

Are There People Burning in Hell?

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Bible Study

The Church of God International



There are an estimated 100 billion who have lived and died since the time of Adam.
How many billions of people do you think are currently being tormented in the burning hell fire?



We all have unbelieving and non-Christian relatives who have passed away.



Maybe they were atheists who do not believe in God, or they may have believed in a religion aside from Christianity. They may have been Hindus, Islams, Buddhists, Taoists, Shintos, or simply sinners who lived a life of depravity.



The Biblical answer to the question is
NONE!



Yes, you heard it right!
No soul is consigned to the ever-burning hell
fire today. That is the simple scriptural truth.



World population stands at 7.3 billion people. It is estimated that about 1.5 billion are Christians. If the statistics are true, and it seems they are, about 5.8 billion people are destined for hell to be tormented for eternity without end.



We know that God is love.
The concept of eternal torment in hell fire is
contrary to the ideals of a loving God.



God is not a monster who consigns sinners
and unbelievers to eternity of doom and
suffering.



2 Peter 3:9

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish** but that all should come to repentance.”



If no one is currently burning in hell where
are the unbelieving dead?



We will let the Bible explain it to you.
Your faith should be based on the Bible.
The word of God is truth.



1 Timothy 2:4

“God wants **all people to be saved** and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”



How can this be accomplished if more people are confined to hell fire than are being saved?



God is a loving God. It is God's plan that ALL people be saved and only the incorrigibly wicked, those, who deny Christ will be consumed in the lake of fire.



The great majority of humanity will be saved!
This is good news because your unbelieving
relatives and family members will have their
opportunity to know God and receive
salvation.



Almost all Christians believe the doctrine of the immortality of the soul without questioning the source and origin of the teaching. The truth is that the Bible never teaches about the immortality of the soul.



If you have an immortal soul you don't need Christ – you are already in possession of immortality! Presumably, your soul continues to survive for eternity after death!



Thus, many believe that the “soul” of the dead, depending on how people live their lives on earth, end up in a place of bliss, limbo or worse in an abode of perpetual torment.



For traditional Christians, the dead are either in heaven, purgatory, or hell. If in heaven, they must be blissfully enjoying the company of the angels and of Christ.



If in purgatory, they have to patiently wait for the prayers of their faithful loved ones on earth to be granted by God for them to be transferred to heaven. If they are in hell, they will be tormented day and night in the lake of fire.



We have been brought up in Sunday school teaching that the dead have been judged and have already received their just reward.



Today, we will try to help you understand three fundamental truths; they are:

1. What is the state of the dead?
2. Where are the dead?
3. Are the dead lost forever?



What is the state of the dead?
What happens to a person when he is
dead?



If I tell you from the pages of the Bible
what Jesus said about the state of the
dead, would you believe the Bible? I
hope you would!



Jesus said the dead are sleeping!
Yes, you heard it right! The dead are neither
in heaven, purgatory nor in hell.



In John 11:11 Jesus said: “Lazarus has fallen asleep” referring to his death. When Jesus referred to death as sleep, even the disciples misunderstood him and were a bit lost and surprised.



They were initially perplexed, but later on they were able to understand and appreciate the full essence of what Jesus wanted to convey.



John 11

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.)³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”



John 11

⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, ⁷ and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”



John 11

⁸ “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”

⁹ Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. ¹⁰ It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.”



John 11

¹¹ After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has **fallen asleep**; but I am going there **to wake him up**.”

¹² His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” ¹³ Jesus had been **speaking of his death**, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.



John 11

¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, “**Lazarus is dead,** ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

¹⁶ Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”



John 11

¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.



John 11

²¹ “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother **will rise again.**”

²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the **resurrection at the last day.**”



John 11

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “**I am the resurrection and the life.** The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

²⁷ “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”



John 11

²⁸ After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” ²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.



John 11

³¹ When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.



John 11

³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.



John 11

³⁴ “Where have you laid him?” he asked.
“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

³⁵ Jesus wept.

³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”



John 11

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”



John 11

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”



John 11

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a **loud voice**, “**Lazarus, come out!**” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”



Jesus was very precise on the use of the terminology. Jesus called the **first death sleep**. This is a great insight.



Sleep is the state of the dead prior to the resurrection. Solomon clearly said that there is no consciousness in the grave.



Ecclesiastes 9:5-6

⁵ For the living know that they will die,
but the **dead know nothing**;
they have no further reward,
and even their name is forgotten.

⁶ Their love, their hate
and their jealousy have long since
vanished;
never again will they have a part
in anything that happens under the sun.



Jesus considers the dead to be asleep until
awaken by the call of God.



Sleep is used as a designation for death, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The term “sleep” implies the future resurrection of the human body.



To understand the context of the resurrection, consider the following:

1. “And Jehovah said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt **sleep** with thy fathers”
Deuteronomy 31:16



2. “So man lieth down and riseth not: Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, Nor be roused out of their *sleep*.” Job 14:12



3. “And many of those who **sleep** in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.” Daniel 12:2



4. He began to say, “the girl has not died, but is *asleep*.” And they began laughing at Him. Matthew 9:24



5. He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but *asleep*.” Mark 5:39



6. The child has not died, but is *asleep*.
Luke 8:52



7. tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen *asleep* were raised; Matthew 27:52



9. “For David ... fell *asleep*, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay”
Acts 13:36



If the dead are asleep, where are they?

The apostle Peter said in Acts 2:29:
“Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here with us to this day.” The simple truth is David is dead and still in his **graveyard.**



The writer of Hebrews wrote: “These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them **received what had been promised**. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.” (Hebrews 11:39-40)



Therefore, the dead are still dead and buried and waiting. “Waiting for what?” you might ask. The answer is in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.



1 Corinthians 15:20-23

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the **resurrection of the dead** comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But **each in turn**: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.



They are waiting for the resurrection at the
return of Christ.



If there is a person who ought to know where the dead are, it has to be Jesus Christ. He was with The Father in heaven and He came down to earth.



If the saints are in heaven Jesus would have seen them. He would have met the faithful like Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samson, David, Elijah, Daniel, Isaiah, Ezra, etc.



Yet, this is what Jesus said in John 3:13: “**No one has ever gone into the heaven** except the one who came from heaven – the Son of Man.” Jesus confirms that no one, not even Abraham, Moses nor David is in heaven.



Yet, some churches teach that the dead are in heaven gazing at the face of God. And, millions upon millions of Christians believe it without question!



Again, Jesus declared in John 1:18: “No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side has made Him known.”



If anyone wishes to argue with Christ or contradict His statement and insist that the saved are in heaven, it is his prerogative. But if one truly believes that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Master, he should believe what Christ said – that no one has gone into heaven nor seen God.



Where are the dead?

The answer is they are asleep waiting for the second coming of Christ, when all the saints will be resurrected – some to everlasting life while others to judgment.



John 5:28-29

²⁸ “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done what is **good will rise to live**, and those who have done what is evil **will rise to be condemned**.



The Greek word translated as condemned is Kriseos which actually means of-judging. Thus, the correct translation of the text should be rise to judgment and not condemnation. This means the dead are not condemned yet but will still be judged.



This understanding is very important in the process of salvation. Jesus spent considerable time in revealing this truth to apostle John and for him to hand it down for our understanding.



Yes, the unbelieving dead are not yet lost.
Yes, God will give the billions upon billions of
unbelievers and sinners an opportunity to
know Him and to accept Him as their God.



God is truly loving, compassionate, and desirous that all men come to repentance and be saved.



It is rare that a church teaches this truth.
Rather, majority of other churches would like
you to believe in heaven and hell.



The reality of God's truth is magnificent.
Our unbelieving relatives, friends, parents,
spouses, and children are not and will not be
tormented in hell fire for eternity.



Now, we will let the Bible explain the whole process to you. Paul declared that the dead are raised in its order.



1 Corinthians 15:20-25

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.



1 Corinthians 15:20-25

²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.



Paul illustrates that Jesus' resurrection from the death is the first fruit of them that are asleep. As the Lord was resurrected from the dead - so shall all the dead be likewise awoken; each in its own turn.



How do you awaken someone who is asleep? You wake him up by calling him, sounding an alarm, right?



Similarly, that would be how Jesus awakes
the dead who have fallen asleep. Lets
consider:



Similarly, that would be how Jesus awakes the dead who have fallen asleep. Lets consider:

1. Luke 7:12-14. Arise, means to wake up from sleep. The widow's son was death and Jesus raised him back to life. So, you call someone out of slumber – to awaken him.



Luke 7:12-14

¹² As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.”



Luke 7:12-14

¹⁴ Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!”



2. John 11: 43. Jesus cried with a loud voice or shouted. Lazarus come out.



John 11: 43

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”



3. Paul illustrated in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 the resurrection of those who are asleep. The trumpet call of God.



1 Corinthians 15:51-54

⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.



1 Corinthians 15:51-54

⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”



4. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. All combined to
the great awakening.



1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.



1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.



The sequence of the resurrection is
presented in its complete detail in
Revelation 19-22



Revelation 19

¹¹ I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, **whose rider is called Faithful and True**. With justice he judges and wages war.

¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.



Revelation 19

¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.

¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.



Revelation 19

¹⁵ Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**



Revelation 19

¹⁷ And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, “Come, gather together for the great supper of God,

¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small.”



Revelation 19

¹⁹ Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army.



Revelation 19

²⁰ But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the **fiery lake of burning sulfur.**



Revelation 19

²¹ The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.



Revelation 20

¹ And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain.

² He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.



Revelation 20

³ He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.



Revelation 20

4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They **came to life and reigned with Christ** a thousand years.

⁵ (The rest of the dead **did not come to life** until the thousand years were ended.) **This is the first resurrection.**



Revelation 20

⁵ The rest of the dead **did not come to life** until the thousand years were ended.

This declaration is a remarkable statement. The dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended! Absolutely amazing statement that the dead are neither in heaven nor in hell. The dead are at sleep waiting for the resurrection!



Revelation 20

⁶ Blessed and holy are those who share in the **first resurrection**. The **second death** has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.



Revelation 20

⁷ When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison

⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.



Revelation 20

⁹ They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.



Revelation 20

¹⁰ And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the **lake of burning sulfur**, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.



The previous verses talk about the first death and the second death.

It clearly suggests that the first death is not the final death.



It is also clear that there is a 1st resurrection and a second resurrection.

The 1st resurrection is the resurrection of the righteous who will rise to rule with Christ for a thousand years.



The rest of the dead will come up from death after the 1,000 years.

This “second” resurrection is the resurrection of the rest of the dead. Who are these rest of the dead? They are the rest of the balance of humanity who did not believe in Christ Jesus – the unbelievers and sinners.



The great multitude whoever since creation
will rise to be judged.



Revelation 20

¹¹ Then I saw a **great white throne** and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.



Revelation 20

¹² And I saw the **dead, great and small**, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The **dead were judged** according to what they had done as recorded in the books.



Revelation 20

¹³ The sea gave up the **dead** that were in it, and **death and Hades gave up the dead** that were in them, and **each person was judged** according to what they had done.



Revelation 20

¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The **lake of fire** is the **second death**.

¹⁵ Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the **lake of fire**.



1st Resurrection

- 1st death = 1st resurrection = Righteous = reign with Christ 1,000 years



2nd Resurrection

- 1st death = 2nd resurrection = unbelievers = after the 1,000 years reign of Christ = Great White Throne Judgment



2nd Death

- 2nd resurrection = judgment = worthy will be saved = name written in the book of life
- 2nd resurrection = judgment = wicked = thrown into the lake of fire = 2nd death



Revelation 21

¹ Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, **coming down out of heaven from God,** prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.



Revelation 21

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! **God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.**”



Revelation 21

⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’”



Revelation 21

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”



Revelation 21

⁶ He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.

⁷ Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.



Revelation 21

⁸ But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the **fiery lake of burning sulfur**. This is the **second death**.”



Revelation 22

¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.



Revelation 22

³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.



Revelation 22

⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever.



Revelation 22

⁶ The angel said to me, “**These words are trustworthy and true.** The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”



Revelation 22

⁷ “Look, I am coming soon! **Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.**”



Here you have it.
This is the Biblical truth about the state of
the death and the fate of the saved and the
unbelievers.



There is a real lake of fire mentioned in the Bible, but its existence is yet in the future at the time of the great judgment.



This is not quite the same as:

1. Hades (greek) or Sheol (Hebrew)
 - graveyard or cementery – Acts 2:27
2. Gehenna
 - Valley of the Sons of Hinnom or Gai Hinnom an area outside of Jerusalem – Matthew 5:29
3. Tartaro
 - Prison for spirits – 2 Peter 2:4



The Lake of Fire is “called” the second death. The second death is total oblivion and destruction. This is exactly what Jesus spoke of in Matthew 10:28. The total and absolute destruction of both body and soul.



Matthew 10:28

²⁸ 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.**



Jesus said: The truth shall set you free.
Today, we have learned a very important
Biblical truth—the truth about the fate of the
unbeliever.



Today, those who are dead are neither in heaven nor in an ever-burning place of torment—they are all in the cemeteries—in graves awaiting the resurrection.



The truth of the Bible is wonderful.
God is loving. God will not consign
anyone to an everlasting torment in hell
fire. Rather, God will effort everyone an
opportunity to know Him and be saved.



The vast majority of the unbelieving dead will rise again at the end of the age to know God and to learn God's ways and be judged by their deeds.



God is good, gracious and slow to anger. It is God's desire that all people come to know the truth and be saved.



Our role today is to be part of the first resurrection in order that we may rule with Christ, and help bring all the billions of people to God at the Day of Judgment.



My question to you now is “Which is a greater and more excellent plan; the torment of the unbelieving soul for eternity or to provide them an opportunity for repentance and be saved?”



We have read four (4) chapters of the most magnificent book of Revelation concerning the time of the end of the age to you. You have to decide to either believe the truth of the scripture or some man made concept of hell fire.



The angel said, “**These words are trustworthy and true.** The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”



END

