

Supplement: The Valley of Hinnom**GEHENNA (VALLEY OF HINNOM)**

The most common word Jesus used for the eternal place of the condemned is *Gehenna*. This is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Ge Hinnom*, meaning "Valley of Hinnom." It is also frequently found as *Ge ben Hinnom*, or "Valley of the Son of Hinnom" (Josh. 15:8; Neh. 11:30). The origin and meaning of Hinnom are unknown.

Hinnom Valley was located just outside of Jerusalem. It was the site of Topheth, a place of child sacrifice, in Judah's idolatrous days (2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6; Jer. 32:35). King Josiah defiled the site so that it could no longer be used for that (2 Kings 23:10). God gave it the prophetic name "Valley of Slaughter" (Jer. 7:31-32; 19:1-15). This was not intended to replace Hinnom as its proper name but to describe God's punishment. At some point after the exile, it became the city dump. In addition to trash and waste, the bodies of animals and criminals were dumped there. Thus, it became associated with two pictures: a worm that never dies and a fire that never goes out (Isa. 66:24; Mark 9:43-48).

In the New Testament, the references to all this history are lost for modern readers, because the Valley of Hinnom is replaced by the word "hell"^{1,2}. But it was full of meaning to the Jewish audience. The Valley of Hinnom was associated with evil, uncleanness, and death. It was a place no one wanted to go, making it a fitting picture of eternal condemnation (Matt. 5:29-30; 25:41).

"If your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out. It is better for you to enter into God's Kingdom with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire, 'where their worm doesn't die, and the fire is not quenched.'" Mark 9:47-48 WEB

Supplement: The Valley of Hinnom

Footnotes:

¹ Three words are translated "hell" in the Bible. The most common is *gehenna*. Most translations also render *tartarus* as "hell" (2 Peter 2:4). The KJV incorrectly translates the Greek *hades* and Hebrew *sheol* as "hell", although these refer to the realm of the dead or, figuratively, the grave. A few other translations do this, too, although inconsistently, such as the ESV in Matthew 16:18.

² Translations which retain *Gehenna* include the LSV, WEB, and YLT.

This article is from <http://www.churchofbend.com/pop/gehenna.htm>