

Hell Is a Reality!

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Introduction

Several years ago, a major radio station in Dallas, Texas, sent a reporter into the streets with the question, "Who's going to hell?" Ninety-eight percent of the five hundred people surveyed could not think of anyone they knew who might be bound for the lake of fire. This should not come as a surprise when we think of the philosophical climate that generally prevails. Those who once believed in the Bible as the Word of God have had that faith destroyed in the past few decades by the combined forces of infidel theologians and atheistic scientists and professors. Atheism (both actual and practical) has logically followed infidelity toward the Bible.

The result was predictable. Sensual, secular men and women now dominate the "influencer class." They have found the rationalization they sought to live like brute beasts. If the Bible is not the Word of God, men are without restraint of principle or threat of punishment. It is no wonder that so many people deny the reality of Hell, either openly or tacitly. Besides these Hell-deniers, there are those religionists (e.g., "Jehovah's Witnesses") whose doctrinal scheme includes a denial of eternal punishment. At least one of our brethren has adopted this view and has written a large book to propagate it (*The Fire that Consumes*, Edward Fudge). Surely, these few observations indicate the dire need for emphasis on the Bible doctrine of Hell.

The Reality of Heaven

The Bible teaches the reality of an eternal dwelling place in the presence of God for the souls of redeemed men. At His ascension, the Lord Jesus went to prepare this place for His servants and promised to return to take them there (John 14:1-3). These righteous souls, redeemed by Jesus' blood, will "inherit" the heavenly kingdom with eternal life (Mat. 25:34, 46b). Paul called the reward of his righteous labors "the crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8). Peter described Heaven as an incorruptible, undefiled, unfading inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4). The book of Revelation contains several descriptions of Heaven. The Bible closes with a picture of Heaven (Rev. 22:1-5).

The Reality of Hell

The Bible just as surely teaches the reality of Hell as it does that of Heaven. Jesus said considerably more about eternal punishment, damnation, and the judgment that will usher the

ungodly into Hell than He did about Heaven. Every time he commanded men to repent (Mat. 4:17; Luke 13:3; et al.), He was warning them to avoid Hell. He denounced entire cities as Hell-bound (Luke 10:10-16). He warned the apostles to fear God who had the power to cast them into Hell (Mat. 10:28). At the judgment the wicked shall be cast into the furnace of fire where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth (Mat. 13:49-50). His great commission warned unbelievers of their damnation (Mark 16:16).

Paul taught that those who know not God and have obeyed not the Gospel will, at the coming of the Lord, "...suffer eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 The. 1:9). "Swift Destruction" will be brought upon false teachers, according to Peter (2 Pet. 2:1). Jude taught that "the blackness of darkness hath been reserved forever" for evil men and angels (Jude 13). A major theme of the book of Revelation is the final overthrow of Satan and all his servants, who will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where they will be tormented for ever and ever (Rev. 20:10).

It is important to note that Bible doctrine on both Heaven and Hell is rooted in the perfect justice and mercy of God (Rom. 11:22). Just as surely as God is merciful, so surely does Heaven exist. Just as surely as God is just, **so surely is Hell a reality.**

Strangely, many want to hold on to the reality of Heaven, while denying Hell. However, this denies logic and consistency as well as Scripture. Inspired teachers, including the Lord, spoke with great certainty about both Hell and Heaven—often in the same contexts (e.g., Mat, 8:11-12; 18:8; 25:46; 2 The. 1:7-9). Were they inspired and truthful only when speaking about Heaven? The Biblical doctrine of Hell is the necessary counterpart and corollary of the doctrine of Heaven. Denial of the reality of Hell is tantamount to denying the inspiration of the men who taught its reality, including the Christ of God. He cannot be the Savior of men or the Son of God if His teaching is faulty on this or any subject.

The Population of Hell

Hell is so much depicted as a reality in the Bible that its populace is described in considerable detail. Such terms as "unrighteous," "unbelievers," "wicked," and "disobedient" are used, but more specifically,

... [N]either fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Galatians 5:19-21 contains a similar (only longer) list of those who will populate Hell. Those who will be cast into Hell include

... [T]he fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters and all liars... (Rev. 21:8; cf. 22:15).

John summarized the entire populace of that dreadful, eternal realm by saying that all whose names were not found written in the Book of Life will be cast therein (Rev. 20:15).

Imagine every evil, wicked, cruel, selfish, base, reprobate, false teacher, and tyrant who ever lived, plus all of those who have themselves been misled into sin and error and **there you have the populace of Hell**. Now try to imagine being **confined** with the likes of such monsters of evil as Mohammed, Joseph Stalin (and all his Soviet Communist successors), Mao Zedong (and all his Red Chinese Communist successors), Adolph Hitler, and a long list of others **with no escape for all eternity**. Even if there were no torment of fire, the torment of association would be all but unbearable.

Conclusion

Our nation and world were much healthier morally and spiritually when a widespread belief in the reality of Hell existed. May God's people with greater zeal help men recapture this conviction. Further, may we help more and more to believe and obey the Gospel so as to avoid Hell.

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