

Introduction:

A cover article in major news magazine reports that 64% of Americans believe in reality of hell. Yet it is rarely mentioned in many churches. We know that the first emphasis in Jesus' preaching was on God's goodness & love. But He was not embarrassed to warn of the reality and dreadfulness of the final state of the lost. In 11 texts, we find Jesus referring to hell – so we need to consider His teaching about divine justice. Jesus taught that actions have consequences & that there will be a reckoning for every sin (Mt. 16:27). The road we choose through life will terminate in life or destruction. But will hell last forever?

I. What is the doctrine of annihilation?

- A. Annihilationism or conditionalism states that the sentence of hell will not be eternal.
 - 1. After a period of time (that God determines) when fitting punishment is dealt out, the condemned soul will be utterly destroyed – i.e., wiped out of existence entirely.
- B. Conditionalists rely heavily on OT passages.
 - 1. Psa. 9; 21:4-10; 49:8-20; 58:7-8; Pro. 2:21-22; 10:25; 12:7
- B. Annihilationists emphasize scriptures referring to hell as the 2nd death.
 - 1. Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14, 21:8; Rom. 6:23

II. Arguments made in favor of this doctrine:

- A. *Hell is inconsistent with the nature of God – it goes against His goodness, kindness, and mercy.* Titus 3:3-5 – God is good, kind, and merciful.
 - 1. Deut. 32:4; Isa. 45:21; Hos. 14:9; 1 John 1:9 – God is also just.
 - 2. **Without justice, there is no mercy!**
- B. *The punishment of hell is disproportionate to the sin for which it is inflicted.*
- C. *Hell reflects on the wisdom of God, since it involves His whole creation in an awful failure.*
 - 1. We may not have all the answers...Rom. 11:33; Psa. 145:3; 36:6; Deut 29:29
- D. Hell is where men always die, yet never die, never live, but always live.

III. Descriptions of hell indicating conscious torment.

- A. It is a place of outer darkness. Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; 2 Pet. 2:17; Jude 13
 - 1. This darkness is a darkness of gloom & utter loneliness.
- B. There will be weeping & gnashing of teeth. Mt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51
 - 1. This describes the intense mental anguish of utter sorrow and regret.
 - 2. Eternity is designed for the wicked that they cannot forget their rejection of God.
- C. It is eternal punishment – Mt. 25:41, 46; Rev. 20:10
- D. Rom. 2:6-11 – indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish
 - 1. How can this happen to unconscious, non-existent people?
- E. It is an unquenchable fire. Mt. 13:42, 50 – Jesus called hell a furnace of fire.
 - 1. Mk. 9:43-48 - an unquenchable fire.
 - 2. Mk. 9:43-48 – *where the worm does not die...*
 - a) Reference to Isa. 66:24
 - b) The fire & the eating worm never accomplish the annihilation of those who are in hell.
- F. Rev. 14:9-11
 - 1. Contrast 14:11 w/14:13. The contrast is on “rest.”
 - 2. This proves that the lost endure continual, unceasing, conscious torment.

Conclusion:

- A. People are conscious after they die.
- B. One cannot torment an unconscious, non-existent person.
- C. Do what you must to get to heaven.