

Isaiah 38:18-19 -- "For לֹאֵשׁ cannot thank Thee,
Death cannot praise Thee;
Those who go down to the pit (רֵיב) cannot hope for Thy faithfulness.
It is the living who give thanks to Thee, as I do today;
A father tells his Sons about Thy faithfulness."

Of course, if לֹאֵשׁ is being used in the first sense -- the grave, the state of physical death -- the problem in all three of these uses disappears. Physically-dead bodies cannot mention God, or carry on any activity, or give praise to God.

The Greek word ἄδης is used 10 times in the New Testament. The A.V. translates it all ten times as "hell". In the interests of thoroughness, all ten of these uses follow.

Matthew 11:23-24 -- "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You shall descend to ἄδης ; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you." (The parallel is found in Luke 10:15 -- "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down ἄδης!")

Here we find two ideas: Capernaum is to be humiliated and brought down to destruction, and its inhabitants are to be left in a miserable state of anticipation of coming judgment for their continuance in sin and unbelief in the face of Christ's teachings and miracles. In this usage ἄδης could refer simply to destruction, or to a place or condition to which wicked men are brought.

Matthew 16:18 -- "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of ἄδης shall not overpower it."

This could mean that ἄδης cannot hold the Church in the state of physical death. Because Christ has gained the victory over death the Church will one day burst the bonds of death and break out through the gates of ἄδης. Or it could mean that ἄδης cannot swallow up the Church. Because of Christ's redemption, the members of Christ's Church are assured that they will never be swallowed up by ἄδης (seen as the place to which wicked persons pass at death).

Acts 2:22-32 -- "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know -- this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. For David says of Him,

'I was always beholding the Lord in my presence;
For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.
Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted;
Moreover my flesh also will abide in hope;
Because Thou wilt not abandon my soul to ἄδης,
Nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.
Thou hast made known to me the ways of life;
Thou wilt make me full of gladness with Thy presence.'