Many people use these terms interchangeably, but biblically, each one refers to a specific concept or location related to life after death. Here’s a clear and scripturally backed explanation of each:

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1. Heaven (The Third Heaven)

Definition: The eternal dwelling place of God, His angels, and ultimately, the redeemed. It is often referred to as the Third Heaven, the highest realm.

- The Apostle Paul described being caught up to the third heaven, a realm of indescribable glory:

> “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven… and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.”
> *— 2 Corinthians 12:2–4 (ESV)*

- It is where Jesus ascended to after His resurrection and where

He prepares an eternal home for believers:

> “In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”
> — *John 14:2 (ESV)*

- God’s transcendence is affirmed in:

> “But will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you…”
> — *2 Chronicles 6:18 (ESV)*

Summary: Heaven is the ultimate and eternal destination for those in Christ — a place of complete joy, peace, and the presence of God.

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2. Paradise (Temporary Rest for the Righteous Dead)

Definition: Paradise refers to an intermediate, blissful state where the souls of believers go after death while awaiting the resurrection of their bodies and final entrance into Heaven.

- Jesus told the repentant thief:

> “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”
> — *Luke 23:43 (ESV)*

- This is understood as a spiritual realm of peace, also referred to as “Abraham’s bosom,” where the righteous like Lazarus were taken:

> “The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side.”

> *— Luke 16:22 (ESV)*

- Also echoed in Revelation where martyred souls are seen under the altar, resting and waiting:

> “I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God… They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer…”
> *— Revelation 6:9–11 (ESV)*

Summary: Paradise is not the final Heaven but a waiting place for believers who have died. It is peaceful and secure a foretaste of what is to come.

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3. Hades (Greek: ᾅδης / Hebrew: Sheol)

Definition: Hades refers to the temporary abode of the dead both righteous and unrighteous before Christ’s resurrection. Post-

resurrection, it is associated more with the waiting place of the wicked.

- In the Old Testament, “Sheol” is often used to describe the grave or realm of the dead:

> “Oh that you would hide me in Sheol, that you would conceal me until your wrath be past...”
> — *Job 14:13 (ESV)*

- David spoke prophetically of Christ, saying:

> “For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.”
> — *Psalm 16:10 (ESV)*

- After Christ’s resurrection, believers are no longer bound to

Hades but go to Paradise, while Hades now holds the unsaved dead:

> “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised…”
> — *Matthew 27:52 (NKJV)*

Summary: Hades is the realm of the dead, often now referring to the waiting place of the unsaved dead, who await final judgment.

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4. Gehenna (Hell of Fire)

Definition: Gehenna refers to a place of fiery torment, used by Jesus to describe the fate of the wicked. It represents divine judgment and is not temporary — it leads into the Lake of Fire.

- Gehenna was a real valley outside Jerusalem (Valley of Hinnom), used as a burning trash dump, which became a symbol of divine judgment.

- Jesus warned of it:

> “And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell [Gehenna].”
> — *Mark 9:45 (ESV)*

- Jesus described it as a place:

> “Where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”
> — *Mark 9:48 (ESV)*

- After final judgment, Gehenna leads to the Lake of Fire:

>

> “Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death...”
> — *Revelation 20:14 (ESV)*

Summary: Gehenna is a place of conscious torment for the wicked — a prelude to the final Lake of Fire. It is permanent and irreversible.

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5. The Lake of Fire (The Second Death)

Definition: The final and eternal punishment for Satan, demons, and all who are not in the Book of Life.

- The final judgment of the wicked occurs at the Great White Throne:

> “If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

> *— Revelation 20:15 (ESV)*

Summary: This is the ultimate destination for those who reject Christ. It follows Gehenna and is final an eternal separation from God.

Where Will You Spend Eternity?

This is not just a theological discussion — it’s a personal and urgent matter. Jesus Christ offers salvation and eternal life to all who believe in Him.

> “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”
> *— John 3:36 (ESV)*

> “The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal

> life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
> — *Romans 6:23 (ESV)*

If you’ve never surrendered your life to Christ, now is the time. Eternal destinies are real and permanent.

What Should You Do?

- Repent: Turn away from sin (Acts 3:19).
- Believe: Trust in Jesus’ death and resurrection (Romans 10:9).
- Follow Him: Live a life led by the Spirit, grounded in the Word (Galatians 5:25).

May God give us wisdom and grace to understand and respond to these truths.

Please share this message with others.

Shalom.

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