

XII.1. Lambs to Rams: The Final Resurrection & Judgment

Joh 5:28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

1Co 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (*Col 1:13*); neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law. 57 But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

1Co 15:24 Then *cometh* the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed is death.

How do we approach a friend or loved one about their eternal destiny when so many of them don't even believe there is a place called Hell? How do many of us even attempt to explain our past lives when living ignorantly in the world while our

children were growing up only to have found the truth later when they weren't either able or even willing to understand the difference? What about the mistakes many of us made while raising them up into adulthood only wishing to have done things differently? How can we apologize for our ignorance then, when the media today, along with so many other secularly magnetic lust-filled institutions, have stolen the true message of love from the hearts of God's creation? How do we reclaim something so precious when Satan has been so subtle in his message of confusion? Maybe you've asked yourselves some, most or all of these questions or maybe even more. Or maybe you're one of the fortunate ones that never had to ask yourself even one of these questions. If so, you are truly blessed to live unscathed from the world and its evil influences. But to many, the pain of knowing the truth just tears away at our hearts when it concerns a lost loved one such as a son or daughter.

Rom 9:1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, ² That I have **great heaviness** and **continual sorrow in my heart**. ³ For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, **my kinsmen according to the flesh**: (*Emp. added*)

Paul understood, as did Abraham, where putting aside his own understanding for a moment so that God would reveal Himself through His Divine plan, knowing he could once again return to reclaim his own salvation. Abraham knew that God would keep His promise that through Isaac the world would be blessed through his Seed (*Heb 11:17-19*). But truth will always be truth and has no agenda but to save.

Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.

The truth is...

2Co 5:10 For all of us must appear before Christ, to be judged by Him. We will each receive what we deserve,

according to everything we have done, good or bad, in our bodily life. 11 We know what it means to fear the Lord, and so we try to persuade others. God knows us completely, and I hope that in your hearts you know me as well. (*Good News Bible*)

“When humanity chose to sin, it made the decision to be separated from the holy Creator. The prophet clearly stated: “[Y]our iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you” (*Isaiah 59:2*). In biblical parlance (*phraseology*), “death” generally denotes a separation of some sort. When the spirit departs the body, the body is dead (*James 2:26*). Similarly, when a person enters a state of sinfulness, he becomes spiritually dead (*Ephesians 2:1*), for, by that act, he has determined to separate himself from God. Remember, the initiation of this estrangement was not forced on us by our Maker; it is totally human responsibility.”

Sin Separates From God – *Wayne Jackson, The Christian Courier*

The Horror of Separation from God

How is it possible to describe the spiritual state of being banished from the presence of the Supreme Being of the universe to someone who is so bound to this physical existence?

1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

Being alienated from Jehovah is the ultimate experience of horror. It is a separation from everything that is pure and good, everything that is right and wholesome, and everything that makes for joy and tranquility. It is, however, a **spiritual** experience, and since the human mind operates on the plane of the material, we really are not prepared to appreciate the gravity of such a circumstance. Hence, God has employed appropriate symbolism to describe the agonies of Hell.

The spiritual abode of the wicked is a state of pain, trouble, and sorrow (*Psalms 116:3*). It is characterized by shame and contempt (*Daniel 12:2*), and is a realm of affliction (*Jonah 2:2*). Hell is a place of outer darkness where there is weeping and the gnashing of teeth (*Matthew 25:30*)—a sphere of eternal fire (*Matthew 25:41*) where the “worm” (*a figure for gnawing anguish*) does not die (*Mark 9:48*).

The wicked are described as being beaten with stripes (*Luke 12:47-48*). They are recipients of God’s wrath and indignation, they experience tribulation and anguish (*Romans 2:8-9*), and they suffer punishment as a manifestation of the Lord’s vengeance.

2Th 1:6 Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on **them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ** (*which pretty much covers all people of all ages and dispensations*); 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; 10 When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. (*Emp. added*)

Hell is a place of utter torment, where no rest ever is known.

Rev 14:10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

While it would not be an expression of responsible exegesis to literalize the figures of speech listed above, one must never forget that the symbolism is designed to emphasize the terror of being abandoned by God. Moreover, the figures doubtless do not do justice to the actual reality of this eternal nightmare!

I have often tried to understand the thoughts that would go through the minds of those who, at the moment of the resurrection, would see someone they knew who was a faithful Christian, ascending to Jesus and His angels, only to, at that moment, understand that they weren't going with them. That they were to be lost and there was no way to redeem themselves. At that point it would be too late. How terrifying a thought that would be! They would be spending an eternity in agony asking themselves why they didn't listen to a loved one who tried to share the Gospel with them. Why would anyone want to risk being in that position?

Is the Punishment Eternal in Duration?

A major objection to the doctrine of Hell is its everlasting nature. Must the suffering go on without end? Is it really **just** for one to be punished forever when he or she has been devoted to evil for only a relatively brief span of time? Consider this question for a moment.

Is God **just** in granting eternal bliss to those who have served him only temporarily in this world? This writer never has heard the Lord charged with unfairness in this instance! It must be emphasized again that the issue is not one that can be determined with the subjective reasoning of biased human emotion. The Bible must supply the answer.

Justice and Equitable Punishment

An added dimension to this study surely must be that of "degrees of punishment." The Scriptures teach that eternal punishment will be proportionate to what is deserved. Jesus said that in "the day of judgment" it would be "more tolerable" for those pagan cities that had received little spiritual influence

than for those cities that rejected Him in spite of seeing His marvelous deeds.

Mat 11:22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. 23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

In one illustration, the Lord told of a certain servant who behaved himself in an unseemly fashion. When his master came and found him unprepared, he assigned him to a just punishment. Christ then stated:

Luk 12:47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

In another incident when Jesus faced Pilate and was told that the authority to either save or condemn Him rested in Pilate's hands, Jesus responded with who it was that would receive a sorer punishment than what Pilate would; showing another passage which explains the degrees of punishment that will exist in Hell.

Joh 19:11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power *at all* against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.

Jesus' purpose in coming the first time was to save man and not to condemn him. God will never send anyone to Hell; He will

only honor their decisions to not love Him.

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth (*Gk.4100- to entrust [especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ]*) in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

Jesus said Christians who are faithful unto the death of the physical body do not die. The judgment is skipped since the faithful go directly to Paradise to await His coming.

Joh 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Rom 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the Law of sin and death (*which states basically that if you sin you die*).

XII.1. Questions

1. How do we reconcile our pain and mental anguish if we have loved ones who are lost? a) by putting aside our own understanding and allow God to reveal Himself through His Divine plan; b) by living every day as though it is our last; c) the text does not say.
2. Why can we put our trust solely in the truth of God's word? a) truth will always be truth; b) truth has no agenda; c) both a and b.
3. Who makes the decision for mankind to be separated from God? a) God does; b) the Bible does; c) we do.
4. Why is it difficult for a worldly person to accept spiritual truth? a) they have no desire for it; b) it is foolish to them since it can only be spiritually recognized; c) mankind is carnal and sold under sin.
5. True or false: A person's duration of punishment depends on the severity of their sin. a) true; b) false; c) the text does not say.
6. Will there be degrees of punishment in Hell? Explain. a) no, punishment won't last since the lost will be annihilated; b) yes, punishment will be in proportion to what is deserved; c) no, Hell and punishment are inventions of man.
7. True or false: Jesus came the first time to save but will return to judge. a) true; b) false; c) the text does not say.
8. True or false: Faithful Christians do not die. a) true; b) false; c) the text does not say.