

Warnings About Hell

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Worth worrying about?

- A national survey found that 38% of adults worry “a lot” about not having enough money and health insurance. Only 8% worry that they will go to hell.
- “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 body and soul in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

Facts to Face

- God's wrath is real. Though God is love, he will punish unrepentant unbelievers.
- Scripture often warns of hellfire.
- Warnings must be heeded.

Will a loving God really punish sinners?

We know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

(Hebrews 10:30-31)

Old Testament judgments

- Flood that spared only Noah and family
- Fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah
- Plagues that crushed Pharaoh's Egypt
- Extermination of Canaanites
- Punishments for covenant breakers
- Bears that mauled mockers of Elisha
- Fall of Samaria, Nineveh, Jerusalem, Tyre, Babylon

New Testament judgments

- Deaths of Ananias and Sapphira
- Angel striking King Herod with worms
- Blinding of Bar-Jesus by Paul
- Deaths of sacrilegious participants in the Lord's Supper at Corinth
- Jesus' warning that Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed
- Final judgment and eternal hell

Does God give fair warning of hell?

“I am in anguish in this flame... I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house — for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.”

“If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.”

(Luke 16:24-31)

Warning in Moses

For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that burns to the realm of death below... It is mine to avenge; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them. (Deuteronomy 32:22,35)

Warnings in Psalms

Your hand will find out all your enemies; your right hand will find out those who hate you. You will make them as a blazing oven when you appear. The LORD will swallow them up in his wrath, and fire will consume them.

(Psalm 21:8-9)

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. Fire goes before him and burns up his adversaries all around. (Psalm 97:2-3)

Warnings in Nahum

The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty... Who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger? His wrath is poured out like fire. (Nahum 1:2-6)

Warnings in Isaiah

But rebels and sinners shall be broken together, and those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed... And the strong shall become tinder, and his work a spark, and both of them shall burn together, with none to quench them.... And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. (Isaiah 1:28,31; 2:19)

Warnings in Isaiah

And the LORD will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire... For a burning place has long been prepared; indeed, for the king it is made ready, its pyre made deep and wide, with fire and wood in abundance; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of sulfur, kindles it. (Isaiah 30:30,33)

Warnings in Isaiah

The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: “Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?” (Isaiah 33:14)

Behold, they are like stubble; the fire consumes them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame. (Isaiah 47:14)

Their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh. (Isaiah 66:24)

Warnings in Daniel

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:2)

Warnings from Jesus

The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt 13:41-42)

Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt 22:13)

Warnings from Jesus

From the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
(Matthew 25:29-30)

He will say, “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels...” And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.
(Matthew 25:41,46)

Warnings from Jesus

And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, “where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.” (Mark 9:43-48)

Warnings from Jesus

You will begin to say, “We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.” But he will say, “I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!” In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Luke 13:26-28)

If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. (John 15:6)

Warnings from Paul

[On the last day] the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.

(2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)

Warnings from Jude

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. (Jude 1:6-7)

Warnings in Revelation

Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?” (Revelation 6:15-17)

Warnings in Revelation

People gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.
(Revelation 16:10-11)

The devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever... if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:10,15)

How should we respond?

- Trust in Jesus (John 3:16)
- Praise God for saving us from the agony we deserve, and marvel that God the Son endured the horrors of hell for us.
- Grieve for the lost, pray for them, warn them, and show them the way to be saved.
- Rejoice that promises of eternal joy are as sure as warnings of eternal punishment.

What is the gospel?

- **My sin:** I am sinful. God's holy law condemns my crimes and requires punishment in hell. Without Jesus I am spiritually and eternally dead, serving Satan, unable to save myself.
- **Christ's cross:** God in love put my sins on His sinless Son, the God-man. By suffering and dying on the cross, Jesus took my punishment, cancelled all charges against me, and disarmed Satan. God raised Jesus bodily, showing Jesus to be divine ruler of all.

What is the gospel?

- **My sin**
- **Christ's cross and resurrection**
- **New life:** The Holy Spirit causes me to be born again as a child of God through faith. When I believe in Jesus, God credits Jesus' perfect goodness to me. The Spirit lives in me, and connects me with Christ and his eternal life. Trusting Jesus, I leave the old behind and join the new humanity in Jesus.

How do I become a Christian?

- A Admit** that you are sinful and totally unable to save yourself.
- B Believe** the gospel facts, and apply those facts to yourself. Trust Jesus to save you, personally. Make God your greatest treasure and pleasure.
- C Commit** your life publicly to Jesus as your owner and ruler. Be baptized, if you are not already baptized. Become a daily disciple by listening to God in Scripture, talking to him in prayer, and seeking to live for the Lord in all you do. Join a Bible-believing, Christ-honoring church.