

HOW HOT IS HELL?

July 1, 2018

The following question was submitted to me for *A Bible Answer*: ***“Is there a Bible verse that says hell fire is seven times hotter than fire on earth?”***

No, there is no such passage in the Bible. There is a saying in Tibetan Buddhism (dating to eighth-century), that stated, the fire at the end of the world will be seven times hotter than the ordinary human fire; and hell fire is seven times hotter than that. A similar thought is found in the Islamic Hadith (attributed to Muhammad seventh-century), which states “Fire as we know it is one seventieth part of the Fire of Hell.”

It is possible that these sayings had their origin in someone’s reading into the Bible what is not there. Specifically, in Daniel 3:19 we have the account of king Nebuchadnezzar having the fiery furnace, into which he threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, heated seven times hotter than it was usually heated. Even though Jesus in Matthew 13:42,50 referred to hell as a “furnace of fire,” Jesus made no reference to the Daniel account and the Daniel account made no reference to hell. Therefore, if that was the origin of this saying, it is going far beyond what God intended.

Fire seven-times or even seventy-times hotter than any fire on earth, does not add to the fearful imagery of hell that our Lord gave. Jesus described hell as a place of: “*everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Mt. 25:41), “*everlasting punishment*” (Mat. 25:46), “*a place of outer darkness ... weeping and grinding of teeth*” (25:30) and a place “*where the worm diet not and the fire is not quenched*” (Mk. 9:44,46,48). In the book of Revelation it is referred to as a “*lake of fire and brimstone*” where the ungodly are “*tormented day and night forever*” (Rev. 20:10). Paul adds that it is a place removed “*from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power*” (2 The. 1:9). I believe by these statements that God meant for us to have a healthy fear of this place.

We need keep in mind though, that hell is a **spiritual realm** prepared for **spiritual beings**: the devil, his angels (Mat. 25:41) and the souls (not physical bodies) of ungodly mankind. The physical description given is meant to impress upon us the terror of this place, by using physical things as an example of spiritual.