

The Truth About Hell

Unravelling The Confusion

There are many people that do not accept the tenets of Christianity because they have heard ministers say that they are going to go into hell and that they are going to burn there through the ceaseless ages of eternity, that God is going to bake them on one side for 6 million years, then turn them over on the other side and bake them on that side for another 6 million years.

People have read Dante's Inferno, where it talks about how people will be put upside down in red hot coals, and the devil comes along with a red hot poker and sticks it to the soles of their feet.

People have read, and ministers have preached, that there are little babies in hell, not over a span long, and their blood runs through their veins like molten lead. Preachers have said that the people in hell are looking up into Heaven and wishing they could be there.

Is this the case? What exactly does the Bible teach about this subject? Where is hell, when did it begin, are there people in hell burning now? What does the Bible have to say about it? Well Jesus told a story that makes it very clear...

Matthew 13:24-30 ²⁴ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: ²⁵ But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. ²⁶ But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. ²⁷ So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? ²⁸ He

The Truth About Hell

said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? ²⁹ But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

The scripture says that after the multitude went away, the disciples of Jesus came to Him and asked Him to explain the parable to them. In His answer it tells us exactly where hell is.

Matthew 13:36-40 ³⁶ Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. ³⁷ He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; ³⁸ The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; ³⁹ The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. ⁴⁰ As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

Jesus made it absolutely clear - the tares represent the wicked, it says the harvest is the end of the age, and it says as the tares are gathered, so they will be burnt at the end of the age. Is there anybody in hell at the present time? No. The Bible makes this crystal clear - it is not until the coming of Jesus that people will be destroyed.

This is what it says about the coming of Christ:

The Truth About Hell

Matthew 16:27 ²⁷ For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

So it's at Jesus' second coming that He will reward everyone according to His works, to how he has lived - not now, but at His second coming.

Let's look at another verse...

Revelation 22:12 ¹² And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Again we see that every person will receive their reward when Jesus comes back - not now, but then.

2 Peter 3:7 ⁷ But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

The Bible makes it clear - fire will burn the earth, and it is then that the wicked will be destroyed. Nowhere in the Bible does it teach that hell is down somewhere beneath the earth and that people go there when they die - it doesn't teach that. It says that it will happen at the end, when Jesus comes - then the wicked will be destroyed. 2 Peter also shows this...

2 Peter 3:10-12 ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. ¹¹ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy

The Truth About Hell

conversation and godliness, ¹² Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

So it says the earth is going to burn, all the works of the earth will be burned up, the wicked will also be burned up with it at this time. So hell is going to take place right here on this earth, not some other place.

Speaking of the wicked right at the end of time, Revelation tells us...

Revelation 20:9 ⁹ And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

So it says fire will come down to burn up the wicked - it uses the word "devoured". Devoured means they will be completely destroyed, they will exist no more, and it takes place right here on earth.

Prepared For The Devil & His Angels

The Bible tells us that the punishment for sin is death.

John 3:36 ³⁶ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Romans 6:23 ²³ For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Truth About Hell

The Bible contrasts for us two groups of people - one group accept the Lord Jesus, and they receive everlasting life, and another group of people who do not accept Jesus, will not see life, but death. This is absolutely clear - these two groups are opposites; there is life in Jesus, but without Him there is death. Matthew also makes this clear...

[Matthew 25:41](#) ⁴¹ Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

So we see that hell was prepared for the devil and his angels; it was not prepared for man; although sinful man will be destroyed in it. It was not what God intended for man, He doesn't want any of us to suffer it, because He loves each one of us and wants us to accept Him, to seek His forgiveness for sin so that He can give us life, but if we do not accept Him then we will not receive life, but death.

Many people use the verse above to prove that this fire will go on burning throughout eternity, that the wicked are going to burn forever, but the Bible does not teach that...

[Hebrews 2:14](#) ¹⁴ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

Here it tells us that the devil is going to be destroyed. As children we tend to think that if you don't obey God, He will give you to the devil, or that you will go to hell which belongs to the devil. But the Bible tells us that God will destroy the devil. In fact the Bible tells us exactly what's going to happen to him at the end of time:

The Truth About Hell

Ezekiel 28:17-18 ¹⁷ Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. ¹⁸ Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

The Bible is clear - it says that the devil is going to be turned into ashes. Now if he is turned to ashes then he's not going to exist anymore, he's not going to be burning on and on without end. The devil and the wicked are going to burn together, but the Bible says plainly that they are going to **burn up**, those are the words it uses, that they will burn up until **they are ashes, nothing left but ashes.**

Matthew 10:28 ⁸ And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

To destroy means do away with, it means it will exist no more. If we are in Christ then we need not fear if we lose our life (kill the body), but we do need to be afraid of the One that can destroy both our body and soul. That's a different story.

Eternal Destruction

Romans 6:23 ²³ For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here we have two different scenarios - with Jesus Christ there is life, with the devil there is death. These are complete

The Truth About Hell

opposites, but many have got them all mixed up, however the Bible is very clear...

2 Thessalonians 1:9 ⁹ Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

This is speaking here of the wicked, and it says they are going to be destroyed with everlasting destruction. It does not say everlasting “destroying”, but everlasting “destruction”. It’s the effect of the destruction that is everlasting, not the act of destroying itself.

Malachi 4:1 ¹ For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

If you have ever seen a field after they have set fire to it and burnt the stubble that’s left after harvesting, there is nothing left, and this is how it says the wicked will be, they will be like stubble that is fully dried, and it says they will be burned up. In Malachi it goes on to say...

Malachi 4:3 ³ And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

So the Bible makes it very clear that the wicked are going to be turned to into ashes - they will exist no more. That’s what it promises.

The Truth About Hell

Matthew 18:8-9 ⁸ Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. ⁹ And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire

Many people say that this verse proves that the wicked are going to be cast into hell for eternity, some versions say the worms will eat on them. The gospel of Mark uses this same analogy, he says:

It's more profitable for you to enter into Heaven with one hand, than into hell where the fire is not quenched and the worm dieth not.

Many people read this and say it means that the wicked are going to burn in hell for eternity, and the worms are going to eat on them for eternity - but nothing could be further from what God is saying.

You see in the time of Christ, outside of Jerusalem, there were three valleys. One of those valleys was where they threw all the trash - the word for that is 'Gehenna', and this is what this word for hell is, 'Gehenna' - this was where they threw all the trash, and dead animals etc. This is what the passage means – it means that what the worms didn't eat the fire would destroy – it means total destruction, they would exist no more. Jesus is not saying that people are going to be going on throughout eternity burning, but that they will burn up, and they will exist no more.

The Truth About Hell

Abraham & Lazarus

Now let's look at a parable that people cite to say we do go to Hell and burn for eternity. This parable is of the rich man and Lazarus. We are going to examine the whole parable to put it into context. As you read it, try to take any preconceived ideas from your mind so that you don't read something into the parable that is not there.

Luke 16:19-31 ¹⁹ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: ²⁰ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, ²¹ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; ²³ And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. ²⁵ But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. ²⁶ And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. ²⁷ Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: ²⁸ For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. ²⁹ Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. ³⁰ And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the

The Truth About Hell

dead, they will repent. ³¹ And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Now, was there anywhere in the parable in which it says that the rich man burnt for eternity? No. It does not say that. It says that Lazarus died and was carried by the Angels to Abraham's bosom. It says the rich man died and was in torment - that's all it says! It does not say that he burnt for eternity, and he was not burning as he spoke to Lazarus, but people read that into it because they have been told that we go to hell and burn eternally, but it does not say that.

So what is this parable trying to teach us? Well to begin with it's a parable - Jesus was trying to convey a very important message. The Jewish people believed that if you were a child of Abraham then you couldn't fail to get to Heaven. They also believed that if you were wealthy it was a sign that you had been blessed by God, and if you were poor it was a sign that you were cursed. They even referred to the gentiles as dogs. So to show them they were wrong, Jesus as He always did, told them a parable.

In His parable Jesus took a wealthy Jew and put him in hell, He then took a man where the dogs had licked his sores, and above all places put him in Abraham's bosom. That's the reason the rich man is crying out 'Father Abraham have mercy on me', because as far as the rich Jew would have been concerned, he should not even have been there, and that's why he's crying out.

Jesus was trying to tell the Jews that just because they are children of Abraham it doesn't give them right to the Kingdom of Heaven. Also if that rich man had been in hell

The Truth About Hell

burning, he wouldn't have been asking Lazarus to dip his finger in water to cool his tongue, he would have been asking for a whole bucket full of water! This was simply a parable in which Jesus was trying to get across to the Jews that just because they were children of Abraham it did not give them the right to the Kingdom of Heaven, and that being poor was not a curse from God. It was not teaching that people are going to burn in hell for eternity. In fact, it simply tells us this...

Matthew 25:46 ⁴⁶ [And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.](#)

Again we see the contrast of life or death. Now you won't have any trouble with this subject if you do just one thing. When you come to this word of everlasting, realise that this word everlasting applies to **punishment** not to punishing – there is a very great difference there.

This verse does not say they will go away into everlasting punishing, it says that they will go to everlasting **punishment**. It means they are never coming back, they are going to be destroyed and that will be the end of them - as we read earlier, they will be burnt to ashes. When we read these verses correctly and compare scripture with scripture then we get a clear picture, we get the whole truth. We must never take just one verse and build a whole doctrine upon that one verse. The Bible clearly tells us in Isaiah 28...

Isaiah 28:10 ¹⁰ [For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:](#)

The Truth About Hell

So we must always compare scripture with scripture, taking it as a whole, to see the complete picture of truth.

Sodom & Gomorrah

If you know the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, you will remember that the Lord sent two Angels to Lot and told him to take his family and get out of the city. Lot's family didn't want to leave, the Angels almost had to drag them out.

The Angels took Lot, his wife and two daughters, and told them not to look back at the city. Unfortunately his wife didn't make it, she looked back and turned to a pillar of salt. The Bible uses this story to explain what is going to happen to the wicked...

Matthew 10:15 ¹⁵ Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Jesus is saying here that Sodom and Gomorrah will be better off than some of the cities that He ministered in, because these cities rejected Him. 2 Peter further explains this...

2 Peter 2:6 ⁶ If he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;

Again the Bible is very clear - Sodom and Gomorrah are an example of what's going to happen to the wicked.

Jude 7 ⁷ Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication,

The Truth About Hell

and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Are Sodom and Gomorrah burning today? No. But they suffered the vengeance of eternal fire. You see the **punishment** was eternal, not the punishing. If we get this point straight, then whole subject becomes clear, and we see that the punishment is final, it will never be again - it says this is the second death. The wicked will exist no more, it will be the end of them, they won't be around, they will become like ashes.

There are many texts throughout the Bible that show that the wicked dead do not burn for eternity. Here are a few examples that show this very clearly.

Psalm 1:4-6 ⁴ The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. ⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 11:6 ⁶ Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.

Here it tells us that just like in Sodom and Gomorrah, God will rain down fire and brimstone - not that people will burn in it forever, but that they will be consumed by it until nothing is left.

Psalm 37:1-2,9-10,20,34-36 ¹ Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. ² For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and

The Truth About Hell

wither as the green herb. ⁹ For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. ¹⁰ For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. ²⁰ But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. ³⁴ Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. ³⁵ I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. ³⁶ Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

The wicked here could not be found because they had been completely consumed - turned to ashes.

Psalm 68:2 ²...as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

Psalm 94:23 ²³ And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the LORD our God shall cut them off.

The word of God is very clear. It says that at the end of time, God will burn this world. The wicked will at that time burn up with it, and that will be the end of Satan and all those who followed him - the wicked will exist no more.

The Wages Of Sin

Now there are some principles involved here, and once you get these principles clear, the whole subject becomes absolutely clear.

The Truth About Hell

Romans 6:23 ²³ For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It clearly says here that the penalty of sin is death.

Romans 6:10 ¹⁰ For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God

Paul tells us that Jesus Christ came and paid the penalty for all of us. That penalty was death - we need to be clear on this - the penalty for sin is death, and Jesus came and paid that penalty.

Do you understand what it's saying here? It's not saying that the penalty for death is to burn in hell for eternity - if that was the penalty then Jesus didn't pay it - it's saying the penalty for sin is death, meaning never coming back, in other words **eternal death** - that's the penalty, and that's the penalty that Jesus paid for each one of us. It also says in Hebrews...

Hebrews 10:12 ¹² But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God;

This is talking about Jesus and it says He has paid the penalty for death, it's done, He paid it for the whole human race. Another point we need to understand is found in 1 John 5...

1 John 5:11 ¹¹ And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Life is only in Jesus. What do we have to do to have that life? We have to have Jesus Christ in our lives, we have to follow

The Truth About Hell

Him, trust Him, obey Him. If we don't have Jesus in our lives then we don't have life...

1 John 5:12 ¹² [He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.](#)

Please understand - you can't even get eternal life in hell. The Bible doesn't promise that. That is why when Adam and Eve sinned they were cast out of the garden of Eden, because if they had eaten from the tree of life then they would have become immortal sinners - there would have been no end to sin and no hope for the human race.

The Bible is very clear. The only way we can have eternal life is in Jesus Christ. We can't find it any other way, apart from Jesus.

God's Strange Act

Without God in your life you face death, eternal death, that's simply what the Bible teaches. You see God loves each one of us, He does not want any of us to be lost.

In fact the Bible tells us that when God has to punish the wicked with eternal death, it is called His "strange act"...

Isaiah 28:21 ²¹ [For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, **his strange work**; and bring to pass his act, **his strange act**.](#)

Judgment is God's "strange work". He reserves it only for times when the state of men's souls is in critical condition. It is the rare thing that He allows when the world, or sometimes

The Truth About Hell

a people or city, has reached a point of no return into darkness, when it has sealed its fate, when it is close to being doomed, when it has become so proud that it cannot recognise its own sin, and when it has turned so far from God that people are beginning to believe that evil is good and good is evil. This is why God had to destroy the world once before, with a flood of water:

Genesis 6:5-7 ⁵ And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. ⁷ And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. ¹⁷ And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die.

Jesus tells us that this is exactly how the state of the world will be at the end of time when He returns:

Matthew 24:37-29 ³⁷ But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ³⁸ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, ³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

This is why God will have to perform his “strange act” once more, for the final time. But this final time it will not be a

The Truth About Hell

flood of water that cleanses the earth, but instead the earth will be purified by fire.

The Gift Of God

Even though God's justice will result in the ultimate destruction of the wicked, God takes no pleasure at all in this.

Ezekiel 18:32 ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

God loves each one of us desperately, He doesn't want any of us to be lost, He wants each one of us to be saved. To make this possible He gave the greatest gift that heaven could give, He sacrificed His only begotten Son to save us, and Jesus came as a willing sacrifice because He loves us so much.

1 John 3:16-20 ¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

Jesus came into the world as God's precious gift. God could not have given more – He gave all that He could give to save us. All we have to do is accept that free gift.

The Truth About Hell

However, many modern notions of the love of God seem to remove righteousness from His nature altogether, and substitute for it a mere good nature, which in reality is weakness not love, cruelty not kindness.

There is nothing in the facts of the world, or in the teachings of the gospel, which countenances the notion of a God whose love prevents Him from punishing the wicked. What do you call it when a father spares the rod and spoils the child?

We are no longer a moral people, anything and everything goes, the world is full of crime and heinous acts against young and old alike. God will not allow this to carry on much longer. It is time for an end to such sin and suffering, and those who have chosen to disregard God's law of love and justice must and will be punished. The wicked would not want to live for eternity in a world of peace, love and obedience to God, it would be a living hell for them, and so to destroy them is an act of compassion from a loving God - but how it will break His heart of infinite love!

Each of us can have the eternal life He freely offers, so before it's too late, turn from the devil's snare into the arms of Jesus, ask Him to come into your life to change you and prepare you for His soon-coming heavenly Kingdom, because...

1 John 5:12 ¹² He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.