

Where We Stand on the Reality of Hell (Part 2)

The Lake of Fire (continued from Part 1):

Now ... there are those who say that those who not know the gospel message should not go to Hell. Notice the next phrase about this group of people (**Luke 12:48**) *yet committed things deserving of stripes.*” This indicates sin deserving of punishment. Here’s how: In **Psalms 53:1** the Bible teaches, “*The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; There is none who does good.*” In **Romans 3:12** this is clarified again, “*They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.*” Additionally, **Romans 5:12** identifies humans as sinners by birth, sinners by choice, and sinners by practice. No one is innocent. In **Romans 1:19-21** the Scriptures teach that God made Himself known to all humans in two ways. One way we can know God is through nature and **Romans 1:19-21** emphasizes that this alone is knowledge enough to know God. The second way is in verse 19 of Romans chapter 1, in which the Bibles clearly states that God has placed within each of us the knowledge of His existence, “*because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.*” So, human beings know God from nature as well as intrinsically. Thirdly, even though God has given us solid ways to know Him, **Romans 3:11** tells us that there are none that seek after God. Human beings know God in multiple ways, and we are sinners by choice, and we choose not to seek after God but pursue our own way without God. Therefore, all humans “*who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes*” are culpable before God.

The Description of Hell

Hell is an actual place. There are four things that describe what is happening in Hell.

Hell Is a Place of Torment:

In the story Jesus told about the rich unbelieving man who died and went to the *place of torments* in Hades. The rich man said in **Luke 16:24b** (NKJV) “... *send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*” This is just one of many evidences in the Scripture that Hell is a place of torment.

In **Revelation 19-21**, Hell is referred to as “*the lake of fire and brimstone.*” I believe that is a literal fire since the unbelieving dead will have new bodies of some type and those new bodies are be constructed by God to not burn up in the flames. Since Christians are given new bodies designed to “last” for eternity, and the lost will spend eternity in Hell with fire and brimstone, it is only logical they also will received new bodies designed to last for eternity. The Scriptures that confirm the new body for Christians are **1 Corinthians 15:50-54**, **Philippians 3:20-21**, and **1 John 3:1-2**.

If the fire is symbolic, there is no respite there. Erwin Lutzer says this about fire being symbolic: “*Another kind of ‘fire’ might be worse than literal fire. That is the fire of unfulfilled passion, the fire of desires that are never satisfied. Perpetually burning lusts never subside, and the tortured conscience burns but is never sated or appeased. Hell, then, is the raw soul joined to an indestructible body, exposed to its own sin for eternity.*”

Hell Is a Place of Memory:

The rich man in Luke 16 hears these torturous words in **Luke 16:25b** (NKJV) “*Child, remember that during your life you had good things and likewise Lazarus had bad things.*” The lost raised up from the grave and Hades for the Great White Throne Judgment will have their entire life reviewed to them just prior to the pronouncement of their eternal adjudication. These unfortunate memories will be ever present in their minds for all eternity. What a tragedy!

How is that different for the eternal life for the Christian? In **Isaiah 65:17**, “*For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.*” That is a blessing! Do any of us want to remember the trials, troubles, heartaches, and hardship of this life?

Hell Is a Place of Hopelessness:

Hell is hopeless because it is eternal separation from God. Evil (defined) is the absence of God. So the major sense of the hopelessness of Hell is being surrounded by overwhelming, continuous evil.

Hell is a place of hopelessness because one cannot escape the memories and guilt of past sins, or the eternal separation from family members and friends, the ever present evil passions that are never satisfied, the hopelessness of never fleeing

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Hell Is a Place of Hopelessness (Continued):

unending demonic abuse, never able to experience anything good and pleasant, facing eternally life's regrets, no rest, and never escaping eternal torture and punishment. These are but a few undesirable eternal feelings of the hopelessness of Hell. Just this one thought is enough ... Hell's hopelessness never ends.

There are heretical views today that attempt to alleviate the hopelessness of Hell. One such view that is growing in popularity is the annihilationist view. Some that hold the annihilationist view say that at death unbelievers just cease to exist. If they cease to exist, how are they going to be raised to stand before the Great White Throne of Judgment?

Others believe that they will be punished for a time and then annihilated. The annihilationist view is the exact opposite of what the Bible says about the eternity of Hell.

Here are some key opposing verses. **Matthew 25:46** (ESV) "*And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*" Described here Hell lasts as long as Heaven. The word "*eternal*," whether referring to eternal punishment in Hell or eternal life in heaven is the same Greek word. The most graphic New Testament statement of the eternity of Hell is **Revelation 14:11a** (NKJV) "*And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night...*" **2 Thessalonians 1:9** (NASB) "*These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.*" **Daniel 12:2** (NKJV) "*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.*"

Hell Is a Place That Glorifies God:

How can Hell glorify God? First we must determine what is the glory of God? His glory is the sum total of His perfections. Anything or anyone that magnifies or displays any of God's perfections displays God's glory.

Hell displays His Holiness, His Righteous, His Justice and His wrath that flow out of His justice. If Hell is not real, then we have robbed Jesus of the glory of His love and compassion manifested by Jesus when He took the wrath of God upon Himself in our place. To deny Hell is to degrade the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross.

What Do We Repudiate When We Deny Hell?

We Deny the Pure Wisdom and Logic of the Bible:

The Bible is not at all vague when it comes to the existence of a literal Hell. It would require a lot of re-defining and re-interpreting Scripture to change that. There is what has been called, "the golden rule of interpretation" it says, "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense seek no other sense."

We Deny God's Justice:

Galatians 6:7 (NKJV) says, "*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*" Without Hell, that verse would have less impact and would lose the full value of its logic.

Some will say, "I'm no Hitler; I'm not perfect, but I'm not that bad. **Romans 3:10-12** (NKJV) "As it is written: '*There is none righteous, no, not one; ... there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside...*'" **Isaiah 64:6** reminds us that, "*But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousness is like filthy rags.*"

We Deny the Clear Teaching of the Church through the Ages:

The Westminster Larger Catechism gives a historical summary: "*The punishments of sin in the world to come, are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in Hell fire forever.*"

We Deny the Full Beauty of the Gospel:

Think lightly of Hell, and you will think lightly of the cross. Think little of the sufferings of lost souls, and you will soon think little of the Savior who delivers you from them. (Charles H. Spurgeon)