

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

February 25

2024

DOES HELL SCARE YOU?

An unpopular subject in many pulpits is the subject of hell. When's the last time you heard a sermon on it or even contemplated the concept of hell? Many "Christians" deny it's existence or deny a loving God would send anyone there. But, what does the Bible teach?

(1) **Hell Is Real.** Hell isn't a fairy tale, myth, condition, or state of mind. It's a real place. It's as real as heaven for they are put on an equality as far as their contrasting qualities are concerned. In Matthew 25:46 Jesus said, "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." So, if heaven is real, so is hell. If hell is a myth, so is heaven. If hell is just a "state of mind," then so is heaven. If hell is only temporary, then so is heaven. Jesus said we ought to fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. 10:28). In this we learn three things: A) Hell should be feared, B) Hell is beyond the grave, and C) The reality of hell should motivate us to live so we won't go there. Have you seriously contemplated the shocking reality of hell? If not, you need to give yourself a "reality check," for hell will be a reality for the vast majority! (Matt. 7:13-14)

(2) **Hell Is Terrible.** Some believe the Bible's descriptions of hell are overstated. That's blasphemous since the person who used the word most often was the Lord Himself! The horrific nature of hell can be seen from three of its aspects.

First, its name, Gehenna, is derived from the Valley of Hinnom near Jerusalem where idolatrous Israelites once burned their children alive as sacrifices (2 Chron. 28:3). Later this valley was used to burn Jerusalem's garbage. Dead bodies were thrown into this dump and its fires were kept burning to consume the rotting filth. Second, the Bible describes hell as a "lake of fire" (Rev. 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8). Imagine if every drop of the Great Lakes was gasoline and then set ablaze. What would it be like to be thrown into the middle? Further, hell contains "brimstone" a sticky, flammable, sulfurous compound. Imagine having a sticky, gooey, stinking, burning liquid clinging to your body! Can you imagine how such would intensify the pain, increase the agony, and magnify the suffering? Other passages portray hell as a furnace of fire (Matt. 13:42, 50), a flaming fire (2 Thess. 1:7-9), a baptism of fire (Matt. 3:11-12), and an unquenchable fire (Mk. 9:43). Is it any wonder then hell is characterized by "weeping," "wailing," and "gnashing of teeth"? (cf. Matt. 8:12; 13:50; 25:30). Do we need a more vivid picture? Do we want to go there? Do we want any of your loved ones or brethren to go there?

(3) **Hell Is Eternal.** The above descriptions would be bad enough even if hell only lasted for a few seconds. But, the pain and suffering of hell is eternal. Jesus equated "hell fire" (Matt. 18:9) with "everlasting fire" (v. 8). Jesus contrasted "everlasting punishment" with "eternal life" (Matt. 25:46). Everlasting is a difficult concept to get our minds around, but be assured it is a long time! Hell is as long as heaven for the smoke of torment ascends "forever and ever" (Rev. 14:10-11). We'll all spend eternity somewhere. Do you want to spend it in hell or in heaven?

Jesus tells us the overwhelming majority of people will go to hell (Matt. 7:13-14) contrary to God's desire (2 Tim. 2:4). Hell is our choice if we don't obey the gospel and live God's way (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Where do you plan to spend eternity?

✍️ Craig Thomas

Avoid Backbiting

My beloved brethren, we need to beware of backbiting, and we need to completely avoid it. You see, to backbite is, “to maliciously talk about someone who is not present.” So, to be simply put, backbiting is talking about someone behind their back in a degrading way. You see, when one backbites they are engaging in an evil and cowardly act. They are forsaking the act of love and kindness, and they are putting their soul in danger. Likewise, it is important to note that Paul informs that not only are those who practice backbiting deserving of death, but also those who approve of those who practice such are deserving of death (Romans 1:30-32).

So, knowing that, we need to keep our tongues from evil, and our lips from speaking deceit (Psalm 34:13). We need to always strive to guard our mouths and tongues (Proverbs 21:23). We need to pursue the things which make for peace, and the things by which we may edify another (Romans 14:19). We need to let no corrupt words proceed out of our mouths, but rather that which is good for necessary edification (Ephesians 4:29). We need to be one who speaks evil of no one (Titus 3:2). We need to lay aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking (1 Peter 2:1). We need to be one who always endeavors to let our words, and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in the sight of the Lord (Psalm 19:14), and we need to avoid those who backbite (Proverbs 20:19).

Brethren, the fact of the matter is, backbiting will not profit anyone anything good, but rather just the opposite. For, the wise man said, *The north wind brings forth rain, And a backbiting tongue an angry countenance*” (Proverbs 25:23). Also, evil typically provokes evil, and in Galatians 5:15, Paul says, *“But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!”* We all also need to give attention to, and remember these inspired words of David, *“Lord who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend...”* (Psalm 15:1-3).

Once more brethren, I plead with you to seriously think about these things concerning backbiting, and always remember, one who backbites will not only be one who will not obtain favor from men, but more importantly they will be one who will not obtain favor from the Lord. So, be one who avoids backbiting, and let’s never forget, *“A fool’s mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul”* (Proverbs 18:7).

✍ Brad Phillips

God’s Plan of Salvation

Hear the word of God. (Romans 10:17)

Believe in Jesus Christ. (John 8:24)

Repent of your sins. (Acts 17:30)

Confess Jesus Christ. (Romans 10:9-10)

Be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38)

Remain faithful unto death. (Revelation 2:10)

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

Belleville church of Christ

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www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	4:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

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