



# HOAW Newsletter

**Revelation 20:12-13:** *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.*

## March 2022

HELPING MEN LIVE LIVES OF INTEGRITY AND HONOR

## Hell (*Sheol*, *Hades*, *Tartarus*, *Gehenna*)

### Dr. Greg Bourgond

People's understanding of Hell is all over the map often relying on hopes, preferences, corrupted understandings, and reliance upon fiction such as Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Non-believers and some believer believe in Heaven but not Hell. This says more about the desire to avoid the truth because it is too uncomfortable to believe.

"In the shifting winds of modern cultures, the idea of everlasting torment and damnation is difficult for many people to grasp. Why is this?"

- The influence of contemporary thought.
- Fear
- A flawed view of God's love.
- A downplaying of sin.
- Aberrant theories.

- Incomplete teaching.
- Satan's ploys.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century **Dante Alighieri's** epic poem, *Divine Comedy*, depicted Dante's travels through **Paradise** (Heaven), **Purgatorio** (Purgatory), and the **Inferno** (Hell). In the last destination, Dante depicts nine concentric circles of torment located within the Earth; it is the "realm ... of those who have rejected spiritual values by yielding to bestial appetites or violence, or by perverting their human intellect to fraud or malice against their fellowmen". As an allegory, the *Divine Comedy* represents the journey of the soul toward God, with the *Inferno* describing the recognition and rejection of sin.

***The 9 circles of Hell are concentric, representing a gradual increase in wickedness, and culminating at the center of the earth, where Satan is held in bondage.*** Some of the circles have additional rings associated with them. The 1st circle is for people in limbo, the 2nd for the lustful, the 3rd for gluttons, the 4th for hoarders and

spenders, the 5<sup>th</sup> for the wrathful and sullen, the 6<sup>th</sup> for heretics, the 7<sup>th</sup> for the violent, suicides, blasphemers, sodomites, and usurers, the 8th for fraudsters, and the 9<sup>th</sup> for the treacherous also called "The Pit of Hell." Although an allegory, it was often believed to be an accurate description of Hell by the uninformed.

Another allegory comes to mind, **C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce***. *The Great Divorce* is a novel by the British author C. S. Lewis, published in 1945, and based on a theological dream vision of his in which he reflects on the Christian conceptions of Heaven and Hell.

C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce* is a classic Christian allegorical tale about a bus ride from Hell to heaven. An extraordinary meditation upon good and evil, grace and judgment, Lewis's revolutionary idea in *The Great Divorce* is that the gates of Hell are locked from the inside.

The main conflict surrounds the surrender of all earthly burdens to

be in God's presence. Some characters choose to remain in the shadows of grey town (Hell), clinging to their earthly pain rather than surrendering to God's eternal love and brightness.

A grim and joyless city, the "grey town", is a place where it rains continuously, even indoors, which is either Hell or Purgatory depending on whether or not one stays there. The story describes a bus-stop for those who desire an excursion to some other place (the destination later turns out to be the foothills of Heaven). In this allegory, the bus riders meet people who they knew in life and who now reside in heaven meet them to offer once chance to cross over. All but one refuses, embracing the torment of what they know instead of promised bliss they don't know. They would rather maintain their perception of control over their lives even if the specter was dark, dreary, and hopeless.

### **But what does the Bible say about Hell?**

Although many questions come to mind regarding Hell, let us address **SIX** of the most common.

1. **Is Hell a real place?**
2. **How is Hell described in the Bible?**
3. **Who is Hell for?**
4. **Are there levels of Hell such as Dante's seven circles?**
5. **Question: "Why does God send people to Hell?"**
6. **How is eternity in Hell a fair punishment for sin?**

#### **1. Is Hell a real place?**

In Revelation 20:14-15; 21:1-2 we read, *Then 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...Then I saw a new*

*heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

Jesus spent more time warning people about the dangers of Hell than He did in comforting them with the hope of heaven. The concept of a real, conscious, forever-and-ever existence in Hell is just as biblical as a real, conscious, forever-and-ever existence in heaven.

Hell is mentioned 167 times in the Bible, sometimes called **Gehenna**, **Hades**, the pit, the Abyss, or everlasting punishment (Proverbs 7:27; Luke 8:31; 10:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:9), and **Sheol**, the pit or grave. It is referred to as **Sheol**, **Hades**, and **Gehenna**. **Is there a difference between them?**

*"In the Old Testament, the word translated "Hell" is Sheol (Hebrew); in the New Testament, it's Hades (Greek meaning "unseen") and Gehenna ("the Valley of Hinnom"). Sheol is also translated as "pit" and "grave." Both Sheol and Hades refer to a temporary abode of the dead before judgment (Psalm 9:17; Revelation 1:18). Hades/Sheol is not necessarily a place of torment because God's people were said to go there as well as the wicked. In the New Testament, we find that Hades is somehow "compartmentalized." That is, the realm of the dead is divided into a place of comfort and a place of torment (Luke 16:19-31).*

*Hades/Sheol is not necessarily a place of torment because God's people were said to go there as well as the wicked.*

**Gehenna** refers to an eternal state of punishment for the wicked dead (Mark 9:43). The word the Bible uses to describe a burning Hell—**Gehenna**—comes from an actual burning place, the valley of **Gehenna**

*adjacent to Jerusalem on the south. In one of their greatest apostasies, the Jews (especially under kings Ahaz and Manasseh) passed their children through the fires in sacrifice to the god Molech in that very valley (2 Kings 16:3; 2 Chronicles 33:6; Jeremiah 32:35). Eventually, the Jews considered that location to be ritually unclean (2 Kings 23:10), and they defiled it all the more by casting the bodies of criminals into its smoldering heaps. In Jesus' time this was a place of constant fire, but more so, it was a refuse heap, the last stop for all items judged by men to be worthless. When Jesus spoke of **Gehenna** Hell, He was speaking of the city dump of all eternity. Yes, fire was part of it, but the purposeful casting away—the separation and loss—was all of it.*

*Both **Sheol** and **Hades** refer to a temporary abode of the dead before judgment (Psalm 9:17; Revelation 1:18). **Gehenna** refers to an eternal state of punishment for the wicked dead (Mark 9:43)."*

By the way, Scripture does not tell us the geographical or cosmological location of Hell.

**NOTE:** GotQuestions.org describes another place often translated as 'Hell.' *"In ancient Greek mythology, **Tartarus** was a horrible pit of torment in the afterlife. It was lower than even Hades, the place of the dead. According to the Greeks, Tartarus was populated by ferocious monsters and the worst of criminals.*

*The Greek word **Tartarus** appears only once in the entire New Testament. Second Peter 2:4 says, "God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to [Tartarus], putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment." **Most English versions translate Tartarus as "hell" or "lowest hell."** The word Tartarus can be defined as "the deepest abyss of Hades."*

Another place in Scripture that mentions sinning angels is Genesis 6:1–4 where “the sons of God” took control of human women and their progeny. According to Jude 1:6, some angels “abandoned their proper dwelling” in the heavens. For this crime, God cast them into **Tartarus** where they are held “in pits of gloom” (AMP) for a later judgment. It seems that Tartarus was what the demons feared in Luke 8:31.

Peter’s mention of Tartarus is in the context of condemning false teachers. Those who secretly introduce heresy into the church will suffer a fate similar to that of the angels who sinned—they will end up in **Tartarus**. The Lord does not tolerate those who lead His children astray (Matthew 18:6).”

## 2. How is Hell described in the Bible?

More broadly, Hell *is a place of conscious torment after death*.

More specifically, it is described as...

- “**Eternal fire**” (Matthew 25:41),
- “**Unquenchable fire**” (Matthew 3:12),
- “**Shame and everlasting contempt**” (Daniel 12:2),
- A place where “**the fire is not quenched**” (Mark 9:44-49),
- A place of “**torment**” and “**fire**” (Luke 16:23-24),
- “**Everlasting destruction**” (2 Thessalonians 1:9),
- A place where “**the smoke of torment rises forever and ever**” (Revelation 14:10-11),
- A “**lake of burning sulfur**” where the wicked are “**tormented day and night forever and ever**” (Revelation 20:10);
- “**Lake of fire, outer darkness, a prison;**”

- A “**bottomless pit, the abyss, a lake, death, destruction, everlasting torment,**”
- A place of “**wailing and gnashing of teeth, a grave.**”
- Compared to “**burning and darkness.**”
- Associated with “**intense grief and horror.**”

To be in Hell is to be separated from God is to be forever shut off from light (1 John 1:5), love (1 John 4:8), joy (Matthew 25:23), and peace (Ephesians 2:14) because God is the source of all those good things.

To be in Hell is to forever lose the chance to see God’s face, hear His voice, experience His forgiveness, or enjoy His fellowship.

To be in Hell is to be forever separated from God.

***Bible tells us only what being in Hell is “like”; it does not explicitly say what Hell is or how exactly it functions. The hyperbole is meant to express the gravity of Hell-to paint a picture, in human terms, of a place to be avoided at all costs.***

## 3. Who is Hell for?

Hell was originally intended for demonic beings; the devil and his angels. Hell is also a place for those who reject Christ.

The Bible is clear that there are two possible destinations for every human soul following physical death: heaven or Hell (Matthew 25:34, 41, 46; Luke 16:22–23). Only the righteous inherit eternal life, and the only way to be declared righteous before God is through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (John 3:16–18; Romans 10:9). The souls of the righteous go directly into the presence of God (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23).

For those who do not receive Jesus Christ as Savior, death means everlasting punishment (2 Thessalonians 1:8–9). Upon death, the souls of unbelievers go to a temporary place awaiting final bodily resurrection at the final judgment, The Great White Throne of Judgment.

Hell, as place of punishment is eternal (Jude 1:13; Matthew 25:46). There is no biblical support for the notion that after death people get another chance to repent. Hebrews 9:27 makes it clear that everyone dies physically and, after that, comes the judgment.

Christians have already been judged and sentenced. Jesus took that sentence upon Himself. Our sin becomes His and His righteousness becomes ours when we believe in Him. Because He took our just punishment, we need not fear ever being separated from Him again (Romans 8:29–30). The judgment for unbelievers is still to come.

Second Thessalonians 1:8–9 says, “He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.” The misery of Hell will consist of not only physical torture, but the agony of being cut off from every avenue of happiness. God is the source of all good things (James 1:17). To be cut off from God is to forfeit all exposure to anything good. Hell will be a state of perpetual sin; yet those suffering there will possess full understanding of sin’s horrors. Remorse, guilt, and shame will be unending, yet accompanied by the conviction that the punishment is just.

There will no longer be any deception about the “goodness of man.” To be separated from God is to be forever shut off from light (1 John 1:5), love (1 John 4:8), joy (Matthew

25:23), and peace (Ephesians 2:14) because God is the source of all those good things. Any good we observe in humanity is merely a reflection of the character of God, in whose image we were created (Genesis 1:27).

While the spirits of those regenerated by God's Holy Spirit will abide forever with God in a perfected state (1 John 3:2), the opposite is true of those in Hell. None of the goodness of God will exist in them. Whatever good they may have thought they represented on earth will be shown for the selfish, lustful, idolatrous thing it was (Isaiah 64:6). Man's ideas of goodness will be measured against the perfection of God's holiness and be found severely lacking. Those in Hell have forever lost the chance to see God's face, hear His voice, experience His forgiveness, or enjoy His fellowship. To be forever separated from God is the ultimate punishment.

#### 4. Are there levels of Hell such as Dante's seven circles?

Hell is indeed depicted as a place of graduated punishment (Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 12:47-48; Revelation 20:12-13). The Bible does suggest different degrees of punishment in Hell. What the gradations or degrees are actually is not described in the Bible. Suffice it to say, they are assigned based on our life prior to death.

**Matthew 11:20-24** *Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been*

*done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."*

**Luke 12:47-48** *And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.*

**Revelation 20:12-13:** *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.*

#### 5. Question: "Why does God send people to Hell?"

The Bible says that God created Hell for Satan and the wicked angels who rebelled against Him, but there are people in Hell also (Matthew 25:41). Both angelic beings and human beings are in Hell for the same reason, sin (Romans 6:23).

**Matthew 25:41** (ESV): *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Romans 6:23* (ESV): *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

God Himself is the standard for what is right, good, and moral. If it were not for God being the standard of moral perfection, created beings would have nothing to measure themselves against. In other words, if God is perfectly righteous, then

anything that falls short of said perfection is sinful, and every human being who has ever lived, since Adam's fall from grace, has committed sin (Romans 3:23). Because Adam sinned, the entire human race now has a sinful nature (Romans 5:12).

**Romans 5:12** (ESV): *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.*

***But people do not go to Hell because of Adam's sin; they go to Hell because of their own sin, which they freely choose (James 1:13-16).***

**James 1:13-16** (ESV): *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.*

Since God is eternal, immutable, and infinite, and all sins are fundamentally against God, God has decreed the just punishment for sin must also be eternal (Matthew 25:46). There is another aspect to consider, which is that God also created people to live eternally. So, when someone commits a sin against another person, the offended person has also been eternally wronged.

***God, therefore, has deemed all who commit sin will go to Hell because they have failed to meet His righteous standard; they have broken His Law of moral perfection.*** If God did not send people to Hell for breaking His laws, it could be said that God is not just (Psalm 7:11).

A good analogy is a court of law with a judge and a lawbreaker. A just

judge will always convict the person who has been found guilty. If that judge did not pursue justice for the crime, he would not be a just judge (Deuteronomy 32:4).

However, the good news is that God is also merciful. In His rich mercy, He made a way for sinners to avoid the punishment of Hell by trusting in the atoning work of His Son, Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16). For Christians, the penalty of sin has been removed and placed upon Christ on the cross (1 Peter 2:24). Because of the sacrifice of Christ, God is still just—the sin is punished—yet He is also merciful to all who believe.

## 6. How is eternity in Hell a fair punishment for sin?

This is an issue that bothers many people who have an incomplete understanding of three things: the nature of God, the nature of man, and the nature of sin.

As fallen, sinful human beings, the nature of God is a difficult concept for us to grasp. We tend to see God as a kind, merciful Being whose love for us overrides and overshadows all His other attributes. Of course, God is loving, kind, and merciful, **but He is first and foremost a holy and righteous God.** So holy is He that He cannot tolerate sin. He is a God whose anger burns against the wicked and disobedient (Isaiah 5:25; Hosea 8:5; Zechariah 10:3).

He is not only a loving God—He is love itself! But the Bible also tells us that He hates all manner of sin (Proverbs 6:16-19). And while He is merciful, **there are limits to His mercy.** “Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon” (Isaiah 55:6-7).

**Humanity is corrupted by sin, and that sin is always directly against God.** When David sinned by committing adultery with Bathsheba and having Uriah murdered, he responded with an interesting prayer: “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...” (Psalm 51:4). Since David had sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah, how could he claim to have only sinned against God? **David understood that all sin is ultimately against God.** God is an eternal and infinite Being (Psalm 90:2). As a result, **all sin requires an eternal punishment.** God’s holy, perfect, and infinite character has been offended by our sin. Although to our finite minds our sin is limited in time, to God—who is outside of time—the sin He hates goes on and on. Our sin is eternally before Him and must be eternally punished in order to satisfy His holy justice.

Every sinner in Hell has a full realization that he deserves to be there. Each sinner has a fully informed, acutely aware, and sensitive conscience which, in Hell, becomes his own tormenter. **This is the experience of torture in Hell—a person fully aware of his or her sin with a relentlessly accusing conscience, without relief for even one moment.** The guilt of sin will produce shame and everlasting self-hatred.

**The realities of eternal damnation, eternal Hell, and eternal punishment are frightening and disturbing.** But it is good that we might, indeed, be terrified. While this may sound grim, there is good news.

**God loves us (John 3:16) and wants us to be saved from Hell (2 Peter 3:9).** But because God is also just and righteous, **He cannot allow our sin to go unpunished. Someone has to pay for it.** In His great mercy and love, God provided His own payment for our sin. He sent His Son Jesus

Christ to pay the penalty for our sins by dying on the cross for us. Jesus’ death was an infinite death because He is the infinite God/man, paying our infinite sin debt, so that we would not have to pay it in Hell for eternity (2 Corinthians 5:21).

**If we confess our sin and place our faith in Christ,** asking for God’s forgiveness based on Christ’s sacrifice, we are saved, forgiven, cleansed, and promised an eternal home in heaven. God loved us so much that He provided the means for our salvation, but if we reject His gift of eternal life, we will face the eternal consequences of that decision.

**Heaven or Hell is a choice, our choice.**

## OTHER NEWS



**Heart of a Warrior Ministries** offers four journeys you can take to become who God created you to be.

**The Foundation** (Ground Zero) helps establish strong biblical foundations for the battles ahead.

**The Compass** (Phase I) calibrates a warrior's heart and tunes that heart to the heart of God. I am currently leading 45 at Calvary Church WBL Campus on this journey.

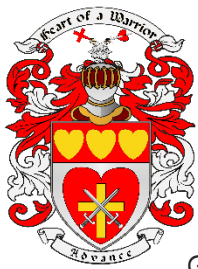
**The Map** (Phase II) helps men focus on what matters in accordance with their unique divine wiring.

**The Guide** (Phase III) develops the spiritual discipline of being mentored and mentoring others.

Go to our website for more details.  
[www.heartofawarrior.org/journeys/](http://www.heartofawarrior.org/journeys/)

If you would like to contact me directly, email me at

Greg@HeartofaWarrior.org..

**Donations**

Please consider giving to Heart of a Warrior Ministries. HOAW Ministries needs your financial support. Our ability to help men live God-honoring lives

depends on the resources we can use to that end. Simply go to the donations tab on [heartofawarrior.org](http://heartofawarrior.org). Thank you for being a subscriber.

Check out **The Store** on our website ([www.heartofawarrior.org](http://www.heartofawarrior.org)). There are downloadable resources you can use to lead a group through Phases I, II, or

III, Foundations of a Warrior, and Bible Study Guidelines.

**Websites for Men**

**Heart of a Warrior Ministries**  
[www.Heartofawarrior.org](http://www.Heartofawarrior.org)

**Legacy Minded Men**  
[www.legacymindedmen.org](http://www.legacymindedmen.org)

**Church for Men**  
<http://churchformen.com/>

**Resolute**  
<https://beresolute.org/>

**Life Way Men**  
<https://blog.lifeway.com/leadingmen/>

**Men's Fraternity**  
<http://www.mensfraternity.com/>

**Man in the Mirror**  
<http://maninthemirror.org/>

**Men with No Regrets**  
<http://www.menwithnoregrets.org/>

**National Collision of Men's Ministries**  
<http://ncmm.org/>

**Every Man's Battle**  
<https://newlife.com/emb/>

**Iron Sharpens Iron**  
<http://ironsharpensiron.net/>

**Ransomed Heart Ministries**  
<http://www.ransomedheart.com/>

**Band of Brothers**  
[www.bandofbrothers.org/](http://www.bandofbrothers.org/)

**Man Up God's Way**  
<http://www.manupgodsway.org/>

**Iron Works**  
<http://www.ironworksmen.com/>

**Every Man Ministries**  
<http://www.everymanministries.com>