**Is “Hell” In The Bible? &**

**What Will Life After Death Look Like?**

**Definition**

The word resurrection is translated from the Greek word “anastasis” which means to “stand up” or to “arise”. It speaks of those who have died being made alive again.

**Clarification**

Before we begin our studies on the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment we will attempt to clarify the usage of certain words used in Scripture that are associated with hell or the dwelling places of the dead. The Bible uses six different words that tend to be confused with one another, they are:

1. Sheol
2. Hades
3. Tartaros
4. Abyss
5. Gehenna
6. Lake of fire

Nowhere in the Scripture is the word “hell” used. The word “hell” is the English translation of the concept “to conceal”. It has come to be known as the dwelling place of the wicked dead as well as the dwelling place of Satan and his demons. Depending on the Bible translation being used the term hell might be used for any of the words listed above.

**Sheol**

Sheol is a Hebrew word and is used exclusively throughout the Old Testament to define the dwelling place of the dead. It appears from the text that both the wicked and the righteous went there upon their death. This should not be confused with the word grave, which is the place of interment for the body. This appears to be the temporary abode of souls prior to the resurrection from the dead.

**Hades**

Hades is a Greek word, which means “unseen” and is used to describe the dwelling place of the dead. It is closely associated with the Hebrew word Sheol. However, according to Jesus’ use of the term there is a division of the righteous souls from the unrighteous. The dwelling place of the unrighteous is Hades. The dwelling place of the righteous is referred to as Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:22-26) or paradise (Luke 23:43). Hades and Abraham’s bosom or paradise appears to be the temporary abodes of souls prior to the resurrection from the dead. After the final judgment and the creation of a new heaven and earth, the eternal destination of the righteous is New Jerusalem.

(Matthew 11:23, Matthew 16:18, Luke 10:15, Luke 16:23, Acts 2:25, Revelation 1:17,Revelation 6:8, Revelation 20:13)

**Tartaros**

Tartaros is a Greek word that denotes the temporary dwelling place of fallen angels (2 Peter 2:4).

**Abyss**

The abyss is a Greek word, which means “the deep” and contains the idea of unfathomable or bottomless. The word abyss appears to be the description of the place where the fallen angels are temporarily incarcerated, whereas Tartaros is the proper name of the place.

([Luke 8:31, Romans 10:7, Revelation 9:11, Revelation 11:7, Revelation 17:8, Revelation 20:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%208:31,%20Romans%2010:7,%20Revelation%209:11,%20Revelation%2011:7,%20Revelation%2017:8,%20Revelation%2020:1&version=NIV))

**Gehenna**

Gehenna is used throughout the New Testament as a description of a place of extreme torment. The word is derived from the use of two Hebrew words “ge” “hinnom” and is used to describe the Valley of Hinnom. The valley itself lies on the south and west sides of Jerusalem and separates Mount Zion from the Hill of Evil Counsel. The valley was the site of a Jewish apostasy, where the rites of passing children through the fires of Molech were practiced. ([1 Kings 11:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Kings%2011:7&version=NIV)) King Josiah converted it into a place of abomination, where dead bodies were thrown and burned. ([2 Kings 23:13-14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Kings%2023:13-14&version=NIV)) This appears to be the eternal destination of wicked souls after the resurrection from the dead and final judgment. This word is closely associated with our English word, “Hell”.

([Matthew 5:22, Matthew 5:29, Matthew 10:28, Matthew 18:9, Mathew 23:15, Matthew 23:33, James 3:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%205:22,%20Matthew%205:29,%20Matthew%2010:28,%20Matthew%2018:9,%20Mathew%2023:15,%20Matthew%2023:33,%20James%203:6&version=NIV))

**Lake of Fire**

The lake of fire is the eternal destination, after the final judgment, of Satan, demons, fallen angels, Antichrist, false prophet, death, Hades and those individuals whose names are not written in the Book of Life. This term is closely associated with our concept of the English word, “Hell”. The term lake of fire appears to be the description of the place of eternal torment whereas Gehenna is the proper name of the place.

([Revelation 19:20, Revelation 20:10, Revelation 20:14, Revelation 21:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%2019:20,%20Revelation%2020:10,%20Revelation%2020:14,%20Revelation%2021:8&version=NIV))

**History**

Throughout Old Testament times, a bodily resurrection was believed in by many Israelites. In fact the only major sect of Judaism existing at the time of Jesus who did not believe in a bodily resurrection from the dead were the Sadducees. ([Matthew 22:23](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2022:23&version=NIV)) One evidence of this wide spread belief is the gigantic graveyard that encompasses much of the Mount of Olives just to the east of Jerusalem. Many pious Jews have been buried here throughout the years because they believed that when Messiah came he would come to the Mount of Olives first and they would be the first to arise from the dead.

**The Resurrection of the Messiah**

The Apostle Paul stated that the Scriptures bore witness to the fact that the Messiah would be raised from the dead on the third day. ([1 Corinthians 15:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2015:4&version=NIV)) The primary text that he refers to is [Psalms 16:8-11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms%2016:8-11&version=NIV). It is also the same passage that the apostle Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost to the Jewish people in his presentation of the gospel to them ([Psalm 16:8, Psalm 71:20-21](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2016:8,%20Psalm%2071:20-21&version=NIV)).

There are many allusions to the third day as being the day of resurrection beginning with Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac and God providing a ram in his place. ([Genesis 22:4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2022:4&version=NIV))

After the Israelites left Egypt, God came down on Mt. Sinai to meet with them on the third day and Moses went up to Him in a cloud. ([Exodus 19:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2019:11&version=NIV))

Esther appealed for the salvation of her people before the king on the third day of a fast. ([Esther 5:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Esther%205:1&version=NIV))

The Prophet Jonah was in the belly of a great fish for three days and three nights before he was vomited out upon dry land. ([Jonah 1:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jonah%201:17&version=NIV))

Jesus foretold his own death and resurrection to fulfill the prophesies of the Messiah. ([Matthew 17:22-23, Matthew 20:18-19 & Luke 18:31-33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2017:22-23,%20Matthew%2020:18-19%20&%20Luke%2018:31-33&version=NIV))

**The resurrection of others from the dead**

([Job 19:25, Isaiah 26:19, Eziekel 37:1-14, Daniel 12:1-4, Hosea 6:2, 2 Peter 3:8, Acts 4:1](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job%2019:25,%20Isaiah%2026:19,%20Eziekel%2037:1-14,%20Daniel%2012:1-4,%20Hosea%206:2,%202%20Peter%203:8,%20Acts%204:1&version=NIV))

**The resurrection from the dead occurs in stages**

([1 Corinthians 15:20-26](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2015:20-26&version=NIV))

**1st stage** - At the resurrection of Messiah – the first fruits.

1. Jesus Christ
2. Others ([Matthew 27:52](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2027:52&version=NIV))
	* (This resurrection did not include all the Old Testament saints since Peter declares that King David was still in his tomb on the day of Pentecost, fifty day after Jesus’ resurrection.

**2nd stage** - At the second coming of Jesus Christ.

1. This resurrection at the second coming of Christ is called the “first resurrection” in the book of Revelation. It begins with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the first fruits of the harvest and ends with his second coming, the rest of the harvest.
2. This resurrection is for those who are Christ’s and in the grave ([1 Thessalonians 4:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Thessalonians%204:16&version=NIV)).
3. It is also for those who are Christ’s and are still alive ([1 Thessalonians 4:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Thessalonians%204:17&version=NIV) - The rapture).
4. Jesus also spoke about the two-fold nature of the resurrection at his coming ([John 11:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2011:25&version=NIV) - Resurrection of the dead and rapture of the living).

**3rd stage** - At the end – after the 1000-year reign of Christ on earth.

1. All those who had not been previously resurrected ([Revelation 20:11-15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%2020:11-15&version=NIV)).

**The resurrection of the dead is central to the Christian faith.**

1. God uses the resurrection of Jesus as proof that there will be a resurrection from the dead and that judgment will befall mankind ([Acts 17:30-31](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2017:30-31&version=NIV)).
2. The Apostle Paul chided some Christians because they were saying there was no resurrection ([1 Corinthians 15:12-14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2015:12-14&version=NIV)).
3. It is the promise to Christians, who have believed the Gospel ([John 6:40](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%206:40&version=NIV)).
4. Christian baptism identifies itself with the resurrection ([Romans 6:6-10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%206:6-10&version=NIV)).

**Other Observations**

1. When the dead hear the voice of the Son of God ([John 5:25-29](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%205:25-29&version=NIV)).
2. Contrasting our bodies before and after the resurrection ([1 Corinthians 15:41-44](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2015:41-44&version=NIV)).
	* Our bodies will be different from one another.
	* Our bodies will last forever.
	* Our bodies will be glorious.
	* Our bodies will be powerful.
	* Our bodies will be spiritual.
	* Our bodies will be able to fly. (Jesus ascended into heaven)
	* Our bodies will be able to pass through material objects. (Jesus appeared to the disciples in a closed room.
	* Our bodies will look different. (Mary Magdalene did not recognize Jesus in the garden, nor did his Uncle Cleopas on the road to Emmaus. His disciples were startled and frightened by his appearance in the closed room. Then, when the disciples went fishing with Peter on the Sea of Galilee, they did not recognize Jesus standing on the shore after having seen him in Jerusalem not many days before. It appears that when Jesus spoke, people were able to recognize Him)
3. What Christian’s will be doing after the resurrection ([Revelation 20:4-6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%2020:4-6&version=NIV)).