

The Guide

WHO WILL BE LOST

There are many people who would rather not think about this subject for fear they may discover the real truth about hell. They are afraid that they may see themselves slipping down to hell at a very fast speed. Most people try to quieten their conscience with the words: God is a God of love and will never cast anybody into hell. With this they imagine that the matter of their eternal life has been dealt with and that their sinful life will be accepted in heaven. "Surely you know that the wicked will not possess God's Kingdom. Do not fool yourselves; people who are immoral or who worship idols or are adulterers or homosexual perverts or who steal or are greedy or are drunkards or who slander others or are thieves – none of these will possess God's Kingdom." (1 Cor. 6:9-10). "But nothing that is impure will enter the city, nor anyone who does shameful things or tells lies. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of the living will enter the city." (Rev. 21:27).

There are others again who try to prove that there is no hell at all, and another group have a teaching made by man, that after death we will be purified by fire and after that will enter heaven. It is strange what people will try to do to avoid the truth about hell. Some avoid it by saying that there is no life after death, that when we die that is the end, there is nothing beyond the grave. God's word tells us that, "Everyone must die once, and after that be judged by God." (Heb. 9:27). Another section of the population of the world believe that only those

who die as Christians will live again, the others die and that is the end. A surprisingly large number of people from many parts of the world believe that when you die you come back to the world in the form of a flower, or a cow, or snake, or some other animal or creature. There are many more lies which people believe in order to soothe their minds about hell.

IS THERE A HELL?

The one person whom we can believe above everyone else is the Lord Jesus. He spoke much about hell and we will therefore take a few of

the many Scriptures out of the Word of God and see what He says. "Whoever calls his brother a worthless fool will be in danger of going to the fire of hell." (Matt. 5:22). "So if your right eye causes you to sin, take it out and throw it away! It is much better for you to lose a part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away! It is much better for you to lose one of your limbs than for your whole body to go to hell." (Matt. 5:29-30). "But those who should be in the Kingdom will be thrown out into the darkness, where they will cry and grind their teeth."

(Matt. 8:12). "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather be afraid of God, who can destroy both body and soul in hell." (Matt. 10:28). "And as for you, Capernaum! Did you want to lift yourself up to heaven? You will be thrown down to hell! If the miracles which



were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would still be in existence today!" (Matt. 11:23). "Just as the weeds are gathered up and burnt in the fire, so the same thing will happen at the end of the age: the Son of Man will send out His angels to gather up out of His Kingdom all those who cause people to sin and all others who do evil things, and they will throw them into the fiery furnace, where they will cry and grind their teeth." (Matt. 13:40-42, 49, 50). " 'Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' the king asked him. But the man said nothing. Then the king told the servants, 'Tie him up hand and foot, and throw him outside in the dark. There he will cry and grind his teeth.'" (Matt. 22:12,13). "You snakes and sons of snakes! How do you expect to escape from being condemned to hell?" (Matt. 23:33). "These, then, will be sent off to eternal punishment, but the righteous will go to eternal life." (Matt. 25:46). These are but a few Scriptures out of only one book of the whole Bible and there are many, many more.

WHAT IS HELL LIKE?

One day Jesus drew back the curtain and gave us a glimpse of hell. In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus gives us a picture of what hell is like. He shows us something terrible which the eye of man has never seen before. Fires of hell burning with great might and in the centre of this great sea of fire, is a man. This man is not asleep, he is awake, he is alive and he is conscious of all that is going on around him. He can see, he can feel, he can hear and he can taste with his tongue. This man once walked and lived on this earth as we do now. He had heard the preachers or prophets, just as many of us hear them. The sad thing is that he took no notice of what Moses and the prophets told him, just like today, so many take no notice of the Word of God and of the preachers of the Word. This man did not think and was not at all worried about life after death. He could have thought that God was a good God and would therefore not throw him into hell, and even if he did land there, there were enough priests to pray him out of hell. My friend, in spite of all this, he landed in hell and here we see him in these flames of fire.

Look at his face and see the misery, look at his eyes and see the great fear of hopelessness, listen to his terrible cry as he calls out to Father Abraham, "Take pity on me, and send Lazarus to dip his finger in some water and cool my tongue, because I am in great pain in this fire!... Then I beg you, Father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father's house, where I have five brothers. Let him go and warn them so that they, at least, will not come to this place of pain." Father Abraham told him that they had Moses and the

prophets and that they should listen to them. But this man in the flames of hell said that if someone were to rise from death and go and warn them they would listen. But Abraham said if they would not listen to the prophets, then they would not listen to anybody even if he rose from the dead.

How many of our friends and relatives are in the painful fires of hell this day and wish that they could come back and warn us of the truth and reality of hell? They cannot come back, we have the Word of God and must believe it. Jesus rose from the dead and how many believed Him? Only just a few.

The suffering in hell is not just for a short time but is for ever. "Away from me, you that are under God's curse! Away to the eternal fire which has been prepared for the Devil and his angels!" (Matt. 25:41). "Then the Devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur ... and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever... Whoever did not have his name written in the book of the living was thrown into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20:10-15). "There the worms that eat them never die, and the fire that burns them is never put out." (Mark 9:48).

Hell is a place of torment and suffering and pain. The Bible tells us that there will be crying and grinding of teeth. Fire causes pain and people do not weep and cry and grind their teeth if they are dead, as some believe, or if there is no life after death. There is life after death for we read in Rev. 20:12, "And I saw the dead, great and small alike, standing before the throne." If we go to hell after death, then we will suffer for ever and ever the torment and pain of its fire.

WHO GOES TO HELL?

Hell was prepared for the Devil and his angels. All those who sin and listen to Satan's voice and whose names are not written in the book of the living, also go to this place of damnation. (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:15). This includes all of us, you and me, "Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence." (Rom. 3:23). "Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death has spread to the whole human race because everyone has sinned." (Rom 5:12). Because of Adam's sin, death has come upon us all, and you and I have to die. In the same way, sin has come upon you and me and we are all sinners in the sight of God. We have a sinful nature with a desire to sin and disobey God. People do not have to be taught to sin, they do it naturally. People have to be taught to obey God, to give their lives to Him and to serve Him. Because of the sinful nature of all men, we are all far away

from God's saving presence and are heading for hell. Whether we want to know it or not, we are sliding down to a terrible hell.

There are many who pray, "Lord, Lord", and repeat certain church ceremonies every week, but do not know the Lord as their Saviour, and have not been born again. They will also, most certainly be found in hell. (Matt. 7:21-23). There are also those who profess to be Christians but do not bring forth good fruit, who will also be thrown into the fire. (Matt. 7:19). The acts of our sinful nature which should not be found in us are, "Immoral, filthy and indecent actions; in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies and they fight; they become jealous, angry and ambitious. They separate into parties and groups; they are envious, get drunk, have orgies, and do other things like these. I warn you now as I have done before: those who do these things will not possess the Kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-21). If we call ourselves Christians then the world should see in us, "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control." (Gal. 5:22-24). Those found in hell will be those who have not been purified by the precious blood of Jesus, those who have not turned from their sins, who have not accepted the Gift of God, which is eternal life, and those who, through disobedience, treat cheaply the blood of God's covenant which purified them from sin. (Heb. 10:29).

The Lord spoke to Nicodemus, who was a Jewish leader and told him that, "I am telling you the truth; no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again." (John 3:3). The Lord was telling him that even though he was a leader and a very good man, he still needed to be born again to enter heaven. If we are not born again, no matter how good-living we are, we will, certainly go to hell.

"What then, of the person who despises the Son of God? Who treats as a cheap thing the blood of God's covenant which purified him from sin? Who insults the Spirit of grace? Just think how much worse is the punishment he will deserve! For we know who said, "I will take revenge, I will repay"; and who also said, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God! (Heb. 10:29-31).

WHO SENDS US TO HELL?

Many people say that because God is love He will never send us to hell. How is it then that people go to hell? God in His great love has made a way of escape for us and it is left to each one individually to decide where he or she wants to spend eternity. God has left this choice

with you and me, and we are free to decide for ourselves about heaven and hell. If we want to go to heaven, the way is clearly shown to us, if we neglect to accept God's way of salvation or if we choose not to accept it but rather to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a while, then we are sending ourselves to hell, because that is the way to go there. You and I are shown the way both to heaven and to hell, but it is you and I who decide which road to take and who walk the road to its destination.

HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?

God made a way of escape for us which needs no money, which does not require you to have a high education, which does not require you to live a good life before you accept it, and which does not ask you to work for it. God's way is free, it is for the sinner as well as the good person. It can be understood and accepted by a child who has no learning as well as by an adult. It is wonderful, glorious and brings peace and joy. God's way takes the heavy load of sin from off our shoulders, and God's yoke is easy and His load is light. (Matt. 11:28-30). God's way is being sorry for and turning from our sins. We must be truly sorry for the sins we have done and turn from them. "But now I am happy... because your sadness made you change your ways... For the sadness that is used by God brings a change of heart that leads to salvation." (2 Cor. 7:9,10). "Do those things that will show that you have turned from your sins." (Matt. 3:8). "I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent." (Luke 15:7). "This is what is written: the Messiah must suffer and must rise from death three days later, and in His name the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be preached to all nations." (Luke 24:46,47). "Surely you know God is kind, because He is trying to lead you to repent." (Rom. 2:4). When, by the conviction of the Holy Spirit, we have seen what great sinners we are and we are sorry and repent, then we must also confess our sins to Him, for "He will forgive us our sins and purify us from all our wrongdoing." (1 John 1:9).

We must also believe and accept in faith what Jesus has done for us "As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the desert, in the same way the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life. For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not die but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its saviour. Whoever believes in the Son is not judged; but whoever does not

believe has already been judged because he has not believed in God's only Son. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not have life, but remain under God's punishment." (John 3:14-18, 36). "I am telling you the truth: whoever hears my words and believes in Him who sent me has eternal life. He will not be judged, but has already passed from death to life." (John 5:24). "For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it." (Eph. 2:8).

Because Adam sinned, death and sin came upon all men, but because Jesus, the sinless One, the Son of God, died for you and me in our place, we can have everlasting life. "For just as all people die because of their union with Adam, in the same way all will be raised to life because of their union with Christ." (1 Cor. 15:22).

You see therefore, that what we have to do is very little and costs nothing. We only have to be sorry for our sins and turn from them, confess, and believe and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. The One who does all the paying and giving is the Lord Jesus. He paid for your salvation with His own life on the Cross of Calvary, He purifies our hearts with His precious blood, He forgives us our many sins. He gives us the right to become the children of God and He accepts us and makes us His very own. (John 1:12). What a wonderful, glorious, and free salvation Jesus offers. Receive this salvation and accept Jesus now!

An ungodly man was once trying to convince a Christian that his religion was of no use and that he would never be any better for it. The unbeliever asked, "What has your Jesus done for you?" The Christian said, "He has saved me." The ungodly man questioned, "And what is that?"

and while he spoke there was an unbelieving smile on his face. The Christian replied, "Step with me to the door and I will show you." So together they walked to the door and stepped outside. The Christian then picked up a quantity of dry leaves and made a large circle or ring of them. He then looked for a worm and having found one, he placed it in the centre of the ring. Then he took some matches and set fire to the dry leaves around the worm, while the unbeliever looked on with amazement. As the heat of the fire approached the poor worm, it began to wriggle and writhe and show symptoms of distress, but it could not get out of the burning ring. The Christian then quickly darted his hand through the smoke and picked the worm out of its dangerous position and placed it on the green grass out of reach of the fire and of all danger.

"There," said the Christian, "that is what Jesus has done for me. I was exposed to the flames of hell, they were surrounding me and there was no possibility of escape. I was a great sinner condemned and ready to perish, but Jesus rescued me by dying for my sins, snatching me like a stick from the fire. (Zech. 3:2).

Dear friend, as you are surely going down to the fires of hell, will you not look up to Jesus? Turn from and confess your sins to Him, believe and accept Him and let Him save you. Do not wait a moment longer but accept Him now! Wherever you are, open your heart to the Lord Jesus now. He loves you. He does not want you to die. He wants to save you, He is just waiting to hear you cry. Call out to Him now and He will stretch out His nailpierced hand and pick you up out of the fire and put you on the green grass away from danger of eternal damnation. He will put you on the road which leads to heaven. Trust Him now!

M.R. Gschwend.

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