

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

*For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)*

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## Bogus Theology 2

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### Introduction

Our last issue began a multi-issue series on Bogus Theology. This issue continues with the theme.

Before we begin this study, let's re-iterate our word definitions from last time so that it is clear exactly what is being discussed. These definitions are taken from the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary:

**Definition of *Bogus*:** not genuine : counterfeit, sham. **Synonyms:** artificial, imitation, dummy, ersatz, factitious, fake, false, faux, imitative, man-made, mimic, mock, pretend, sham, simulated, substitute, synthetic

**Definition of *Theology*:** (1) the study of religious faith, practice, and experience; especially : the study of God and of God's relation to the world (2) a) : a theological theory or system b): a distinctive body of theological opinion

So, *bogus theology* is a counterfeit, fake, man-made study of religious faith; that is, the study of God and of His relation to the world embodied as religious opinion and theory.

We have been indoctrinated with bogus theology in a number of areas of our understanding about God and His plan and purpose for us.

### The Devil and Hell

One of the areas of much bogus theology deals with the Devil and Hell and their relationship with each other and with us. We have been taught that when the wicked die they go to Hell and are tormented by demons for eternity. We have been taught that the Devil rules Hell and delights in having his demons torment people. Sometimes these teachings have been brought to us in books and sermons and sometimes they are just implied by our terminology. It is sad to say but sometimes our understanding of these things were formed by movies and other works of fiction that predominate Hollywood and the publishing industry.

The popular belief that the Devil is in Hell and is currently ruling over the demons who are also headquartered in Hell is totally untrue. We have this idea because of the pagan beliefs that came into the Church during and after the time of Constantine, when the visible Church became a political entity and a way of unifying conquered nations. The so-called church received any and all without the need of a new birth and pagan beliefs were introduced under a thinly disguised Christian veil. These pagan beliefs included an underworld of the dead who were continually tortured by demons who were ruled by the Devil as the King of the demons. Today, this concept is heavily exploited by Hollywood and has become the defacto “truth” for many. However, it is not in accord with the Scriptures and is, therefore, a deception. According to the Scriptures, the Devil is not in Hell, has never been in Hell, and will never be in Hell.

To explore what the Scriptures say, let's first look at the original words and how they are translated. Our English word, hell, is from the Anglo-Saxon, *hel* or *helle*, and means “a hidden place”. Its root is the Anglo-Saxon word *helan*, to hide. Now, we should add to its meaning the attributes of the words that are used in the Scriptures and eliminate from our minds the traditions and pagan concepts that have become attached to it.

In the New Testament there are two Greek words that are translated with our English word, *hell*. They are *geena* or *gehenna* and *hades*. (Actually, there is a third one, *tartaroo* or *tartarus*, which is only used once in 2 Peter 2:4. This will be discussed in a different teaching series.)

(1) *Geena* appears in the Scriptures 12 times and is always translated as “hell”. Examples are Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6.

(a) *Gehenna* (Greek = *geena*) is the transliteration of the Hebrew word, *Gai' Hinnom*, which means valley of Hinnom. This was a valley with perpetual fires burning the garbage and other refuse from Jerusalem. It is used symbolically to signify the lake of fire in Revelation as the final abode of all of the wicked angels, demons, and men.

(2) *Hades* appears in the Scriptures 11 times and is translated as “hell” ten times and “grave” once in 1 Cor. 15:55 (KJV; NASB = death). Examples of the word rendered as “hell”: Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14.

The Greek word *hades* is equal to the Hebrew word *sheol*. How do we know this? The Holy Spirit used the Greek word, *hades*, in Acts 2:27 and 31, which is a quote from Psalm 16:10 where the Hebrew word, *sheol*, is used. This tells us that we should not understand *hades* with any of the Greek traditions attached, but should understand it as meaning the same thing that *sheol* meant to the Hebrews.

In the King James bible *sheol* appears 65 times and is translated “*hell*” 30 times, “*grave*” 31 times, “*graves*” 1 time, and “*pit*” 3 times (the NASB doesn't translate it at all, it is simply rendered as *sheol* at each occurrence). We don't have an English word that truly fits the meaning of *sheol* even though in the KJV “grave” is the most prevalent. When we say “grave” we mean the burial place of the body. The Hebrew meaning is closer to “the state of death” and doesn't relate to the physical body. The Hebrew word for grave that corresponds to our English word for grave is “*keber*, or *bor*”, which means “a grave”.

My understanding of the way the Hebrews understood this is that the body went to a grave

(*kebor*) and the non-physical part of us went to *sheol*. This would indicate that *sheol* had two compartments: a place for the wicked and a place for the righteous. This is borne out by Jesus when He told of the rich man and the beggar. (Notice that Jesus did not refer to this as a parable but as actual fact.)

"Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and \*saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.' (Luke 16:22-26 NASB)

From this we can see that there are two compartments. One is referred to as Abraham's bosom and the other as simple *hades*. The poor man in Abraham's bosom (also called paradise) was enjoying comfort while the rich man in *hades* was being tormented, apparently by fire. These two areas were separated by a chasm so that neither side could cross over; however, the ones being tormented could see across the chasm to the paradise side. (This would further add to the torment.)

It would appear then that, prior to the resurrection of Jesus, the righteous and the wicked both went to the same location, that is, *sheol, hades, hell*. However, they had separate compartments or habitats with different environments. With the resurrection of Jesus, this all changed.

The Scriptures tell us that before Jesus ascended He first descended into the lower parts of the earth, that is, to *sheol, hades, hell* (Eph. 4:9). Jesus had told the thief that was on one of the other crosses that He would see him in paradise that day. When Jesus arose from the dead, He led a host of captives (Eph. 4:8). These were the Old Testament saints, the righteous, that were awaiting Christ in the paradise side of *sheol*. How do we know this? As always, we only know what the Word reveals.

The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. (Matthew 27:52-53 NASB)

Some, not all, of the Old Testament righteous were resurrected after Jesus and actually walked around Jerusalem in their resurrection bodies. We can conclude that when Jesus arose and ascended to the Father that He led the captives (those held in the paradise side of *sheol*) with Him and allowed some to stop off and see Jerusalem on the way to the Father (these were part of the first fruits or wave offering of the resurrection harvest).

However, the torment side of *hades* is still active and is still a receptacle for the unrighteous awaiting Judgment Day. At the final judgment *hades*, itself, is thrown into the Lake of Fire, which is the final abode of the unrighteous.

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14 NASB)

Since the resurrection of Jesus, the paradise side of *sheol or hades* is empty and will remain so. Now, the righteous in Jesus are immediately translated to the presence of Jesus upon their death (2 Cor. 5:6-8).

Jesus holds the keys to *hades or hell*. He took them upon His resurrection.

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "**Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.**"  
(Revelation 1:17-18 NASB)

I certainly don't see how anyone could think that the Devil is running hell when it is Jesus who has the keys to it. When someone has been confined to *hades* he is confined. There is no coming or going. So, if the Devil were confined to hell now, he would be locked up without being able to come or go upon the earth. We know that this is not true.

So, since this is getting rather long, we will continue in the next issue the question about where the Devil is now and what he is doing.

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