

## Hell: Ultimate Destiny of Unbelievers

Matthew 25.41, 46; Revelation 20.11-15

“Go to hell!” No one who has experienced hell would utter those words. Hell wasn’t made for us (Matt. 25.41), and God doesn’t want anyone to go there (1 Tim. 2.4). It is a place of judgment, described in graphic and terrifying detail. It’s the destiny of unbelievers *one minute after they die*.

- Bad Bible: Words translated “hell” that don’t refer to it
  - *Sheol is not hell*
  - *Hades is not hell*
  - *Gehenna is not hell*
- Hell: The Final Destiny of All Apart from Christ
  - *Hell was made for the devil and his angels, not us.*
  - *It is not God’s will (desire) that any go to hell!*
  - *Hell is described as an ‘eternal lake of fire.’*
  - *Final judgment: The Great White Throne*
    - The beast and false prophet enter hell first (Rev.19.20)
    - The devil is thrown in hell after the Millennium (Rev.20.10)
    - At GWT, unbelievers’ works are judged (Rev. 20.12-13)
    - Sheol and Hades are thrown in the lake of fire (Rev.20.14)
    - Those not in the Book of Life go to lake of fire (Rev. 20.15)

1. When we talk about hell, it’s usually as a general reference to where those who are ungodly and do not trust Christ go after they die. But *Sheol* in the OT and *Hades* in the NT describe a place of where both righteous and unrighteous go. How would you differentiate between those in *sheol* or *hades*, and those in hell?
2. The Greek word *gehenna* occurs 12 times in the New Testament (cf. (Matt. 5.22, 29, 30; 10.28; 18.9; 23.15; 33; Mark 9.43, 45, 47; Luke 12.5; James 3.6). Our English Bibles usually translate it “hell.” But this translation is problematic: *Gehenna* was ‘the valley of Hinnom,’ a festering, constantly-burning garbage dump outside Jerusalem. It *symbolized* a place of shame, disgrace, and judgment. The problem arises because of what Jesus said caused a person to go to *Gehenna*. Read each Scripture referenced above: If *Gehenna* refers to “hell,” what causes us to go to hell? In some verses, Jesus is talking to His disciples who believed in Him. Is it possible for someone who has believed in Jesus and received eternal life to sin and go to hell?
3. Since *Gehenna* was a *metaphor* for shame, disgrace, and judgment, it can refer to different judgments. For example, what judgment was Jesus warning the Jews of in Matt. 23.29-38? What judgment of *believers* (not to determine whether one goes to heaven or hell, but for rewards) does Scripture tell of (see Rom. 14.10-12; 1 Cor. 3.13-15; 4.5; 2 Cor. 5.10)? Most of Jesus’ references to *Gehenna* were spoken to disciples (believers). Can Christians experience shame and disgrace before Christ (cf. 1 Jn. 2.28)? What better translation (than “hell”) would you use as a metaphor of *Gehenna*?
4. Although *Gehenna* does not equal hell, the reality of hell, a place of eternal judgment, is clearly taught in Scripture. However, it is rarely called hell, but is rather described in graphic detail. How does Jesus describe it in Matt. 25.41, 46? What do we learn from these verses? 2 Thess. 1.8-10; Jude 6-7; 2 Peter 2.4; Rev. 14.10-11; 19.20; 20.10-15; 21.6-8. To think about: Read Matt. 10.15 and 11.20-24. The NT indicates there are levels of reward for Christians based on faithful service for Christ; do you think there are also levels of judgment in hell based on a person’s knowing and willful rejection of Christ?

