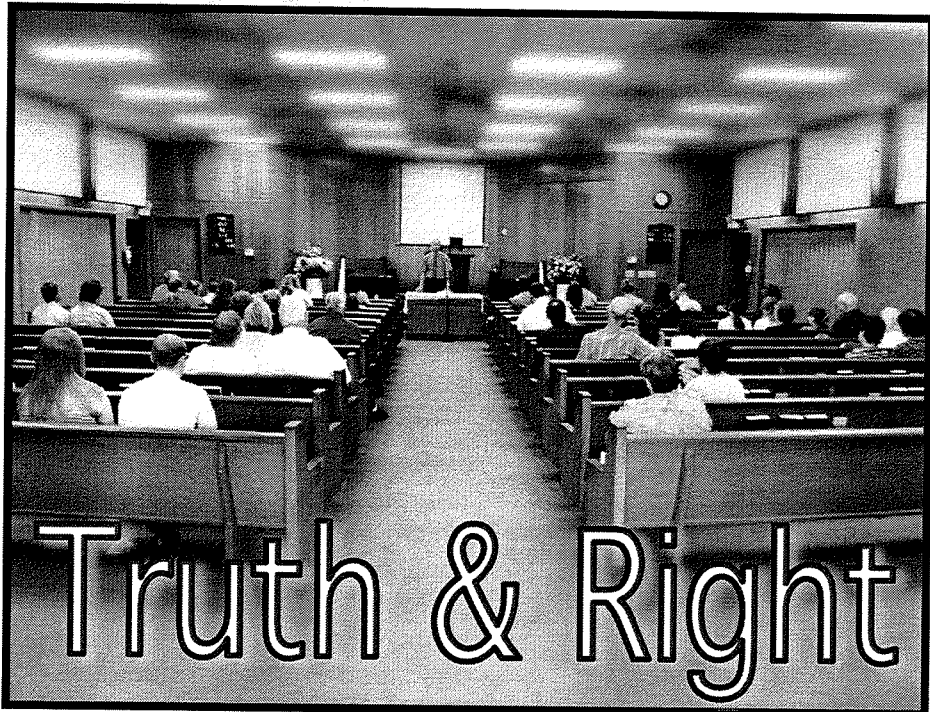


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Truth & Right

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The Reality Of Hell

In Matthew 25:31-46 the Bible teaches that at the final judgment while the righteous will enter heaven to enjoy everlasting life, the wicked will go into eternal punishment. The thought of everlasting suffering is repulsive to many. No doubt this aversion lies at the bottom of much of the unbelief to what the Bible teaches about hell.

Hell, despite the denials of many, is real. Sin demands it. Sin is a violation of the law of God (1

John 3:4). If there were no punishment for sin, then there could be no law for law without penalty is null and void. If there is no law, there would be no sin. That would make the death of Jesus useless because if there is no sin there is no responsibility to save anyone from it.

The reality of life after death also demands the reality of hell. Jesus taught, in Matthew 22:23-33, that there

was life after physical death. In the account of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), two distinct destinies are presented: comfort for the righteous but punishment for the wicked.

Hell was originally prepared for Satan and his angels (Matt. 25:41). Jude 6 states that fallen angels are placed in chains awaiting judgment. Yet, when men and women join the devil in his work and live in servitude to him, they must suffer the same fate that will befall him.

Hell Not Contrary To The Nature of God

Many people find it difficult to accept the reality of hell because they cannot believe that a loving and merciful God could create such a place. But hell is not contrary to the nature of God. If no punishment were given for violation of His law, then God would not be just. Being a just God, He will reward the righteous and punish the wicked. Hell is to punish the wicked.

What Hell Is Like

Hell is eternal. It is described that way in Matthew 25:46. In Romans 16:26 God is said to be eternal. The Holy

Spirit, in Hebrews 9:14, is also described as eternal. The same word in the Greek language in which the New Testament was originally written was used in all three of these passages. The word means eternal, everlasting, without end, never to cease. Hell and the punishment meted out there will last as long as God forever.

Hell is a place of darkness. Jude 13 speaks of "the blackness of darkness" to which false teachers will be confined forever. God is light (1 John 1:5) and the Father of lights (Jas. 1:17). Hell is described as darkness because it is the place farthest removed from God. There will be no God to listen to pleas for mercy or give hope of release.

Hell is a place of fire. Matthew 13:42 speaks of it as a furnace of fire. Matthew 25:41 calls it an everlasting fire. Mark 9:44-45 says the fire is never quenched. Revelation 21:8 refers to it as the lake of fire. There will be no relief from its fires because Revelation 14:11 says the smoke from the fires of torment ascends forever and ever.

There is no rest there. Revelation 14:11 says the

wicked will have no rest from their torment day or night.

As there is no rest, there will be no relief. The rich man in Luke 16, even while awaiting the final judgment in Tartarus, wanted a drop of water to cool his tormented tongue but he did not get it.

Who Will Go There

As already noted, Satan and his angels will be there (Matt. 25:41). Revelation 21:8 says the "cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars" will be there. Those who do not know God and those who will not obey the gospel of Christ will be punished with everlasting destruction (2 Thes. 1:7-9). In short, all sinners who choose to remain in their sin will be found in hell.

Why People Will Go There

God desires that all be saved (1 Tim. 2:1-4). God is all-powerful and the gospel, His power to save (Rom. 1:16), can save to the uttermost. People will not be in hell because God will not save them. God sent His Son into the world so that all might have salvation (John 3:16) and He has extended His

invitation to all who would come to Him (Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:17).

If a person ends up in hell, he is lost by his own free choice. He has no one to blame but himself. Many see no need to be interested in spiritual things and are indifferent to the pleas of the gospel. Others refuse to obey the gospel or submit to the will of God. Some refuse to believe. Others just love sin more than righteousness. Some become unfaithful in service. Many put off obeying until it is too late.

Conclusion

Hell is real. The suffering of it is waiting for the sinful. You can escape the torments found there by giving obedience to Christ now. He will wash away the guilt of your sins and grant you hope of a life of eternal bliss in His presence.

Gene Taylor

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- Job said his face was R___ with weeping (Job 16:16)
- The officials paid Judas in coins of S_____ (Matt. 26:15)
- G___ hair is called a crown of glory (Prov. 16:31)
- Mordecai wore royal robes of B___ (Esther 8:15)
- God gave us the G_____ plants for food (Gen. 9:3)
- A widow put in two small C_____ coins (Luke 21:1-2)
- One of the horses in John's vision was B_____ (Rev. 6:5)
- Paul said he coveted no one's G___ (Acts 20:33)
- The Lord says, "though your sins are like S_____..."
- "...they shall be as W_____ as snow;" (Isa. 1:18)
- Lydia was a seller of P_____ goods (Acts 16:14)