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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 Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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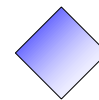


Schedule of Assembly

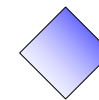
Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

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

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com



The Voice of Truth



August 21, 2011

"Thou Art Dead"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Jesus charged the apostle John to write to the church in Sardis, "These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead" (**Revelation 3:1**).

I read this passage, and I wonder how many churches there are today like Sardis. Can you picture a congregation of the Lord's people thinking it was very much alive, but only to hear the Lord pronounces that church dead? Christ says, "I know", and this is repeated by the Lord in all these letters to the churches. He knew them, because Christ looks at the spiritual strength, and outward actions do not always reflect spiritual conditions. I sit here writing this article and thinking to myself: What causes a congregation of the Lord's people to be dead?

1. What would cause my Lord to say, "thou art dead?" Teaching and following error. The Lord never promised to bless those who follow error, no matter how sincere they may be. Paul exhorted Timothy to charge some men not to teach a different doctrine (**1 Timothy 1:3-7**). Accepting false doctrine would produce unfaithfulness (**1 Timothy 4:1-3**). It will cause the Lord to remove His candlestick and fellowship from this place (**Revelation 2:5; 2 John 9**). "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (**1 John 4:6**). God wants us to hate every false way (**Psalms 119:104**).

2. What would cause my Lord to say, "thou art dead?" Conforming to the world. Jesus told the apostles, "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (**John 15:19**). Worldliness is one of the greatest dangers facing the church of the Lord. Satan, as the god of this world (**2 Corinthians 4:4**), puts all kinds of pressure on the church to conform to the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world,

the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (**1 John 2:15-17**). "No man can serve two masters" (**Matthew 6:24**). We cannot make friends with the world (standards) without becoming the enemy of God (**James 4:4**). When Christians, and the church exhibit desire for and make compromises with the world, they are guilty of spiritual adultery, and the church will die!

3. What would cause my Lord to say "thou art dead?" Neglect of members. What do we need to do to cause the Lord to say, "thou art dead?" NOTHING! "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but do them not; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their gain" (**Ezekiel 33:31**). "And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand" (**Matthew 7:26**). This is the height of stubbornness. But, then it is nothing new and is one of the problems in the church today. The children of Israel made a conscious choice not to do the will of God, just as many people do today. Individual members who engage in sinful activities and do not repent or change their ways, thus bringing reproach on the body of Christ. We neglect to do those things that make the church vital and alive.

4. What would cause my Lord to say, "thou art dead?" Not being united! After all, the church is to be "fitly joined together" (**Ephesians 4:16**). "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and (that) there be no divisions among you; but (that) ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (**1 Corinthians 1:10**). "Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?" Brethren, this implies cooperation by brethren; unity, harmony, being "fitly joined together" is a mark of Christianity. Nobody even likes that person who always has to have his own way, or will not cooperate with others.

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Who always thinks their way is the only way. When I was a child, playing at recess in school, there was always someone that insists everything must be as he calls it. Do you know what happened? Soon the others would leave him, and there he is all alone. The same thing is true on the adult level. God is not pleased with the uncooperative person who is unwilling to sacrifice himself for the benefit and good of others. God is not pleased with such a person. A lack of this attitude hinders the progress of the cause of Christ. God wants us to love one another, "For ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (1 Thesalonians 4:9). And what does love do? "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not re-

joice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

To have spiritual life with Christ, and to dwell with Him eternally, we must not teach or follow error, but His word. As the church, the called out, we must not conform to the world. The church must separate from the world and be transformed into the image of Christ (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). As the church, to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10), we must not neglect our duties, but be doers of the word (James 1:22). We must as the church, be united! The church that does follow and teach error, conforms to the world, neglects its duties and is not united in Christ, will surely hear the Lord say one day, "Thou art dead!" ♦

What Example Do You Set in this Local Church?

By Brian A. Yeager

Jesus said, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (Jn. 15:3). In the context of John 15, Jesus compares His Father to a "husbandman" (vinedresser, Jn. 15:1), and He compares Himself to the "true vine" from which the branches feed and grow. In a study of John 15:1-10, we learn that if we are "in Him," we will be clean, purged, and bear fruit. If we are not, then we will wither, and be cast "into the fire" and "burned." Jesus taught that to bear much fruit brings glory to God (Jn. 15:8), and we show that we love Christ by doing His will (v. 10-14). John 15:15 states that Jesus calls those who are in Him "friends"; and because of our relationship with Christ, the world will hate us (Jn. 15:18-20).

It is evident that there are many things in this chapter for us to learn and apply. Yet, in this study, let us focus on the words of Christ in John 15:3.

How Is One Clean?

In studying John 15:3, we see that a more accurate translation of the verse is: "Ye are already clean by reason of the word I have spoken to you." Darby, the ASV, NKJ, NAS, and several other versions state the verse in this way. Therefore, this verse is discussing a disciple who has already become clean!

How did this one become clean? How does this person stay clean? Interestingly, the answer to both questions is: "Through the word"! For example, David asked, "Wherewithal (how, JJ) shall a young man cleanse his way?" The answer: "By taking heed thereto according to

thy word" (Ps. 119:9). Men stand as filthy sinners before God (Isa. 1:18), but it is God's word that cleanses men. Peter said, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth..." (I Pet. 1:22). It is God's word that tells us that baptism cleanses us (I Pet. 3:21; Acts 22:16). Therefore, when we take heed to the gospel, God's power to save (Rom. 1:16), we can become clean and stay clean!

Being Clean Implies We Have A New Relationship.

Notice the phrases Christ uses in John 15 that describe a relationship: "In me" (6x); "in you" (2x); "abide in me" (3x); "abide in the vine"; "without me"; "abide in you"; and "continue." These things cannot be said of unclean people who are not in the vine, i.e., those who are not Christians, disciples cleansed from sin. Therefore, being cleansed also implies a relationship with Christ! One cannot be cleansed and not be in a relationship with Christ!

The Ephesians were shown this truth (Eph. 2:11-13). Therefore, "in Christ" we have blessings never before realized (Eph. 1:3). The world does not enjoy these blessings because they are not "in Christ"! Yes, God causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon the just and unjust (Matt. 5:45). However, spiritual blessings belong to a "peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

Old-time preachers used to teach that faith changes the heart; repentance changes the lifestyle; confession changes the allegiance; and baptism changes the relationship. This is still true! Once cleansed, we have a relation-

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ship we could not have enjoyed previously.

Now That We Are Clean, We Must Stay Clean.

This cleansing is enjoyed as we abide in Christ, bearing fruit for Him. This is why we need to show concern for those who have fallen away (Gal. 6:1). Away (or apart) from Christ, there is no cleansing; there is no life; there is nothing (Jn. 15:5-6). One away from the Lord will die spiritually. Why? "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (Jn. 15:4). If we understand this concept with physical "vines" and "branches", should we not feel a great urgency toward the spiritual "branches" who need to return to the "True vine"?

The prescription for staying clean is evident in John 15. If one wishes to stay clean, he must:

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.

1) Stay in Christ and bear fruit (Jn. 15:2, 8). Bearing "fruit" means bringing new converts to the Lord as well as bearing the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22-23).

2) Continue in Christ's love (Jn. 15:9). How does one do this? By keeping Christ's commandments (Jn. 15:10).

3) Be Christ's friend (Jn. 15:13-15).

4) Love one another (Jn. 15:12, 17).

5) Endure afflictions (Jn. 15:18-20; II Tim. 2:13; I Pet. 4:16).

Conclusion

Are you cleansed or not? Are you "in Christ" or not? Have you left the "true vine," or do you need to be "grafted in" (Rom. 11:17, 19)? Don't delay from doing what you know is right. Tomorrow is too late (II Cor. 6:2)!

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

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.

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