



What Will Hell Be Like?

DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Q&A NUMBER: 11

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What will Hell be like for those who will spend their eternities there? This is an important question for us all to consider as we decide how we will live our lives on this earth. Anything that we know about Hell can only be known because of what God has told us about Hell in the Bible. So, as we consider the Bible's descriptions of this place, I hope that it will encourage us all to conduct our lives so as *not* to make Hell our eternal homes! Let's consider an overview of a few Bible passages about Hell to understand what it will be like.

John 3:36

John 3:36 records this statement of truth: "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

This passage does not mention Hell specifically. However, this passage clearly warns of some who will be punished. Some will have the "wrath of God" abide on them – rather than experiencing everlasting life. Whatever this punishment will be (which we will be exploring throughout this lesson), notice that it represents the vengeance of the Almighty God! Therefore, Hebrews 10:30-31 says, "For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Allow your mind to contemplate the power of this great God. This is the God who was able to *speak* the world, the light, the plants, the birds, the land animals, and all things into existence. This is the God who was able to create man from the dust of the ground; and woman from the rib of the man. This is the God who caused the great Red Sea to be parted after bringing ten powerful plagues upon the Egyptians. This is the God who caused a great fish to swallow Jonah. This is the God who caused the earth to break open and swallow some rebellious people.

Oh, the great power of this God! Those who have obeyed His voice have always experienced the great blessings of His power. However, those who have *not* obeyed His voice have always experience His great wrath. Furthermore, those who fail to listen to God will have the wrath of this Almighty God "abide" on them for all of eternity. Now, let's consider what the Bible tells us about the punishment He has prepared for those who do not obey Him.

Matthew 25:46

In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus gives us a picture of what the Judgment Day will be like. In this passage, He tells of how He will separate all people who have ever lived like a shepherd divides His sheep from the goats. Those on His left hand represent those who were unfaithful to Him during their lives on the earth. Those on His right hand represent those who were faithful to Him during their lives on the earth. As He concludes this Judgment scene, He says, “And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matthew 25:46).

Therefore, the unrighteous (unfaithful) will be given “everlasting punishment.” The Scriptures help us to see that this everlasting punishment is in Hell. Now consider what the phrase “everlasting punishment” helps us to understand about Hell.

First, it is punishment. By implication, then, whatever the nature of this punishment will be, it will not be pleasant. Second, notice that this punishment is “everlasting.” So, as we will continue to see how the Bible describes this place, it is important to understand that this punishment will be *never-ending*!

Matthew 5:22, 29

In Matthew 5:22, 29, consider that Jesus speaks of individuals who would be cast into “hell” (also in Matthew 10:28 and Luke 12:5). Matthew 5:22 says, “But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.” Matthew 5:29 says, “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”

The Greek word that is translated “hell” is the word “gehenna.” Gehenna was originally called the valley of Hinnom, a valley that was just south of Jerusalem. This valley was notorious for being the place where all manner of filth and dead animals would be discarded – and burned. Therefore, this place would be known for its great stench and its continually burning fire – and known as a place of destruction/decay.

So, Jesus used this word to provide a picture of the future punishment that will be given to those who do not live according to His instructions (in the passages I have already mentioned). Surely, the use of this word would bring pictures of destruction and death to the mind of His audience.

Matthew 25:30

As we continue to seek an understanding of what Hell will be like, consider how Jesus described the punishment that would be given to those who were unfaithful stewards, in Matthew 25:30: “And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

As Jesus concludes this parable about stewardship, Jesus taught that the one who would not be a faithful steward would be punished in this way. Notice the elements of this punishment: (1) It would be in a place of extreme darkness (“outer darkness”), (2) There will be great weeping,

and (3) there will be such extreme pain that people are pictured as gnashing (or grinding) their teeth.

Mark 9:43-48

In Mark 9:43-48, Jesus warned about the great dangers of Hell. Consider verses 43-44: “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched — where ‘Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’” In verses 45-48, Jesus issues the same warning about Hell concerning your foot and your eye.

Now, specifically notice what is said concerning Hell in this passage. First, notice that Jesus says the punishment in Hell will be worse punishment than physically maiming your own body (so that you will not sin). Second, consider that this passage presents Hell as being a place in which the fire will never be quenched. Third, notice that Hell is said to be a place where “their worm does not die.”

Regarding this worm, there is much that is speculated. However, I would suggest that this is figurative language that pictures the great destruction that will be present in Hell. Think about the fact that a worm feeds on that which has decayed – and that Jesus said that this worm will not die (seeming to imply that this worm will always have destruction to feed on). Additionally, notice that Jesus said “*their* worm does not die.” So, each one who will experience the punishment in this place will experience this kind of destruction!

Revelation 14:9-11

Revelation 14:9-11 says, “Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.’”

Now, consider what this passage tells about the punishment waiting those who do not obey the Lord. First, they will “drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation.” Second, they will be “tormented with fire and brimstone.” Third, “the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night.” So, this is a picture of complete punishment and torment!

Revelation 21:8

In Revelation 21:8, Hell is pictured: “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

First, Hell is pictured as being a lake that burns with fire and brimstone. So, those who will be punished eternally in Hell are graphically pictured as being dropped into the middle of a lake

that is burning with fire! Second, this passage depicts Hell as being the “second death.” This is descriptive of eternal spiritual death, which is separation from God.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

Finally, consider what 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 tells us about Hell: “and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”

First, this passage again identifies the punishment that will be brought upon the disobedient as being the outpouring of God’s vengeance. Second, it is described as “everlasting destruction.” Third, this vengeance is described as being “in flaming fire.” Fourth, this everlasting destruction will be away “from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”

Of all the horrible aspects of Hell, this last one is the worst! Hell will be a place that is entirely separated from God! He will not be present in any way in Hell. There will be nothing that is godly about Hell. This is why this place is described as being the “second death” in Revelation 21:8.

Conclusion

Hell is certainly described as being a place of extreme pain and anguish in which many people will spend eternity! I hope (as you consider the Bible’s description of this place) that you will determine to do whatever God requires of you so that you can avoid spending your eternity in Hell – even if it means great earthly sacrifice! Remember, avoiding Hell will surely be worth every sacrifice that you will have to make! In Matthew 16:26, Jesus implies that nothing and no one is worth losing your soul in Hell for!

Discovering God’s Word Bible Study Series

Study Number: QA11

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