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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.

*A faith that will not take us to worship will not Take us to heaven!*

*Truth is truth even if no one believes it. Error is error if everyone believes it.*

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

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



# The Voice of Truth

March 25, 2012

Why Withdraw?  
By Jimmy Pettigrew

Those from whom the church is commanded to withdraw are: the fornicator, covetous, railer, idolater, drunkard, extortioner (1 Corinthians 5:11), the false teacher (Romans 16:17), factious (Titus 3:10), and the disorderly (2 Thessalonians 3:6). Included in the idea of withdrawal is: mark and avoid (Romans 16:17), no company (2 Thessalonians 3:14), rejection (Titus 3:10), and with such not to eat (1 Corinthians 5:11). Paul wrote, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thessalonians 3:6). That is not an optional course of action; it is commanded by the Lord. We must do it!

There are two stated purposes for withdrawing from unfaithful members; the first is to maintain the purity of the church (1 Corinthians 5:6-7). The Lord desires that His church be a pure church (Ephesians 5:26-27). It is unthinkable that Christ will own His bride (church) if she becomes unchaste, plays the harlot, and has her affections taken away from Him and set on things of the earth. If a congregation permits impure individuals to remain unchastened within its fellowship, it becomes a partaker of their sin and will soon drift out of the favor of the Lord and their candlestick will be removed (Revelation 2:5). "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened . . . Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Corinthians 5:6-7,13). The church is to be kept pure. For the sake of the other members, the ungodly are to be put away, lest others be contaminated by temptation to do the same things.

withdrawal is designed to bring him to repentance. If we continue to treat him as before, withdrawing is robbed of its purpose. We must let him know, by our actions and words, that his manner of life is not acceptable to the Lord and that we do not approve of it. "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat" (1 Corinthians 5:11). If members in the church are guilty of living this way, then loyal saints are not to keep company with them! Don't invite them to eat, visit and play games in your home! Don't let the world see you condoning such lives in Christ's church! You cannot eat with, play cards with, or keep company with one in the church who is guilty of such sins; this includes the family of one from whom the church has withdrawn.

In other words, the purpose of the withdrawing is to save souls. "To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:5). Discipline isn't to get rid of or to run off, but to save a soul (James 5:19-20). We are trying to help him, not leave him lost!

When members of the church sin, they are to be warned by loving brethren who are concerned for their souls. If they stubbornly refuse to listen, and persist in sin in spite of repeated warnings, the church must withdraw from them. And all of this is done to save souls: of the one who sins, and of other members of the church. Such action is taken to keep the church pure and faithful (1 Corinthians 5), and that he may be ashamed (2 Thessalonians 3:14).

The second reason is to bring the erring brother to repentance by shaming him. When a person is taught, encouraged and admonished, and still will not repent, what more can concerned Christians do? Paul answers: "Withdraw . . . have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed" (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14). Thus,

Withdrawing is a difficult step to take. But eternity is long and hell is hot, and souls are hanging in the balance. ♦

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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

## “Choose The Church Of Your Choice” – Is This A Scriptural Phrase?

By Jarrod Jacobs

Probably one of the most familiar phrases heard among people today is: “choose the church of your choice.” Billy Graham and others like him through the years have said this. Most newspapers have such an admonition in their “religion” section or “religion” page. In fact, this is one of the “politically correct” things to say these days. To reinforce this belief of choosing the “church of your choice”, many people are taught to be saved and then go join the church that they choose. We have heard many times on the TV, radio, and other media that “ ‘so-and-so’ church is what you are looking for” and other similar phrases. In fact, there is a church in Franklin, TN that put on their sign, “The People’s Church.” Does the Bible teach such a thing? Has God said that one can be saved and then go join the church of his choice? Does God sanction each and every organization that has “church” on their sign? Is He the author or promoter of these groups that teach different and conflicting doctrines? What saith the Scripture?

### There Is Only One Church Mentioned In The Bible.

It is important for us to note that when the New Testament speaks of the church, it is mentioned consistently in the singular. In **Matthew 16:18**, Jesus called her “*my church.*” In **Acts 2:47**, the Lord added the saved to “*the church.*” Paul called her “*the church of God*” (**Acts 20:28**). Christ is “*head of ... the church*” (**Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22**). Paul said, “*Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its savior. ... the church is subject unto Christ, ... Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for her; That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, That he might present her to himself a glorious church, ... that she might be holy and without blemish*” (**Eph. 5:23-27**). Please reread these verses, and note the fact that the Lord’s church is singular in nature!

### When Does One Become A Member Of The Lord’s Church?

Does the Bible teach that one can be saved one day, and then “choose their church” another day? The apostle Luke records that after the 3000 were baptized for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:36-41**), that many continued to submit to God’s plan of salvation. In **Acts 2:47** we read, “*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*” Here, we find the Lord doing the adding to His church, and it happened when folks were saved! God adds

only the saved to the church, and adds none of the unsaved to His church. One can only be a part of His church when he is saved from his sins; and this adding is done at that moment of salvation. There is no getting around this.

### What About All The Churches Mentioned In The New Testament?

Yes, there are several churches mentioned in the Bible. These include the churches at Ephesus and Corinth, the churches of Galatia, the church at Rome, Philippi, etc. However, this does not mean that they were all different denominations teaching different and conflicting doctrines! These local congregations were composed of people who had been saved (**Acts 2:38**), and then banded together in a local area in order to do the work God gave them to do. When they did this, they were still the “*church of God*” (**I Cor. 1:2**) or the “*churches of Christ*” (**Rom. 16:16**). In fact, it is only in the local church setting that we find one (Paul) “*joining*” the church at Jerusalem (**Acts 9:26**). In doing so, he was not taking his pick among Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Community Church, etc. Rather, since he had been saved (**Acts 22:16**), and been added to the church by the Lord (**Acts 2:47**), he had a desire to be a member of a local congregation of God’s people. They knew nothing of denominational divisions in the first century, but only of the Lord’s church (Rom. 16:16). This is all that existed in the first century!

### Conclusion

Talk of joining the church of one’s choice only breeds confusion and discord. Seeing that God is not the author of confusion (**I Cor. 14:33**); we know He cannot be behind the denominations of this world. If we are going to please God, we are going to have to be a part of the church of GOD’S choice rather than our own! Jesus established and purchased only one church (**Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28**). He is the head of only one church (**Col. 1:18**). The Bible teaches that it is this church or kingdom which will one day be delivered up to God at the end of time (**I Cor. 15:24**). Therefore, we better make sure we are a part of that one church if we are going to please God and spend eternity with Him in Heaven! Credit: The Old Paths - March 11, 2012 ♦

## Are You Heaven Bound?

By David J. Riggs

It matters not what else you do in life, if you miss heaven you have been a complete failure. You might gather about you great riches and fame and leave thousands of friends to mourn your departing, but if you are not ready for heaven you have been a miserable failure. On the other hand, you may die in a charity home for the poor and be buried in a potter's field without a single friend to mourn, but if you receive heaven, your life has been a marvelous success.

You can't afford to miss heaven for if you miss it, you miss all. It is the place of eternal rest (**Heb. 4:9-11**) where pain, sickness, and death will not be known (**Rev. 21:4**). It is an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that does not fade away (**1 Pet. 1:4**). It is that city built by the living God (**Heb. 11:10**).

You don't have to miss heaven. Humbly submit yourself

to the will of God (**Matt. 7:21**). Let His Word guide you (**2 Tim. 3:15**) and let no one beguile you or your reward (**Col. 2:18**). Overcome temptations (**James 1:12**) and suffer for His cause with rejoicing (**Matt. 5:11-12**). If you do these things, heaven will be yours someday for the God of heaven who cannot lie has promised it.

I quote a few words from some of our songs: "I am going to a city where the streets with gold are laid, where the tree of life is blooming, and the roses never fade. Here they bloom but for a season, soon their beauty is decayed; I am going to a city where the roses never fade." "I am bound for the promised land, promised land, I am bound for the promised land; O who will come and go with me? I am bound for the promised land." "When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun; we've now less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun."

Credit: <http://oakridgechurch.com/riggs> ♦

## 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