

**THOU WILT NOT LEAVE  
MY SOUL IN HELL.**

The words above are from Psalm 16, verse 10 They help to illustrate how the translators of the Bible often confused the reader by using words that have more than one meaning.

Fortunately, there are other translations, and some of the more recent versions have used words that we understand better today.

For example, the NIV Bible expresses this same verse as follows:

“because you will not **abandon me to the grave**, nor will you let your Holy One see **decay**.”

**Soul and Hell**

The words “soul” and “hell” (from the KJV), are words that suggest entirely different ideas. Most people think of the word “soul” as a word that describes the spirit of a man.

Soul comes from the Hebrew word “nephesh” which means “a breathing creature” or a living person. The NIV translated “nephesh” correctly by using the word “me” in Psalm 16:10.

The word “hell” promotes the concept of a place where the dead are tormented and punished. This word is translated from the Hebrew word “sheol.” The NIV version uses the word “grave.” Grave is a word that we understand and use today. It accurately describes to the modern man, what the Psalmist actually meant in the verse.

**A Prayer for Christ**

If we read the entire section of the 16th Psalm (from verse 8-11, we will

**THE BIBLE**



**“A lamp for those who travel”**

learn how these words must have been very comforting to Jesus as he contemplated his coming sacrificial death on the cross. Reading from the NIV, the Psalmist prophesies:

“I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” (Psalm 16:8-11)

**The Resurrection of Christ**

We are told that: “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” ( 1 Cor 15:3-4)

During those three days, he was in the tomb. He died for us, knowing from this Psalm, that he would not remain in the grave long enough to see corruption. Knowing also that he would be raised up, to sit at God’s right hand in the joy of His presence.

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**“And death and hell delivered up  
the dead which were in them”**

The words above are taken from Revelation, chapter 20. The context is as follows:

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; **and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.**” (verses 12-13)

These verses speak of the time of the resurrection and the judgment. At that time, the responsible dead from under the earth, and in the sea will be raised for judgment.

**Death and Hell?**

The confusing element in this verse is the expression “death and hell.” These words are difficult to understand because there are many false ideas associated with the abode of the dead.

The word that is translated “hell” is taken from the Greek word “hades”, which means the place of the dead, or in very simple terms, **the grave**.

This word is similar to the Hebrew word “sheol” which is used in the Old Testament for **the grave**, or the place of the dead.

**The State of the Dead**

In our theme verses, we are told that it is the “dead” who are resurrected. Death is the cessation of life. There-

fore, these individuals have been sleeping in the dust, as we are told in Daniel 12: 2. They have been at rest in the grave waiting for the resurrection. There is no place in between life and death other than the grave. There would be no confusion if we understood these Bible truths.

The popular theories of a burning hell, where souls said to be tormented, are completely discredited when we recognize that there can be no torment when a person is unconscious in death.

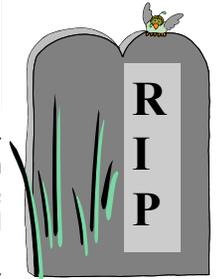
Eternal life is offered as a reward to the righteous. It would be totally inconsistent for a merciful God to reward wicked people with life everlasting, and then punish them eternally.

**Hell is the Grave**

The plain truth is that hell is just another word which means the grave. This truth has been distorted by translators who believed in the popular superstitions.

The truth about death and hell (the grave), is a source of some comfort when we lay to rest a friend who never embraced the hope of the gospel.

It is not much consolation, but at least they will “REST IN PEACE”. Those old tombstones with R.I.P written on them were consistent with the true teachings of the Bible.



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## Hope and Comfort from the Scriptures

**“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.”**

( Rev 1:18 )

The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is one that is filled with signs and symbols. It is a difficult book to understand.

It is a prophecy of the things that will happen in the future, and therefore, it is an important book for the servants of God. A blessing is promised for those who read and understand this prophecy.

### Introduction

In the first chapter of the book, Jesus introduced himself to John. He asks John to write seven letters to the 7 ecclesias that are in Asia.

Part of his introduction is quoted at the top. These words are a message of hope and comfort to all of the servants of God, in every age.

Jesus is alive! He was dead, but now he has been raised from the dead and he is alive for evermore.

### The Firstfruits

What a wonderful introduction. Think about the Master's joy. Alive again, after a terrible trial and crucifixion. Not only alive, but having the power to be able to offer others an opportunity to share in his glory.

Christ is only the firstfruits of them who have been awakened from the sleep of death. His servants will also be raised to life when he returns. ( see 1 Cor 15:20-26, 2 Tim. 4:1)

### The Keys

He told John that he now has **“the keys of hell and of death.”** Think about what this means. It is now within his power to unlock the grave and to remove the bonds of death.

He has the keys. No man has ever been granted this power. But it is not the power that Jesus was motivated by.



It was the hope of victory over death, first for himself, and then for his friends. This is the joy that encouraged him.

### Hell and Death

When we consider the implication of Christ having the keys of hell, we ought to sense an obvious conclusion. What became of the popular guardian of the grave?

If there were a devil, then one thing would be certain. He no longer has a job.

We know however, that the devil is only a symbol and that the words “hell” and the “devil” were never intended to have the interpretations that are now taught by the popular religions of this world.

The Bible Hell means “the grave” and the “devil” is a word that means false accuser, or adversary to God.

### The devil destroyed

Christ destroyed the devil, or the desire to sin in himself, when he died for our sins. ( see Hebrews 2:14) The devil was destroyed, and the keys of hell ( the grave) were given to Christ.

His sacrifice and the victory that he gained over death solved a lot of problems for mankind.

There is no longer any reason to be confused by the philosophies and superstitions of men. We know what really happens at death. Death no longer has any sting, and the grave no victory. ( see 1 Cor 15: 55-57)

**Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**“If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.” ( Matthew 5:29)**

The Master taught in parables. He encouraged those who heard him to think about his lesson.

In Matthew 5, during his Sermon on the Mount, he spoke the parable at the top of this page.

This sounds like a drastic measure, to pluck out your eye, so that the whole body would not perish. If he were speaking in a very literal sense, it would be an extremely painful sacrifice for a disciple to make.

### One-eyed solution?

Think about it. Would the loss of an eye prevent you from looking with the other? And would your lust be reduced by 50%?

It is obvious that this parable has another meaning. Jesus wanted us to think about it.

### Single Eye

Later in this same sermon, Jesus taught that “if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” (Chap 6:22)

When we are committed to God with a single purpose, not wavering between our carnal desires and our spiritual hopes, then we have symbolically plucked out one of our eyes. The remaining eye is single and therefore dedicated to following the Master.

### Cast into Hell??

But what about the rest of the story? What of the consequence if our eye is not single? Jesus said that the danger is that our entire body may be cast into hell.

We are again confronted with a translation problem. This time, the word “hell” is translated from the Greek word “Gehenna.” Gehenna means “the valley of Hinnon; a valley of Jerus. It is a word that is used figuratively for a place of everlasting punishment.

### City Dump

This valley, near the city of Jerusalem was used as a dump. In those days, it was common for fires to be set to consume the rubbish and other materials that were discarded there.

We understand that this area was also used for the disposal of the bodies of criminals, or the poor, who had no one to pay for their tomb.

Jesus used the natural places and things around him for his parables. The character of this dumping area made it a logical choice for the lesson that he wanted to teach.

Those who listened and understood his parable would strive to figuratively pluck out an eye, or cut off their hand. They would try to avoid ending up with a fate like those poor individuals whose body would end up in a burning dump.

### Superstition

We can understand why the teachings of Jesus were often confused. His contemporaries were heavily influenced by the superstitions of the world around them. They listened only for support of the philosophies of men and did not meditate on the real lesson.

How sad it is that teachings that were intended to make men wise unto salvation, became a stumbling block to those who were not interested enough to seek out the real meaning.

Do we have ears to hear the teachings of the Master? Use your wisdom to seek him while he may be found. “For whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” ( Eccles 9:10)