

## HELL

*“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” (Psalm 9:17)*

*“And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.” (Matthew 18:9)*

### Key Facts About Eternity

- Everyone will exist after leaving this earth either in heaven or hell (Daniel 12:2-3; Matthew 25:46; John 5:28; Revelation 20:14-15).
- Everyone has only one life in which to determine their destiny (Hebrews 9:27).
- Heaven or hell is determined by whether a person believes (puts their trust) in Christ alone to save them (John 3:16, 36, etc.).

### Definition of Hell

- The place or state of punishment for the wicked after death.
- The place of the dead, or of souls after death; the lower regions, or the grave; called in Hebrew, sheol, and by the Greeks, hades.

### Biblical Terms (Words) Describing Hell

- **Sheol** - a Hebrew term simply describing “the grave” or “death” – Does not refer to “hell” specifically
- **Hades** - A Greek term that usually refers to hell – a place of torment (Luke 10:15; 16:23, etc.)
- **Gehenna** - A Greek term (borrowed from a literal burning dump near Jerusalem) that always refers to hell – a place of torment (Matthew 5:30; 23:33)
- **“Lake of fire”**- the final abode of unbelievers after they are resurrected (Revelation 20:14-15)

### Why Did God Create Hell?

If it is God's sincere desire that everyone come to know Him why did He create hell in the first place? Why make a place of judgment for humanity?

The Bible teaches that God did not create hell as a judgment for humanity. God created hell for the punishment of the devil and his angels and not as a place for human beings to suffer. 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’” (Matthew 25:41).*

Hell was created as a place of judgment for Satan and those who followed him in their rebellion against God. The Bible says that the devil and his angels will eventually be consigned to the lake of fire:

*“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” (Revelation 20:10)*

Human beings, who are created in God's image, are not meant to spend eternity away from the presence of God. The place God created for them is the earth. However, since the fall of man, God has made heaven as the temporary abode of His children until the new heaven and new earth is created. Jesus spoke of this place that God has prepared for those who trust Him:

*“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:2-3)*

Hell was not created for humanity, but it is the destination for those who reject God's salvation in Jesus Christ.

### **Erroneous Views of Hell**

- **The second chance view** – After death there is still a way to escape hell.

Answer: “It is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

- **Universalism** – All are eternally saved.

Answer: It denies the truth of salvation through Christ which means that a person decides to either trust in Christ or else he/she rejects Christ and goes to hell (John 3:16; 3:36).

- **Annihilationism** – Hell means a person dies like an animal – ceases to exist.

Answer: It denies the resurrection of the unsaved (John 5:28, 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 etc. – see above).

### **Objections to the Biblical View of Hell**

- **A loving God would not send people to a horrible hell.**

Response: God is just (Romans 2:11). He wants us to know Him as the God of Justice (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

The answer to this is that God is a God of holiness and justice as well as a God of love. These moral attributes are complementary, not contradictory. When the laws of God are disobeyed there must be a judgment. God's laws demand that sin must be paid for. God can still love someone, but He cannot allow sin to go unpunished. This is the reason that Jesus Christ came to earth, to die for the sins of the world.

- God has provided the way of salvation to all (John 3:16,17; 2 Corinthians 5:14,15; 1 Timothy 2:6; 4:10; Titus 2:11; 2 Peter 3:9).
- Even those who haven’t heard of Christ are accountable for God’s revelation in nature (Romans 1:20). God will seek those who seek Him (Luke 19:10).
- Therefore, God doesn’t send people to hell, they choose it (Romans 1:18,21,25).

- **Hell is too severe a punishment for man’s sin.**

Response: God is holy-perfect (1 Peter 1:14-15).

- Sin is wilful opposition to God our creator (Romans 1:18-32).
- Our sin does merit hell (Romans 1:32; 2:2,5,6).
- What is unfair and amazing is that Christ died for our sin and freely offers salvation to all (Romans 2:4; 3:22-24; 4:7,8; 5:8,9).

## How Hell is described:

- **Hell is conscious torment.**
  - Matthew 13:50 “furnace of fire... weeping and gnashing of teeth”
  - Mark 9:48 “where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched”
  - Revelation 14:10 “he will be tormented with fire and brimstone”
- **Hell is eternal and irreversible.**
  - Revelation 14:11 “the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever and they have no rest day and night”
  - Revelation 20:14 “This is the second death, the lake of fire”
  - Revelation 20:15 “If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire”

## Where is Hell?

The bible will usually use the description of somewhere under, below, or underneath the earth to describe where hell is. We cannot be totally sure, but it would be safe to believe it is under the earth.

*“For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment” (2 Peter 2:4)*

*“Let death seize them; Let them go down alive into hell, for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them.” (Psalm 55:15)*

## Conclusion

In the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John wrote concerning a final judgment of the wicked:

*And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books... And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:12,15).*

The reality of a final judgment is clearly taught in Scripture. But the Bible also indicates that the people who go to hell do so because they have rejected God's provision for salvation. The Bible says that God does not want anyone to go to hell:

*“This means that, contrary to man’s perspective, the Lord is not late with his promise to return, as some measure lateness. But rather, his “delay” simply reveals his loving patience toward you, because he does not want any to perish but all to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9 TPT)*

Thus, we conclude by saying:

1. The Bible teaches the reality of a final place of judgment for the wicked.
2. Those who spend eternity in the lake of fire, do so because they rejected God's love and His provision for salvation.
3. It is God's desire for everyone to come to Him by faith and receive the salvation that He offers.

