

Is Hell Real?

The purpose of Satan is to take away the fear of God's judgment from people just as he had in the Garden of Eden. Once this fear is removed, then people go forth knowingly and sin. The scriptures are very clear that there is a Heaven and there is a **Hell**. First of all, God desires that no one should perish (2 Peter 3:9). Yes, He has the love and power to save us all. He is also just and cannot go against His word. Jesus tells us that "heaven and earth will pass away, but God's words will remain" (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33). If we are disobedient and do not adhere to God's word, then we must suffer the consequences of our choices. That is to say, if we choose to not believe on His Son Jesus, then we are in danger of hell fire. God is long-suffering, but not forever-suffering. He does overlook our faults and disbeliefs for a time, but His word must be fulfilled as it is written in Revelation 20:15, *If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

The Wrath of God

Yet there is another side of God that many of us refuse to acknowledge. In the Book of Nahum 1:2-3 it states, *"The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on His foes and maintains His wrath against His enemies. The LORD is slow to anger and great in power; the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished."* God will not accept any gods before Him (Exodus 20:3). Oddly as it may sound, His name is Jealous: *"Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God"* (Exodus 34:14). He has forewarned us in His word, and gives us ample time for repentance. If we don't heed these warnings and take the time to change, we will experience this special, God-designed fire that is eternal, unquenchable, raging, and that was originally prepared for the devil and his angels.

Why Hell was Created

God did not create hell for man, but He made it for the enemy of our souls, Satan and his demons (Matthew 25:41). As we walk in disobedience and opposition with God, we have chosen for ourselves eternal damnation.

Because of the Bible's symbolic language, some people question whether hell contains actual fire. Such an interpretation should bring no reassurance to the lost. The reality is greater than the symbol. The Bible exhausts human language illustrating heaven and hell. Whereas heaven is more glorious, and hell is more terrible, than any language can convey.

Definitions

To help us understand further, let's look at the meaning of hell and what words it originated from in the Greek and Hebrew.

Hell – From the Old English it is called, **hel**. Because the Roman Church prevailed in England from an early date, the Roman (Mediterranean) belief that hell was hot prevailed there too. It is described as is a black and fiery place of eternal torment for the damned. But because the Vikings were converted to Christianity centuries after the Anglo-Saxons, the Old Norse *hel*, from the same source as Old English *hel*, retained its earlier pagan senses as both a place and a person. As a place, *hel* is the abode of oathbreakers, other evil persons, and those unlucky enough not to have died in battle. It contrasts sharply with *Valhalla*, the hall of slain heroes. Unlike the Mediterranean hell, the Old Norse *hel* is very cold. *Hel* is also the name of the goddess or giantess who presides in *hel*, the half blue-black, half white daughter of Loki and the giantess Angrbotha.

The Hebrew word that "hell" was translated from is **Sheol**, and the Greek words that "hell" was translated from are **hades**, **gehenna**, and **tartaros** as noted in the table below.

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Gehenna	Greek form of two Hebrew words ge hinnom meaning "Valley of Hinnom." Became synonymous with "a place of burning."
Grave	An extension of Sheol , the place of the dead.
Hades	Greek word for hell meaning "the place of the unseen."
Lake of Fire	The final destiny of all the enemies of God; the lake that blazes with fire and brimstone (burning sulfur); the second death.
Pit	Used as a synonym for a place of destruction, corruption, or death.
Sheol	Hebrew word for hell meaning "a place in the depths of the earth."
Tartaros	Greek word meaning "cast into hell."

Word Explanation

The word **Gehenna** originally referred to a ravine on the south side of Jerusalem where pagan deities were worshipped. It became a garbage dump and a place of abomination where fire burned continuously (2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 7:32; 2 Chronicles 28:3, 33:6).

Grave is the pit or cave in which a dead body is buried. The Hebrew thought graves were not simply places to deposit human remains. They were in a sense, extensions of Sheol (the place of the dead).

Hades was the name of the Greek god of the underworld and the name of the underworld itself. The Septuagint – the earliest Greek translation of the Old Testament – used Hades to translate the Hebrew word Sheol. In Matthew 16:18, Hades is not simply a place of the dead, but represents the power of the underworld. Jesus said the gates of Hades would not prevail against His church.

The **Lake of Fire** is the eternal destiny of all unbelievers which is "the second death". After the great white throne judgment, these will be cast into the lake of fire: the Antichrist (the beast), the false prophet, the fearful (cowardly), the unbelievers (faithless), the abominable (vile), murderers, whoremongers (sexually immoral), sorcerers (those who practice magic arts), idolaters (worshippers of idols), all liars, Satan, death, and hell.

The word "**pit**" or "**bottomless pit**" is presently the place of imprisonment of some demons (Luke 8:31) and will be the place from which the beast ascends as it reads in Revelation 17:8. It is a place that is in the earth below or the lower parts of the earth.

The word **Sheol** occurs 65 times in the Hebrew Bible. The King James Version translates 31 of the occurrences "hell", another 31 occurrences as "grave", and three occurrences as "pit." The Revised Standard Version uses "grave" as a one-time translation of Sheol (Song of Solomon 8:6). The word Sheol is expressed in the Old Testament as follows:

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The depths	Deuteronomy 32:22; Psalms 86:13; Proverbs 9:18, 15:24; Isaiah 7:11, 14:15
The farthest point from heaven	Job 11:8; Psalms 139:8; Isaiah 7:11; Amos 9:2
The "pit"	Job 17:13-14, 33:18; Psalms 30:3, 88:3-4; Proverbs 1:12; Isaiah 14:15, 38:18
Parallel with death	2 Samuel 22:6; Psalms 18:4-5, 49:14, 89:48, 116:3; Proverbs 5:5; Isaiah 28:15,18; Hosea 13:14
Overwhelming floods, water, or waves	Jonah 2:2-6
Pictured as a hunter setting snares for its victim, binding them with cords, snatching them from the land of the living	2 Samuel 22:6; Psalms 116:3
A prison with bars; a place of no return	Job 7:9, 10:21, 16:22, 21:13; Psalms 49:14; Isaiah 38:10
People could go there alive	Numbers 16:30,33; Psalms 55:15; Proverbs 1:12
Continuously burning fire	Matthew 18:9; James 3:6; Revelation 20:11
A place of torment forever	Revelation 20:10
"Outer darkness"	Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30

The Greek word **Tartaros** (cast into hell) appears in the New Testament one time (2 Peter 2:4). This word appears in classical Greek to refer to a subterranean region, doleful and dark, regarded by the ancient Greeks as the abode of the wicked dead. It was thought of as a place of punishment. In the sole use of the word in the New Testament, it refers to the place of punishment for rebellious angels.

Conclusion

According to scripture, hell is:

- ✦ eternal separation from God (Matthew 7:23)
- ✦ described as a place of darkness (Matthew 8:12; Matthew 22:13)
- ✦ no hope for release (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:48)
- ✦ a place of consciousness (Luke 13:28)
- ✦ a place where your memory is tormented (Luke 16:27,28)

Are you still in doubt there is no such place as hell? Do you still believe God will send people there? Do you believe that only the vilest people go there? God doesn't place people in hell; our sins that we commit will put us there. Regardless of whether we believe it or not, hell exists and the Bible says that it is never full. The best decision we can make now is to cease allowing the spirit of our minds to be deceived by Satan, and begin believing in Jesus and God's inspired words. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).

The believer's reassurance is, by the blood of Jesus, the battle has already been won against Satan and his followers.

Brothers and sisters, be wise as to how and which you choose (Heaven or Hell).

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Reference Verses

Book	Verse
Exodus 20:3	"You shall have <u>no other gods</u> before me."
Exodus 34:14	"Do not worship <u>any other god</u> , for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."
Numbers 16:30,33	"But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, <u>and they go down quick into the pit</u> ; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord." Thy, and all that appertained to them, <u>went down alive into the pit</u> , and the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the congregation.
Deuteronomy 32:22	For a <u>fire</u> has been kindled by my wrath, <u>one that burns to the realm of death below</u> . It will devour the earth and its harvests and set afire the foundations of the mountains.
2 Samuel 22:6	The cords of the <u>grave</u> coiled around me; the snares of <u>death</u> confronted me.
2 Kings 23:10	He desecrated Topheth, which was in the <u>Valley of Ben Hinnom</u> , so no one could use it to sacrifice his son or daughter in the fire to Molech.
2 Chronicles 28:3	He burned sacrifices in the <u>Valley of Ben Hinnom</u> and sacrificed his sons in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites.
2 Chronicles 33:6	He sacrificed his sons in the <u>fire</u> in the <u>Valley of Ben Hinnom</u> , practiced sorcery, divination and witchcraft, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord, <u>provoking Him to anger</u> .
Job 7:9	'As a cloud vanishes and is gone, so he who <u>goes down to the grave (Sheol)</u> does not return.'
Job 10:21	'...before I go <u>to the place of no return</u> , to the <u>land of gloom and deep shadow</u> ,...'
Job 11:8	'It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? <u>Deeper than hell</u> ; what canst thou know?'
Job 16:22	'Only a few years will pass before I go on <u>the journey of no return</u> .'
Job 17:13-15	If the only home I hope for is the <u>grave</u> , if I spread out my bed in darkness, If I say to corruption, 'You are my father,' and to the worm, 'My mother' or 'My sister, 'where then is my hope?'
Job 21:13	'They spend their years in prosperity and go down to the <u>grave (Sheol)</u> in peace.'
Job 33:18	'...to <u>reserve his soul from the pit</u> , and his life to the messengers of death.'
Psalms 18:4-5	The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the <u>grave</u> coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me.
Psalms 30:3	O Lord, you brought me up from the <u>grave</u> ; you spared me from going down into the pit.
Psalms 49:14	Like sheep they are destined for the <u>grave</u> , and death will feed on them.

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Psalms 55:15	Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the <u>grave</u> , for evil finds lodging among them.
Psalms 86:13	For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the <u>depths of the grave</u> .
Psalms 88:3-4	For my soul is full of trouble and my life draws near the <u>grave</u> , I am counted among those who go down to the <u>pit</u> .
Psalms 89:48	What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the <u>grave</u> ?
Psalms 116:3	The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the <u>grave</u> came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.
Psalms 139:8	If I go up to the heavens, you are there, if I make my bed in the <u>depths</u> , you are there.
Proverbs 1:12	...let's swallow them alive, like the <u>grave</u> , and whole, like those who go down to the <u>pit</u> ;
Proverbs 5:5	Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the <u>grave</u> .
Proverbs 9:18	But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the <u>depths of the grave</u> .
Proverbs 15:24	The path of life leads upward for the wise to keep him from going down to the <u>grave</u> .
Song of Solomon 8:6	Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the <u>grave</u> . It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.
Isaiah 7:11	"Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the <u>deepest depths</u> or in the highest heights."
Isaiah 14:15	But you are brought down to the <u>grave</u> , to the <u>depths of the pit</u> .
Isaiah 28:15,18	You boast, 'We have entered into a covenant with death, with the <u>grave</u> we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place.'
Isaiah 38:10,18	I said, 'In the prime of my life must I go through the gates of death and be robbed of the rest of my years?' For the <u>grave</u> cannot praise you, death cannot sing your praise; those who go down to the <u>pit</u> cannot hope for your faithfulness.
Jeremiah 7:32	"So beware, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when people will not longer call it Topheth or the <u>Valley of Ben Hinnom</u> , but the <u>Valley of Slaughter</u> , for they will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room."
Hosea 13:14	"I will ransom them from the power of the <u>grave</u> ; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O <u>grave</u> , is your destruction?"
Amos 9:2	"Though they dig down to the <u>depths of the grave</u> , from there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down."
Nahum 1:2-3	The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The Lord takes vengeance on his foes and maintains His wrath against His enemies. The Lord is slow to anger and great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished.
Jonah 2:2	He said: 'In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From the <u>depths of the grave</u> I called for help, and you listened to my cry.'

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Matthew 8:12	"But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, <u>into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.</u> "
Matthew 16:18	"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the <u>gates of Hades</u> will not overcome it."
Matthew 18:9	"And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the <u>fire of hell.</u>
Matthew 22:13	"Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and <u>throw him outside, into the darkness; where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.</u> '
Matthew 24:35	"Heaven and earth will pass away, but <u>my words will never pass away.</u> "
Matthew 25:30	'And throw that worthless servant outside, <u>into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.</u> '
Matthew 25:41	'Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, <u>into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.</u> '
Mark 9:48	"...where 'their worm does not die, and <u>the fire is not quenched.</u> '
Mark 13:31	"Heaven and earth will pass away, but <u>my words will never pass away.</u> "
Luke 8:31	And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the <u>Abyss.</u>
Luke 21:33	"Heaven and earth will pass away, but <u>my words will never pass away.</u> "
John 3:16	"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him <u>shall not perish but have eternal life.</u> "
James 3:6	The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself <u>set on fire by hell.</u>
2 Peter 2:4	For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but <u>sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;</u>
2 Peter 3:9	<u>The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.</u>
Revelation 17:8	The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will <u>come up out of the Abyss</u> and go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.
Revelation 20:3	He threw him <u>into the Abyss</u> , and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.
Revelation 20:10-11	And the devil, who deceived them, was <u>thrown into the lake of burning sulfur</u> , where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.
Revelation 20:15	If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was <u>thrown into the lake of fire.</u>

All Scriptures are taken from the New International Version (NIV).