

What The Bible Says About

Eternal Punishment (Hell)



Good Hope
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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What The American Christian Thinks

The Barna Group (barna.org) is founded and headed by Christian George Barna. Barna specializes in polling and running surveys on religious thought in America. For instance, on April 10, 2009 Barna conducted a survey to discover what the average American thought about **Satan**. In a random survey of 1871 people Barna reported:

"Four out of ten Christians (40%) strongly agreed that Satan "is not a living being but is a symbol of evil." An additional two out of ten Christians (19%) said they "agree somewhat" with that perspective. A minority of Christians indicated that they believe Satan is real by disagreeing with the statement: one-quarter (26%) disagreed strongly and about one-tenth (9%) disagreed somewhat. The remaining 8% were not sure what they believe about the existence of Satan."

Nothing ever changes. French Poet **Baudelaire** wrote in 1864 **"the devil's best trick is to persuade you he doesn't exist"**. George Barna concluded that **most American Christians do not believe that Satan exists.**

In an October 31, 2003 report a random sampling of over 1000 adults across 48 continental states as to what they believed about **Heaven and Hell**. Barna reported that

"In all, 76% believe that Heaven exists, while nearly

the same proportion said that there is such a thing as Hell (71%). Those who believe in Heaven were divided between describing Heaven as "a state of eternal existence in God's presence" (46%) and those who said it is "an actual place of rest and reward where souls go after death" (30%). Four out of ten adults believe that Hell is "a state of eternal separation from God's presence" (39%) and one-third (32%) says it is "an actual place of torment and suffering where people's souls go after death." A third perspective that one in eight adults believe is that "Hell is just a symbol of an unknown bad outcome after death" (13%). ... Most Americans do not expect to experience Hell first-hand: just one-half of 1% expect to go to Hell upon their death. Nearly two-thirds of Americans (64%) believe they will go to Heaven. ..."

What you believe matters. If hell is annihilation or a place you can avoid by saying "oops - now I want to believe", does it matter if we tell others about Jesus?

A very interesting aspect of the report was that - and I quote Barna: "the more education a person gets or the more income they earn, the less likely they are to believe that Heaven or Hell exists. While most high-income households and college graduates maintain belief in Heaven and Hell, the finding reinforces the popular notion - and, indeed, Jesus' teaching - that people of economic means and those with considerable education struggle to embrace biblical teachings on such matters. "



People believe that they will, for the most part, go to Heaven, and that only a few of the basest people **Adolf Hitler** or **Ted Bundy** will end up in Hell. The rest, they believe, will end up in Heaven by default. Those who go to hell will not - according to most people - suffer forever. They will instead be *annihilated* after a time.

No Loving God Would Send Anyone To Hell

Most people are familiar with the passage in **1 John 4:8** that states "**God is love**". Based on this they suppose that "**If God is love, He will not send anyone to hell. Or if He does, they will be annihilated quickly and humanely.**" Many unbelievers have said, "I cannot believe in a God Who would send anyone to hell".

The truth is, God doesn't send anyone to hell. They go to hell because they reject the love of God in Christ Jesus. **God has written an invitation to Heaven in twenty-six words (twenty-five words in the King James Version), and asks all who receive that invitation to RSVP.** The invitation is:

John 3:16^{NIV} For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Every person has an opportunity to accept this invitation.



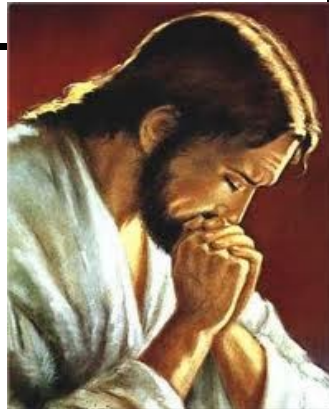
The sad truth is most people treat this invitation like they do one to a human party. They reason, "Well, if I don't RSVP I can just show up with a gift in hand and come in anyway". What's the problem with that?

God IS love, but God is also HOLY. Unholy things and unholy people cannot come into God's presence, nor into God's House (which is Heaven). When the **Prophet Isaiah** was allowed to look into the Throne Room of God he saw the angels crying out:

Isaiah 6:3 ... Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

The Godhead - Father, Son, and Spirit, are HOLY and untouched by sin.

God is three times holy. The **Father is holy**. When Jesus prayed to the Father in Gethsemane He said:



John 17:11 KJV ... I come to thee, Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we [are].

There is no sin at all in God the Father. He is HOLY. The Son of God, **Jesus Christ, is HOLY**. The Scripture says of Him Who is our High Priest:

Hebrews 4:14-15 KJV ... we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin.

Our Lord Jesus walked this earth being tempted as we ourselves are tempted. But He was and is **without sin**. **He is Holy**. And it goes without saying that the Third Person of the Godhead, the **Holy Spirit**, is holy. God is holy - thrice holy. He cannot tolerate sin. This is why Christ had to go to the Cross. God's nature demands that sin be punished - ALWAYS! Jesus Christ died for our sins. If you accept what He did for you, then yours sins do not stand between you and the thrice Holy God.



Jesus Christ went to the Cross to satisfy God's righteousness and pay for our sins. When you surrender to His embrace by faith He *covers you* from the wrath of God!

1 John 2:1-2 KJV ... if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: {2} And he is the propitiation (satisfactory payment) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus Christ stands between the Christian and the Holy

Father, having made payment for our sins by the shedding of His Blood. He is the **propitiation** or the **satisfactory payment for our sins**.

Richard Burkey said:

" {The Reformer} **Martin Luther called the exchange of the unholy life of the believer with Christ's holy life 'the sweet swap'. Jesus takes up our sin, our guilt, our punishment, our death, and even our mistakes. And in the sweet swap we receive from Him His righteousness, His holiness, His forgiveness, His glory, His life, His love, His joy, His peace, His presence. "**

God accepts nothing else as acceptable to cover our offense of sin. Salvation is a free gift from God. The Apostle wrote:

Romans 3:24-25^{KJV} Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: {25} Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,

to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.



Charlie Brown said "Sometimes I lie awake at night, and I ask, "Where have I gone wrong?" Then a voice says to me, "This is going to take more than one night." We are all born

Charlie Brown in God's eyes. We are imperfect, sinful, and unholy. But God has given us a written invitation and a promise in twenty six words. **Christ is the way unto God.** Come to Christ and believe on Him and be saved. Otherwise **the wrath of God abides on you.**

John 3:18^{NIV} Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

The unbeliever in Christ is in a state of condemnation, separate from God. If he dies in this state he will *not* go to be with the Creator - but is cast into a place of eternal punishment. Our Lord Jesus said ...

Matthew 25.46..” And these (unbelieving ones) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal..”

The **righteous go to eternal life, but the unbelieving into everlasting punishment.** It is no "punishment" that ends. In fact, when Jesus preached about Hell He did not show the unbeliever to be annihilated or destroyed.

The Rich Man Chose Hell Over Heaven

Those who come to Jesus are saved. Those who are saved by Jesus have LOVE planted in their hearts. Those who are saved LOVE. The unnamed rich man *having none of the love of God in him* watched *Lazarus suffer* without the slightest qualm. He chose

riches over Christ, living well over Lazarus.

In the famous sermon "**The Rich Man and Lazarus**" (Luke 16:19-31) our Lord Jesus spoke of Eternal Punishment. He said:

Luke 16:19-21 ^{NASB} Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. 20 And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

1 There is immediate torment or immediate comfort after death. When Lazarus died the angels immediately came and got him and took him to Abraham, who comforted him. When the rich man died he **was in torments**.

Luke 16:22 ^{KJV} And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; {23} And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments...



2 The rich man - even in hell - did not repent. He cried out to Abraham for relief, but in no way acknowledged his Creator. The rich man cried out ...

Luke 16:24 ^{KJV} ... Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

The rich man spent his lifetime rejecting the salvation that is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Once he died he lived on in his sin, calling out to Abraham to *send Lazarus like he used to call one of his servants in life* to comfort him.

3 The rich man was tormented in flames. He wasn't destroyed. He did not lose consciousness, but lived on and suffered. "**Cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame**". He is aware, awake, and suffering.

4 Though the rich man begged, he could not be relieved nor could he escape. There was a great gulf fixed between him and the living.

Someone wrote **Dr. Billy Graham** once, saying:

"Why would a loving God send anyone to hell? I can't reconcile the idea of hell with Jesus' teaching about love. I'm not sure I even believe in hell anyway. Maybe everyone will be saved, even if they weren't expecting it. "

Billy replied:

"It may surprise you to discover that no one



taught about hell or warned us against it more than Jesus, and we should take his words very seriously. He declared, "I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him" (Luke 12:5). What is hell? The Bible gives us several vivid images of hell, and without exception, they wouldn't make you want to go there. It calls it a place of "darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12). It also says it is a place of absolute hopelessness, because God is totally absent from it, and those who go there will never experience heaven's joy and beauty and peace. The Bible says hell's inhabitants will be "shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:9). But listen: God doesn't want us to go there! If we do, it will only be because of our stubborn desire to leave God out of our lives. God doesn't hate us; he loves us, and that is why he has provided a way for us to be forgiven of our sins and go to be with him in heaven. That way is Christ, who gave his life for us."

Those Who Receive The Mark Of The Beast Are Tormented Forever

As we studied through our series on the Second Coming of Christ we discussed the **seven year Tribulation (to include the Great Tribulation)**. During that time in human history the local Church is taken off the earth so that *Daniel's Seventieth Week* can be fulfilled. During that seven year Tribulation we saw "**The Beast**" or the **anti-Christ** who rose up to create a one world godless

government. One of the means by which he will gain worldwide power is by forcing everyone to either receive his mark in their hand or on their forehead:

Revelation 13:16-18 ^{KJV} {The anti-Christ's right hand man, the false prophet} **causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number [is] Six hundred threescore [and] six.**

If you want to either buy or sell you will need to receive this mark, or else starve. So every person will be compelled to receive this mark. If a person receives this mark they will be sustained during the Tribulation. However God said through His angel:

Revelation 14:9-11 ^{KJV} **If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive [his] mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.**

Those who receive the mark of the Beast - 666 - "shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels". Notice that "they have no rest day nor night". They shall suffer eternal punishment!

Following the Thousand Year reign of Jesus Christ and the Battle of Gog and Magog (**Revelation 20:7-10**), the Devil, the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet are cast into a Lake of Fire. The Bible says:

Revelation 20:10 ^{KJV} And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet [are], and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

..."they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever". What about the lost? What about those who followed the devil and rejected salvation in the Lord?

The Great White Throne Judgment

Following the Millennial (1000 Year) Reign of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Battle of Gog and Magog, the Lord sits on His Great White Throne. We read:

Revelation 20:11-15 ^{KJV} And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their

works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

What are some truths we can see in this Throne?

1 This is a Throne of Punishment, not reward.

Notice that people are running *away* from this Throne, not *toward* it. In verse 11 we read: "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them". They run, but cannot hide.

2 This is a Throne where there is no discrimination allowed. In verse 12 we read: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God". It doesn't matter if you're Billy Moneybags or some unnamed scrub woman from New York. All are judged equally, regardless of race, creed, nationality, sex, or sexual "orientation".

3 This is a Throne where the Thrice Holy God is the Judge. We are told that they "Stand before God", not an angel, but God. The character of God judges each person.

4 This is a Throne that judges people according to their works. We read in verse 12, "the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works". Those who are

standing at this Throne refused to RSVP to God's invitation of salvation. They thought they could be "**good enough**" to get into Heaven. They thought that they could come late to the Gate and buy their ticket "**at the door**". They stand before God with their works alone.



5 But in the end, this is a Throne that sends the unbeliever where they have always wanted to go. In verse 15 we are told, "**whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire**". You go to Eternal Punishment not for your works, but for not being in the Book of Life. How do you get in the Book of Life? By believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul told the Saints at Philippi:

Philippians 4:1-3 ^{KJV} Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, [my] dearly beloved. **2** I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. **3** And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and [with] other my fellowlabourers, whose names [are] in the book of life.

Born into His Family by faith in Jesus, we live for Him. Jesus said, "**I come that you may have life, and have it more abundantly**" (John 10:10). He is our Life!

