

KJV Revelation 1:17b-18

17 Fear not; I am the first and the last: ^(A)

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Greek Text

* Μη φοβοῦ. Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος καὶ ὁ ζῶν καὶ ἦν νεκρὸς καὶ ἰδοὺ ὁ ζῶν εἰμι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων καὶ ἔχω τὰς κλεῖς τοῦ θανάτου καὶ τοῦ ᾗδου

Μη ^{Ab} ^{Fear not!} φοβοῦ ^{V imperative present middle or passive depon.} Ἐγώ ^I εἰμι ^{am} ὁ ^{the} πρῶτος ^{first} καὶ ^{and} ὁ ^{the} ἔσχατος ^{last} καὶ ^{and} ὁ ^I ζῶν ^{living one} καὶ ^{and} ἦν ^{I became} νεκρὸς ^{dead} καὶ ^{and} ἰδοὺ ^{behold} ὁ ^I ζῶν ^{living} εἰμι ^{I am} εἰς ^{into} τοὺς ^{the} αἰῶνας ^{ages} τῶν ^{of} αἰῶνων ^{the ages} καὶ ^{and} ἔχω ^{I have} τὰς ^{the} κλεῖς ^{keys} τοῦ ^{of} θανάτου ^{death} καὶ ^{and} τοῦ ^{of} ᾗδου ^{hades}

* Fear Not - used over 80 times in the Bible

(A) Isa 41:4, 44:6, 48:12

κλεις = keys

Matt 16:19

Luke 11:52

Rev 1:18, 3:7, 9:1, 20:1

πρῶτος in Rev

1:11, 17, 2:4, 5, 8, 19

4:1, 7 8:7 13:12

16:2, 20:5, 6 21:1, 4, 19, 22:13

ἀδελφού, ἀδελφής

Mt 11:23, 16:18

Luke 10:15, 16:23

Acts 2:27, 31

1 Cor 15:55

Rev 1:18, 6:8, 20:13, 14

VI.

Hell, Hades, and Tartarus

THERE are three Greek words in the New Testament translated by the one English word "hell," which fact results in some confusion in our thinking.

One of these is "Gehenna." It is the Greek representative of the Hebrew "Ge-Hinnom," or Valley of Hinnom, a deep narrow valley to the south of Jerusalem, where, after the introduction of the worship of the fire-gods by Ahaz, the idolatrous Jews sacrificed their children to the god Molech. After the time of Josiah, when this practice was stopped, it became the common refuse-place of the city, where the bodies of criminals, carcasses of animals, and all sorts of filth were cast. From its depth and narrowness, and its fire and ascending smoke, it became the symbol of the place of the future punishment of the wicked. The word is used in Matthew 5:22 in the phrase "the hell of fire," (Greek), and thus refers to the final abode of the wicked dead which is called in Revelation 19:20 "the lake of fire burning with brimstone." This lake of fire is in existence now, for the word "prepared" in the Greek of Matthew 25:41 is in the perfect tense which refers to a past completed action having present results. Hell had been already prepared and was in existence when Jesus spoke these words. There is no one there now. The first occupants of that dreadful place will be the Beast and the false prophet, Satan following them 1000 years afterwards. Then at the

Great White Throne Judgment, which occurs at the close of the Millennium, all lost human beings, the fallen angels, and the demons will also be sent there for eternity. Our word "hell" is the correct rendering of the word "Gehenna," and should be so translated in the following passages, Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6.

The second of these words is "Hades," which is a transliteration, not a translation, of the Greek word. When we transliterate a word we take the spelling of that word over into another language in the respective letter equivalents, whereas when we translate a word, we take the meaning over into that language. The word itself means "The Unseen." This was the technical Greek religious term used to designate the world of those who departed this life. The Septuagint, namely, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, uses this word to translate the Hebrew "Sheol," which has a similar general meaning. The "Hades" of the pagan Greeks was the invisible land, the realm of shadow, where all Greeks went, the virtuous, to that part called Elysium, the wicked, to the other part called Tartarus.

The difference between the pagan and Biblical conceptions of Hades is that the former conceives of Hades as the final abode of the dead, whereas the latter teaches that it is the temporary place of confinement until the Great White Throne Judgment in the case of the wicked dead, and until the resurrection of Christ, in the case of the righteous dead, the latter since that event going at once to heaven at death (Phil. 1:23).

As the pagan conception of Hades included two parts, so the Biblical idea divided it into two parts, the one called paradise (Luke 23:43, but not II Cor. 12:4, and Rev. 2:7), or Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22), for the righteous dead, and the other part for the wicked dead having no specific

designation except the general word "Hades" (Luke 16:23). This Greek word is found in the following passages, to be translated and interpreted generally as "Hades," the place of the departed dead, and for the reason that the translators of the Septuagint use this word to express in the Greek language what is meant in the Hebrew by the word "Sheol," the place of the departed dead.

In Matthew 11:23 and Luke 10:15, Capernaum is to be brought down to the realms of the dead, presumably here to that portion of Hades reserved for the wicked, because of its rejection of the attesting miracles of our Lord. In Luke 16:23, the rich man was in Hades, that part where the wicked dead are kept until the judgment of the Great White Throne. In Acts 2:27, 31, our Lord at His death went to Hades, the passage in Acts being quoted from Psalm 16:, where the Hebrew is "Sheol." His soul was not left in Hades, the "paradise" portion, nor did His body in Joseph's tomb see corruption, for He was raised from the dead on the third day. He as the Man Christ Jesus, possessing a human soul and spirit, as He possessed a human body, entered the abode of the righteous dead, having committed the keeping of His spirit to God the Father (Luke 23:46). The word "grave" in I Corinthians 15:55 is not from the word "Hades," for the best manuscripts have the word "death," while "Hades" is a rejected reading. The translation should read, "death."

In Revelation 6:8, Death and Hades follow in the wake of war and famine, Hades ready to receive the dead of the Great Tribulation period. In Revelation 20:13, 14, Death itself, and Hades with all the wicked dead are cast into the lake of fire.

There are just two places where this Greek word should be translated rather than transliterated. In Revelation 1:18, our Lord has the keys or control of The Unseen and

of death. That is, He is master of the unseen world which in the Christian system includes Hades, Tartarus, and the kingdom of Satan in the atmosphere of this earth.

The other place is Matthew 16:18 where we translate "The Unseen." The word "prevail" in the Greek means "to be strong to another's detriment, to overpower." The word "gates" is an orientalism for the idea of centralized legal authority. Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. Boaz went to the gate of Bethlehem to settle a legal matter with reference to his proposed marriage to Ruth. The word refers to a council. The word "hades" is out of the question here as an adequate translation, because the wicked dead in that place have no power to overcome the Church, and the righteous dead there at the time our Lord spoke these words had neither the desire nor power. The holy angels in heaven would have no such desire. All that is left in the unseen world are Satan and his demons. These constitute the Council in the Unseen that desires to bring about the destruction of the Church.

The third word translated "hell" is in II Peter 2:4 where the Greek word is "Tartarus," the prison of the fallen angels that sinned at the time of the flood (Gen. 6:1-4; I Peter 3:19, 20; Jude 6).

This brief study contains all the passages where the word "hell" is used in the New Testament, and can be used as a guide to the correct translation in each case.