to the physical world run by men. Jesus is not speaking about the physical world coming to an end, but rather the age of sin, death and suffering. Most modern translations get this right.

The Greek word translated “world” is
Strong’s #165 - *aión*.

This word means *age*, as in a period of time.



Examples in modern translations:

Matthew 13:39: (NIV) ...*The harvest is the end of the age...*

Matthew 13:39: (NASB) ...*the harvest is the end of the age...*

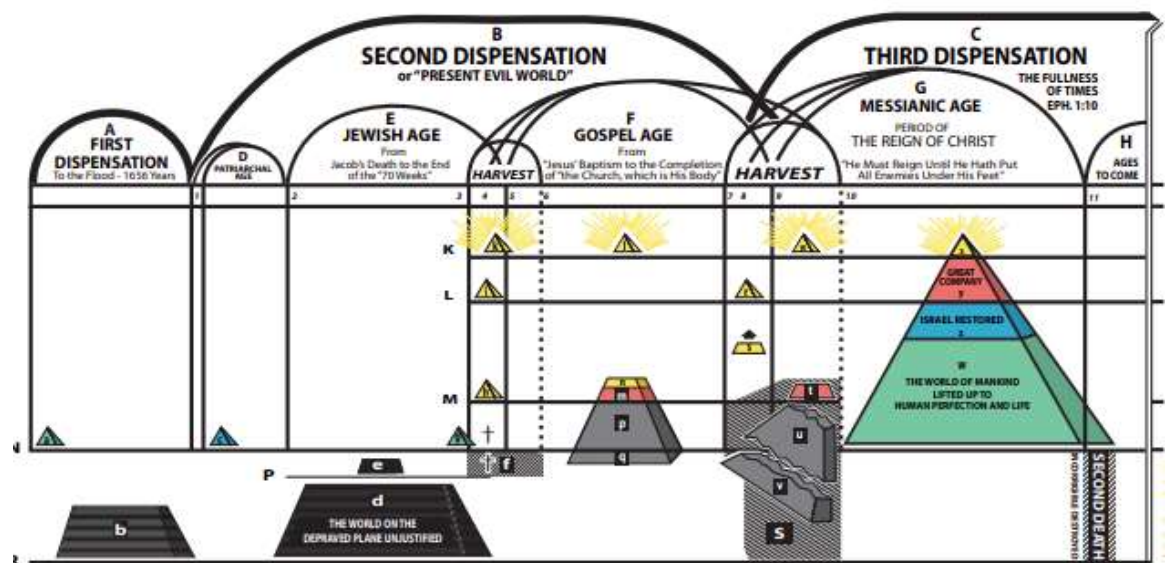
Matthew 13:39: (YLT) ...*the harvest is a full end of the age...*

Matthew 13:39: (Weymouth) ...*the harvest is the Close of the Age...*

The harvest is the end of a period of time.

We are speaking of the close of an age or an eon - then what? In the Bible, we learn of many ages beginning and ending. As one age ends, another begins. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus prays, *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done...* This is what he was praying for, when this age of the gospel ends, then what happens? Another age, the age of God's kingdom will begin. By understanding the Greek word *aion* to mean "age" rather than "world," it opens up God's plan for man in a whole new way. It is not the end of the literal world burning up in fire; it is the end of an age which brings something greater, something beautiful and in harmony with God's plan.

It really is amazing how much difference one word can make. Get the meanings right and understand God's plan!



"Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." Habakkuk 2:2

For an explanation of this "Chart of the Ages," please go to:
chicagobible.org/interactive-chart-of-the-ages

Understanding some words changes what we believe.

Can understanding one word change the way we organize our churches?

As Christians, our whole lives should be driven by scriptural precepts. It is natural to look back on things written 2,000 or more years ago and think it all needs updating. While it is important to apply these things to our modern lives with practicality, the ancient precepts we are given still stand firm. They do not change for our convenience.



Let's look at a Greek word that directly impacts the organization of a church:



Acts 14:23: (KJV) And when they had **ordained** <5500> them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Acts 14:22: (Douay) And when they had **ordained** <5500> to them priests in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they believed.

We get the impression from these translations that the apostles ordained certain ones in the churches to be in charge of their affairs. The use of the word *ordained* seems to give the sense of a formal, solemn ritual bestowing spiritual authority, which the flock in general would not have.

However, when we look at the Greek word translated *ordained* it does not include the thought of a special ritual. Instead, it is something else entirely:

Ordained: Strongs #5500 *cheirotoneo*; *teino* (to stretch); to be a hand-reacher or voter (by raising the hand), i.e. (generally) to select or appoint

In classical Greek times, they had city-states with legislators. When the legislators decided on a new law, measure or the appointment of a position, they would *cheirotoneo* that individual, meaning, they would stretch forth their hand to vote.

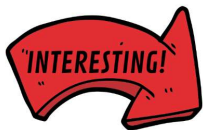
**CHEIRO + TONEO
(STRETCH) (HAND)**

This word simply means to vote, elect or select.



From an organizational standpoint, individuals in churches have the privilege of voting on who will serve as elders. These are men from the church appointed by the church.

Acts 14:22: (Douay) And when they had ordained to them **priests** (we believe this should be translated as **elders**) in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they believed.



We often hear in English the first part of this word, *cheiro*. A chiropractor uses pressure from his or her hands to manipulate the spine. This is the same root word.

Several references that demonstrate this conclusively:

(Source: Bible Commentary by Jamison, Fausset and Brown) Acts 14:23,24 *when they had ordained them elders* - literally, "chosen by show of hands." But as that would imply that this was done by the apostles' own hands, many render the word, as in our version, "ordained." Still, as there is no evidence in the New Testament that the word had then lost its proper meaning, as this is beyond doubt its meaning in 2 Corinthians 8:19, and as there is indisputable evidence that the concurrence of the people was required in all elections to sacred office in

the earliest ages of the church, it is perhaps better to understand the words to mean, "when they had made a choice of elders," that is, superintended such choice on the part of the disciples.

The authority to select elders was with the voting church members.

(Source: Alfred Barnes' Notes) Acts 14:23,24: *and when they had ordained - χειροτονήσαντες cheirotoneōsantes. The word "ordain" we now use in an ecclesiastical sense, to denote "a setting apart to an office by the imposition of hands." But it is evident that the word here is not employed in that sense. That imposition of hands might have occurred in setting apart afterward to this office is certainly possible, but it is not implied in the word employed here and did not take place in the transaction to which this word refers. The word occurs in only one other place in the New Testament, 2 Corinthians 8:19, where it is applied to Luke, and translated, "who was also chosen of the church (that is, appointed or elected by suffrage by the churches) to travel with us, etc." The verb properly denotes "to stretch out the hand"; and as it was customary to elect to office, or to vote, by stretching out or elevating the hand, so the word simply means "to elect, appoint, or designate to any office." The word here refers simply to an "election" or "appointment" of the elders. It is said, indeed, that Paul and Barnabas did this. But probably all that is meant by it is that they presided in the assembly when the choice was made. It does not mean that they appointed them without consulting the church; but it evidently means that they appointed them in the usual way of appointing officers, by the suffrages of the people. See Schleusner and the notes of Doddridge and Calvin.*

In the early church, there was not an ecclesiastical structure with one person in charge of everything. Even the authority of the apostles was somewhat mediated by the churches. For example, when Paul and Barnabas went on a missionary tour together, it was the church at Antioch that voted to send them forth as apostles (see Acts 15:23-25). They were apostles to the church at Antioch. (Paul was one of the 12 Apostles as well.) The authority came from the church members.

This structure has been lost in mainstream Christianity with the inclusion of large management structures. There is no indication in early Christianity that anything like that was suggested or encouraged. Rather, the primitive churches were all independent and voted for/elected their own elders. They were accountable, recognizing that their choice had to be led by the holy spirit and not their own preference or a popularity contest. They were provided specific qualifications on which to make a determination.

The only ordination suggested here is a vote from members of the church for who would serve as an elder:

Acts 14:23: (Young's Literal Translation) *and having appointed <5500> to them by vote elders in every assembly, having prayed with fastings, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*

As Paul traveled, he did not know many of these brethren personally, so he would not know if they were qualified to lead. But those spiritually qualified would be known and identified within their individual churches. That is where they should be chosen.

One more time this word is used:

2 Corinthians 8:16-19: (NKJV) *¹⁶But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. ¹⁷For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord. ¹⁸And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches, ¹⁹and not only that, but who was also chosen <5500>*





by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind,

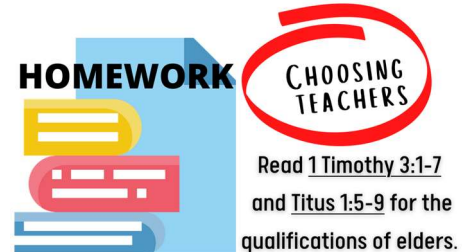


How would this brother have been chosen except by the churches? They would have voted for him and authorized him to go on the trip. The authority was with the congregation.

Compare Young's Literal Translation:

2 Corinthians 8:19: (YLT) *and not only so, but who was also **appointed by vote <5500>** by the assemblies, our fellow-traveller, with this favour that is ministered by us, unto the glory of the same Lord, and your willing mind,*

The early church gives us the example of the meaning of the word *ordained*. We see Jesus intends the churches to be independently responsible for choosing their teachers. They have to use the qualifications Paul provided. Why would he give the qualifications if it were not for them to make the right choice? Since most churches are steeped in tradition, understanding the true meaning will not change their structure.



The portion of the next two texts where *ordained* was added and not part of the original manuscript:

2 Timothy 4:22: (KJV) *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. ~~The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.~~*

Titus 3:15: (KJV) *All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen. ~~It was written to Titus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretians, from Nicopolis of Macedonia.~~*

Time and tradition can be liabilities as well as assets. How do we know which one is present? Find original truth!

Are there any biblical issues where one word is translated in very different ways? How do we handle this?

While this is not common in Scripture, it definitely is an issue. When we uncover such things, the key question to ask is WHY. Why would any key word in Scripture be subject to more than one meaning, especially if one of the attributed meanings is not authentic?



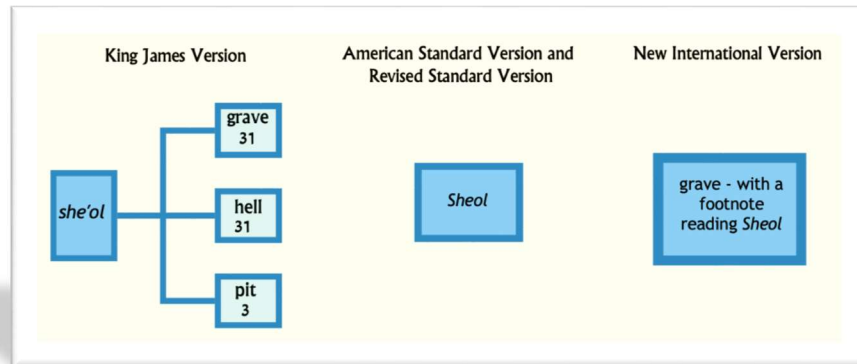
The answer is that sometimes doctrinal bias plays a role. This is where we need to be extra careful!

The next word we are going to discuss will be a Hebrew word from the Old Testament. We will then look at the Greek counterparts in the New Testament. While this can get “messy,” we as individuals need to use the tools that are now available to us to see what the words are and how they are used. It is important to look at them without the prejudice of our doctrinal views.



Let's take, as an example, the Old Testament Hebrew word *sheol*:

It seems that translators of various Bible translations have had problems with this word. The King James Version, for example, renders it in English as *grave* 31 times, *hell* 31 times and *pit* three times. The American Standard Version and Revised Standard Version simply render it *sheol*. These translators may not have wanted to get involved with any interpretation. The New International Version has *grave* with a footnote reading "sheol" to allow readers to decide for themselves. But decide what? What does it mean? How can the same word be rendered both *hell* (a place of torment in many Christian minds) and the *grave* (a place of rest or lack of consciousness)?



Sheol/Hell: Strong's #7585 *sh'owl sheh-ole'* or *shol*; Hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates: grave, hell, pit

This is an example where we have to be careful because even the authorities we use might be subject to bias or doctrinal preconceptions. Why do translators render it with different words? The short answer is that it is an unconscious decision based on preconceptions. If even these people who did this difficult and wonderful work had a preconceived idea of what the Scripture means *before* they begin the translation, it may *unconsciously* affect their translation. This was not a deliberate attempt to deceive. We all must be careful when we study the Bible to *not* put our own doctrinal prejudice into our interpretations.

Sheol was rendered *hell* 31 times. Most mainstream Christians have an idea of what they think hell is. So, *sheol* must mean hell. Suddenly this creates a problem. They find a verse that does not fit which requires them to translate it a different way. This is why one word like *sheol* is translated into three very different English words. An objective review of all of 65 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible (see the list in the Bonus Material at the end of this Rewind) shows what fits all of the instances the word appears.



The simplest conclusion? *Sheol* means the grave - the resting place of death - and nothing more complex than that. Everyone goes to the grave, both good and bad.



Episodes 1021, 1024 and 1027: Is the Hell of Christian Tradition Taught in the Bible? (Parts I, II and III)

For example, righteous Jacob wrote this:

Genesis 37:35: (NASB) *Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, surely I will go down to **sheol <7585>** in the mourning for my son. So his father wept for him.*

Genesis 37:35: (KJV) *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 <7585>** unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.*

Jacob, the *righteous* follower of God, states that he is so devastated by the perceived death of Joseph, his favorite son, it will take his life from him. Translating the Hebrew into the English *hell* here would not make sense to translators who believed in hell as a burning place of torment, as Jacob was a righteous man. But translating the same exact Hebrew word as *grave* would make perfect sense for Jacob. In other words, Jacob will mourn his son until he goes to the grave, his own death.

Here is righteous Job, who always wanted to serve God:

Job 17:13: (NASB) *If I look for **sheol <7585>** as my home, I make my bed in the darkness;*

Job 17:13: (KJV) *If I wait, the **grave <7585>** is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.*

Poor Job had lost all his children and property, and now was afflicted with a terrible disease. He was in pain and agony. He was despairing, and therefore looking to the grave, the darkness of death, to find some peace. Again, *hell* would not have made sense. *Grave* makes sense for righteous Job and is consistent with other instances of this word.

The condition of *sheol*, the grave, is total unconsciousness:

Ecclesiastes 9:5,10: (NASB) *⁵For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten. ¹⁰Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in **sheol <7585>** where you are going.*

Ecclesiastes 9:5,10: (KJV) *⁵For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. ¹⁰Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the **grave <7585>**, whither thou goest.*

This is a consistent and natural translation of *sheol*, the abode of the dead. When we are dead, there is no more *activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom*. The dead are there awaiting their awakening. When we are dead, we need resurrecting (like Jesus) in order to reactivate all these things that have stopped with entrance into the grave. It is completely consistent with the idea that *sheol* is the grave, the common destiny of all men. That was the Old Testament perspective of death.



Check out our CQ Kids video:
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?
christianquestions.com/youtube



Trivia Question: How many times does the phrase “heaven and hell” occur in the Bible?

It never occurs! (The words “heaven” and “hell” appear in the same verse in Matthew 11:23 but not the phrase.) However, the phrase “heaven and earth” occurs many times (28 times in the American Standard Version and 31 times in the King James Version).



Let's transition to the New Testament. Three Greek words are translated into English as *hell*: **GEHENNA TARTAROO HADES**

Let's start with one Jesus used:

Matthew 5:22: (NASB) *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, You fool, shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery **hell** <1067>.*

Gehenna/Hell: Strongs #1067, *gheh'-en-nah*; of Hebrew origin (#1516 and #2011); valley of (the son of) Hinnom, a valley of Jerusalem, used (figuratively) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment:—hell.



The word occurs 13 times in the New Testament. No doubt Jesus had in mind something the Jews would be very familiar with when it came to choosing a metaphor for complete and utter destruction, namely the Valley of Hinnom, locally called Gehenna. This is an actual valley in the city of Jerusalem that can be seen today.



Modern Day Gehenna, the Valley of Hinnom, in Jerusalem

In Israel's ancient past, it was used as a place of child sacrifice to pagan gods, which was absolutely abhorrent to God. From the reign of Josiah onward (over 600 years until Jesus and for many years after) it was used as a garbage dump where fires burned the refuse continuously. Those tending the fires would throw sulfur in periodically to keep them going. Anything thrown into it would be fully consumed and cease to exist.

Jesus used it in Matthew 5 as an apt visual illustration of the final destruction of the wicked. Those marked by God for destruction in *Gehenna* were destroyed totally, everlastingly, thoroughly. Nothing in Jesus' day was ever thrown alive into this continuously-burning garbage dump. Criminals' bodies were thrown here rather than being buried which was considered a disgrace. But they were not thrown into Gehenna *until* they were dead.



This was *not* an underground lava-filled chamber. It was an aboveground valley with fires to get rid of garbage. It was much different from the Greek concept of *hades*. Jesus is saying that if someone was found guilty of speaking evilly to another, destroying his reputation and worse, he would be annihilated, wiped out completely, but not tortured forever.



(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.



**Episodes 869, 876 and 881:
Do the Fires of Hell Come From God?
(Parts I, II and III)**



There is one other word in the New Testament translated *hell* and is found only once in the Bible:

2 Peter 2:4: (NASB) *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into **hell** <5020> and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.*

Tartaroo/Tartarus/Hell: Strong's #5020, *tartarōō*

This was a specific judgment that was made only against the angels (not men) back in the time of Noah when they left their proper place against God's orders and materialized on earth before the flood. They had mighty half-human, half-angelic children with women here on earth called the *Nephilim* (Genesis 6:1-4). The result was unbelievable violence and suffering. Obviously, Satan and his angels are still active today, so whatever *tartaroo* is, it is NOT a subterranean chamber from which they could not operate. They are, however, in a condition of darkness which does not allow them the complete freedom they once had between heaven and earth.

This judgmental action on the part of God may have been perverted into the mythologies of later Greece. These mythologies may have come from the tales of the time before the Flood. The offspring of human women and angels would have seemed to men to be gods. They were very strong with powers men did not have. They fought among themselves much like the gods of Olympus. The Titans of Greek lore were the sons of Uranus (note this correction from the audio). They rebelled against Uranus who defeated them. He banished them from Mount Olympus down to Tartarus, the lowest hell, and restrained them.





2 Peter 2:4 picks up on this and says the sons of God, the fallen angels, were also sent to *tartarus*. This gives a wonderful confirmation of the Bible's account before the Flood with the rebellion of some of the sons of God (fallen angels) against God.

The parallel in reality connects appropriately. These angels were cast out of the heavenly domains to be restricted to earth and out of touch with God's light, effectively cut off from heavenly communication and chained to the restraining darkness of spiritual dis fellowship.

They continue to be active, though partially restrained, at this time along with Satan, awaiting the time of their permanent destruction.

Let's review the verse again, this time from a different translation:

2 Peter 2:4: (Youngs Literal Translation) *For if God messengers who sinned did not spare, but with chains of thick gloom, having cast [them] down to **tartarus <5020>**, did deliver [them] to judgment, having been reserved,*

While this translation does not read as smoothly, it gives us all of the important points. *Chains of thick gloom* indicates they are away from the light of God, and they are restrained (*in chains*), not totally unable to act. *Tartarus* then, is quite different from *gehenna* or *hades*.



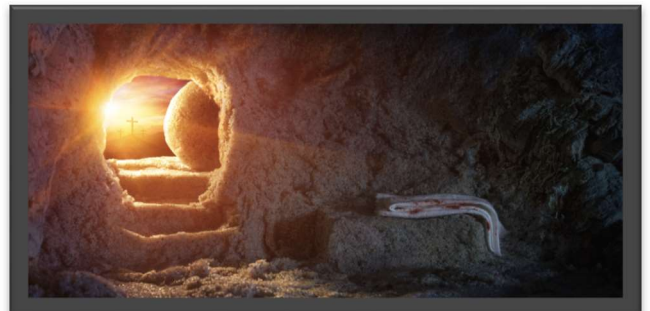
Hades occurs 11 times in the New Testament. Its meaning is very similar to the Old Testament *sheol*, namely, the common grave of mankind, our abode after death.

Even Jesus went to *hades*:

Acts 2:27,31: (NASB) ²⁷*Because you will not abandon my soul to Hades nor allow your holy one to undergo decay.* ³¹*he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was neither abandoned to **hades <86>** nor did his flesh suffer decay.*

Hades/Hell: Strongs #86, *háidēs*; properly, unseen, the place (state) of departed souls; grave, hell

If we translate this as *hell* using the preconceived notion of hell as an eternal place of torment, it will not make sense. *Hades* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *sheol*. These verses clearly show that Jesus died and went to *hades*. Simply put, he died and went into the grave from where he was resurrected by God's power out of *hades*. He conquered death and will also permit all of his followers, the true church, to come forth from the grave as conquerors of death. This is a most marvelous hope.





We can see how much Bible truth hinges on the interpretations of these two words, *hades* and *sheol*, meaning death

Let's look at the words of Jesus:

Matthew 16:18: (NASB) *I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of **hades** <86> will not overpower it.*

Jesus knew that those of the church who were persecuted and died over the last 2,000 years would not stay in the grave forever. The grave would not have the power to hold them. They would come forth from the grave just as their Master, Jesus, did.

This victory over death and the grave is shown further:

1 Corinthians 15:55: (NASB) *O **death** <2288>, where is your victory? O **death** <2288>, where is your sting?*

1 Corinthians 15:55: (ASV) *O **death** <2288>, where is thy victory? O **death** <86>, where is thy sting?*

1 Corinthians 15:55: (NKJV) *O **Death** <2288>, where is your sting? O **Hades** <86>, where is your victory?*

1 Corinthians 15:55: (KJV) *O **death** <2288>, where is thy sting? O **grave** <86>, where is thy victory?*

1 Corinthians 15:55: (YLT) *where, O **Death** <2288>, thy sting? where, O **Hades** <86>, thy victory?*

Death: Strong's #2288 *thanatos*; deadly, death

Hades/Death/Grave: Strong's #86, *háidēs*; properly, unseen, the place (state) of departed souls; grave, hell

Lining them up, we see how some translators left the word *hades* untranslated, possibly because they did not want to get involved with interpretation like we previously surmised with *gehenna*. But this Scripture is fairly simple. *Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?* It is saying the power of death and the grave to reign over us will be cut off, ended.

Jesus is talking about the church here, so it is a little more involved. When Lazarus was raised from the grave, did he die again? Yes, as he was only temporarily resuscitated. He will be raised again in the kingdom, but he did not have a victory over death that first time. His raising, as joyous as it was, was not a permanent solution. But when the church is raised, they will have conquered death and the grave for all time.

What about the *second death* mentioned in the Bible? The “first” death was the death we inherited from Adam’s sin. Adamic death will be done away with forever. Once all of those in the graves come forth, there will be no more death and no more need of graves. *But second death is total destruction with no hope of a resurrection.*

This is beautifully described here:

Revelation 20:14: (NASB) *Then **death** <2288> and **hades** <86> were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.*



Hades is thrown into *the lake of fire*. So, *hades* cannot be the lake of fire. As we discussed, it is the grave. When the last person of the family of Adam comes out of the grave, there will be no more Adamic death! Paul tells us this will happen in 1 Corinthians 15:22: (NASB): For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (See also Romans 5:12). And if there is no one in the grave, then there is no *hades* anymore.

The symbolic lake of fire corresponds to the symbolic *gehenna*. The second death, the lake of fire and *gehenna* all represent the same thing. This is the condition of total, absolute and everlasting destruction for eternity. Death is destroyed forever. The grave is destroyed forever. Life and peace and happiness will prevail forevermore. God is saying death will have its run, but when it is over, He will crumple it up and throw it into the garbage dump!

When we look back at this series on Bible mistranslations and misunderstandings, we see a beautiful example for us all as students of the Bible. We have the tools necessary to go back and check the meanings of the words. And we need to check our reference sources a couple of times, as not all the reference sources agree on the meaning and application of things. We should use our best judgment by comparing and reconciling the whole set of Scriptures on the topic. The first four parts of this series have given us a good example of the type of mistranslations we should be looking for.

Understanding what the Bible really says does not come to us magically. It comes through the gift of God's spirit that helps us understand. Our diligence with that gift is imperative - to look into the Scriptures and to understand the mind of God and the plan of God, so that we can preach the true gospel of what Jesus Christ brought to us.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth is the gospel - when we get the translations correct, that is what we see!

*So, has the Bible been mistranslated and misunderstood?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on February 1, 2021

Ep. 1163: Has the Bible Been Mistranslated
and Misunderstood? (Part V)



Bonus Material and Study Questions

Learn what is true in order to do what is right. — Thomas Huxley

In the Old Testament of the King James Version, the following verses either use the word *hell* or *grave*, except for two that use *pit* (Numbers 16:30,31). All of these verses use the same Hebrew word *sheol* <7585>:

Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 44:29,31

Numbers 16:30,33

Deuteronomy 32:22

1 Samuel 2:6

2 Samuel 22:6

1 Kings 2:6,9

Job 7:9; 11:8; 14:13; 17:13,16; 21:13; 24:19; 26:6

Psalms 6:5; 9:17; 16:10; 18:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14,15; 55:15; 86:13; 88:3; 89:48; 116:3; 139:8; 141:7

Proverbs 1:12; 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:11,24; 23:14; 27:20; 30:16

Ecclesiastes 9:10

Song of Solomon 8:6

Isaiah 5:14; 14:9,11,15; 28:15,18; 38:10,18; 57:9

Ezekiel 31:15-17; 32:21,27

Hosea 13:14

Amos 9:2

Jonah 2:2

Habakkuk 2:5

Christian Questions Weekly
Newsletter

CQ Rewind Show Notes and
Study Questions

Text
CQREWIND
to 22828 to get started.



Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1162: Has the Bible Been Mistranslated and Misunderstood (Part IV)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1162-bible-translation/>

See:  **CQ Rewind**
SHOW NOTES

1. What are the simple mistranslations found in some versions of John 12:32 and Acts 12:4? How do the correct translations change the meanings of the verses?
2. Does the Bible teach us to hate our families? How can a concordance help us understand Jesus' true message? (See Job 39:9-10, Luke 14:26, 1 John 3:13-15)
3. How have mistranslations contributed to a belief about the "end of the world"? What does the Bible truly teach? (See Matthew 13:39,49, 24:3, 28:20, 2 Peter 3:3-4)
4. What does the Greek word translated "ordained" in Acts 14:23 of the King James Version mean? How is this word used elsewhere in the Bible? (See 2 Corinthians 8:16-19)
5. How can the correct translation help us understand how the Bible teaches us to organize our churches? (See Acts 14:23, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Timothy 3:1-7)
6. Based on its usage in the Old Testament, what does the Hebrew word "sheol" mean? (See Genesis 37:35, Job 17:13, Ecclesiastes 9:5,10)
7. What does the Greek word "gehenna" literally mean? What does its origin teach about Jesus' intention when he used the word? (See Jeremiah 7:32, Matthew 5:22)
8. According to the New Testament, who is cast into "tartaroo"? What does this teach us about the word's true meaning? (See 2 Peter 2:4)
9. To what does the Greek word "hades" refer? How does the understanding of the true meanings of "hades" and "sheol" help shape our understanding of the Bible? (See Matthew 16:18, Acts 2:27, 31, 1 Corinthians 15:55, Revelation 20:14)
10. Why is it so important to understand the true meanings of the words in the Bible?