

## HELL...REALLY? YES...REALLY!

“Men are not in hell because God is angry with them; they are in wrath and darkness because they have done to the light, which infinitely flows forth from God, as that man does to the light who puts out his own eyes.”

**William Law**

“Exit is not a word found in the vocabulary of hell.” **Robert G. Lee**

“The ‘pains of hell’ are not the greatest part of hell. The ‘loss of heaven’ is the weightiest woe of hell.” **John**

**Chrysostom**

“I willingly believe that the damned are, in one sense, successful, rebels to the end; that the doors of hell are locked on the inside.” **C.S. Lewis**

“The lost enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and are therefore self-enslaved.” **C.S. Lewis**

“The national anthem of hell is ‘I Did It My Way.’” **Peter Kreeft**

“Hell is a monument to free will...” Hell is God’s complement to the reality of human dignity and free choice.” **C.K. Chesterton**

“There are no personal relationships in hell.” **C.S. Lewis**

“There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, “Thy

will be done,” and those to whom God says, in the end, “Thy will be done.” All that are in hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek, find. To those who knock, it is opened.” **C.S. Lewis**

“Hell is truth seen too late.” **H.B. Adams**

“There are no agnostics in hell.” **G.B. Wilson**

“As surely as God is eternal, so surely is heaven an endless day without night and hell and endless nights without day.” **J.C. Ryle**

“What humanity needs is not the promise of a scientific immortality, but compassionate pity in this life and infinite mercy on the Day of Judgement.” **Joseph Conrad**

“Most Christian organizations would like to send their workers to Bible College for five years. I would like to send our workers to hell for five minutes. That would prepare them for a lifetime of compassionate ministry.” **William Booth – Founder of the Salvation Army.**

“Just before his death in 1912; Booth issued this prophetic warning. He saw

a day when the church would teach forgiveness without repentance,

salvation without regeneration...and a heaven without hell. **William Booth**

- What William Booth foretold over 100 years ago, we now see in a rising wave of Universalism.
  - What is universalism?
    - The believe that all persons will eventually be saved and thus that no one will be eternally lost. Some Universalists hold that all will be saved because of the work of Christ, but some deny the unique deity of Christ and necessity of His work for salvation in favor of a pluralistic view that sees the world's religions as equally valid.

“Universalism basically is the belief that all people will be saved. Jesus’ death and resurrection will automatically, or at least eventually, save the whole human race. Personal repentance and faith in Christ are not necessary for going to heaven. The Christian mission is reduced to announcing to people the ‘good news’ that they are already saved. But does Scripture teach that everyone will be saved? There is overwhelming biblical evidence to the contrary.” **David Shibley**

- What does the Bible say?

<sup>19</sup> “Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. <sup>20</sup> And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup> and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. <sup>22</sup> Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and \*saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. <sup>24</sup> And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.’ <sup>27</sup> And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house— <sup>28</sup> for I have five

brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’<sup>29</sup> But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’<sup>30</sup> But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’<sup>31</sup> But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

#### **Luke 16:19-31 NASB**

- Jesus is NOT a Universalist!
  - Jesus made both repentance and faith a prerequisite for forgiveness. **(Mark 1:15)**
  - The ‘water of life’ is offered to everyone but not all receive it or want to receive it. See **Revelation 22:17**
- The Bible teaches that there is a judgement after physical death...”It is appointed once for men to die, but after this the judgement.” **(Hebrews 9:27)**
  - Jesus speaks of a horrible place of judgement for those who never believe in Him and never enter the Kingdom. See **Matthew 13:41-42**
  - The Bible also teaches God’s judgement of sin but also love for a sinful people.

<sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. **Romans 5:8-9 NASB**

- There is a perfect way for all to come to God, live in His presence, and enjoy His love.
  - See **John 3:3; 3:16; 14:6, Acts 4:12; 16:31**
- It is God’s will for everyone to believe in Jesus and become part of His family. **(John 1:12)**

“whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” **John 3:14-15**

- Here is the truth...heaven is not ‘automatic’...we are born dead in our trespasses and sins and we must believe and receive Jesus.

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

#### **John 3:18 NASB**

He who believes in Him [who clings to, trusts in, relies on Him] is not judged [he who trusts in Him never comes up for judgment; for him there is no rejection, no condemnation—he incurs no damnation]; but he who does not believe (cleave to, rely on, trust in Him) is judged already [he has already been convicted and has already received his sentence] because he has not believed in *and* trusted in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [He is condemned for refusing to let his trust rest in Christ's name.] **John 3:18 AMPC**

### ***The Nature of Hell***

1. God is the creator and upholder of all life. All people are accordingly accountable to Him for their lives.
2. In the pursuance of His purposes, God has already determined a coming day of judgement.
3. We will all meet God on the day of judgement when our entire lives and deeds will be assessed in His presence.
4. None of us will be able to survive that scrutiny on the basis of our personal moral and spiritual achievements, for 'all have sinned.'
5. Our only hope will be Jesus Christ, His perfect life of righteousness and His death for our sins. Our hope will lie in these having been applied to us, and then and there availing for us.
6. Although the only basis of our acceptance will be Jesus Christ and our embrace of Him, the judgement will also take account of how our faith has affected our lives.
7. God Himself in the person of His Son will effect the judgement.
8. We recall from the teaching of Jesus that faith may be 'as a grain of mustard seed,' and also His repeated warning of some degree of surprise on the day of judgement.
9. Those so united to Christ as to be able to claim justification through Him will be granted, a place within the new, eternal order of the kingdom of God, the 'new heaven and new earth of righteousness.'
10. Those who fail the scrutiny of the day of judgement will be assigned to hell. Not all will be saved.
11. There will be some variety in the degree of punishment, and hence of suffering, in hell.

12. While the images used of hell are necessarily metaphorical, we cannot evade the clear impression that hell is experienced as an existence of conscious and terrible judgement.

13. This assignment to hell is irrevocable. There will be no 'second chance.'

14. The redeemed who enter the 'new heaven and earth' will be completely fulfilled, particularly through a new, all-pervading relationship to God, which no unhappiness will mar.

<sup>9</sup>*The Nature of Hell*, report by the Evangelical Alliance Commission on Truth and Unity Among Evangelicals (Acute, 2000)

### **TEN THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HELL AND ETERNAL CONSCIOUS PUNISHMENT:**

"Hell is real and people are going there." **Sam Storms, Nov 17, 2017**

I take no special delight in writing this article. But hell is real and people are going there. So let's look closely at what the Bible has to say about it as well as the ongoing debate over whether hell is eternal conscious punishment.

1. The word most often translated 'hell' in the NT is Gehenna, the Greek equivalent for the 'valley of Hinnom.' This valley is immediately southwest of Jerusalem, still visible from the Mt. of Olives. At one time it was there that human sacrifices were made to the pagan deity Moloch. (**2 Kings 23:10, 2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6; cf. Jeremiah 7:31-32; 19:5ff**)
2. The most graphic portrayal of hell is found in **Revelation 14:9-11**. There we read: "And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of His anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."
3. John goes on to describe the duration of this punishment in two statements in **v11**. First, the 'smoke' of their torment, i.e., the smoke of the fire and sulfur

(v10) ‘goes up forever and ever’ (see **Isaiah 34:9-10** for the **OT** background). It is almost as if there is a smoldering testimony to the consequences of sin and the justice of God’s wrath. The duration of this phenomenon is said to be, literally, ‘unto the ages of the ages.’ This terminology occurs thirteen times in **Revelation**: three times with reference to the duration of the praise, glory, and dominion given to God (**1:6; 5:13; 7:12**); five times with reference to the length of life of God or Christ (**1:18; 4:9; 10; 10:6; 15:7**); once referring to the length of God’s reign in Christ (**11:15**); once referring to the length of the saints’ reign (**22:5**); once referring to the ascension of the smoke of destroyed Babylon (**19:3**); once referring to the duration of torment of the devil, beast, and false prophet (**20:10**); and, of course, once here in **14:11**. Second, ‘they have no rest, day or night’ (the latter phrase being parallel to ‘forever and ever’).

In **Revelation 4:8**, the same terminology occurs with regard to the duration of worship on the part of the four living creatures. That from which they have ‘no rest’ is, presumably, the torment caused by the fire and brimstone. It is also said that to suggest hell lasts forever is to say that God does not, in actual fact, achieve victory over sin and evil. How can God be said to ‘win’ if His enemies continue to exist forever? Would not eternal punishment entail an eternal cosmological dualism? Would not the eternally continuous existence of hell and its occupants mar the beauty and joy of heaven? Perhaps the most emotionally charged argument is that eternal conscious punishment in hell is morally repugnant to any sensible conscience. It is emotionally abhorrent to suggest that a God of love and mercy and kindness would ‘torture’ (their word) people in hell forever and ever. No matter how grievous the sin(s), horrific pain, whether spiritual or physical or both, that goes on and on for billions of years, and after that for billions of years, ad infinitum, is more than they can tolerate.

8. As for the argument from justice, we humans are hardly the ones to assess the enormity of our sins. “Is the magnitude of our sin established by our own status, or by the degree of offense against the sovereign, transcendent God?” **Carson, 534**) As **John Piper** has pointed out, “The essential thing is that degrees of blameworthiness come not from how long you offend dignity, but from how high the dignity is that you offend.” (**Let the Nations be Glad, 127**) In other words, our sin is deserving of infinite punishment because of the infinite glory of the One against whom it is perpetrated.

9. Only sin that goes unpunished would indicate a failure of justice and a defeat of God's purpose. The ongoing existence of hell and its occupants would just as readily reflect on the glory of God's holiness and His righteous opposition to evil. Perhaps the idea of endless punishing is less offensive when the idea of endless sinning is considered. In other words, if those in hell never cease to sin, why should they ever cease to suffer? In this regard many point to **Revelation 22:11**, where the angel says to John the apostle, "Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy." Says **Carson**: "If the holy and those who do right continue to be holy and to do right, in anticipation of the perfect holiness and rightness to be lived and practiced throughout all eternity, should we not also conclude that the vile continue in their vileness in anticipation of the vileness they will live and practice throughout all eternity" (533).

If one should reject this notion and argue that people pay fully for their sins in hell and at some point cease to sin, why can't they then be brought into heaven (thereby turning hell into purgatory)? If their sins have not been fully paid for in hell, on what grounds does justice permit them to be annihilated? On this last point, I suspect the annihilationist could respond by saying that extinction of being is itself the payment for sin. The ultimate destruction of the soul, i.e., obliteration, is itself the full and final judicial consequence for sin. One's legal debt for sins committed can never be thought of as fully paid until one is annihilated. But would the unsaved regard annihilation as punishment for sin or as release from it? Would not the termination of conscious punishment for sin or as release from it? Would not the termination of conscious punishment through annihilation be more an expression of mercy than of justice?

10. Finally, one must explain **Matthew 25:46** and **Revelation 20:10-15**.

Regardless of what one thinks about the identity of the beast and false prophet, no evangelical denies that Satan is a sentient being. Thus here is at least one such 'person' who clearly suffers eternal conscious torment. "We may not feel as much sympathy for him as for fellow human beings, and we may cheerfully insist that he is more evil than any human being, but even so,

it is hard to see how the arguments deployed against the notion of eternal conscious suffering of sinful human beings would be any less cogent against the devil.” (**Carson, 527**)

One final comment is in order. What you and I ‘like’ is utterly and absolutely irrelevant. God doesn’t set His eternal agenda based on what we ‘prefer.’ What we might ‘hope’ to be true simply doesn’t matter. What does or does not make us ‘feel comfortable’ has no bearing on the truth or falsity of this issue. The fact that we have an intuitive sense for what strikes us as ‘far’ or ‘just’ please no part whatsoever in coming to a conclusion on whether or not there is an eternal hell. The fact that we may not enjoy the thought of eternal conscious punishment doesn’t make it go away! The fact that you ‘feel’ the existence of hell is inconsistent with your concept of God doesn’t mean there isn’t one. What we ‘want’ or ‘hope’ or ‘desire’ has no relevance at all in this debate. The only important question is, ‘Does the bible teach it?’ And if the Bible does teach it (and **Revelation 14** together with numerous other texts would indicate it does), our responsibility is to believe it and fervently and faithfully proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ as the only hope sinners have for now and eternity.