

Why I Don't Want To Go To Hell!

Franklin Church of Christ
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AM Assembly

Introduction:

According to **II Peter 3:10**, the earth will one day come to a surprising and sudden end. The frightening issue however is not the way the earth is going to end, but what is going to happen after the end. According to **Hebrews 9:27**, we will all face judgment. On that day, one of two things will happen to us, we will either go to heaven (**I Peter 1:3-5**) or we will go to hell (**Matthew 25:41; II Peter 2:4**). For me, this is what makes all that we know about the end so important. I have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (**Romans 3:23**). I deserve to go to hell (**Ezekiel 18:20; Romans 6:23**). I have earned that. But, I do not want to go there. Please, allow me to tell you why I do not want to go to hell. I am sure many already share this feeling, but if you do not, please allow my message to affect you.

Discussion:

- I. I do not want to go to hell, because in hell I would be separated from the presence of God.
 - A. According to **II Thessalonians 1:9**, on the day Christ returns to be glorified in and marveled at by His saints, those who have not obeyed Christ's gospel will "suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might." In hell, I would be completely cut off from God's power and glory.
 - B. Consider the import of this. We often talk about coming into God's presence or being away from God's presence. We do not mean that absolutely. We make that statement simply to say that someone is either in the will of God or not. In the absolute sense, they are still in the presence of God and, in fact, participate in the power of God and in many of His blessings. In the sermon on Mar's Hill, Paul declared that it is by God's power that we (all of us, whether Christian or otherwise) live, move and have our very being (**Acts 17:28**). The fact that a person lives demonstrates they are not separate from God's power. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared God caused the sun to rise and the rain to fall even on the wicked and the unjust (**Matthew 5:45**). Whether people are Christians or not, as long as they are still in this world, they participate in the power and glory of God, even if they do not recognize it.
 - C. But, after the Day of Judgment, those who have not obeyed Christ's gospel will not enjoy even a smattering of God's power, glory or blessing. There will be no light, there will be no life, there will be no moving. I can hardly imagine what it would be like to be completely cut off from God. What comes to my mind as I envision this is suffocation. Can you imagine awaking to find yourself completely unable to breathe? You know there is oxygen somewhere, but you can't see how to get there, neither can you move to get to it. The terror that strikes into your heart. The panic that screams in your mind, "I need to breathe." And yet nothing in the universe seems concerned about you. Amplify that infinitely and hell is worse. I don't want to go there.
- II. I do not want to go to hell, because in hell I would face absolute torment.
 - A. **Matthew 25:46** says those who did not serve God will go into everlasting punishment. This same word is used in **I John 4:18** and is translated "torment" in the KJV. When we think about punishment for crime, we think about prison. And we all have differing views of prison life. But this is not just being locked in a cell. This is being tormented. In **Matthew 25:41**, the picture of hell is that of unquenchable fire. I understand that those in hell will not have physical bodies. I understand that spiritual bodies probably aren't affected by physical fire. I believe the point of Jesus' statement is to drive home the issue of torment. Just as we would be in torment if we were in a fire, so will our spiritual body be in torment in hell.
 - B. Consider the picture of the rich man in torment in **Luke 16:19-31**. I understand that this passage does not give us a picture of hell. But rather is a picture of torment in Hades, the "waiting place" for those who die before the judgment day, as sinners await eternal sentencing of hell. If what we read about in this chapter is simply the holding place for the spirits of the unresurrected dead, how much worse must the place of final torment be? Read the cries and pleas of the rich man in **Luke 16:24; 27-28**. See the agony that pleads for a moment's respite, the briefest relief and the smallest comfort.
 - C. I can't imagine such anguish. What comes to my mind as I envision this torment and agony is the "reheat chamber" at the Nucor Steel plant back home in Blytheville, AR. When in high

school, I worked for D&L Refrigeration. We had the contract for the steel mill's refrigeration and air conditioning work. One day, we were working near the "reheat chamber". This chamber is used to heat up already cast pieces of steel I-beams. After the steel was cast in its I-beam shape, it was in short, extremely thick sections. If those who were casting the steel produced the I-beams quicker than those who were stretching them into their final length and thickness, the metal would cool and need to be reheated in order to be stretched. Thus, the "reheat chamber". I saw this chamber in action. I was more than 100 feet away from the chamber and inside a cinder block building, behind a 2½-inch solid core metal door with a Plexiglas window. When the chamber opened and I saw the blue-greenish white flames come shooting out, I could feel the heat even from where I was. I could not imagine being in that flame, feeling the torment and agony, and not being allowed to die. And hell is worse. I don't want to go there.

III. I do not want to go to hell, because my stay in hell would be eternal.

- A. Perhaps hell would not be so bad if it were momentary. If it were, as some today suggest, simply a moment of painful destruction and then oblivion, I probably wouldn't be so afraid to endure it. But that is not the picture the Bible presents.
- B. In **Matthew 18:8; 25:41** and **Jude 7**, the punishment is described as eternal fire. Some suggest, the fire is eternal but our stay there will not be. However, **Matthew 25:46** says the wicked will endure eternal punishment or torment, not a moment in an everlasting fire that vaporizes our very existence. The fire lasts forever and our presence in the fire is also everlasting.
- C. Whenever I am running (which hasn't been in a while now), after a short while, perhaps 30 seconds, I am gasping for air, my side is cramping, my legs are hurting and my entire body is screaming at me. But I typically endure to the end because I know there is going to be an end. This very minor torment and agony will be over soon. But the agony and torment of hell will never be over. In hell, I will never be able to look at my stopwatch and say, "OK, only five more minutes." The terror and agony we have already described will last forever, without relief, rest or respite. I do not want to go there.

IV. I do not want to go to hell, because hell would be worse for me than if I had never believed.

- A. **II Peter 2:20-22** frightens me. Because this passage claims that everything we have just described about hell and eternal punishment is less than what you and I will receive. You see, those passages describe hell mostly for those who never obey the gospel. But most of us here have obeyed the gospel and escaped the defilement of the world. If we turn from Christ now, our latter state will be worse than if we had never believed to begin with.
- B. I know preachers have tried to argue their way out of these verses. They try to nullify them by saying this passage only means that our knowledge will torment us forever whereas the others don't have that knowledge, as if this statement means it really won't be worse for us. Brethren, I don't care what it is that makes the punishment and torment worse, these passages say it will be worse for us. This doesn't mean hell is a "walk in the park" for those who never heard or never believed. It simply means it will be worse for me. So now, I really don't want to go there.

Conclusion:

I remember giving a young lady a tract. When she and I got together to study, she remarked that she felt some aspects of the tract were trying to frighten people into obeying. And she thought that was a bad thing. I want to be honest with you. I am trying to frighten you. I hope I scare the daylights out of you. Jesus said we ought to be afraid in **Matthew 10:28**. Fear is not the only motivator and in our next lesson, I will explain why I want to go to heaven. But I hope I have instilled in you the greatest of all fears. Because, when you really fear going to hell, then all the other issues that could ever come up will be overcome because we will be working together to stay out of hell and not take any chances on ending up there. Please, remember, if you have not obeyed the gospel or if you are not continuing to grow faithfully in Christ, your entrance into hell will be sudden and unexpected. Are you ready for that day?