

LAMPLIGHTER

"Prophecy is like a lamp shining in a dark place." - II Peter 1:19

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The Reality of Hell



Observations by the Editor

It's Greek to Me!

How long has it been since you heard a sermon on Hell? I've been going to church for over 65 years, and I can't remember a single one.

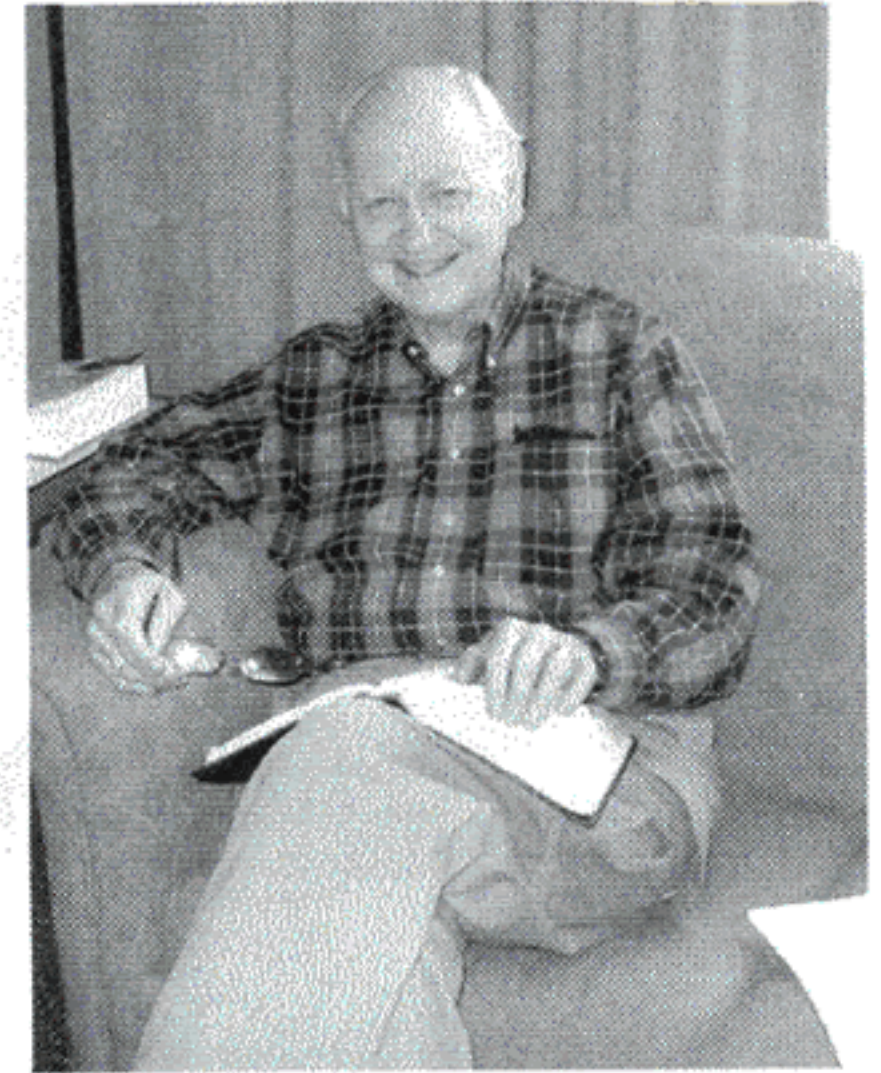
Hell is the unmentionable topic in Christendom. Today that is easy to understand because many churches have become captivated with the "seeker-sensitive" movement, and they would therefore consider it politically incorrect to mention such an unpleasant topic as Hell.

But what about historically? Why has the topic of Hell been so ignored? I believe it is because the concept, as traditionally taught, is an embarrassment to the Christian community. After all, it is very difficult to portray the Creator as a God of love, grace, and mercy, and then turn around and talk about how He intends to torture the great majority of humanity forever.

Where did this diabolical idea come from? I believe it is a product of applying Greek philosophy to the Scriptures. It was Plato who developed the idea of the immortality of the soul. That is a very unbiblical concept. The Bible says that God alone is immortal (1 Timothy 6:16). The Bible also says that the Redeemed will not become immortal until the time they are resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:51-55). The Bible also never says that unrepentant sinners will ever become immortal. In fact, it says they will not be able to keep their souls alive (Psalm 22:29).

If the soul is immortal, then it must exist somewhere forever — hence the idea that the torment that will be suffered by the lost in Hell must be eternal in duration. But if the soul is not inherently immortal, as the Bible teaches, then we can accept the biblical teaching that the souls of the lost will one day suffer "the penalty of eternal destruction" (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

St. Augustine (354 – 430 AD) is the real culprit here. He is the one who in his book, *The City of God*, systematized the application of Greek philosophy to the Scriptures. He affirmed the immortality of the soul and the concept of eternal torture of the lost. He is also the one who spiri-



Dr. David R. Reagan

tualized what the Bible says about both the Millennium and the Eternal State.

Since Greek philosophy teaches that the material universe is inherently evil, Augustine could not accept the biblical teaching that Jesus would one day literally reign on this earth. Nor could he accept the biblical concept of Heaven on a new earth. So, he spiritualized the Millennial kingdom to be the current Church Age, and he spiritualized the new earth to mean an ethereal realm inhabited by disembodied spirits.

The Bible was not written by Greek philosophers. It was penned instead by Hebrew prophets. We need to discard Augustine's Christoplatonism in order to get back to the real meaning of the Scriptures regarding the end times and the Eternal State. ✚

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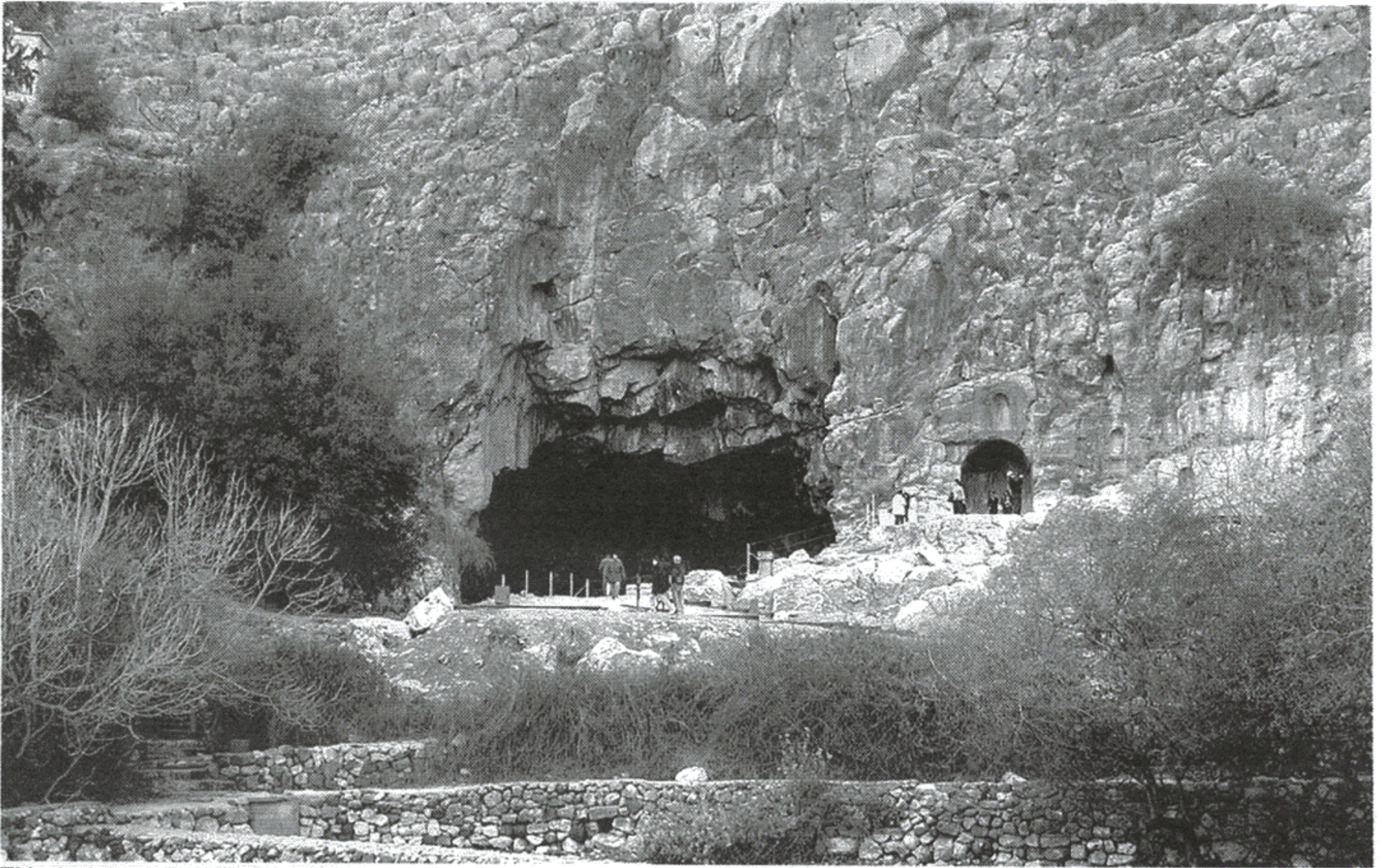
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THE REALITY OF HELL

Eternal punishing or an eternal punishment?



This site is located in the far north of Israel, near the border with Lebanon and Syria. It is where the Roman city of Caesarea-Philippi stood in the time of Jesus. The cave was considered to be the entrance to Hades. This is where Jesus made His famous statement in response to Peter's confession of Him as the Son of God: "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."

Dr. David R. Reagan

The Bible presents Hell, like Heaven, as a real place. The Bible says that God created this terrible place to serve as the ultimate destiny of the Devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). The Bible also teaches that Hell will be the destiny of all people who reject the grace and mercy God has provided through Jesus and who choose, instead, to follow Satan (Matthew 25:46).

Hell is described in the Scriptures as a place of darkness and sadness (Matthew 22:13), a place of fire (Matthew 5:22), a place of torment (Revelation 14:10), a place of destruction (Matthew 7:13), and a place of disgrace and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2).

Its Distinction from Hades

Hell is not Hades. A careful study of the Scriptures will reveal that Hades in the New Testament is the same place as Sheol in the Old Testament (Psalm 49:15).

Before the Cross, Hades (or Sheol) was the holding place for the spirits of the dead who awaited their resurrection, judgment, and ultimate consignment to Heaven or Hell. According to Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), Hades was composed of two compartments — Paradise and Torments. At death, the spirits of the righteous (those who had put their faith in God) went to a compartment in Hades called Paradise. The unrighteous went to a compartment called Torments. The two compartments were separated by a wide gulf that could not be crossed.

The Bible indicates that the nature of Hades was radically changed at the time of the Cross. After His death on the Cross, Jesus descended into Hades and declared to all the spirits there

His triumph over Satan through the shedding of His blood for the sins of Mankind (1 Peter 3:18-19; 4:6).

The Bible also indicates that after His resurrection, when He ascended to Heaven, Jesus took Paradise with Him, transferring the spirits of the righteous dead from Hades to Heaven (Ephesians 4:8-9 and 2 Corinthians 12:1-4). The spirits of the righteous dead are thereafter pictured as being in Heaven before the throne of God (Revelation 6:9 and 7:9).

Thus, since the time of the Cross, the spirits of dead saints no longer go to Hades. They are taken, instead, directly to Heaven. The spirits of Old Testament saints could not go directly to Heaven because their sins had not been forgiven. Their sins had only been covered, so to speak, by their faith. Their sins could not be forgiven until Jesus shed His blood for them on the Cross.

The souls of the unrighteous dead will remain in Hades until the end of the millennial reign of Jesus.

At that time they will be resurrected and judged at the Great White Throne judgment portrayed in Revelation 20:11-15. They will be judged by their works, and since no person can be justified before God by works (Ephesians 2:8-10), all the unrighteous will be cast into Hell, which the passage in Revelation refers to as "the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14).

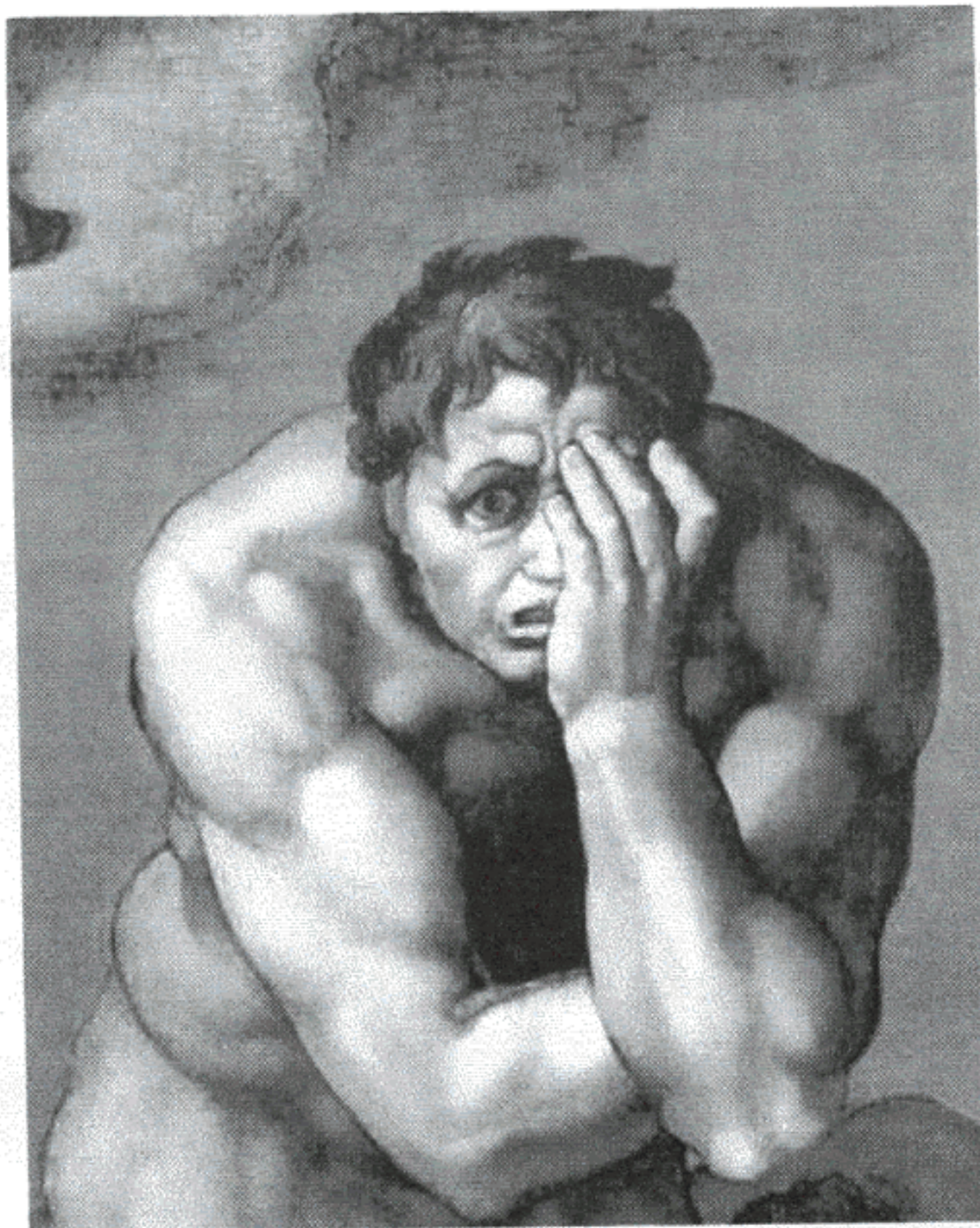
The Duration of Hell

How long will the unrighteous be tormented in Hell? The traditional view holds that Hell is a place of eternal, conscious torment. According to this view, a person who ends up in Hell is doomed to a never-ending existence of excruciating pain and suffering. Hell is a place of no escape and no hope.

Another point of view — the one I hold — takes the position that immortality is conditional, depending upon one's acceptance of Christ. I believe the Bible teaches the unrighteous will be resurrected, judged, punished in Hell for a period of time proportional to their sins, and then suffer destruction (the death of body and soul).

In a moment we will take a brief look at both views, but before we do, I would like to remind us all of a sobering truth: Hell is a reality, and it is a dreadful destiny. Hell exists because God cannot be mocked (Galatians 6:7). He is going to deal with sin, and He deals with sin in one of two ways — either grace or wrath. John 3:36 says, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Whatever we conclude from the Scriptures about the duration



A scene from Michelangelo's fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. This portion of the fresco presents the Last Judgment.

of Hell, we must remember that Hell is to be avoided at all costs. Whether the wicked suffer there eternally or are destroyed after enduring God's terrible punishment, Hell is an unimaginably terrifying place.

We must also remember that our beliefs about the duration of Hell are not on the plane of cardinal doctrine. Sincere, godly Christians may study the same scripture passages about Hell and end up with differing conclusions about the issue of its duration. Our varied viewpoints, arrived at through earnest and godly study, should not be allowed to cause division or rancor in the body of Christ.

The Traditional Viewpoint

Few traditionalists are happy about the doctrine of the eternal torment of the wicked, but they accept it anyway because they believe it to be biblical. In this they are to be commended.

Most point to scriptures such as Matthew 25:46 for support: "Then these [the wicked] will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Since the word "eternal" is used of both the wicked and the righteous, they conclude that the punishment must be eternal in the same way that the life is.

Many traditionalists also cite Revelation 20:10 — a verse specifically about the Devil, the Antichrist and the False Prophet — to prove that a God of love can indeed sentence at least some of His creatures to eternal torment: "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." If it is possible for God to treat one set of His creatures in this way, they reason, why should it be impossible for Him to do the same thing with another set?

Still another Revelation passage also figures in the traditionalist argument. Revelation 14:9-11 reads:

- 9 And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand,
- 10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.
- 11 And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his

image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

Traditionalists notice that not only are these unbelievers tossed into the lake of fire where “the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever,” but they have no rest “day or night.” This is in stark contrast to the saved, who will enjoy rest eternally (Revelation 14:13). To traditionalists, both the “rest” of believers and the “unrest” of unbelievers seem to imply a conscious state.

Other Traditionalist Arguments

In other parts of the Bible, several passages which talk about Hell use the word “destroy” or “destruction” to describe what happens to the unrighteous. Traditionalists claim that the picture in these passages is not of obliteration but of a ruin of human life out of God’s presence forever. In this way they are able to conceive of a “destruction” which lasts forever.

A more philosophical traditionalist argument concerns Mankind’s creation in the image of God. Some traditionalists believe that the torments of Hell must be eternal, since humankind was made in the image of God and that image cannot be “uncreated.” Thus they believe that immortality was bestowed on Mankind when God created male and female in His image.

Last, many traditionalists believe that Hell must be eternal because of the nature of sin itself. All sin is an offense against God, goes this argument, and since God is infinite, all sin is infinitely odious. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), the great Puritan theologian, took this line of argument in his famous sermon, “The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners.”

As you can see, these arguments seem both biblical and substantial. And yet they are not without significant problems. Allow me to explain why I believe the conditionalist approach is a better solution to the difficulty.

The Conditionalist Viewpoint

The doctrine of the duration of Hell has been so strongly held throughout the history of Christianity that few have dared to challenge it. Adding to the reluctance has been the fact that most modern challenges have come from the cults. Thus, a person who dares to question the traditional viewpoint runs the risk of being labeled a cultist.

A classic characteristic of modern-day “Christian” cults is their denial of the reality of Hell. Some argue that everyone will be saved. Most take the position that the unrighteous are annihilated at physical death.

The views of the cults regarding Hell have always been repulsive to me because they deny the clear teaching of Scripture that the unrighteous will be sent to a place of suffering called Hell. Yet, I have never been able to fully embrace the traditional viewpoint of conscious, eternal punishment.



“The Door to Hell” — An art object on the patio of an art gallery in Santa Fe, NM. It illustrates how the world views Hell as a joke.

Traditionalist Difficulties

My first difficulty with the traditional view is that it seems to impugn the character of God. I kept asking myself, “How could a God of grace, mercy and love torment the vast majority of humanity eternally?” It did not seem to me to be either loving or just. I realize He is a God of righteousness, holiness and justice, but is eternal suffering justice? The concept of eternal torment seems to convert the true God

of justice into a cosmic sadist.

Second, the concept of eternal torment seems to run contrary to biblical examples. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire — suddenly and quickly. He destroyed Noah’s evil world with water — suddenly and quickly. He ordered the Canaanites to be killed swiftly. In the Law of Moses there was no provision for incarceration or torture. Punishments for violation of the Law consisted either of restitution or death. Even sacrificial animals were spared suffering through precise prescriptions for their killing that guaranteed a death that would be as quick and painless as possible.

As a student of God’s Prophetic Word, I found a third problem with the traditional view. It seems to contradict a descriptive phrase that is used in prophecy to describe Hell. That term is “the second death.” It is a term peculiar to the book of Revelation (Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8). How can Hell be a “second death” if it consists of eternal, conscious torment?

The Problem of Destruction

A fourth reason the traditional view has always troubled me is that it seems to ignore an important biblical teaching about Hell; namely, that Hell is a place of destruction. Jesus Himself spoke of Hell as a place of “destruction” (Matthew 7:13). Further, in Matthew 10:28 Jesus said: “Do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell.”

Likewise, in 2 Thessalonians 1:9 Paul says that those who do not obey the gospel “will pay the penalty of eternal destruction.” The writer of Hebrews says that the unrighteous will experience a terrifying judgment that will result in their consumption by fire (Hebrews 10:27). Even one of the most comforting verses in the Bible speaks of the destruction of the unrighteous: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not *perish*, but have eternal life” (John 3:16, emphasis added).

The traditionalist argument that the word “destroy” or “destruction” should be interpreted as “irreparable loss” seems a stretch to me. It seems much more likely that “destroy” should be taken to mean exactly that.

The Meaning of Punishment

Fifth, there is a difference between eternal punishment and eternal punishing. It is one thing to experience a punishment that is eternal in its consequences; it is another thing to experience

eternal punishing.

The Bible also speaks of eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:2). Is that a judgment that continues eternally, or is it a judgment with eternal consequences? Likewise, the Bible speaks of eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12). But this does not mean that Christ will continue the act of redemption eternally. That act took place at the Cross, once and for all. It was an eternal redemption because the result of the redemption had eternal consequences.

Symbolism

Sixth, I noted earlier that traditionalists often cite Revelation 14:9-11 to demonstrate that the suffering of the wicked will be eternal. They most often highlight two phrases. The first refers to those who take the mark of the beast during the Tribulation, who will be "tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels." The second is that "the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever." Notice that this passage does not speak of eternal torment. Rather, it speaks of "the smoke of their torment" ascending forever.

The Bible is its own best interpreter, and when you look up statements similar to this you will find that they are symbolic for a punishment that has eternal consequences, not a punishment that continues eternally. For example, consider Isaiah 34:10 which speaks of the destruction of Edom. It says the smoke of Edom's destruction will "go up forever."

I have been to Edom (the southern portion of modern day Jordan in the area around Petra). I have seen its destruction. But there was no smoke ascending to heaven. The reference to eternal smoke is obviously symbolic, indicating that Edom's destruction will give eternal testimony to how God deals with a sinful society.

The same is true of Jude 7 when it says that Sodom and Gomorrah experienced "the punishment of eternal fire." Again, I have been to the area at the southern tip of the Dead Sea where these twin cities existed. The area is one of utter devastation, but there is no smoke going up to heaven. They are not burning eternally. They simply suffered a fiery destruction that had eternal consequences.

Immortality

Last, many traditionalists believe that the soul is immortal. But is it? I believe the Bible denies the immortality of the soul point blank.

In 1 Timothy 6:15-16 Paul says that God alone possesses immortality. And 1 Corinthians 15:53 teaches that the Redeemed will not become immortal until the time of their resurrection.

In other words, immortality is a gift of God which He gives in His grace to the Redeemed at the time of their resurrection. There is no need to believe in an eternal Hell if the soul is not intrinsically immortal. And it isn't.

"I notice that Our Lord, while stressing the terror of Hell with unsparing severity, usually emphasizes the idea not of duration but of finality. Consignment to the destroying fire is usually treated as the end of the story — not as the beginning of a new story." — C.S. Lewis in the *Problem of Pain*

A Summary

You should see by now that both the traditional and conditional positions on Hell can muster good, biblical support for their point of view. We are not talking here about a biblical view versus an unbiblical one.

In defining any doctrine, everything the Bible has to say about the issue must be considered. Concerning the issue of Hell, the only way I have been able to incorporate all that the Bible has to say is to conclude:

- 1) Those who die outside a faith relationship with Jesus are initially confined to a compartment in Hades called Torments.
- 2) At the end of the Millennium, they will be resurrected and judged of their works by Jesus at the Great White Throne Judgment.
- 3) All of them will be condemned to Hell because no one can be justified before God by their works.
- 4) They will be cast into the lake of fire (Hell) where they will suffer a time of torment in proportion to their sins.
- 5) They will then experience the "second death" (death of body, soul and spirit).

The Reality of Hell

Which viewpoint is right—the traditional one or the conditionalist concept? I have cast my vote for the conditionalist understanding. You may decide that the evidence points in the other direction. That's okay. The important thing to keep in mind is that Hell is a reality, and regardless of its specific nature, it is a terrible destiny.

And because it is a horrible reality, it needs to be preached. People need to know the consequence of rejecting God's love, grace, and mercy.

The story has been told of C. S. Lewis listening to a young preacher's sermon on the subject of God's judgment on sin. At the end of his message, the young man said: "If you do not receive Christ as Savior, you will suffer grave eschatological ramifications!"

After the service, Lewis asked him, "Do you mean that person who doesn't believe in Christ will go to Hell?"

"Precisely," the young preacher responded.

"Then say so," Lewis replied.

The stakes are too great to beat around the bush. ✚

Note: This article was taken from Dr. Reagan's book, *God's Plan for the Ages*. The book contains 42 chapters and runs 415 pages in length. It covers every aspect of Bible prophecy. The cost is \$15. To order a copy, call 1-800-705-8316 between 8am and 5pm (Central time), Monday through Friday.

An Insightful Argument in Behalf of the Conditionalist Viewpoint of Hell

Editor's Note: The following article was taken from an unpublished manuscript by Dirk Warren entitled "Hell Know: Dispelling the Eternal Torture Myth." Dirk is a life-long student of the Bible. He resides with his wife Carol in Howland, Ohio. He can be contacted at dawaren@msn.com.

Golgotha and Gehenna

Dirk Warren



Dirk Warren

The very death of Jesus Christ on the Cross is an example of everlasting destruction. Jesus suffered God's wrath and died so that we don't have to. Theologians refer to this as "substitutionary death." All this means is that Jesus suffered and died in our place. He was sacrificed for our sakes so that we don't have to reap the wages of our sin. The Bible says "He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews

2:9).

We see here that Jesus suffered and tasted death for everyone. This is what God would have had to do to us on Judgment Day if Jesus hadn't suffered and died in our place. In other words, *Jesus suffered the very penalty that we were to suffer*, and that penalty is suffering that ends in death.



Jesus didn't die for us so that we don't have to experience earthly death, the first death; He died for us so that we don't have to suffer the "second death" (Revelation 20:6 & 14). So Christ's death on the Cross is a window for us of what the Second Death essentially is, and the only view we see through this window is that of suffering that ends in death, not never-ending conscious torture.

Unlike the ungodly people cast into the lake of fire, who will suffer everlasting destruction, Jesus rose from the dead "because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him" (Acts 2:24). God had to raise Jesus from the dead, otherwise we would not be justified and have the hope of eternal life (see 1 Corinthians 15:

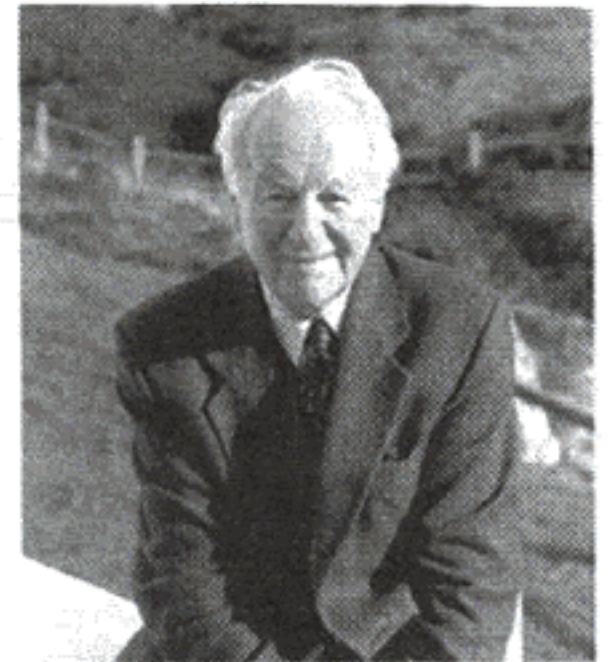
12-22 and Romans 10:9-10).

The bottom line is that Jesus "tasted death for everyone." He did not taste eternal conscious torture for us, He tasted death. If Jesus' substitutionary death had to consist of what supporters of eternal torture say the wages of sin is, then Jesus would have to still be suffering never-ending torment.

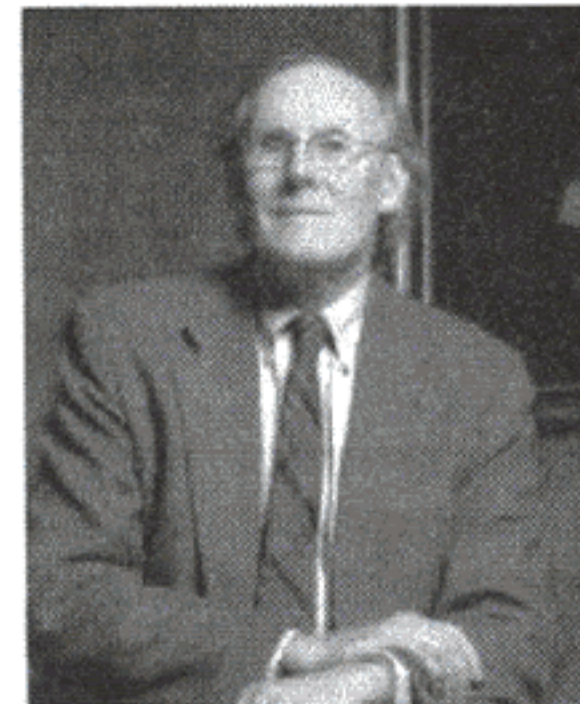
Jesus' suffering and death in our place on this earth is a picture of what the second death will be on Judgment Day in the spiritual realm. And the simple fact is that Jesus suffered and died. This is what people witnessed when He was horribly crucified, and this is what we see today when we picture it. *Death* is what we are saved from, not eternal conscious torture, for "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). ✚

Quotes About Hell

"I believe the ultimate annihilation of the wicked should at least be accepted as a legitimate, biblically founded alternative to their eternal conscious torment . . . I find the concept [of eternal, conscious torment] intolerable and do not understand how people can live with it without either cauterizing their feelings or cracking under the strain."
— John Stott, Rector of All Souls Church in London.



John Stott



Clark Pinnock

"I maintain that the ultimate result of rejecting God is self-destruction, closure with God, and absolute death in body, soul, and spirit. I take the verse seriously that says: 'The wages of sin is death' (Romans 6:23) . . . Hell is not the beginning of a new immortal life in torment but the end of a life of rebellion. Hell is, as C. S. Lewis said, 'the outer rim where being fades away into nonentity' . . . I contend that God does not grant immortality

to the wicked to inflict endless pain upon them but will allow them finally to perish.

"Our Lord spoke plainly of God's judgment as the annihilation of the wicked when He warned about God's ability to destroy body and soul in Hell (Matthew 10:28) . . . Thus the impression Jesus leaves us with is a strong one: The impenitent wicked can expect to be destroyed by the wrath of God . . .

"Everlasting torture is intolerable from a moral point of view because it pictures God acting like a bloodthirsty monster who maintains an everlasting Auschwitz for His enemies . . ." — Clark Pinnock, McMaster Divinity School. ✚

Fast Facts Concerning Hell

Hell is not the same place as Hades.	Revelation 20:14
The Scriptures indicate that Hades is located in "the lower parts of the earth."	Isaiah 44:23 and Eph.4:8
Before the Cross, Hades was a temporary holding place for the spirits of the dead, both the saved and the unsaved. It consisted of two compartments, Paradise and Torments.	Luke 16:19-31
When Jesus died, He descended into Hades where He made a proclamation. (Most likely He proclaimed: "The blood has been shed!")	1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6
When Jesus ascended to Heaven, He took Paradise with Him. Since that time, the saved go to Heaven when they die; the lost continue to go to Hades.	2 Corinthians 12:4 and Ephesians 4:8
Hell was created for Satan and his angels. Its location is not indicated in the Scriptures.	Matthew 25:41
Satan wants to take as many people to Hell with him as he possibly can.	1 Peter 5:8
No one is in Hell now. The first to be placed in Hell will be the Antichrist and his False Prophet. This will occur at the time of the Lord's Second Coming.	Revelation 19:20
The second to be confined to Hell will be Satan himself. This will occur at the end of the Millennial reign of Jesus.	Revelation 20:10
The unsaved will be consigned to Hell at the end of the Millennium after they have been resurrected and judged.	Revelation 20:11-15
Hell is a "lake of fire."	Revelation 20:14
Hell is a "furnace of fire."	Matthew 13:42 & 50
Hell is a place of "unquenchable fire."	Matthew 3:12
Hell is a place of "eternal fire."	Matthew 18:8
Hell is a place of "outer darkness."	Matthew 8:12 and 22:13
Hell is a place of "black darkness."	2 Peter 2:17 & Jude 13
Hell will be a place of "weeping and gnashing of teeth."	Matthew 8:12 and 22:13
Hell is a place of "wrath and indignation."	Romans 2:8 and Rev. 14:10
Hell is a place of torment.	Revelation 14:10
Hell is a place where people will experience degrees of torment in relation to the magnitude and seriousness of their sins.	Matthew 11:22-24; Luke 12:47-48; & Hebrews 10:29
Hell is a place of no rest.	Revelation 14:11
Hell is a place of "disgrace and everlasting contempt."	Daniel 12:2
Hell is a place of exclusion from God's presence.	2 Thessalonians 1:9
Hell is a place where people "perish."	Psalms 1:6 and John 3:16
Hell is a place where people will suffer "eternal destruction."	2 Thessalonians 1:9, Philipians 3:19; & Matthew 7:13
Hell is a place where both body and soul can be destroyed.	Matthew 10:28
Hell is a place where people will be consumed by fire.	Hebrews 10:27
Hell is a place where people will experience a "second death."	Revelation 20:6 & 14

Hell is a place where people will be unable to keep their souls alive.	Psalm 22:29
Hell is a place where people will become corpses.	Isaiah 66:24
The Redeemed will be able to look upon the corpses of those who perish in Hell.	Isaiah 66:24
Satan and his angels will suffer eternal torment in Hell.	Revelation 20:10
The fate of those destined to Hell will be remembered forever.	Revelation 14:11

Other Aspects of Hell

Tartarus

In 2 Peter 2:4 we are told that certain angels have been confined by God in a special place called Tartarus. Some translations say Hell, but the actual word is Tartarus. The place is described as “pits of darkness.”

Who these angels are is an intriguing question. The passage in 2 Peter simply says they are angels “who sinned.” But all the fallen angels sinned when they joined Satan’s rebellion against God, so these angels must have sinned in some very special way. It could very well be that they are the ones referred to in Jude 6 “who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode.” The passage in Jude says that these angels, like the ones in 2 Peter 2:4, are “kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”

The “proper abode” of fallen angels is the atmosphere of this planet (Ephesians 6:12). The angels in Tartarus may likely be the entities called “Nephilim” who in the time of Noah had sexual relations with women on earth (Genesis 6:4). The Scriptures indicate that these unions produced a race of “mighty men” (Jude 6), possibly giants, who were later destroyed in the Noahic flood.

The location of Tartarus is not revealed in the Scriptures. Some believe it is a compartment in Hell; others believe it is the “great chasm located in Hades” (Luke 16:26).

The Abyss or Bottomless Pit

Another place that some believe may be a part of Hell is what the Scriptures refer to as “the abyss.” This is most likely the same place that is referred to in some verses as “the bottomless pit.”

The first mention of this place in the Scriptures is found in Luke 8 where Jesus encounters a demon-possessed man in the Gerasenes area of the Galilee. As He prepared to cast the demons out of the men, they began to plead with him to not cast them into “the abyss” (Luke 8:31). Jesus honored their request and cast them instead into a herd of swine.

In Revelation 9 we are told that during the Great Tribulation, the key to this abyss will be given to an angel who will open it and allow a host of demonic locusts to escape and afflict the people of the earth. We are even told that there is “an angel of the abyss” who serves as king over its demonic horde. His name is called Abaddon in Hebrew and Apollyon in Greek, both names meaning “destroyer.”

The final mention of this pit is found in Revelation 20 where we are told that when the Lord returns to earth, He will bind

Satan and then shut him up in the abyss for a thousand years, until the end of the Lord’s millennial reign.

Again, some believe this abyss is a compartment in Hell. But I believe it is more likely a place in Hades. In Luke 16 Hades is described by Jesus as being a place with two compartments — Paradise and Torments — separated by “a great chasm” (Luke 16:26). This chasm is probably the abyss or bottomless pit. It could also be the place referred to in 2 Peter 2:4 as Tartarus.

Purgatory

Catholics believe there is a compartment in Hell called purgatory where all believers go at death to be purged of their sins through suffering. Once their purging is completed, they are then allowed into Heaven.

There is absolutely no biblical basis for this concept. And, in fact, the concept is a blasphemy of the blood of Jesus because it contends that the blood which Jesus shed on the Cross is insufficient to cleanse us of our sins. The Bible says otherwise: “If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, *and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7).

When believers die, their souls go directly to Heaven, not to an imaginary place called purgatory.

Since there is no biblical basis for the concept, how did it develop? Catholic theologian, Zachary J. Hayes says that it developed in the Middle Ages from the grass roots — from the people in the pews who felt that there needed to be a place of cleansing after death. “Long before theologians became involved, individual Christians prayed for the dead . . . and in this practice, they were convinced their prayers benefited the dead. In this sense, the question of purgatory can be said to have emerged from the ‘voice of the people’” (*Four Views on Hell*, edited by William Crockett, Zondervan 1992). ❖



An artist's concept of Purgatory.

HELL: A CONSUMING FIRE

Edward Fudge

Editor's Note: The author served many years as a writer and teacher among the Churches of Christ before he became an attorney. He practices law today in Houston, Texas. He maintains a website of spiritual resources at www.edwardfudge.com.

There can be no question about the reality of Hell. The Bible warns of it very clearly, and Jesus said more about it than anyone else reported in Scripture. It is important that we study carefully what Scripture actually says, and not merely repeat what others have said.

Hell is punishment. Some people will go away into "eternal punishment" and others into "eternal life" (Matthew 25:46). The same adjective describes both destinies . . . And both destinies are everlasting and will never end. Those who go to Hell will never come out again. The results of this punishment will be forever.

The Meaning of Hell's Fire

Hell is portrayed as fire. Jesus also tells us that this punishment involves "fire" — fire of the Age to Come, "eternal" fire (Matthew 25:41). What does fire do to something put into it? We might think of three things, depending on the circumstances, the object put in, and the character of the one in charge.

Sometimes fire tortures. Some people believe that God's "eternal" fire will torture. They believe that God will torture those who go to Hell almost to death, allow them reprieve sufficient to barely survive, and repeat the process forever and ever. Tertullian was one of the first Christian teachers to adopt this idea, some 200 years after Christ. But this is not the only view of the matter. A great many thoughtful Bible students have decided that this view is horribly incorrect, that it slanders God and misrepresents the Bible.

Sometimes fire purifies. Gold and silver are cleansed by fire. Christian character is refined by the "fire" of affliction. About 300 years after Christ, Origen suggested that Hell would be a purifying fire. Origen was reacting to Tertullian's idea of a torturing fire. He believed that God would be more likely to purify his creatures than to torture them forever. Origen suggested that Hell would purify its inhabitants, so that they all would eventually be cleansed of sin and graduate to heaven.

The Bible does not teach Origen's idea. But it does not teach Tertullian's idea either.

Sometimes (in fact, most of the time) fire destroys. According to both the Old and New Testaments, this is the function of the fire of Hell. Jesus warned people to fear God who is able "to destroy both body and soul in Hell" (Matthew 10:28). The eternal "punishment" of which Jesus spoke is, in fact, eternal destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:9). The last day will see the wicked totally burned up, left neither root nor branches (Malachi 4:1). All that will remain will be ashes and smoke (Malachi 4:3).



"Unquenchable Fire"

The fire is unquenchable. No one cast into Hell can avoid this destiny of total destruction and escape by putting out God's fire. This fire is unquenchable and cannot be extinguished (Mark 9:43,48). If fire is not quenched or extinguished, it keeps burning until there is nothing left to burn. It ought not to surprise us that whatever is put in "unquenchable" fire will be "burned up."

That is exactly what John the Baptist said Jesus' punishment will do to those who experience it. He said Jesus will "burn up the chaff" with "unquenchable" fire (Matthew 3:12).

The "worm that does not die"

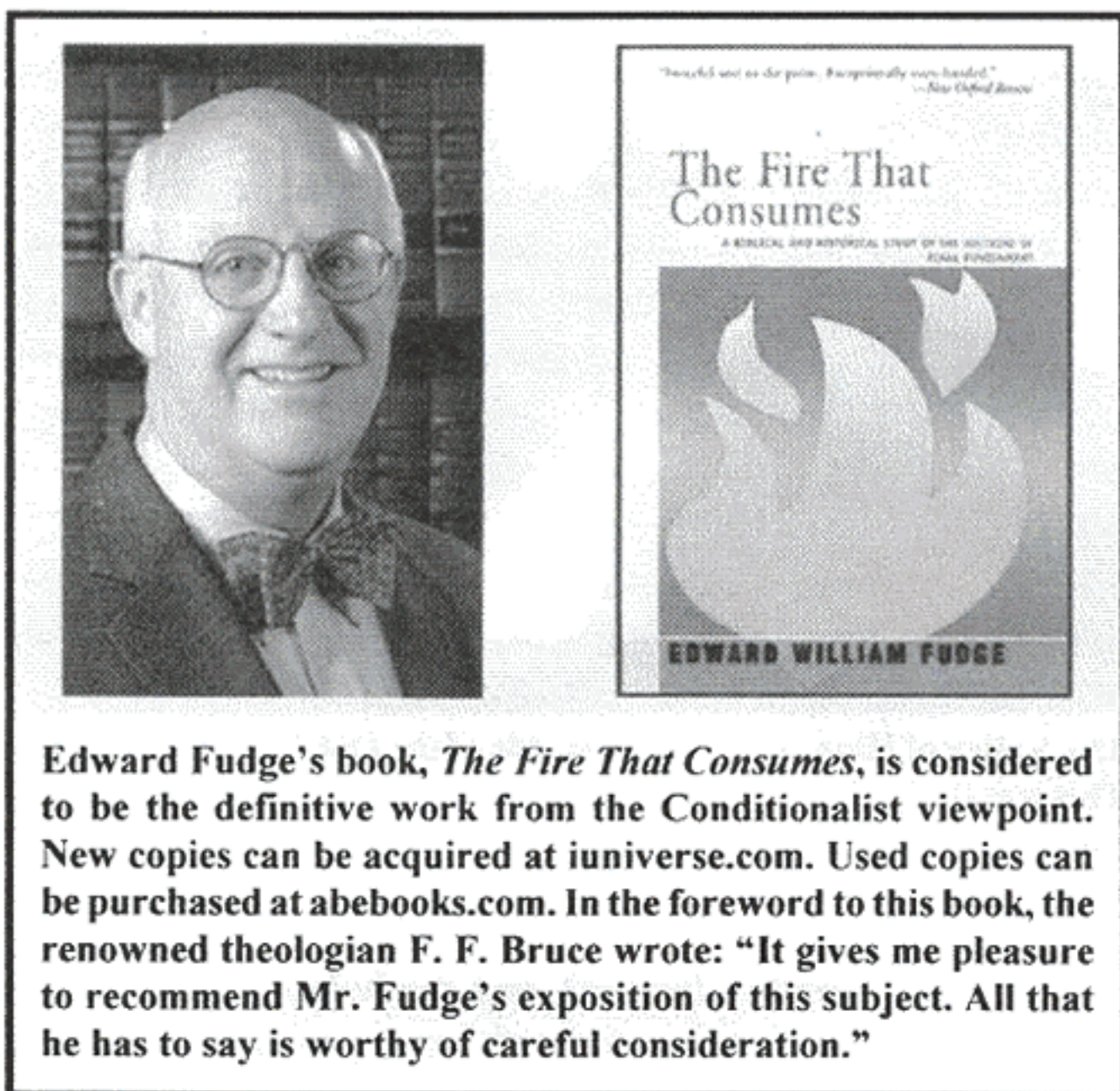
This is also Scripture's meaning when it speaks of the "worm that does not die" (Mark 9:46, 48). Jesus borrowed this language from Isaiah 66:24. When we look at that text, we learn what this "worm" is all about. And we avoid the fanciful and unscriptural notions some have invented — that it represents everlasting remorse, or that doomed sinners will wriggle like worms forever in everlasting torture.

Isaiah describes the final end of the righteous and the wicked. The righteous will be with God forever to enjoy His company and engage in everlasting worship (Isaiah 66:22-23). They will also view the completed destruction of those who rejected God throughout life. "They shall go forth and look on the corpses of those who have rebelled against God; where their worm [maggot] dies not, and the fire is not quenched" (Isaiah 66:24).

The scene here is the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) outside Jerusalem. It is the city garbage dump, a place of smoldering, constant fire. Here are thrown carcasses of dead animals and criminals and sometimes enemy soldiers. The maggots feed on the corpses. The fire feeds on the corpses. Finally nothing is left to feed on. This is the Bible's picture of the place "where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched." It is a place of disgust, of abhorrent and repugnant sights and smells (Isaiah 66:24 and Daniel 12:2). It is a place of absolute, total, irreversible destruction.

"Weeping and gnashing of teeth"

Before the destruction is accomplished, there will be such conscious suffering as the infinite wisdom of God justly apportions in each individual case (Romans 2:6). This will be a time of



Questions and Answers About the Conditional View of Hell

Dr. David R. Reagan

1) Doesn't the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 teach eternal torment in Hell?

No, it does not. In fact, eternal torment is not even mentioned. Furthermore, the story has nothing to do with Hell. It is a depiction of Hades as it existed before the Cross, when Paradise was still one of its compartments.

The confusion stems from the fact that some translations state in verse 23 that the rich man was in Hell. That is incorrect. The actual word used in the Greek text is Hades and not Gehenna, the word for Hell.

When unsaved people die, their souls go to a compartment in Hades called Torments where they are subjected to suffering. That particular suffering will come to an end at the conclusion of the Millennial reign of Jesus. At that time He will judge those who are in Hades and consign them to Hell (Revelation 20:11-15). We are told that Hades will be cast into the "lake of fire," which is Hell (Revelation 20:14).

For those who have suffered for lengthy times in Hades, their suffering may well end instantly when they are consigned to Hell where they will experience "eternal destruction" (2 Thessalonians 1:9). Others will likely continue to suffer for a period of time in Hell before they "perish" (John 3:16).

The Bible clearly teaches that there will be degrees of punishment, so some will suffer longer and more intensely than others (Luke 12:35-48, Luke 20:45-47, and Hebrews 10:29).

2) Didn't Jesus teach eternal torment when He said that Hell is a place "where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched?" (Mark 9:48)

Jesus could not have been teaching eternal torment when He made this statement because He was quoting Isaiah 66:24 which says that the redeemed will be able to view the corpses of those who are lost. The phraseology about the worm and the fire is figurative language that emphasizes the fact that the testimony of what happens to unrepentant sinners will never die.

Similar wording is used about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude 7 tells us that these cities experienced "the punishment of eternal fire." That does not mean an eternally burning fire; rather, it speaks of a fire with eternal consequences.

"tribulation and distress, of wrath and indignation" (Romans 2:8,9). Precise divine justice will be measured out. God is righteous in all He does, and Hell will be no exception . . .

Although the wicked will gnash their teeth at God and the righteous, they will be unable to resist God's judgment sentence or to avert their own destruction. Even while they gnash their teeth in anger and defiance, the wicked will melt away, until they are completely gone (Psalm 112:10).

The "Second Death"

But the ultimate end of it all will be total destruction, an extinction that can never be undone. This is the "second death," and from it there will be no recovery forever (Revelation 20:13-15; 21:8).

This will take place in the "lake of fire and brimstone," a figure which comes from the annihilation of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-25), and which, throughout Scripture, symbolizes a destruction that is entire and complete. Sodom's destruction was also irreversible, and in that sense was "eternal" in its results. The New Testament says that Sodom was a type or example, therefore, of the "eternal fire" which will destroy the wicked in Hell (Jude 7). This is "eternal" fire because it is fire of the Age to Come, but also because its results are everlasting.

We may therefore take at face value the Bible's repeated warning: "the wages of sin is death" (Genesis 3:3, Ezekiel 18:20, Romans 6:23, and Revelation 21:8). This is not merely a death of the body. It is the death of the body and soul (Psalm 22:29 and Matthew 10:28). When Hell's function is finished, its results will be forever. This is indeed eternal punishment, eternal destruction just as eternal as eternal life.

Where, then, did the notion come from that God would torture the wicked alive forever in Hell? I discuss that in detail in the second half of my book, *The Fire That Consumes*. Here I will simply say that it came from the pagan doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which crept into the Church during the Third and Fourth Centuries after Christ. ✚

3) What about those during the Tribulation who take the mark of the beast? Doesn't the Bible say they will be tormented forever? (Revelation 14:9-11)

Again, there is no mention of eternal torment in these verses. We are told that they will "be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb" (Revelation 14:10), but no duration of this torment is given. To conclude that the torment will continue eternally, one would have to assume that the soul is immortal. But the Bible denies the immortality of the soul (1 Timothy 6:13-16).

The passage does say that "the smoke of their torment will go up forever," but that is a figurative expression that denotes an eternal witness of their fate. For example, we are told in Isaiah 34:10 that the smoke from Edom's destruction will rise forever. There is no such smoke rising from Edom today except in the sense that we have the memory of its destruction.

4) What about the Antichrist and the False Prophet? Doesn't the Bible say they will be subjected to eternal torment? (Revelation 19:20 and 20:10).

Yes, Revelation 20:10 states that the Antichrist and his False Prophet will "be tormented forever and ever," together with Satan. But this certainly is no indication that the rest of humanity will suffer eternal torment.

The Antichrist and False Prophet are two special cases. Keep in mind that they will be responsible for the deaths of one-half of humanity during the first three-and-a-half years of the Tribulation. That's a total of 3 billion people in today's terms. They are also going to kill two-thirds of the Jews during the second half of the Tribulation. By the end of the seven years of the Tribulation, it is likely that they will have the blood of two-thirds of humanity on their hands — or 4 billion people. All the carnage of all the nefarious leaders of history — like Hitler, Stalin, and Mao — pales in comparison.

But it may well be that Revelation 20:10 is not speaking of the human beings who will serve as the Antichrist and False Prophet. It may instead be speaking of the demonic spirits that possess them. Note that the passage refers to "the beast and the false prophet." We are told in Revelation 11:7 that the beast "comes up out of the abyss." According to the Scriptures, this is the pit where evil spirits are imprisoned, not human beings. Likewise, the False Prophet is referred to as "another beast" (Revelation 13:11), meaning another of the same kind.

5) Won't the Conditional viewpoint motivate people to ignore God?

Let me quote Edward Fudge's answer to this question: "Only if their only reason for serving God is the belief that He will inflict on the wicked a torture unimaginably worse than the most monstrous tyrant among men ever dreamed of inflicting on his victims.

"The truth is that the traditional doctrine of everlasting torture in Hell has created more atheists than almost anything else Christians have ever taught . . .

"What the Conditionalist view does is magnify the justice of God (each doomed sinner receives precisely what he or she deserves and nothing else), the mercy of God (even the worst



The Valley of Hinnom on the west side of the Old City of Jerusalem. This was the garbage dump of ancient Jerusalem where fires burned continually, consuming the refuse of the city. This is where the imagery for Hell came from that is used in the New Testament.

sinner finally perishes forever), and the holiness of God (His wrath is real, but it is measured with exact precision in keeping with His own character)."

6) Doesn't the Conditionalist viewpoint require a lot of spiritualization of the Scriptures?

Not at all. In fact, it is the traditional view of everlasting torment that requires the most spiritualization. Those who hold to the traditional concept must spiritualize such words and phrases as "perish," "destruction," "consumed by fire," and "second death."

The Conditionalist view requires only the spiritualization of figurative expressions like "their worm will not die" and "the smoke of their torment will go up forever."

7) Don't the cults hold the Conditionalist viewpoint?

Many, like the Jehovah's Witnesses, believe that the souls of sinners are annihilated at death, but that is not the Conditionalist position. A marginal group, The Seventh Day Adventists, does embrace Conditionalism, but their endorsement of it no more invalidates it than does their endorsement of the Trinity invalidate that thoroughly biblical concept.

8) What do you consider to be the single most powerful argument against the traditional concept of eternal torment in Hell?

The fact that we are told that Jesus paid the price for our sins. What was that price? It was suffering and death, not eternal torment. Unrepentant sinners will therefore experience what Jesus experienced: suffering and death (the "Second Death").

The bottom line is that because of a preconceived, unbiblical notion that the soul is immortal, we have read *eternal* torment into the Scriptures when it was never intended for Mankind. Hell was created for Satan and his angels, not for Mankind, and it is Satan and his demonic hordes who will be consigned to Hell and its torments eternally. ✚

Hell. The place. Not the profanity.

Donald E. Wildmon

For some reason I got to thinking not long ago about how long it has been since I heard Hell spoken of in the biblical sense. In our society it is out of vogue to mention the biblical Hell. I haven't heard an expository sermon on the subject in years.

Back when I was a student in seminary, we had some debates about Hell. Many of my friends didn't think it theologically right to promote the fear of Hell as a method of leading people to the Lord. I kinda bought into that theology until I thought deeper. Like the fear of getting caught speeding, the fear of Hell is at least a beginning point for a deeper walk with the Lord. Not the end, certainly, but a legitimate beginning place.



Donald Wildmon

The Reality of Hell

Is there a Hell? Is there a Heaven? Is there a Heaven, but no Hell? The latter idea seems to be the norm in today's thinking. But can there be a Heaven without a Hell? If Hell doesn't exist, and Heaven does, then Jesus was crazy. If there is only a Heaven and not a Hell, then His death was unnecessary. If everyone is going to Heaven, then His death was totally unnecessary.

Take that thought one step farther. If there is no Hell and only a Heaven, then everyone is going to Heaven. That perspective thus rules out right and wrong, and consequently, any accountability for our actions. If there is no right or wrong, then one act — murder, for instance — is just as moral as any other, for example, feeding the poor. You cannot have right unless you also have wrong. They cannot exist independently. Let me reaffirm the basic Christian belief that we do not earn our way to Heaven, but that salvation is a free gift given by God to those who receive Christ as their Savior.

But suppose there is neither a Heaven nor a Hell. That situation also dictates an absence of any morality. There can still be no right or wrong. In fact, without right and wrong there is no such thing as justice.

Can We Rely on Common Consensus?

That's not true, some might argue. Some acts inherently are better than others. But if there is neither Heaven nor Hell, why is one act better than another? By whose standards? Isn't the morality of one person as good as the morality of another?

But, some would argue, there are acts we can agree on which are better than others. Perhaps. But does our agreement make them better than the ideas of those who disagree with us? We

may have a common consensus that one act is better than another, but what if common consensus changes? Does that act remain better than the other? If not, was it really better before we changed our thinking?

Returning to the Scriptures

It would be of immense help if we returned to the basic tenets of Scripture and the teaching of Christ. It is a simple faith, and its teaching isn't nearly as confusing as the debate above. It is thus: There is a Hell and there is a Heaven. Good and bad, right and wrong do exist, established apart from the whims of the world.

That returns morality to a fixed starting point, a place of judgment for decision-making. It also establishes a concrete morality based on a relationship with the Maker of the universe. And at the same time it underlines our need to escape the punishment we all deserve for the wrongs we have committed.

Perhaps our intentions were good in our efforts to remove Hell from our theology. But often the road to Hell is paved with good intentions.

Our society, and those in our churches, would greatly benefit from a proper fear of Hell. At least the fear of Hell is a starting place — a compass point to set us in the right direction. Because if there isn't a Hell, nothing matters. But if there is a Hell, Christ matters most of all. ✚

Reprinted from the *AFA Journal*, April 2001.

Who is Don Wildmon?

Donald E. Wildmon is an ordained United Methodist minister, having earned his MDiv. from Emory College in 1965. After serving in the U.S. Army's Special Services, he pastored churches from 1965 until he founded the National Federation for Decency in 1977. NFD became the American Family Association in 1988.

Don and his wife Lynda have four children and five grandchildren. He knows first-hand the battle parents face today teaching their families traditional moral values. Don tells in his own words how AFA was founded:

One evening in 1977 I sat down with my family to watch TV. On one channel was adultery, on another cursing, on another a man beating another over the head with a hammer. I asked the children to turn off the TV. I sat there, got angry, and said, "They're going to bring this into my home, and I'm going to do all I can to change it."

I brooded for a while and then came up with a plan for our church to turn off the TV for a week. I sent out a press release and the national media picked up on it.

Through that "Turn Off The TV Week" I learned there were literally millions of other people around the country who felt the same way I did. That was the beginning of the American Family Association. ✚

The Assault on Christmas —

In Dodgeville, Wisconsin, Ridgeway Elementary School's "winter program" changed the name of "Silent Night" to "Cold in the Night." The lyrics were rewritten to read: "Cold in the night, no one in sight, winter winds whirl and bite, how I wish I were happy and warm, safe with my family out of the storm."

The "winter program" included decorating classrooms with Santa Claus, Kwanza symbols, Menorahs, and Labafana — a Christmas witch!

Also in Wisconsin, the Glendale-River Hills School District banned every Christmas song which had any Christian "motive or theme." But while banning Christian Christmas songs, the district permitted secular holiday songs as well as songs celebrating Hanukkah. In defending this policy, the district administrator said that the Hanukkah songs are more cultural than spiritual.

Speaking of the end times, Jesus said, "They will lay their hands on you and will persecute you . . . and you will be hated by all on account of My name" (Luke 21:12 & 17).



The Frequency and Intensity of Earthquakes —

The Washington Post recently published an article about earthquake statistics. Defining a major quake as 5.5 magnitude or higher, they went back to 1960. During the 60's, only one major quake occurred. The 70's produced 7. The 80's only gave us 2. During the 90's we had 7 major quakes. But so far in this half of the first decade of the 21st Century, we've experienced 7. That was before Pakistan. Since then, Pakistan has experienced 14 quakes over 5.5 in magnitude, bringing our five year total to 21 major quakes. That puts it on pace for 42 in this decade alone — six times that of the 1990's.

Further, in the year 2000 there were approximately 21,000 earthquakes recorded of all sizes and magnitudes. In 2004, over 30,000 were recorded. That's a 50% increase.

TIMES and Seasons

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Judicial Nonsense —

Recently the Colorado Supreme Court, by a vote of 3-2, threw out a death sentence for a man convicted of rape and murder. The reason? Some jurors in the jury room read from the Bible before reaching a verdict.

Oddly enough, the judge in the case — as Colorado law requires — said to the jury panel that they must make an "individual moral assessment" in deciding whether the defendant should be given the death penalty.

The jurors voted unanimously for death. But the Colorado Supreme Court overturned their decision and sentenced the man to life without parole.

"The biblical passages the jurors discussed constituted either a part of the jurors' moral and religious precepts or their general knowledge, and thus were relevant to their court-sanctioned moral assessment," the dissenting judges wrote.

Of course, the ACLU praised the ruling, saying that the use of the Bible in the jury room was illegal due to "the separation of church and state."



A federal judge in Pennsylvania ruled recently that it is unconstitutional to teach "intelligent design" in a biology class, declaring that the concept is "creationism in disguise." The judge wrote that the six week trial had yielded "overwhelming evidence" that the concept of intelligent design "is a religious view, a mere relabeling of creationism, and

not a scientific theory."

This ruling, of course, overlooks the fact that evolution is an unproved theory which really amounts to an atheistic religious philosophy.

The apostle Paul wrote that the wrath of God would be poured out on those who "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1: 18). He went on to say that such people worship the creation rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25).

Israel Bashing at the United Nations —

This past November the United Nations held a "Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People." A large map of Palestine, with Israel missing from the map, was prominently featured during the festivities. This was an incredible insult to the nation of Israel which has been a member of the UN for 56 years.

The ceremonies were held at the UN headquarters in New York and were attended by Secretary General Kofi Annan.

The keynote speaker was Mr. Paul Badji of Senegal, the chairman of the "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People." During his remarks, he proclaimed that Palestinian suicide bombings were justified because they were in response to Israeli violence!

Meanwhile the president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, called for Israel to be literally "wiped from the map."

The prophet Zechariah said that in the end times the whole world would come against Israel over the issue of Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:2-3). ✚

Judicial Wisdom —

The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, Ohio, recently issued a ruling containing some startling insight for a federal court.

In a decision affirming a district court's ruling, the appeals court upheld the right of Mercer County, Kentucky to display in its court house the Ten Commandments along with the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, the Magna Carta, and the National Motto ("In God we trust"). This is hardly earth-shaking stuff because the law clearly allows for such displays, especially when the Ten Commandments are displayed with other important cultural influences on American history.

What was startling and refreshing about the Court's opinion was its specific response to a brief submitted by the American Civil Liberties Union which stressed over and over the importance of "the wall of separation of church and state." Here's what the judges wrote:

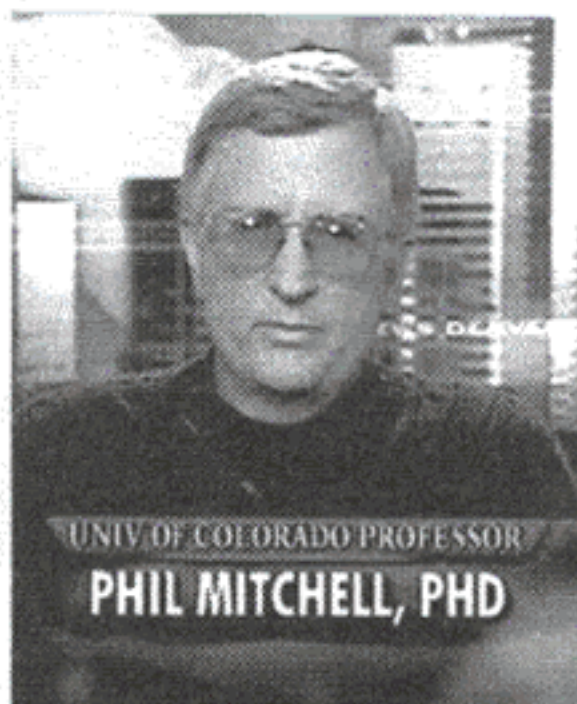
The ACLU makes repeated references to "the separation of church and state." This extra-constitutional construct has grown tiresome. The First Amendment does not demand a wall of separation between church and state. Our nation's history is replete with acknowledgment and in some cases, accommodation of religion. After all, we are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being . . .

At long last, one of our federal courts has recognized the fact that our constitution says absolutely nothing about a wall of separation between church and state.

The Academic Environment —

"The truth is, universities are the most hostile, narrow-minded and intolerant environment in society."

This assessment of public universities in America today was made by Dr. Phil Mitchell, former professor of history at the University of Colorado. Dr. Mitchell, 57, the father of six birth children and three adopted, was dismissed by the



Ward Churchill

University for requiring his students in a social history class to read Charles Sheldon's classic book, *In His Steps*.

The same university that fired him, stood firmly behind another professor when he came under attack from the public. That professor was Ward Churchill, an America-hating, left-wing agitator who responded to the 9/11 attacks by saying that the people killed deserved what they got. He called them "little



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Eichmanns," a reference to Adolph Eichmann, the Nazi bureaucrat who implemented Hitler's Final Solution. Churchill continues on the university's faculty at a salary of \$90,000 per year.

Dr. Mitchell asserts that university campuses today are an extremely hostile environment for Christians because liberal faculty members view Christianity as a threat to their influence. "And they are right about that," he observed. He emphasizes that the hostility comes mainly from faculty, not students, who he finds to be much more tolerant.

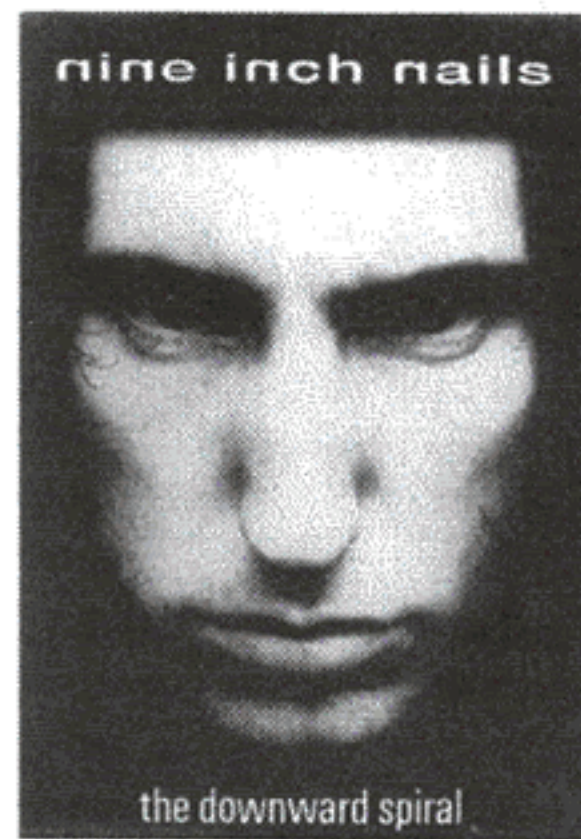
He summed up his observations by stating that on public university campuses today "Christian faculty and students face an atmosphere of unrelenting anger, prejudice, bigotry and discrimination."

Spiritual Abominations

"False gods, attempts to represent the true God, and indeed, all material things which are worshiped, are so much filth upon the face of the earth, whether they be crosses, crucifixes, virgins, wafers, relics, or even the Pope himself.



We are by far too mealy mouthed about these infamous abominations. God abhors them, and so should we. To renounce the glory of spiritual worship for outward pomp and show is the height of folly, and deserves to be treated as such." — Charles Spurgeon, 19th Century English pastor.



The Virtue of Self-Denial

"The biggest revelation I've had about my own life is that I've done everything I've ever wanted to do, and I'm still pretty miserable."

— Trent Reznor of the band, Nine Inch Nails.

Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." — Luke 9:23-24

Educational Drift —

When Harvard University was founded, its motto was *Veritas Christo et Ecclesiae* — "Truth for Christ and the Church." Its crest showed three books with one turned down to symbolize the limitation of human knowledge. Today, the crest shows three books face up, and the motto has been changed to *Veritas*, meaning simply, "Truth." ✚



Television Update

The ministry's weekly television program, "Christ in Prophecy," is available nationwide on two networks.

The **DayStar Network** can be accessed by satellite over DirecTV (channel 369). The DayStar broadcast can also be seen live over the DayStar website at ww2.daystar.com. DayStar programming is also carried over six international satellite systems which literally cover the world. You can get a listing of these at the DayStar website. Additionally, DayStar owns 44 broadcast stations scattered across the United States. A listing of these stations can also be found at the DayStar website.

The **Inspiration Network** can be accessed by cable nationwide. Check your local cable listings to see if your cable system carries the network. If it does not, then give them a call and ask them to add it to their offerings. You can also check the availability of Inspiration programming in your area by typing your area code into a search engine at www.getinsp.com.

DayStar Network				
Zone	Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
Day & Time	Wed. 4:00pm	Wed. 5:00pm	Wed. 6:00pm	Wed. 7:00pm
	Sun. 10:30pm	Sun. 11:30pm	Mon. 12:30am	Mon. 1:30am

Inspiration Network				
Zone	Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
Day & Time	Tues. 5:30pm	Tues. 6:30pm	Tues. 7:30pm	Tues. 8:30pm



Our television program is also broadcast over the Family Vision Network, a regional network that covers all of Southern Louisiana.

The programming of Family Vision can be seen on 11 cable systems throughout Southern Louisiana, reaching approximately 200,000 homes: Crowley (Channel 2), Estherwood (channel 44), Franklin (Channel 62), Iberia (Channel 15), Lafayette (Channel 16), Lake Charles (Channel 20), Patterson (Channel 62), Rayne (Channel 2), Roberts Cove (Channel 24), St. Martin (Channel 22), and Vermilion (Channel 14). You can access the network over the Internet at www.kajn.com/familyvision.

The network also broadcasts over a series of low-power television stations: Lafayette (Channel 40), Lake Charles (Channel 58), and Crowley (Channel 65).

Our program, "Christ in Prophecy," is broadcast over the Family Vision Network three times a week at the following times: Sunday at 6:30am, Monday at 8:30am, and Wednesday at 7:00pm.

We Need Your Financial Support!

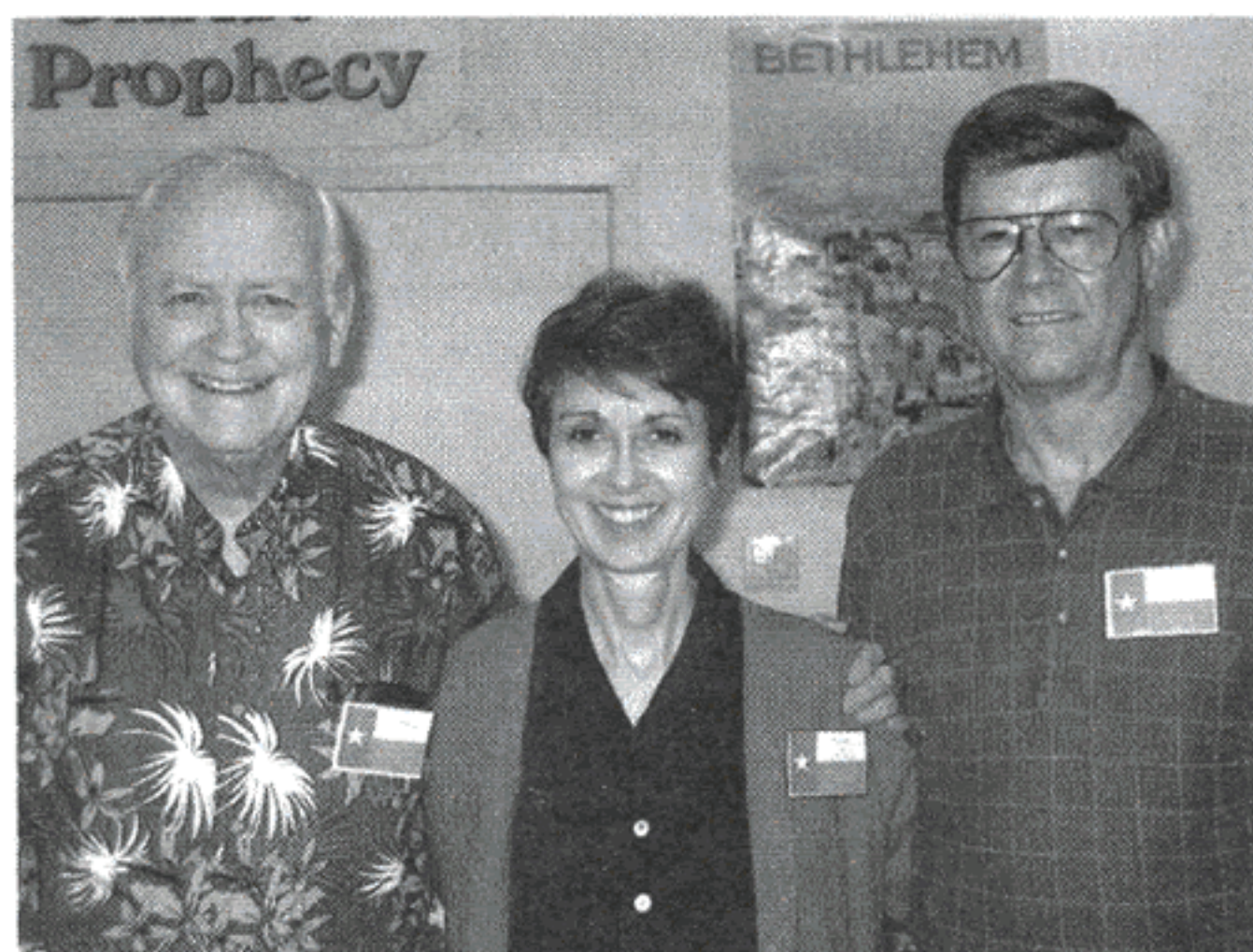
Both DayStar and the Inspiration Networks raised their broadcast costs for 2006. It is now costing us almost \$7,000 per week to air our broadcast on these two stations, and that does not include production costs.

The expense is well worth it because these networks are enabling us to reach millions of people all over the world with the message of the Lord's soon return.

But if we are to continue with this significant outreach, we need your financial support.

The best way you can supply that support is to become a **Prophecy Partner**. We currently have around 1,400 Prophecy Partners. We need to increase that number to over 1,500 for 2006 if we are to continue to cover our media outreach costs.

We ask our Prophecy Partners to aim at giving \$1 a day for a year — or \$30 per month. Many do this, and some give even more. The minimum contribution is \$20 per month.



Dave Reagan is shown above with two of the Ministry's Prophecy Partners, Ray and Sylvia Dunn of Griffin, Georgia.

Program Benefits

There are many benefits and blessings associated with being a Prophecy Partner. First and foremost is the knowledge that your sacrificial support is going to a ministry whose purpose is to point people to Jesus Christ and to proclaim His soon return.

Your donations will be used to help pay for our media outreach all across this nation and around the world via television and the Internet.

We need your support! Join us for 2006. Call 1-800-705-8316 and sign up today as one of our Prophecy Partners. (Please call between 8am and 5pm Central time, Monday through Friday.) ✚

Renewed Appeal for Church in South Africa

Last year, in the July-August issue of this magazine, we made an appeal for \$10,000 for the construction of a church building in Kimberly, South Africa. The readers of this magazine responded with overwhelming generosity by providing a total of \$13,000.

Our original goal was based upon fund-raising appeals in the past for the construction of facilities in the Philippines. Well, we have since learned that construction costs in South Africa are about double the cost in the Philippines.

Pastor Abraham Louw in South Africa has informed us that it will cost \$36,000 to provide the building that he needs for his congregation. They have secured the services of a dedicated Christian builder who will oversee the construction. He has agreed to donate much of his time and labor.

They plan to start construction on the church building in February, with the hope that it can be finished by May. They are proceeding ahead in faith, believing the Lord will supply the remaining \$13,000 that is needed to cover all the costs.

It took Pastor Louw over 20 years to get the land grant from the government. To keep the land, he has fenced it and erected a primitive corrugated iron building.



The current structure being used by the church in Kimberly.

He must now proceed to construct a permanent building in order to maintain title to the land. We need to raise the remaining funds immediately.

Please search your heart about making a sacrificial donation for this worthy cause. Mark your donations, "South African Church." Thank you! ✚

HERALD OF HIS COMING



"Herald of His Coming" is one of the most cherished publications in all of Christendom. It was established in Los Angeles, California in 1941 by Willard and Sarah Moore. Prior to that time Willard had been an itinerant preacher holding meetings and teaching about prayer.

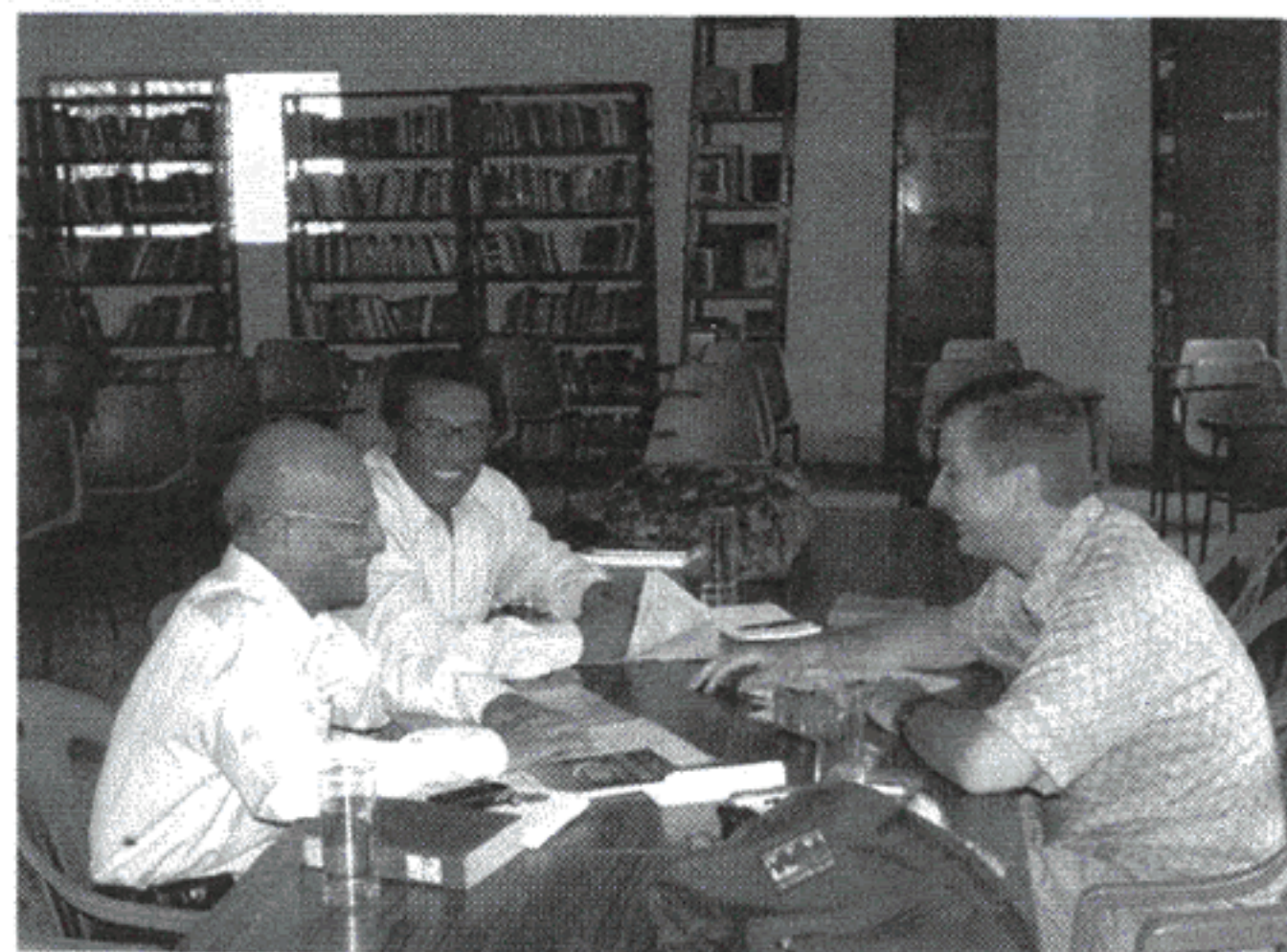
A printer who was a man of prayer offered to print a paper for them to help spread their deep burden for the Church worldwide to be clothed in holy garments, ready to meet Christ at His coming.

The first edition of 10,000 copies had a good reception, and so a second was printed. Others followed, and by the 1960's the circulation had grown to 425,000 monthly.

Sarah Moore was called home to her reward in 1973. Willard lived until 1980 when he died at the age of 90. Lois J. Stucky became the new editor and continued to publish the paper in the Los Angeles area.

In 1999 the ministry was moved to Terre Haute, Indiana where Dave and Kimberly Butts, founders and directors of Harvest Prayer Ministries, welcomed Herald of His Coming to partner with them. Rich Carmichael serves today as the publisher. Lois J. Stucky continues as editor.

Presently, about 80,000 Heralds are published monthly, about one-third of which are sent to readers outside the United States. The Herald is also printed abroad in 32 different languages.



Rich Carmichael is shown above conferring with editors of versions of the Herald that are printed and distributed in India.

Recently, the Herald has published several articles by Dr. Reagan about the Signs of the Times and the Second Coming of Jesus. These articles have been well received by the Herald's readers.

To subscribe free of charge to the Herald, go to their website at www.heraldofhiscoming.com, or write to the Herald at P.O. Box 279, Seelyville, IN 47878. The publication is free of charge, but a donation would be appreciated. ✚

Resource Materials for the Study of Bible Prophecy

Books



Wrath and Glory. Dr. Reagan's explanation of the book of Revelation. Written in a down-to-earth and easy-to-understand manner. It provides guidelines for interpretation, and responds to the most frequently asked questions about Revelation. It also explains how the book relates to Christian living.

240 pages. \$10.



Living for Christ in the End Times. A hard-hitting commentary on how Christians are to respond to the decay of society and the increasing apostasy within the Church. The book is full of practical guidelines for overcoming paganism and living a triumphant daily life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

263 pages. \$10.



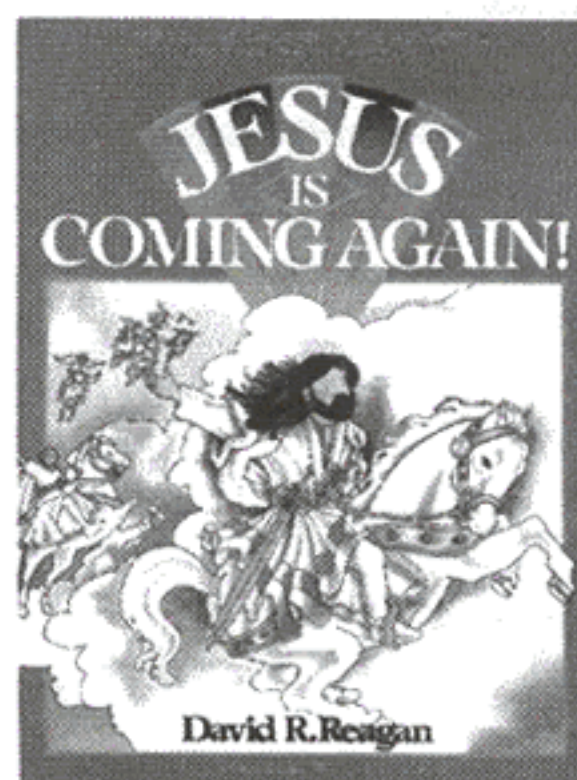
God's Plan for the Ages. Dr. Reagan's newest book. It provides an overview of every aspect of Bible prophecy regarding both the First and Second Comings of the Messiah, with a special emphasis on end time prophecies. Contains 42 in-depth chapters and several charts and diagrams.

415 pages. \$15.



The Christ in Prophecy Study Guide. Lists in chronological order all the prophecies in the Bible concerning both the First and Second Advents of the Messiah. Represents seven years of research. Printed in a large format (8½ by 11") and spiral bound. Provides both topical and scripture indexes.

150 pages. \$15.

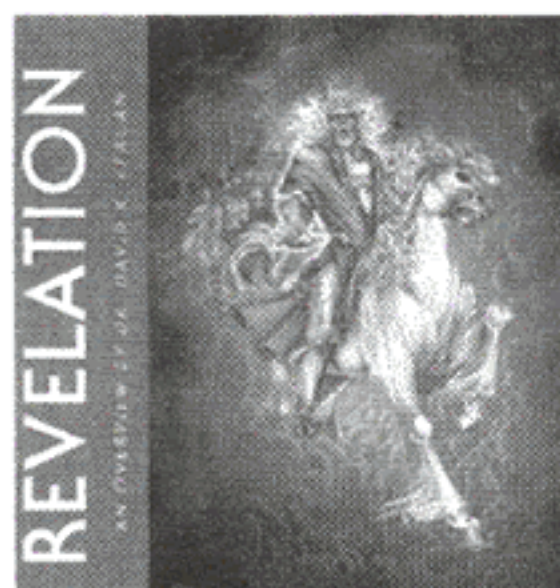


Jesus is Coming Again!

Dr. Reagan's book for children (pre-school and elementary). This is the only book ever published for children about end time prophecy. Beautifully illustrated in full color. Large format (8½ x 11"). Durable cover. Contains teaching tips for parents, together with a list of Scripture references.

28 pages. \$7.

Audio Program



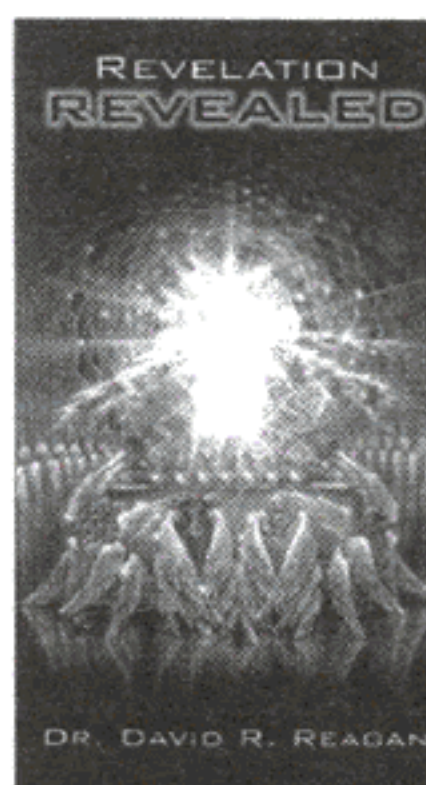
An Overview of Revelation. Dr. Reagan presents an in-depth survey of the book of Revelation, covering it verse by verse. Twelve audio tapes or 12 CDs in an album. \$36. A study guide is available to accompany the album. The cost of the guide is \$5. Our most popular study resource.

Video Programs

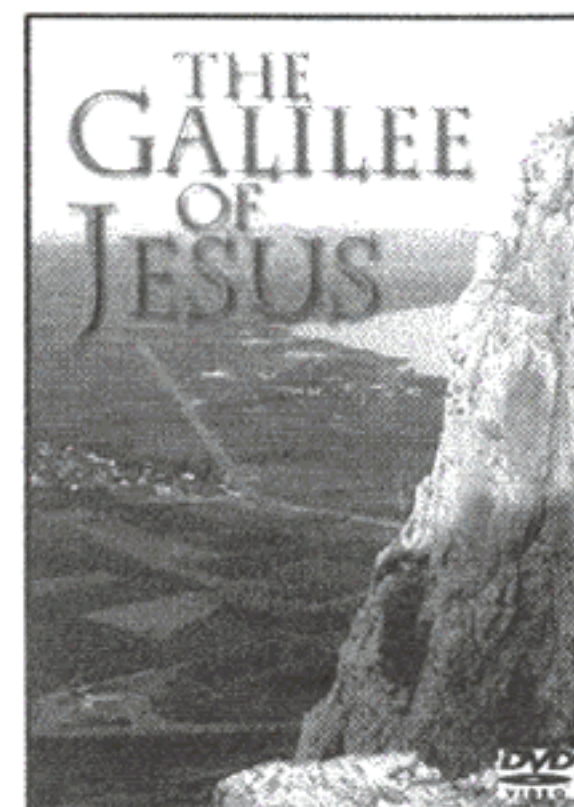
Israel in Bible Prophecy. An exciting survey of seven prophecies that are being fulfilled in Israel today, all of which point to the soon return of Jesus. The video was shot on location at various sites in Israel. Appropriate for both individual and group study. Shows how the Jews are the key to understanding end time prophecy. Contains significant historical footage. 65 minutes in length. VHS or DVD, \$15.



Revelation Revealed. Dr. Reagan presents a 75 minute overview of the entire book of Revelation, covering the book chapter by chapter. The video is rich with maps, charts, diagrams, still photos, animations, and video footage. Dr. Reagan clearly demonstrates that the book of Revelation can be understood and is relevant to Christian living here and now. Appropriate for individual or group study. VHS or DVD, \$15.



The Galilee of Jesus. Our newest video program. Contains four TV programs about the Galilee that have been edited together. The first is an introduction to the Galilee. The second focuses on Nazareth. The third is about the miracles of Jesus in the Galilee. The final segment investigates the Transfiguration, looking at where it occurred and what is its significance. DVD only, \$15.



All resource items listed on this page can be ordered by calling 1-800-705-8316, Monday through Friday, between 8:00am and 5:00pm, Central time. Or, they can be ordered from our website at www.lamblion.com. ☩

Ministry News



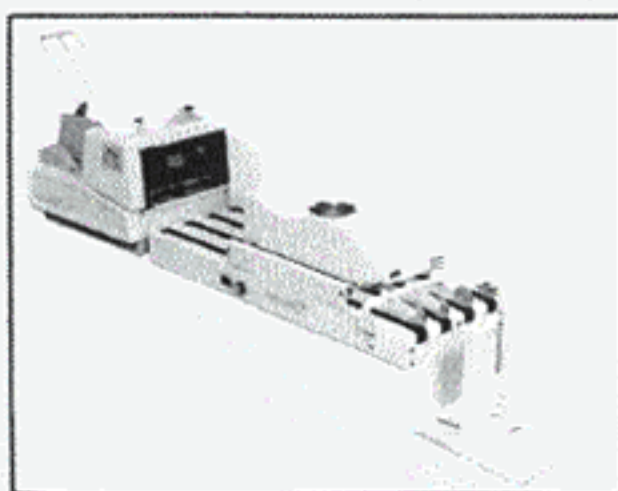
Meetings — In the month of **March** Dr. Reagan will be speaking at the Sylvan Oaks Christian Church in Citrus Heights, California (17-19). In **April** he will begin the month by giving three lectures at a prophecy conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma, sponsored by Thy Kingdom Come Ministries (5-8). He will present three pre-Easter sermons at White Water Christian Church in Noblesville, Indiana (12-14) before concluding the month by leading a pilgrimage to Israel (April 21 through May 2). In **May** Dr. Reagan is scheduled to speak at the Stealing the Mind conference that will be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (20).

Cruise — Dr. Reagan has been asked to serve as one of the guest speakers on the Biblelands 2006 Cruise that is sponsored yearly by Compass Ministries, the sponsors of the Stealing the Mind conferences. Other speakers will include Ed Hindson, Kent Hovind, and the best-selling novelist, Frank Peretti. Dr. Reagan's group will depart the States On October 31st. They will fly to Athens, Greece where they will spend one full day touring. They will then board the cruise ship Perla and sail to Eastern Turkey



to visit the ancient city of Ephesus. The next stop will be the Isle of Patmos where John wrote the book of Revelation. During the sailing time from Patmos to Egypt, there will be an onboard prophecy conference. In Egypt the group will visit the pyramids. From Egypt they will proceed to the Israeli port of Haifa, and from there, they will tour the Galilee, visiting cities like Nazareth, Capernaum, and Tiberias. The next day they will tour Jerusalem. While sailing back to Athens, a second Bible study conference will be held onboard. The group is scheduled to arrive back in the States on November 9th. For a detailed brochure, call 1-800-705-8316.

Mailing System — We are trying to raise sufficient funds to enable us to purchase a computerized mailing system to handle the mailing of this magazine. This system would save us many



man hours because the entire processing of the magazine is now done by hand. The system sells for \$12,500. We have thus far raised half that amount. Please consider a special donation to help us purchase this system. Thank you!



Communications

Book — “I just finished reading your book, *Trusting God*. Thank you for being so open and honest and for giving so many practical tips about how to live by faith.” — Terry L. Dean of Broken Arrow, OK.

Lecture — “Dr. Reagan: I just had the privilege of hearing you for the first time at the Stealing the Mind conference in Idaho. WOW! Israel had always been on my heart, but now it is there in a new meaningful way. Quite simply, YOU ROCK! (And I am certain it is because you stand on “The Rock.”). Your ministry is a tremendous blessing of truth.” — Matthew Morton of Ellensburg, Washington.

Prophecy Partner Materials — “I use your magazine articles as guides for preparing my Sunday School lessons. Recently I showed your DVD interview of White House correspondent Bill Koenig. Thank you for all the special materials you send to your Prophecy Partners. I plan to continue supporting your ministry financially. God bless you.” — Charles E. Jones, Jr. of Roanoke, Virginia.



An Explanation — Because we are a media ministry, we receive literally thousands of communications each week by letter, email, and telephone. We praise God for each one, but we want you to understand that it would be impossible for Dr. Reagan to read all these communications, much less respond to each one. The staff handles the vast majority of them. Dr. Reagan is given only those that necessitate a response from him, although some

items are passed along to him for his review as representative of opinions received on a particular issue.

General Ministry & TV — “I’ve been a follower and supporter of your ministry since the early 1980’s when Dr. Reagan would preach at homecoming meetings at my church in Gallatin, Tennessee. Although my spiritual foundations at that time were shaky at best, Dr. Reagan’s teachings lit a fire in my soul that has burned to this day and helped sustain my faith in the darkest hours. I KNOW my Lord is returning soon, and we’ll see Him in all His glory. I now have the joy of watching your TV program on the DayStar Network with my children and teaching them about the soon return of Jesus.” — Jim Kedsle of Richardson, Texas.

Magazine — “What a wonderful blessing to receive the latest *Lamplighter* in the mail today at my new home here in Israel. Wow, it is a great issue (on Hurricane Katrina and the Gaza pullout). Keep up the good work. You are doing so well, and I pray more of God’s blessing on your wonderful ministry.” — Clarence Wagner, former director of the ministry, Bridges for Peace, located in Jerusalem. ✝

A Challenging Book

Most contemporary Christians acknowledge the doctrine of Hell, but they would rather not think about how God punishes unrepentant sinners. The authors of *Four Views on Hell* meet this subject head-on with different views on what the Scriptures say.

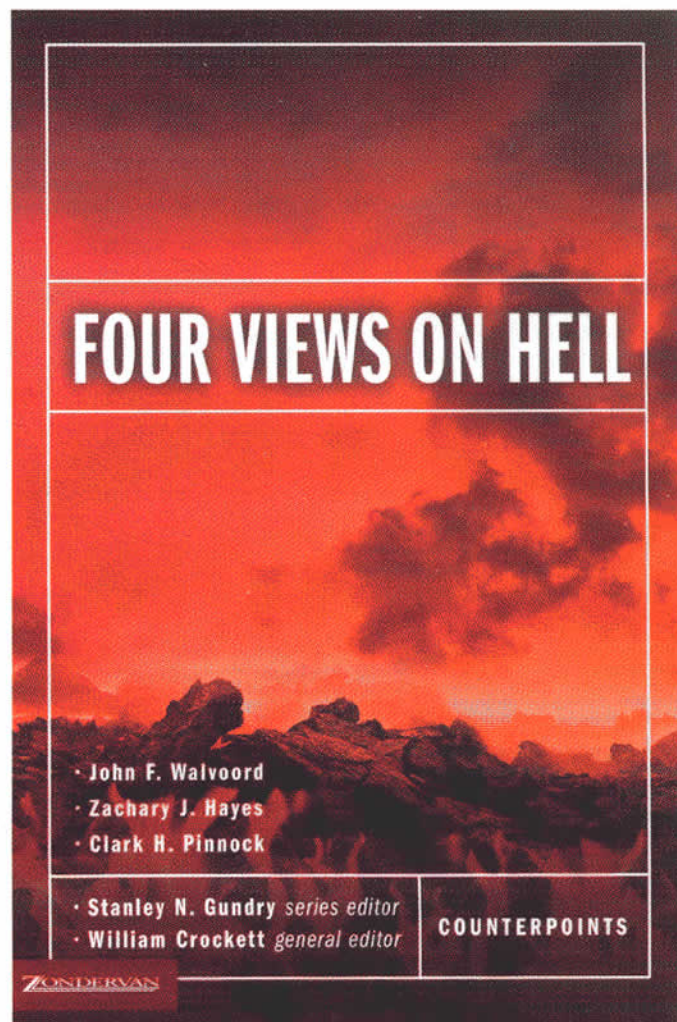
Is Hell to be understood literally as a place of eternal smoke and flames? Or, are such images simply metaphors for a real but different form of punishment? Is there such a thing as “conditional immortality” in which God annihilates the souls of the wicked rather than punishing them endlessly? Is there a Purgatory, and if so, how does it fit into the picture?

Four distinguished theologians present the different viewpoints in a down-to-earth conversational manner that is easy to understand:

- **John F. Walvoord** — Traditional View
- **William V. Crockett** — Metaphorical View
- **Zachary J. Hayes** — Purgatorial View
- **Clark H. Pinnock** — Conditional View

One of the really neat things about this fascinating book is that each of the authors write a brief response to each of the major essays. Thus, for example, at the end of John Walvoord’s major article there are three brief responses by the other authors. This format enables the reader to see the strengths and weaknesses of each viewpoint.

Those who have always wondered about the nature of Hell will find the differing perspectives interesting and informative. Although the authors differ sharply on some points, they do so in a congenial spirit, with hope that the arguments in this book will help readers agree that God is not pleased



with disobedience and has appointed a day to judge the peoples of the world.

The book runs 190 pages in length. It contains a subject index and a very detailed scripture index. The book sells for \$15.

To order, call **1-800-705-8316**. Call between 8am and 5pm Central time, Monday through Friday. And consider ordering an extra copy for your church library or your pastor. ✚



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