
WHAT THE HOLY BIBLE SAYS ABOUT HEAVEN AND HELL

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This article is condensed and does not cover the subject extensively. That would take a book.

Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus would be a great starting point (Luke 16:19-31). This is not the typical parable, differing from the others Jesus told. In the others, He used fictional but relatable stories to communicate God's spiritual truths. There was nothing cryptic about them. For instance, the parable of the prodigal son could have happened. Most everyone can relate to the idea of a wayward son and a father who runs to embrace him upon his return. Yet, the story of the rich man and Lazarus draws no parallels. It is just that—a story—told as if it were true. In other words, this story whether true or fictional tells us what happened when someone died at that time. Jesus begins (v. 19), "There was a certain rich man..." and (v.20) there was a certain beggar..." Jesus' often used "there was" to begin several of His parables as He did in this one, indicating the possibility of it happening.

These conclusions can be drawn from this passage in Luke 16:

- 1) There is a place of fiery torment and punishment (incarceration) for the unrighteous and also a place of comfort and care for the righteous.
- 2) These two places *were* separated by a great gulf and were located in a place called Sheol (from the Hebrew) or Hades (from the Greek; often translated Hell). The place of incarceration is often referred to as Hell fire and the other as Abraham's Bosom. Obviously, both sinner

and saint went into this abode of the dead (Sheol or Hades) after dying *under the Old Covenant*. It was a common holding place.

- 3) Anyone sent into Hell fire is *never* allowed out. In Mark 9:43, Jesus said the fires of Hell shall *never* be quenched.
- 4) Based on other Scriptures, those who were in Abraham's Bosom were destined to be released from there upon Jesus' arrival after His death.

Now let's look at Scriptures concerning Jesus' entering Abraham's Bosom and setting the captives free.

- 1) The Apostle Peter's sermon in Acts 2 makes it clear that Jesus' soul went into Hades but God did not leave Him there (specifically verse 31).
- 2) Ephesians 4 (verse 8) indicated that Christ "led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men." In other words, while His soul was in Hades (Abraham's Bosom), He set those held there free. In fact, Matthew 27:51-53 states that many bodies of saints were raised from the dead with Jesus and many people saw them. Those who were raised along with Christ were the righteous captives in Sheol.
- 3) After Jesus cleared out Abraham's Bosom, the after-death abode of the righteous was changed. The place of the righteous is now with Jesus as He clearly portrayed in John 14:1-3. This place is now Heaven above and is also referred to as Paradise (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:4; Revelation 2:7).

Scripture is quite clear that only those who believe in, cling to, trust in, and rely on God's Son have eternal life in both quality and duration. It is required that they continue in faith in Christ also (i.e. John 15; the dire need of abiding in the Vine). Here are some references:

John 3:16-21; John 3:36; Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 14:9-11; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:3

Revelation 20:10, 14-15 informs us that a time will come that even Hell itself and everyone in it will be thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Here's a quote from an article I wrote entitled "How the Devil uses Human Sentiment." This will help pinpoint why people have a problem with the whole idea of Hell.

“If we allow human sentiment to influence how we feel about the foundational doctrine of eternal judgment (Hebrews 6), God’s justice will be equated with cruelty. While discussing this subject with a college student, he said to me that he did not want to go to Heaven if his earthly father was not there. Can you see how deeply the roots of human sentiment can run within our hearts? While I do love and honor my parents, I would not lose my own soul for their sakes. I choose to receive the love of the truth even if it means losing loved ones. God’s justice may in appearance seem cruel, but cruelty is never just. Cruelty involves not only unkindness but also brutality and malice. God is morally just but never mean or malicious. He is not willing that anyone should perish (eternally) but must protect His Kingdom and people against those who would do it harm. A good shepherd may have to kill a wolf or bear that is threatening his sheep. This doesn’t indicate that he is cruel, brutal, unkind, or mean. No, it reveals that he truly is a good shepherd, better yet, a great shepherd. We must never allow our human sentiment to define God’s justice as cruel. Nor can we ever attempt to customize or adapt His justice to appease how we feel about something or to cater to our lack of self-denial and death to idolatrous human bonds.

The foundation upon which God’s throne (His rule) rests is judgment and justice (Psalm 89:14-18; Isaiah 9:6-7). This indicates that the existence and integrity of all creation depends on His justice being served.

How we feel about hell, the lake of fire (places of eternal incarceration), and the possibility of loved ones suffering in those places cannot ever influence our interpretation of the Biblical truth about those things. In the last days, those who refuse the love of the Truth will be turned over to strong delusion (2 Thessalonians 2).”

You must be a lover of God’s truth above yourself and family no matter the cost or it could cost you your soul.

I love my family but would choose not to go to Hell with them if that were the case. How stupid would that be?

Jesus knew there would be conflicts between our love for certain people and our love for God and, therefore made it clear that we would have to die to our love for them in order to rightly honor Him as God. You shall not have any other gods before Me is the first commandment of the ten (Exodus 20). Another way to look at it is: you shall have no other “loves” before Me.”

God is not only good all the time but also just in all His ways. The very fact that He would provide a way of escape for any of us who has sinned against

Him is nearly unfathomable. We should trust God even if we don't understand His ways because He has proven Himself entirely trustworthy through the death of His Son, Jesus.

In conclusion, let us be careful not to attempt to conform God to our understanding of what is good and just. Our understanding of many things is often compromised by how we personally feel about it. Feelings come a dime a dozen. We have God's Word and His Spirit to give us clarity if we sincerely seek the Father for understanding.

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you (Matthew 7:7).