

GREAT BIBLE DOCTRINES - LESSON 15 THE DOCTRINE OF OUR GLORIOUS HOPE

Introduction: For life to be meaningful, there must be something to hope for, a definite goal in the future. This makes us able to keep going in the right direction even though the going is sometimes hard. The writer of Hebrews calls our eternal hope an anchor reaching into heaven itself that keeps our lives in place - Hebrews 6:19, 20. The doctrine of our hope is one of the seven basic unifying doctrines in the church - Ephesians 4:1-6.

God's word teaches that all people after the judgment will end up in one of two destinations, hell or heaven.

1. Hell is the certain destination of the unrepentant wicked.

A. Some religious people have discarded a belief in hell. This may be because of:

- 1) The general movement away from the belief in scripture as God's word.
- 2) The loss of faith in unseen realities.
- 3) Unwillingness to face responsibility for one's way of life.
- 4) Unawareness of the greatness of God's holiness and the evil of sinning against it.

But one cannot logically believe in heaven without also believing in hell, as both are taught together in scripture.

B. Some find it hard to believe that a loving God would cast people into eternal punishment. But they forget that:

- 1) God does not want anyone's destruction, but he will not violate our free will and personhood -- people themselves choose to go to hell - 2 Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 18:23.
- 2) God could not be the judge of the earth if he could not punish wickedness - Romans 2:5, 6; 3:5, 6.
- 3) The wicked by their very nature would hate heaven, and it would contradict the holy nature of God to give them an evil environment they would enjoy.
- 4) Separating the wicked to their own place is actually an act of the love of God for the righteous, who otherwise would always have to endure the harassment and discouragement of the wicked and the presence of sin.

C. Hell is the source of all evil, Satan's headquarters - Matthew 23:15; James 3:6.

D. Hell is a place of separation from God and all that is good - 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Matthew 22:13.

E. Hell is a place of fellowship with evil people only - Revelation 21:8; 20:10, 15; Matthew 25:41.

F. Hell is referred to as eternal destruction - Matthew 10:28; 5:22, 29; 18:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:9.

G. Hell is a place of torment and suffering.

- 1) It is compared with fire - Revelation 14:10,11; 20:10,15; 21:8; Mark 9:43,44; Matthew 25:41; 3:12; 13:41,42.
 - 2) It is compared with "outer darkness" - Matthew 8:12; 2 Peter 2:17; Jude 13.
- H. The punishment in hell is eternal, without hope of relief in the future - Mark 9:43, 44; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 14:10, 11. Scripture does not support the doctrine sometimes taught that the wicked will be instantly annihilated and know nothing more. And there is no support in scripture for the doctrine of purgatory where people with less than mortal sins are cleansed by punishment and then released.
2. The hope of the righteous is eternal life with God in heaven - John 14:2.
- A. Heaven is the home of God and the Lamb - Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 21:22.
 - B. Heaven is the home of God's servants, the angels and the redeemed people of earth - Hebrews 12:22, 23; Revelation 5:11; 7:9, 14; 22:14.
 - C. Heaven is also called the Paradise of God, and in it there will be nothing that offends, no sin, death, sorrow, crying, pain, curse, or night - Revelation 2:7; 21:4, 27; 22:3, 5. In it are the tree of life and the river of the water of life - Revelation 22:1, 2; compare Genesis 2:8-10.
 - D. In heaven is the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city.
 - 1) It is the city for which God's people wait - Hebrews 11:10-16; 13:14.
 - 2) We come there in spirit when we worship God through Christ - Hebrews 12:22.
 - 3) It is a city of glory and splendor, wonderfully made, with twelve gates - Revelation 21:2, 10-27.
 - E. Heaven is the reward of the righteous - Luke 6:35; Matthew 8:11, 12.
 - 1) There we will be with the Lord - Revelation 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; John 17:24; 2 Corinthians 5:8.
 - 2) We will have the joy of the Lord - Matthew 25:23.
 - 3) The Lord will care for us - Revelation 7:13-17.
 - 4) We will be in glory - Daniel 12:3; Romans 8:15-18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Timothy 2:10.
 - 5) We will rest from our struggles - 2 Thessalonians 1:7; Hebrews 4:9; Revelation 14:13.
 - 6) We will receive a crown of life - 1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 2:10.
 - 7) We will have fellowship with all the saints (holy people of God) - Luke 13:28, 29; Revelation 19:9.
 - 8) We will have each his own place - John 14:2.

- 9) We will reign with Christ - 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 22:5.
- 10) We will have responsibilities in God's work - Matthew 25:20-23.

Conclusion: When we consider the life and joy that are offered to us in heaven, every suffering for Christ's sake is worthwhile, and every sacrifice. Considering the terror of hell and the joy of heaven, there is only one way to live while we are on earth - 2 Peter 3:11,12.

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