

The Basics of Hell

I. Introduction

- A. If people stopped using the word “hell” to emphasize their conversations, we might not hear the word at all.
- B. A CNN poll from the 1980s reported that 77% of Americans believe in Heaven while only 18% believe in Hell.

II. Hell Is Unpopular

- A. The same Bible that teaches us about Heaven also teaches us about Hell.
- B. There is a God-given awareness in all of us that there is something waiting for us after death.
- C. Heaven is God's home enlarged to make room for all the redeemed and the elect angels.
- D. Hell will be the home of the devil and his fallen angels plus everyone who has rejected the Lord Jesus Christ—God's plan of salvation.
- E. If Heaven is a place of happiness, blessing, and benefit, then Hell is the exact opposite.
- F. The subject of Hell is unpopular. Very unpopular!
- G. Why wouldn't it be unpopular to believe in Hell?
- H. Whatever God says is true and real. It doesn't matter what we believe. His Word is always true.
- I. It is unfortunate that religion has helped to weaken or remove God's warnings about Hell.
- J. One way is the teaching of UNIVERSALISM that declares that everybody will finally be saved and go to heaven.
- K. A second teaching that reduced the unpleasantness of Hell is the teaching of RESTORATIONISM that says the punishment in Hell is not eternal. The punishment will only last for a while, then it will be finished.
- L. A third teaching that goes against the Word of God about Hell is SECOND PROBATIONISM. (You get a second chance to make the right decisions).
- M. The fourth false doctrine that tries to take the fear of Hell out the heart of people is called ANNIHILATIONISM. (After the Last Judgment, all damned humans and fallen angels including Satan will be totally destroyed).
- N. Of course concepts of Hell are unpopular, but they are undeniable.
 - 1. Because of its terrible nature, Hell is a subject that people try to avoid talking about.
 - 2. Yet we must face the truth of Hell. It is a positive truth of the divine revelation.
 - 3. We cannot try to invent any doctrines that teach something different from what God has said about Hell in the Bible.

III. Hell Is Undeniable

- A. The King James Version of the Bible uses the word HELL thirty-one times in the Old Testament, and in each case, it is a translation of the Hebrew word SHEOL; a place where both the ungodly and the godly went at the time of death.
- B. HADES, an equivalent Greek word in the New Testament, is translated eleven times as HELL. It, too, refers to the place where all the dead stayed until the resurrection of Jesus.
- C. The wicked dead are in HADES, not in HELL.
- E. The story of the rich man and Lazarus is about two completely different areas and conditions separated by a gulf that no one can cross over.
Luke 16:22-23 Later, Lazarus died, and the angels carried him to the arms of Abraham. The rich man died, too, and was buried. ²³ In the place of the dead, he was in much pain. The rich man saw Abraham far away with Lazarus at his side.
- F. Eleven other times in the New Testament, the word HELL is used to translate the Greek word *gehenna*.
- G. The Greek word *tartarus* is used only once in the New Testament. It is translated as hell.
2 Peter 2:4 When angels sinned, God did not let them go free without punishment. He sent them to hell and put them in caves of darkness where they are being held for judgment.
- H. The Bible consistently teaches that an unbearable and indescribable end waits for the sinner who dies without the saving grace of Jesus.
- I. The doctrine of Hell cannot be settled by studying Jewish theology or the popular thought of Jesus' day.
- J. Everywhere Jesus taught, He made it clear that He understood the future of the sinner was extremely bad.
- K. The simple use of a Bible concordance will show that Jesus taught more about Hell than He taught about Heaven.
- L. New Testament writers talked about Hell as a real place.
- M. Jesus was the only New Testament person to use the word "Hell," but the rest of the writers of the New Testament talked about Hell as a real place, a seriously hard place, and the unavoidable place where people who reject Jesus Christ will go after death.

IV. Hell Is Unbearable

- A. Maybe one reason Jesus spoke so much about Hell was because He knew that the tortures of Hell would be unbearable. We were designed for Heaven, not for Hell.
- B. The Bible's doctrine of Hell uses many different words that describe the tortures of Hell.
- C. We read of "a fire that cannot be put out" (Matthew 3:12), "the darkness"(Matthew 22:13), "blackest darkness" (Jude 1:13), "blazing furnace" (Matthew 13:42), "the lake of burning sulfur" (Revelation 21:8), "smoke from their burning pain" (Revelation 14:11), "the fire that burns forever that was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41), and "In hell the worm does not die; the fire is never put out." (Mark 9:48).
- D. What God has told us about Hell is beyond the wildest imaginations.
- E. The Scriptures teach of various degrees of reward for the faithful, and it also teaches of different degrees of punishment for the wicked.

Luke 12:47-48 The servant who knows what his master wants but is not ready, or who does not do what the master wants, will be beaten with many blows! ⁴⁸ But the servant who does not know what his master wants and does things that should be punished will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded. And from the one trusted with much, much more will be expected.

- F. Hell will be made even more miserable by the tormenting memories of missed opportunities.
- G. Even if there were no fire, no burning sulfur, no tormenting demons, and no everlasting darkness, these memories would give an eternity of painful regrets.

V. Hell Is Unending

- A. The blessings of the righteous are eternal, and the punishment of the wicked is forever and ever (Revelation 19:3; 20:10; 14:11).
- B. Hell is a place in eternity; not in time.
- C. There is no indication anywhere in Scripture of lost sinners in Hell being able to repent.
- D. Although there are different degrees of punishment, everyone gets punished for the same amount of time—eternity.

VI. Hell Is Unnecessary

- A. I do not mean that the place called Hell is not required.
- B. What we become in life, we take into eternity with us.
- C. Also, Heaven gains value because of those who are excluded from it.
- D. "Hell is unnecessary," because everyone has the opportunity to make the choice to go to Heaven.
- E. The topic of punishment is actually the topic of sin.
- F. God's punishment of the ungodly is not an act of God's personal revenge against sinners.
- G. Some people ask, "How can God send anyone to an everlasting Hell?" The answer is that God does not choose this destiny for people; they freely choose it for themselves.
- H. God does not "send" people to Hell, He just gives them up to their delusions, idolatry, and sinfulness.

Romans 1:21-25 They knew God, but they did not give glory to God or thank him. Their thinking became useless. Their foolish minds were filled with darkness. ²² They said they were wise, but they became fools. ²³ They traded the glory of God who lives forever for the worship of idols made to look like earthly people, birds, animals, and snakes. ²⁴ Because they did these things, God left them and let them go their sinful way, wanting only to do evil. As a result, they became full of sexual sin, using their bodies wrongly with each other. ²⁵ They traded the truth of God for a lie. They worshiped and served what had been created instead of the God who created those things, who should be praised forever. Amen.

- I. We must constantly remind ourselves that God is not only loving, He is also holy and righteous. An evil revolt against God brought sin and death into the world. There must be punishment to bring justice.

J. The doctrine of Hell might seem difficult for our natural human mind to understand. We must always remember that the Bible is our rule of faith for the doctrine of Hell. Since God said it, we believe it.

K. Let's make every effort to stay out of Hell!

2 Timothy 2:15 Make every effort to give yourself to God as the kind of person he will approve. Be a worker who is not ashamed and who uses the true teaching in the right way.