

Eternal Punishment of the Wicked

I. The DEFAULT DESTINATION – Everyone Headed There Unless Christ Turns them.

Evangelicals used to Preach about Hell. After all, what is it we so badly need to be saved from?

Far too many people out of naturally kind hearts and humanitarianism are closet **universalists!** Certain others lean to ‘**annihilationism.**’ But we must be guided by Scripture, not sentiment.

People wonder if anyone is headed for hell? They think that only someone really, really bad would be... They say when someone dies, “He is in a better place...” Really? They do not comprehend that EVERYONE is hell-bound, apart from Christ!

Compare John 3:16 to 3:18-20. Read Matthew 7:13-14. Read Hebrews 10:26-31

II. THE STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE OF HELL – Why So Seldom Taught Today?

How does a doctrine of hell fit into Divine Election? Westminster Confession chapter 3: says in reprobation God simply “passes by” the non-elect, and they go where their will desires to go!

People always ask: What about 2 Peter 3:9?

Note the teaching of Proverbs 1:22-33

None other than JESUS CHRIST was the chief spokesman about Hell!

See these passages quoting Jesus in the gospel of Matthew alone: 5:22, 29; 7:23; 8:12; 10:28; 13:40; 18:8; 23:15, 33; 25:32-33, 41, 46.

Is the “fire” of hell truly a literal flame? We should understand it as symbolic of pain and lasting destruction—however that does not at all lessen it as a reality which is horrible beyond imagining right now.

Quote from Dr. Jim Boice on his last New year’s Eve service before he died...

III. WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT HELL – Dare We Ignore what HE Taught?

Many people would take the same line as movie actress Shirley Temple...

Quotes from atheist Bertrand Russell... And from NT scholar Leon Morris...

We already saw snippets of things Jesus said in Matthew, above. Now we go to the most instructive single text by the Lord on the this subject: **Luke 16, The Rich Man and Lazarus**

Comparisons ‘before’: Lazarus The Unnamed Rich Man

Comparisons 'after':

Principles seen in Luke 16: 1) Hell's suffering begins immediately after death. 2) Hell has no escape hatch for its occupants—the notion of “purgatory” is an unbiblical fantasy. 3) God's Word and the work of Christ gives the world sufficient warning, which they ignore.

And notice, this rich man is anonymous—his name does not survive him. But Lazarus the man of faith has an eternally lasting name that means: “God is my helper”.

IV. DOES HELL LAST FOREVER? The Bible vs. Annihilationism

Any rational caring person does not easily accept the idea of doctrine that says people we know will experience everlasting pain, woe, loneliness and regret, apart from all fellowship with God! We are not monsters... We do not *want* the biblical idea of hell to be true! Annihilationism says the lost simply become ‘extinct;’ blotted out of existence. They argue:

- Biblical words about “destruction” mean they cease to exist...
- Sin is a momentary and limited act; so how could it receive an endless penalty? This is disproportionate justice; the punishment does not fit the crime...
- They say doctrine of hell is entirely out of line with God's love...

ANSWERS to annihilationism:

- To destroy in some Bible texts means ‘ruined for further intended usefulness’ as in Matthew 9:17. The object still exists but is forever spoiled and useless.
- On the idea that ‘little’ sins have too great a punishment—No sin is little! It is against the all-Holy God! Most concepts of sin are very inadequate; sin is an infinite crime.
- The holy wrath of God is proof of his great love. His love is most amazing because he exposed his Son to his wrath, for us!
- Another point: consider paired use of the word “eternal” in a passage like Mt. 25:46.

FINAL: Why does the Biblical hell not drive us to greater zeal for evangelism?

Incident with Dr. Francis Schaeffer...

Massive chain-reaction car accident in England. People sped right through police trying to wave them to stop and they joined the fatal pileup of many vehicles...

Jonathan Edwards quote: “Some talk as if it is unreasonable to frighten persons to heaven. But I think it is totally reasonable to frighten them away from hell... For they stand upon its brink and are ready to fall into it, but are altogether senseless of their mortal danger. Would you call it unreasonable to frighten someone out of a house on fire?”