

Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

April 22, 2018

Issue 6

HELL: THE ETERNAL CONSEQUENCE OF SIN

Ronnie Scherffius

The Reality of Hell

It is not surprising that men who mock the existence of their Creator and scorn the idea of a Redeemer would also deny the existence of hell. However, there are many professed Christians who either are uncertain about the reality of hell or deeply question if an eternal punishment in hell, which they call *eternal conscious torment*, is “compatible with the biblical revelation of divine justice” and the nature of an all-loving and all-merciful God. According to the *Pew Research Poll* database the number of Americans who believe in “hell as a place of eternal punishment” has dropped from 71% (1996) to 58% (2014), and the number who believe in the reality of hell as a place has declined from 73% (2006) to 62% (2017). But to all who accept the Scriptures as the inspired written Word of God there can be no question of the reality of hell!

As Jesus prepared His disciples to go out and preach the gospel of the kingdom, He warned them of persecution they would endure (Matt. 10:16-18), He then admonished them, “fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). Luke’s account of this statement varies slightly: “Fear him, which after he hath killed ***hath power to cast into hell***; yea, I say unto you, Fear him” (Luke 12:5). These two passages clearly set forth the reality and existence of a *place* of punishment into which the souls of unrighteous of men will enter.

How strange that the “Christian” who denies the existence of hell rejoices in the hope of heaven when similar language is used by Jesus to affirm the reality of both. Jesus affirmed that at His coming in judgment, all nations would be gathered together and sep-

arated before the announcement of their eternal fate. Some would hear the desired declaration, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom ***prepared*** for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34), while others the dreaded decree, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, ***prepared*** for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). The existence and reality of hell is just as certain as the existence and reality of heaven!

The Nature of Hell

Understanding that hell is in fact a reality, a legitimate question would be “What is the nature of hell?” The passages noted above clearly indicate that hell is a place of punishment, destruction and death, but what is the duration of this punishment and is the death referred to an instant death or a slow painful death?

The Bible is not unclear when describing the nature of hell! Hell is pictured as a “lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14-15), “eternal fire” (Jude 7), “everlasting punishment” (Mt. 25:46), “everlasting destruction” (2 Thess. 1:9), and a “furnace of fire” (Matt. 13:42). But while hell is a place of death and destruction, it is not a place of annihilation where the souls of the condemned will be totally destroyed so as to not exist, or their consciousness extinguished. The words of inspiration paint a very vivid picture of hell as an eternity of unrest, divine retribution and punishment (1 Thess. 1:7-9), and a fire unquenchable (Matt. 3:12).

Hell: The Eternal Consequence Of Sin

As terrifying as these word pictures describing the nature of hell may be, perhaps the most sobering of all is Peter’s description of

the punishment of hell as a “mist” or “blackness of darkness forever” (2 Pet. 2:17). Deep in the heart of the earth at the Glenwood Caverns in Glenwood Springs, CO, a group of friends were on the “wild tour” and were instructed by their guide to turn off their lights. To his amusement the group began to describe how they could make out the “outline of the cave,” but with the absence of light this was an impossibility. The tour guide informed them, “Your mind is continually replaying the last captured image, trying to find it again.”

Imagine standing in awe before the glory of God and in the presence of His angels only to be cast into the blackness of darkness forever—the images of heaven’s eternal glories being searched out and replayed in your mind over and over and over, as you endure eternal death and destruction! Hell IS the eternal consequence of sin, a prepared place for an unprepared people.

Love – It Isn’t Just Part of It, It is It

By Andy Brewer

Ask me how to sum up my duty as a Christian in one word. Go ahead, I dare you. All right here it is. Love. That’s it. All of Christianity, our duty to God, our duty to one another, our duty to ourselves – everything we are called to do and who we are called to be can be summed up in that one word – love. Now don’t get me wrong, there’s a lot of details contained in that blanket statement. But if I were pressed to sum up how to be pleasing to God, how to treat my fellow man, and how to develop myself as a person it would have to be with the word “love.”

But please know that this isn’t just my opinion. Everything we read throughout the New Testament bears out that Christianity is all about love. Let me illustrate. In Romans 13 Paul talked some about Christian duty. He spent the first few verses talking about our duty to civil government (vs. 1-7), but then we continued that thought by extending our duty to others as well. Notice what he said, his words not mine:

“Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has ful-

filled the law. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet,’ and any other commandment are summed up in this word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (vs. 8-10).

Paul’s point here was that when we generally learn to love one another then God’s specific laws for how to treat one another will come naturally to us. When we love one another we’re not tempted to commit adultery because we know how it will hurt everyone involved. When we love one another we’re not going to murder anyone – it’s hard to murder someone you love. When we love another we’re not going to steal, covet, or do anything else that has the potential to hurt anyone because we love them. Sin is the antithesis of love, so when we learn to love treating one another according to God’s law becomes second nature.

The same is true, not just in our relationship with one another, in our relationship with God. Think of at least a couple of passages that emphasize a love for God as the one thing we’ve got to have and how when we get it then everything else comes naturally.

First, we’ve got the conversation Jesus had with a Pharisee lawyer: “And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:34-40). Jesus’ point was that everything we are called to do as people of God is first dependent on our ability to learn to love God and our fellow man. When we learn to love everything else will follow. When we learn to love God we accept and don’t question what He says about the church, salvation, worship, morality, evangelism, Christian duty, etc. When we learn to love God that’s it – everything else will follow.

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of April 22, 2018

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Kevin Sheeran
Scripture Reading: Curtis Scherffius

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Tom Pitchford
Fruit of the Vine: Clifton Rutherford
Offering: Mark FitzSimmons
Assist: Richard Tisue; Bryce Dolan; Sammy Scherffius

Sunday Evening: Tom Pitchford; Clifton Rutherford

Prayer

A.M. Opening: Jeff Harris
A.M. Closing: Ron White
P.M. Opening: Jim Hutt
P.M. Closing: Lupe Escojido

Ushers: Steve Randle
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Adrian Cannady

Open/Close Building: Will Burleson

Sound System: Bryant Siegel

Greeters:

Will Cleveland
Allen Clifton
Steve Randle

Prepare Communion: Sneeringer-Gonzalez

SINS THAT CRIPPLE THE CHURCH

Matthew 16:18

1. Absenteeism (Hebrews 10:25).
2. Indifference (Revelation 3:15).
3. Worldliness (1 John 2:15).
4. Unfaithfulness (Revelation 2:4).
5. Selfishness (Philippians 2:4).
6. Neglect (Hebrews 2:3).
7. Compromise (2 Corinthians 6:17).
8. Contention (1 Corinthians 1:10).
9. Ignorance (Acts 17:30).
10. Apathy (Ephesians 4:19).

—Mark Posey

THANK YOU!

Thank you to the anonymous donor who helped one of our Midtown youth be able to go to Peach Valley Summer Camp this year! If you would like to help, please see one of our elders.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

DIANE AND LORA HARDY, family of Doug Jobs' uncle Lamar. Lamar past away last week; SANDRA MERICLE, who had gallbladder surgery this past Friday; JEFF LAWS, who will be having brain surgery April 23rd.; ALICIA HERNANDEZ, mother of Letty Hernandez, who is in the hospital.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 22: Fourth Sunday Fellowship Meal
April 24: Men's and Ladies Bible Classes @10am
May 1: Men's and Ladies Bible Classes @10am
May 8: Men's and Ladies Bible Classes @10am
May 12: Jr/Sr. High Devo @6pm
May 15: Men's and Ladies Bible Classes @10am
May 20: Fellowship meal honoring 2018 graduate

IN THE AREA

April 28: Stockdale C of C Ladies Day
May 6-9: Gospel Meeting @ Port Lavaca; various speakers 7pm nightly
May 5-10: Focal Point @ University (San Marcos)
May 23-28: Young Men's Development Conference @ Bryan-College Station

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: David Sample (24)
Happy Anniversary: Scott & Trisha Foerster (27)

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS

Jeff Cannady	Mike McVey
Les Daltry	Ann Pantel
Pat Davis	Glenodine Pitts
Dee Gilpatrick	Bob Smith
Lucille Hawkins	Della Rampley
Faye Henderson	Clark Withers
Sandy Malone	

FRIENDS & FAMILY

Mary Lou Arguelles (sister of Virginia Escojido)	Cole Ohrt (friend of Ann Pantel)
Bert Haynes (father of Pam Stryker)	Vikram Gottam (brother-in-law of Archana Verma)
Victor Benitez (brother of Virginia Escojido)	Mary Younglove (grandmother of Naomi Flonnory)
Kim Neel-Farthing (daughter of Joyce)	Cynthia Sneeringer (mother of Angela)
Scarlet O'Neill (friend of Yvonne Smith)	Antonio Benitez (brother of Virginia Escojido)
Sarah Randle (mother of Steve)	

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Elders:

Will Cleveland
Tom Pitchford

Deacons:

Adrian Cannady
Mark FitzSimmons
Doug Jobs
Bryant Siegel

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius**Secretary:** Nina Siegel**TIMES OF SERVICES**

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of April 15, 2018

Bible Class.....113
A.M. Worship.....142
P.M. Worship.....94
Wednesday Bible Study.....93

Offering \$4,819

QUICK REFERENCE

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

Angels

Innumerable.....Heb 12:22
Worship God.....Rev. 14:14-20;
Psm. 148:2; Matt 25:31; Dan. 7:10

**SUPPORTED WORKS**

India - Mani Pagidipalli
New Zealand - James & Emily Cammock
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
Southwest School of Bible Studies - Cody Kilgore

GO PAPERLESS!

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