

3 Bad Beliefs About Hell

Introduction. The terms “save” and “salvation” are used a lot when we’re assembled as a church. But what are we “saved” from? Some need to be saved from themselves (i.e. stubbornness, laziness, spiritual ignorance, or apathy regarding their destiny). Some need to be saved from the vices of pride and lust. Some need to be saved from their traditional beliefs.

However, the most essential answer is that we need to be saved from the everlasting condemnation of our sin. Around 75% of US adults affirm a belief in heaven and about 60% of US adults affirm a belief in hell. That leaves millions of people in this country without an adequate knowledge of life beyond the grave. We need to revisit the Bible to be reminded of the peril on the other side of our mortal end. Therefore, I’ve prepared three bad beliefs that people hold about hell for us to study today.

I. Hell Doesn’t Exist

- A. Humans are emotional and logical creatures. Sometimes, we choose to focus on the emotional, being led by our hearts more than our heads. We don’t want to see any soul in a place of eternal conscious torment. But to conclude that there’s no hell is to set “our feelings” as a higher standard than God’s will.
- B. To deny hell is also to deny logic. In the same way that the ultimate reward for righteousness in heaven makes sense of this earthly existence, the ultimate punishment in hell also makes God’s rules, morals, and ethics make sense. If there’s no ultimate answer for our transgressions, what motivation do we have to avoid them?
- C. We can’t ignore the witness of the Scriptures. Some want to use 1 John 4:8 (“God is love”) as their complete picture of God, but they choose to ignore the other information about Him:
 - 1. One of the elementary doctrines of the gospel is “eternal judgment” in Hebrews 6:2.
 - 2. People “treasure up wrath for themselves on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Romans 2:5-11).
 - 3. God did not spare sinful angels but cast them into hell “to be reserved for judgment,” and will keep the unrighteous “for the day of judgment” (2 Peter 2:4, 9; cp. Jude 6-7).
 - 4. In Revelation 20:11-15, the great white throne judgment reveals the dead being judged according to their works, and anyone not found in the Book of Life being cast into the lake of fire, called the second death.

II. Hell Won’t Be That Bad

- A. Conditional Immortality (Annihilationism) says that only the redeemed receive immortality; the wicked are ultimately destroyed. Punishment is temporary and it’s followed by destruction (ceasing to exist).
- B. Some think of hell as just another place, but Jesus provides the largest portion of information about hell. Let’s look at His assessment:

1. In Matthew 5:29-30 (and 18:8-9), Jesus said that hell's worse than losing an eye or a hand (losing the use of very essential things to our existence).
 2. In Matthew 10:28, Jesus said it's better to be killed for being righteous than to deny God and be destroyed in hell.
 3. In Mark 9:43-48, Jesus said hell's a place where suffering is like fire that's not quenched and where the worm doesn't die.
- C. Some have even suggested that they'll go to hell for their loved ones. My question is always, "Why would you even consider that?" They can't comfort you there; you can't comfort them there. You'll not be able to see them, nor will they see you because hell's an overwhelming darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth from its torment (Matthew 25:30; cp. Luke 16:24-25, 28; 2 Peter 2:4).

III. I Won't Be in Hell

- A. Most people believe they're entitled to heaven because they're "good."
1. The doctrine of Christian Universalism (or Ultimate Reconciliation) says that God's love and power will ultimately restore all people.
 2. But Matthew 25:31-46 shows that there will be judgment as all souls will be divided by their deeds (vv. 31-32; cp. Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
 3. Then, in v. 46, by the declaration of His judgment, "[Those on the left] will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (cp. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10).
- B. No one living and able to obey God's holy Word has to go to hell if they're willing to obey God. It's sad to think that many souls are wasting their lifetime chasing a false notion of spiritual security, and not ensuring their only hope to escape hell (John 14:1-6; 2 Timothy 2:15).
1. Hebrews 9:27 wakes us up to the fact that we'll all die, and we'll face our Creator in the spiritual condition in which we leave this life, because it'll be too late to change then.
 2. Many are refusing to change because they're too stubborn, too busy, too selfish, too caught up in worldly wisdom, and too satisfied to change. In order to avoid the condemnation of hell, we have to amend our lives before it's too late.

Conclusion. There have been a lot of misconceptions about hell. However, the Bible reveals the terrifying truth about that place. Stop thinking that there's no hell, or that it isn't that bad, or that you're too good to go there. You don't have to go there if you're willing to change. Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16). This salvation is only found through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Choose salvation today.

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