

Hallelujah
in Hell

DOWNSIDE  **UP**
 **GOD IS BETTER THAN YOU THOUGHT**

**STUDY
GUIDE**

UPFRONT: Letting the Way Find Us

As young Becky watched the Little Mermaid, she felt the plight of Ariel as her own, imploring her to “Keep singing!” even as all hell was breaking loose. Just as in King David, there was a spirit in Becky giving rise to the song. On some level, we can all relate with the song in hell, because it comes from a familiar place of pain, shame and sorrow. And even if we’ve yet to sing it ourselves, we’ve all heard it before.



What are some examples of songs you’ve heard that have come from a place of pain, shame and sorrow?

- 1.**

When you feel like hell, the song often begins like this: “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”

- 2.** *When have you felt forsaken by God?*

UPTAKE: Letting the Truth Know Us

All our lives, people have been trying to convince us what to believe about hell. Some embrace the idea of eternal conscious torment. Some believe in a type of purgatory. Some talk of hell in terms of eternal separation from God.

- 1.** *What did you grow up believing about hell? How have your beliefs changed over the years? How have they been shaped by passages about hell in the Bible?*

In Scripture, there are at least three different realities that we often refer to with the one English word "hell": Hades (or Sheol), the Lake of Fire, and Gehenna.

- Hades is pictured as the place of outer darkness and the realm of the dead. It begins on the surface of the earth and continues after the body dies.

2. *Who do you think finds themselves in this hell? How do they come to be there?*

- The Lake of Fire and Brimstone can also be translated as the Lake of Fire and Divinity, or even, the Lake of Fire that is Divinity.

3. *What implications would there be if God was not only present in the Lake of Fire, but was also the very substance of the fire? If Hades gets cast into the lake of Fire, as it says in Revelation 20, then what becomes of hell?*

- Gehenna represents the place of Judgment, located just outside Jerusalem, where they used to burn the city's trash. It's there that Light, Life and Love consume darkness, death and isolation. It's the boundary between Jerusalem (City of Peace) and the outer darkness. It's at this boundary that Jesus is crucified.

4. *Based on that imagery, how does the cross reveal God's Judgment? How does it reveal God's Love?*

In Gehenna, described as the burning boundary between this fallen creation and the new creation, Jesus starts quoting Psalm 22 from the cross.

5. *Out of all the Psalms, why do you think Jesus chose this one?*
(For more insight, read Psalm 22 in its entirety)

UPEND: Letting the Life Recreate Us

As King David composed the lament of Psalm 22 at the edge of hell – the same place where Jesus was crucified – he struck the minor chord, just as countless others have done in their songs of pain, shame, and sorrow.

- 1.** *So what purpose does the minor chord serve in a song? And in the same way, what purpose does “going through hell” serve in our lives?*
- 2.** *How does our sin create a longing for God’s grace?*



*Jesus takes the surrendered discord and sings it into harmony. In whatever hell we find ourselves, He descends there to finish the song.
It's His spirit in us singing hallelujah in hell.*

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