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## **The Pit in the Old and New Testament.**

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

# The Pit in the Old and New Testament.

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## Topics.

- He who comes up from the midst of the pit shall be caught in the snare.
  - Those who come up from the midst of the pit.
  - They are gathered together as prisoners in a pit.
  - They have dug a pit for my life
  - Pit and the lowest parts of the earth.
  - The children of men go down to the pit.
  - An angel is given the key to the bottomless pit.
  - The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit.
  - The dragon, the serpent the devil and Satan bound in the bottomless pit.
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**NOTE:** the purpose of this document is not to do an in-depth study on each topic, but simply to discover what the word the pit means and if it is linked to eternal torment.

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## PIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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**Pit:** in the Old Testament is from the Hebrew word *bowr*, and from Strong's Concordance means a pit or hole in the ground especially one used as a well or prison, a dungeon or fountain. The following verses show that the word pit in the Old Testament simply means a hole in the Ground.

- Let us now kill him (Joseph) and *cast him into some pit* (Gen 37:20).
- If a man *digs a pit* and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it (Exodus 21:33-34).
- Moses said, "If these men die naturally like all men or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, *then* the LORD has not sent me, but if the LORD creates a new thing, and the *earth opens its mouth* and *swallows them up* and they go down alive into the *pit* then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD." as Moses finished speaking all these words the *ground split apart* and the *earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up* and they went *down alive into the pit* and the earth closed over them and they perished from among the assembly (Numbers 16:29-33).
- They took Absalom and *cast him into a large pit* in the woods, and laid a very large heap of stones over him (2 Samuel 18:17).

In these verses Joseph is cast into a pit; a man digs a pit certain people go down alive into the pit and Absalom was cast into a large pit all of these show that pit is simply a hole in the ground.

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## PIT IN PSALMS

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## The Pit and the Grave.

The following verses show that the pit and the grave are the same thing:

- LORD, You brought my soul up from the *grave* You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the *pit* (Psalm 30:3).
- You, O God, shall bring them down to the *pit* of destruction; Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days (Psalm 55:23).
- Let the deep swallow me up; And let not the *pit* shut its mouth on me (Psalm 69:15).
- My life draws near to the *grave* I am counted with those who go down to the *pit* I am a man who has no strength, adrift among the dead, like the slain in the *grave* You have laid me in the lowest *pit* in darkness, in the depths (Psalm 88:3-7).
- You may give him rest from the days of adversity, until the *pit* is dug for the wicked (Psalm 94:130).

In these verses the Pit is identified with:

- A pit dug for the wicked, the bloodthirsty and the deceitful.
- The grave and a pit as a hole in the ground.
- A pit of destruction and darkness in the deep.
- The deep that swallows the wicked.

The pit in these verses clearly refers to the grave as the abode of the dead.

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## PIT IN ISAIAH

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### The Pit and Sheol.

- **Isaiah 14:15:** Yet thou (the king of Babylon) shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the *pit*.

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The LORD says, the king of Babylon (Isaiah 14:4) will be cast down to to hell, to the sides of the pit because the king said in his heart, “I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:13-15). In these verses God says that the king of Babylon will be brought down to sheol to the far reaches of the pit clearly showing that sheol the pit and the grave are all the same thing.

### He who comes up from the Pit shall be caught in the Snare.

- **Isaiah 24:17-23:** Fear and the *pit* and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth. <sup>18</sup>And it shall be That he who flees from the noise of the fear shall fall into the *pit*, And he who comes up from the midst of the *pit* Shall be caught in the snare; For the windows from on high are open, And the foundations of the earth are shaken. <sup>19</sup>The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly. <sup>20</sup>The earth shall *reel to and fro like a drunkard* And shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again. <sup>21</sup>It shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, And on the earth the kings of the earth. <sup>22</sup>They will be gathered together, *as prisoners are gathered in the pit*, And will be shut up in the prison; After many days they will be punished. <sup>23</sup>Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

**The LORD will punish the host of heaven** (v21) in this context means that God will not only punish all those in high places of authority in the secular world, but also those in high places of religious authority (i.e., priests, religious leaders and teachers who are leading the Lord’s people astray and using their privileged position for their own selfish gain). On the day God judges the world, the earth is pictured as staggering like a

drunken man and its inhabitants being in terror because of the utter destruction and being in fear because the world's financial system has collapsed and will not recover, no-one will be able to escape the effects of this judgment.

**Fear, the pit and the snare are upon the inhabitant of the earth:** (v17) these words, mean that there will be massive death, the pit in this context refers to the grave, but not as an individual grave dug for a single person, but a grave in which multitudes of dead bodies are buried. In certain context of Scripture even dead bodies that are left on the surface of the earth to rot and decay are spoken of as being in the grave since the grave carries the idea of the abode of the dead so it matters little where they die since wherever their dead body lays to decay can be referred to as their grave (howbeit not an ideal or perfect one).

Naturally the ideal and respectful place for dead bodies is to be buried in a single hole dug in the ground, but in times of extreme famines, plaques and war this is not always possible in this situation a massive hole is dug in which multitudes of bodies are buried together. This type of grave is referred to in the Bible as a pit.

**Those who come up from the midst of the pit:** the words, "He who comes up from the midst of the pit shall be caught in the snare" (v18) means that those who are resurrected from amongst those in the pit (the grave) will not escape since they will stand for judgment.

**They are gathered together as prisoners in a pit:** the word prisoners in the following verse, "They will be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and will be shut up in the prison; After many days they will be punished" (v22) refers to those who are in the pit (the grave). In this context the pit is pictured as a prison holding prisoners until they are resurrected to judgment.

**The moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed:** the words, "The moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed" (v23) is a Jewish idiom that highlights the glorious light of the Lord Jesus Christ reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords on God's Holy mountain Zion and God's Holy City Jerusalem. Isaiah is saying that the wonder, splendour and majesty of Christ will be so glorious that even the moon and sun (figuratively speaking) will feel that the light they give is nothing compared to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah in this chapter prophecies that everyone will be affected on this day whether they are the king of a nation; leaders of government; heads of global banks; successful in business; rich or poor; gloriously famous or simply the common man and woman on the street they will all be affected by this global disaster because the inhabitants of the earth have polluted the earth.

**A curse devouring the earth:** in this chapter the earth is pictured as having a curse encompassing it which is not only slowly devouring the earth, but also its inhabitants because of their guilt. The curse is seen as continuing to increase in its widespread global oppression and its destructive power over the inhabitants of the world until the Lord Jesus Christ returns to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice joy and peace on earth.

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## PIT IN JEREMIAH

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### THEY HAVE DUG A PIT FOR MY LIFE

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- **Jeremiah 18:20-22:** Shall evil be repaid for good? For they have dug a *pit* for my life -- -- NOW GO TO VERSE -----<sup>22</sup>Let a cry be heard from their houses, When You bring a troop suddenly upon them; For they have dug a *pit* to take me, And hidden snares for my feet.

Jeremiah God's faithful prophet spoke God's word to the people, but the people did not like what he said so they cruelly dug a pit in the ground as a prison to lower him into. These verses clearly show that a pit is simply a hole in the ground.

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## ISHMAEL CAST DEAD BODIES INTO A PIT

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- **Jeremiah 41:7-9:** So it was, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah killed them and *cast them into the midst of a pit* he and the men who were with him. <sup>8</sup>But ten men were found among them who said to Ishmael, "Do not kill us, for we have treasures of wheat, barley, oil, and honey in the field." So he desisted and did not kill them among their brethren. <sup>9</sup>Now the *pit* into which ishmael had *cast all the dead bodies* of the men whom he had slain, because of Gedaliah, was the same one Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael the son of Nethaniah *filled it with the slain*.

Ishmael cast the bodies of those he had killed into a pit that was already full of dead bodies. These verses clearly show that pit and the grave, are both the same thing, (i.e., a hole in the ground where the dead are buried).

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## PIT IN EZEKIEL

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### PIT AND THE LOWEST PARTS OF THE EARTH

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- **Ezekiel 26:19-20:** Make desolate is Tyrus by Nebuchadnezzar; "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'When I make you a desolate city, like cities that are not inhabited, when I bring the deep upon you, and great waters cover you, <sup>20</sup>then I will bring you *down with those who descend into the pit* to the people of old, and I will make you  *dwell in the lowest part of the earth*, in places desolate from antiquity, with those who *go down to the pit*, so that you may never be inhabited; and I shall establish glory in the land of the living

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God says He will bring Tyrus down with those who descend into the pit and make him dwell in the lowest part of the earth, with those who go down to the pit. The pit and the lowest part of the earth is the same thing. They refer to the grave the abode of the dead. When the words the lowest part is added to the word pit it expresses two things firstly, God's utter disdain toward those who are in focus and secondly that at judgment they will be cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction).

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## THE CHILDREN OF MEN GO DOWN TO THE PIT

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- **Ezekiel 31:14-16:** So that no trees by the waters may ever again exalt themselves for their height, nor set their tops among the thick boughs, that no tree which drinks water may ever be high enough to reach up to them. 'For they have all been *delivered to death, to the depths of the earth*, Among the children of men who *go down to the pit*. <sup>15</sup>"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'In the day when it went *down to hell (sheol in ESV)* I caused mourning. I covered the deep because of it. I restrained its rivers, and the great waters were held back. I caused Lebanon to mourn for it, and all the trees of the field wilted because of it. <sup>16</sup>I made the nations shake at the sound of its fall, when *i cast it down to hell (sheol in ESV)* together with those who *descend into the pit* and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the *depths of the earth*.

The following expressions:

- Delivered to death.
- The depths of the earth.
- Go down to the pit.

- Cast down to hell (sheol).
- Descend into the pit.
- Go down to hell (sheol).

All mean the same thing which is the grave (often referred to as hell).

**Hell:** (sheol) (hades) from the Strong's Concordance refers to the place where the wicked are sent it means the grave; the pit; the abode of the dead and a place of no return. Figuratively it carries the idea of extreme degradation in sin. The word hell in the Old Testament is the English translation of the Hebrew word sheol which means grave and in the New Testament hell is the English translation of the Greek word hades which also means the grave. Sadly because the Hebrew word sheol and the Greek word hades meaning the grave has been translated to the English word hell many have been taught that it means those outside of Christ will exist in some form of conscious spirit state and be painfully and cruelly tortured by eternal evil spirit creatures called demons in a place full of fiery flames which will forever burn their bodies for all eternity so that they will never be free of the most extreme agony. This is a gross misunderstanding of the Hebrew word sheol and the Greek word hades and a gross misrepresentation of the nature and character of God.

Following are four reasons this theory of hell (the grave) may have come about:

1. In the 325 A.D. when the Roman papal church had power over the state and certain bishops at the Council of Nicea determined what the official doctrines of the Christian faith would be they then set about aggressively enforcing them onto society by torturing, imprisoning and burning at the stake those who held a different view to the doctrines they had officially stamped to be the only true doctrines of the Christian faith. One of these doctrines is the traditional teaching of hell that many believe today (i.e., eternal torture in hell for all eternity).
2. This sadistic teaching of hell that proclaims all who die outside of Christ will in some form of conscious spirit state suffer eternal torture, pain and extreme agony in a place full demons and fiery flames for all eternity may have been introduced to scare people into the church. It is almost certain this is one of the reasons it has continued throughout history and very rarely been questioned by ministers and leaders of certain churches.
3. Those who formed this inhuman brutal and extremely violent teaching of eternal agony in flaming fire not only had a total lack of the meaning of the Hebrew word sheol and the Greek word hades, but also had a total lack of understanding the nature and character of God.
4. When the bishops of the Roman papal church established the doctrine of eternal torment, they were influenced by the teachings of pagan religions that existed amongst them at that time.

Whatever the reason and there are no-doubt many other possible scenarios both the Hebrew word sheol and the Greek word hades refer to mortal death in the grave. When the word eternal is added to the word hell it carries the idea of eternal death (i.e., total extinction) for all who are cast into the Lake of Fire (a symbol of eternal death) also called the Second Death. (Rev. 2:11) (Rev. 20:6) (Rev. 20:14) (Rev. 21:8).

For further information see the title:

- Torment and Tormented in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).



Trees in the context of this chapter are used figuratively to depict Pharaoh the king of Egypt (v2) and his extreme pride. Trees by the water flourish and grow they symbolize the greatness of Pharaoh and all his multitude and the glory and beauty of his kingdom amongst the nations. Ezekiel is saying that because of the extreme pride in Pharaoh the king Egypt heart and his self-exaltation he will go down to the pit and join all the great kings of the world who are already there.

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## PIT IN EZEKIEL

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### THE DEPTHS AND LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH, THE PIT, HELL AND THE GRAVE

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- **Ezekiel 32:18-32:** Son of man, wail over the multitude of EGYPT, And cast them down to the *depths of the earth*, Her and the DAUGHTERS of the FAMOUS NATIONS, With those who *go down to the pit* <sup>19</sup>Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down, be placed with the uncircumcised.' <sup>20</sup>“They shall fall in the midst of those slain by the sword; She is delivered to the sword, Drawing her and all her multitudes. <sup>21</sup>The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the *midst of hell (sheol)* With those who help him: ‘They have gone down, They lie with the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.’ <sup>22</sup>“ASSYRIA is there, and all her company, With their *graves* all around her, All of them slain, fallen by the sword. <sup>23</sup>Her *graves are set in the recesses of the pit*, And her company is all around her *grave*, All of them slain, fallen by the sword, Who caused terror in the land of the living. <sup>24</sup>“There is ELAM and all her multitude, All around her *grave*, All of them slain, fallen by the sword, Who have gone down uncircumcised to the *lower parts of the earth*, Who caused their terror in the land of the living; Now they bear their shame with those who *go down to the pit*. <sup>25</sup>They have set her bed in the midst of the slain, With all her multitude, With her *graves* all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; Though their terror was caused In the land of the living, Yet they bear their shame With those who *go down to the pit*. It was put in the midst of the slain. <sup>26</sup>“There are MESHECH and TUBAL and all their multitudes, with all their *graves* around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, Though they caused their terror in the land of the living. <sup>27</sup>They do not lie with the mighty Who are fallen of the uncircumcised, Who have *gone down to hell (sheol)* with their weapons of war; They have laid their swords under their heads, But their iniquities will be on their bones, Because of the terror of the mighty in the land of the living. <sup>28</sup>Yes, you shall be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, And lie with those slain by the sword. <sup>29</sup>“There is EDOM, Her kings and all her princes, Who despite their might Are laid beside those slain by the sword; They shall lie with the uncircumcised, And with those who *go down to the pit*. <sup>30</sup>There are the PRINCES of the NORTH, All of them, and all the SIDONIANS, Who have *gone down with the slain* in shame at the terror which they caused by their might; They lie uncircumcised with those slain by the sword, And bear their shame with those who *go down to the pit*. <sup>31</sup>“PHARAOH will see them and be comforted over all his multitude, Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword,” Says the Lord GOD. <sup>32</sup>“For I have caused My terror in the land of the living; And he shall be placed in the midst of the uncircumcised With those slain by the sword, Pharaoh and all his multitude, Says the Lord GOD.

#### The following expressions:

- The depths of the earth.
- Go down to the pit.
- The midst of hell (sheol).
- Their graves all around her.
- Her graves are set in the recesses of the pit.
- Her company is all around her grave.
- The lower parts of the earth.

- Gone down to hell (sheol).
- Gone down with the slain.

All mean the same thing which is the grave (often referred to as hell) all of these titles refer to different aspects of the grave even when a dead body is place in a tomb on top of the earth's surface or left lying on the surface of the earth in certain contexts they can be referred to as being in the grave since the word grave carries the idea of the abode of the dead no-matter where they are. This chapter shows that the depths of the earth, the grave and hell are the same as the pit and that those who have gone down to the pit are the uncircumcised (meaning those who deny God) of the following nations; Egypt, the daughters of the famous nations, Assyria, Elam, Meshech and Tubal, Edom, the princes of the north, the Sidonians and Pharaoh king of Egypt. Ezekiel in this chapter is telling Egypt that God will cast them down to the depths of the earth, with all those who are already there because they caused terror in the land through war. Ezekiel personifies the pit by saying that the dead who are lying in their beds in the grave will see those slain of Egypt arrive as they descend into the pit themselves. Ezekiel in this chapter pictures the pit as a huge hole that has been dug out to bury multitudes of dead bodies; the grave is seen as the place within this huge hole that each individual dead body is laying in. Supporting this idea is verse (v23) which says, the graves are set in the recesses of the pit. It is very similar to today when there are mass killings on a battlefield and bulldozers are brought in to dig a massive hole to bury the multitude of dead and decaying bodies. The depths of the earth, lower parts of the earth, the pit and the grave are all the same thing, a place in the earth were dead bodies are buried.

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## CONCLUSION OF THE PIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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The pit refers to a huge hole in the ground that people are buried in, sometimes an area within this massive pit were the dead bodies lie is called the grave. There is no mention of torture or everlasting flames related to people buried in the pit. When the Scripture speaks of the pit as a bad place it implies that it is only the ungodly that are buried there. The Bible talks a lot about the uncircumcised and those who have fought with weapons of war and the chief people and nations of the earth being in the pit in contrast to those who belong to Christ being referred to as sleeping in Christ (because their death is only temporary). There are other Scriptures in the Old Testament that use the word pit but they all carry the same idea as these verses and simply refer to all the different and various aspects of a grave. There are no Scriptures using the word pit in the Old Testament that teach or even imply everlasting torment.

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## PIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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**Pit:** in the New Testament is from the Greek word (bothunos) and from Strong's Concordance means a hole (in the ground) especially a cistern or a ditch.

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## PIT IN MATTHEW AND LUKE

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### A SHEEP, DONKEY AND AN OX FALLS INTO A PIT

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- **Matthew 12:11:** Jesus said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it *falls into a pit* on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?"
- **Luke 14:5:** Jesus answered them, saying, "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has *fallen into a pit* will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?"

In the context of these verses the pit is clearly a hole in the ground.



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AN ANGEL IS GIVEN THE KEY TO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

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- **Revelation 19:1:** Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the *key to the bottomless pit* <sup>2</sup>And he opened the *bottomless pit* (Abyss) and *smoke arose out of the pit* like the smoke of a great furnace So the sun, and the air were darkened because of the *smoke of the pit*. <sup>3</sup>Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions

It is certain this angel will not have a literal key to open a hole in the ground simply to let some literal locusts and scorpions free. This is very symbolical biblical lofty language. The star falling from heaven refers to a very powerful religious leader on earth who has tremendous power and influence over multitudes of people at this time. The words, "Falling from heaven" (v1) means that this great religious leader falls from his exalted position and deceives and gathers nations to war against God (a type of Judas). His evil political doctrines cloud the true word of God and darken the light given by it.

There is no hole in earth that is bottomless this is very figurative and symbolical language to that refers to every evil spiritual power arising from the ungodly human heart that opposes and withstands God and deliberately stands against His will and His eternal plans and purposes. Since this study is solely focused on discovering if there are any Scriptures using the word pit that link it to eternal torment we cannot go into any further detail concerning this group of verses given that they cover a far too bigger subject and it is clear that there are no Scriptures that teach eternal torment in the pit in these verses.

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THE BEAST THAT ASCENDS OUT OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT.

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- **Revelation 11:7-8:** When they (the two witnesses) finish their testimony, the *beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit* will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. <sup>8</sup>"The beast that you (John) saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the *bottomless pit and go to perdition*. (destruction and damnation) and those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

The beast symbolically represents an evil kingdom and its king aggressively opposing God and His will, plans and purposes and certain Scriptures says that every evil, ungodly and wicked person who has died is buried in the pit therefore the beast is symbolic of and evil king and his kingdom that opposes and withstands God. This is not about creatures ascending out of the earth it is symbolic language depicting the evilness of a king and his kingdoms arising against God and His Kingdom. It is graphic colourful language, highlighting the horror and evil power this fallen king and his kingdoms will have. As exciting as it would be to pursue this topic further, we cannot since this study is solely focused on discovering if there are any Scriptures using the word pit that link it to eternal torment and in these verses, there is not one.

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THE DRAGON, THE SERPENT THE DEVIL AND SATAN, BOUND IN THE BOTTOMLESS PIT.

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- **Revelation 20:1-3:** Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the *key to the bottomless pit* and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup>He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years <sup>3</sup>and he *cast him into the bottomless pit* and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Obviously, God is not going to send an angel with a literal chain and literal key to chain up a literal dragon in a literal bottomless hole in the ground. This chapter is full of very figurative and symbolical language.

**NOTICE:** the dragon, the serpent the devil and Satan are all the same entity, they are different aspects of the ungodly evil that comes from the evil depths of the human heart that is opposed to God and withstands His will, plans and purposes. The word Satan means one who opposes and withstands and is a perfect title that embraces evil power in the human heart and collectively in governments that withstands against everything that is of God and opposes the Lord Jesus Christ and his Kingdom and all that is good. The words, "Satan, is bound in chains for a thousand years' is biblical lofty language denoting that the during the reign of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords every form of evil and whatever is opposed to God will not be allowed to manifest its destructive power or wicked and evil influences during this glorious new age. Sadly, we cannot explore these verses in greater detail since this study is solely focused on discovering if there are any Scriptures using the word pit that link it to eternal torment and in these verses not one can be found.

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## CONCLUSION OF THE PIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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This is the end of all Scriptures using the word pit in the New Testament. At the beginning of this study our purpose was not to do an in-depth study on each topic, but simply to discover what the word pit means and if it is linked to eternal torment. We have discovered that it refers to a hole in the ground especially a massive hole where the dead bodies of the wicked are buried and found that there are no Scriptures that link it to eternal torment or even imply eternal torment.

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### For further information see the topics:

- Lofty and Figurative Language of the Bible.

In (Various Topics) (ON WEBSITE MENU).

- Satan in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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