

## “Gehenna”

*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. II:1183. [1915]

ga-hen'-a (*gee'na* [see Grimm-Thayer, under the word]):

Gehenna is a transliteration from the Aramaic form of the Hebrew *ge-hinnom*, “valley of Hinnom.” This latter form, however, is rare in the Old Testament, the prevailing name being “the valley of the son of Hinnom.” Septuagint usually translates; where it transliterates the form is different from Gehenna and varies. In the New Testament the correct form is *Gee'na* with the accent on the penult, not *Ge'enna*. There is no reason to assume that Hinnom is other than a plain patronymic, although it has been proposed to find in it the corruption of the name of an idol (EB, II:2071). In the New Testament (King James Version margin) Gehenna occurs in Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6. In all of these it designates the place of eternal punishment of the wicked, generally in connection with the final judgment. It is associated with fire as the source of torment. Both body and soul are cast into it. This is not to be explained on the principle that the New Testament speaks metaphorically of the state after death in terms of the body; it presupposes the resurrection. In the King James Version and the Revised Version (British and American) Gehenna is rendered by “hell” (see “Eschatology of the New Testament”). That “the valley of Hinnom” became the technical designation for the place of final punishment was due to two causes. In the first place the valley had been the seat of the idolatrous worship of Molech, to whom children were immolated by fire (2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6). Secondly, on account of these practices the place was defiled by King Josiah (2 Kings 23:10), and became in consequence associated in prophecy with the judgment to be visited upon the people (Jeremiah 7:32). The fact, also, that the city's offal was collected there may have helped to render the name synonymous with extreme defilement. Topographically the identification of the valley of Hinnom is still uncertain. It has been in turn identified with the depression on the western and southern side of Jerusalem, with the middle valley, and with the valley to the East.