



The Voice of Truth



February 7, 2010

Promises

By Jimmy Pettigrew

“Seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust” (2 Peter 1:3-4).

God's promises are great and precious; they have been made possible because of God's glory and virtue. Peter stresses that these precious promises enable one to become a partaker of the divine nature. God promised the Messiah (**Genesis 3:15**), and in the fullness of time (**Galatians 4:4**) sent His Son. God promised the Kingdom of Christ would never be destroyed (**Daniel 2:44**). The Lord will come again (**Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**); He promised the resurrection (**1 Corinthians 15:22; John 4:28-29**); the judgment (**Romans 2:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27**); Hell for the wicked (**Matthew 25:46; Romans 2:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**); salvation for the baptized believer (**Mark 16:16**); spiritual blessings in Christ (**Ephesians 1:3**); Salvation to the obedient (**Hebrews 5:8-9**); The crown of life to the faithful (**Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:8**), and even material blessings to those who put God and His Kingdom first (**Matthew 6:33**).

God has never promised that the Lord will return to the earth. The Bible teaches we shall meet the Lord in the air (**1 Thessalonians 4:17**); this earth shall be burned up (**2 Peter 3:7-10**). God has never promised that the Lord will establish a kingdom when He comes. The Bible teaches that the Lord's kingdom was established upon Pentecost in **Acts 2**; that the Lord is now reigning over His

kingdom. God has never promised to save everybody. The Bible teaches that provisions have been made for all men (**John 3:16**); that God wants all men to be saved (**2 Peter 3:9**); that the Savior's invitation must be extended to all men (**Matthew 11:28**). Specific conditions must be met! God never promised to save those who would not obey Him. The Bible teaches saving faith is an obedient faith (**Romans 1:5; James 2:14ff**); He is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (**Hebrews 5:8**); Vengeance will be taken upon those who obey **not** (**2 Thessalonians 1:8**). God has never promised to save those outside the church. The Bible teaches the saved are added to the church (**Acts 2:47**); The Lord is the Savior of the body (**Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23 Colossians 1:18, 24**). God never promised to save those who refuse to be baptized. The Bible teaches that baptism is essential to salvation (**Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 2:20-21**); Baptism puts one into Christ (**Galatians 3:27**); every spiritual blessing is in Christ (**Ephesians 1:3**).

Let us be careful not to base our hopes upon things assumed!*

“Doing God Service”

By Jarrod Jacobs

Jesus warned the eleven: *“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me” (Jn. 16:1-3)*. This is an eye-opening statement to me. Jesus told His apostles that there were some people who were quite zealous and adamant about their beliefs, yet they were wrong! Jesus warned of folks killing the apostles, and in so doing,

thinking they were serving God! How wrong can people get?

Execution for preaching Christ was not an act limited to the apostles, though. In his younger days, Saul of Tarsus consented to the death of Stephen, a child of God (**Acts 8:1**). In later years, he admitted that he thought within himself, *"That I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities"* (**Acts 26:9-11**). How could someone brought up at the feet of Gamaliel and *"taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers"*; a man *"zealous toward God"* (**Acts 22:3**), end up making such a wrong decision? I think a key point in Paul's case was his admission: *"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth"* (**Acts 26:9**). Somewhere in his life, he went off-track, and began selfishly following the whims and wishes of men rather than selflessly following the pure will of God!

How do I know this is what happened? It is because if he had followed the pure will of God, he would have accepted Christ rather than rejected Him! Remember Jesus said, *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad"* (**Jn. 8:56**)! Remember, Moses wrote about Christ (**Jn. 5:46**)! Jesus on another occasion told the people, *"Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?"* (**Jn. 7:19**)! Therefore, if he (or any of the Jews who had rejected Christ and the Christians in the first century) was following the pure will of God, he would have listened to the Scripture, i.e., the words of Abraham and Moses, and would have accepted Christ. Those who accepted the truth from the inspired words of Abraham, Moses, and other prophets followed Christ! Yet, be-

cause folks like Saul of Tarsus and others were following the whims and wishes of men, they were taught to kill Christ and Christians, and in so doing, they would *"do God service."* How tragic!

What can I learn from this? I can learn that just because I think something is "good" or "holy" or "righteous" does not make it so. The inspired word of God equips us for **"every good work"** (**II Tim. 3:16-17**). Therefore, if what I am doing does not have its basis and authority from the Scriptures, it is not a good work! Maybe it is time we examined our lives (**II Cor. 13:5**) and made sure what we are doing is what has been authorized by God in His revealed Scriptures. If we find we are following the will of man instead of God, then we need to repent, or be guilty of the same thing those Jews were guilty of in the first century. Specifically, we can be guilty of doing something sinful, and saying it is being done "in God's service."

Some 700 years before Christ came to the earth, God said there were folks guilty of calling *"evil good and good evil... (putting) darkness for light, and light for darkness; ... (putting) bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter"* (**Isa. 5:20**). He went on to say, *"Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"* (**Isa. 5:21**). Today, it is the same. Woe to people who exchange their "think-so's" for God's word and then claim they are following the Lord! If we are guilty of this, beware, for we fool ourselves into thinking we are "doing God service" when in actuality, we are harming the Lord's cause. We end up working for Satan by default, and destroying the very thing we claim to be building. *"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good"* (**I Thess. 5:21**). Follow God's will only, and forsake man's will. Let us not be guilty of sinning while claiming we are "doing God service"!

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

The Reality Of Hell

By Gene Taylor

In **Matthew 25:31-46** the Bible teaches that at the final judgment while the righteous will enter heaven to enjoy everlasting life, the wicked will go into eternal punishment. The thought of everlasting suffering is repulsive to many. No doubt this aversion lies at the bottom of much of the indifference to what the Bible teaches about hell.

Hell, despite the denials of many, is real. Sin demands it. Sin is a violation of the law of God (**1 John 3:4**). If there were no punishment for sin, then there could be no law for law without penalty is null and void. If there is no law, there would be no sin. That would make the death of Jesus useless because if there is no sin there is no responsibility to save anyone from it.

The reality of life after death also demands the reality of hell. Jesus taught, in **Matthew 22:23-33**, that there was life after physical death. In the account of the rich man and Lazarus in **Luke 16:19-31**, two distinct destinies are presented comfort for the righteous but punishment for the wicked depending on whether or not one serves God while living on earth.

Hell was not originally prepared for man. It was prepared for Satan and his angels (**Matt. 25:41**). **Jude 6** states that fallen angels are placed in chains awaiting judgment. Yet, when men and women join the devil in his work and live in servitude to him, they must suffer the same fate that will befall him.

Hell Is Not Contrary To The Nature of God

Many people find it difficult to accept the reality of hell because they cannot understand or believe that a loving, merciful and forgiving God could create such a place and then place people in it eternally. If no punishment were given for violation of His law, then God would not be just. Being a just God, He will reward the righteous and punish the wicked. Hell is to punish the wicked.

What Hell Is Like

Hell is eternal. It is described that way in **Matthew 25:46**. In **Romans 16:26** God is said to be eternal. The Holy Spirit, in **Hebrews 9:14**, is also described as eternal. The same Greek word is used in all three passages. The word means "eternal, everlasting, without end, never to cease." Hell and the punishment meted out there will last as long as God forever.

Hell is a place of darkness. **Jude 13** speaks of "the blackness of darkness" to which false teachers will be confined forever. God is light (**1 John 1:5**) and the Father of lights (**Jas. 1;17**). Hell is described as darkness because it is the place farthest removed from God.

Hell is a place of fire. **Matthew 13:42** speaks of it as a furnace of fire. **Matthew 25:41** calls it an everlasting fire. **Mark 9:44-45** says the fire is never quenched. **Revelation 21:8** refers to it as the lake of fire. There will be no relief from its fires because **Revelation 14:11** says the smoke from the fires of torment ascends forever and ever.

There is no rest there. **Revelation 14:11** says the wicked will have no rest from their torment day or night. Hell is a place where there is no hope. The punishment is everlasting (**Matt. 25:46**) with no chance of pardon or parole.

Who Will Go There

As already noted, Satan and his angels will be there (**Matt. 25:41**). **Revelation 21:8** says the "cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars" will be there. **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9** says that those who do not know God and those who will not obey the gospel of Christ will be punished with everlasting destruction. In short, all sinners who choose to remain in their sin will be found in hell.

Why People Will Go There

People will not be in hell because God wants them to be there. He desires that all be saved (**1 Tim. 2:1-4**). They will not be there because God cannot save them. God is all-powerful and the gospel, His power to save (**Rom. 1:16**), can save to the uttermost. God sent His Son into the world so that all might have salvation (**John 3:16**) and He has extended His invitation to all who would come to Him (**Matt. 11:28-30**). If a person ends up in hell, he is lost by his own free choice. He has no one to blame but himself. Many see no need to be interested in spiritual things and are indifferent to the pleas of the gospel. Others refuse to obey the gospel or submit to the will of God. Some refuse to believe. Others just love sin more than righteousness. Some, though once obedient, become unfaithful in service. Many put off obeying until it is too late.

Conclusion

Hell is real. The suffering of it is waiting for the sinful. You can escape the torments found there by giving obedience to Christ now. He will wash away the guilt of your sins and grant you hope of a life of eternal bliss in His presence. *Credit: www.padfield.com ♦*

What Do I Owe My Congregation?

I owe it my loyalty. I must help carry out every good work it undertakes. I should help other congregations in special efforts, but I should not neglect my home congregation. I owe it my dependability. I am depending on it for many things it does in my behalf. It is not fair and right for me to depend on it and not be such that it cannot depend on me.

I owe it my financial support. It takes

money to operate the church and preach the gospel. I am responsible to the Lord to give as He has prospered me. My home congregation has first call on my financial ability, for if the members of the church do not support the work of the home congregation, it will not be supported. The expenses go on whether I am there or not, so I should make up my contribution when absent.

I owe it my presence. If everyone stayed home there would be no worship of God. I am responsible as anyone to attend all of my congregation's services. I must not be a parasite.

I owe it the influence of a godly life. The life I live either helps others to obey the gospel or makes it the harder for them. How I live affects the work of the church and the salvation of the lost. I should live in such a way that my life will be blessing to others. ♦

God Has a Right

Author unknown

God has a right to a definite part of your time

He has the power to take all of it.

God has a right to a definite part of your money

He has the power to take all of it.

God has a right to be glorified through your tongue

He has the power to take all of it.

God has a right to be honored through your influence

He has the power to take all of it.

God has a right to your life

— He has the power to take all of it. ♦

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Our Address

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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