

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

The Lord May Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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Do We Believe In a Literal Hell

The Foundational Questions

Before it can be decided if there is a Heaven or Hell the foundational questions need to be answered:

- a) "Is the Bible the inspired and unerring Word of God?"
- b) "Does God mean what He says and say what He means?"

These are "either" or "or" questions and there can be no middle ground to the answer. Again, if the second question is variable, that is, sometimes God says what He means and sometimes He does not mean what He says, then the answer to the first question is: "The scriptures are not the inspired Word of God"! This opens up the discussion as to whether God is true to His word or just an individual who, at times, makes threats that He does not carry through with. If I believe that God is not a liar who, taking eternity very seriously, explains clearly that there is a Heaven or Hell, then because He means it, wisdom on my part demands an intelligent and present decision.

There must be no mistaking, the reality is that it is irrelevant whether God pronounces it as a promised blessing or a judgment from God, He means what He says. One can consider some examples of both from the scriptures:

- a) God's promised judgments:
 - i) God promised the ancients that He was going to bring a flood of judgment on the world. It was very kind of Him to warn of its approach for He was under no obligation to do so. He could have righteously judged man without warning as He did with the confusion of languages.
 - ii) God warned Pharaoh of approaching judgment, and again He was under no obligation to do for He would have righteously caused the death of Pharaoh and his armies without warning as He did with the warriors of Sennacherib.

The promised judgments of God are not idle threats but dire warnings for humanity to take heed to

- b) God's promised blessings:
 - i) God promised the Israelites that if they killed the passover lamb, put its blood on the lintel and side posts of the home where they were, and if they stayed in that home, the first born would be spared the penalty of death, and this is what happened.
 - ii) He told Noah to build an ark whereby humanity could have been saved from the judgment and none of Noah's family died in the flood.

On these matters we can be absolutely sure when God promises Heaven or Hell as taught in the scriptures, He means what He says. There is a place and state called Heaven, and there is a place and state called Hell.

The Situation Today

One of the things which greatly saddens me is the lack of old time gospel preaching. Being brought up in Ireland I was made aware from early days that there was a heaven and there was a hell. Many were the times when I heard the gospel solemnly preached with earnestness and passion. In 1964 a large tent was erected in Belfast and above the platform was written, "Heaven or hell for eternity, Which?". I fear today we have lost the passion and the reality of an eternal hell for those who reject the Savior. Satan has done a stupendous work of dulling our minds and blinding our eyes. Unconsciously, the philosophies, attitudes, and even preaching of the gospel has become modified. It is many years now since I heard a speaker proclaim the gospel with tears in his eyes and a passion for those who were unsaved. The question we have to stop and ask ourselves is, "Do we really believe that every individual we see or hear, whether it is on the television, face-book, or any other means, that individual is going to spend eternity in one of two places, the lake of fire or heaven?"

I believe there needs to be a balancing in preaching between the love of God and the wrath of God. Sadly, there has been such an imbalance on the love of God warning to "flee from the wrath to come" (Lk. 3:7) has been taken out of the Gospel and the seriousness of Hell taken out of today's preaching. A.W. Pink once said: "What is needed today is a scriptural setting forth of the nature of that punishment which awaits the lost - the awfulness of it, the hopelessness of it, the endlessness of it".

There is a need for intercession for God to open the spiritual eyes of saints and sinners to enter into the reality that there is another sphere of weeping wailing and unspeakable agony. No words can describe this. We speak of those who are dead, but they are only dead to this world. They are unconscious to the earthly happenings around them, caring not for that which they left, or what is happening amongst loved ones. Saints need the operating of the Holy Spirit to infuse into every being the horror of the fierce judgment of God for all eternity. Even if there was no literal fire or darkness, no word of comfort, and nothing that which made life meaningful, in Hell there is something much worse. It is the consciousness of being alone as never known on earth, and painfully aware that there is no hope ever, no glimmer of light at the end of this tunnel, but blackness of darkness for all eternity. Truly God forsaken.

So often preaching the gospel has become simply the presentation of facts interwoven with little illustrative stories, but void of power, conviction, and reality in the life of the picture. Unless an individual is living in the reality of heaven and hell, seeing humanity as individuals being under the wrath of God for all eternity, they will never be able to preach with conviction.

The Descriptions And Agonizing Of Hell

It is impossible to describe to a blind person the beauty of a dawn or sunset. How much more difficult is it to describe what Hell is like? We can use terms such as "fire", "brimstone", "torments", "wailing", etc., but they are only descriptive words which one cannot feel the sensations of. Many years ago I had part of a nerve drilled out without a pain killer. It was painful, but if the reader has never experienced that, my expressions of "pain", "agony", etc., are just words. In seeking to describe hell God can go no further than use words, and yet, in themselves they reveal so much about that dreadful place.

- a) It is a place of unending separation from God, total aloneness and isolation in agonizing pain and horror is dreadful beyond words. There will be no comfort, no hope, and alone with a burning conscience.
- b) It is a place of graduated punishment according to that which was known, for the scriptures teach that those who had more opportunities to repent of sin will suffer more judgement (Matt. 11:21-24). Some will be 'beaten with many stripes' and some with 'few stripes' (Lk. 12:47, 48).
- c) It is a place of unending pain and grief. The Lord suffered bodily and spiritually, so will man who rejects His salvation. There will be 'wailing' and 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' (mentioned 6 times: Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Lk. 13:28).
- d) It is a place of torment. The Lord opened the portal to that other world when he spoke of the rich man who in Hell cried: "I am tormented in this flame" (Lk. 16:23-25) and in Revelation it is recorded: "he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night" (Rev. 14:10, 11).

- e) Added to this are the expressions:
- i) Everlasting fire (Matt. 25:41, 46)
 - ii) The lake of fire (Rev. 20:15)
 - iii) A furnace of fire (Matt. 13:41, 42)
 - vi) A place where man can never repent (Matt. 12:32)
 - vii) A place where they have no rest (Rev. 14:11)
 - viii) A place of blackness and darkness for ever (Jude 13)
 - ix) A place where they gnaw their tongues (Rev. 16:10)
 - x) A place into which people were cast alive (Rev. 19:20)
 - xi) A place where they will drink the wine of the wrath of God (Rev. 14:10)
 - xii) A place where they do not want their loved ones to come (Lk. 16:28)

Hell, the prison house of despair, Here are some things that will not be there,
 No flowers will bloom on the banks of Hell, No beauties of nature, we love so well,
 No comforts of home, music or song, No friendship or joy will be found in that throng,
 No children to brighten that long dreary night, No love or peace, not one ray of light,
 No blood-washed soul with face beaming bright, No loving smile in that region of night,
 No mercy, no pity, pardon or grace, No water, O God, what a terrible place,
 The pangs of the lost no human can tell, Not one moment's ease, there is no rest in Hell.

Hell, the prison house of despair, Here are some things that will be there,
 Fire and brimstone are there, we know, For God in His Word hath told us so,
 Memory, remorse, suffering and pain, Weeping and wailing, but all in vain,
 Blasphemers, swearers, haters of God, Sinners who refused to be washed in the Blood,
 Lovers of pleasure more than of God, Christ rejecters while here on earth trod,
 Murderers, gamblers, drunkards and liars, Will have their place in the lake of fire,
 The filthy, the vile, the cruel and mean, What a horrible mob in Hell will be seen,
 Yea, more than humans on earth can tell, Are the torments and woes of Eternal Hell.
 Catherine Dungell

[Is Eternal Hell Fair?](#)

Is it fair for God to punish an individual for all eternity whenever they have only lived in this world for 40, 50, 60, 100 years? In recent days an individual murdered in our city. Thankfully the murderer was eventually caught and ultimately sent to jail for 25 years approximately. It only took a matter of seconds for that individual to murder someone else yet they must spend 25 years in jail. Is that fair? The reality is that the duration is relevant, as another has said, the punishment must fit the crime. If they have taken the life of another, in his highest level of their life also must be taken to show the value of that which was gone. However, we do not execute criminals today but they also lose their lives, to a certain extent, for to be free to live life in its fullness. To that degree it is fair. What was the crime that man has committed that is so severe that the punishment from God is to be banished from him for all eternity? It is on two levels.

- a) Although an individual today was not at the cross of Calvary, was not in Pilate's judgment hall, yet they, by their attitude are crying: "away with him"; "we will not have this to reign over us"; "crucify"; "we will not have this man but Barabbas". They are deliberately spurning the greatest gift which God can give, procured at the greatest price the world could ever know, and they have spurned the gift multiple times.
- b) Not only so, but using the biblical terminology they have killed Christ. They have "murdered Christ", they have "trampled underfoot the son of God". This was not an activity done unwittingly, neither was a once for all decision, but it is a way of life, total rejection of God and his gift of love, and the putting to death of Christ.

What is suitable punishment for an individual who despises the love of God and treats the sacrifice of Christ as nothing of value?

[Who Will Be In Hell?](#)

Certainly Satan, his Demons, the antichrist and his false prophet will all be in the Lake of Fire. But, in Hell also will be those who do 'not know God' and have not 'obeyed the Gospel' and not received Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord (2 Thess. 1:8). We are to: "Fear him, which after he has killed has power to cast into hell..." (Lk. 12:5). *We are responsible* if we end in Hell, because we are sinners and are warned to repent.

"The fearful, and on believing, and abominable, and murderers, and warmongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." (Rev. 21:8)

What about those who have never heard the Gospel (and there are many in ages gone)? *All* have sinned and all deserve justice and separation from God in Hell. Some people believe that if any simply believed in God they will be somehow saved, but this is contrary to Scripture and the historic faith. Romans chapter 1 speaks of people having no excuse to see that there is a creator, but *that does not save them*. The passage goes on to damn all, not save. No one can be saved unless they come through Jesus Christ and His Gospel (Acts 4:12; 16:30, 31; Rom. 10:9-11).

Thank God there is a way of escape and the words of the angel to Lot and his family sound through the ages: "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee" (Gen. 19:17). For every individual there is the glorious message: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). Good works will never gain God's favour but indeed are an insult to Him. Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man (individual) cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn. 14:6). On the cross of Calvary, in three hours of darkness, Christ was forsaken by God, the forsaking we should have received. He bore that suffering and now from nail pierced hands He offers salvation. How can I get this gift? Not by works, but being a gift it is simply accepted. I have a friend Judy who does the most wonderful baking. Every so often she offers to me muffins and lemon cake. It is a gift, and believing Judy I simply take it and I am thankful for it. That is what God does for us. He offers salvation, and we, setting aside all our works, simply accept for ourselves the gift and thank Him for it. Having received salvation there is a sense of relief, and a joy in knowing ones sins are forgiven, Heaven is their home, and there is the removal of the fear of eternal damnation in hell. My question to you is:

Oh, what will you do with Jesus?
The call comes loud and sweet;
As tenderly He bids you
Your burdens lay at His feet;
Oh, soul so sad and weary,
That sweet voice speaks to thee;
Then what will you do with Jesus?
Oh, what shall the answer be?

Oh, what will you do with Jesus?
The call comes loud and clear;
The solemn words are sounding
In every listening ear;
Eternal life's the question,
And joy through eternity;
Then what will you do with Jesus?
Oh, what shall the answer be?

... Rowan Jennings

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