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## Sh'ol



In the Dispensation of Torah (see the commentary on **Exodus**, to see link click **Da - The Dispensation of the Torah**), **sh'ol** (Hebrew) was the place of departed spirits. It had two subdivisions. The first was called **Abraham's side** (a place of comfort and peace), or **Paradise (Luke 23:43)**, and the second section was a place of **torment** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Hx - The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus**). Only **the Righteous of the TaNaKh** went to be with **Abraham**, and only on the basis of **faith** in **the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**. And just like those in the Dispensation of Grace (see the commentary on **Hebrews Bp - The Dispensation of Faith**), those without **faith**, go to a place of everlasting **torment**, which in the Brit Chadashah is called **hades** or **hell** (Greek). Salvation is always by **faith (Ephesians 2:8-9)**. Those in **Paradise** stayed there until **Messiah descended into sh'ol (hell)** during the three days in which **His body** lay in the tomb, **and led the Righteous of the TaNaKh into heaven (Ephesians 4:7-10)**. However, all those throughout the ages without **faith** will go to, and remain in, **sh'ol (hell)** until **it** is thrown into **the Lake of Fire** at the end of the Messianic Kingdom (see **Revelation Fp - The Lake of Fire is the Second Death**). There, those who hate **God** will be in **torment** for all eternity.

Knowing this, what is our responsibility to evangelize others? As believers, we

should want people to go to heaven. To that extent, we should all know how to present the Gospel message in a clear and concise way. But the urgency of our Gospel message is greatly enhanced when we realize what people are being saved from! We want to see people saved from **eternal punishment**, a **punishment** that never ends. Conscious existence in a body resurrected and suited for **eternal punishment**. I think we sort of comfortably distance ourselves from that reality. Certainly in general in the Church it is looked over and ignored. But in truth, it turns out to be the first thing that we talk about when we talk about the Gospel. **What are people being saved from?**

Today our society is so depraved that it imposes virtually no consequences on their behavior. People get so used to **sinning** without consequences that when you introduce the idea that **they** will pay in full, forever for every **sin** they have ever committed, that is just alien to their thinking. People **sin** without immediate consequences. And to try to convince them that there are somehow, down-the-road, decades from now (if they live that long), deferred **eternal** consequences is a hard sell. For example, you might tell someone: **Because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed (Romans 2:5)**. Unbelievers are not getting away with anything: No fornication, adultery, no **sin** in the mind, no **sin** in behavior, no lie, no deception, no cheating; unbelievers are not getting away with any of it. They are just **storing up wrath**. All of which will be confronted and justly punished forever by **YHVH** in a place called **sh'ol (hell)**.

This is not new. Speaking of the faithfulness of **ADONAI** to discipline **His people** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Ad - The Song of Moses**), **Moshe** recorded: **For My anger has been fired up. It burns to the depths of sh'ol (Deuteronomy 32:22a)**. Our **Lord's** first sermon in the B'rit Chadashah was on **sh'ol (hell)**. **Yeshua** is a **hell-fire Preacher**. On the Sermon on the Mount, **He** said: **But I tell you that anyone who nurses anger against his brother will be subject to judgment; that whoever calls his brother, 'You good-for-nothing!' will be brought before the Sanhedrin; that whoever says, 'You Fool!' incurs the penalty of burning in the fire of Gei-Hinnom (Matthew 5:22, also see verses 29-30)! He** speaks of **the fiery sh'ol (hell)** as if **He** assumed everyone already knew about **it** because **sh'ol (hell)** was a very well known part of their biblical understanding. Later **Messiah** declares: **Do not fear those who kill the body but are powerless to kill the soul. Rather, fear him**

**who can destroy both soul and body in Gei-Hinnom, the unquenchable fire, having no rest day and night (Matthew 10:28 and 38; Revelation 14:11b).** **Yeshua** said that **the Pharisees** were guilty of producing **sons of Gei-Hinnom** and being **sons of hell themselves (Matthew 23:15).**

Yes, **Yeshua Messiah** was a **hell-fire Preacher.**

When we talk about salvation, the word **sh'ol (hell)** has to be used because we are talking about being rescued. **Salvation is a word that means deliverance or saved. And the question is . . . saved from what?** Contemporary society has corrupted this idea and offers many psychological and even material substitutes for **sh'ol (hell)**. They say, "Well, **Jesus** wants to save you from loneliness, or **He** wants to save you from purposelessness, or **He** wants to save you from anxiety, or poverty, or failure, or sickness, or disappointment. No. **He** desires to save you from **sh'ol (hell)**. The message of Scripture is that salvation is a rescue, a rescue from a real place called **sh'ol (hell)**.

**Yeshua** talked more about **sh'ol** than everybody else in the Bible combined. And **He** defined it as conscious, **eternal punishment.** **He** continually spoke about it and **He** warned **sinners** to escape **sh'ol (hell)** because of **its** horrible reality. **The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus** mentioned above is a story about **a rich man** who went to **sh'ol.** **Yeshua** tells us that this is where the lost go after death, **it** was a place of **torment**, of thirst, of agony, and of **fire.** Once you're there, you're there forever. No escape. This is our **Lord's** description of **sh'ol.** Was **the Son of God** wrong about that? No. Annihilationism (Soul Sleep) is not true, and universalism is also not true because the Bible teaches us that the ungodly are forever excluded from **His** presence.

Proof of that is in **Matthew 25:46**, where we see an inescapable, contrasting, parallel. **These,** our **Lord** says: **will go off to eternal** (Greek: *aionion*) **punishment, but the righteous into eternal** (Greek: *aionion*) **life.** Both words **eternal** are identical in Greek. So if **sh'ol (hell)** isn't **eternal** then **heaven** isn't **eternal.** If there is **eternal life**, then there has to be **eternal punishment.** Was **our Lord** wrong about this? If **the Lord** was wrong, why was **He** wrong? Was **He** ignorant of the truth? If **He** was, then **He's** not **the Lord** of all. **He's** not **the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6).** No. **He** wasn't wrong and **He** wasn't ignorant.

But precisely because of this **eternal punishment**, there are those who say, "Does the **punishment** really fit the crime?" Well, **Ha'Shem** determines that, doesn't **He?**

And **YHVH** has determined that the crime is heinous enough that it should be judged in this way. And that is the hurdle that most people have trouble getting over. How can a temporal sin or sins result in an **eternal punishment**? It seems excessive. Let me help you with that.

The amount of time that a **sinner sins** is irrelevant. If **the sinner** dies at fifteen-years-old, or thirty-five, or a hundred and ten; the amount of time **a sinner sins** is irrelevant. Crimes against the infinitely holy and exalted **God** are infinitely wicked and **the punishment** fits the crime. Infinite crimes against an infinite **God** deserve an infinite **punishment**. And here's the key. **Sinners go to sh'ol (hell) and never repent.** Never. **They** continue to rebel. Every description of **sh'ol (hell)** indicates to us that **it** is not a remedial experience. **It** is not a place to reform **sinners**. **It** is punitive justice. **They** remain **God-haters** forever so that **the punishment** never catches up with **the sin**. In **sh'ol (hell)** **they** continue to curse **God**, blaspheme **God**, and despise **Messiah**. So **the punishment** never catches up to **the sin** because **the sinning** never, ever, stops. **People** don't go to **(sh'ol) hell** and then never **sin** again . . . and just get punished over and over for what **they** did in this life. **They** go to **sh'ol (hell)** and keep on **sinning** forever, so **the punishment** never catches up with **the sin** (see the commentary on [Jude At - Enoch, the Seventh Generation from Adam, also Prophesied about These People](#))!

The Bible says: **Someone who blasphemes against the Ruach Ha'Kodesh never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin (Mark 3:29).** From a theological standpoint, we need to understand the nature of **God**. **His** honor and **His** glory can be clearly seen in the **wicked**. **YHVH**, because **He** is holy and because **He** is absolutely righteous and just, **MUST** punish **sin**. Read what **Isaiah** says about that: **For just as the new heavens and the new earth that I am making will continue in my presence," says ADONAI, "so will your descendants and your name continue. Every month on Rosh-Hodesh (new moon) and every week on Shabbat, everyone living will come to worship in My presence," says ADONAI. "As they leave, they will look at the corpses of the people who rebelled against Me. For their worm will never die, and their fire will never be quenched; but they will be abhorrent to all humanity" (Isaiah 66:22-24).** It is the character of **God** that is at stake. So **sh'ol (hell)** is **God's hell** where **He** punishes those who refuse to give **Him** honor and glory. **They** will remain forever rebellious, **God-haters**, lovers of **sin** and blasphemers of **the Ruach**. They act against **His** mercy, His grace, and **His**

sovereignty.

Finally, the Bible speaks of **sh'ol (hell)** in very specific words: **agony, banishment, brimstone, contempt curse, darkness, deprivation, destruction, distress, eternal, fire, teeth-grinding, guilt, hopelessness, loneliness, pain, suffering, pressure, prison, punishment, ruin, separation, shame, smoke, sulfur, torment, trouble, trash heap, and weeping.** There are many roads to **sh'ol (hell)**. In one sense, every **sinner** goes **there** on the road of his or **her** own **sinful** choices. **They** go there on the road of pride, or **they** can go on the road of lust. **They** can go as a self-righteous religious leader or **they** can go as a killer. There are many roads to **sh'ol (hell)**. On the other hand, there is only one way to escape **(sh'ol) hell. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John3:16).**

How do you evangelize people? In **the parable** that **Jesus** told about **the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man**, who was being **tormented** in **sh'ol (hell)**, is seen pleading with **Abraham**, saying: **I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him witness to them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment (Luke 16:27-28). Abraham replied: They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.** That's a reference to Scripture. But **he** said: **No, father Abraham, if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.** This indicates that **the rich man's** fate was not due to **his** being **rich** but **his** lack of **repentance**. **Abraham said to the rich man, "If they do not listen to Moses, that is the Torah, and the Prophets, which means the entire TaNaKh, then they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Lk 16:29-31).** Again, how do you evangelize people? You lead them to the holy Scriptures. They are the only persuasive means that **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** uses to regenerate and rescue lost souls from **sh'ol.**<sup>6</sup>