

CrossRoads Baptist Church
July 30, 2006 10:00 AM
Mark 9: 42-48
Eternity: Heaven or Hell #3

“The Reality of Hell”

The subject of hell is one of the most disturbing factors of the Christian doctrine. You can not talk about hell without some type of heaviness or discomfort. Thus, most people never talk about it.

Most people laugh at the subject of hell. Its used as an idle curse word or cheering sections at sporting events tell their opponents their destination by using hell. These all make hell seem unreal. Other people make it seem fun to go to hell. Focus on the Family reported March 15, 1994 that a musical guest on MTV during an interview with Jon Stewart said, “Because half the fun of going to hell is getting there.”

Hell is not popular, at least the Biblical understanding of it. But its not up for a vote. If so, we’d all vote against it at first glance. But hell is a reality. Human opinion does not change it because God does not consult us when executing His righteous judgment of sinful humanity. Do you believe you’d be as good of a person today if your mom and dad had always asked you what type of punishment was right for your disobedience?

But when we look at the Word of God, the place of future punishment of the wicked cannot be laughed at or explained away.

What are some wrong views of hell?

1. The annihilation theory.

That is a person just ceases to exist at death. They may spend some time in hell, but the fire of judgment will consume the sinner and he is destroyed, so that after this destruction, the person no longer exists.

Yet, the Bible says in Revelation 14:11 “the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever.” That seems to indicate the torment is forever.

Mark 9, Jesus said this place is where “the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”

2. The universalistic theory.

Another wrong theory that is very popular today is universal redemption. We are all God’s children and God will eventually save everyone. They use verses like John 12:32 “That he would draw all men to himself.” But that verse is speaking of all kinds of mankind – both Greek and Jews, not every living person.

But what does the Bible say about hell?

The English word “hell” appears 52 in the KJV. It has been translated from one Hebrew word, *sheol*, and three Greek words: *gehenna*, *hades*, *tartarus*. Of these four, *sheol* and *hades* mean the same. *Tartarus* is only used in II Peter 2:4. So the two main words are *sheol* and *gehenna*.

Sheol refers to a deep pit under the earth as the residence of the dead. We talked about this last Sunday. This is a holding place that has an area for those who died as Christians and an area for those who died as unbelievers. This does not refer to eternal punishment.

The most prominent Greek word translated “hell” is *gehenna*. Jesus used the word eleven times and the only time it is used in the NT is James 3:6 to describe an uncontrollable tongue. The word was the name for the “Valley of Hinnom” located outside of Jerusalem. This valley was first used by King Ahaz to carry out human sacrifices even the burning to death of his own sons. This valley was later used as the garbage dump for the city and a fire had to be kept burning continuously to keep the place sanitary.

Jesus had more to say about hell than any other writer. The strongest support for a real hell comes from Him. It has been calculated that of the 1870 verses recording words which Jesus spoke, thirteen per cent are about judgment and hell. Jesus spoke more about these two topics than about any other. Of the forty parables Jesus taught, more than half of them relate to God’s eternal judgment of sinners.

Let’s make some general comments about hell from the teaching of the Word of God.

1. Common sense and nature teaches it.

Most people have to put their brains in neutral or reverse to deny the reality of hell. As sure as suffering follows injury; night follows day; then so punishment follows sin or disobedience. If there is a heaven, there must be a hell.

2. The wrath of God demands hell.

We hear people screaming that God is love; and He is. But He is more. But the Bible describes Him more than just love. Romans 2:5-6 ... He is also holy, righteous, and just.

Revelation 16:5 "...You are righteous, O Lord, because You have judged these things."

3. God wants no one to go to hell.

II Peter 3:9 "Not willing that any should perish but all should come to repentance."

Jesus died on the cross to keep you out of hell. He has given us numerous warnings:

There are 264 chapters in the New Testament and 234 references to hell, judgment, etc. If life's road was 264 miles long and you saw 234 warning signs that warned: "This road leads away from life into the dark night of hell"; and if you did not turn around and go the other way, you could never place the blame on the one who put the signs on the highway.

God has put signs on the highway all through the NT and if you are lost, you can blame only yourself, for it is your disposition, your desire, your chosen direction that will eventually cause you to go to hell.

John 3: 17 "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it.

4. Hell is only for the devil and his angels.

Matthew 25:41 "Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his demons!'"

5. Hell is a monument to the free choice of man.

Can you image God sending people to heaven who wanted nothing to do with Christ or His church here on earth? Their lifestyle was not even changed by the presence of Christians little alone did they change anything to accept Christ. They would hate Heaven.

Man chooses for himself where he will spend eternity. God decides there are only two choices, but man makes the choice.

6. But if God is a God of love, why would he send anyone to hell?

But God does not send anyone to hell. Someone who rejects Jesus Christ is committing spiritual suicide, not being murdered by God. God makes a way for life everlasting.

In fact, God don't want people to go to hell so badly that He sent His Son to die on the cross and take our hell for us. If there is no Hell, and God let His Son die on the

cross to save us from Hell, then I don't want to anything to do with that type of God or serve or get to know that God.

7. To understand hell, one must understand the holiness of God.

Isaiah 6 tells us that God is holy. In fact, there is no darkness in Him at all. Angels are continually chanting the holiness of God every day. When Isaiah saw the holiness of God, he immediately saw himself morally dirty and unclean.

Persons who have not had their sin forgiven and placed under the blood, can not go to Heaven because they could not survive in the presence of a Holy God. Hell is a place of darkness and better coordinates with those who live their lives with sin and darkness.

8. To understand hell, one must understand the nature of sin.

Sins are not the reason we go to hell, but the sin of rejecting Jesus.

The sin that sends people to hell is not plural, but singular. Its an attack upon the very person, work, heart and love of God as shown through the cross of Christ. People who reject Jesus and His way commit the greatest sin of all time and will be punished for the greatest sin of all.

If the greatest commandment is to love the Lord they God with all thy mind, strength and soul; then the greatest sin is not to love Him.