

"HELL"

I think we all can conclude that "hell" represents a very bad place. But, what does the Bible actually say about "hell?"

Some Bible passage regarding hell:

- ✧ Matthew 10:28 - Fear God! He, not man nor Satan, has the power to destroy anyone in hell.
- ✧ Romans 1:18-32; Romans 2:7-8 - We are the ones who choose to go to hell by willfully rejecting the truth, the free gift of eternal life by giving ourselves to Christ as Lord and Savior. We are given a choice. **We** are the ones who place ourselves in there.
- ✧ Revelation 19:20-21; 20:10 - The devil, the beast, the false prophet and all the fallen angels are all doomed to eternal hell; the lake of fire.
- ✧ Revelation 20:11-15 - After those who didn't follow Christ (those whose names are not written in the book of life) are judged, they, along with death and hades will be thrown into the lake of fire.

Some basic Bible observations:

- The word for "hell" is used about 83 times throughout the Old and New Testaments (NIV / NASB).
- The word for "hell" in the OT is "sheol" that refers to the "underworld" (the world of the dead) and can also refer to the place where the wicked are sent for punishment. This may mean a temporary place for the dead prior to the final fire of eternal hell.
- The New Testament uses the Greek word "gehenna" for hell. This also generally is used to refer to a place of future punishment.
- In the New Testament, the Greek word "tartaroo" is also used for a place where wicked angels who sinned are sent. I suspect some were bound there and some were left to roam the earth to do Satan's bidding. (See 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6)
- When the word "hades" is used in the NT, it usually indicates a temporary place where the lost souls are kept as they await their final resurrection (for "second death" - see Revelation 2:11; 20:6,14; 21:6)
- The word "abyss" ("abussos" in the Greek) is mentioned once in Luke and 7 in Revelation and appears to refer to a place where fallen angels / evil spirits are held and where Satan will go during the 1000 year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:1-3).
- The "lake of fire" and "eternal fire" are also used to describe the final place for the devil, lost angels and lost humans. (see Matthew 25:41; Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14-15)
- Therefore, those who die and have rejected Christ appear to go to a temporary place for holding until the end of the 1000 year reign of Christ when God brings in a New Heaven and New Earth and the devil, the beast, the false prophet, the demons and all unbelievers are thrown into the lake of fire (the final eternal hell). (see Revelation 19:19-20 and Revelation 20:7-15)
- Hades is ultimately cast into the "lake of fire" at the end and further supports the idea that hades is a temporary place of the lost dead (and perhaps the fallen angels) that are held for their final eternal home. (see Revelation 20:13-14)
- There is no crossing over between hell and heaven (a great chasm) as illustrated in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 (not the Lazarus that Jesus raised from the dead in John 11).

Questions to consider:

- Read the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man in Luke 16:19-31 and describe how this story touches you.
- Why do you think God does not allow even a tiny bit of evil to enter into heaven. Is God being too harsh or unjust? Why or why not?
- Knowing hell is a real place and represents eternal torment and separation from God and all who love Him, how does that affect you and your desire to share the truth to loved ones and friends?
- There is an unseen battle for our souls. We are at war. How do you plan to protect yourself, family, church and community from the powers that want to destroy you, or at least to be ineffective for God and His Kingdom? (see Ephesians 6:10-18)