

14 Death - What others believe

The following article on 'Hell' is taken from the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

"HELL - the abode or state of being of evil spirits or souls that are damned to postmortem punishment. Derived from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning "to conceal" or "to cover," the term hell originally designated the torrid regions of the underworld, though in some religions the underworld is cold and dark.

The concept of a state of being or place that separates the good from the evil or the living from the dead is found in most religions of the world. The view that hell is the final dwelling place of the damned after a Last Judgement is held by the Western prophetic religions: Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In Zoroastrianism ... the soul at death waits three nights to be judged and on the fourth day goes to the Bridge of the Requiter, where his deeds in life are weighed. If the good outweighs the evil, the soul crosses the bridge, which becomes broad, and goes to heaven; if the evil deeds are greater, the bridge becomes too narrow to cross and the soul falls into a freezing and ill-smelling hell to suffer torment and chastisement until the Resurrection. ... The Christian view of hell, based on Jewish concepts, regarded hell as the fiery domain of the devil and his evil angels, a place of eternal damnation for those who have lived a life of sin and who thereby deny God. Some early Christian thinkers, such as Origen of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa, questioned the eternity of hell and the literalistic view that hell was a place of fiery afterlife. The majority of Christian thinkers, however, taught that hell is a state of punishment for those who die unrepentant of their sins. Some modern theologians have again questioned the literalistic view but still hold that hell is, at least, a state of separation of the wicked from the good.

Islam bases its concepts of hell, which it calls Jahannam, on Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity. Jahannam is described as a huge crater of fire beneath a narrow bridge that all souls must pass over to go to paradise. The damned fall from the bridge and suffer torments, unless Allah (God) wills otherwise.

In Hinduism, hell is only one stage in a career of the soul. Because all actions have consequences and because of reincarnation, the time spent in one or more of the 21 hells beneath the netherworld is not of ultimate significance. Eventually, the soul will return to the World (or Ultimate) Soul, even though it takes many life periods to do so. The Haina hell (bhumi) is a place where demons torture sinners until any evil accumulated during their lives has been exhausted.

So: most religions around the world believe people carry on living after death. Why do you think they believe that? Most also believe that there is some sort of place where dead people are physically tormented for ever because of bad things they have done. Why do you think they believe that?

What lessons should we learn, do you think?



This is the text of a leaflet being handed out in Boston, Massachusetts.

What would you say to a friend who believed what it said and gave you a copy?

Jesus Christ believed in a **BURNING HELL**, that is why He left the Father's bosom and came into this world of sorrow. He left the streets of gold and the rejoicing of angels, to come to this earth to be crucified, so that you and I could escape **THE BURNING HELL**.

In **LUKE 16:23 & 24** the Bible says; **"AND IN HELL HE LIFT UP HIS EYES, BEING IN TORMENTS, AND SEETH ABRAHAM AFAR OFF, AND LAZARUS IN HIS BOSOM. AND HE CRIED AND SAID, FATHER ABRAHAM, HAVE MERCY ON ME, AND SEND LAZARUS, THAT HE MAY DIP THE TIP OF HIS FINGER IN WATER, AND COOL MY TONGUE; FOR I AM TORMENTED IN THIS FLAME."** The Bible says in **MARK 8:36**, **"FOR WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN, IF HE SHALL GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL?"**

One day in **HELL**, you will not have to be bothered by some Christian trying to give you a gospel tract. Neither will you have to worry about a soul winner knocking on your door and inviting you to go to church. No sir, but you will be remembering every gospel sermon you ever heard, every gospel tract that you turned down or tore up, each kind word from a mother, preacher or Christian friend pleading with you to be saved. You too, will one day be like the rich man you just read about in **LUKE 16:23 & 24**. You will be crying, and begging for one drop of water to cool your scorching tongue. But it will be too late

The Bible says in **PSALM 9:17**; **"THE WICKED SHALL BE TURNED INTO HELL, AND ALL THE NATIONS THAT FORGET GOD."** In **MATTHEW 25:41** the Bible says; **"... DEPART FROM ME, YE CURSED, INTO EVERLASTING FIRE, PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS."** You see **HELL** was originally prepared for the Devil and his angels. But if you die wicked and cursed, by not being saved, you will be there with them!

My Friend, don't let anyone convince you that when you die it will be all over. The Bible says in **HEBREWS 9:27**; **"AND AS IT IS APPOINTED UNTO MEN ONCE TO DIE, BUT AFTER THIS THE JUDGEMENT:"** God says judgement follows your death, so **NOW** is the time to get ready to meet Him, because Judgement Day could be **TODAY**. The Bible says in **REVELATION 20:15**; **"AND WHOSOEVER WAS NOT FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE."**

My Friend, I beg you in the name of Jesus, to turn from your sinful, wicked ways and claim a new life with Jesus Christ. One day I too was traveling down the road that led to a **BURNING HELL**. I thought to myself, "There must be a better way." Well I trusted my heart and soul to Jesus Christ, now I can claim this verse from the Bible for my life; **II CORINTHIANS 5:17** **"THEREFORE IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATURE: OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL THINGS BECOME NEW."** Thank you Jesus!

HEAVEN or HELL? You do the choosing. If you are lost, and would like to get your name written in God's "Book of Life", so you can miss **THE BURNING HELL**, simply trust Him now, and pray "Lord Jesus forgive me of my sins, come into my heart this moment and save me. Amen."

by Dwite Watkins, Fellowship Tract League, Lebanon, Ohio, USA

The following extract is taken from 'An Introduction to the Christian Faith', 1992, published by Lynx Communications.

“JUDGEMENT IS FINAL Once God has passed his judgement on an individual, that person's state is fixed for the whole of eternity. There is no retrial. The punishment is eternal. Jesus wanted to offer the clearest possible warning, and so his teaching about hell is very plain. It is the place of eternal punishment that awaits all those who die without Christ. He uses very vivid imagery to describe it: eternal fire; a fire that cannot be extinguished; a furnace where people will cry and grind their teeth; a place of continual decay where God destroys both the soul and the body; a place of deepest darkness.

None of these phrases is to be taken as a literal description. Hell is not a physical place, such as we know the earth to be. Hell is the eternal state of all those who are excluded from God's presence. The strong language emphasizes the dreadful fact of judgement and that, once pronounced, it is final and will never be altered.

Many Christians are undecided about the exact nature of this final state of judgement. Some believe eternal judgement means that those who are excluded from God's presence live eternally conscious of their banishment. Others hold that eternal punishment means complete annihilation. On this view, punishment is eternal, not in the sense that individuals experience its agony for ever, but because, once given, there is no possibility of ever going back on it. Everything is over; individual existence is forfeited for ever.”

Well, that's a bit like a meal made of leftovers - it includes a bit of everything. Can you spot the truth in there anywhere?



Finally, it may be that many of your friends simply believe that this life is all there is - no life after death at all. In the words of John Lennon's song:

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today...



What would you say to someone who believed that? Is it a healthy thing to believe?

