

# Everything You Wanted to Know About Hell\*

\*(but were afraid to ask)

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Is hell a literal place? Why would a loving God send people there? Why would God create a place of torment? Will it last forever? What is the difference between Hades and Gehenna? Will people in hell be annihilated? Will everyone eventually be saved? We will answer all these questions in this study.

## Is Hell a literal place?

We learn more about hell from the teachings of Jesus than from any other source. Jesus knows what lies beyond the grave and **if He knew it wasn't a real place, He would not have taught so much about it.** We must base our knowledge of hell on what Jesus revealed about it and not our logic or what doesn't make sense to us. When we examine all the Scriptures concerning what He taught about it, we can easily conclude that hell is a literal place in the afterlife.

## Why would God create hell?

Jesus said in Matthew 25:41 that hell was created for the devil and his angels as a place of punishment from them. **Satan and his demons were once angels in heaven** that rebelled against God and were kicked out. Although hell was originally intended for demons, Jesus revealed that many people will also go to this place (see Matt. 25:31-46).

## Why would a loving God send people there?

God does not want anyone to go to hell. The apostle Paul writes, "Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15) and "God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). God is love, but because He is also holy and righteous, He must judge sin. He is gracious and provided the way of salvation from hell through Jesus Christ so that we can go to heaven.

God demonstrated His love for us, not by destroying hell, but by giving us the way of salvation to keep us from going there. "But God demonstrated His own love toward us, that that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). He demonstrated His love through Jesus dying for us.

Second Peter 3:9 says, "**God is not willing that any should perish** (in hell) but for **all to come to repentance.**" Repentance means to change your mind and heart so that your life changes. Jesus Christ took the punishment for our sins on the cross and by accepting Him as your Lord, He will give you eternal life. **CLICK HERE to find out how to be saved.** If you reject the sacrifice of Jesus for your sins, it means that you have chosen pay for your own sins forever in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). The sin debt will never be paid off. But if you will receive Jesus as Lord, He will take your sins from you and you'll escape hell.

## Old Testament Word for Hell

**Sheol** is a Hebrew word in the Old Testament which refers to the place where all souls went after people died, whether godly and ungodly. When someone died during the Old Testament days, his body went to the grave to await resurrection while his soul departed to Sheol.

Jesus revealed that there were two sections of Sheol. **Paradise** was the section of Sheol where righteous people went. The torment section of Sheol was the place for the wicked. (See Luke 16:19-31). When righteous people died before Jesus came, they couldn't go directly to heaven because He had not yet died for their sins. They went to the paradise compartment of Sheol to await Jesus' death and resurrection, which would open the way to heaven.

Jesus told the thief on the cross, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43). When Jesus died on the cross, His body went to the grave and His soul went to Sheol. Psalm 16:10 is quoted in Acts 2:27 concerning the resurrection of Jesus, "Because Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol (Greek--hades) nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay" (the body in the grave). Ephesians 4:8-10 informs us before Jesus ascended into heaven, He first descended (into Sheol) to lead a host of captives (in Paradise) out of captivity and took them to heaven.

## New Testament Words for Hell

**Hades**--This Greek word is equivalent to the Hebrew word Sheol. When the New Testament was written a change had taken place in Sheol. After Jesus descended into hell (Sheol), He led a host of captives (the righteous in the Paradise section) out of the captivity of Sheol. When Jesus ascended, He took the righteous Old Testament saints with Him to heaven. When a Christian dies today, he or she will go directly to heaven at death because Jesus has already died on the cross for their sins. Paradise is now in heaven (2 Cor. 12:2-4). Because of this change in Sheol, the word hades (hell) now always refers to the place of torment for the wicked.

**Tartarus**--This Greek word is only used in 2 Peter 2:4 but is also referred to in 1 Pet 3:19 and Jude 6. This is the place of torment for fallen angels (demons) now in prison. There are two classes of fallen angels—those bound and under punishment now in hell and those loosed on earth awaiting judgment. We don't know why some demons are currently bound in Tartarus except for the fact they sinned (2 Pet 2:4) and didn't keep their first estate (Jude 6).

**Abyss**--This Greek word means "the bottomless pit" and refers to the place of torment for demon spirits. In Matt 8:29, the demon begged Jesus to not torment him before the appointed time of judgment. Luke 8:31 calls this place the abyss.

**Gehenna**--This Greek word refers to the place eternal punishment for all lost people (unbelievers), which is also called the lake of fire. Both Hades and Gehenna are places of fire and torment, but no one is in Gehenna at this present time. The souls of unrighteous people who have died are currently in torment in Hades (hell) awaiting judgment and the resurrection of their bodies. At the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15), these souls will be rejoined with their corrupt resurrected bodies and will all be cast into Gehenna (the lake of fire), which is the permanent place of torment for their body and soul.

The souls in Hell (Hades) will be cast into the lake of fire (Gehenna) after all wicked people receive their hideous resurrection bodies at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:14). Their names are not written in the book of life (Rev. 20:15) and they will be punished according to the amount of evil they have done during their lives on earth (Rev. 20:12).

<b>Differences between Hades and Gehenna</b>	
<b>Hades (Hell)</b>	<b>Gehenna</b>
This is the place where a lost person's <b>soul</b> goes at the moment of death. The person's soul will be here until a future time when his or her body will be resurrected at the Great White Throne Judgment. (Acts 2:27, Ps. 16:10, 86:13, 89:48, Prov. 23:14, Luke 16:19-31)	This is the place for the lost person's <b>body and soul</b> <u>after</u> the Great White Throne Judgment. (Matt. 5:29-30, 10:28, Rev. 20:10-15). The lost person's resurrection body will be hideous (Jesus compared it to a worm in Mark9:43-48)
<b>Current</b> place for unrighteous souls while waiting for the resurrection of their bodies. (Rev. 20:13-15)	<b>Future</b> eternal place for unrighteous souls <u>after their bodies are resurrected</u> and <u>rejoined with their souls.</u> (Rev. 20:10-15)
Apparently souls in Hades are experiencing the same equal torment because they have not yet been judged for each sin, which will happen at the Great White Throne Judgment. (This is an assumption only)	After every lost person is judged for each sin at the Great White Throne Judgment, they will experience differing <b>degrees of torment</b> , according to what they have done. (Matt. 10:15, 11:22, 12:41, Luke 12:47-48, Rev. 20:13)

\*Note--The transfer of people from Hades to Gehenna (Rev. 20:14) at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15) does not mean the people in hell will be given a second chance to accept Christ. This Judgment is to determine each person's individual eternal punishment for rejecting salvation through Jesus and the life they lived on earth.

Revelation 20:15 says, "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Gehenna)." Jesus taught that everyone is either saved or lost (John 3:16-17, Matt. 13:47-50). Saved people are those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord, while lost people are those who

reject Him. Jesus said most people will choose to spend eternity in hell rather than follow Him (Matt. 7:13-14).

Jesus described hell as a furnace of fire (Matt. 13: 42, 50) and a place of outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30). He said it is better to lose a part of your physical body than to go to hell (Matt. 5:29-30). Gehenna is also described as a lake of fire:

- It is a lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8).
- It burns with fire (Rev. 19:20, 20:10, 14-15, 21:8).
- It is an eternal fire (Matt. 18:8).
- It is an unquenchable fire (Mark 9:43,48).

Jesus described hell in Luke 16:19-31. The rich man in hell was in torment (v.23), cried for mercy (v.24) and was thirsty (v.24). He was in agony in a flame (v.24) and he could remember what his life was like while he was living on earth (v.25). He was separated from the righteous (v.26) and realized he couldn't get out. He wanted someone to go warn his five brothers, who were still alive on earth, to not go to the place of torment (v.27-28).

### Two False Views—Annihilation and Universalism

The Bible says hell is a place of eternal punishment (Heb. 6:2, Jude 7). Two false views are: **Annihilation**—teaches that lost people will be instantly destroyed and will no longer exist rather than experience eternal torment. **Universalism**—teaches everyone will eventually be saved, even those who don't believe and receive Jesus Christ as the only sacrifice for their sins. Neither of these ideas are true.

**Annihilation** cannot be true because Jesus said this about Judas: "It would have been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. 26:24, Mark 14:21). I.M. Haldeman writes:

"If death means the extinction of being, why should life be worse for Judas than any other wicked traitor? No matter how great his guilt, death would end it all ... Never to have been born means never to have come into existence. If death means going out of existence, then never to have been born and to die are equivalent conditions; they mean the same thing—nonexistence. Why, then, did the Lord say it would have been good not to come into existence? Why did He not say (seeing the man was born and there was no use in wasting regrets over his birth)—why did He not say, 'It will be good for that man when he dies, for when he dies he will then be just as if he had never been born—nonexistent'?" (*Millennial Dawnism*, p. 371)

**Universalism** cannot be true because Jesus would not have said "it would have been good for that man (Judas) if he had not have been born" if He believed Judas would ultimately be saved. Ultimate salvation would mean Judas would have hope of ultimately being reconciled to God. First Corinthians 4:13 says Christians don't grieve as those who have no hope.

Matthew 25:41-46 makes it clear hell is a place of eternal punishment. Jesus said, "And these (lost people) will go away into **eternal punishment**, but the righteous into **eternal life**" (Matt. 25:46). The same Greek word is used for "eternal" in referring to both life and punishment, meaning the duration is the same for both groups.

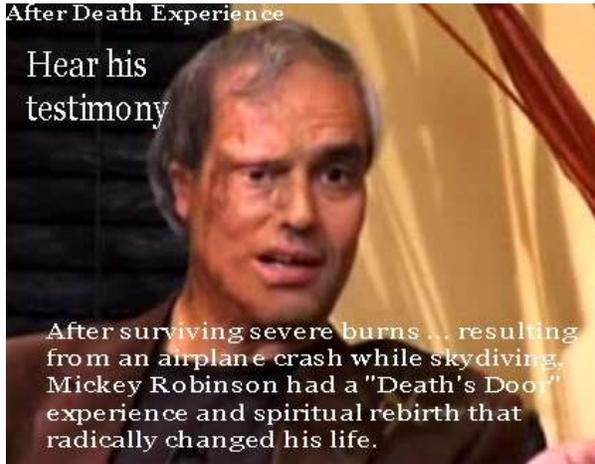
In Rev. 19:19-20, the beast (the Antichrist) and the false prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire by Christ at His Second Coming. One thousand years later, when the Millennium is completed, Jesus casts the devil into the lake of fire "**where the beast and false prophet are also.**" After one thousand years of being in the lake of fire, they aren't annihilated but are "tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10). This is the strongest expression that can be used concerning eternal punishment.

### Hell is not the grave

Jehovah's Witnesses teach that hell is the grave. But if we substitute the word "grave" for "hell" in the following Scriptures we see that it doesn't make sense:

- Isa. 66:24—They will look into the grave where they won't die and the fire isn't quenched.
- Matt. 8:12, 22:13—Cast into the grave where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- Rev. 20:10—Tormented in the grave day and night forever and ever.
- Matt. 25:41—The grave is prepared for the devil and his angels.
- Luke 12:5—Only God has authority to cast into the grave.  
Hell is obviously not the grave but a place of existence beyond the grave.



### Near Death Experiences of Hell

Mickey Robinson was killed in a plane crash and went to the other side. **Click this link to watch:**

**[Mickey Robinson Testimony](#)**

Dr. Maurice Rawlings is a cardiologist who didn't believe in God and the afterlife until he talked with patients who died and claimed they went to hell and came back. Their testimonies changed his mind about what lies beyond the grave. He produced a video showing the interviews of several people who claimed to have come back from hell. **To watch this 50-minute video click on the link: [To Hell and Back](#)**

### How to keep from going to hell

Our sins have separated us from God and the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of eternal life is eternal life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:23). The blood that Jesus shed of the cross is the only way you can be cleansed from your sins (Heb. 9:11-12, 22). You can **[receive eternal life today by receiving Jesus Christ](#)** into your life.

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