

When Was Hell Prepared?

Hell was *prepared*, not created, as some people might believe. The word “prepared” in Strong’s Concordance means, “to make ready.”

In Matthew 25:41 (NKJV), Jesus said, “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’” The word “prepared” used here is the same word God used in John 14:2b where He said, “I go to prepare a place for you.” In the preparation of hell, God simply removed His attributes, or His goodness, from it.

James 1:17 states that every good thing comes down from heaven. If God removes His goodness, then all good goes with Him, and only evil remains. Hell didn’t have to be created. All that had to be done for hell to exist was for God to remove himself. This became the place called Hades, which is the current hell.

We know that hell was prepared some time after the six days of creation. The reason it didn’t exist prior to the six days is because God said in Genesis 1:31a, “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” If hell had existed prior to that, everything would *not* have been good.

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Author Wayne Grudem in his book “Systematic Theology” writes, “Some time before Satan tempted Eve in the garden (Genesis 3:1) a number of angels sinned and rebelled against God (2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6-7). This event occurred apparently after the sixth day of creation when God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was very good.’”

This would indicate that Satan hadn’t yet sinned and fallen

during those six days; therefore, hell was not yet prepared. Since Satan (Lucifer) was the highest of God's creation before man, he may have felt that he was special to God. After all, he was the top of the angelic host. Some scholars say Lucifer and the angels were created early the first day, and man was created on the sixth day.

It is possible that Lucifer, being God's highest creation until man, became jealous of God's attention now on man. Also, man is made in God's image and angels are not. Pride entered his heart, as Isaiah 14:12-15 states. He desired to be God, and even asked Jesus to bow down and worship him in Matthew 4:9.

It most likely was not long after the creation week that Lucifer rebelled in heaven. The reason for this belief is that in 1 John 3:8b (NKJV) it says, "the devil has sinned from the beginning." This phrase, "from the beginning" or "since the beginning" is referred to 14 times in the Bible and always refers to the beginning of creation.

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We also see that man sinned from the beginning. "Therefore just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men" (Rom. 5:12a). Man sinned in the Garden when he disobeyed God and believed Satan's lie. Satan sinned from the beginning in heaven (Ezek. 28:15), and then shortly after that man brought sin into the earth. Jesus said about Satan in Luke 10:18b, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." We do not know what time this occurred.

Revelation 12:9 states, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his

angels were cast out with him.” This will take place in the middle of the Tribulation period, when Satan and his demons no longer have access to heaven.

We see from Scripture that Satan was cast out of heaven to the earth at the beginning, and then again during the Tribulation. Sheol is also mentioned. In Isaiah 14:15 the word “Sheol” refers to the current hell down deep in the earth. It is not the future hell, which is the lake of fire also called Gehenna. Jesus spoke of this place 11 times, and James spoke of it once. That is the future hell after the Judgment Day.

The Bible gives us enough information to determine that Satan rebelled shortly after the creation week and was thrown out at that time, which means hell was prepared not long after the six days.

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