

What Will Hell be Like?

by [Rich Deem](#)

INTRODUCTION

This page will examine what the Bible says about hell and what it will be like. Contrary to the doctrines of Catholicism, there is no purgatory, but only the choice between [heaven](#) and hell. Although there are quite extensive descriptions of [heaven](#) in the Bible, there are no really detailed descriptions of hell. Most of the descriptions of hell merely describe the fate of its inhabitants.

What is hell like?

The most common description of hell is that of fire.¹ Here is a list of some of these descriptions:

Bible's Description of Hell

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| fire and brimstone | burning wind | fiery oven |
| flames of fire | judgment by fire | unquenchable fire |
| furnace of fire | eternal fire | eternal punishment |
| fiery hell | pits of darkness | lake of fire |

Punishment and restraint

Since there could possibly be a lot of party people in hell, one might think that it will be one big party. However, the problem is that the likes of Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and other unsavory characters will be there also. In order to keep those people from tormenting their neighbors excessively, all the inhabitants will be restrained through punishment (with the amount increasing with the degree of restraint required). This list below tells of some of the things that the inhabitants of hell will be going through:

Punishment in Hell

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| smoke of their torment ² | no rest day and night ² |
| weeping and gnashing of teeth ³ | tormented ⁴ |
| death ⁵ | their worm does not die ⁶ |
| destruction ⁷ | |

Why does there need to be a hell?

This is a good question, since many would say that God could just destroy the evil people, rather than condemn them to a place of torment. The problem is that God made spiritual beings (humans and angels) as eternal creatures. In fact, the Bible says that God has put the knowledge of the eternal nature of our spirits within each of us:

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. (*Ecclesiastes 3:11*)

Since God is absolutely holy, He cannot be in the direct presence of sinful creatures. Therefore, all who are sinful must be separated from God⁸ and cannot be allowed to enter into His home (heaven). Hell is the place where these people must go, away from the presence of God. For more information, see [Why Would a Loving God Send Billions of People to Hell?](#)

Eternal torment or eternal destruction?

The classic Christian interpretation of hell is a place of eternal torment. However, the Bible also includes a number of verses that suggest that those who are condemned to hell are eventually destroyed. Here is a list of verse citations that promote each scenario (see the [references](#) to read the verses themselves):

Eternal Torment or Eternal Destruction?

| Eternal Torment | Eternal Destruction |
|---|--|
| Matthew 8:29, 18:8, 25:41, 46, Luke 16:23-24, 28, Hebrews 6:1-2, 2 Peter 2:9, Jude 1:7, Revelation 14:11 ⁹ | Matthew 7:13, John 5:24, John 8:51, Romans 6:21, 23, 9:22, 2 Corinthians 7:10, Philippians 3:18-19, 2 Thessalonians 1:9, James 1:15, 1 John 3:14, 2 Peter 3:7, 3:16, Revelation 2:11, 19:20, 20:6, 10, 14-15, 21:8 ¹⁰ |

It is possible that hell will involve both torment (until the day of judgment) and eventual destruction.

Who will go to hell?

Those who reject Jesus Christ cannot enter into the presence of God,⁸ and so must be separated from Him¹¹ until the white throne judgment.¹² The Bible gives several lists of people who will not be in heaven.¹³ A summary of the activities that keep people out of heaven is listed in the table below.

What Sends You to Hell?¹³

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| idolatry | adultery | prostitution |
| theft | greed | drunkenness |
| swindling | impurity | witchcraft |
| discord | jealousy | fits of rage |
| dissensions | factions and envy | orgies |
| lying | cowardice | unbelief |
| sorcery | sexual immorality | homosexual offenses |
| slander | hatred | selfish ambition |
| abomination | murder | |

The list is fairly extensive and includes some things that all of us have done. At the end of the first creation we will appear before the great white throne of God.¹² God will go through the "books" to see if we have committed any of the deeds listed in the table above.¹³ In addition, the names will be checked to see if they are written in the book of life.¹² Anyone whose name is *not* found in the book of life¹⁴ will be thrown into the lake of fire, based upon the evil deeds that they had done in their lives.¹⁵ God does not grade on the curve, so all people who have been guilty of *any one* of the violations above and whose names are not in the book of life will be sent to the lake of fire, which is the second death.¹⁶

If you have committed *any* of the violations of God's laws listed above, you should expect to go to the lake of fire. As with any transgression of law, we are convicted on the basis of our guilt with regard to the crime. The good things that we have done do not change or impact the charge for which we stand trial. Only those whose moral record is perfect or those who have been made righteous (i.e., based upon the moral perfection of Jesus Christ) will escape the great white throne judgment.

CONCLUSION

Hell is a place designed by God to separate those who hate Him from those who love Him. Those who are sent to hell are restrained through punishment so that they won't be able to torture others. If you don't think that you will like it in hell, try [heaven](#) instead. However, you are not going to get there on the basis of the "good" things you have done in your life, but through belief in Jesus Christ.¹⁷ Click [here](#) to find out how to get there.

RELATED PAGES

- [What Will Heaven be Like?](#)
- [Going to Heaven Are We?](#)
- [My Attorney](#)
- [Why Would a Loving God Send Billions of People to Hell?](#)

REFERENCES

1. Upon the wicked He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup. (*Psalms 11:6*)
You will make them as a fiery oven in the time of your anger; The LORD will swallow them up in His wrath, And fire will devour them. (*Psalms 21:9*)
For behold, the LORD will come in fire And His chariots like the whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. (*Isaiah 66:15*)
For the LORD will execute judgment by fire And by His sword on all flesh, And those slain by the LORD will be many. (*Isaiah 66:16*)
"And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (*Matthew 3:12*)
"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (*Matthew 7:19*)
"Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. (*Matthew 13:40*)
"The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (*Matthew 13:41-42*)
"So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (*Matthew 13:49-50*)
"And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire. (*Matthew 18:8*)
"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared

for the devil and his angels; (*Matthew 25:41*)

"And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, (*Mark 9:43*)

"And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast 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, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED. (*Mark 9:47-48*)

"And His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (*Luke 3:17*)

"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. (*John 15:6*)

And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. (*James 3:6*)

Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. (*Jude 1:7*)

he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will 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 goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." (*Revelation 14:10-11*)

And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. (*Revelation 19:20*)

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

And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (*Revelation 20:14-15*)

2. "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." (*Revelation 14:11*)
3. "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (*Matthew 13:41-42*)
4. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are

also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (*Revelation 20:10*)

5. "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (*Revelation 21:8*)
6. "And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast 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, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED. (*Mark 9:47-48*)
7. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, (*2 Thessalonians 1:9*)
8. "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' (*Matthew 7:23*)
9. And behold, they cried out, saying, "What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" (*Matthew 8:29*)
"And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire. (*Matthew 18:8*)
"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; (*Matthew 25:41*)
"And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (*Matthew 25:46*)
"And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.' (*Luke 16:23-24*)
for I have five brothers-- that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' (*Luke 16:28*)
Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. (*Hebrews 6:1-2*)
then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, (*2 Peter 2:9*)
Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. (*Jude 1:7*)
"And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." (*Revelation 14:11*)
10. "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who

enter by it. (*Matthew 7:13*)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. (*John 5:24*)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death." (*John 8:51*)

Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. (*Romans 6:21*)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (*Romans 6:23*)

What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? (*Romans 9:22*)

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death. (*2 Corinthians 7:10*)

For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. (*Philippians 3:18-19*)

And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, (*2 Thessalonians 1:9*)

Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. (*James 1:15*)

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. (*1 John 3:14*)

But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. (*2 Peter 3:7*)

as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. (*2 Peter 3:16*)

'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.' (*Revelation 2:11*)

And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. (*Revelation 19:20*)

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. (*Revelation 20:6*)

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

And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. (*Revelation 20:14*)

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of

- life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (*Revelation 20:15*)
 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (*Revelation 21:8*)
11. then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, (*2 Peter 2:9*)
 12. And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds... And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (*Revelation 20:11-12, 15*)
 13. Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (*1 Corinthians 6:9-10*)
 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (*Galatians 5:19-21*)
 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (*Revelation 21:8*)
 14. The book of life is a list of those who have been declared righteous through belief in Jesus Christ.
 - Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. (*Philippians 4:3*)
 - 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I [Jesus] will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (*Revelation 3:5*)
 - All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb [i.e., Jesus] who has been slain. (*Revelation 13:8*)
 - "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. (*Revelation 17:8*)
 - and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but

only those whose names are written in the Lamb's [i.e., Jesus'] book of life. (*Revelation 21:27*)

Those who believe in Jesus are absolutely righteous based upon that belief:

- even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; (*Romans 3:22*)
 - He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (*2 Corinthians 5:21*)
 - and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, (*Philippians 3:9*)
15. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. (*Revelation 20:12*)
16. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (*Revelation 20:15*) and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (*Revelation 21:27*)
17. "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (Jesus Christ, *John 5:24*)
Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (*John 14:6*)