

The Robison Reminder

Robison Street church of Christ
Edna, Texas

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Are There Levels of Punishment in Hell?

by Heath Rogers

“For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire’” (2 Peter 2:20-22).

Our text naturally gives rise to a question regarding the eternal fate of those who are lost. Peter says that if one who has been saved (one who has escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ) turns back to the world, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. In the beginning they were lost. How can one be worse than lost? The fiery torments of Hell will be bad enough! Is there a part of Hell that burns a little hotter than the rest of Hell? Are there compartments in Hell, and somehow the life that we live upon this earth determines, not only if we are saved or lost, but also how “lost” we will be?

The Scriptures do not teach such a doctrine. Heaven is Heaven, and Hell is Hell. One can not find a single passage that teaches that there are different levels to be experienced by man as either an eternal reward or a punishment. So, how are we to understand Peter’s statement – “*the latter end is worse for them than the beginning*”?

I believe the next verse sheds light on the matter and helps us have the proper understanding. Peter goes on to say, “*For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.*” Their torment is made worse because of what they **know**. It will be one thing for a sinner who never rendered any thought or obedience to the gospel to spend eternity in Hell. However, think of the torment that will be experienced by one who spends eternity in Hell knowing that he **did not have to go there**. There was a time in his life when he was saved. He was cleansed from his sin, but he willingly turned away from the truth

and now must suffer eternally for that choice. If only he had died while he was faithful! If only someone had hung a millstone around his neck and drowned him in the sea (Matt. 18:6), then he would have escaped this torment! However, he had the truth and, for some reason, walked away from it, preferring to wallow in the mire of sin rather than sanctifying himself and striving to enter into his rest. Hell will be bad enough, but for such a person as this, it will have been better for him if he had never learned the truth than for him to spend eternity regretting his unfaithfulness.

Contrary to popular opinion, the Bible contains numerous warnings against the possibility of apostasy (falling away).

- “*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*” (1 Cor. 10:12).
- “*You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace*” (Gal. 5:4).
- “*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*” (Heb. 3:12-13).
- “*Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins*” (James 5:19-20).

The Bible makes it clear that a saved individual can lose their salvation. Such a person will suffer an eternal fate which will be worse than one who never learned or obeyed the truth. This is not because they are cast into a hotter section of Hell, but because they must live with the fact that they, for whatever reason, forfeited their gift of eternal life. Let us resolve to be faithful until death, and then we will receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

What Can I Do?

by Heath Rogers

Sometimes brethren feel like there is not much that they can do in the Lord's work. Sometimes they look at themselves and only see limitations: lack of finances, lack of formal education, inability to speak before groups, old age, lack of experience, poor health, etc.

The practical book of James tells us that there is much that all of us can do, if we will just do it! Read through the short epistle again, and look for the simple little commands that are given to all of us. What can I do? I can...

- Face my trials with joy (1:2).
- Pray for wisdom (1:5).
- Understand how temptation works, and overcome it (1:12-15).
- Thank God for every good and perfect gift (1:17).
- Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath (1:19).
- Receive the word of God with meekness (1:21).
- Be a doer of the word, and not a hearer only (1:22-26).
- Help those in need (1:27, 2:15-16).
- Keep myself unspotted from the world (1:27).
- Be impartial in my dealings with others (2:1).
- Treat all visitors with love and respect (2:2-9).
- Show mercy to others (2:13).
- Perfect my faith with my works (2:14-26).
- Control my tongue (3:1-12).
- Show my meekness and wisdom in my good conduct (3:13).
- Sow the fruit of righteousness in peace (3:18).
- Stop seeking friendship with the world (4:4).
- Draw near to God and humble myself in His sight (4:8-10).
- Stop judging, speaking evil of, and grumbling against my brethren (4:11-12, 5:9).
- Realize the frailty and uncertainty of life (4:13-16).
- Do what I know I ought to do, lest I sin (4:17).
- Remember that all sin will be punished by God (5:1-6).
- Be patient (5:7-11).
- Be a person of my word (5:12).
- Pray when I am suffering, sing when I am cheerful (5:13).
- Let others know when I am sick (5:14).
- Pray for others (5:16).
- Restore erring brethren (5:19-20).

News and Notes



Joann Smith came forward on Wednesday night, expressing her desire to be restored to the Lord and His church. We are thankful to God for her decision. Please make the addition to your church directory, and continue to be a source of encouragement to her.

Wayne Johnson is scheduled for cataract surgery on Monday.

Wayne Haney, the son of Kenneth and Jo Haney, will receive treatments for mouth cancer beginning this Wednesday in Houston. The treatments will last five days. Jo Haney will be with him during that time.

There is a gospel singing at Southbrooke this afternoon at 3:00.

Keep our shut-ins in your thoughts and prayers.

Stonewall Jackson, Wayne Johnson, Tommy Smith, Jason Thompson, Herman Villarreal and Marie Wilkerson.

**Robison Street
church of Christ**

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website

www.ykc.com/cofc/

Times of Services

- Sunday -

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Morning 10:30 AM

Evening 6:00 PM

- Wednesday -

Bible Study 7:30 PM

elders:

Sherrel Mercer - 782-5678

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