

more time than anyone else in the Bible warning mankind about Hell? The reason is because He knows what is waiting for us on the other side of death. Imagine the following scenario: You are driving down an unfamiliar road and a car meets you coming from the opposite direction. The driver (a local resident) flags you down. In a desperate voice he informs you that a bridge up the road has just been washed out and encourages you to follow him to a safe passage. What would you do? Would you ignore him and drive on ahead, or would you take his warning seriously, turn around, and follow

him to safety?

This is exactly what Jesus did. He came to earth to warn man of the danger that awaited him if he stayed on his chosen path. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

We need to take the warnings

that Jesus gives us seriously. Hell is not a place where anyone should want to spend eternity. Jesus has shown us the way to avoid Hell, but Jesus leaves the choice up to us. Heaven will be our eternal home if we will take the way of escape that Jesus provides. We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of our sins, and be baptized in water for the remission of our sins (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Mark 16:16). As erring Christians, we must confess our sins, repent, and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). ~

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The BIBLE Doctrine of



by Heath Rogers

On one occasion I was visiting an older man who was in the hospital recovering from a stroke. His wife and two grown children were in the room with him. As we were talking about his serious condition, he told me that he was not afraid of dying because he knew he would be in heaven. His son, sensing this was directed towards him, replied, "Dad, I'm not afraid of going to Hell when I die because at least I know I won't be alone."

I was shocked when I heard him say this. How could a person not be afraid of going to Hell? However, when you think about it, most people probably do not really know what the Bible says about Hell. If a person understood what Hell is like, they would never make a statement like the one cited above. Therein lies the problem: many people today are ignorant of what the Bible really has to say about Hell.

There are some false ideas that

people have about the subject of Hell. Some churches teach that Hell is only temporary. They insist that in Hell the soul is instantly consumed and ceases to exist, or is annihilated. Some choose not to believe in Hell because, in their minds, they cannot reconcile an all-loving God with an eternal Hell. In our society, "Hell" has become a common slang word used to describe things that irritate, anger, or disgust us (traffic, job, weekend at the in-laws, etc.), or things that are destructive or severe ("war is Hell"). We may use the word "Hell" to describe

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these things, but they are no comparison to the place that the Bible calls “Hell.”

The above conditions have caused Hell to undergo a gradual “cooling off” over the past few decades. Statistics show that people do not believe in Hell like they once did. The Bible teaches that a fear of Hell is necessary in order to have a fear of God: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). Once the fear of Hell is gone, the fear of God soon follows. After all, if no one is afraid of going to Hell, why should they be concerned with obeying God? Once the fear of God is gone, man has lost that which restrains him.

The Nature of Hell

Jesus came to rescue mankind from Hell (1 Timothy 1:15). Jesus spoke about Hell more than any other person in the Bible (He also spoke more about Hell than He did about Heaven!). The words He used to describe Hell leave us with no doubt as

to what it is like. There is no reason for anyone to be confused or misled about the true nature of Hell.

1. Fire. Hell is described as a lake of fire. “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10; see also 20:14-15). Most cartoonists depict Hell as a dark cavern with fires burning in the background. This is not an accurate, Scriptural picture of Hell. A more accurate picture of Hell would be the lake of lava found in a volcano. Fire is the most common description used of Hell. Why fire? Every person has experienced what it feels like to be burned by a fire or by something extremely hot. Because we are all familiar with the pain of a burn, we do not have to use much imagination to understand the overwhelming pain accompanied with being cast into a lake of fire.

2. Where The Worm Does Not Die. Three times in Mark 9:43-48 Jesus described Hell as the place “Where their worm dieth

not, and the fire is not quenched.” The word “Hell” is translated from the Greek word GEHENNA, which referred to a defiled valley outside of Jerusalem. The valley of Hinnom was at one time a place where children were sacrificed to the pagan god Molech. Later it became a rubbish dump where a continual fire was present to consume dead carcasses and garbage. In Jesus’ day, the word GEHENNA represented a place of filth, death, and constant decay. He used this representation to teach us about the nature of Hell.

3. Outer Darkness. “But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 8:12; see also 22:13, 25:30). One might wonder what is so terrible about being in darkness. It is one thing to be in the dark, but it is another thing to be in total darkness. The effects of total darkness are a feeling of disorientation, helplessness; being lost and alone.

4. Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth. In the above three passages, Jesus also referred to Hell

as a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. Hell is a place of punishment, pain, and suffering. Perhaps you have seen someone in so much pain that they grit and grind their teeth. The suffering in Hell is so bad that it is described by the sound that is being made by those who are being tormented.

The Purpose of Hell

Hell was created as a place of punishment. Jesus said that Hell was created for the devil and his angels. “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). This everlasting fire is the means by which the devil and his angels are going to be punished. “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10). To torment means to torture, to vex with grievous pains. “Who” and “what” Hell were created for tell us that we do not want to go there.

The Duration of Hell

Some teach that the souls that enter Hell will be destroyed and will cease to exist. This is not what Jesus taught. He said the torments of Hell will be “day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10). This means that the suffering will last for eternity without interruption. He said that the worm does not die and that the fire is never quenched (Mark 9:43-48). The worm dies when it is out of food, and the fire dies when it is out of fuel, but there is no end to the decay and pains of Hell. The Bible clearly teaches that the duration of Heaven and Hell are equal: “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matthew 25:46).

Hell Has No Desire For Companionship

The man that was mentioned at the beginning of this article told his father that he was not afraid of going to Hell because he knew he would not be alone. I have heard people say that if a loved one died and went to Hell they would want to go there to

be with them. In Luke 16:19-31 we read of the rich man and Lazarus. Although this passage is about Hades (the realm of departed spirits awaiting the resurrection and judgment) it gives us a good picture of what a man was personally suffering while in torment. After dying, the rich man found himself tormented in a flame and saw Lazarus at rest in Abraham’s bosom. He pled for mercy and was told that Lazarus could never come to help him and that he could never leave his torment. When he learned this he said, “I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment” (Luke 16:27-28). This man did not want any company. He did not want his family to join him. He wanted to warn his loved ones not to come to the place of torment where he was.

As we look into eternity we have only two options: Heaven or Hell. The cry from Heaven is “Come” (Revelation 22:17). The cry from Hell is “Do not come to this place of torment!” (Luke 16:28).

Why is it that the Lord spent