

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT

“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” (I Corinthians 5:10). Every soul is accountable to God, and the heavenly Father “has committed all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22). Jesus Christ possesses authority and power to execute judgment because He is the Son of God.

The gospel warns all men that the wrath of God will be poured out upon disobedience and evil. Knowing the Lord will judge character and conduct, everyone should be taking heed to what is revealed because he will be judged by the Lord’s word (cf. John 12:48). Damnation is not a joking matter, nor a meaningless phrase blurted out at an emotional moment. Divine revelation describes the gravity of condemnation.

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back, and when He does He will take vengeance “on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel” (II Thessalonians 1:8). “These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” (v. 9). The disobedient will be punished. Their punishment is in a place called hell (cf. Matthew 18:9; 23:33). Hell’s fire is depicted as a “lake of fire and brimstone” where the damned are “tormented day and night” (Revelation 20:10; 21:8). Therefore, “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

When the Lord Jesus pronounces the sentence of condemnation, all those who practice the works of the flesh and lawlessness will be “cast out into outer darkness” where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (cf. Matthew 8:12; 25:30). Wherever God is, light exists. In heaven there is no need for the sun or lamps because God gives light to all those are with Him (cf. Revelation 22:5). In contrast, the punishment of hell is being separated from the Lord’s presence and glory (cf. II Thessalonians 1:9). Absolute darkness is in hell because God does not dwell there. That is a sobering thought.

Like the joys of heaven, the torment and darkness of hell are eternal. The Scriptures do not say that the condemned cease to exist, but rather, they suffer “everlasting punishment” (Matthew 25:46) in hell “forever and ever” (Revelation 20:10). The coming judgment on that great day is an eternal judgment (cf. Hebrews 6:2; Jude 6). In Christ is eternal life, and by His blood, sinners can be saved from the wrath to come, if they will believe and obey Him.