

Matthew Series

Lesson #165

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Dean Bible Ministries

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MATTHEW

JESUS: KING OF THE JEWS

Is the Lake of Fire Forever and Ever?

Or just a very long time?

**Punishment for the Devil, his Angels,
the Wicked, the Unsaved**

Matthew 25:41–46

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Matt. 25:41, “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’ ”

Matt. 25:41, “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;’ ”
NASB

Matt. 25:41, “Then he will turn to the ‘goats,’ the ones on his left, and say, ‘Get out, worthless goats! You’re good for nothing but the fires of hell.’ ” *The Message*

Matthew 25:41–46

- 1. What are the issues here?**
- 2. When, why, and for whom was the Lake of Fire created?**
- 3. Punishment for the unsaved through the Old Testament and the New Testament?**
- 4. What is the meaning of key terms: Everlasting, Sheol, Hades, Torments, Gehenna, Lake of Fire?**
- 5. Why is this a problem for the love of God and the grace and the goodness of God?**

Matthew 25:41–46

1. What are the issues here?

ESSENCE OF GOD

Sovereign

Omniscient

Righteousness

Omnipresent

Justice

Omnipotent

Love

Veracity

Eternal Life

Immutability

- **Is the Lake of Fire a metaphor or is it literal?
Are there any metaphorical statements?**
- **What about the idea of purgatory?**
- **What is the purpose of the Lake of Fire?**

Heb. 9:27, “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,”

Heb. 10:31, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Matthew 25:41–46

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Matt. 25:41, “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:’ ”

πορεύομαι (*poreuomai*),

“go, to journey, to travel, to walk”

Matt. 25:41, “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:’ ”

ἑτοιμάζω *hetoimazō*

perf mid part neut sing acc

The perfect tense indicates completed action at some time in the past.

Therefore, this indicates the “everlasting fire” has already been created in the past. So why were the devil and his angels not consigned there?

**The devil, is the adversary of God,
otherwise known as Satan, Lucifer (Isa.
14:12–14; Ezek. 28:12–16)**

**διάβολος *diabolos* enemy, adversary,
devil**

שָׂטָן *satan* Satan, adversary, accuser

Rev. 12:9, “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

Rev. 20:2, “He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;”

Isa. 66:24,

**“And they shall go forth and look
Upon the corpses of the men
Who have transgressed against Me.
For their worm does not die,
And their fire is not quenched.
They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”**

*תּוֹלָעַת, תּוֹלָעַת הַשָּׂרָד, תּוֹלָעַת. **tola‘at, tol‘ah, tola‘***

**Worm, scarlet, crimson. All three forms of
this word mean “worm, maggot, larva”.**

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Deut. 32:22, “For a fire is kindled in My anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.” NKJV

Deut. 32:22, “For a fire is kindled in My anger, and burns to the lowest part of Sheol, and consumes the earth with its yield, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.” NASB95

Hell

The English word may be in part from Old Norse Hel (from Proto-Germanic *halija “one who covers up or hides something”). In Norse mythology the name of Loki’s daughter, who rules over the evil dead in Niflheim, the lowest of all worlds (nifl “mist”). Transfer of a pagan concept and word to a Christian idiom.

~Chambers Dictionary of Etymology

Matt. 11:23, “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell [KJV] [Hades NKJV]: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.”

Hell is used 54 times in the KJV; 32 times in the NKJV

In the KJV/NKJV, “hell” is translated “sheol” in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament translates the Greek Hades and Gehenna in the KJV, but only Gehenna in the NKJV, as well as Tartarus in 2 Pet. 2:4.

Gen. 42:38, “But he said, ‘My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.’ ”

**Isa. 38:18, “For Sheol cannot thank You,
Death cannot praise You;”**

The abode for the Old Testament believer after death.

Gen. 37:35, “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 in mourning for my son.’ So his father wept for him.”

The abode for the Old Testament unbeliever after death.

Psa. 9:17, “The wicked will return to Sheol, Even all the nations who forget God.”

Psa. 31:17, “Let me not be put to shame, O LORD, for I call upon You; Let the wicked be put to shame, let them be silent in Sheol.”

“Forever” in the Old Testament

A long time ago

Isa. 58:12, “Those from among you shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.”

“Forever” in the Old Testament Eternal, Everlasting

**Mic. 5:2, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands
of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to
Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose
goings forth are from of old, from
everlasting.”**

“Forever” in the Old Testament

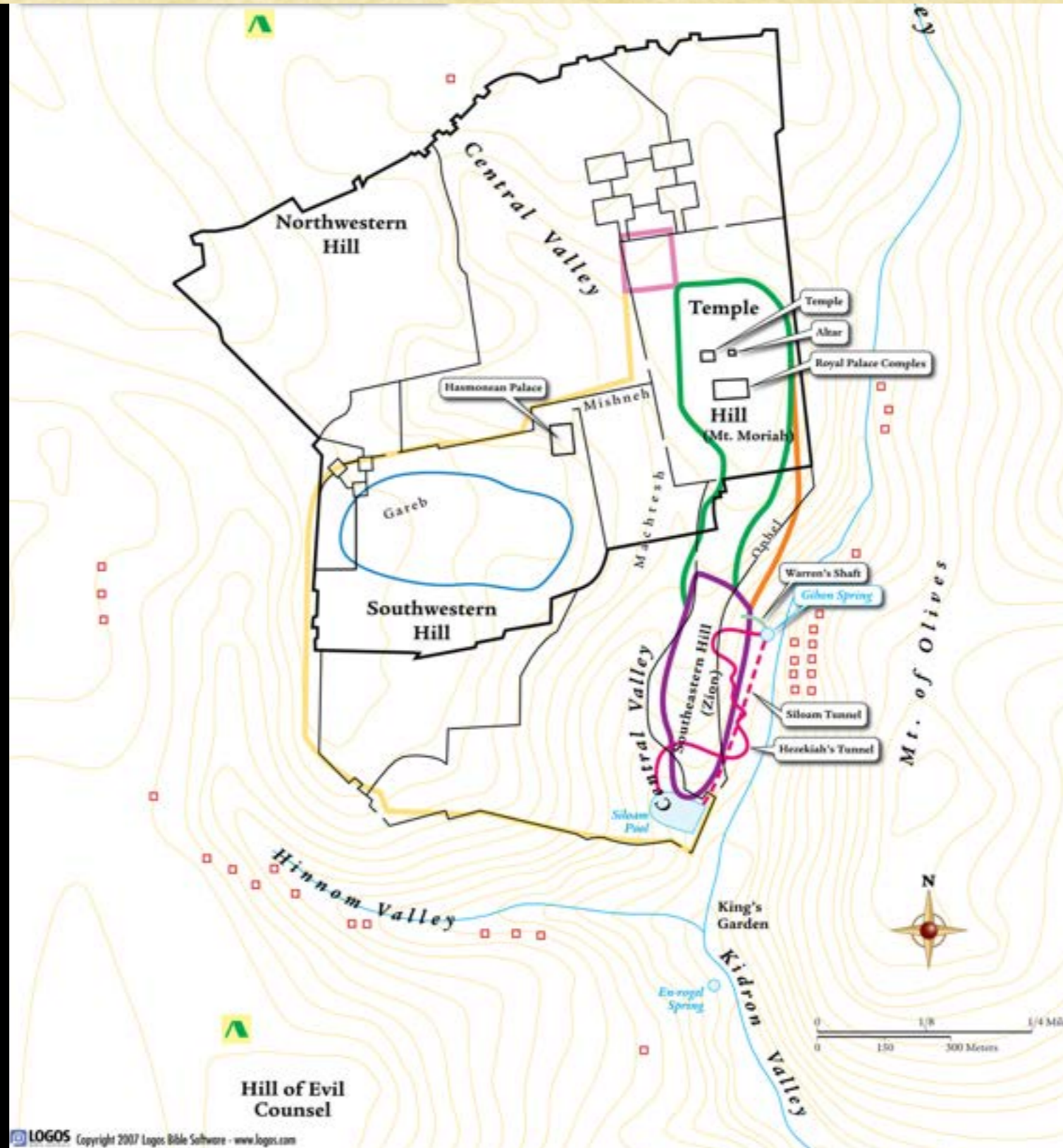
**Dan. 12:2, “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,
Some to everlasting life,
Some to shame and everlasting contempt.”**

Gehenna, Valley of Hinnom

Gehenna, The Valley of Hinnom

גֵּיאַ הַחַיְהִים (ge' hinnom), γέεννα (geenna)

11× in 10 verses



***Gehenna*, “The Valley of Hinnom”**

גֵּיהֵנָם (ge' hinnom), γέεννα (geenna)

11× in 10 verses

- 1. Where Judah sinned by committing child sacrifice and burning their sons and daughters in the fires of Molech. Thus *Gehenna* symbolized a place of idolatry, disobedience to God, and spiritual failure.**

(2 Chron 28:2, 33:6; 2 Kings 16:3)



***Gehenna*, “The Valley of Hinnom”**

גֵּיהֶנּוֹם (ge' hinnom), γέεννα (geenna)

11× in 10 verses

2. For their sins of idolatry Judah was to be punished in *Gehenna* in 586 BC.

This was a historical punishment of divine discipline on the nation for their spiritual failure.

In Jeremiah 19:6 Jeremiah predicted that as punishment for the sins, the valley would be used as a mass burial site for those slaughtered in the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

***Gehenna*, “The Valley of Hinnom”**

גֵּיאַ הַיְזָם (*ge' hinnom*), γέεννα (*geenna*)

OT: 11× in 10 verses

- 3. Conclusion: The Valley of Hinnom was not used in the Old Testament as a reference to eternal condemnation in the Lake of Fire, but as a place of divine discipline on the nation of Israel for their spiritual failure. *Gehenna* thus became a symbol for spiritual failure, condemnation and shame, and divine discipline in time, not in eternity.**

SHEOL, HADES

Luke 16:19–25

ABRAHAM'S
BOSOM

“PARADISE”

Old Testament
Believers

To third heaven
2 Cor. 12:1–4

Impassable
Barrier

TORMENTS

Unbelievers
From all
dispensations

TARTARUS

2 Pet. 2:4

specific groups of
fallen angels

Tartarus

2 Pet. 2:4, “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [*tartaroo*] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;”

Tartarus

2 Pet. 2:4, “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [*tartaroo*] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;”

Jude 6, “And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,”

Matt. 25:41, “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:’ ”

αἰώνιος *aiōnios*

acc neut sing

eternal, 71× in the New Testament

Always means forever

Matt. 25:46, “And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

John 3:15, “that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

John 3:36, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

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“What sort of God would He be who could rejoice eternally in heaven with the saved while downstairs the cries of the lost make an agonizing cacophony?” Green answers his own question: “Such a God is not the person revealed in Scripture as utterly just and utterly loving.” Green labels the traditional view of hell, “a doctrine of savagery.”

~Michael Green, *Evangelism through the Local Church*

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Righteousness

Eternal

Love

Justice

Truth

“Eternal punishment is an unrelenting doctrine that faces every human being as the alternative to grace and salvation in Jesus Christ. As such, it is a spur to preaching the gospel, to witnessing for Christ, to praying for the unsaved, and to showing compassion on those who need to be snatched as brands from the burning.”

~John F. Walvoord