



# Why Do People Go to Hell?

## Lesson Overview

### 1. Watch a video

Watch *Do Suicides Go to Hell?* At [bitly.com/SuicidesHell](https://bitly.com/SuicidesHell) (1min 34sec)

### 2. Read

People choose to go to hell because they experience delight there, no matter how unfulfilling it is, pp. 1-2.

### 3. Respond

Choose an ending for the sentences. Discuss your answers, p. 2.

### 4. Discuss

What is hell torment about? How are we tormented? p. 3.

## New Church Concept The Lord Protects

Every evil carries with it a corresponding punishment, which is called the punishment of evil, and is in the evil as if joined with it.... Internal people, as the angels of heaven are, do not wish the retaliation of evil for evil, but from heavenly charity they forgive freely; for they know that the Lord protects from the evil all who are in good, and that He protects according to the good with them. *Apocalypse Explained* 556

## FaithBuilder 2 | Lesson 9 | Eternal Life

People who die a natural death wake up surrounded by angels in the world of spirits. But what happens to people end their own lives? Let's watch a video to find out.

### Watch a video

Watch *Do Suicides Go to Hell?* (1min 34sec) online at [bitly.com/SuicidesHell](https://bitly.com/SuicidesHell). (Enter the bitly link in the web browser bar at the top of your screen.)

### Discuss

Choose questions for discussion.

1. Is hell eternal punishment?
2. The narrator called hell a "life style." What is the basis of the life style of hell? What kinds of ideas and loves do people in hell live by?
3. Why do people choose hell?
4. Does any *single* act determine whether a person goes to heaven or hell? Why or why not is this the case?
5. What happens when a person who takes his or her life wakes up after death?

### Read

Every person, whether going to heaven or hell, wakes up in the world of spirits and is tenderly cared for by angels. Once fully awakened, people start to live a life that is similar to their life on earth. After several months or a year they come into a new state. During this second state it is impossible for people to hide what they *really* think and love. Those who love themselves more than others and put themselves first knowing it will harm others, gravitate towards the company of others who feel this way as well. Eventually people like this choose a life in hell.

It is granted everyone to experience the delight of his evil, provided he does not molest people moved by a delight in good. Yet because evil cannot help but molest good...to keep them from doing harm such people are removed and cast down into their places in hell. *Divine Providence* 324.8

If we look at what makes people in hell happy, it is clear that their happiness is temporary and unfulfilling. Devils feel happiest when exercising the power of their selfish loves over others, and the Lord does not allow them to do this all the time.

For example, their greatest delight consists in their being able to punish, torture, and torment one another. They know how to introduce painful sensations just as if they were in the body, and also dreadful and horrible delusions, as well as fears and phobias. See *Arcana Coelestia* 695

The Lord keeps the power of devils in check by sending angels from heaven to sort out disturbances. The devils obey because they are afraid of being punished. The Lord does not turn away from anyone—even people who choose live in hell.

The Lord is leading every spirit toward Himself through angels and through an inflow from heaven, but...spirits who are absorbed in evil resist strenuously and virtually tear themselves away from the Lord. They are drawn by their evil—by hell, that is—as though it were a rope. Because they are drawn and want to follow because of their love of evil, it follows that they freely cast themselves into hell. *Heaven and Hell* 548

People stay in hell for ever, because they continue to want to do evil and hurt those who are good.

They cannot be taken out of hell, because it cannot be given them to will good to anyone, but only, from fear of penalty, not to do evil, the desire to do it always remaining. *Arcana Coelestia* 7541.2-3

## Respond

Read the following statements. Circle correct answer(s). Discuss.

### 1. There is a hell because

- the Lord loves human freedom and lets people choose to love evil more than good.
- the Lord cannot prevent people from putting themselves ahead of others.
- devils need a place to live.

### 2. The Lord will not save me from going to hell if I want to go there because

- He loves my freedom.
- that would be going against His rules of order.
- I would be unhappy in heaven.

### 3. If a person goes to hell after he dies, he will

- live there for ever.
- live there for a while, and then be free to go to heaven.
- repent and go to heaven.

### 4. Devils cannot make people to go to hell because

- they cannot force people to choose evil.
- people are constantly being protected by the Lord and His angels.
- people are free to choose to love the Lord and follow Him to heaven.

## New Church Concept Eternity of Heaven & Hell

In the case of the good who are to be raised to heaven evil is separated from them in successive stages, and they are filled at each stage with good according to their ability acquired in the world to receive it. But in the case of the evil who are to be cast into hell good is separated from them in successive stages, and they are filled at each stage with evil according to their ability acquired in the world to receive it. Furthermore a person in the next life goes on entering new states and undergoing changes. Those who are being raised to heaven are constantly being made more perfect, both then and afterwards for evermore. But those who are being cast into hell suffer bad experiences, both then and afterwards - experiences which become repeatedly grimmer, till they reach the point at which they do not dare to inflict harm on another. And after they have been cast into hell they remain there forever. They cannot be released from there because no desire for someone else's good can be imparted to them, only a refusal to do harm to someone, from fear of punishment; for the desire to do it will never forsake them. *Arcana Coelestia* 7541.3

## What Are the Torments of Hell?

People may be tormented when they have done something they are ashamed of, or regret doing. Mental anguish, regret and self-doubt sometimes stay with a person long after a deed is done, or a mistake made. The anguish may be reduced by apologizing, facing a penalty, or making some other kind of restitution.

### Hell—A Different Kind of Torment

People are happy when they are free to do what they want to. Angels are happy serving the Lord and others. Devils in hell are happy when controlling other people or possessing wealth. But as soon as one devil rules over another, the persecuted devil turns on him, trying to escape domination, and instead rule over the other fellow. Each devil is able to do no more to another than was done to him—taking revenge as is said in the Old Testament “an eye for an eye!” The torment of hell is the frustration the devils feel at not being able to experience the evils that they love. In fact their punishments are so painful that eventually they become afraid of them, and their desire to do evil is therefore reduced.

### Heaven or Hell

The actual evils and falsities in which people in hell are immersed are what torment them. But the torment is not due to any grief they feel because they have done evil in the past but because—since doing evil is the delight of their life—they cannot do it in the present. For when they do evil there they suffer punishment and torment at the hands of those to whom they do it. What motivates them chiefly when they do evil to one another is a desire to exercise control over others. If others do not allow themselves to be dominated, they turn to punishment and torment. But control there passes by turns from one to another, which means that those who have punished and tormented others are then themselves punished and tormented. And this goes on until eventually the fear of punishment serves to cool their ardor. Hell fire is nothing other than the cravings of self-love, which inflame and torment. See *Arcana Coelestia* 8232

*Choose situations to reflect on or discuss.*

1. You see someone cheating on a test and don't say anything. You are later worried about it. Is your torment from heaven or hell?
2. You really want to go somewhere with a friend, but your parents don't think what you have planned is safe. You feel angry. Is your torment from heaven or hell?
3. You have broken an expensive item at a friend's house, but nobody noticed. You are frightened about being found out. Is your torment from heaven or hell?
4. Someone you love has been hit by a car and badly injured. You feel guilty because you might have prevented it. Is your torment from heaven or hell?
5. You pledge not to lie about something, and fail miserably. Is your torment from heaven or hell?