

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About...

Hell and Judgment

There are those who believe that Hell will not be a place of eternal punishment and fire. The word of God says when Jesus returns (Acts 1:11) in the air, He "will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire," (2 Thess. 1:7). He will bring "with Him those who have fallen asleep [dead saints] in Jesus," (1 Thess. 4:14). These saints, who will return with Jesus, have already been judged (Heb. 9:27) and have been counted as worthy, (Col. 1:10-12). Those who are physically alive when Jesus returns "will be caught up together with them [dead saints] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air," (1 Thess. 4:17). Jesus will, at this time, "deal out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not OBEY the gospel of our Lord Jesus." These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power (2 Thess. 1:8-9). Jesus described this judgment scene for the righteous and the wicked who are alive at His return (Matt. 25:32-46). To the wicked He states, "Depart from Me accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels...And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life," (Matt. 25:41, 46).

We should note three things in these verses: (1) the wicked are sent into "eternal fire", (2) that fire is prepared for the devil and his angels, (3) it is eternal punishment. Therefore, Hell is not temporary but is eternal. Eternal punishment is constantly described as a fire, and a fire that causes unceasing pain. "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth...And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day or night... 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...And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire," (Matt. 13:42; Rev. 14:11, 20:10,15).

Jesus said, "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire...Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who DOES THE WILL of My Father who is in heaven will enter," (Matt. 7:19,21). God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:3-4), He doesn't want any to perish (2 Pet. 3:9). But when people reject the salvation that God freely offers in Jesus Christ, there will be eternal consequences.