

Eternal Death

November 2nd, 2008

Revelation 20:11-15

Four Statements concerning the Afterlife

1. Everyone will live forever in either heaven or hell

S **Sunbird Stickers** ~ Satan and Jesus ~ “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.”

- **Jesus judges ~ Mt 25:31** ~ Jesus returns ~ separates sheep and goats
 - v46 ~ all will receive either “everlasting punishment” or “eternal life”
- **Hell** ~ a maximum security prison built for the devil and his fallen angels
- **Heaven** ~ a paradise filled with peace and joy in the presence of God

2. Humans have bodies & spirits in heaven & hell

- **Jesus warns ~ Mt 10:28** ~ “fear Him who is able to destroy soul and body in hell”
- **Rev 20:13** ~ Death and Hades gave up the dead (bodies and spirits)

3. Our eternal destiny is sealed by the deeds done in our flesh

- **Rom 3:20a** ~ “by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight.”
- **Gal 3:22** ~ “But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”
 - Salvation is given only to those who believe
- **Rev 20:12b** ~ “books were opened ... and another book”
 - The books imprisons us ~ The Book of Life sets us free ...

4. Christ’s sacrificial death is the only key to the gate of heaven

- **Heb 9:27-28** ~ “... it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”
- **1 Tim 2:5** ~ “... there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ.”
- **Heb 11:6** ~ “... without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him.”

Next: Truths About Hell

Truths About Hell: Hell is a place of Continual, Conscious, Eternal Torment

- **Continual** ~ no lapse, no relief, no respite, no refreshment
 - **Rev 14:11** ~ “And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

- **Conscious** ~ people are alert and awake ~ they are weeping and gnashing teeth
 - **The rich man and Lazarus ~ Luke 16:23-24** ~ “being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’”

- **Eternal** ~ never ending, going on forever and ever without end
 - **Mark 3:29** ~ “he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation”
 - **Jude 4...13** ~ “... certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation ... for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.”

- **Torment** ~ anguish, discomfort, pain and fear
 - **Mt 13:41-42** ~ “The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”
 - 7 different times Jesus says this ...
 - **Read Mk 9:42-48** ~ “worm does not die ... fires is not quenched”
 - Worm ~ torments from within
 - Fire ~ torments from without
 - Jesus repeats the phrase 3 times for hand, foot and eye
 - **Read Mt 25:41** ~ “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”
 - “**depart**” ~ separation from all good
 - “**everlasting fire**” ~ forever devouring and tormenting
 - “**join**” ~ the devil and his angels
 - **Rev 14:11** ~ see above...

Next: Lies About Hell

Lies About Hell

Universalism: No one will be sent to hell ~ everyone will go to heaven

- **Support**
 - **1 Cor 15:22** ~ "... as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."
 - **2 Cor 5:19** ~ "... God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them..."
 - **Col 1:19-20** ~ "For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."
 - "God is love" (**1 Jn 4:8**) and love "keeps no record of wrongs" (**1 Cor 13:5b** NIV)
- **Opposition**
 - Selective and overly generalized application of universal language
 - All usually means "without distinction" not "without exception"
 - Scriptural opposition to universalism is overwhelming...
 - **1 Th 1:7b-9** ~ "when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power..."

Annihilationism: Those sent to hell will cease to exist ~ suffering is mercifully brief

- **Support**
 - **2 Th 1:9** ~ "These shall be punished with everlasting destruction ..."
 - **Heb 10:39** ~ "we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved."
 - **2 Pet 2:12** ~ "these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish."
- **Opposition**
 - Again selective and overly literal application of certain words
 - destruction, destroyed, perish
 - Yet none of these words means something ceases to exist
 - And this belief denies the conscious eternal torment we defined earlier
 - "**weeping and gnashing of teeth**" ~ Mt 8:12, 13:42, 13:50, 22:13, etc...
 - Mt 25:46 ~ "a punishment is eternal in its length ~ not its effect"
 - **2 Pet 2:17** ~ "These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

Purgatory: The punishment of hell is temporary ~ all souls will go to heaven

- **Support**
 - **Mt 5:25-26** ~ “Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.”
 - **Mt 12:32** ~ “Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.”
- **Opposition**
 - Liberals believe punishment is corrective ~ not punitive ~ and so with hell too
 - **Q** *“There are those who allow that the wicked will be cast into hell, and yet they insist that the punishment is corrective rather than retributive. A sort of Protestant Purgatory is invented, the fires of which are to be purifying rather than penal.”* **A. W. Pink** ~ *“Eternal Punishment”*
 - In Matthew 25 Jesus speaks of returning in judgment ~ sheep and goats
 - No middle ground ~ right hand or left hand
 - Not sheep or goats AND geep or shoats
 - In Rev 20 there is no middle ground ~ name is IN Book of Life or NOT

Megaloi BLOG Post c/Hell ~ Jan 2008

Views of 3 people

Michael ~ 23 year old guy who hosts the BLOG and started the discussion

Don ~ a Baptist deacon for 21 years ~ no longer attends church

Bob ~ a spiritual but non-religious guy

Next: I’ll explore their views in reverse order...

Bob ~ the spiritual but non-religious guy

I think the concepts of "heaven" and "hell" are simply made up, nothing more than that. For some reason, religions seem chock-full of punishment for disobedience. It's a human trait that some believe is also applied in Heaven.

But if we believe that God loves us "unconditionally" (and I do), then wouldn't He want us all to be with Him after we die, no matter what we did "wrong" as a human? Could a human parent ever truly turn his back on his/her flesh and blood? I don't believe that God would either. I don't like to think of *my* God as being vindictive or spiteful. Those are human attributes.

I used to believe that "Heaven" was simply "being with God" and "Hell" was choosing to not be with God - and that the ensuing suffering was self-inflicted torture rather than anything meted out by our loving Father. That pain would be levels of magnitude worse than any "fire and brimstone" could be. But since most humans fear fire, it makes a most compelling image of what would await us in "hell."

... We say that God loves us "unconditionally," yet we are very keen to put conditions on that love. Strange, that. Me, I simply do not believe in a vindictive, spiteful, wrathful or vengeful God. Those are weaknesses. I believe they are human emotions and traits that God does not possess. But hey, maybe I'm wrong.

- **Note he starts out with "I think" and never quotes a verse**
- **He believes in a God that loves unconditionally (yet capitalizes God, He and Him)**
- **I don't like to think of *my* God as being vindictive**
- **This type of man just ignores Scripture**

Don ~ a Baptist for 21 years ~ no longer attends church

I am a retired educator (history). I checked out literal versions of the Bible and various concordances that went with them. Two years ago, I left the church (I was a deacon for 21+ years and a Baptist all my life.) I could not stay in a place that believed so diametrically opposite as I did. I have never looked back. I am very open-minded now. I will and do study any belief system to see if it has anything to offer me. ... I don't really know if any of my old friends would define me as a Christian today. That doesn't bother me one way or the other.

I would like to tell you basically what I believe about the Bible. Is it inspired by God? Yes. Is it inerrant? No. I don't believe it is a manual for Christian living. I believe it is an account of the experiences of early Christians, written down for the first time at least 60 years after the crucifixion. None of the authors, whoever they were, were eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus. All of the accounts were orally passed from generation to generation.

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Michael's Mom:

"--your Dad & I LOVE YOU, WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU--no matter what you say or do or believe--that's called UNconditional LOVE & that's what we HAVE FOR YOU & ALL OUR FAMILY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!--THAT'S the SAME KIND OF LOVE GOD HAS FOR US!!! THANK GOD, JESUS & THE HOLY SPIRIT! YOU ARE ONE SMART MAN & we are SO VERY PROUD OF YOU!!!!!!!!!! WE LOVE YOU, Mom"

Mom you are so right. Your unconditional love is well deserved by Michael. I have a few questions: If your love is unconditional, and you say it is, and you say God's love is also "unconditional", why do you place conditions on His love that you would not place on yours? That condition being that if we don't love Him back and follow His "rules" He will send us to Hell. God told us to love Him unconditionally and our neighbors as ourselves. Should we as parents expect less of Him? Will He ask of us something He is not willing to do?

- **In the church for 21 years ~ the type of heretic Jude warned of...**
- **Very skilled at undermining those who wrote ~ BLOG writers mother included**
- **This type of man abandons Scripture when it doesn't fit his beliefs**

**Michael** ~ 23 year old guy who hosts the BLOG and started the discussion

All the churches I'd attended believed and taught that hell was a real place of eternal torment, and that the majority of people were going to end up there. Nobody talked about it much though, as the "fire and brimstone" days of preaching were past and churches were more grace-oriented now.

I would walk into a store and see dozens of people around me, and try to imagine 90% of them, or even one of them, literally burning in a pit of fire. It was terrifying. There was not a soul I'd ever met who I would wish that on for five minutes, let alone forever! As I expanded that and thought more about all the hellbound people, billions and billions of them, it was crushing to the point of total despair. This universe was a total disaster. Me and my fellow church members would leave our comfortable homes on Sunday morning and drive past thousands of doomed souls while we looked forward to sitting in comfortable pews to hear a sermon. I saw two choices of how to look at the situation:

#1 -- My church members (including me) were the most selfish, uncompassionate people in the history of the world. We knew how to keep people from eternal torment yet slacked on evangelism because it was uncomfortable, inconvenient or hard. We were the ones who deserved to perish.

#2 -- None of us really believed, deep down, that the eternal picture was that bleak and that the stakes were so massive. Or else as sane human beings we'd be doing more about it.

This eventually led me to accept the universalist view of eternity -- that all souls go to heaven. It has tons of biblical support, but I won't pretend that there aren't problem passages for this view as well. ... In the end we pick a view and live accordingly. Once we've picked one, then those problem passages don't seem so bad, and the support seems overwhelming. The classic human gift of justification is still alive and well, and I was using it with universalism. ... I can't say that I'm 100% universalist today because while it has great merit, it is no more knowable than any other doctrine. We all do our best and make assumptions to fill in the gaps.

- **He initially held to at least some Scripture ~ but weakened fast...**
  - **Thinks multiple views can all be true ~ post-modern ~ We can't know**
  - **Adapted the truth to fit his conscience ~ not his conscience to fit the truth**
- Q "It is to pervert, and to misinterpret the Word of God, to make one passage contradict another simply because the language used admits of an explanation which brings them into conflict." Charles Hodge ~ "*Future Punishment*"

**Next: Objections to Hell**

## **Three Objections to Hell**

### **1. Unloving:** God is too loving to send people to hell<sup>1</sup>

- “If God is too loving to send people to hell, why does He threaten to do it so much?”
  - That would imply that He is one of those parents that yells and threatens ...

**John 3:16-20** ~ “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”

### **2. Unmerciful:** God is too merciful to keep people in hell forever<sup>2</sup>

- God’s mercy does endure forever... that phrase occurs throughout Scripture
- But God chooses objects of His mercy ~ He owes it to no one

**Ex 33:19b** ~ “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” (quoted by Paul c/Jacob & Esau Rom 9)

### **3. Unjust:** Eternal punishment is too great a penalty for finite sins<sup>3</sup>

**2 Th 1:6-10** ~ “[I]t is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe.”

**Q** “It would be well if all who call themselves Christians, should learn that it is not their business to believe and teach what they think true or right, but what God in His Holy Word has seen fit to reveal.” Charles Hodge ~ “*Future Punishment*”

**Next: Living with the Reality of Hell**



## **Living with the Reality of Hell ~ 5 points**

### **1. God's offer of mercy is greater than the punishment promised in hell**

- Christ suffered that we might be spared suffering
- But we must humble ourselves, admit our spiritual poverty and embrace Christ
- If we refuse to, we remain in our sins and guilt, and God's judgment rests upon us
- *"Do we think God will not have those who reject His Son drink from the cup of wrath that Christ did?" ~ Remember Christ's duress in the Garden of Gethsemene*

### **2. We have been bought at a terrible price ~ We should be thankful**

- **Q** "A realization of the unspeakable misery which awaits the lost (and which each of us fully merited) would immeasurably deepen our gratitude, and bring us to thank God more fervently that we have been snatched as brands from the burning fire and delivered from the wrath to come." A. W. Pink ~ *"Eternal Punishment"*
- *"Survivor's guilt"* shouldn't steal away our joy

### **3. Sin is a destroyer ~ We must not ally with it in the least degree**

- Sin will be expunged from the earth
- We must not befriend it, defend it or embrace it ~ It is evil ~ We must fight it

### **4. Life on earth is surreal ~ We live in the light of eternity**

- Hell is as real as heaven
- We must engage people
- We must warn them of the wrath awaiting those that reject Christ
- People don't want to hear it
- But we must still share it with them

### **5. Trust the Word of God ~ Do not treat it as the unbelievers do**

- **Q** "It would be well if all who call themselves Christians, should learn that it is not their business to believe and teach what they think true or right, but what God in His Holy Word has seen fit to reveal." Charles Hodge ~ *"Future Punishment"*

# Eternal Death

November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008 • Rodney Swab • Revelation 20:11-15

## 1. Truths About Hell

- Every human will live forever (body and spirit) in either heaven or hell<sup>1</sup>
- Our eternal destiny is decided based upon the deeds done in our flesh<sup>2</sup>
- Christ's sacrificial death is the only key that opens the gate of heaven<sup>3</sup>
- Hell is a place of continual<sup>4</sup>, conscious<sup>5</sup>, eternal<sup>6</sup> torment<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mt 25:46; <sup>2</sup>Rom 3:20; <sup>3</sup>Heb 11:6; <sup>4</sup>Rev 14:11; <sup>5</sup>Lk 16:23-25; <sup>6</sup>Mk 3:29; <sup>7</sup>Mt 13:41-42

## 2. Lies About Hell

- Universalism: No one will be sent to hell ~ everyone will go to heaven<sup>1</sup>
- Annihilationism: Those sent to hell will cease to exist ~ suffering is mercifully brief<sup>2</sup>
- Purgatory: The punishment of hell is temporary ~ all souls will go to heaven<sup>3</sup>
- Personalized: Hell is merely an uncomfortable place ~ not a place of torment<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>2 Th 1:9; <sup>2</sup>2 Pet 2:17; <sup>3</sup>Jude 7; <sup>4</sup>Rev 14:11

## 3. Objections to Hell

- Unloving: God is too loving to send people to hell<sup>1</sup>
- Unmerciful: God is too merciful to keep people in hell forever<sup>2</sup>
- Unjust: Eternal punishment is too great a penalty for finite sins<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jn 3:16-20; <sup>2</sup>Jude 10-13; <sup>3</sup>2 Pet 2:4-17

## 4. Living with the Reality of Hell

- God's offer of mercy is greater than the punishment promised in hell
- We deserve hell ~ But we have been bought at a terrible price
- Sin is a destroyer ~ We must not ally with it in the least degree
- Life on earth is surreal ~ We must live in the light of eternity