

“People in Hell DIE, Not Suffer Forever!”

In answer to the e-mail question [“Are People in Hell Isolated and Alone?”](#) The bible clearly states that the wages of sin is DEATH not eternal life, be it in heaven or hell as you think. Malachi 4:3 plainly says they shall be ashes under our feet. In Is.1:28 “...and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed.” Is.66:17 says “...shall be consumed together, saith the Lord.” Rev 20:9 “...and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” Rev 20:14 “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” Doesn’t say second life but second death. You should look up some of the Greek and Hebrew words that have been translated into hell, that would make it more clear to you.

Thank you for your letter. You are correct in noting that the fate of unbelievers is one of heated debate these days, even among professing evangelicals. My own difficulty with the thesis of conditional immortality stems from passages like Matthew 25:46, Revelation 14:9-11 and Revelation 20:10. It is difficult for me to see how these passages can be consistent with the denial of eternal punishment.

For example, in Matthew 25:46 Jesus states: “And these will depart into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” The same Greek term, *aionion* (eternal), is used to describe both punishment and life.

Revelation 14:11 reads in part: “And the smoke from their torture will go up forever and ever, and those who worship the beast and his image will have no rest day or night.” What troubles me about this verse is the concluding phrase, “those who worship the beast and his image will have no rest day or night.” Again, these unfortunate people appear to be enduring eternal, conscious torment.

Finally, in Revelation 20:10 we read: "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet are too, and they will be tormented there day and night forever and ever." The beast and false prophet are both human beings. And yet, along with the devil, they will endure eternal punishment. Furthermore, Revelation 19:20 states, "Now the beast was seized, and along with him the false prophet who had performed the signs on his behalf—signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with sulfur." Please note that this takes place prior to the thousand year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:1-7). And yet, when the thousand years are over, the beast and false prophet are still being tormented in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). This lake of fire is the same place where all unbelievers are thrown in Revelation 20:15.

It's true that this is called the "second death," but does the Bible equate "death" with "annihilation"? How do you read Ephesians 2:1-2? The Ephesians were formerly "dead." But does this mean that they didn't have personal, conscious existence? Wouldn't you agree that the Ephesians were spiritually dead (i.e. separated from the spiritual life of God)? And might this not also be what the Bible means by the "second death" (i.e. unremedied spiritual death results in eternal separation from God)? When the Bible speaks of death it does not mean "annihilation." Rather, it means "separation."

Physical death is the "separation" of the spirit from the body (James 2:26). Spiritual death is the "separation" of a conscious, living person from God (Ephesians 2:1-2). And the second death is the "eternal separation" of an unredeemed person from God (Revelation 20:11-15).

This, at any rate, is why it's so difficult for me to embrace the doctrines of conditional immortality and annihilationism.

Hope this helps.

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn

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