

HELL

What is it? Where is it? Who Goes There & Why?

First of all, it must be made clear that God is NOT the one Who torments those in Hell. Nowhere in the Bible is this stated.

Facts From The Bible To Provide Evidence

For any indisputable evidence we must refer to what Jesus said about hell as the primary source. After all, Jesus is both Saviour (the person Who can save us from hell) and also Judge (the One Who decides where we will spend eternity). His authority comes about because He was God in human form while alive on earth and now is in Heaven - "God's blood purchased His church" (Acts 20:28 NIV).

Of the 1,870 verses recording the words that Jesus spoke here on earth, 243 verses are about hell and judgment. He spoke more about these 2 topics than any other subject ('angels' come second and 'love' comes third).

Of the 40 parables that Jesus told, more than 50%

relate to God's eternal judgment of sinners who are unrepentant.

It's important to remember that when speaking about hell, we must always include God's infinite love, as these two topics are inextricably linked, after all, He loved sinners so much that He died for them.

However, there is a MORAL STRICTNESS to this love which has resulted in God displaying His other (just as important) attributes, such as JUSTICE, AUTHORITY AND HOLY ANGER. In other words, HIS HOLINESS. These are found throughout the Bible.

Unrepentant SIN and HOLINESS cannot mix, they are like pure oil and dirty water. As a result, no-one still guilty of sin, can enter Heaven. A person still guilty of sin after death cannot enter Heaven because they cannot reside in close companionship with God. A person such as this must stay 'outside'!

The history of the Jewish nation shows how heinous (atrocious, odious and wicked) sin is to God. It grieves Him and He hates it - e.g., the flood, the Egyptian plagues, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the

destruction of Jerusalem. He gave all the people involved in these events centuries to change, with warnings conveyed by the Prophets, etc.

(NOTE: People do not BECOME sinners when they sin, they sin because they ARE sinners ALREADY).

This is often referred to as ORIGINAL SIN inherited from ADAM.

THE HEBREW & GREEK WORDS USED FOR HELL IN THE BIBLE

1. SHEOL - is the Hebrew word used 65 times in the Old Testament and is used to sometimes refer to death or the grave - a place where all the dead go or as a place of punishment for the wicked.

2. HADES - is a Greek word and is used 71 times in the New Testament. It has a different emphasis and refers in most cases to a temporary place of punishment for the wicked BEFORE judgment day. It is this use of the word that this study is chiefly concerned with.

3. GEHENNA - is used far less often in the New Testament, being a Greek word referring to the

punishment of both body and soul AFTER the final Day of Judgment.

The Bible (both Old & New Testaments) often depicts hell by using pictorial, descriptive terms as follows:- FIRE, TORMENT, WORMS, GNASHING OF TEETH, DESTRUCTION, NO PEACE, OUTER DARKNESS, ETERNAL PUNISHMENT, TRIBULATION, PUNISHMENT, JUDGMENT, CONDEMNATION.

Therefore, in the Gospels where Jesus' actual words occur, these are the facts:

HELL is used 11 times

FIRE, FURNACE & FLAMES 11 times

JUDGMENT 10 times

CONDEMNATION 8 times

WEEPING & GNASHING OF TEETH 7 times

DESTRUCTION & PERISH 3 times

TOTAL = 50 TIMES

OTHER NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS:

NOTE: There are over 100 sins mentioned in the N.T. each carrying the spiritual death penalty. They are

all roads that can lead to hell!

1. PAUL outlines those who will NOT inherit the Kingdom of God, saying that 'destruction' is their destination (see GAL 5:19-21 & 1COR 6:9-10) and come, under the heading "Acts of the sinful nature".

2. PETER - the whole of Chapter 2 in 2PET describes people who are destined for darkness and destruction.

3. JAMES 3:6 - 'the tongue is described as 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 set on fire by hell'.

4. JUDE - (the brother of James). Jude is short for Judas, therefore, scholars assert with confidence, that he is the brother of Jesus. Its text is headed 'The sin and doom of godless men' and includes the statement (vs.6-7) "Angels kept in darkness who abandoned their own home are bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. Also, Sodom and Gomorrah - 'Who gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion'. They serve

as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. And he later mentions (vs.15) the ungodly amongst you.

5. JOHN - the writer of the Gospel - see REV 1:13-15, & REV 20:13 - both mention 'death and Hades' and 'the lake of fire' in Ch.20. REV 21:8 mentions a 'fiery lake of burning sulphur'.

CONCLUSION

All of the descriptive words in the Bible used to describe hell, especially those of Jesus, seem to be attempting to convey to the reader a state of mind of people who are suffering from an absence of happiness, joy, pardon and peace and bereft of any hope for the future which Jesus alone gives to any genuine believer, because of what the shedding of Jesus' blood on the Cross provides.

Genuine believers who believe and accept Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross as completely sufficient and fully efficacious recognise and know that their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, at the

moment of conversion and that nothing else can be added to it. (See PHIL 4:2-3, HEB 12:23 and REV 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:14-15, 21:27.)

Therefore, the above evidence from the Bible leads me to believe that it is from WITHIN HIMSELF that the hardened, unrepentant sinner will find his punishment. The state of his mind and its hopeless emptiness will cause him/her pain, anguish, gnashing of teeth, fire and tribulation. They will feel abandoned and perhaps tormented by knowing that they have been forever deprived of the love God offered to them whilst they were alive, and won't be able to enjoy the many, many blessing which they took for granted on the earth during their life-time - sun, water, seasons, food, love of family and friends, flowers, scenery, animals, beauty of the earth, etc., etc., etc.

If sinners have stubbornly run away from Jesus thinking He was completely inappropriate and unnecessary to their lives, Jesus finally goes away and leaves them to themselves after their physical death, and finally says to them on Judgment Day

'Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire!'
(MATT 25:41 - parable of the sheep and goats) -
especially after God gave His Beloved Son, Jesus, to
them, thus doing the utmost to save them!

This study illustrates just how important JESUS is,
regarding people being made righteous in God's eyes
- both here and now, so we can become fully His
'children' and later, after death, when we can be in
company with Him for ever.

It is why, without a shred of doubt, that the message
about SALVATION is to be made known to everybody
- not just family and friends - but strangers on the
street, and even in churches which appear to have a
'different gospel' - a gospel of works - which is no
gospel at all.

If Believers keep the Good News to themselves, they
are certainly not fully carrying out the command of
Jesus - to love and go out and preach the Gospel -
and even this could constitute a sin - a lack of ZEAL
for evangelism.

How can 'genuine' Believers just stand by and watch

people slowly walking into a hell of their own unbelief and stubbornness without making some kind of effort to share the Salvation plan of God with them and save them from this most dreadful, eternal fate?