

~GEHENNA (415)

(*Ge-hen'na*) [Greek form of Hebrew, *Geh Hin-nom'*, Valley of Hinnom]

- Not A Symbol Of Everlasting Torment
- Symbolic Of Complete Destruction
- Figurative Use

· This name appears 12 times in the **Christian Greek Scriptures**, and whereas many translators take the liberty to render it by the word hell, a number of modern translations transliterate the word from the Greek *ge'en-na*. [Ro, Mo, ED, NW, BC Spanish], NC Spanish, also the footnotes of Daniel and RS.

- However, I say to you that everyone who continues wrathful with his brother will be accountable to the court of justice, but whoever addresses his brother with an unspeakable word of contempt will be accountable to the Supreme Court, whereas whoever says, You despicable fool! Will be liable to the fiery **Gehenna**. (**Matthew 5:22**)
- The deep, narrow Valley of Hinnom, later known by this Greek name, lay to the South and Southwest of ancient Jerusalem and is the modern-day **Wadi er-Rababi**, **Ge Ben Hinnom**.
- And the boundary went up to the valley of the son of Hinnom to the slope of the Jebusite at the south, that is to say; Jerusalem, and the boundary went up to the top of the mountain that faces the valley of Hinnom to the west, which is at the extremity of the low plain of Rephaim to the north. (**Joshua 15:8**)
- And the boundary went down to the extremity of the mountain that faces the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is in the low plain of Rephaim to the north, and it went down to the valley of Hinnom, to the slope of the Jebusite on the south, and went down to En-rogel. (**Joshua 18:16**)
- And you must go out to the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is at the entrance of the Gate of the Potsherds. And there you must proclaim the words that I shall speak to you. (**Jeremiah 19:2**)
- Therefore, look! There are days coming, is the utterance of Yehowah, when this place will be called no more Topheth and the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of the killing.

(Jeremiah 19:6)

- **Judean Kings Ahaz and Manasseh engaged in idolatrous worship there, which included the making of human sacrifices by fire to Baal.**
- **Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and for sixteen years he reigned in Jerusalem, and he did not do what was right in Yehowah's eyes like David his forefather. (2 Chronicles 28:1)**
- **And he himself made sacrificial smoke in the valley of the son of Hinnom and proceeded to burn up his sons in the fire, according to the detestable things of the nations that Yehowah had driven out from before the sons of Israel. (2 Chronicles 28:3)**
- **Twelve years old was Manasseh when he began to reign, and for fifty-five years he reigned in Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 33:1)**
- **And he himself made his own sons pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and practiced magic and used divination and practiced sorcery and made spiritistic mediums and professional foretellers of events. He did on a grand scale what was bad in the eyes of Yehowah, to offend him. (2 Chronicles 33:6)**
- **And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, in order to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, a thing that I had not commanded and that had not come up into my heart. (Jeremiah 7:31)**
- **Therefore, look! Days are coming, is the utterance of Yehowah, when it will no more be said to be Topheth and the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of the killing, and they will have to bury in Topheth without there being enough place. (Jeremiah 7:32)**
- **Furthermore, they built the high places of Baal that are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, in order to make their sons and their daughters pass through the fire to Molech, a thing that I did not command them, neither did it come up into my heart to do this detestable thing, for the purpose of making Judah sin. (Jeremiah 32:35)**

- Later, to prevent such activities there in the future, faithful King Josiah had the place of idolatrous worship polluted, particularly the section called Topheth.
- And he made unfit for worship **Topheth**, which is in the valley of the sons of **Hinnom**, that no one might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. (**2 Kings 23:10**)

See Also HINNOM, VALLEY OF

· **Not A Symbol Of Everlasting Torment**

- Jesus Christ associated fire with **Gehenna**.
- However, I say to you that everyone who continues wrathful with his brother will be accountable to the court of justice, but whoever addresses his brother with an unspeakable word of contempt will be accountable to the Supreme Court, whereas whoever says, You despicable fool! Will be liable to the fiery **Gehenna**. (**Matthew 5:22**)
- Also, if your eye is making you stumble, tear it out and throw it away from you. It is finer for you to enter one-eyed into life than to be thrown with two eyes into the fiery **Gehenna**. (**Matthew 18:9**)
- And if your eye makes you stumble, throw it away. It is finer for you to enter one-eyed into the kingdom of God than with two eyes to be pitched into **Gehenna**. (**Mark 9:47**)
- Where their maggot does not die and the fire is not put out. (**Mark 9:48**)
- As did the disciple James, the only Biblical writer besides Matthew, Mark, and Luke to use the word.
- Well, the tongue is a fire. The tongue is constituted a world of unrighteousness among our members, for it spots up all the body and sets the wheel of natural life aflame and it is set aflame by **Gehenna**. (**James 3:6**)
- Some commentators endeavor to link such fiery characteristic of **Gehenna** with the burning of human sacrifices that was carried on prior

to Josiah's reign and, on this basis, hold that **Gehenna** was used by Jesus as a symbol of everlasting torment.

- However, since Yehowah God expressed repugnance for such practice, saying that it was a thing that I had not commanded and that had not come up into my heart.
- And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, in order to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, a thing that I had not commanded and that had not come up into my heart. (**Jeremiah 7:31**)
- Furthermore, they built the high places of Baal that are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, in order to make their sons and their daughters pass through the fire to Molech, a thing that I did not command them, neither did it come up into my heart to do this detestable thing, for the purpose of making Judah sin. (**Jeremiah 32:35**)
- It seems most unlikely that God's Son, in discussing divine judgment, would make such idolatrous practice the basis for the symbolic meaning of **Gehenna**.
- It may be noted that God prophetically decreed that the Valley of Hinnom would serve as a place for mass disposal of dead bodies rather than for the torture of live victims.
- Therefore, look! Days are coming, is the utterance of Yehowah, when it will no more be said to be Topheth and the valley of the son of **Hinnom**, but the valley of the killing, and they will have to bury in Topheth without there being enough place. (**Jeremiah 7:32**)
- And the dead bodies of this people must become food for the flying creatures of the heavens and for the beasts of the earth, with nobody to make them tremble. (**Jeremiah 7:33**)
- And you must go out to the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is at the entrance of the Gate of the Potsherds. And there you must proclaim the words that I shall speak to you. (**Jeremiah 19:2**)
- Therefore, look! There are days coming, is the utterance of Yehowah, when this place will be called no more Topheth and the valley of the son of **Hinnom**, but the valley of the killing.

(Jeremiah 19:6)

- **And I will make void the counsel of Judah and of Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hand of those seeking for their soul. And I will give their dead bodies as food to the flying creatures of the heavens and to the beasts of the earth. (Jeremiah 19:7)**
- **And you must break the flask before the eyes of the men who are going with you. (Jeremiah 19:10)**
- **And you must say to them, This is what Yehowah of armies has said; In the same way I shall break this people and this city as someone breaks the vessel of the potter so that it is no more able to be repaired, and in **Topheth** they will bury until there is no more place to bury. (Jeremiah 19:11)**
- **And all the low plain of the carcasses and of the fatty ashes, and all the terraces as far as the torrent valley of Kidron, clear to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the sunrising, will be something holy to Yehowah. It will not be uprooted, neither will it be torn down anymore to time indefinite. (Jeremiah 31:40)**
- **The reference to the low plain of the carcasses and of the fatty ashes is generally accepted as designating the Valley of **Hinnom**, and a gate known as the Gate of the Ash-heaps evidently opened out onto the eastern extremity of the valley at its juncture with the ravine of the Kidron.**
- **The Valley Gate was what Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired, they themselves built it and then set up its doors, its bolts and its bars, also a thousand cubits in the wall as far as the Gate of the Ash-heaps. (Nehemiah 3:13)**
- **And the Gate of the Ash-heaps was what Malchijah the son of Rechab, a prince of the district of Beth-haccherem, repaired, he himself went building it and setting up its doors, its bolts and its bars. (Nehemiah 3:14)**
- **It seems obvious that such carcasses and fatty ashes are not related to the human sacrifices made there under Ahaz and Manasseh, since any bodies so offered would doubtless be viewed by the idolaters as sacred and would not be left lying in the valley.**

- Therefore, the Biblical evidence concerning **Gehenna** generally parallels the traditional view presented by rabbinic and other sources. That view is that the **Valley of Hinnom** was used as a place for the disposal of waste matter from the city of Jerusalem.
- And the Gate of the Ash-heaps was what Malchijah the son of Rechab, a prince of the district of Beth-haccherem, repaired, he himself went building it and setting up its doors, its bolts and its bars. (**Nehemiah 3:14**)
- [Ph] renders **ge'en-na** as rubbish heap. Concerning **Gehinnom**, the Jewish commentator David Kimhi, **1160-1235 C.E.**, in his comment on;
- If I had not had faith in seeing the goodness of Yehowah in the land of those alive! (**Psalms 27:13**)
- Gives the following historical information; **And it is a place in the land adjoining Jerusalem, and it is a loathsome place, and they throw there unclean things and carcasses.**
- **Also there was a continual fire there to burn the unclean things and the bones of the carcasses. Hence, the judgment of the wicked ones is called parabolically Gehinnom.**

•• Symbolic Of Complete Destruction

- It is evident that Jesus used **Gehenna** as representative of **utter destruction** resulting from adverse judgment by God, hence with no resurrection to life as a soul being possible.
- And do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul, but rather be in fear of him that **can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.** (**Matthew 10:28**)
- Moreover, I say to you, my friends, Do not fear those who kill the body and after this are not able to do anything more. (**Luke 12:4**)
- But I will indicate to you whom to fear. Fear him who after killing has authority to throw into **Gehenna**. Yes, I tell you, fear this One. (**Luke 12:5**)
- The scribes and Pharisees as a wicked class were denounced as subjects for **Gehenna**.

- **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut up the kingdom of the heavens before men, for you yourselves do not go in, neither do you permit those on their way in to go in. (Matthew 23:13)**
- **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you traverse sea and dry land to make one proselyte, and when he becomes one you make him a subject for Gehenna twice as much so as yourselves. (Matthew 23:15)**
- **Serpents, offspring of vipers, how are you to flee from the judgment of Gehenna? (Matthew 23:33)**
- **To avoid such destruction, Jesus followers were to get rid of anything causing spiritual stumbling, the cutting off of a hand or foot and the tearing out of an eye figuratively representing their deadening of these body members with reference to sin.**
- **Also, if your eye is making you stumble, tear it out and throw it away from you. It is finer for you to enter one-eyed into life than to be thrown with two eyes into the fiery Gehenna. (Matthew 18:9)**
- **And if ever your hand makes you stumble, cut it off. It is finer for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go off into Gehenna, into the fire that cannot be put out. (Mark 9:43)**
- **And if your foot makes you stumble, cut it off. It is finer for you to enter into life lame than with two feet to be pitched into Gehenna. (Mark 9:45)**
- **And if your eye makes you stumble, throw it away. It is finer for you to enter one-eyed into the kingdom of God than with two eyes to be pitched into Gehenna. (Mark 9:47)**
- **Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)**
- **You heard that it was said; You must not commit adultery. (Matthew 5:27)**
- **But I say to you that everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery**

- with her in his heart. (**Matthew 5:28**)
- **If, now, that right eye of yours is making you stumble, tear it out and throw it away from you. For it is more beneficial to you for one of your members to be lost to you than for your whole body to be pitched into Gehenna. (Matthew 5:29)**
 - **Also, if your right hand is making you stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you. For it is more beneficial to you for one of your members to be lost than for your whole body to land in Gehenna. (Matthew 5:30)**
 - **Jesus also apparently alluded to;**
 - **And they will actually go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that were transgressing against me, for the very worms upon them will not die and their fire itself will not be extinguished, and they must become something repulsive to all flesh. (Isaiah 66:24)**
 - **In describing Gehenna as a place where their maggot does not die and the fire is not put out.**
 - **And if your eye makes you stumble, throw it away. It is finer for you to enter one-eyed into the kingdom of God than with two eyes to be pitched into Gehenna. (Mark 9:47)**
 - **Where their maggot does not die and the fire is not put out. (Mark 9:48)**
 - **That the symbolic picture here is not one of torture but, rather, of complete destruction is evident from the fact that the Isaiah text dealt, not with persons who were alive, but with the carcasses of the men that were transgressing against God.**
 - **If, as the available evidence indicates, the Valley of Hinnom was a place for the disposal of garbage and carcasses, fire, perhaps increased in intensity by the addition of sulfur**
 - **For his Topheth is set in order from recent times, it is also prepared for the king himself. He has made its pile deep. Fire and wood are in abundance. The breath of Yehowah, like a torrent of sulphur, is burning against it. (Isaiah 30:33)**

- **Would be the only suitable means to eliminate such refuse. Where the fire did not reach, worms, or maggots, would breed, consuming anything not destroyed by the fire. On this basis, Jesus words would mean that the destructive effect of God's adverse judgment would not cease until complete destruction was attained.**

·· **Figurative Use**

- **The disciple James use of the word **Gehenna** shows that an unruly tongue is itself a world of unrighteousness and that one's whole round of living can be affected by fiery words that defile the speakers body.**

- **The tongue of such a one, full of death-dealing poison and so giving evidence of a bad heart condition, can cause the user to be sentenced by God to go to the symbolic **Gehenna**.**

- **Well, the tongue is a fire. The tongue is constituted a world of unrighteousness among our members, for it spots up all the body and sets the wheel of natural life aflame and it is set aflame by **Gehenna**. (**James 3:6**)**

- **But the tongue, not one of mankind can get it tamed. An unruly injurious thing, it is full of death-dealing poison. (**James 3:8**)**

- **For by your words you will be declared righteous, and by your words you will be condemned. (**Matthew 12:37**)**

- **For in their mouth there is nothing trustworthy, their inward part is adversity indeed. Their throat is an opened burial place, a smooth tongue they use. (**Psalms 5:9**)**

- **They have sharpened their tongue like that of a serpent, the venom of the horned viper is under their lips. (**Psalms 140:3**)**

- **Their throat is an opened grave, they have used deceit with their tongues. Poison of asps is behind their lips. (**Romans 3:13**)**

- **The Biblical use of **Gehenna** as a symbol corresponds to that of the Lake of Fire in the book of Revelation.**

- **And death and Hades were hurled into the Lake of Fire. This means the second death, the lake of fire. (**Revelation 20:14**)**

- Furthermore, whoever was not found written in the book of life was hurled into the Lake of Fire. ([Revelation 20:15](#))

See Also LAKE OF FIRE