

DIFFICULT QUESTIONS, REAL ANSWERS

LESSON 6

DOES HELL REALLY EXIST?

INTRODUCCION: Our church in its Declaration of Faith says that at the end of time, there will be “*an eternal punishment for the wicked.*” What is this eternal punishment? Many call this eternal punishment, hell. The term hell creates in our minds lots of images which have to do with what Hollywood portrays in its horror movies. What is it that we can know about this place that has been ignored?

BIBLICAL TERMS ABOUT THE PLACE OF THE DEAD:

In the Old Testament, Sheol was a place of the dead. In some cases it seems to refer only to the state of being “dead” and not so much as a punishment. You can also read Psalms 9:17, Job 24:18 and 19

THERE IS A PLACE WHERE THE DEAD GO

For the effects of this study, we should consider without any mistake that the Bible speaks of every person when they die will have a final destiny. In the case of the Old Testament, the word “Sheol” has two descriptions. A) Where the dead go. B) Where those who have sinned go.

THE NEW TESTAMENT:

There are two terms to describe the place where people who die go.

- The first is “*Hades.*” This is a place that refers to a place of torment and to where people who have died go. There are several passages that describe it as a place of torment.

Luke 10:15 says, “And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.” (this verse appears also in Matthew 19:23).

Luke 16:23 says, “In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.”

- The second is Gehena: This place existed from the times of the kings of the Old Testament. It was where the trash of the city was thrown. This place also had been used by bad kings to sacrifice humans, especially children. It was a deplorable place, horrible, always on fire and undesirable.

Johel H. Canelo says:

“Gehena denotes a Cliff on the south side of Jerusalem. This valley was used by some Hebrew apostates as a place where their children were offered into the arms of the pagan god Moloch (2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6). In that way it became an area of suffering and pain. Lastly, it was converted into a trash deposit in Jerusalem where there was a continual burning of residue. The Gehena associated with these ideas, adequately served as a symbolic designation of the place of suffering for evil people will be sent after the coming of the Lord. We should consider now the passages of the New Testament in which Gehena is mentioned.”

Jesus and the other writers of the New Testament use this place as an example to describe the final destiny of those who have lived unpleasant and incredulous lives.

Matthew 10:28 says, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Matthew 5:29-30 says, *“If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”*

Matthew 13:49-50 says, *“This I show it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

Revelation 20:13-15 says, *“The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.”*

- There is another term that is used in the New Testament to describe “hell”. This word is “*tartaros*” that means a dark place. This term describes the same as “hades” and “hehena.” The three speak of a “place”. This place is reserved for those who not only sinned but also never recognized that they are sinners, including the angels that rebelled against God together with Satan.

CHARACTERISTS OF HELL

Our church, in the last article of the Declaration of Faith says: *We believe in...life eternal for the just and eternal punishment for the wicked.*” We understand this without any mistakes. There will be “an eternal punishment for the wicked.” This will take place in hell. The following verses will help us understand how terrible this destiny will be:

>Hell is a real torment – Matthew 13:50

>Hell is a torment without end – Mark 9:48; Revelations 14:10

>Hell is irreversable – Revelations 14:11; 20:14, 15.

WHAT AWAITS US ALL?

- DEATH: We will all die.
- BE JUDGED

After we die, the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:10 *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”*

Hebrews 9:27-28 says, *“Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.”*

- RECIEVE WHAT WE JUSTLY DESERVE

Now a day, there are several ways to understand the end. Some people say that after death there is no existence; others say that God is not going to allow for people to go to a hell but that all will go to heaven; and some say that hell is temporal and that after having been punished for a time, the people that went to hell will be set free and be allowed to be in heaven.

The Bible does not say that. The Bible says that there are two places reserved for human beings. One is heaven and the other is hell.

HELL

The real answer to this difficult question has arrived. Is there a Hell? According to the Bible, the answer is yes. Even though, like many things, we do not know how exactly it will be, we do know that it is the destiny that has been reserved for those who have rejected the eternal salvation that God offers.

Jesus said how it was going to happen. **“Then he will say to those on his left, Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”** (Matthew 25:41).

>We all have an entire lifetime to determine our destiny. Hebrews 9:27

>Hell was designed for Satan and His demons. Matthew 25:41, Revelations 20:10

>Hell will be the destiny for those who have rejected Jesus Christ. Matthew 13:41, 50, Revelations 20:11-15; 21:8

>Hell is destined for those who have decided not to accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God. John 3:16-36

CONCLUSION: IS GOD JUST?

Maybe the most important question is whether God is just or unjust when he announces that there is a place prepared for the unbelievers, sinners, and Satan with his demons. In and of itself, the answer is even more beautiful. Because God is just, there should be a heaven and a hell. The true reward and punishment. If that were not so, then justice would only be a farce.

Because God is just and loving, the Bible says in 2 Peter 3:9-15, *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear Friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him”*

This makes us happy and encourages us to look towards heaven and escape hell.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you think hell is? How would you describe it?
- After having studied this lesson, have you changed your opinion about hell?
- According to the Bible, who is hell reserved for?
- Do you think that it is important to speak about this subject? Why?
- Do you know what your eternal destiny is?

