

Questions About Hell

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- Who goes to hell?
- What happens between death and Jesus' return?
- What is hell like?
- Are there different levels of punishment?
- Is hell really endless?
- Whose fault is hell?

Who goes to hell?

- eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41)
- the devil ... the beast and the false prophet ... anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life (Rev 20:10,15)
- his adversaries ... his enemies... the guilty (Nahum 1:2-6)
- rebels and sinners ... those who forsake the Lord (Isaiah 1:28,31) the sinners... the godless (Isaiah 33:14)

Who goes to hell?

- law-breakers (Matt 13:41-42)
- worthless servant (Matt 25:29-30)
- those who do not know God and ... do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus (2 Thess 1:8)
- drift away... neglect such a great salvation (Hebrews 2:1-3) fallen away (Hebrews 6:6) go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth (Heb 10:26)

Between death and Jesus' return

Unsaved souls go to a place of punishment and pain, an inescapable jail. They stay there until Jesus returns, raises their bodies, and sentences them to the prison of eternal hell.

- The Lord knows how to ... hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. (2 Peter 2:9)
- In Hades, being in torment ... he called out...
“I am in anguish in the flame.” (Luke 16:23-24)
- Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment. (Hebrews 9:27)

Raised to life or judgment

When Jesus returns and raises dead bodies, saved souls who have been in heaven will get splendid bodies to enjoy the new creation forever. Damned souls will get bodies suited to unending suffering and shame in eternal hell.

- There will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. (Acts 24:15)
- All who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. (John 5:28-29)

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What is hell like?

- **Fire:** agony, destruction
- **Worms:** gross, ghastly, rotting
- **Darkness:** no truth, joy, love, or hope
- **Left alone:** “Depart from me.” “away from the presence of the Lord”
- **Shame:** exposed, despised, loathsome
- **Loss:** missing out on eternal blessings
- **Ruin:** becoming worthless garbage

Are there different levels of punishment?

- The more serious the sins committed, the worse the punishment.
- The larger the abilities and advantages squandered, the worse the punishment.
- The greater the revelation rejected, the worse the punishment.

Levels of punishment

But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. (Luke 10:13-14)

Levels of punishment

That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. (Luke 12:47-48)

Neglect such great salvation?

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. (Hebrews 2:1-4)

Crucify Christ again?

For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

(Hebrews 6:4-6)

Much worse punishment

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries...

How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:26-29)

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Two denials of endless hell

Universalism: belief that in the end all will be saved, including Satan and his demons, as well as humans who died unrepentant. All will eventually turn from their rebellion, accept God's love, and enjoy eternity with God.

Annihilationism: belief that unrepentant sinners will be wiped out and become non-existent. They will not suffer forever but God will cause them to become nothing, perhaps after a period of suffering and punishment.

Endless Punishment

Hell is dreadful and everlasting. Universalism and annihilationism are wrong. Punishment never ends but goes on forever.

- “eternal fire” (Matt 18:8, 25:41; Jude 1:7)
- “unquenchable fire” (Matt 3:12; Mark 9:43)
- “eternal punishment” (Matt 25:46)
- “eternal destruction” (2 Thess 1:9)
- “eternal judgment” (Heb 6:2)
- “eternal chains under gloomy darkness” (Jude 1:6)
- “worm does not die and fire is not quenched”
(Isaiah 66:24, Mark 9:48)

Whose fault is hell?

- Is God horrible for sending people to hell? No, God is just and good. Hell isn't only what God does to you. It's also what you do to yourself.
- Self-centered sin is horrible. When we choose our sinful self and reject Jesus, we become more and more hellish until hell is the only place we belong.
- Either you tell God, “Your will be done,” or God tells you, “Your will be done.”
- God would rather pardon than punish.

God is gracious and just

The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished (Exodus 34:6-7)

They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. (2 Thess 2:10)

He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

Turn, and live!

“Are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? Therefore I will judge you... every one according to his ways... Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die...? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.” (Ezekiel 18:29-32)