

# Biblical Perspectives from God's Word

## Eternal Judgment of the Righteous & Unrighteous

Ken Birks, Pastor/Teacher

### I. Introductory Remarks.

A common question that has risen in mankind from generation to generation is, **"What happens to someone after death?"** Many people have had so called death experiences and have come back to life and told of their experiences. Philosophers and religious leaders have offered countless opinions on the subject as well. Ideas have ranged from reincarnation to simply ceasing to exist at all, but the Bible gives us the most clearly stated answers on this subject.

The Subject of Eternal Judgment is a necessary part of the spiritual foundation that God is laying in each one of our lives. It is important that we understand from a believer's perspective what happens in the eternal state of both the believer and the unbeliever.

**Hebrews 6:1-3** *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, <sup>2</sup> of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of **eternal judgment**. <sup>3</sup> And this we will do if God permits.*

**Daniel 12:2** *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall wake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.<sup>1</sup>*

The Bible has a lot to say concerning life after death and what happens to the soul. Jesus spoke a great deal about this subject and declared that He Himself had come down from heaven<sup>2</sup> and that after His death He would go there to prepare a place for those who would follow Him.

**John 14:2** *"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

Jesus also spoke a great deal about a second place that had been prepared for the Devil and his followers.

**Matthew 25:41** *"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, `Depart from*

---

<sup>1</sup> See Matthew 25:46 also

<sup>2</sup> John 3:13

*Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

In this lesson I want to try and paint a picture for us on what the Bible has to say concerning the reality of both Heaven and Hell. God has provided very clear answers regarding life after death and eternal judgment.

## II. What Is Heaven?

Heaven is a term in the Bible which describes three different spheres of existence. The word "heaven" sometimes refers to the atmosphere surrounding the earth. Other times it refers to outer space where the other planets are. Lastly, Heaven is the dwelling place of God and the elect angels. It is the everlasting home of the redeemed of all mankind. This is the Heaven we will be looking at in this message. It is the place where those who are not destined for Hell will live after death. In the New Testament it is clearly described as an actual place, and not a state of mind or being.

### 1. Terms Used To Describe Heaven.

**John 14:2** *"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

**Hebrews 11:16** *But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

**Revelation 14:13** *Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*

**2 Corinthians 12:4** *...how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

**Luke 13:29** *"They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.*

The term "kingdom of God" represents the here and the now as well as the eternal domain. In fact most references concerning the kingdom of God refer to the here and the now. The truth is that we must enter into the kingdom of God now if we want to be a part of it in the eternal.

It is here in heaven that the believer is promised "the tree of life", not to be hurt of

the second death, a stone with a new name in it, authority with Christ, a white garment and his name in the Book of Life; security in the City of God, and ruling and reigning in the Throne of God and the Lamb.

### **III. The Reality Of Life After Death.**

The Bible teaches that life continues after the physical death of the body. God created man with a natural, temporal body and an eternal soul. The soul of man consists of who we really are. It is the center of our mind, will and emotions. The Bible teaches that life is eternal.

**1 John 2:25** *And this is the promise that He has promised us; **eternal life.***

**2 Corinthians 5:1** *For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

When Jesus returns at His "Second Coming" all those who have died in Christ will be raised from the dead and then we who are alive will meet Him in the air. From that time on we spend 1000 years with Christ on the earth and then at the end of the 1000 years we rule and reign with Him throughout eternity.<sup>3</sup>

### **IV. What Will Heaven Be Like?**

Heaven will be a place of light, love, holiness, righteousness, worship, service, joy, peace and life eternally because Jesus the Redeemer will be there. The New Jerusalem will be the new capitol of the universe and the place where the redeemed gather for worship and service. There will be no darkness, hate, sin, unrighteousness, sorrow, discord or death there. Without these things, it will be heaven indeed. What a wonderful and worthy reward of the God who redeemed us!

#### **1. It Is A Place of No More Thirst, Hunger, Sorrow, Pain Or Death.**

**Revelation 21:4** *"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."*

**Revelation 7:16-17** *"They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; "for the Lamb who is in the midst of the*

<sup>3</sup> See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15:20-25, 51-55 & Revelation 20:1-4, 21:1-4.

*throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

## **2. Heaven Is A Place Where Nothing Can Be Corrupted.**

**Matthew 6:20** *"but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.*

**Revelation 21:27** *But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

## **3. Heaven Is A Place Of Pleasures Forevermore.**

**Psalms 16:11** *You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

**1 Corinthians 2:9** *But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

## **4. It Will Be A Place Of Worship.**

**Revelation 15:4** *Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested."*

## **5. Heaven Will Be A Place Of Constant Illumination.**

**Revelation 21:23** *And the city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it, and the Lamb is its light.*

Heaven is clearly described in the Bible as an actual place. It is not a feeling or a state of mind. When people refer to Heaven as being on earth they are partially correct in that we can experience a personal relationship with God while we are still alive. This is experiencing some of what is in store for those who will go to Heaven when they die.

We saw that the Bible teaches that life continues after the physical death of the body. God created man with a natural, temporal body and an eternal soul. The soul of man consists of who we really are. It is the center of our mind, will and emotions. We saw that the Bible teaches that life is eternal, because the soul is

eternal, which means we will either spend eternity in Heaven or in Hell.

## V. The Reality of Hell and the Lake of Fire.

Although this subject of Hell is not the most edifying of subjects, every Christian should have an understanding of its truth. The Bible teaches in Hebrews six that we are to have an understanding of eternal judgment. We all need to have a healthy dose of the fear of God in this respect. This is what helps us to stay on the straight and the narrow.

***Matthew 10:28*** "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. **But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**

The word "destroy" in this setting means to literally give over to eternal misery.<sup>4</sup> It is not talking about the death of the soul but rather giving the soul over to eternal misery.

There are many questions in people's minds concerning hell: Is it a real place, do all unsaved people go there, will it continue to exist forever, will people who are consigned there be tormented forever or will they be annihilated? The only way to understand this subject and to answer these questions is to look to the Bible for the answers.

Hell is the place or state of final punishment of the wicked. It is an actual place, as surely as heaven is. Many like to accept that heaven is a place while rejecting hell as a place. Just as God has a place of happiness for the redeemed who serve Him, so God has a place of punishment for the rebellious who serve the Devil. Jesus the perfect compassionate One, spoke more on hell than all other Bible writers, because He came to save men from it.

### 1. Do Some Souls Cease To Exist?

There are some who believe that the souls of those who do not go to Heaven will be annihilated or cease to exist. The Bible clearly indicates that this is not so. The soul is eternal, and will spend eternity in Heaven or in Hell.

***Mark 9:47-48*** "And if your eye makes you sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire; "where ***their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.***"

---

<sup>4</sup> The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament - Joseph Henry Thayer, D.D., page 64, #622.

The kind of worm that is spoken of here is the kind that preys upon dead bodies - - this speaks of their punishment after death will never cease. It also symbolizes the loathsomeness of the penalty.

***Revelation 20:10,15*** *And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And **they will be tormented day and night forever and ever...** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

## 2. What About Purgatory?

Some people believe that the soul of man goes to an intermediate place between Heaven and Hell called purgatory. It is believed that in this place the soul goes through a fiery purging to make it pure enough to enter Heaven later on. There is no evidence of this in the Bible. The Bible makes it very clear that we can only enter heaven through the righteousness of Jesus.<sup>5</sup> Our own righteousness will never be good enough. There is only one method for dealing with sins ever mentioned in the Bible.<sup>6</sup>

***1 John 1:7*** *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

Hell is neither annihilation nor a place of temporary punishment. It is not a place of probation or a state of non-existence. An honest consideration of the Scriptures will show that hell is a place of eternal punishment. Hell is a self-chosen and self-inflicted curse, the inevitable outcome of sin.

## 3. What About Reincarnation?

The Bible absolutely does not teach reincarnation anywhere. It teaches that it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.

***Hebrews 9:27*** *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

Reincarnation teaches that when a person dies, his soul goes to live in a new body that is being born, and that this process repeats itself over and over again. This belief of Hinduism teaches that how we live our life determines the Karmic debt that we must pay off in the next life. The basic idea is that we are stuck on

---

<sup>5</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21

<sup>6</sup> Taken from CEI Booklet "Heaven & Hell" by Gary Beasley

an endless wheel of life, death, and reincarnation until we improve our state through many thousands of lives.<sup>7</sup>

## **VI. What Is Hell Going To Be Like?**

The Bible has a lot to say about Hell. It is a place that the devil and demons inhabit. It is such an awful place to be, that Jesus said it would be better to cut off your hand or gouge out your eye rather than to go there. There is crying and total darkness in Hell. It is described as a lake made up of fire and brimstone. The fire in Hell cannot be put out and causes intense pain and agony.

It is true that people can partially experience Hell on earth. Those who live in rebellion against God and His ways do experience to a small degree some of the things that those in Hell are suffering. This experience is however, only a slight foretaste of the miseries that the occupants of Hell experience forever.

### **1. Hell Will Be A Place Of Fire And Brimstone.**

***Revelation 19:20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were **cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*****

***Revelation 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And **they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*****

***Revelation 20:14-15 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And **anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*****

### **2. Hell Will Be A Fire That Is Never Quenched.**

It is a fire that shall never be quenched. It shall go on forever and ever.

***Mark 9:43 And if your hand makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go to hell, into **the fire that shall never be quenched.*****

***Mark 9:45 And if your foot makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life***

---

<sup>7</sup> Taken from CEI Booklet "Heaven & Hell" by Gary Beasley

*lame, than having two feet, to be cast into hell, **into the fire that shall never be quenched.***

### **3. Hell Will Be a Place of Intense Torment, Pain & Weeping.**

**Matthew 13:42** *...and will cast them into the furnace of fire. **There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.***

**Matthew 13:50** *...and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus illustrates to us the intensity of the pain that will exist in Hell. The rich man speaks of being tormented in the flame and does not wish this place of torment upon anyone – *Luke 16:19-28*.

Hell will be a place where it will be terrible torment to have lusts which cannot be satisfied and a conscience that torments past guilt and rejected grace.

### **4. It Shall Be A Place Of Blackness & Darkness.**

**Jude 1:13** *...raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved **the blackness of darkness forever.***

## **IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS.**

As we have seen, Hell will be a terrible place separate from the presence of God, the rejected Lamb, the holy angels and the redeemed. No light, life, peace, joy righteousness, nor salvation, but only darkness and torment of conscience will be there for those who rejected and despised the grace of God. This is the Hell Jesus Christ died to save us from.<sup>8</sup>

The important thing to keep in mind is that Jesus did not come into the world to condemn it. The world was already condemned. Jesus came so that the world would be saved from this awful place of torment.

**John 3:17-19** *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness*

---

<sup>8</sup> The Foundations Of Christian Doctrine - Kevin Conner, page 307.



*rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

**2 Peter 3:9-11** *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance....*

A great deal of people will end up in hell. They will come from every background, society, religion, and culture. Among their numbers will include those who the Bible describes as:

1. Those who do not know God. *(2 Thessalonians 1:8)*
2. Those who do not obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *(2 Thessalonians 1:8)*
3. Sinners and hypocrites. *(Isaiah 33:14)*
4. Those that practiced lawlessness. *(Matthew 13:41)*
5. Cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murders, sorcerers, sexually immoral, idolaters, and all liars. *(Revelation 21:8)*
6. Homosexuals, adulterers, thieves, covetous people, drunkards, extortioners. *(1 Corinthians 6:9-10)*

The Bible says the road to hell is wide and the road to heaven is narrow. Which road are you traveling on?

Pray that you will be among the righteous and be a part of the new heaven and the new earth and not a part of the lake of fire and its torment. As long as you continue to follow Jesus your place in heaven is assured.