

I. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT HELL AND WHY A PERSON WOULDN'T WANT TO GO THERE

By Pastor Richard H. Jones

A. HELL IS DESCRIBED AS A REAL PLACE WHERE THE UNSAVED WILL BE CONFINED AND PUNISHED.

1. This place called "hell" is located somewhere in the heart of the earth. We know this is true because Jesus descended into Abraham's bosom which used to be there and was separated from a place of torments by a great gulf (Luke 16:26; Matt. 12:39,40).
2. This place called "hell" is spoken of in a four-fold way:
 - a. Firstly, the word translated "hell" in Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Lk. 10:15; Lk. 16:23; Acts 2:27; Rev. 1:18; 20:13,14 is "hades." This word is used to refer to the unseen realm of departed souls. For those saved it means being with the Lord (II Cor. 5:8), for those unsaved it means being in conscious torments (Lk. 16:23).
 - b. Secondly, the word translated "hell" in Matt. 5:22, 29,30; 10:28; 23:15, 35; Mk. 9:43,45,47, Lk. 12:5; Jas. 3:6 is "Gehenna." This word means "Valley of Hinnom" and has reference to the place outside the south wall of Jerusalem where garbage was burned. In this sense it symbolizes hell as a real place of continual burning and destruction.
 - c. Thirdly, the word translated "hell" in II Pet. 2:4 is "Tartaros." This word is used to refer to a real place in hell where certain fallen angels are being bound until the day of judgment (Jude 6).
 - d. Fourthly, the word translated "bottomless pit" in Rev. 9:1,2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3 is "Pit of Abyss." This word identifies hell as the real place from which demons will be released in the tribulation period and Satan will be bound during the Millennial Reign of Christ (Rev. 9:1-11; 20:1,2).
3. This place called "hell" is a place beyond the grave where the unsaved will suffer conscious and eternal punishment (Matt. 25:41,46; Rev. 14:10,11; 20:10,15).
 - a. Some cultic groups like the Jehovah Witnesses contend that hell is the grave and they interpret the word "Gehenna" to mean complete annihilation or extinction. They deny any conscious existence between death and the resurrection and any torments beyond the grave. Note if the grave is hell the following passages would make little sense. But it is evident that they speak rather of a real place of torments:

"The wicked shall be turned into hell (sheol), and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9:17).

"Thou shalt beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell" (sheol) (Prov. 23:14).

"Though they dig into hell (sheol) thence shall mine hand take them, though they climb up to heaven from where will I bring them down" (Amos 9:2).

Note also what the Bible says about conscious life after death:

- (1) The Bible says the spirit of Samuel conversed with King Saul after he had been dead for some time (I Sam. 28:3-10).
 - (2) The Bible says Moses and Elijah appeared on the Mt. of Transfiguration and talked with the Lord Jesus (Matt. 17:1-3).
 - (3) The Bible says the rich man who went to hell could speak and hear and was conscious of the torments of hell (Lk. 16:19-31).
 - (4) The Bible says that the Lord Jesus told the repentant thief he would be with Him that same day in paradise (Lk 23:39-46). And He was descending into the heart of the earth.
 - (5) The Bible says that the martyrs of the tribulation period will ask the Lord to avenge their murders (Rev. 6:9-11).
 - (6) Notice... to believe that hell is the grave is to be deceived by the great deceiver who is Satan himself.
- b. Notice hell will be the awful consequence of rejecting Christ and dying in one's sins (Jn. 8:24). The moment one dies rejecting Christ and denying that He was God in the flesh, he will be in a real place of conscious existence and will suffer the torments of hell.
4. This place called "hell" is the temporary destiny of those who are doomed to everlasting punishment. The Bible says those in hell will be cast into the lake of fire at the Great White Throne Judgment. This will then be their eternal abode along with the devil, the antichrist, the false prophet and the fallen angels (Rev. 14:9-11; 20:10; Matt.25:41; Rev. 21:8). The Bible also says that hades which refers to a specific place will also be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). Apparently, the new earth will have no place called hell in it.

B. HELL IS DESCRIBED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS WHICH SPEAK OF THE TORMENTS OF THAT AWFUL PLACE.

1. Hell is described as a real place where there is "fire" (Matt. 18:9; Mk. 9:47).
 - a. This "fire" will devour all those who go there (Isa. 33:14; Heb. 10:27).
 - b. This "fire" is called a furnace and it shall never be quenched (Mk. 9:43; Matt. 3:12; 13:42).
 - c. This "fire" will burn and torment all those who go there (Rev. 14:10,11).
2. Hell is described as a real place that is "everlasting."
 - a. The "fires" of hell will be eternal or "everlasting" (Matt. 25:41; Jude 7).

- b. The "torments" of hell will be "everlasting" (Rev. 14:10,11; Isa. 33:14; II Thess. 1:9).
 - c. The "sentence" to hell will be eternal or "everlasting judgment and punishment" (Heb. 6:2; Matt. 25:46). There will be no relief, no reprieve and no release (Lk. 16:26).
3. Hell is described as a real place of conscience existence (Lk. 16:23,24).
- 1. Those in hell will feel the "pains" of hell (Psa. 116:3; Lk 16:23; Matt. 8:12; 13:42).
 - 2. Those in hell will have all their "senses." They'll be able to speak, to hear, to cry out in the flames and will remember the opportunities they had to be saved (Lk. 16:25).
 - 4. Hell is described as a place of "outer darkness" (Matt. 8:12). This image may have been taken from the Roman dungeons or prisons which were underground and shut out from the light of the sun. If so those in hell will be shut out from the light of heaven. Others suggest that this darkness refers to that outside of the wedding place when the door was shut and some were not permitted to enter. But whatever the imagery is referred to, the meaning is the same - those in hell will be separated from God, from those saved, from the light of heaven and from a never-ending life there.

C. HELL IS DESCRIBED AS A PLACE OF ABANDONMENT FROM GOD AND ALL THAT IS HOLY (II THESS. 1:8,9).

- 1. This means those in hell will have "no mercy" (Lk. 16:24).
- 2. This means those in hell will have "no hope" of a second chance.
- 3. This means those in hell will have "no reprieve or release" for all eternity (Lk. 16:26).
- 4. Notice all those who die without Christ will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14,15; 21:8). This is referred to as the "second" death. The "first" death (physical) will separate the soul from the body (James 2:26) but the "second" death (spiritual) will separate the sinner from God forever (II Thess. 1:9; Rev. 21:8)

D. HELL IS DESCRIBED AS A PLACE TO BE SHUNNED AT ALL COSTS.

- 1. The Bible teaches that a soul is more valuable than the whole world (Mk. 8:36,37).
- 2. The Bible teaches that a person should fear God above anyone or anything else because of His power to destroy the soul in hell (Matt. 10:28).
- 3. The Lord Jesus warned others about hell and how the sinful exercise of certain parts of our

bodies should be restrained (Mk 9:43,45,47).

- a. To cut off one's "hand" would mean to sever ourselves from certain things we would have a propensity to "do."
- b. To cut off one's "foot" would mean to sever ourselves from certain places we would have a propensity to "go."
- c. To pluck out one's "eye" would mean to sever ourselves from certain lusts we would have a propensity to "lust after."