

## Hell

The very thought of hell is one that can be so terrifying that people would rather not think about it at all. It is without a doubt the most unpopular subject in all of Christianity. Much like the child who will close his eyes in an effort to make an undesirable sight vanish, so has the subject of hell all but disappeared from pulpits around the world. In fact, there are many pseudo-Christian sects that have done away with the doctrine of hell or have altered the doctrinal teachings of it to the point that belief in eternal damnation no longer exists. Seventh Day Adventists, Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and others teach a heavily altered view of what the Bible teaches about hell.

We are warned many times in the Scriptures about the reality of eternal damnation that is reserved for those who reject the truth of God. We are told by Jesus in **Matt. 7:13–14** that the gate to salvation is narrow but the gate to destruction (hell) is wide and that many will choose to enter through that gate. **Isa. 33:11, 14, Matt. 25:31-34, 41, 46, Matt. 26:24, Mark 9:47–48, Luke 3:16-17, 2 Thess. 1:6-9** all speak to the reality of hell and its *eternal* consequences. **Rev. 14:11** also speaks of a never-ending state torment. The Early Church Fathers unanimously echoed what Jesus and the Apostles taught about reality of hell and its implications for those who choose to disobey God rather than remain faithful.

The good news is that we don't *have* to experience this eternal separation from God. Despite what our Calvinist friends teach, God doesn't create *anybody* for hell. **1 Tim. 2:4** tells us that God wills the salvation of all. Similarly, in **John 3:16** we are comforted by the assurance that God loved the world so much that he sent his Son – and whoever believes in him will have eternal life. Just as God doesn't drag anybody into heaven who doesn't want to be with him - he also doesn't send anybody kicking and screaming into hell against their will. It is by our *own* volition that we are rewarded or punished. It is our *cooperation* with God's free gift of grace that determines our fate.

Jesus tells us that those who remain faithful and *endure* to the end will be saved **Matt. 10:22, 24:13, 25:31–46**). In **Rev. 3:5**, we are told that God will not blot out our names from the Book of Life if we faithfully endure in him.