

After Life

Today's Question:

What is
the nature of Hell?

Is Hell real?

only

59%

of “mainline” Christians
believe in Hell

What will it
be like?







3 Things are Certain:

1. Hell will be what it will be - **we don't get a vote**
2. Hell will be an **appropriate consequence** given by a righteous & loving God
3. You **do not want** any part in it



What does
fire do?



The “fire” of Hell

- Not literal, physical fire
- But does it torment or consume?

Punishing fire of God

- **Nadab & Abihu:** Leviticus 10:1-2
 - *“So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and **consumed** them, and they died before the LORD”*
- **Korah & his followers:** Numbers 16:35
 - *“And fire came out from the LORD and **consumed** the 250 men who were offering the incense.”*

Punishing fire of God

- Was the fire used by God as **punishment**?
- Did the fire have **lasting** consequences?
- Did God **torture** them with the fire?

Other enemies of God:

- **Captains of Samaria:** 2 Kings 1:9-14
 - *“Elijah answered the captain, “If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and **consume** you and your fifty men!” Then fire fell from heaven and **consumed** the captain and his men”*
- **Disobedient Israel & Judah:** Hosea 8:14
 - *“But I will send fire on their cities that will **consume** their fortresses”*

Other enemies of God:

- **Philistines:** Amos 1:7
 - *“Because she took captive whole communities and sold them to Edom, I will send fire on the walls of Gaza that will **consume** her”*
- **Ammonites:** Amos 1:14
 - *“Because he ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to extend his borders, I will set fire to the walls of Rabbah that will **consume** her”*

Other enemies of God:

- **Damascus:** Jeremiah 49:27
 - *“I will set fire to the walls of Damascus; it will **consume** the fortresses of Ben-Hadad”*
- **Moabites:** Amos 2:2
 - *“Because he burned to ashes the bones of Edom’s king, I will send fire on Moab that will **consume** the fortresses of Kerioth.”*

Other enemies of God:

- **Ar of Moab**: Numbers 21:28
 - *“Fire went out from Heshbon, a blaze from the city of Sihon. It **consumed** Ar of Moab, the citizens of Arnon’s heights”*
- **many more...**

Hebrews 10:26-27

*“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging **fire that will consume** the enemies of God.”*

Nature of the
fire?

Sodom & Gomorrah

- 2 Peter 2:6-9 - *“He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and **made them an example** of what is going to happen to the ungodly”*
- Jude 7 - *“They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of **eternal fire.**”*

Mark 9:43

*“And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the **unquenchable fire**.”*

“eternal” fire

“unquenchable” fire

=

nature not duration

Jesus weighs in:

*“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the **eternal fire** prepared for the devil and his angels.... Then they will go away to **eternal punishment**, but the righteous to **eternal life**.” (Matthew 25:41,46)*

- The point is **destination** not **duration**
- The **kind** of punishment not the **length** of punishment

The “fires” of hell are...

- **Eternal** : lasting consequences
- **Unquenchable** : can't be stopped
- **Consuming** : nothing remains

Is Hell
endless torture
or ultimate
destruction?

Torture?

Weeping & Gnashing?

“But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’ In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out”

- Luke 13:27-28

Weeping & Gnashing?

- Weeping = Sorrow
 - “I blew it, and now it’s too late”
- Gnashing = Anger (not pain)
 - Acts 7:54; Job 16:9; Psalm 35:16; Lamentations 2:16
 - Anger at whom? Themselves? God?

Matthew 7:22-23

“Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'”

Where's the
torture?

Strongest case for torment

Revelation 20:10

*“And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. **They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**”*

- The context is **figurative**, not literal

Destruction?

Destruction?

- The language of destruction is everywhere:
 - destruction, blotting out, cutting off, death, perishing, consuming
 - 2 Peter 3:7 *“But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly”*

Destruction?

- Matthew 7:13-14 *“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that **leads to destruction**, and those who enter by it are many”*
- 2 Thessalonians 1:9 *“They will be punished with **everlasting destruction** and shut out from the presence of the Lord”*

What's the
opposite of
eternal life?

Second Death

- Revelation 2:11 *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the **second death**.”*
- Revelation 21:8 *“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the **second death**”*

Second Death

- Ezekiel 18:4 *“Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: The soul who sins is the one who **will die.**”*
- John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not **perish** but have eternal life”*

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Matthew 10:28

Destruction or torture?

- In the OT and the NT, God's enemies are "destroyed" or "consumed"
- Scripture after scripture describe God's punishing fire as "consuming"
- We have no scriptural evidence for torture in the afterlife
- We have no scriptural evidence for God being a torturer at ALL
- Jesus himself describes it as destruction

“Hell” is the biblical term for the ultimate destruction of the soul.

Reactions to this...

- Where's the punishment?
- But that's not good enough!
- That's not scary enough!
- Evil people should be tortured!
- I want them to pay!



What we believe
about hell says a lot
about our concept of
God and His nature.

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