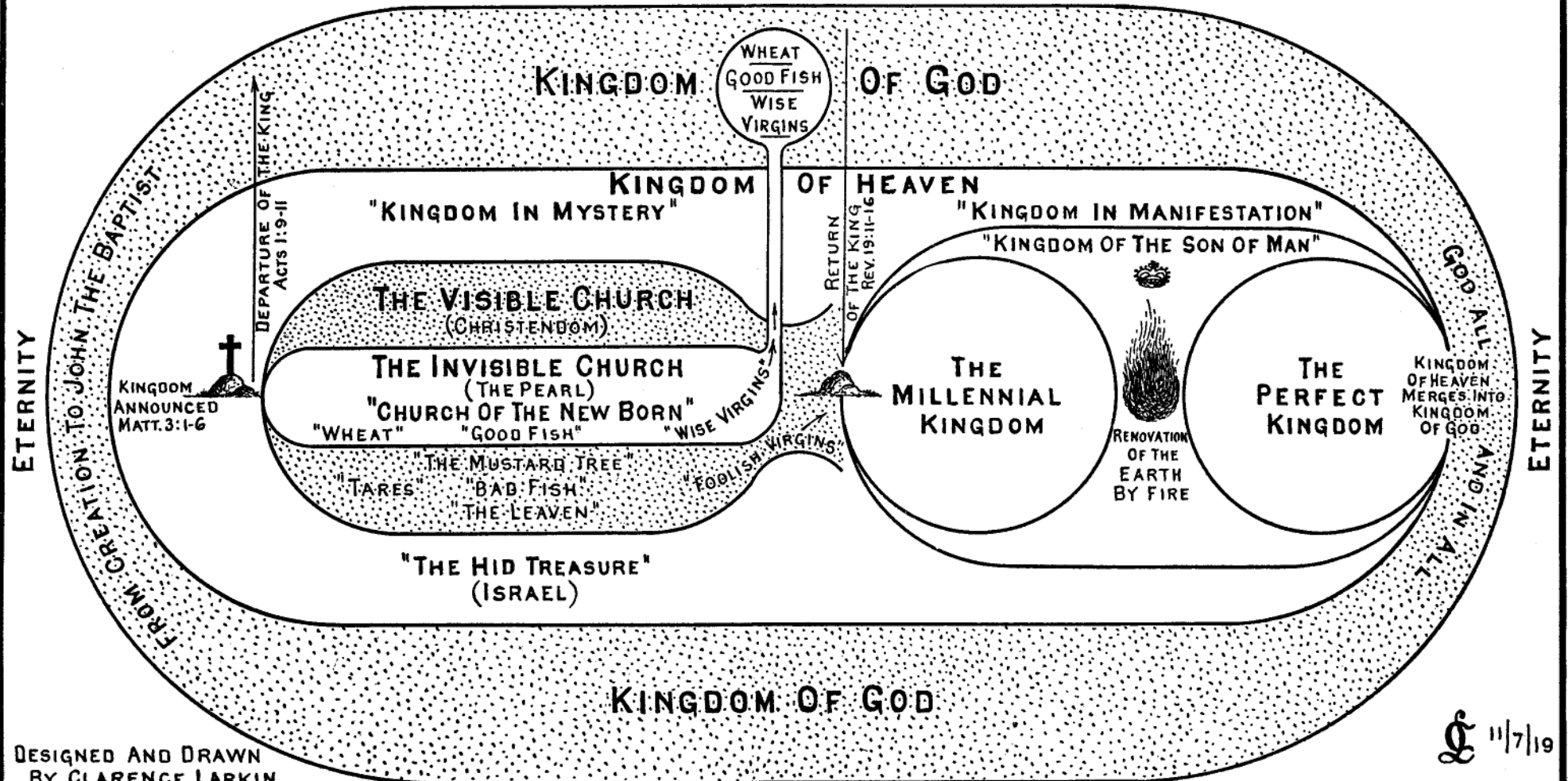


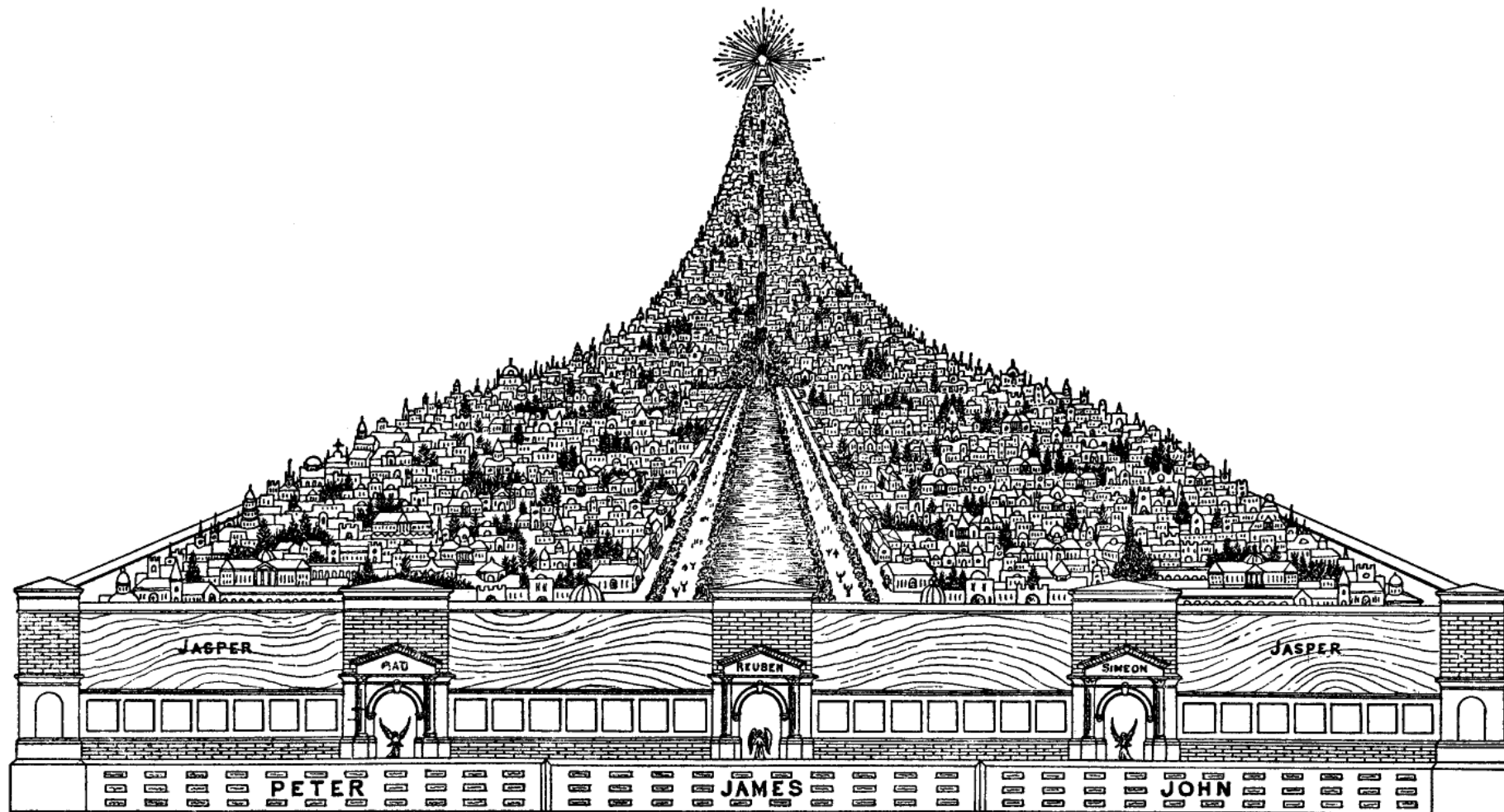
"KINGDOM OF GOD"-"KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"-"THE CHURCH"



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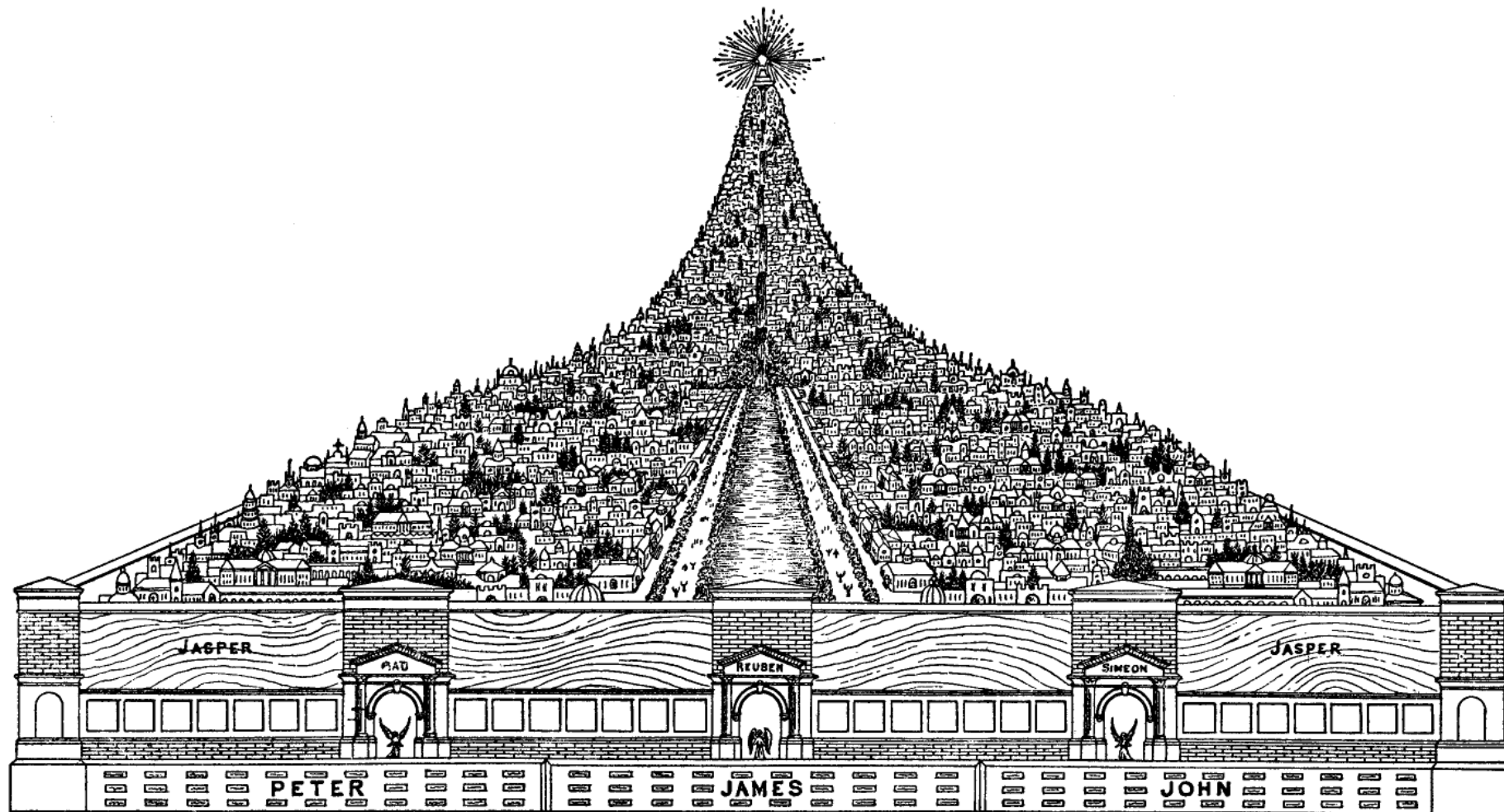
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THE HOLY CITY

REV 21:22:6.



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REV 21:22:6.

Heaven - M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., Illustrated Bible Dictionary, 1897.

- (1.) Definitions., The phrase “heaven and earth” is used to indicate the whole universe (Genesis 1:1 KJV In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.; Jeremiah 23:24 KJV Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.; Acts 17:24 KJV God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;). According to the Jewish notion there were three heavens,
 - (a) The firmament, as “fowls of the heaven” (Gen 2:19; Gen 7:3, Gen 7:23; Psa 8:8, etc.), “the eagles of heaven” (Lam 4:19), etc.
 - (b) The starry heavens (Deu 17:3; Jer 8:2; Mat 24:29).
 - (c) “The heaven of heavens,” or “the third heaven” (Deu 10:14; 1Ki 8:27; Psa 115:16; Psa 148:4; 2Co 12:2).
- (2.) Meaning of words in the original,
 - (a) The usual Hebrew word for “heavens” is shamayim, a plural form meaning “heights,” “elevations” (Gen 1:1; Gen 2:1).
 - (b) The Hebrew word marom is also used (Psa 68:18; Psa 93:4; Psa 102:19, etc.) as equivalent to shamayim, “high places,” “heights.”
 - (c) Heb. *galgal*, literally a “wheel,” is rendered “heaven” in Psa 77:18 (R.V., “whirlwind”).
 - (d) Heb. *shahak*, rendered “sky” (Deu 33:26; Job 37:18; Psa 18:11), plural “clouds” (Job 35:5; Job 36:28; Psa 68:34, marg. “heavens”), means probably the firmament.
 - (e) Heb. *rakia* is closely connected with (d), and is rendered “firmamentum” in the Vulgate, whence our “firmament” (Gen 1:6; Deu 33:26, etc.), regarded as a solid expanse.
- (3.) Metaphorical meaning of term. Isa 14:13, Isa 14:14; “doors of heaven” (Psa 78:23); heaven “shut” (1Ki 8:35); “opened” (Eze 1:1). (See 1Ch 21:16.)
- (4.) Spiritual meaning. The place of the everlasting blessedness of the righteous; the abode of departed spirits.
 - (a) Christ calls it his “Father's house” (Joh 14:2).
 - (b) It is called “paradise” (Luk 23:43; 2Co 12:4; Rev 2:7).
 - (c) “The heavenly Jerusalem” (Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22; Rev 3:12).
 - (d) The “kingdom of heaven” (Mat 25:1; Jam 2:5).
 - (e) The “eternal kingdom” (2Pe 1:11).
 - (f) The “eternal inheritance” (1Pe 1:4; Heb 9:15).
 - (g) The “better country” (Heb 11:14, Heb 11:16).
 - (h) The blessed are said to “sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” and to be “in Abraham's bosom” (Luk 16:22; Mat 8:11); to “reign with Christ” (2Ti 2:12); and to enjoy “rest” (Heb 4:10, Heb 4:11).

In heaven the blessedness of the righteous consists in the possession of “life everlasting,” “an eternal weight of glory” (2Co 4:17), an exemption from all sufferings forever, a deliverance from all evils (2Co 5:1, 2Co 5:2) and from the society of the wicked (2Ti 4:18), bliss without termination, the “fulness of joy” for ever (Luk 20:36; 2Co 4:16, 2Co 4:18; 1Pe 1:4; 1Pe 5:10; 1Jo 3:2). The believer's heaven is not only a state of everlasting blessedness, but also a “place”, a place “prepared” for them (Joh 14:2).

Heaven - Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary of American English
HEAVEN, n. hev'n.

1. The region or expanse which surrounds the earth, and which appears above and around us, like an immense arch or vault, in which are seen the sun, moon and stars.

2. Among christians, the part of space in which the omnipresent Jehovah is supposed to afford more sensible manifestations of his glory. Hence this is called the habitation of God, and is represented as the residence of angels and blessed spirits. Deu 26.

The sanctified heart loves heaven for its purity, and God for his goodness.

3. Among pagans, the residence of the celestial gods.

4. The sky or air; the region of the atmosphere; or an elevated place; in a very indefinite sense. Thus we speak of a mountain reaching to heaven; the fowls of heaven; the clouds of heaven; hail or rain from heaven. Jer 9. Job 35.

Their cities are walled to heaven. Deu 1.

5. The Hebrews acknowledged three heavens; the air or aerial heavens; the firmament in which the stars are supposed to be placed; and the heaven of heavens, or third heaven, the residence of Jehovah.

6. Modern philosophers divide the expanse above and around the earth into two parts, the atmosphere or aerial heaven, and the etherial heaven beyond the region of the air, in which there is supposed to be a thin, unresisting medium called ether.

7. The Supreme Power; the Sovereign of heaven; god; as prophets sent by heaven.

I have sinned against heaven. Luke 15.

Shun the impious profaneness which scoffs at the
institution of heaven.

8. The pagan deities; celestials.

And show the heavens more just.

9. Elevation; sublimity.

O! for a muse of fire, that would ascend

The brightest heaven of invention.

10. Supreme felicity; great happiness.

Heaven - Smith's Bible Dictionary by Dr. William Smith (1884)

Heaven. There are four Hebrew words thus rendered, in the Old Testament, which we may briefly notice.

1. **Raki'a**, Authorized Version, *firmament*. See **Firmament**.

2. **Shamayim**. This is the word used in the expression "*the heaven and the earth*", or "*the upper and lower regions*". **Gen 1:1**.

3. **Marom**, used for heaven in **Psa 18:16; Isa 24:18; Jer 25:30**. Properly speaking, it means *a mountain* as in **Psa 102:19; Eze 17:23**.

4. **Shechakim**, "*expanses*", with reference to the *extent* of heaven. **Deu 33:26; Job 35:5**.

St. Paul's expression, "third heaven," **2Co 12:2**, had led to much conjecture. Grotius said that the Jews divided the heaven into three parts, namely,

i. **The air or atmosphere**, where clouds gather;

ii. **The firmament**, in which the sun, moon and stars are fixed;

iii. **The upper heaven**, the abode of God and his angels, the invisible realm of holiness and happiness; the home of the children of God.

Heaven - R. A. Torrey's New Topical Textbook.

Created by God

Gen 1:1; Rev 10:6;

Everlasting

Psa 89:29; 2Co 5:1;

Immeasurable

Jer 31:37;

High

Psa 103:11; Isa 57:15;

Holy

Deu 26:15; Psa 20:6; Isa 57:15;

God's dwelling-place

1Ki 8:30; Mat 6:9;

God's throne

Isa 66:1; Act 7:49;

GOD

Is the Lord of

Dan 5:23; Mat 11:25;

Reigns in

Psa 11:4; Psa 135:6; Dan 4:35;

Fills

1Ki 8:27; Jer 23:24;

Answers his people from
1Ch 21:26; 2Ch 7:14; Neh 9:27; Psa 20:6;

Sends his judgments from
Gen 19:24; 1Sa 2:10; Dan 4:13; Dan 4:14; Rom 1:18;

CHRIST

As Mediator, entered into
Act 3:21; Heb 6:20; Heb 9:12; Heb 9:24;

Is all-powerful in
Mat 28:18; 1Pe 3:22;

Angels are in
Mat 18:10; Mat 24:36;

Names of saints are written
Luk 10:20; Heb 12:23;

Saints rewarded in
Mat 5:12; 1Pe 1:4;

Repentance occasions joy in
Luk 15:7;

Lay up treasure in
Mat 6:20; Luk 12:33;

Flesh and blood cannot inherit
1Co 15:50;

Happiness of, described
Rev 7:16; Rev 7:17;

IS CALLED

A garner
Mat 3:12;

The kingdom of Christ and of God
Eph 5:5;

The Father's house
Joh 14:2;

A heavenly country
Heb 11:16;

A rest
Heb 4:9;

Paradise

2Co 12:2; 2Co 12:4;

The wicked excluded from
Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Rev 22:15;

Enoch and Elijah were translated into
Gen 5:24; Heb 11:5; 2Ki 2:11;

What does it mean when the Bible refers to the Third Heaven?

<http://carm.org/what-does-it-mean-when-bible-refers-third-heaven>

At the time of ancient Israel they did not have as complete an understanding of the universe as we do today. So they wrote in terms with which they were familiar. The Jews spoke of three heavens. The first heaven consisted of the the earth atmosphere where the clouds and birds were. The second heaven was where the sun, stars, and moon was. The third heaven was the dwelling place of God. When Paul said he was caught up to the third heaven ([2 Corinthians 12:2 KJV I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, \(whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;\) such an one caught up to the third heaven.](#)), he was referring to the very dwelling place of God.

As a note, the Mormons erringly teach that the three heavens consist of telestial, terrestrial, and celestial. They divide them into compartments dwelt by people after they die.

The First Heaven: Earth Atmosphere

- [Deut. 11:17](#) -- Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce....
- [Deut. 28:12](#) -- The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands.
- [Judges 5:4](#) -- "O LORD, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the land of Edom, the earth shook, the heavens poured, the clouds poured down water.
- [Acts 14:17](#) -- "Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons;...

The Second Heaven: Outer Space

- [Psalm 19:4,6](#) -- In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun... It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other;
- [Jeremiah 8:2](#) -- They will be exposed to the sun and the moon and all the stars of the heavens which they have loved and served....

- [Isaiah 13:10](#) -- The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light.

The Third Heaven: God's Dwelling Place

- [1 Kings 8:30](#) (phrase repeated numerous times in following verses) -- then hear from heaven, your dwelling place...
- [Psalm 2:4](#) -- The One enthroned in heaven laughs; The LORD scoffs at them.
- [Matthew 5:16](#) -- In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

The highest heaven, the third heaven is indicated by the reference to the Throne of God being the highest heaven:

- [1 Kings 8:27](#) -- "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you.
- [Deut. 10:14](#) -- To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it.

From:

<http://www.biblestudy.org/question/are-there-different-levels-of-heaven.html>

Q. Is there MORE than ONE [heaven](#) and if so, how many are there? Are there different LEVELS of [heaven](#)?

A. The [New King James Bible](#) version says in Genesis 1:

"In the beginning God created the HEAVENS and [the earth](#)." (Genesis 1:1, NKJV throughout, emphasis added)

Although the [King James Version Bible](#) uses the word "**heaven**" in Genesis 1:1, most [modern Bibles](#) correctly translate this verse and use the word "**heavens**." [God](#) did create more than one heaven!

Genesis 1 contains the very first place where a specific "heaven" is referred to:

"Thus God made the firmament, and [divided the waters](#) which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. God called the firmament HEAVEN . . ." (Genesis 1:7-8)

This first heaven is the earth's atmosphere, which is the location that has air and clouds and which airplanes fly in every day. A confirmation of where this heaven is located is found in the book of Jeremiah:

"I beheld, and indeed there was no man, and all the birds of the HEAVENS had fled." (Jeremiah 4:25)

Birds fly within the earth's atmosphere which we call SKY. Revelation 19 further substantiates this definition:

"Then I saw an [angel](#) standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of HEAVEN . . ." (Revelation 19:17)

The second heaven created by God can be found in Genesis 22:

" . . . [blessing](#) I will bless you, and [multiplying I will multiply your descendants](#) as the STARS OF THE HEAVEN and as the sand which is on the seashore; . . ." (Genesis 22:17)

This heaven is where the sun, moon, planets, stars, galaxies and the rest of the universe is located.

[Psalm](#) 11:4 says:

"The Lord is in His [holy temple](#), the Lord's throne is in heaven . . . "

The Lord's throne cannot be in the FIRST heaven (the sky) since God does not yet dwell with mankind. Could the throne be in the SECOND heaven, what we call SPACE?

Deuteronomy 10:14 tells us:

"Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the [Lord your God](#), also the earth with all that is in it." (Deuteronomy 10:14)

Job 22 sheds a little more light on the subject:

"Is not God in the height of heaven? And see the highest stars, how lofty they are!" (Job 22:12)

This suggests the height of heaven is even higher than the stars, thus indicating yet another heaven.

It is the [Apostle Paul](#) who reveals and confirms the existence of a THIRD heaven. [Paul](#), speaking indirectly about what occurred to him, states:

"I know a man in Christ who [fourteen](#) years ago — whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows — such a one was caught up to the THIRD HEAVEN.

"And I know such a man (speaking indirectly about himself) — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows — how he was caught up into Paradise (where God is located, see Revelation 2:7) and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." ([2Corinthians](#) 12:2-4)

To recap, the three heavens God created are:

1. The atmosphere (sky) that surrounds the earth.
2. The Universe or Space.
3. The place where his throne is located.

Written by: Les Turvey and Don Smith

Heavens, New (and Earth, New) - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - James Orr, M.A., D.D., General Editor

1. Eschatological Idea
2. Earliest Conceptions: Cosmic vs. National Type
3. Different from Mythological Theory
4. Antiquity of Cosmical Conception
5. The Cosmical Dependent On the Ethico-Religious
6. The End Correspondent to the Beginning
7. The Cosmical Heavens: Hebrews 12:26-29
8. Palingenesis: Matthew 19:28
9. A Purified Universe

1. Eschatological Idea

The formal conception of new heavens and a new earth occurs in [Isa 65:17](#); [Isa 66:22](#); [2Pe 3:13](#); [Rev 21:1](#) (where "heaven," singular). The idea in substance is also found in [Isa 51:16](#); [Mat 19:28](#); [2Co 5:17](#); [Heb 12:26-28](#). In each case the reference is eschatological, indeed the adjective "new" seems to have acquired in this and other connections a semi-technical eschatological sense. It must be remembered that the Old Testament has no single word for "universe," and that the phrase "heaven and earth" serves to supply the deficiency. The promise of a new heavens and a new earth is therefore equivalent to a promise of world renewal.

2. Earliest Conceptions: Cosmic vs. National Type

It is a debated question how old in the history of revelation this promise is. Isaiah is the prophet with whom the idea first occurs in explicit form, and that in passages which many critics would assign to the post-exilic period (the so-called Trito-Isaiah). In general, until recently, the trend of criticism has been to represent the universalistic-cosmic type of eschatology as developed out of the particularistic-national type by a gradual process of widening of the horizon of prophecy, a view which would put the emergence of the former at a comparatively late date. More recently, however, Gressmann (*Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie*, 1905) and others have endeavored to show that often even prophecies belonging to the latter type embody material and employ means of expression which presuppose acquaintance with the idea of a world-catastrophe at the end. On this view the world-eschatology would have, from ancient times, existed alongside of the more narrowly confined outlook, and would be even older than the latter. These writers further assume that the cosmic eschatology was not indigenous among the Hebrews, but of oriental (Babylonian) origin, a theory which they apply not only to the more developed system of the later apocalyptic writings, but also to its preformations in the Old Testament. The cosmic eschatology is not believed to have been the distinctive property of the great ethical prophets, but rather a commonly current mythological belief to which the prophets refer without formally endorsing it.

3. Different from Mythological Theory

Its central thought is said to have been the belief that the end of the world-process must correspond to the beginning, that consequently the original condition of things, when heaven and earth were new, must repeat itself at some future point, and the state of paradise with its concomitants return, a belief supposed to have rested on certain astronomical observations.

4. Antiquity of Cosmical Conception

While this theory in the form presented is unproven and unacceptable, it deserves credit for having focused attention on certain phenomena in the Old Testament which clearly show that Messianic prophecy, and particularly the world-embracing scope which it assumes in some predictions, is far older than modern criticism had been willing to concede. The Old Testament from the beginning has an eschatology and puts the eschatological promise on the broadest racial basis (Gen 3). It does not first ascend from Israel to the new humanity, but at the very outset takes its point of departure in the race and from this descends to the election of Israel, always keeping the Universalistic goal in clear view. Also in the earliest accounts, already elements of a cosmical universalism find their place side by side with those of a racial kind, as when Nature is represented as sharing in the consequences of the fall of man.

5. The Cosmical Dependent on the Ethico-Religious

As regards the antiquity of the universalistic and cosmical eschatology, therefore, the conclusions of these writers may be registered as a gain, while on the two other points of the pagan origin and the unethical character of the expectation involved, dissent from them should be expressed. According to the Old Testament, the whole idea of world-renewal is of strictly super-natural origin, and in it the cosmical follows the ethical hope. The cosmical eschatology is simply the correlate of the fundamental Biblical principle that the issues of the world-process depend on the ethico-religious developments in the history of man (compare [2Pe 3:13](#)).

6. The End Correspondent to the Beginning

But the end correspondent to the beginning is likewise a true Scriptural principle, which theory in question has helped to re-emphasize, although there is this difference that Scripture does not look forward to a repetition of the same process, but to a restoration of the primeval harmony on a higher plane such as precludes all further disturbance. In the passages above cited, there are clear reminiscences of the account of creation ([Isa 51:16](#), "that I may plant the heavens, and *lay the foundations* of the earth"; [Isa 65:17](#), "I *create* new heavens and a new earth"; [2Pe 3:13](#) compared with [2Pe 3:4-6](#); [Rev 21:1](#) compared with the imagery of paradise throughout the chapter). Besides this, where the thought of the renewal of earth is met with in older prophecy, this is depicted in colors of the state of paradise ([Isa 11:6-9](#); [Hos 2:18-21](#)). The "regeneration" (*palingenesi* 'a) of [Mat 19:28](#) also points back to the first genesis of the world. The 'inhabited earth to come' (*oikouménē méllousa*) of [Heb 2:5](#) occurs at the opening of a context throughout which the account of Gen 1 through 3 evidently stood before the writer's mind.

7. The Cosmical Heavens: [Heb 12:26-29](#)

In the combination "new heavens and a new earth," the term "heavens" must therefore be taken in the sense imposed upon it by the story of creation, where "heavens" designates not the celestial habitation of God, but the cosmical heavens, the region of the supernal waters, sun moon and stars. The Bible nowhere suggests that there is anything abnormal or requiring renewal in God's dwelling-place ([Heb 9:23](#) is of a different import). In [Rev 21](#), where "the new heaven and the new earth" appear, it is at the same time stated that the new Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven (compare [Rev 21:1](#), [Rev 21:2](#), [Rev 21:10](#)). In [Heb 12:26-28](#) also the implication is that only the lower heavens are subject to renewal. The "shaking" that accompanies the new covenant and corresponds to the shaking of the law-giving at Sinai, is a shaking of "not the earth only, but also the heaven." This shaking, in its reference to heaven as well as to earth, signifies a removal of the things shaken. But from the things thus shaken and removed (including heaven), the writer distinguishes "those things which are not shaken," which are destined to remain, and these are identified with the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God, however, according to the general trend of the teaching of the epistle, has its center in the

heavenly world. The words “that have been made,” in [Heb 12:27](#), do not assign their created character as the reason why heaven and earth can be shaken, an exegesis which would involve us in the difficulty that among that which remains there is something uncreated besides God; the true construction and correct paraphrase are: “as of things that were made with the thought in the mind of God that those things which cannot be shaken may remain,” i.e. already at creation God contemplated an unchangeable universe as the ultimate, higher state of things.

8. Palingenesis: [Mat 19:28](#)

In [Mat 19:28](#) the term *palingenesia* marks the world-renewing as the renewal of an abnormal state of things. The Scripture teaching, therefore, is that around the center of God's heaven, which is not subject to deterioration or renewal, a new cosmical heaven and a new earth will be established to be the dwelling-place of the eschatological humanity. The light in which the promise thus appears reminds us that the renewed *kosmos*, earth as well as cosmical heavens, is destined to play a permanent (not merely provisional, on the principle of chiliasm) part in the future life of the people of God. This is in entire harmony with the prevailing Biblical representation, not only in the Old Testament but likewise in the New Testament (compare [Mat 5:5](#); [Heb 2:5](#)), although in the Fourth Gospel and in the Pauline Epistles the emphasis is to such an extent thrown on the heaven-centered character of the future life that the role to be played in it by the renewed earth recedes into the background. Revelation, on the other hand, recognizes this element in its imagery of “the new Jerus” coming down from God out of heaven upon earth.

9. A Purified Universe

That the new heavens and the new earth are represented as the result of a “creation” does not necessarily involve a production *ex nihilo*. The terms employed in [2Pe 3:6-13](#) seem rather to imply that the renewal will out of the old produce a purified universe, whence also the catastrophe is compared to that of the Deluge. As then the old world perished by water and the present world arose out of the flood, so in the end-crisis “the heavens shall be dissolved by fire and the elements melt with fervent heat,” to give rise to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells. The term *palingenesia* ([Mat 19:28](#)) points to renewal, not to creation *de novo*. The Talmud also teaches that the world will pass through a process of purification, although at the same time it seems to break up the continuity between this and the coming world by the fantastic assumption that the new heavens and the new earth of [Isa 65:17](#) were created at the close of the Hexameron of Gen 1. This was inferred from the occurrence of the article in [Isa 66:22](#), “the new heavens and the new earth.”

Levels of Hell

Question

Do the different words translated into english as "hell" actually refer to different levels of hell?

I was recently exposed to a doctrine that I had never heard before. The idea is that there are three Greek words for hell interpreted as **Gehenna**, **Hell**, and the **Lake of Fire** - all with different meanings. As explained to me, Gehenna is where apostate believers go for a time (a millennium), Hell is where the unbelievers go until the final judgment when they are thrown into the Lake of Fire.

In addition to Gehenna I understand that there is another place believers in need of punishment will be sent and that **place is the outer darkness** (Matt 8:12, 22:13, and 25:30).

In these accounts the argument is that Jesus is speaking to believers. In Matthew 8 he refers to the "sons of the Kingdom" being cast out into the outer darkness.

In Matthew 22 the guests at the wedding are assumed to be saved but one is throw out. He is not condemned eternally but is punished for his sins in the outer darkness. Matthew 25 refers to servants (or believers) but one is throw out into the outer darkness—once again, a believer is thrown out but not eternally. This doctrine is backed by verses such as Mark 9:45-48 (where "hell" is actually Gehenna).

The argument is that Christ is speaking to believers and warning them of the punishment that awaits them if they fail to be faithful. The idea of rewards, such as in Matthew 19:27-30, is that those who DO more for the kingdom will receive more rewards than others and those who are saved but live in sin or apart from God will still be saved from eternal damnation but will be punished in Gehenna (or the outer darkness - this speaks to three levels of heaven - the Kingdom of Heaven, the Outer Darkness, and Gehenna - the believer's hell).

Can you shed some light on this for me?

Answer

In the Bible, there are a number of different words for the abode(s) of the deceased. In the Hebrew Old Testament we find terms like "new earth," "Sheol," "Abaddon" and various words for "the pit." In the Greek New Testament and in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), we find terms like "new earth," "Heaven," "Gehenna," "Hades," "Tartarus," "abyss" and "Lake of Fire."

Terms

All the following terms are spoken of in terms that indicate that the inhabitants of these realms are conscious and aware.

Sheol is usually translated by "Hades" in the Septuagint. It is a very general term referring commonly to the parts of the world that lie beneath the surface of the earth (e.g., Num. 16:30-33; Deut. 32:22; Isa. 7:11), including the grave (Isa. 14:11), and to the abode of both the righteous (e.g., Ps. 30:3; Eccl. 9:10) and the wicked (e.g., Ps. 9:17) after death. Other Old

Testament texts equate Sheol with “death,” as does Paul (1 Cor. 15:55 with Hos. 13:14).

Abaddon is a place of destruction in the Old Testament, and Revelation indicates that it is also the name of the angel of the abyss (Rev. 9:11). It is frequently associated with Sheol (Job 26:6; Prov. 15:11; 27:20), and sometimes with death (Job 28:22) or a tomb (Ps. 88:11).

“**The pit**” is usually a hole in the ground, i.e., a grave. However, in some instances it may refer to the collective abode of the dead (Isa. 14:15-19).

The Bible distinguishes **heaven** as a temporary place of blessing for disembodied believers (2 Cor. 5:6-8).

After the general resurrection, believers will leave heaven and live perpetually on the **New Earth** (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).

Gehenna is a place of punishment, torment and destruction (e.g., Matt. 5:22; 10:28; 23:33; Mark 9:43), and it is characterized by fire (Matt. 5:22; 18:9; Mark 9:43; Jam. 3:6). It would seem that the spirits in Gehenna are not disembodied (e.g., Matt. 5:29,30; 10:28), which suggests that it is at least a place of eternal punishment after the general resurrection (John 5:28-29). But Gehenna also appears to exist and to be an active force in the present (Jam. 3:6), before the resurrection, suggesting that it is also a place of disembodied torment prior to the judgment.

The Lake of Fire is mentioned only in Revelation (Rev. 19:20; 20:10,14,15; 21:8), where it is described as the final place of torment for the wicked. Gehenna is not mentioned in Revelation. Judging from the descriptions of Gehenna and the Lake of Fire, they seem to be one and the same.

Hades is used in the New Testament to refer to the abode of the wicked after death (Luke 10:15) and for the grave or tomb of the righteous (Acts 2:27-29). In Revelation, it is closely associated with “death” (Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14). It is mentioned in Luke 16 in the context of the story/parable of Lazarus and Dives. Scholars are divided in their opinions as to whether Jesus affirmed this view of Hades or simply borrowed it for the sake of an illustration. Potentially, it affirms that Hades may legitimately be used to refer to a place where unbelievers are tormented before the judgment.

In Revelation, the **Abyss** is mentioned mainly as the abode of demonic forces and curses (Rev. 9:1,2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1; 20:3), and the same is true in Luke 8:31. But in Romans 10:7 Paul speaks of the Abyss simply as the abode of the dead, and specifically as where Christ went when he died. Since the Bible indicates that Jesus did not suffer torment after his death (Luke 23:46), the Abyss does not appear to be restricted to the wicked and to demons. The word “abyss” itself refers to a deep or bottomless pit, so that the image is closely associated with “the pit” and perhaps with “Abaddon.” Probably, its meaning is as broad as that of “Sheol” and “Hades.”

Tartarus is only used once, so we have very little information on it. It is where the fallen angels are temporarily imprisoned (2 Pet. 2:4), prior to the judgment. It is also associated with the idea of a pit. It may have been used exclusively as a description of a place of punishment, but we can't be sure based on its one appearance. Its use in reference to the abode of the demons makes it a close match with “Abyss.” Since the Abyss is probably not for the wicked exclusively, Tartarus may also be a place for the righteous.

Hell is an English catch-all term that different translations use in different ways. It is not directly related to any of the terms in the Hebrew or Greek Scriptures.

Outer darkness is a term used in Matthew to refer to a place of cursing, cut off from the blessings of God (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). It is fairly equivalent to Gehenna, except that we have no references to it that mention fire. Tartarus is also described as being in darkness (2 Pet. 2:4). It is reserved for those who are of God's elect (Matt. 22:14), that is, for unbelievers.

The **Millennium** is the current age, spanning the entire time between the first and second advents of Christ. For further info, see the following Q&A's:

answer.asp/category/nt/file/99930.qna

answer.asp/category/nt/file/99798.qna.

Analysis of the Terms

As you can see, there is quite a bit of overlap between many of the terms listed above. The doctrine of the afterlife is not laid out very clearly in the Old Testament, and in fact most texts that speak of it do so only in the vaguest terms. It is in the New Testament that we find more detailed information. But that does not mean that we should ignore the implications of the Old Testament.

For example, Sheol can mean a wide variety of things, and "Hades" is the Greek word most commonly used to translate Sheol in all its uses in the Septuagint. Therefore, we ought to expect the meaning of "Hades" in the New Testament to be as broad as the meaning of "Sheol" in the Old Testament. And in fact, this expectation seems to be fulfilled.

In general, it would appear that "Sheol" and "Hades," as well as "Abaddon," "the pit" and "Abyss," and perhaps even "Tartarus," largely cover the same semantic ground. They are perhaps nuanced differently, but we probably ought not to make hard and fast theological distinctions between them. These terms do not give us a clear picture of what happens to people when they die, or of what happens to them after the judgment.

On the other hand, there seems to be sufficient data to indicate that Gehenna is the Lake of Fire, and that it is exclusively a place of punishment, whereas "heaven" and "new earth" are exclusively places of blessing. "Outer darkness" also seems to refer to this place.

The error we ought to seek to avoid is creating a system of theology based on limited uses of these various words. Each use of each word contains only a little bit of the picture. We ought not to infer from the various uses of the words that words that are not used in precisely the same manner actually refer to different things. Consider, for example, that I describe my car to a variety of people who later compare notes:

- I tell Joe that I have a silver two-door.
- I tell Bob that I have a small import.
- I tell Pete that my car has lots of black trim.

All these reports are correct, all contain different data, none of the data overlaps, but all the descriptions refer to the same vehicle. I might also have many names for my vehicle, such as "my car," "the Nissan," and "Old Faithful." Different names and different descriptions don't necessarily indicate different things.

Now, imagine I want to describe Gehenna. I explain that it is a place where:

- Unbelievers are disembodied.
- Unbelievers are not disembodied.
- Unbelievers are tormented.
- There is fire.
- Unbelievers are in darkness.

All these reports are correct, all contain different data, none of the data overlaps, but all the descriptions refer to the same place, albeit at different times regarding “1” and “2.” I might also call this place “the Lake of Fire” and “hell,” but compounding names doesn’t mean I have mentioned more than one place. If each name indicated a different place, we would have to say that as Christians we worship a whole host of Gods, for God has many, many names and titles in Scripture. In summary, we do not need to imagine that each word or description we encounter refers to a different place.

Theological Implications

We can make a number of theological assertions with an extremely high degree of certainty:

1. Demons are currently imprisoned until the judgment (2 Pet. 2; Jude).
2. When believers die, their disembodied souls go to heaven until the resurrection and judgment (2 Cor. 5).
3. When unbelievers die, their disembodied souls are imprisoned and tormented until the judgment (Luke 16; cf. comments on Gehenna above). The other option here is to see them in a shadowy, limited, restricted, hopeless existence like that sometimes associated with Sheol in the Old Testament. Or perhaps these two ideas are actually different perspectives on the same thing.
4. After the resurrection and judgment, believers live perpetually on the new earth in their resurrected bodies (1 Cor. 15; John 5:28-29; Rev. 21).
5. After the resurrection and judgment, unbelievers and demons dwell perpetually in Gehenna, a.k.a. the Lake of Fire, (Matt. 5; Rev. 19-21).

In light of assertion “1” above, I should add at this point that the Bible completely refutes the idea that any believer may ever be considered wicked or be subjected to punishment of any sort in the afterlife. All believers are counted as perfectly righteous in Christ (e.g., Rom. 3:21-26; 5:17-18; 8:10-11; 1 Cor. 1:30; Gal 2:19-21; Phil. 3:9-11), and therefore all believers go to heaven when they die, and reign on the new earth with Christ after the resurrection. There is no such thing as a “believer’s hell,” temporary or otherwise—that idea is basically the Protestant version of the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory (cf. the Q&A on that subject: answer.asp/category/th/file/99944.qna).

Along these lines, the “sons of the kingdom” (Matt. 8:12) who are cast into outer darkness are not believers. A “son of the kingdom” is one who is in covenant with God, not one who is saved. All who are part of the visible people of God are in covenant with him. In our day, the covenant people are the visible church. In Jesus’ day, the covenant community was the nation of Israel. All the covenant people are children of the kingdom, regardless of whether or not they are saved. Those who are believers receive the covenant blessings; those who are unbelievers fall under the

covenant curses. In Matthew 8:10-12, the “sons of the kingdom” were the Jews. Jesus’ point was that many Jews would not believe, and therefore would fall under the covenant curses, whereas many Gentiles would come to faith and receive the covenant blessings that had originally been offered to these same Jews.

Similarly, in Matthew 22, being invited to the dinner is not equivalent to being saved. Rather, it is equivalent to being offered the gospel. The man who was cast out responded to the gospel, but not in a saving manner. When the master of the feast saw that the man’s faith was not genuine, he cast him out. The explanation was that the man was not “chosen” or “elected,” that is, he was not predestined to salvation, and he never came to faith.

And again, in Matthew 25, we see the same thing. The servant is not a believer, but simply one who is obligated to do what the master says. Since he is unfaithful/disobedient, he is punished. The application Jesus makes of this parable is that during the judgment Jesus will punish the wicked and reward the faithful. Clearly the servant was one of the wicked and not one of the faithful. The parallel to Jesus’ audience was that some of the Jews who heard him speak obeyed him and came to faith, while others rejected him. They were all servants in his house, but only some were good servants.

Likewise, in Mark 9:45-48 Jesus was not talking exclusively to believers—Judas was there, but he was never a believer. In any event, it is true that if believers fall away, they will perish. What is not true is that the Holy Spirit will allow such a thing to take place. Nevertheless, remaining faithful takes effort. This is why in Reformed circles we deny the doctrine of eternal security, but affirm the doctrine of perseverance of the saints: answer.asp/category/th/file/99813.qna. Believers must be encouraged to remain faithful, and must pursue fidelity with energy.

I should also add that there is actually no such thing as an “apostate believer.” By definition, an apostate is not a believer. An apostate is one who falsely professes faith, but then abandons that profession. Because the Holy Spirit preserves all believers, no believer may ever fall from grace in this way. For a more extensive treatment of this subject, see the Q&A at answer.asp/category/th/file/99813.qna.

The idea of rewards does not pertain to punishment (cf. Matt. 17:27-30). A reward is a good thing; punishment is a bad thing. All believers will be rewarded in varying degrees, but none will be punished.

Answer by Ra McLaughlin

HELL

hell (see SHEOL; HADES; GEHENNA):

1. The Word in the King James Version

The English word, from a Teutonic root meaning “to hide” or “cover,” had originally the significance of the world of the dead generally, and in this sense is used by Chaucer, Spenser, etc., and in the Creed (“He descended into hell”); compare the English Revised Version Preface. Now the word has come to mean almost exclusively the place of punishment of the lost or finally impenitent; the place of torment of the wicked. In the King James Version of the Scriptures, it is the rendering adopted in many places in the Old Testament for the Hebrew word *she’ol* (in 31 out of 65 occurrences of that word it is so translated), and in all places, save one ([1Co 15:55](#)) in the New Testament, for the Greek word *Hades* (this word occurs 11 times; in 10 of these it is

translated “hell”; [1Co 15:55](#) reads “grave,” with “hell” in the margin). In these cases the word has its older general meaning, though in [Luk 16:23](#) (parable of Rich Man and Lazarus) it is specially connected with a place of “torment,” in contrast with the “Abraham's bosom” to which Lazarus is taken ([Luk 16:22](#)).

2. The Word in the Revised Version

In the above cases the Revised Version (British and American) has introduced changes, replacing “hell” by “Sheol” in the passages in the Old Testament (the English Revised Version retains “hell” in [Isa 14:9](#), [Isa 14:15](#); the American Standard Revised Version makes no exception), and by “Hades” in the passages in the New Testament (see under these words).

3. Gehenna

Besides the above uses, and more in accordance with the modern meaning, the word “hell” is used in the New Testament in the King James Version as the equivalent of Gehenna (12 t; [Mat 5:22](#), [Mat 5:29](#); [Mat 10:28](#), etc.). the Revised Version (British and American) in these cases puts “Gehenna” in the margin. Originally the Valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, Gehenna became among the Jews the synonym for the place of torment in the future life (the “Gehenna of fire,” [Mat 5:22](#), etc.; see GEHENNA).

4. Tartarus

In yet one other passage in the New Testament ([2Pe 2:4](#)), “to cast down to hell” is used (the King James Version and the Revised Version (British and American)) to represent the Greek *tartarōō*, (“to send into Tartarus”). Here it stands for the place of punishment of the fallen angels: “spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits (or chains) of darkness” (compare [Jud 1:6](#); but also [Mat 25:41](#)). Similar ideas are found in certain of the Jewish apocalyptic books (Book of Enoch, Book of Jubilees, Apocrypha Baruch, with apparent reference to [Gen 6:1-4](#); compare ESCHATOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT). On theological aspect, see PUNISHMENT, EVERLASTING. For literature, see references in above-named arts., and compare article “Hell” by Dr. D. S. Salmond in *HDB*.