



Does the bible really say?

Part 4: "Hell is/isn't a real place!"

Matthew 10:28: *"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."*

1. We prefer heaven to hell

- Did you know that a much **higher** percentage of people believe in the existence of heaven than those who believe in a **literal** hell.
- Around **73**% of Americans believe in heaven, while only **59**% believe in hell. Both numbers have been consistently **dropping**.

2. Various views and perspectives about hell and punishment:

- a. **Christian**- teaches that hell is a real place of **eternal, conscious** separation from God, as punishment for those who are unrepentant, rejecting Christ. Hell is a place of punishment and **torture** that was created for Satan and his demons (**Matthew 25:41**).
- b. **Cults**- many teach what is commonly called **annihilation**. That if you are unrepentant, you just **cease** to exist and are not eternally punished. Some also teach what is commonly called **soul-sleep**.
- c. **Catholic**- teaches a **mixed** view of punishment. Hell is a real, **eternal, conscious** place of judgment for the unrepentant. Hell has different **levels** for the most severe sinners. Also teaches about **purgatory**, an **intermediate** state where one is **purged** or **cleansed** of any remaining sinfulness before entering heaven.
- d. **Muslim**- teaches that hell can be a temporary place for believers who remain too sinful for **paradise**, but that it is eternal for non-believers. There are different **levels** for the most severe sinners.
- e. **Jewish**- views of the **afterlife** vary. In biblical times, the Pharisees believed in a real heaven and hell, whereas the Sadducees did not. Today, the Jewish hell is referred to as **Gehinnom**, which is a

temporary place (12 months), similar to purgatory, where a person can be purified.

- f. Eastern religions- many teach that either hell doesn't exist at all, or that hell is a temporary state or realm while awaiting rebirth/reincarnation.
- g. Universalists- there is no literal hell, all people will be saved and taken to some form of heaven or eternal rest.

3. Hell by any other name?

- Sheol- Hebrew word that appears often in the Old Testament. It most often refers to the common grave of mankind. However, it can also be used to describe a pit or the place of the dead.
- In ancient Judaism, all mankind went to this place; it's not always presented as a place where just the unrepentant go for evil actions.
- However, it is often known for darkness, a place of dust or dirt.
- And, it is often said to be a place of forgetfulness.
- Abaddon- Hebrew word that means a place of destruction. In Greek, the word is turned into a title, Apollyon, which means the destroyer. The name appears in **Revelation 9**.
- Hades- Greek word that appears often in the New Testament. Usually used to refer to the realm of the dead. Sometimes it is referred to permanent place, other times as impermanent. Some would claim that Hades was two parts (**Luke 16:19-31**), one for the righteous (Abraham's Bosom/Side-happiness, rest, and peace) and one for the unrighteous (fire and torment). These are separated by a great gulf or chasm. In **Revelation 20:14**, both death & Hades are thrown into the Lake of Fire, which represents a place of final judgment.
- Gehenna- Hebrew word that is used a dozen times in the New Testament. The word is taken from the Valley of Hinnom, which is a real place outside of Jerusalem. It painted a visual illustration.
- This area was associated with idolatry and even child sacrifice. In Jesus' time, it was used as a trash dump, and refuse was burned there.
- Christians, Jews, and Muslims all have used this word to describe a state of torment in the afterlife.

4. Is hell fair?

- How can we be infinitely punished for a finite number of sins?
- To say this, you fundamentally misunderstand the nature of God, the nature of man, and the nature of sin.
- The nature of God: God is perfect, holy, unstained, and righteous.

- All sin is ultimately committed against God (**Ps. 51:4**).
- **The nature of man**: we are not holy, we are unrighteous, stained, going from bad to worse. We assign levels and penalties to sins/crimes.
- Even we treat wrongdoing **proportionately**.
- There is a greater penalty for murder than for stealing. Punishment is relative to the crime.
- **The nature of sin**: God sees all sin exactly the same; there are no levels. All sin leads to death, all sin separates us from God, and all sin is a direct offense to His holiness.
- So, if all sin is an offense against an infinitely holy God, then all sin is punished infinitely.
- If God is **love**, how can He **send** people to hell?
- God is a holy, righteous, gracious, loving, merciful, and **just** God.
- If God were so loving that He **overlooked** sin and evil, then He could not be **just**.
- You cannot separate God's **attributes** from one another. We cannot pick and choose the ones we like and the ones we don't.
- If we want God to be 'fair' towards us in the area of sin, then all of us would deserve hell and eternal separation from God.

Homework: look up and read these verses about the realities of hell.

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|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Daniel 12:2 | • Luke 16:23 |
| • Matthew 3:12 | • John 3:18, 36 |
| • Matthew 5:22 | • 2 Thessalonians 1:9 |
| • Matthew 5:29 | • 2 Peter 2:4 |
| • Matthew 10:28 | • Jude vs. 7 |
| • Matthew 13:50 | • Revelation 14:11 |
| • Matthew 23:33 | • Revelation 19:20 |
| • Matthew 25:46 | • Revelation 20:10, 14-15 |
| • Mark 9:43, 48 | • Revelation 21:8 |



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1. We _____ heaven to hell

- Did you know that a much _____ percentage of people believe in the existence of heaven than those who believe in a _____ hell.
- Around ____% of Americans believe in heaven, while only ____% believe in hell. Both numbers have been consistently _____.

2. Various _____ and _____ about hell and punishment:

- a. _____ - teaches that hell is a real place of _____, _____ separation from God, as punishment for those who are unrepentant, rejecting Christ. Hell is a place of punishment and _____ that was created for Satan and his demons (**Matthew 25:41**).
- b. _____ - many teach what is commonly called _____. That if you are unrepentant, you just _____ to exist and are not eternally punished. Some also teach what is commonly called _____ - _____.
- c. _____ - teaches a _____ view of punishment. Hell is a real, _____, _____ place of judgment for the unrepentant. Hell has different _____ for the most severe sinners. Also teaches about _____, an _____ state where one is _____ or _____ of any remaining sinfulness before entering heaven.
- d. _____ - teaches that hell can be a temporary place for believers who remain too sinful for _____, but that it is eternal for non-believers. There are different _____ for the most severe sinners.
- e. _____ - views of the _____ vary. In biblical times, the Pharisees believed in a real heaven and hell, whereas the Sadducees did not. Today, the Jewish hell is referred to as _____, which

is a _____ place (____ months), similar to _____, where a person can be purified.

- f. _____ - many teach that either hell _____ exist at all, or that hell is a _____ state or realm while awaiting _____/_____.
- g. _____ - there is no literal hell, all people will be saved and taken to some form of heaven or eternal rest.

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- In ancient Judaism, _____ mankind went to this place; it's not always presented as a place where just the unrepentant go for evil actions.
- However, it is often known for _____, a place of _____ or _____.
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- This area was associated with _____ and even child _____. In Jesus' time, it was used as a _____ dump, and refuse was burned there.
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- So, if all sin is an offense against an infinitely holy God, then all sin is punished infinitely.
- If God is _____, how can He _____ people to hell?
- God is a holy, righteous, gracious, loving, merciful, and _____ God.
- If God were so loving that He _____ sin and evil, then He could not be _____.
- You cannot separate God's _____ from one another. We cannot pick and choose the ones we like and the ones we don't.
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