

# Bible Studies for Life: November 19

*Confident in the Face of Hard Questions: Is Hell Real? • 2*  
*Thessalonians 1:3-12*

*By Becky Brown*



Brown

We  
ha  
ve  
on  
e  
mo  
re  
le  
ss  
on  
to  
ge  
th  
er  
in  
No  
ve  
mb  
er  
.  
Th  
e  
th  
em  
e  
of  
th  
at

le  
ss  
on  
wi  
ll  
be  
th  
an  
ks  
gi  
vi  
ng  
. Th  
is  
mo  
nt  
h  
(a  
lo  
ng  
wi  
th  
th  
is  
ye  
ar  
of  
20  
23  
)  
is  
pi  
ck  
in  
g  
up

sp  
ee  
d  
an  
d  
fl  
yi  
ng  
by  
!  
Th  
is  
le  
ss  
on  
wi  
ll  
co  
mp  
le  
te  
ou  
r  
st  
ud  
y  
of  
ho  
w  
to  
be  
co  
nf  
id  
en  
t  
in

th  
e  
fa  
ce  
of  
di  
ff  
ic  
ul  
t  
qu  
es  
ti  
on  
s  
ab  
ou  
t  
ou  
r  
fa  
it  
h.  
I  
ha  
ve  
pr  
ay  
ed  
fo  
r  
ea  
ch  
re  
ad  
er  
du

ri  
ng  
th  
is  
qu  
ar  
te  
r  
to  
us  
e  
th  
es  
e  
le  
ss  
on  
s  
to  
de  
ve  
lo  
p  
an  
d  
bo  
ls  
te  
r  
th  
ei  
r  
co  
ur  
ag  
e  
to

st  
an  
d  
fi  
rm  
,  
ar  
me  
d  
wi  
th  
th  
e  
pe  
rs  
pe  
ct  
iv  
e  
of  
bi  
bl  
ic  
al  
tr  
ut  
h.

Here is our question this week: "Is Hell Real?" My first response would be a counter question: "Is Heaven Real?" The answer to both questions is YES! The Bible teaches that BOTH are real, BOTH are eternal and BOTH are accessible. Our location will be based on our choice to accept or reject God's Plan A: Jesus. There is no Plan B. We are born with sinful natures and arrive on earth bound for Hell (John 3:16-18). When we choose to serve Jesus, God cancels our reservation in

Hell and provides a place for us in The Father's House.

Our scripture reference comes from 2 Thessalonians 1. Paul is writing to encourage believers in Thessalonica to stand firm in the face of adversity. They, along with many believers in the first century, were being faced with daily persecution because of their relationship with Jesus. They were also being afflicted daily with pressure and stress from circumstances that were arranged to silence their witness in Greece. Their lives were under constant attack. Paul's life had been in such danger there that he had to be ushered out of the city for his own personal safety.

Paul wrote to remind them that they must endure and stand firm. Paul promised them that the suffering would end and that their persecutors would be punished. Meanwhile, they were to hold on to their convictions and leave the results in the hands of The One Who had called them. Those who refuse the Gospel will receive retribution at the proper time. That is God's business. Those who reject Him here on this earth will pay the penalty of being separated from Him in eternity in a place called Hell.

Our choice on earth to enter through the narrow gate and walk the narrow road of faith and life will lead us to the gates of Heaven. Those who choose to refuse Jesus will enter through the wide gate and walk the wide road that will lead to the gates of Hell and destruction (Matthew 7:13-14 words of Jesus in red from the Sermon on the Mount).

2 Thessalonians 1:9 contains a chilling phrase that gives us the truest definition of Hell: "These (who reject Jesus) will pay (their own) penalty of eternal destruction *away from the presence of the Lord* and from the glory of His power." On Calvary, Jesus' shed blood paid for the sins of ALL who would believe in Him for salvation.

So then, the truest definition of Hell is "eternally being

separated from the presence of the Lord." With that thought in mind, I don't even need to know the location of Hell or even try to imagine the gravity of that level of torment. To be separated from the presence of God for eternity is most unimaginable and inconceivable.

In scripture, Jesus talks a lot about Hell. In Matthew 13:42, Hell is "...a furnace of fire where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. In Matthew 25:41, Hell is "...the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." In Matthew 25:46, Hell is a place of "...eternal punishment." In Luke 16:19-31, Hell is "...torment of being far away from God, a place of agony, a great (un-crossable) gulf fixed between Heaven and Hell, a place of no relief and no return."

Hell was designed to be the last place of residence for the devil and his angel followers, those who rebelled against God and were cast from Heaven. This "Accuser of the brethren" was the tempter of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Lucifer wanted them to doubt the Word of God. Satan's destructive plan has never wavered. Thank goodness God's redemptive plan has never wavered, either.

Hell was not designed for people! It was designed for Satan and his angels. However, God in His omniscient, all-knowing attributes knew that many would reject Him and His invitation to The Father's House. God doesn't SEND people to Hell or FORCE them to live in Heaven with Him. He allows us to choose our eternal dwelling place. God is not willing (desirous) for ANY to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). That is the HEART of God.

With that in mind, both Heaven and Hell are "prepared" places. Have you made your eternal reservation for a room in The Father's House? Jesus has pre-paid your bill there with His own blood. Don't choose to live in Hell...it is definitely a REAL place.



*Brown is minister of missions at First Church, Richland.*