

## AN OVERLOOKED REALM

Our society and its religious institutions have forgotten the doctrine of Hell. I am speaking of a place of eternal punishment prepared by the immortal God. Our world would rather forget and ignore this clear teaching of the Bible. The terms "hell" and "damned" are used with **increasing informality** among people today. What once was considered the height of impiety is now considered passé. These terms are used frequently in everyday conversation by millions of ignorant souls. But God hears and remembers what we say (Mat. 12:36-37).

Yet Christ did not consider Hell a **trivial matter**. "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43-44). These forceful words were uttered by the gentle Savior of whom the prophet Isaiah wrote, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench" (Isa. 42:3). If the Son of God must use such language to warn us of the **finality** of Hell, it must be a place to be avoided at all costs!

It has been said that "Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people." Likewise, Hell is a prepared place for an **unprepared** people. God has prepared it primarily for Satan and his angels (cf. Rev. 20:10). Reluctantly, God has also reserved it for those who have not believed in Him and obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 The. 1:8-9). Those who have basked in His kindness and the unfathomable generosity of their Creator in this brief physical existence, yet either failed to respond to the call of the Gospel (cf. 2:14) or have not been faithful to God in this life, will be there. **The terms the Scriptures use to describe this eternal place are frightening: unquenchable fire, lake of fire and brimstone, weeping and gnashing of teeth, wailing and gnashing of teeth, outer darkness, everlasting punishment, everlasting fire, and torments.**

Yet I believe the worst punishment of Hell will be for one to be taken from the presence of God for all eternity. When Christ hung upon the cross of Calvary He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mat. 27:46). God was **too righteous** to look upon our sins His Son bore for us on the cross, so He looked away (cf. Hab. 1:13). That utter, complete loneliness will be what the occupants of Hell will agonize over forever and ever. Yet they will surely know "why." Is not this the "second death" John spoke of (Rev. 21:8)?

Brothers and sisters in Christ, **let us love our neighbors too much to see them condemned to Hell and not once warn them.** May God grant us the courage and love to lead them to a life away from an eternal torment. "And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22-23).

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