

The case against Hell: Did you know that there is a solid scriptural case to be made against the idea of Hell? Many non-Christians have rejected the concept of Hell, but it may come as a surprise to learn that there is a growing number of Bible-believing Christians who also reject the notion-not in spite of Scripture but because of it! This short study is meant only to raise some questions and provide brief answers. For further study, please refer to the links at the end of the article.

An open and unbiased study of the Bible, including many key Greek and Hebrew words as well as Church history will reveal some surprising things.

For instance, did you know that....

"Hell" Is Not an Old Testament doctrine:

Popular myth : **Hell is an established Biblical doctrine that is in the Bible from start to finish.** This is not true! Two thirds of the Bible (the Old Testament) does not mention Hell at all. ("Sheol," the Old Testament word that is sometimes translated as Hell, only means "grave" by definition, and it is where everyone in the Old Testament went when they died--good or evil, Jew or Gentile). Thus the Old Testament does not contain the concept of Hell!

Think about it...

If Hell is real, why didn't God make that warning plain right at the beginning of the Bible? God said the penalty for eating of the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was death- -not "eternal life" in fire and brimstone.

If Hell is real, why wasn't Cain warned about it, or Sodom and Gomorrah , or any of those who committed the earliest recorded "sins?"

If Hell is real why didn't Moses warn about this fate in the Ten Commandments or the Mosaic Covenant consisting of over 600 laws, ordinances, and warnings? The Mosaic Law simply stated blessings and cursings in this lifetime.

If Hell is real, why are its roots in paganism, rather than the Bible? Many nations surrounding Israel in the Old Testament believed in Hell-like punishment in the afterlife, for they served bloodthirsty and evil "gods," while Israel simply taught the grave (sheol) and a hope of a resurrection. If Hell is real, why was the revelation of it first given to pagan nations, instead of God's covenant people? Did God expect Israel to learn about the afterlife from the Pagan Gentiles? If so, why did He repeatedly warn Israel to **not** learn of their ways?

If Hell is real, why did God tell the Jews that burning their children alive in the fire to the false god Molech, (in the valley of Gehenna) was so detestable to Him? God said that such a thing "never even entered His mind" (Jer. 32:35). How could God say such a thing

to Israel , if He has plans to burn alive a good majority of His own creation in a spiritual and eternal Gehenna of His own making?

****FACT:** The King James Bible erroneously translates the word "Sheol" as Hell a total of 31 times in the Old Testament, thus setting a foundation for that doctrine in the New Testament as well as the majority of Bible translations to follow the KJV. Even so, most new translations have completely eliminated Hell from the Old Testament, as honest and better scholarship has demanded. The Jewish version of the Old Testament (the Tanakh) has no concept of Hell in it. The importance of this fact cannot be over-emphasized. If a doctrine does not appear as seed form in the books of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms, it cannot fairly be taught as a major biblical doctrine, if indeed it can be taught as biblical at all!

Hell Is Not a New Testament Doctrine:

Popular myth: **Jesus spoke of Hell more than He did of Heaven.** This is not true! Jesus warned the Jews many times of impending destruction, both nationally and individually. He used several different terms to refer to punishment/destruction, some of which were erroneously translated as the same word, "Hell" by Bible translators. We do not deny that God will indeed judge the whole world, nor do we wish to make light of His judgments. We are challenging the belief that His judgment on sin and unbelief is eternal torment/Hell and never-ending separation from God. Certainly, Jesus spent a lot of his ministry warning people to repent or reap the consequences, (particularly "Gehenna.") But could we be reading more into His warnings than He originally intended?

Think about it.....

If Hell is real, why were most of the warnings pertaining to punishment/Gehenna directed to Israel , particularly the Lord's own disciples as well as the Pharisees? The first great cluster of references to Gehenna, are found in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat 5:22, 29, 30), Jesus' great sermon to His disciples in which He warned that one was in danger of Gehenna for the likes of calling someone a fool. This is a far cry from our modern Evangelical interpretation that says not accepting Jesus as your Savior is what sends someone to Hell. Are we perhaps missing the symbolism that Jesus originally intended?

If Hell is real, aren't we taking verses out of context when we warn non-Jewish sinners who are not part of the Mosaic covenant God made with the nation of Israel about consequences for sin which have nothing to do with them since they are not under that covenant?

Since the concept of Hell doesn't exist in the Old Testament, how could Jesus and his disciples teach that salvation was deliverance from a place that is not even found in their Scriptures? And if He was introducing the subject for the first time, why did He do it so casually, as though His listeners already understood what He was talking about?

If Hell is real, since some English translations use the word Hell for the Greek word "Gehenna," in the New Testament, why didn't this same place (Gehenna) get translated Hell in the many places where it appears in the Hebrew form "ga ben Hinnom" in the Old Testament?

If the Jews did not understand "Gehenna" as a symbol of everlasting torture, but rather as a place of shame, filth, and defilement (where Israel participated in the grossest form of idol worship), why does modern theology ascribe more to the word than the original meaning did? The teaching of Gehenna has evolved in Jewish teachings to include punishment in the afterlife; but even today, Gehenna still does not mean "endless" punishment to the Jews.

If Hell is real how could the Apostle Paul (who was especially commissioned by God to preach the gospel to the nations) say that he had declared the entire counsel of God (Acts 20:27), when indeed he never warned of "Hell" in any of his letters? If Hell is real, wouldn't Paul, of all people, warn of it repeatedly?

If Hell is real, the sin/death of Adam has had a far more powerful effect on the world than the resurrection life of Christ! And yet Paul declares in Romans 5 that Christ's victory is far greater than Adam's transgression! Listen to Paul's confidence in the work of Christ! If Paul believed in eternal hell for the majority of men, how could he write the following verses?

"Just as the result of one trespass (Adam's) was condemnation for all men , so also the result of one act of righteousness (Christ's) was justification that brings life for all men . For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:18,19).

"Since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:22)

"For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe" (1 Timothy 4;10).

(The above verses are just a few of the many verses where Paul writes of a pre-eminent Christ that far transcends the traditional Christian view. This article is full of many more New Testament references by Paul that display his views of the Christ triumphant, unlimited, all-powerful, all-conquering, and victorious).

If Hell is real, why is it that the only time Paul even mentioned "Hell" in any of his epistles, was declare the triumph of Christ over it? (1 Corinthians 15:55). The word "Grave" in the passage is the Greek word "Hades."

If Hell is real, why is it not mentioned once in the book of Acts in any the evangelistic sermons that were recorded by the early Apostles?

If Hell is real why do some of the best Bible scholars and Bible teachers say it is not in the Greek or Hebrew text? (William Barclay, John A.T. Robinson, Lightfoot, Westcott, F.W. Farrar, Marvin Vincent, etc.)

If Hell is real, why does the word itself come from the Teutonic "Hele" (goddess of the underworld "Hell" of northern Europe). The description of this ancient mythological place has very little resemblance anymore to the modern Christian image of Hell. See any encyclopedia or dictionary for the origin of the word.

FACT: The apocryphal books of the intertestamental period had a tremendous impact on the Jews in the time of Christ. It is from these books, especially the book of Enoch, that many of the Jewish myths and fables concerning Hell, heaven, demons and angels and many other fables first became a part of Judaism and from there became a part of Christianity. The myths and fables of these books came from Pagan influences (namely Zoroastrianism), during and after the Babylonian captivity of Israel . In fact, Zoroastrianism looks more like modern Christianity in many ways than ancient Judaism does!

If Hell is real, why did Paul warn Timothy repeatedly to stay away from Jewish myths and fables, the likes of which were influencing many in the early church? Rather than affirming such doctrines, Paul declares them to be profane fables. (1 Tim. 1:1; Tit. 1:14)

Hell Contradicts The Work of the Messiah:

Popular myth: **Jesus came to save the sinner from his destination of everlasting Hell.** Not exactly true! Hell was never a place that the Jews were hoping to be saved from, since they didn't even believe in it! But they did need to be saved from their sins and consequences of them; namely death. Jesus came as the Anointed One to fulfill all of God's plan for the earth-that through Him might come the salvation, deliverance of sin, peace, kingdom of God and all that God had promised through the Old Testament scriptures. There is much we can say here, but for the sake of brevity we will limit our points to a few key passages. Please take the time to look up the verses that are referenced.

Think about it...

If Hell is real, why does Psalm 22 (one of the most prophetic passages in scripture concerning the Messiah) promise that because of the cross, " All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD , and all the families of the nations will worship before You. For the kingdom is the LORD'S and He rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship , all those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, even he who cannot keep his soul alive " (Psalm 22:27-29 NASB).

If Hell is real, did Jesus fail in His mission? He said, "I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world" (John 12:47).

If Hell is real and most find their way to it, was Jesus lying when He said if He was lifted up (crucified) that He would "draw" ("drag" in the original Greek word, "helkyo") all mankind unto Himself? (John 12:32)

If Hell is real and eternal, how can the Scriptures speak of the gathering of all things into Christ? (Eph. 1:10)

If Hell is real and eternal, how can all things be subdued unto Christ? (1 Corinthians 15:28, Philippians 3:21, Hebrews 2:8).

If Hell is real and eternal, how can it be that the scriptures promise that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord? (Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:10).

If Hell is real and eternal, how will Jesus ever see the travail of His soul and be satisfied (Isaiah 53:11)? If the traditional understanding is correct, most of those He came to save will never experience His salvation. Do we believe that this would be satisfying to Jesus?

If Hell is real, and God sent Jesus to save people from it, can we really say that the will and pleasure of God has prospered in His hand, since, according to traditional theology, only a few will ever be saved? (Isaiah 53:10, and 55:11).

If Hell is real, and the devil is the one who deceives people into going there, isn't he ultimately the winner in the war for souls? After all, traditional interpretation of the Bible says that more people will end up in Hell than in Heaven. If so, how can we really call Satan the defeated enemy and Christ the victor?

If Hell is real and most of mankind will remain in an eternal deathlike state of torment with no chance to repent or escape, how exactly are we to understand and rejoice in the fact that Jesus destroyed death and him that had the power of death (Satan)? (Hebrews 2:14-15, 1 John 3:8, Hosea 13:14, 1 Corinthians 15:55, 1 Corinthians 15:26 etc.)

If Hell is eternal, how can the increase of Christ's government and of peace have no end? (Isaiah 9:7).

FACT: The term "saved" has evolved in Christianity to mean something different than it did to the original readers and hearers of Scripture. The Greek words, "sozo" and "soteria" embrace the broad meaning of being rescued, delivered, healed and saved from danger. These words were applied in a variety of ways throughout the New Testament. There is much more to the salvation of Christ than most Christians know. Sadly, much of the church is robbed of fullness of their salvation by embracing a limited and futuristic view of what it actually means-- (i.e. "going to Heaven when they die").

Popular Myth: "Eternity" is a theme that is throughout the entire Bible, including eternal punishment. Not exactly true! We are not denying that the

New Testament is full of warnings of judgment, and that the words, "everlasting" and "eternal" appear often in most translations. However, a careful study of the words that are translated to mean forever or everlasting, will prove that they have been mistranslated. The question is not whether or not God will punish sin and rebellion, but rather how He does it, and for what purpose and how long the correction lasts.

Think about it..

If Hell is forever, why is the Hebrew word *Olam* (which has been translated to mean "eternal/forever") used in so many verses where it clearly does not mean "everlasting"? A few examples: "Everlasting" is applied to the priesthood of Aaron; to the statutes of Moses; to the mountains and hills; and to the doors of the Jewish temple, to the length of time that reproach and shame should be upon the Jews. The word "forever" is applied to the duration of man's earthly existence; to the time a child was to abide in the temple; to the continuance of Gehazi's leprosy; to the duration of a king's life; to the time a servant was to abide with his master; to the duration of the Jewish temple; to the time David was to be king over Israel; to the throne of Solomon; to the stones that were set up at Jordan; and to the time Jonah was in the fish's belly. It should be obvious from the context that *olam* merely referred to an indefinite period of time--not forever!

Aion and related words (*aionian* and *aionios*) are the Greek equivalents of *olam* . *Aion*, literally means "age," from which we get our English word, "eon." *Aion/age/eon*, is merely a period of time. "*Aionian* and *Aionios*" are words that refer to the ages (plural) or pertaining to the ages. As long as time is being measured, it cannot be referring to eternity, which is a realm beyond the measurement of time. If "Hell" is forever, why is it described by words that pertain to the ages?

If the Greek word *Aion* and its derivatives mean eternal as some Bible scholars insist, why did contemporary Greek usage of it, at the time the New Testament was written, not carry with it the idea of endless eternity? (Works by Plato, Aristotle, Homer, Hippocrates and many others use these words in a limited, not an eternal sense).

If Hell is forever, how do we explain the fact that *aion/olam* did not mean eternal/unending to the original writers and hearers of Scripture?

FACT: Some would argue that if **aionian** and related words do not mean eternal, then God cannot be eternal, for these words also describe Him. To this we say, that just because God is described as the God of the eons, does not mean that He is not the God who also transcends the eons. In the same way, just because He is called the God of Israel , does not also mean that He is not the God of all the other nations. Also, there are other Greek words used to refer to the unending power and life of God. They are, **aptharsia/apthartos**, which means imperishableness and immortality; **amarantinos/amarantos** which mean unfading; and **akatalytos** , which means indestructable. They are usually translated as immortal, or incorruptible. Please refer to the following verses for

reference: Hebrews 7:15-16, 1 Peter 1:3-4, 1 Peter 5:4, 1 Timothy 1:17, Romans 1:23, 1 Corinthians 9:25, 1 Corinthians 15:51-54, Romans 2:7, 1 Corinthians 15:42, 2 Timothy 1:10, and 1 Timothy 6:16.

Popular Myth: **One's fate is sealed after death.** If this is true, how do we deal with the following scriptures that indicate the opposite?

Think about it...

"Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But God does not take away life; instead, He devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him" (2 Samuel 14:14).

"The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave (sheol), and bringeth up." 1 Samuel 2: 6

"See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand" (Deuteronomy 32:39).

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave (Sheol/Hell); I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave (Sheol/Hell), I will be your destruction!" (Hosea 13:11-14).

"For men are not cast off by the Lord forever. Though He brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is His unfailing love. For He does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men. (Lam 3:31-33)

"Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny" (Matthew 5:25-26).

If Hell is a place of no escape, why did the early church teach Jesus went to Hell (Hades), preached to them and led captivity captive? (Eph. 4:8,9; Psalm 68:18; 1 Peter 3:18-20)

If Hell lasts forever, why does the Psalmist confidently speak again and again about being rescued from it (sheol)? (Psalms 16:10, 30:2-3, Psalm 49:15, 86:13, 116:3-8, 139:8).

If Hell is real, how can Solomon teach that the spirit of man will return to the God Who gave it? (Ecc 12:7).

If the grave settled the matter forever, why did the early Christians offer up prayers for the dead? Why were they baptized for the dead? (1 Corinthians 15:29).

"Hell" Was Not a Doctrine of the Early Church:

Popular myth: **Universalism was recently introduced to Christianity in the 1800's as the church became more liberal and modern and began to abandon their true biblical foundation.** This is not true! A belief in the restitution of all things was a standard view in the early church, held by the majority of early Christians. It has also been held by a minority throughout all of church history even during the Dark Ages.

Think about it..

If Hell was real, why did the first comparatively complete systematic statement of Christian doctrine ever given to the world by Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 180, contain the tenet of universal salvation?

If Hell was real, why did the first complete presentation of Christianity (Origen, 220 A.D.) contain the doctrine of universal salvation?

If Hell was real, why do neither the Apostles Creed, nor the Nicene Creed, two foundational "doctrinal statements" for the early church, contain the concept of Hell?

If Hell was real, why did Church leaders as late as the fourth century AD acknowledge that the majority of Christians believed in the salvation of all mankind?

If Hell was real why did the early church appoint an avowed universalist as the President of the second council of the church of Constantinople in the fourth century? (Gregory Nazianzen, 325-381).

If Hell was real why did not a single Church council for the first five hundred years condemn Universalism as heresy considering the fact that they made many declarations of heresy on other teachings?

If Hell was real why didn't Epiphanius (c. 315-403) the "hammer of heretics" who listed 80 heresies of his time not list universalism among those heresies?

If Hell was real, since most historians would acknowledge today that Origen was perhaps the most outstanding example of universalism in the church, when Methodius, Eusebius, Pamphilus, Marcellus, Eustathius, and Jerome made their lists of Origen's heresies, why wasn't universalism among them?

If Hell was real and found in the original Greek manuscripts of the Bible, why is it that it was primarily those church leaders who either couldn't read Greek (For example, Minucius Felix), or hated Greek as in the case of Augustine, that the doctrine of Hell was advocated? Those early church leaders familiar with the Greek and Hebrew (the original languages of the Bible) saw universal salvation in those texts. Those who advocated Hell got it from the Latin, not from the original Greek and Hebrew. Who would more likely be

correct--those who could read the original languages of the Bible or those who read a Latin translation made by one man (Jerome)?

If Hell was real then why did four out of six theological schools from 170 AD to 430 AD teach universal salvation while the only one that taught Hell was in Carthage, Africa, again were Latin was the teaching language, not Greek?

If Hell was real and a serious heresy, why was it not until the sixth century when Justinian, a half-pagan emperor, tried to make universalism a heresy? Interestingly, most historians will acknowledge that Justinian's reign was among the most cruel and ruthless.

*The historical facts documented in the above section can all be verified through the books, ["Universalism, the Prevailing Doctrine of the Early Church for the First 500 Years"](#) by J.W. Hanson and ["The History of Opinions on the Scriptural Doctrine of Retribution"](#) by Edward Beecher.

Hell does not reflect the heart of God:

Popular myth: **The justice of God demands a place like Hell in which the wicked shall be eternally punished for their sins.** Not true! The justice of God demanded a perfect sacrifice for sin, and that man was Christ Jesus. The justice of God will certainly come to every person, and God may deal severely with our sins as He subdues and gathers all things to Christ, but to punish people endlessly for crimes committed in a short human lifespan defies all logic and justice. How is it just to have unending punishment for offenses that have limits?

Think about it....

If Hell is real and all things were made for God's pleasure (Rev. 4:11), is it conceivable that God would derive pleasure from seeing those He created endlessly tortured? God says He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ez. 33:11).

If Hell is a real place of endless torment, and God didn't want anyone to end up there, why didn't God just kill Adam and Eve and end the long terrible chain of misery that passed to their offspring before it began? After all, the Scriptures say that all died because of Adam. (Rom. 5:18)

If Hell is real, if God loves His enemies now, will he not always love them? Is God a changeable being? (James 1:17)

If Hell is real, if you had sufficient power would you not deliver all men from sin? If God would save all men, but cannot, is He infinite in power?

If Hell is real, and God can save all men, but will not, is He infinite in goodness and mercy?

If Hell is real, since God will have all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:3 KJV), does that mean God's power is not strong enough to have His will fulfilled?

If Hell is real and Jesus teaches us to forgive seventy times seven and yet He Himself will never offer forgiveness to anyone after they die, does that not make Him a hypocrite?

If Hell is real and God's wrath abides upon billions of human beings forever, doesn't that violate the Scripture which says His anger will come to an end? (Isaiah 57:16-18)

If Hell is real and God only loves those who love Him, what better is He than the sinner? (Luke 6:32-33)

If Hell is real, since some people receive many chances to "get saved," some receive only a few chances and billions have never even received one chance, does that make God a respecter of persons? (Acts 10:34, James 3:17). After all, billions of people have been born and died on this earth without a chance to ever hear the name of Jesus, the "only name under heaven by which men may be saved."

If there is a Hell and all who have sinned are destined to go there (which is everyone) unless they figure out how to avoid it, does that not consign all aborted babies and non-Christian children to Hell? (While some denominations teach a so-called "age of accountability," it is not found anywhere in the Bible. It is just some people's way of trying to make God more humane than the eternal torment teaching makes Him out to be).

If Hell is real, does that mean that motherly love is more powerful and enduring than God's love? Do you know of normal parents who would endlessly torment most of their kids? Why do we believe our heavenly Father, Who is millions of times more loving than all of us combined, could do such an evil, wicked thing?

If Hell is real, why does the human spirit writhe under the horror of wars and prison camps, torture chambers and dictators? How can we judge these things as wrong, if Hell is real? After all, Hell far eclipses these earthly torments which came from the most sinful and beastly part of humanity. We say God is grieved by man's violence and disregard for life, and yet believe that He Himself enforces the same principles for all eternity!

If Hell is real, how would endless misery benefit the Almighty, as the inflictor? How would endless misery benefit the saints, as spectators? How would endless misery benefit the sinner, as the sufferer?

If Hell is real, how does the threat of endlessly torturing us convince us that God loves us and that we should love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength?

FACT: While the church has gotten used to thinking of God as Someone who was forced to design a grandiose punishment called Hell, and against His own

will sends the majority of His creation there, this concept of a God "who did the best He could" is totally against the Scriptural view of a God who is absolutely sovereign, powerful, all-wise and all-victorious. He never had to come up with a plan B or C, for Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. It is time to give Him the glory He deserves for our God is truly awesome and wonderful far beyond the limited, and man-centered views of Him!

Come Up Higher!

Beloved, what is the "lens" through which you are interpreting the Bible? Traditional doctrines teach us to interpret the "victorious" scriptures in the light of the "judgment" scriptures. But what if God wants us to see it the other way around? What if we are to interpret the "judgment" scriptures in the light of the "victorious" scriptures? Is not Christ's victory the greatest revelation in the Bible? Standing on this highest peak-that is, the finished work of the cross, causes us to see a much larger and far more beautiful panoramic view of God's plan throughout the ages. We do not throw out one set of Scriptures in favor of another. Rather, we seek to harmonize them. For man shall live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

In the time of Christ, most of Israel completely missed the Word of God when He was in their midst. They were too busy with their nose in the book, to perceive the Word Himself as He came and walked among them! Many Jews were afraid to believe in Jesus, since the majority of their leaders (Scribes, Pharisees, Saducees, Priests etc) who knew the scriptures better than they did, were convinced that He was not the Messiah. In the early days of the church, faith in Jesus Christ was heresy and to admit faith in Him was basically asking for scorn and rejection. Modern Christians point the finger at Israel of old, not realizing that we are following in their footsteps today. Most of us play it safe, siding with the denomination or movement that we happen to be a part of. While there is wisdom in honoring our spiritual fathers, we can never allow them to take the place of the Holy Spirit teaching us in our own lives.

The facts presented in this article should at least cause every reader who is truly hungry to know God, to search the scripture to see if these things be so. If what we are presenting here is false, it needs to be disproved. And if it is true, it cannot be ignored.

It is time to stop skipping the parts of the Bible that do not fit in with our theology. And if, like the religious leaders of Jesus' day, our theology is not big enough to hold the entire counsel of Scripture, perhaps it is time to expand--lest we once again miss God!

And so we ask you again, beloved Christian, to ask yourself.

If the traditional teaching of Hell is real..

How can mercy triumph over judgment? (James 2:13)

How can it be true that, "where sin abounded grace did much more abound?" (Rom. 5:20)

When will all flesh come to God? (Psalm 65:2-4)

When will the poor of the earth be avenged and comforted by God? (Psalm 113:7, Psalm 140:12, Proverbs 14:31, Proverbs 19:17, Proverbs 31:9, Isaiah 11:4, Isaiah 61:1, Jeremiah 22:16 etc.) (Bear in mind that most of the poor of the earth throughout history have not had a chance to accept Jesus as their savior).

When shall it come to pass that: "On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine- the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken" (Isaiah 26:6-8).

When and how will "all nations" praise Him, come to Him, serve Him, be blessed in Him and bow to Him? (Psalm 45:17, Ps. 86:9, Isaiah 62:11, Daniel 7:14 Ps 66:1, Ps 72:11, Ps 102:15, Jer. 3:17, Ps 72:17, Isa. 2:2, Isa. 11:10, Isa. 52:10, Rev. 5:13 etc.)

How can the world be reconciled to God? (2 Corinthians 5:19, Romans 11:5, Romans 5:10).

Why would Paul the apostle say the goal of God's creative plan was to ultimately be "all in all?" (1 Cor. 15:28)

How can it be true that God, Who works all things according to the counsel of His will, shall gather together all things in Christ, in the fullness of the times? (Ephesians 1:9-11)

How can Paul insist that "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things" (Romans 11:36).

How can the most often-repeated Biblical description of God be true? "His mercy endures forever" (literally, "His mercy/lovingkindness endures for the ages"). Certainly, as long as there are ages, and people in need of mercy, God's mercy will endure.

How and when can there ever be a "restitution of all things?" (Acts 3:21)

A Final Test

We have tested the doctrine of Hell against many different Biblical topics and concepts and found it wanting. When scrutinized in the light of the entire counsel of Scripture, the doctrine of Hell is found to be full of holes. Now, test this doctrine against your own heart and see whether it can stand. Please take some time and prayerfully ask yourself these questions:

If there is a Hell and according to most denominations of Christianity the majority of mankind will go there, could you really enjoy heaven knowing your mother or father or

children or best friend are suffering everlasting tortures the likes of which would make the Holocaust seem like a picnic?

If Hell is real, will you judge your mother, son, or other non-believers to Hell ? *"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world"? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?"* 1 Corinthians 6:2-3

If Hell is real and a place of terrible, unending pain, could you even send a dog to such a place?

If Hell is real and universalism is a heresy, why is it that those who believe God loves all and will save all find it easier to love all people than those who believe most people are going to Hell? (Think this through very carefully.)

If Hell is real, can you honestly rejoice in the victory, love, and wisdom of God, knowing that somewhere in His beautiful creation there will always be a black and stinking hell-hole crammed full of tortured souls who have no chance for relief or forgiveness--or even death? Even if there was only one person left in such a state, how could all of Heaven rejoice for all eternity knowing that there was still one soul who had not been touched by the victory of Christ and was suffering alone?

Is it good to desire all men to be saved? *"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."* (1 Tim.2:3,4).

- . Do you ardently desire the salvation of all men?
- . Is it true that God *"openeth His hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing?"* -- (Ps. 145:16)
- . Do you fervently pray for the salvation of all men? (1 Tim. 2:1)
- . Do you pray in faith, nothing doubting? (James 1:6)
- . Are you aware, *"that whatsoever is not of faith is sin?"* -- (Rom 14:23)
- . Would God require us to pray for all men, and to pray in faith, unless He intends all men should be saved?
- . If you believe endless misery to be the truth of God, why should you desire and pray that it may prove false?

We hope that this information has raised enough questions for you to pursue further study on this subject. For more information on the history of the doctrine of Hell, the Lake of Fire , Studies on Biblical words that are often translated as eternal, everlasting, etc. and many other teachings pertaining to this subject, please visit:

www.tentmaker.org/ScholarsCorner.html

Some of these questions were taken from a much larger list compiled in an article entitled [Is Salvation a Deliverance From Hell or Eternal Death?](#) " by Gary Amirault .

The painting on the front of this booklet is a scene from "The Damned" by Michelangelo. His paintings of Hell and the damned, like much Christian art of the time, was influenced more by Greek mythology of the underworld, than by the Bible.

Who are we? Tentmaker Ministries and Publications is a Christian ministry committed to sharing as best to our ability our understanding of God's plan for the ages to reconcile all things to Himself through Jesus Christ. (This view is also known as Ultimate reconciliation or Christian universalism, which is a very different thing than Unitarian Universalism). We believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, the only way to the Father, the only begotten Son of God, and that there is no other way to everlasting, "aionian" life but through Him. We believe He is king of the universe, and owner of all Creation, and that His purpose is to bring all things under His government and reconciled with Himself.

"And for this we labor and strive, that we have put our hope in the living God, Who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe" (1 Timothy 4:10).