

Apologetics

Is Hell Real?

(II Th 1:5-10)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening
 - a. Greeting
2. Series of lessons on "Apologetics"
 - a. Dinosaurs, the historic Jesus...
3. Tonight we will look at "Is Hell Real?"
 - a. This is a topic that not too long ago was really a non issue.
 - i. However over the last 10 to 15 years there is a growing thought that hell is not real but rather a tradition made up of miss-translations.
 - ii. The January 31, 2000 edition of U.S. News & World News had this very topic as their cover story. (<http://tinyurl.com/3jdg9m4>)
4. Why would one doubt that hell is real?
 - a. First it's because people do not want to believe there can be a hell & a loving God.
 - i. "I could never torture people endlessly, especially my own children. How can you say that God will do that to His children? This seems hideous. You make God look like a monster worse than Hitler, not a loving Father Who would even die for His enemies!" (<http://tinyurl.com/4x6v8y4>)
 - ii. Albert Einstein said "I cannot imagine a God who rewards and punishes the objects of his creation" (<http://tinyurl.com/4r9ydf>)
 - b. Second it's because denominationalism is so "accepting" that they ultimately must come to this conclusion.
 - i. Names of some but certainly not all of the denominational men that have now renounced the possibility of hell being real.
 1. Clark Pinnock - theology professor at McMaster Divinity College in Ontario, Canada. (<http://tinyurl.com/3jdg9m4>)
 2. John R. W. Stott - a popular theologian in London.
 3. Philip E. Hughes - an Anglican clergyman.
 4. Jehovah's Witnesses have been teaching this for years.
 - a. They teach the "concept of everlasting punishment is an "unreasonable doctrine" that "contradicts the Bible"" (<http://tinyurl.com/y8kmzew>)
 - ii. It is not just denominationist but also our own brethren.
 1. Edward Fudge - church of Christ author of "The Fire That Consumes" out of Houston, TX. (Ibid)
 2. F. LaGard Smith - former law professor at Pepperdine University and now affiliated with David Lipscomb University has written against the reality of hell.
 3. Stephen Clark Goad - a writer for many Christian journals wrote an essay entitled "Believer In Heaven & Hell: A Non-Traditional View."

Apologetics

- c. Third because it is simply easier to talk to people about God without it.
 - i. "Whenever I was previously confronted with questions like those above (and I've heard these questions countless numbers of times), all of my answers seemed to fall short of being "reasonable." And if someone watched my body language, especially my eyes, they could have seen that I did NOT have good answers for the sincere questions they asked. And I was a zealous student!" (<http://tinyurl.com/4x6v8y4>)
5. So what is hell?
- a. "Gehenna, a Hellenized transliteration of the Hebrew, "Hinnom Valley." A ravine just SSW of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. A place of trash fires and perpetually burning rubbish, hence the figurative extension of a place of eternal punishment" (Swanson, J. (1997). Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.)
 - b. "valley of (the son of) Hinnom; ge-henna (or Ge-Hinnom), a valley of Jerus., used (fig.) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment:—hell." (Strong, J., S.T.D., LL.D. (2009). Vol. 1: A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible (20). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.)
 - c. "Hebr. gê-hinnôm, i.e. the valley of Hinnom, which represented the place of future punishment, N.T." (Liddell, H. (1996). A lexicon : Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English lexicon (161). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.)
 - d. "The Greek term γέεννα is derived from a Hebrew phrase meaning 'Valley of Hinnom,' a ravine running along the south side of Jerusalem and a place where the rubbish from the city was constantly being burned. According to late Jewish popular belief, the last judgment was to take place in this valley, and hence the figurative extension of meaning from 'Valley of Hinnom' to 'hell.' In most languages γέεννα is rendered as 'place of punishment' or 'place where the dead suffer' or 'place where the dead suffer because of their sins.'" (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (5). New York: United Bible societies.)
 - i. Hell is the place that was prepared for Satan and his messengers.
 - a. **Mt 25:41** "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'"

I. Hell Is A Real Place

- A. Notice that the word is found 12 times in the N.T.
 - 1. Eleven times it is used by our Lord and Savior Jesus throughout the gospel accounts.
 - i. **Lk 12:5** "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!"
 - ii. **Mt 10:28** "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
- B. It is a real place souls will go
 - 1. **Mt 25:46** "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Apologetics

II. Hell Is A Real Torment

- A. If everlasting punishment doesn't sound bad enough...
 - 1. **Mt 8:11-12** "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
 - 2. **Mt 13:49-50** "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50 and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."
- B. We even have an example of "Torment" though this isn't hell
 - 1. **Lk 16:22-24** "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'"
- C. Hell will not be pleasant for anyone under any circumstances
 - 1. No one will want to be there.

III. Hell Will Be Many People's Life

- A. In other words it will be the place most will go
 - 1. **Mt 7:13-14** "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."
 - 2. **Lk 13:24** "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able."
- B. Think about the sheer magnitude of this reality
 - 1. First all those that obey not God's gospel plan of salvation, since the cross, will be lost.
 - i. **II Th 1:8** "in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 2. Second all those that obey God's plan of salvation, since the cross, but are not faithful will be lost.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."
 - ii. **Ga 5:4** "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."
 - a. **Ga 6:1; Ja 5:19-20**

Apologetics

3. Third all those before the cross that were not obedient to God will be lost.
 - i. **I Jn 2:4-6** "He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."
 - a. **Is 59:1-2**
 - ii. **Ro 14:10c** "...For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."
 - a. **II Co 5:10**
- C. More souls will be lost than saved
 1. This is simply fact.

IV. Hell Can Be Avoided

- A. God has given us a way of escape
 1. We must take hold of that free gift.
 - i. **Ro 6:23** "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - ii. **Ph 2:12** "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"
 2. We must be obedient to Him.
 - i. **Jn 14:15** "If you love Me, keep My commandments."
- B. God prepared a place for the righteous opposite of hell...heaven
 1. **Jn 14:2-4** "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know."

CONCLUSION

1. "Bertrand Russell, Britain's celebrated agnostic, suggested that one of the reasons he could not be a Christian was because Jesus Christ "believed in hell."...Russell charged that no person "who is really profoundly humane can believe in everlasting punishment"...Though he acknowledged that some punishment was justified in the case of criminals, he opined that eternal punishment was unjust." (<http://tinyurl.com/y8kmzew>)
 - a. The truth is eternal punishment was contrary to Mr. Russell's sense of justice.
 - b. However "no one complains that eternal happiness is unjust in the case of those who have served God only briefly [or not at all] on this earth." [brackets mine] (Ibid)
2. The truth is hell is real and many souls will be lost.
 - a. Christians must be a light to a most desperate world that is lost in sin.
3. Invitation