

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You mentioned that you have a friend who is not convinced that she will go to heaven. You wanted us to send you some information that you could use to change her mind because you said, “No body should settle with the thought of hell.”

Our belief is that hell is not a scriptural concept (see attachment) and that salvation is available to all of humanity, but that availability exists on two levels, heavenly and earthly. The subject of the two parts of salvation is basic and crucial for understanding God’s beautiful plan of the ransom for all. When Jesus died, he paid the price once for all. God has a place for everyone in either his heavenly or earthly kingdoms and Jesus’ sacrifice included all of humankind, regardless of when a person lived or whether he has accepted Jesus as his Savior now or not. “This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given at its proper time. (1 Timothy 2:3-6) “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22) These scriptures tell us that Jesus came to provide a ransom for Adam and all his progeny, some now, who are following Jesus and sacrificing their wills, and some later. Those who are sacrificing now have been called by God and look forward to a heavenly reward mentioned in John 13:33-36; 14:1-4; and 17:24. Although there is definitely a heavenly destination, it is only for a very select few who, if faithful, will have a change of nature from human to spiritual (Romans 6:5; 2 Corinthians 5:1-2; Revelation 3:20-21).

But, the vast majority of humankind will be awakened on earth to a period of judgment, or decision, in which they will have an opportunity to willingly follow God’s laws of righteousness and perfect their characters. Jeremiah speaks of this future time. “No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more.” (Jeremiah 31:34) God's purpose was not to have millions be born and die in this present evil world with no chance of salvation. Nor, was it God's purpose to destroy those who knew of Him, but sinned in this present life. When humankind is awakened on earth, there will be a period of judgment, the purpose of which will be to destroy sin and evil and bring everyone by his own free will to salvation. Although this will be a time of pruning, it will also be a time of great joy, in which everyone will understand God’s plan. (See Isaiah 11:1-9.) Bloodshed, hurting or destroying will be only a memory because the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord. God does not wish to destroy those who have sinned in this present life, but to destroy sin and evil and bring everyone to salvation. Would Jesus instruct us to pray for a kingdom to come on earth if there wasn’t going to be one? (Matthew 6:6-13) For more on the peaceable kingdom soon to be established on earth in which all who are not of the heavenly class will come forth from their graves, read Isaiah 35:5-10, Revelation 21:1-4, Revelation 11:15, Isaiah 9:6-7, and Isaiah 65:21-25. We look forward with great joy to that day when all these scriptures will be fulfilled.

We hope we have given you some encouraging information that will be helpful to your friend. It is important to remember that not everyone who has heard of or even learned about Jesus is called to a heavenly reward. But everyone is granted the opportunity for everlasting life either on earth or in heaven. We have attached a short article entitled, "Who Lit the Fire in Hell?" We hope it will be useful in explaining that hell is the grave or the death that everyone goes to and not a place of eternal punishment.

Sincerely,  
Christian Questions Radio