

Elephants in the Church

"Hell"

(Matthew 25:41,46)



- Introduction:
1. The Bible doctrine of Hell is "under fire" today.
 2. It is quickly becoming an embarrassing artifact of ancient Christian doctrine.
 3. 2015 survey by the Pew Research Center stated that 58% of Americans believe in the existence of Hell, while 72% believe in Heaven.
 4. 2007 Barna survey asked if people believed Hell to be a real place of eternal punishment - only 32% said, "yes."
 5. Listen to some of the ways churches advertize themselves:
 - a. "There is no fire and brimstone here. No Bible-thumping. Just practical, witty messages."
 - b. "The sermons are relevant, upbeat, and best of all, short. You won't hear a lot of preaching about sin and damnation and hellfire."
 - c. "The pastor preaches a very upbeat message. It is a salvationist message, but the idea is not so much being saved from the fires of Hell. Rather, it's being saved from meaninglessness and aimlessness in this life. It's more of a soft-sell."
 - d. "As with all clergymen, this pastor's answer is God, but he slips him in at the end, and even then doesn't get heavy. No ranting, no raving. No fire, no brimstone. He doesn't even use the 'H-word.'"
 6. A diminished view of Hell is even finding inroads among our brethren.
 - a. "The Fire that Consumes" by Edward Fudge.
 - b. "After-Life" by F. LaGard Smith.
 - c. "Fire in My Bones" by Jimmy Allen.

I. Views Concerning Hell

- A. A Simple Denial - Don't believe in any afterlife.
- B. Conditionalists - Immortality is granted only to the righteous. Otherwise, one ceases to exist at death.
- C. Annihilationists - Both wicked and righteous are raised, but the wicked are annihilated, and do not suffer eternally.
- D. What they all have in common is the denial of everlasting, conscious, torment.

II. Objections to Hell as Everlasting, Conscious, Torment

- A. A loving God would never do this.
 1. (Romans 11:22; Nahum 1:2; Romans 1:18; Revelation 19:15).
 2. God is also a God of wrath.
 3. Some are guilty of creating a God after their preferences.

4. Actually, the character of God demands nothing less.
- B. It wouldn't be fair.
 1. How could God punish a man infinitely for a finite sinful actions?
 2. Well, the same question could be asked positively. How could God reward a man infinitely for finite righteousness?
 3. Who are we to measure how bad sin is?
- C. Hell is eternal in its consequence, not duration.
 1. That is not how Scripture portrays it (Matthew 25:31-46).
 2. Hell will last as long as Heaven lasts.

III. What The Bible Says About Hell

- A. Jesus spoke more about Hell than anyone else in the Bible.
- B. It is the wrath of God (Hebrews 10:29-31; Proverbs 20:2).
- C. It is eternal (Matthew 25:46).
- D. It is a place of fire (Revelation 20:15).
- E. It is a place of no relief (Revelation 14:11).

- Conclusion:
1. Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men (2 Corinthians 5:11).
 2. Ills. Of getting heart back in rhythm.
 3. If the living knew what the dead know, the front pew couldn't contain those who were in a desperate search for salvation.