

Short Answer Series # 24

Does a sinner suffer in Hell for Eternity?

'And if your hand offend you, cut it off: it is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched.' Mark 9v43. What is Hell? Is it a place where Devils run around, tormenting the Lost with pitchforks, as cartoons suggest? The Word Hell in the verse above, is translated from the Greek word 'Gehenna,' which is the Valley of Hinnom, on the outskirts of Jerusalem, where the carcasses of animals, rubbish, and the bodies of criminals, were burnt, and the fire continually burned. Hell, (Translated from the Greek Hades, the Unseen World, in other places,) is a prison, where the lost are kept in darkness, until the Great White Throne Judgement of Revelation 20v11-15. God is a Righteous Judge, (2 Timothy 4v8,) and He will not condemn anyone, until their Soul, from Hell, has been united with their resurrected body, (Revelations 20v13,) and they are given a fair trial.

'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.' (Revelations 20v12-13.) 'Death and Hell delivered up the dead which were in them,' means, those who had died without God, and were in Hell awaiting Judgement.

Who will judge them? 'For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgement to the Son.' (John 5v22.) So, will Jesus judge everyone Himself? 'Do you not know that the Saints shall judge the world?' (1 Corinthians 6v2.) We will judge them. 'Know you not that we shall judge Angels.' (1 Corinthians 6v3.) These are fallen Angels, or Demons as we call them.

All the lost, will be judged fairly according to their works. But, because they rejected the free Salvation, and Eternal life offered to them on earth, they will be condemned. Their works will only prove they rejected it. So, what is their sentence? Will they be tormented for Eternity? No, they cannot be tormented for Eternity, because they would have to have Eternal life to do so. Again, God is the Righteous Judge. His edict is, that the punishment fit the crime. Under the Mosaic Law the punishment was, '...life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth,' (Exodus 21v23.) No one was allowed to exact any more punishment from anyone, than what their crime deserved. It could not be excessive.

'And death and Hell were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire.' (Revelations 20 v14-15. The death of the body on earth is the 'First' death. 'And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgement. (Hebrews 9v27.) 'Death and Hell were cast into the Lake of Fire.' That does not mean death and Hell themselves, but those who had died unsaved, and been kept in Hell, and were now condemned.

How long will they be in the Lake of Fire? Five seconds, or a hundred years? Nobody knows. But, the Lake of Fire is the 'Second' death. The death of the Soul, and the end of existence. Why did the Lord call it 'Everlasting Punishment.' Because, it is everlasting, in that there is no coming back from it. It is final!

'Then shall He say also to them on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' (Matthew 25v41.) The Lake of Fire was not prepared for Mankind, it was prepared for Satan, and the Fallen Angels.

We are all given Free-will, and the chance to accept His gift of Eternal life. No-one should be so busy during their lifetime, that they never take the time to find out about it. We all have the same amount of hours in the day, so, no one will have an excuse, but millions will have regrets.