

Heaven, or the Lake that Burneth with Fire and Brimstone?

John said, “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:11-15).

The “lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8), corresponds to a condition applied to the wicked after death. This condition is described by the Greek term Gehenna. The word itself comes from a Hebrew term denoting the “Valley of Hinnom.” The Valley of Hinnom was a place of worship to the pagan god Moloch. King Josiah had destroyed the worship, broken down the altars, and placed the remains of the dead upon them. As a result, Gehenna became a dumping ground, a place that received the waste of Jerusalem. To dispose of this waste, fire burned continually: sulphur was also used to further accomplish the disposal of the waste. Jesus described this condition, saying “And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” (Mark 9:43-48).

The condition of the righteous, after death, is referred to by the apostle Peter, when he said, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3-4). This is the place of “the abode of God and of the hosts of angels” (International Standard Bible Ency.).

Consider the hope stated by the apostle Paul as he encouraged the Thessalonians: “wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead,

even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10).
Are you ready for that day? Ross Triplett, Sr.