

Hell is Forever

Written by K B Napier
Friday, 13 February 2015 12:46

Many cults, and theologians such as John Stott, believe that when we die, everything is finished – we just disappear into dust. Some believe hell is only for a relatively short period and then those in it will simply disappear. Unfortunately, even some Christians hold to this view of annihilation, thus not believing in hell.

What does scripture say? After all, if heaven is forever, does it not make sense that hell is also forever? Yet, even if it makes human sense, it may not necessarily be the view of God! So, as with all subjects, we must allow scripture to speak for itself and not impose our own theories upon them.

Mark 3:29

“But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.”

In this text the word ‘never’ is *aion*. In context it is interpreted as ‘evermore’ or eternal. Forgiveness is *aphesis*, meaning remission (of sins) or deliverance. Thus, the text says that for this sin there can be no deliverance from sins, but only *enochos*, or danger, or worthy of punishment, of “eternal damnation”.

This damnation or *krisis*, is a separating from, or a judgement of condemnation against the person. How long does this condemnation last? We are told its duration is “eternal”, *aiionios* – everlasting, forever, without end, never to cease.

In anyone’s language that sounds just like eternity to me. The notion that we will only be punished for a short while, before we disappear is absurd... a punishment is useless if we just disappear and know nothing more about it!

John 5:29

We know from many texts that heaven and bliss are eternal. Those who enter heaven will know peace and blessing forever. In this text we are told that those who have done good will know the “*resurrection of life*”. That is, they will be raised again to enter heaven forever.

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This is immediately followed by the fate of those who have done evil – the “*resurrection of damnation*.” As there is no further qualifying statement, we can legitimately assume this damnation is also forever. There is no point in damnation if the one damned does not know it!

Mark 9:43-46

“... hell... into the fire that never shall be quenched: where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched... into the fire that never shall be quenched.”

The fire of hell shall never be quenched and the worm never dies. Hell, or *geena* in this text, is the ‘Gehenna of fire’, the place of the future destruction of the wicked. This destruction is not as we know it, for it will be eternal, never to be stopped or lessened in its severity. The word ‘quenched’ is *asbestos*, and this contains within itself the meaning of eternal punishment, ‘unquenchable’. The word is further qualified by ‘never’, *ou*, meaning not or cannot, an absolute negative. That is, it cannot be altered.

The worm “*dieth not*”. The word ‘dieth’ is qualified by the word ‘not’, and so *teleutao* is never-ending, and does not maintain its actual meaning of ‘to finish’ or ‘to end’. Rather, the qualifying word, ‘not’, means that the opposite is true – the worm shall *never* die, but its work will continue forever. Coupled with the concept of a fire that will never be quenched, we have a picture of eternal torment and punishment, not annihilation (which is an error held by unbelievers).

And note, the difference between heaven and hell will always be one of total separation, as the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:22) proves. The rich man was tormented in hell day and night, whereas Lazarus was comforted forever in heaven. The man in hell can never enter heaven or be given a ‘second chance’, for between them a “great gulf is fixed”. Nor can the man in heaven ever lose his salvation and enter hell, for the same reason.

2 Peter 2:17

“These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mists of darkness is reserved for ever.”

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This text speaks of the wicked, those who reject God and His word. Though the language is poetic, it points us to a direct truth, that they are worthless (like a well without water), who will know the “mists of darkness... for ever.”

The ‘mist’, zophos, refers to the darkness of the nether world, total blackness, as the following word, ‘darkness’, signifies: skotos, ungodliness and immorality leading to misery and perpetual blindness (to spiritual things and God). This miserable state will be experienced ‘for ever’, aion; evermore, for eternity.

Note the reference to predestination here, in the word ‘reserved’. Though people hate the idea of predestination, and try to deny it, it arises time and again, throughout both Old and New Testaments. In this text, God has ‘reserved’ eternal misery for those who are not saved, as tereo means. It is an active act of God, to reserve or to keep a person in a state he has been allotted to. Thus, he cannot escape its inevitability, or escape its duration, which is for eternity, as the rich man discovered.

This is a very short introduction to the subject, but it proves beyond doubt that soul annihilation is a lie and an heresy, taught by those who wish to reject God’s word, in part or in total. As with any heresy, Christians must resist it and teach the truth. Those who enter hell will be there for all of eternity, without remission. Their torment will never die or become less. This is God’s word.

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