

She'ol (1Enoch 22)

There are three words translated “Hell” in most English Bibles, however “Hell” may not be the best translation for all or any of these words. She'ol

What is She'ol?

The first Hebrew word we will discuss is She'ol which the Greek texts render as “Hades.” Some have taught that the Hebrew word “She'ol” (commonly translated “Hell”) should be simply understood as a Hebrew word for “grave” or “pit”. However the Hebrew word She'ol always appears in the feminine form and NEVER has a definite article in any of its many appearances in the Tanak. Therefore it is almost certain that SHE'OL is a proper noun, the name of a place. As the Encyclopedia Judaica states:

“Several names are given to the abode of the dead, the most common being She'ol—always feminine and without the definite article—a sign of proper nouns. The term does not occur in other Semitic languages, except as a loan word from Hebrew She'ol, and its etymology is obscure.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica; Article “Netherworld” p. 996)

In the Tanak the word SHE'OL is often contrasted with “Heaven” (Job 11:8; Ps. 139:8; Amos 9:2). According to the Tanak the wicked and godless nations go to SHE'OL (Ps. 9:17) According to Psalm 86:13 the soul goes to SHE'OL. According to Proverbs 15:24 SHE'OL can be avoided. In Prov. 23:14 a soul is delivered from SHE'OL. In Is. 57:9 a soul is lowered to SHE'OL.

So SHE'OL would seem to be the proper name of a place which may be contrasted with Heaven to which souls go and from which they may be delivered.

The First Century Jewish Historian Josephus describes the Pharisees as having a belief in this place of pre-resurrection afterlife. He writes of the Pharisees:

“They hold the belief that an immortal strength belongs to souls, and that there are beneath the earth punishments and rewards for those who in life devoted themselves to virtue or vileness, and that eternal imprisonment is appointed for the latter, but the possibility of returning to life for the former”

(Josephus Ant. 18.1.3)

According to Ezek. 31:16-18 Gan Eden (The Garden of Eden) was cast into SHE'OL (Ezek. 31:16-18). Thus Gan Eden has become a compartment within She'ol, where the righteous await the resurrection.

Yeshua himself gives us a peek into the pre-resurrection afterlife in his account of El'azar and the rich man:

19 Now there was one rich man and he wore linen and purple, and everyday, he was luxuriously merry.

20 And there was one poor man, whose name was El'azar: and he lay at the gate of that rich man, stricken with sores.

21 And he desired that his belly be filled, from the crumbs that fell from the table of that rich man: but even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 Now time passed, and that poor man died, and the angels carried him to the bosom of Avraham: and also that rich man, died and was buried.

23 And while tormented in she'ol, he lifted up his eyes from afar, and saw Avraham, and El'azar in his bosom.

24 And he cried with a great voice and said, My father Avraham, have mercy on me. And send El'azar to dip the tip of his finger in water, and to moisten my tongue for me, for behold, I am tormented in this flame.

25 Avraham said to him, My son, remember that you received your good during your life, and El'azar his bad: and now, behold, he is resting here, and you are tormented.

26 And with all these things, a great gulf is placed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you, are not able, nor from there, to pass over to us.

27 Then he said to him, I beg of you, my father, that you send him to the house of my father,

28 For I have five brothers. Let him go and testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment!

29 Avraham said to him, They have Moshe and the prophets: let them hear them.

30 And he said to him, No, my father Avraham, but if a man from the dead would go to them, they would repent.

31 Avraham said to him, If they will not hear Moshe and the prophets, even if a man would rise from the dead, they would not believe him.

(Luke 16:19-31 HRV)

Some have tried to dismiss this account as a mere parable. However Yeshua does not introduce this account as a parable. Instead he tells us “there was one rich man” and “there was one poor man” so as to tell us that these men actually existed and these events actually occurred. However even if we were to accept that this account is a mere parable, the elements of the parable must be rooted in truth or the parable would be meaningless. For example in the parable of the seed, seed sown in the various types of ground does in fact react in the same manner described in the parable. A net cast into the sea does in fact bring forth fish. The basic aspects of this account therefore, even if they are a parable, must be true. Even if the events were meant as a parable, to be a valid parable with valid meaning, the events have to be events that at least COULD have happened.

In this account Yeshua describes Sheol as having at least two compartments, one is a place of rest, which he calls “The Bosom of Avraham” the other is not named, but is a place where one is “tormented in flame”. We are told that the two are separated by “a great gulf” so that souls cannot cross from one to the other.

Souls are Conscious and Aware in She'ol

Of course the above passages have already demonstrated that souls are conscious and aware while in Sheol (thus the conversation between Avraham and El'azar in Luke 16:19-31 and Abel making suit in 1Enoch 22). There are, however, several more:

9 And when He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar, the nefeshot [souls] of those who were killed because of the Word of Eloah, and because of the testimony of Yeshua that they had.

10 And they cried with a great voice and said, How long, YHWH, Set-Apart and True, do You not judge and require our blood of the inhabitants of the earth?

11 And there was given to each and every one of them a white robe. And it was said that they should rest for the period of a short time until it should be ended—even their fellows and their brothers who were about to be killed, as also they [had been].

(Rev. 6:9-11 HRV)

**Four Compartments of She'ol
(1Enoch 22)**

There are four compartments (22:2) but three “separations” (22:9) between them. These four compartments correspond to the four types of men according to the Talmud:

*The righteous man who prospers, a righteous man who suffers, a wicked man who prospers, and a wicked man who suffers.
(b.Ber. 7a).*

Talmud	Book of Enoch
The righteous man who prospers	<i>And he answered me and said unto me: 'These three have been made that the spirits of the dead might be separated. And such a division has been made (for) the spirits of the righteous, in which there is the bright spring of water. (1Enoch 22:9)</i>
The wicked men who prosper	<i>10 And such has been made for sinners when they die and are buried in the earth and judgment has not been executed on them in their lifetime. 11 Here their spirits shall be set apart in this great pain till the great day of judgment and punishment and torment of those who curse forever and retribution for their spirits. There He shall bind them forever. (1Enoch 22:10-11)</i>
The righteous men who suffers	<i>And [the third] was divided for the spirits petitioned with information concerning their destruction when they were killed in the day of the sinners. (1Enoch 22:12)</i>
And the wicked men who suffered	<i>Such has been made for the spirits of men who were not righteous but sinners, who were complete in transgression, and of the transgressors they shall be companions: but their spirits shall not be slain in the day of judgment nor shall they be afflicted from thence.' (1Enoch 22:13)</i>

The righteous man who prospers is destined to the compartment “***in which there is the bright spring of water***”

*And he answered me and said unto me: ‘These three have been made that the spirits of the dead might be separated. And such a division has been made (for) the spirits of the righteous, in which there is the bright spring of water.
(1Enoch 22:9)*

The wicked men who prosper are those for whom “***judgment has not been executed on them in their lifetime***” , they suffer “***great pain till the great day of judgment***”

10 And such has been made for sinners when they die and are buried in the earth and judgment has not been executed on them in their lifetime.

*11 Here their spirits shall be set apart in this great pain till the great day of judgment and punishment and torment of those who curse forever and retribution for their spirits. There He shall bind them forever.
(1Enoch 22:10-11)*

The righteous men who suffers make ***petition concerning their destruction***
*And [the third] was divided for the spirits petitioned with information concerning their destruction when they were killed in the day of the sinners.
(1Enoch 22:12)*

And the wicked men who suffered, “***their spirits shall not be slain in the day of judgment nor shall they be afflicted from thence***” because they suffered for their transgression while still living.

*Such has been made for the spirits of men who were not righteous but sinners, who were complete in transgression, and of the transgressors they shall be companions: but their spirits shall not be slain in the day of judgment nor shall they be afflicted from thence.’
(1Enoch 22:13)*

The Tree of Life
1Enoch 24:4-5

Tradition further tells us that Enoch also had a book, which came from the same place as the book of the generations of Adam... This is the source of the book known as “the book of Enoch”. When God took him, He showed him all supernal mysteries, and the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden and its leaves and branches, all of which can be found in his book. Happy are those of exalted piety to whom the supernal wisdom has been revealed, and from whom it will not be forgotten for ever, as it says, “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and his secret to make them know it.” (Psalms. 25:14) ‘
(Zohar 1:37b)

1Enoch 26:2
The Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley

R. Phinehas in the name of R. Huna of Sepphoris said: The spring that issues from the Holy of Holies in its beginning resembles the antennae of locusts; as it reaches the entrance to the Sanctuary it becomes as the thread of the warp; as it reaches the Ulam [the main hall leading to the sanctuary], it becomes as the thread of the woof; as it reaches the entrance to the [Temple] court, it becomes as large as the mouth of a small flask, that is meant by what we learned: R. Eliezer b. Jacob said: [Hence] go forth the waters which will bubble forth from under the threshold of the Sanctuary. From there onwards it becomes bigger, rising higher and higher, until it reaches the entrance to the House of David. As soon as it reaches the entrance to the house of David, it becomes even as a swiftly running brook, in which men and women afflicted with gonorrhoea, menstruating women, and women after childbirth bathe, as it is said: In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for purification and for sprinkling. (Zech. 13:1) Said R. Joseph: Hence there is an intimation that a menstruating woman [at her purification] must sit in water [that reaches in height] up to the neck. But the law is not in accord with him.

(b.Yoma 77b-77a)

“through it [the water gate] the waters trickled forth and in the future will issue out from under the threshold of the house.”

(m.Middot 2:6)