

This Vital Realization Will Encourage You to Spread the Gospel

Is hell really eternal? Does the Bible point to a never-ending place of torment for people who reject Jesus Christ? Can time served in hell pay for sin and shorten the stay? The one aspect about hell that is most attacked, ridiculed and watered down is the notion that hell is eternal. People cannot reconcile a loving God with a God who would allow eternal suffering. Some of those who struggle with eternal torment is due to an erroneous belief that everyone is God's child, and God would never allow his child to suffer torment in hell forever. Everyone is not God's child. Only those who receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are God's children. This is clearly stated throughout the Bible.

Some feel that a lifetime of say 70 or 80 years of sin does not deserve an eternity of punishment. What many don't understand is that time spent in hell is not valuable enough to pay for sin. Time is the wrong premise. Sin is so severe to God that it took the blood of His own Son to pay for our sins. Time is the wrong premise. It's not based on time; it's based on a relationship with Jesus Christ. Hebrews 9:22b says that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Romans 7 explains that our sin is exceedingly sinful to God. It does deserve an eternal punishment. It took an eternal God, Jesus Christ, to pay for our eternally deserved sin. Many people instead believe in false teachings such as annihilationism or universalism.

Annihilationism is the belief that man will cease to exist upon his death. This is false because in Genesis 1:26, God explains we're made in His image. We're made eternal beings.

God cannot annihilate us because He's already made us eternal. He made us to live with Him forever in heaven. If people reject Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, they will live eternally separated from God in hell.

Universalism is the belief that all roads lead to heaven. This belief denies the work of the cross, denies Christ's deity and calls Jesus a liar. Jesus Christ claimed to be God and the only way to heaven. Conditional universalism believes that if a person spends two or three hundred years in hell, he or she will then stand before God and say, "I've paid for my sin. Let me out now." We could never pay for sins, as that would be works. Ephesians 2:8-9 says we are saved by grace, not by works.

If God were to let someone out of hell after a few hundred years, where would He put that person? He can't take people to heaven in our fallen nature because Revelation 21:27 says He'll let nothing into heaven that defiles or corrupts. We would make a mess of heaven if He let us in the way we are. He has to give us a new heart and a new spirit, and that doesn't come through time spent in hell. It comes through a relationship with Jesus Christ

When we trust in what Jesus did on the cross, He considers our trust as if we were righteous, and He gives us a new heart and a new spirit. This is explained in many verses in the Bible. God has to give us a new nature, and that doesn't come again through time or works.

The good news is that not one person has to go to hell. It's our choice. If people choose to reject the only provision for our sin, which is Jesus Christ, they will face an eternal hell.

For more on this powerful topic, listen to *23 Minutes in Hell* on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

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