

WEEK #5 THE ROAD TO THE CROSS – next stop = Just Punishment!

KEY TRUTH THIS WEEK: Hell is reasonable and deserved based on crimes against God.

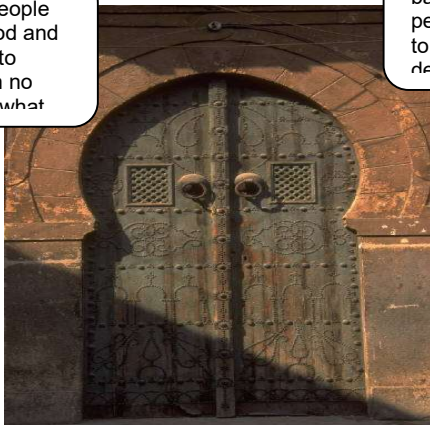
Consider this – Why do we think that our sins are not so bad? We have bad thinking...

Most people think this...

HEAVEN

Most people are good and will go to heaven no matter what

Only really bad and evil people will go to hell – they deserve it



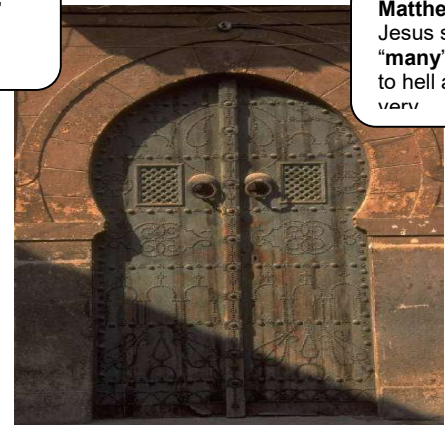
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God says this...

HELL

John 10:9 Jesus said, "I am the Door" and few find

Matthew 7:13 Jesus said, "many" will go to hell and be very



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Matthew 7:13-14 – Enter ye in at the *strait* gate:

for *wide* is the gate, and *broad* is the way, ***that leadeth to destruction***, and ***many there be which go in thereat:***

Because *strait* is the gate, and *narrow* is the way, ***which leadeth unto life***, and ***few there be that find it***.

Matthew 7:21-23 – Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. *Many* will say to me *in that day*, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*****

Most people think this...

HEAVEN

I am a good person and my god does not "do" hell.



I deserve heaven – considering my own righteousness...

God says this...

HELL

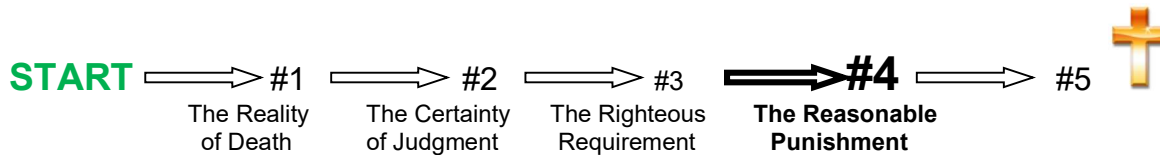
The demands of justice must be met for law breakers.



Quick test... Say this out loud..."I really deserve hell."

I deserve hell – considering my unrighteousness...

LANDMARK #4: The *Reasonable* and Just Punishment – Hell!



1) The Reasonableness and Existence Hell

The existence of hell and the surety of the judgment are not the claims of fallible man. The Bible is the source of the claim, and it is utterly infallible. When someone becomes a Christian, he is admitting that he was in the wrong, and that God is justified in His declarations that we have sinned against Him.

What if someone says, “*Well, I don’t believe in hell*”...?

Well, tell them, if you are right, the good news is that you won’t know anything after you die. It will be the end. No heaven, no hell. Just nothing. You won’t even realize that it is good news. **However, the bad news for them is that if the Bible is right and there is eternal justice**, then they will find themselves standing before the judgment throne of a holy God. Think about it. A holy and perfect Creator has seen your thought-life and every secret sin you have ever committed. You have a multitude of sins, and **God must by nature carry out justice**. Ask Him to remind you of the sins of your youth. Ask Him to bring to remembrance your secret sexual sins, the lies, the gossip, and other idle words. You may have forgotten your past sins, but God hasn’t. Hell will be your just punishment – exactly what you deserve – and you will have no one to blame but yourself. This is the claim of the Bible. If you do not believe it, it is still **TRUE**. It will still happen. What matters is what is true, not what you believe!

Yet there is good news – incredibly good news. **We deserve judgment, but God offers us mercy through the cross**. He paid our fine so that we could leave the courtroom. He destroyed the power of the grave for all who obey Him. Simply obey the gospel, and live.

Some who are enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season will brush off thoughts of God’s eternal justice by joking, “I don’t mind going to hell. All my friends will be there.” Obviously, those who flippantly say such things don’t believe in the biblical concept of hell. They are like a slow-witted criminal who thinks that the electric chair is a place to put up his feet for a while and relax. **Their understanding of the nature of God is erroneous, so it may be wise to speak for a few moments about the reasonableness of hell**. Explain that the Bible tells us that God will punish murderers and rapists, and the place of punishment – the “**PRISON**” God will send them to – is a place called “hell.” **However, God is so good, He will also punish** thieves, liars, adulterers, fornicators, and blasphemers. He will even punish those who **desired** to murder or rape but never took the opportunity. He warns that if we **hate** someone, we commit murder in our hearts. If we **lust**, we commit adultery in the heart, etc. All are sins that will send us to hell.

C.S. Lewis summed up all the terrors of hell when he said, “*There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than the doctrine of hell, if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture and, especially, of our Lord’s own words; it has always been held by the Christian Church, and it has the support of reason.*”

Take the time to tell people of the **REALITY** of hell and its biblical description. Some sinners like to picture hell as a fun, hedonistic, pleasure-filled place where they can engage in all the sensual sins that are forbidden here. Others accept that hell is a place of punishment, but believe that the punishment is to be annihilated – to cease conscious existence. **Because they can't conceive that a loving God would punish people in eternal torment**, they believe hell is just a metaphor for the grave.

While it is true that **God is love** (1 John 4:8), **He is also just** (Neh 9:32-33; 2 Thess 1:6) and **eternal** (Psalm 90:2; 1 Tim 1:17). God will therefore punish the evil doer (Isa 13:11) and this punishment will be eternal. It will also be conscious. Scripture tells us of the rich man who found himself in hell (Luke 16:19-31). He was conscious and was able to feel pain, to thirst, and to experience remorse. He wasn't asleep in the grave; he was in a place of "torment."

Luke 16:23 – And *in hell* he lift up his eyes, *being in torments*, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

We tend to forget what pain is like when we don't have it. Can you imagine how terrible it would be to be in agony, with no hope of relief? Many human beings go insane if they are merely isolated for a long time from other people. Imagine how terrible it would be if God simply withdrew all the things we hold so dear – friendship, love, color, light, peace, joy, laughter. Hell isn't just a place with an absence of God's blessings; it is punishment for sin. It is literal torment, forever. That is why the Bible **WARNS** that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!!

Heb 10:31 – *It is a fearful thing* to fall into the hands of the living God.

The fate of the unsaved is described with such fearful words as the following:

- "Shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2)

Daniel 12:2 – And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and *some to shame and everlasting contempt*.

- "Everlasting punishment" (Matt 25:46)

Matt 25:46 – And these shall go away into *everlasting punishment*: but the righteous into life eternal.

- "Weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 24:51)

Matt 24:51 – And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be *weeping and gnashing of teeth*.

- "Fire unquenchable" (Luke 3:17)

Luke 3:17 – Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn *with fire unquenchable*.

- "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish" (Rom 2:8,9)

Rom 2:8-9 – But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, *indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish*, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

- “Punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” (2 Thess 1:9)

2 Thess 1:9 – Who *shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*, and from the glory of his power;

- “Eternal fire...the blackness of darkness for ever” (Jude 7, 13)

Jude 7:3, 13 – Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, *suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*...Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved *the blackness of darkness for ever*.

Scripture is quite clear: hell is a **REAL** place. It is not mere unconsciousness.

It is not temporal. It is eternal **TORMENT**.

If hell is a place of knowing nothing or a reference to the grave into which we go at death, Jesus’ statements about hell make no sense. He said that if your hand, foot or eye cause you to sin, it would be better to remove it than to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (Mark 9:43-48)

Back to our story from last week...

Here is how to use the Divine Law (the Ten Commandments) as an evangelistic tool when speaking to an unsaved person:

- The Bible says that on Judgment Day, God will judge every person according to His perfect standard of righteousness.
- God has given us a simple way to know what that standard is – we know it as the Ten Commandments.

NOTE God has also written His perfect standard on the heart of all people and has given every person a conscience which will testify of what is right and wrong.

- Let me ask you a question...have you ever told a lie?
- **ANSWER: Yes**
- What does that make you?
- **ANSWER: A liar**
- Have you ever stolen anything...regardless of its value...or cheated on a test?
- **ANSWER: Yes**
- What do you call someone who steals stuff?
- **ANSWER: A thief** (not a “stealer”...that is someone who plays football in Pittsburgh)
- Have you ever used God’s name as a curse word...or said OMG?
- **ANSWER: Yes**

- The Bible calls that **blasphemy**. Do you know what you are doing? You are taking the name of the Creator who has given you life and breath...and you are using it as a filthy word to express disgust. If you used my mom's name as a curse word, how do you think that would make me feel? How much more God the Righteous Judge.
- Jesus said that if you look with lust upon another person, you have committed **adultery** in your heart. Have you ever **looked with lust**?
- **ANSWER: Yes**
- John, **by your own admission**, you are a **lying, thieving, blaspheming, adulterer** at heart (and we have only looked at 4 of the Ten Commandments) and you are going to have to face God on Judgment Day.
- John, **when YOU** face God on Judgment day and He judges **YOU** based on the Ten Commandments, will **YOU** be **INNOCENT** or **GUILTY** of breaking God's Law?
- **ANSWER: Guilty**

NOTE There are only 2 options for this most important question. If they say, "Innocent" then you know with certainty now that they have not seen their crimes before a holy God. At that point I will say, "Why is that? Because you think God is good and will overlook your sin?" To this they normally say, "Yes, that's it." If so, take them to the courtroom and see how that works in a court of law in our city. Does a "good" judge overlook the crimes of a man accused of rape and murder because he says he is sorry and asks the judge to forgive him? No. If the judge is good, he must punish the guilty criminal for his crimes. How much more the God and Judge of the universe for crimes against Him!!

CONTINUED...

- ✓ So, will you go to Heaven or hell?
- ✓ **ANSWER: Hell**

NOTE If they say, "Heaven" then see the previous note because although they have admitted to their guilty sentence (having no doubt been reproved by the Holy Spirit and having their conscience bear witness to their guilt), they are thinking that their own righteousness can somehow get them into Heaven. Not so, **unless you have God's righteousness on that Day**, you will be found wanting and will end up like those in Matthew 7:21-23 who thought that they were saved and were cast into hell.

- ✓ Does that concern you?
- ✓ **ANSWER: Yes**

NOTE If they say, "No" then tell them that it sure ought to. Remind them that it does not matter what you believe. What matters is what is true! Tell them you will pray for them and be sure to leave them with at least a tract or something to consider.

- ✓ Do you know what God did for you so that you would not have to take the punishment you deserve on Judgment Day and be cast into hell and then the lake of fire for all eternity?

NEXT WEEK: The most **Amazing Grace** that ever did come to planet earth!!!