

Except where indicated otherwise, all Bible verses will be quoted from the New Living Translation.

Some people claim to believe the Bible but don't think heaven and hell are anything more than conditions here on earth. But before I begin this study, you might be one who is not sure you can believe the Bible. We must start there, for my proofs are from that Book. If this is you, I suggest you read my brochure called, *The Bible, the Book from God*.

There are actually three different places called heaven in the Bible. **The first heaven** is our sky and includes our solar system. Gen. 1:1, "God created the heavens and the earth." Gen. 1:26, "...the birds of the heavens." Psa. 19:1, "The heavens tell the glory of God." And there are lots more like this.

The second heaven is a spiritual realm, invisible, where demon activity is. Here are a few verses that prove this.

Eph. 2:2, "You used to live just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God." II Cor. 4:4, "...Satan, the god (small g) of this evil world." Eph. 6:12, "We are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the

unseen world, ... against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms."

The third heaven is where God lives, and Christians go immediately when they die.

Matt. 6:9, "Our Father who is in heaven." Phil. 1:23, "I'm torn between two desires: Sometimes I want to live, and sometimes I want to go and be with Christ. That would be far better for me, but it is better for you that I live." II Cor. 5:8 KJV, "... rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Heb. 11 lists many great people of faith who have died. These are referred to in 12:1. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses ..." (I imagine they are cheering us on!) John 14:2-3 (KJV) "In my Father's house are many mansions. ... I will come again ... that where I am, there ye may be also..."

Jesus came from there and went back there. John 6:38, "I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do what I want." John 16:28, "Yes, I came from the Father into the world, and I will leave the world and return to the Father." Acts 1:11. The angels are talking to the men who watched Jesus go up. They said, "Jesus has been taken away from you into heaven, and someday, just as you saw him go, he will return!"

Now, **hell** is more firmly denied. How could a good God create such a place of torment? Later, you will see that it wasn't meant for us. God doesn't want anyone to go there, as seen in II Pet. 3:9. The fact that it is up to us is covered better in my brochure called *The Sovereignty of God*.

Jesus used two words in His earthly ministry that have been translated *hell*. They are *hades* and *gehenna*. Hades means the place of the dead, and gehenna was a dump pit where they kept a fire burning constantly.

Here is a story Jesus told. It's found in Luke 16:19-31. Let me summarize the first part. A rich man lived in luxury, and a beggar lived by his gate. They both died and went to different places. The beggar was carried by angels to Abraham's side, and the rich man went to hades. Let's pick it up now at verse 27.

"Then the rich man said, 'Please Father Abraham, send him to my father's home. For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them about this place of torment so they won't have to come here when they die.'

"But Abraham said, 'Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read their writings anytime they want to.'

"The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will turn from

their sins.’

“But Abraham said, ‘If they won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they won’t listen even if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

Notice that the man had his vision, his emotions, his voice, and he had his memory ~ and he was in torment. Now, here are some other places where Jesus spoke of hell. Matt. 5:22, 29, “... and if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.” vs. 29, “... It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”

Matt. 10:28, “Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill you. They can only kill your body. They cannot touch your soul. Fear only God who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Matt. 13:49-50, “That is the way it will be at the end of the world (age). The angels will come and separate the wicked people from the godly, throwing the wicked into the fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matt. 25:41, 46, “And then the king will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons!’” vs. 46, “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.” These last two tell us that hell is forever, and that it wasn’t made for people!

There is an evidence for heaven and hell that is NOT in the Bible. It is the testimony of doctors who work in emergency rooms. They watch people die, and have seen that very many die in one of two ways ~ either screaming in terror, or blissfully happy and even saying they see a loved one. It’s made a believer out of one doctor who has written a book about it.

Which place will you go after you die? It depends on which kingdom you belong to here. And if you don’t make a choice, one will be made for you ~ by Satan. There are only two kingdoms. Col. 1:13, “... God’s holy people, who live in the light. For He has rescued us from the one who rules the kingdom of darkness, and He has brought us into the Kingdom of His dear Son.” Also I John 5:19, Phil. 2:13-15, I Pet. 2:9.

Becoming God’s child:

John 1: 12, “But to all that believed and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God.”

Pray this: “Jesus, I believe you died for me and rose again. Forgive my sins, and come into my life and be my Lord and Savior. I turn my life over to you. I thank You that I am saved!” (Now you need “*God wants to make your life beautiful!*”)

Heaven and Hell

Are they real places?

A mini Bible study
By Cheryl Boone