

Three Things You Should Know About Hell

By Dr. Robert Ball¹

I recently read a definition of hell that said, "A place of perpetual fire and loathsomeness" (Wycliffe Dictionary of Theology, pg 266). That definition conjures up all sorts of ugly mental pictures that most of us would rather not think about. The problem is, Wycliffe's definition is spot on. Hell is a terrible place, the horror of which exceeds anything man can comprehend in this life. Hell is a place to be avoided at all costs. Most of the world today never thinks of hell in those terms. It is with that in mind that I want to share with you three realities about the place we call hell.

I. HELL IS A LITERAL PLACE.

Hell is not the figment of some writer's imagination. Hell is not some mystical place or the result of some religious system's creativity. Hell is a literal place that is as real as the world you and I live in right now. The Bible tells us that at the end of the tribulation, the beast and the false prophet will be cast into a "lake of fire" (Revelation 19.20). Jesus described hell as a place where there is, "Weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8.12). Jesus later described hell as a, "furnace of fire" where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13.50). Hell is a literal place where God's judgment is administered upon lost men and women for their sin. Some of the biblical descriptions of hell include a place of total darkness, a place of perpetual suffering, a place of eternal fire, a place of unquenchable fire, and a place of perpetual unrest. The worst part of hell is that it is a place of perpetual separation from God. You can be sure hell is a literal place.

II. HELL IS A FOREVER PLACE.

The Bible teaches that once a person goes to hell, they will be there forever, there is no hope of deliverance. The Bible tells us, "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 forever and ever" (Revelation 20.10). Particular attention should be given to the "forever and ever" phrase. The apostle Paul said to the church at Thessalonica, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thessalonians 1.8-9). Again, note the phrase, "everlasting destruction." All of these terms portray the permanence of God's eternal judgment on those who reject Him. There is no such thing as a second chance once a person has died and gone to hell. All the more reason to make sure of one's relationship with Christ while there is still time to do so.

III. NOT ONLY IS HELL A LITERAL PLACE AND A FOREVER PLACE, BUT IT IS A PREPARED PLACE.

By prepared I mean it has its designated inhabitants already identified. Who will be in hell? The Bible tells us who will be there. Satan will be in hell according to Revelation 20.10. Not only Satan, but the beast and false prophet of the tribulation will be there. In addition to these folks, the Bible says the fallen angels or demons will be there, see 2 Peter 2.4. So, we have Satan, the beast, the false prophet, and the fallen angels, but there is one more group that will be there with them. The last group is made up of

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human beings who died in their sin. We are told in John 3.36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Here is the truth of the human spiritual condition. We are all born with a sin nature and we are guilty of our sin before God. The penalty for all sin is death. Physical death is a part of this life because of sin and is proof of the truth. There is nothing we can do in this life to pay the debt of our sin and therefore we are under the judgment of God. However, God loves all men and would have all men to be forgiven of their sin and be saved. To that end Jesus Christ, who is eternally God, left heaven and took on human flesh so He could die on the cross and pay for our sin with His own death. Jesus arose in victory over death three days later and ascended back to heaven. Forgiveness of sin and salvation of the human soul is by faith in Jesus Christ and Him alone. We can be saved when we confess our sin to God, turn away from our sin, and ask Him by faith to forgive us and save us. Romans 10.13 says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." All who leave this life without being saved by faith in Jesus Christ will spend eternity in hell, separated from God. That truth is not popular in the world today, but that does not change the fact that it is true.

So, where are you planning to spend eternity? Hell is a real place. To die without Jesus is to go there and never return. You can turn to Jesus right now and be saved. God will save you if you will but call on His name and ask Him. May you consider what you have read today and may God use it to touch your heart. Next time we will consider another literal place called heaven.

