

Can there be unlawful captives in hell?

To answer this question we need to look to Adam and Eve. They represent the two categories of those who fall under Satan's dominion. Adam was not deceived but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression.ⁱ Adam and Eve both decided (saw) that the fruit was good to eatⁱⁱ and did eat yet the Holy Spirit, through Paul in his letter to Timothy, distinguishes between them. Adam knew the Lord's command to honour the Lord's tree, the Lord's portion, His tithes of the garden. This can be inferred from Adam's response to God in Genesis 3:12. In verse 13 Eve claimed to be beguiled (to fool, deceive charm) a claim that God did not dispute with her.ⁱⁱⁱ

Adam was cast out of the Garden of Eden (the presence of God) and ultimately into hell (separation from God beyond the gates of death) because he was legally responsible for his choice to allow Satan's dominion over him. He assented to this in the full clear knowledge of his disobedience to God's command, although the consequences of that choice were beyond his power to comprehend. Eve was beguiled, as such she was guilty only as an accessory to Adam's crime. Yet there is only one end of sin, no exceptions - death.^{iv}

All souls who lived before Jesus passed through death. Some went to Abraham's Bosom^v and others to the place of torments. Both of these locations were in the heart of the earth, though an abyss separated them. It is from the Bosom of Abraham that those who had been cleansed by sacrifice and by grace, arose after the resurrection of Jesus.^{vi} They had been held in Satan's dominion because there was no other place for them until the coming of the Redeemer. When Jesus preached to them^{vii} they were released by receiving the gospel, into heaven. For this reason, the evacuation of Abraham's Bosom, hell expanded.^{viii}

From the example of Eve and the Old Testament saints we can know that it is possible to enter hell without having made a clear decision on the offer of salvation through the blood of Jesus because that blood had not yet been shed. It is for lack of knowledge of God that the Lord's people perish. Salvation is always a choice of the soul, a choice made after a clear presentation, legally presented. For those who have been beguiled into hell, knocked down the hill by the consequences of prior events, there still remains the opportunity to choose.

Pastor Richard Wurmbbrand, who suffered many years of torture and imprisonment because of the gospel, noticed this about his fellow captives: "Even under the worst conditions we see men coming to love God and to realise that they have done wrong. Dives (the rich man) in Jesus' parable of poor Lazarus shows signs of a change of heart in hell. He had been an egoist, now he is concerned about his brothers."^{ix} Souls in hell are the same as living souls. If their hearts have not already been hardened to the gospel by a prior decision against it then they still have the capacity to change their hearts and receive it once they hear it, even in hell.

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- i 1 Timothy 2:14
 - ii Genesis 3:6
 - iii 2 Corinthians 11:3
 - iv Romans 5:12,6:23
 - v Luke 16:22-23
 - vi Matthew 27:52-53
 - vii 1 Peter 4:6
 - viii Isaiah 5:14
 - ix In God's Underground p 140