

Articles and Sermons :: The Justice of God in the damnation of sinners - Jonathan Edwards

The Justice of God in the damnation of sinners - Jonathan Edwards - posted by Josef83, on: 2012/5/13 8:45

This is an extract of what he preach to his own church on a sunday meeting .

"First, To look over your past life: inquire at the mouth of conscience, and hear what that has to testify concerning it. Consider what you are, what light you have had, and what means you have lived under: and yet how you have behaved your self! What have those many days and nights you have lived been filled up with? How have those years that have rolled over your heads, one after another, been spent? What has the sun shone upon you for, from day to day, while you have improved his light to serve Satan by it? What has God kept your breath in your nostrils for, and given you meat and drink, that you have spent your life and strength, supported by them, in opposing God, and rebellion against him?

How many sorts of wickedness have you not been guilty of! How manifold have been the abominations of your life! What profaneness and contempt of God has been exercised by you! How little regard have you had to the Scriptures, to the word preached, to sabbaths, and sacraments! How profanely have you talked, many of you, about those things that are holy! After what manner have many of you kept God's holy day, not regarding the holiness of the time, not caring what you thought of in it! Yea, you have not only spent the time in worldly, vain, and unprofitable thoughts, but in immoral thoughts; pleasing yourself with the reflection on past acts of wickedness, and in contriving new acts. Have not you spent much holy time in gratifying your lusts in your imaginations; yea, not only holy time, but the very time of God's public worship, when you have appeared in God's more immediate presence? How have you not only attended to the worship, but have in the mean time been feasting your lusts, and wallowing yourself in abominable uncleanness! How many sabbaths have you spent, one after another, in a most wretched manner! Some of you not only in worldly and wicked thoughts, but also a very wicked outward behavior! When you on sabbath-days have got along with your wicked companions, how has holy time been treated among you! What kind of conversation has there been! Yea, how have some of you, by a very indecent carriage, openly dishonored and cast contempt on the sacred services of God's house, and holy day! And what you have done some of you alone, what wicked practices there have been in secret, even in holy time, God and your own consciences know.

And how have you behaved yourself in the time of family prayer! And what a trade have many of you made of absenting yourselves from the worship of the families you belong to, for the sake of vain company! And how have you continued in the neglect of secret prayer! Therein wilfully living in a known sin, going abreast against as plain a command as any in the Bible! Have you not been one that has cast off fear, and restrained prayer before God?

What wicked carriage have some of you been guilty of towards your parents! How far have you been from paying that honour to them which God has required! Have you not even harboured ill-will and malice towards them? And when they have displeased you, have wished evil to them? yea, and shown your vile spirit in your behavior? and it is well if you have not mocked them behind their backs; and, like the cursed Ham and Canaan, as it were, derided your parents' nakedness instead of covering it, and hiding your eyes from it. Have not some of you often disobeyed your parents, yea, and refused to be subject to them? Is it not a wonder of mercy and forbearance, that the proverb has not before now been accomplished on you, Proverbs 30:17. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and refuseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."

What revenge and malice have you been guilty of towards your neighbors! How have you indulged this spirit of the devil, hating others, and wishing evil to them, rejoicing when evil befell them, and grieving at others' prosperity, and lived in such a way for a long time! Have not some of you allowed a passionate furious spirit, and behaved yourselves in your anger more like wild beasts than like Christians?

What covetousness has been in many of you! Such has been your inordinate love of the world, and care about the things of it, that it has taken up your heart; you have allowed no room for God and religion; you have minded the world more than your eternal salvation. For the vanities of the world you have neglected reading, praying and meditation; for the things of the world, you have broken the sabbath: for the world you have spent a great deal of your time in quarreling. For the world you have envied and hated your neighbor; for the world you have cast God, and Christ, and heaven, behind your back; for the world you have sold your own soul. You have as it were drowned your soul in worldly cares and desires; you have been a mere earth-worm, that is never in its element but when grovelling and buried in the earth.

How much of a spirit of pride has appeared in you, which is in a peculiar manner the spirit and condemnation of the devil! How have some of you vaunted yourselves in your apparel! others in their riches! others in their knowledge and abilities! How has it galled you to see others above you! How much has it gone against the grain for you to give others their due honour! And how have you shown your pride by setting up your wills and in opposing others, and stirring up and promoting division, and a party spirit in public affairs.

How sensual have you been! Are there not some here that have debased themselves below the dignity of human nature, by wallowing in sensual filthiness, as swine in the mire, or as filthy vermin feeding with delight on rotten carrion? What intemperance have some of you been guilty of! How much of your precious time have you spent at the tavern, and in drinking companies, when you ought to have been at home seeking God and your salvation in your families and closets!

And what abominable lasciviousness have some of you been guilty of! How have you indulged yourself from day to day, and from night to night, in all manner of unclean imaginations! Has not your soul been filled with them, till it has become a hold of foul spirits, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird? What foul-mouthed persons have some of you been, often in lewd and lascivious talk and unclean songs, wherein were things not fit to be spoken! And such company, where such conversation has been carried on, has been your delight. And with what unclean acts and practices have you defiled yourself! God and your own consciences know what abominable lasciviousness you have practised in things not fit to be named, when you have been alone; when you ought to have been reading, or meditating, or on your knees before God in secret prayer. And how have you corrupted others, as well as polluted yourselves! What vile uncleanness have you practised in company! What abominations have you been guilty of in the dark! Such as the apostle doubtless had respect to in Ephesians 5:12. "For it is a shame even to speak of those things that are done of them in secret." Some of you have corrupted others, and done what in you lay to undo their souls, (if you have not actually done it;) and by your vile practices and example have made room for Satan, invited his presence, and established his interest, in the town where you have lived.

What lying have some of you been guilty of, especially in your childhood! And have not your heart and lips often disagreed since you came to riper years? What fraud, and deceit, and unfaithfulness, have many of you practised in your own dealings with your neighbours, of which your own heart is conscious, if you have not been noted by others.

And how have some of you behaved yourselves in your family relations! How have you neglected your children's souls! And not only so, but have corrupted their minds by your bad examples; and instead of training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, have rather brought them up in the devil's service!

How have some of you attended that sacred ordinance of the Lord's supper without any manner of serious preparation, and in a careless slight frame of spirits, and chiefly to comply with custom! Have you not ventured to put the sacred symbols of the body and blood of Christ into your mouth, while at the same time you lived in ways of known sins, and intended no other than still to go on in the same wicked practices? And, it may be, have sat at the Lord's table with rancour in your heart against some of your brethren that you have sat there with. You have come even to that holy feast of love among God's children, with the leaven of malice and envy in your heart; and so have eaten and drank judgment to yourself.

What stupidity and sottishness has attended your course of wickedness: which has appeared in your obstinacy under a waking dispensations of God's word and providence. And how have some of you backslidden after you have set out in religion, and quenched God's Spirit after he had been striving with you! And what unsteadiness, and slothfulness, and long misimprovement of God's strivings with you, have you been chargeable with!

Now, can you think when you have thus behaved yourself, that God is obliged to show you mercy? Are you not after all ashamed to talk of its being hard with God to cast you off? Does it become one who has lived such a life to open his mouth to excuse himself, to object against God's justice in his condemnation, or to complain of it as hard in God not to give him converting and pardoning grace, and make him his child, and bestow on him eternal life? Or to talk of his duties and great pains in religion, as if such performances were worthy to be accepted, and to draw God's heart to such a creature? If this has been your manner, does it not show how little you have considered yourself, and how little a sense you have had of your own sinfulness?

Secondly, Be directed to consider, if God should eternally reject and destroy you, what an agreeableness and exact mutual answerableness there would be between God so dealing with you, and your spirit and behaviour. There would not only be an equality, but a similitude. God declares, that his dealings with men shall be suitable to their disposition and practice. Psalm 18:25, 26. "With the merciful man, thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man, thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure, thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward, thou wilt show thyself froward." How much soever you dread damnation, and are affrighted and concerned at the thoughts of it; yet if God should indeed eternally damn

you, you would be met with but in your own way; you would be dealt with exactly according to your own dealing. Surely it is but fair that you should be made to buy in the same measure in which you sell.

Here I would particularly show,- 1. That if God should eternally destroy you, it would be agreeable to your treatment of God. 2. That it would be agreeable to your treatment of Jesus Christ. 3. That it would be agreeable to your behaviour towards your neighbours. 4. That it would be according to your own foolish behaviour towards yourself."

Re: The Justice of God in the damnation of sinners - Jonathan Edwards - posted by TMK (), on: 2012/5/13 11:26

Eternal punishment for temporal crimes seems unjust even by God's stated standards of justice (an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth). A debt or penalty that takes forever to repay will never be fully repaid, and there can never be any final justice or resolution of the problem of sin in the universe.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2012/5/13 12:28

Hello TMK

I think it is commonly accepted that by the mainstream throughout history, the people that has been accepted as true Christians through history has a common view of God as eternally Holy and just. So one sin regardless how small then becomes infinite and eternally offensive and there is no punishment that can rightly get anyone of the hook except an infinity Holy God dying on a cross taking upon himself your eternally large crimes.

It's not the sin that is the thing, it is towards whom it was committed. The severity of the punishment depends on your view of God.

If God is eternal and infinite and Holy, then only eternal punishment is sufficient enough and that is justice and good.

God would be just in throwing all men into hell even the best of us, without sending Christ to earth taking upon himself our sins, and he would still be Holy and good and perfect letting all men weep and howl in the eternal darkness.

He still would be a loving wonderful God...

but he made a way...

the severity of these things can not be grasped by the human mind, yet that does not make them untrue.

Your statement resembles what the Catholic church teach or did for many centuries. That we can buy our way out, or we will be punished in a purgatory that will make better with time.

Nothing we do can undo one sin because it is Eternally large because against to whom it has been committed.

hope that makes sense.

Re: , on: 2012/5/13 12:33

Also I would add that we have a small view of God and a big view of ourselves.

We also tend to think, "So God's going to throw me into eternal hell for telling a few lies?"

Again we minimize the totality of our open rebellion against our own Father.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2012/5/13 14:36

Quote:

"The severity of the punishment depends on your view of God."

Correct. My view of God is what leads me to believe that he will not keep people alive for all eternity for the sole purpose of torturing them. I do not believe that God is revealed that way in the Bible. Of course you may all disagree, and that is fine.

I hope you all don't misunderstand where I am coming from, or my background.

I grew up in a very sound Christian home (multi-generations); I gave my life to Jesus when I was 8 years old. I grew up in very fundamental churches (Brethren and Baptist). I have had my times of rebellion (particularly in college) but God always pursued me and I never fully abandoned Him. I am currently sold out to the Lord and His purposes. No church I have ever attended, and no Christian brother or sister I know (including my best friends, family members or spouse) holds any other view than the traditional view of hell-- i.e. the eternal torment of the unbeliever.

Several years ago I was introduced to alternative views of hell. The more I have studied and argued and read and thought, the less convinced I have become that the traditional view of hell is accurate.

Hmmmm mentioned the Catholic church... the Catholic church invented the idea of eternal torment. My further studies of the scriptures, in general, and of the few verses upon which I once based my belief in eternal torment, in particular, have moved me away from my confidence that such a doctrine ever was taught in scripture. It was an effective tool for keeping the masses loyal to the church in the Middle Ages, and seems consistent with such a "God" as was presented in Medieval Christianity. However, I can no longer confidently assert that it is the doctrine of scripture, nor that it portrays the same God as He who was revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The traditional view of hell may be correct. I hope it is not. Here is something I read several years ago regarding "hope" as it pertains to this topic. It has always been inspiring to me and I hope that readers here can accept it in the spirit in which it was written:

"I want say at the outset that I'm not presenting a case for or against universalism here. I'm not a universalist (but neither am I an annihilationist, nor an eternal retributionist). The purpose of this lengthy essay is to challenge what I believe is a false notion that an argument from "feelings" has no place in debates and discussions related to universal reconciliation or any other topic for that matter. I hope to demonstrate that being made in the image of God means that we are not only rational beings, but imaginative and emotional beings as well. And that it's those three things together enable us to interpret revelation and develop what we believe. Without any one of them, I believe we only get a partial picture of the truth most of the time.

One of the arguments I often see put forth against the doctrine of universal reconciliation is that it is based largely on "feelings" or "wishes" and therefore, by implication, the basis of believing in the doctrine is purely emotional and irrational. But is it? Is hope for an ultimate reconciliation of all people really irrational? I would say yes if, and only if, the doctrine can be unequivocally proven to be undeniably false. No doubt, feelings are notoriously wrong and the heart is often deceitful (Jer. 17:9). And it is certainly irrational to believe contrary to an established fact. However, I would assert that it is not necessarily irrational to hope for something that has the possibility of being true. If it were, then every Christian has irrational beliefs in many future things that he or she awaits for (resurrection to eternal life, being present with Jesus, etc). For until they happen, they are not an established fact, they are merely a hope based on a promise. That is why faith is required to believe them.

In scripture, are we not encouraged to "hope" for things that are not yet realized?

Heb 11:1

11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
NKJV

Are we not told to be prepared to explain our hope?

1 Peter 3:15

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;
NKJV

Is it not one of the very virtuous things of love itself?

1 Cor 13:4-8

4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all

I think, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things. 8 Love never fails.
NKJV

Many times in the gospels, Jesus commended the faith of people whose only evidence of His power to heal was likely just second hand news at best. Many of these people had much to hope for (dead children, chronic illness, blindness, etc.) , but not much data to build a logical case on. But Jesus is said to have "marveled" at their faith. Yes, I believe a rational hope is a very real and valid reason to believe something.

Ironically, I've often (almost universally) heard those that oppose the doctrine of universal reconciliation say that they could wish it could be true. Even Paul himself wrote that he wished he could trade places with his countrymen (Rom 9:3): Why is that? Could it be that they have compassion? In the OT, we see Abraham and Moses pleading with God to have compassion on the wicked (Gen 18, Ex 32:11-14). Are we to suppose that we have more compassion for the lost than God does? Or could it be that it is part of being made in the image of God to have such compassion and mercy? In my opinion, most Christians, if they are honest with their "feelings" would hope (if they were allowed to) for an ultimate reconciliation for all people. I believe that compassion and mercy is all part of being made in God's image and we need to pay attention to that.

Personally, when I imagine all of the possible final outcomes, I can't imagine a more glorious outcome than God reconciling "all things to Himself" (Col 1:20, 1Cor 15:27-28) that He may be "all in all".

Why?

1. First and foremost, God gets all that He wanted for Christmas. Is it too much to hope for that God ultimately won't suffer permanent loss of the objects He desires to love and enjoy forever? Would we not be happy for Him?

2. Sin (and all of its ill effects) and the works of the devil are ultimately undone and creation is perfectly restored. Like entropy to matter and energy, the power of sin is completely exhausted and dissipated to an impotent state and consigned to the past forever. This can't be so if there is a corner in the universe someplace where people are forever suffering the effects of sin, or even if there are those who are annihilated, because that is still a permanent effect of sin. In essence, the power of sin would still be in effect (NOTE: memories of suffering in this life do not necessarily fit this category because the mortal suffering is temporary and it can be redeemed if the suffering has a greater eternal purpose).

3. A more glorious and perfect afterlife. The thought of loved ones suffering eternally would hinder, in some way, a perfect afterlife. Think about it. Every human being, from one's own mother to Adolph Hitler was someone's baby. It's almost universally repugnant to imagine one's newborn baby burning in hell forever and ever. Yet everybody knows and loves somebody who is not a Christian and, by traditional theology, will not spend eternity with God. This makes the final outcome less than ideal for everyone (not the least of which is God). If the final reality is less than "what might have been" then it is not the best possible outcome and therefore imperfect. Why can one not hope that God has the most perfect eternal plan imaginable?

If God could somehow pull all of this off, who wouldn't be in awe of that? If God can reconcile all people He desires (2Pet 3:9, 1Tim 2:4), and simultaneously execute perfect justice and completely destroy the power of sin, who could argue that that scenario is less than ideal? Does not this imagined outcome have some merit in the fact that God is both all-loving and all-powerful and therefore willing and able to bring it about? That's exactly what universalists hope for if I understand them correctly.

I believe that being made in the image of God makes us both rational and emotional beings. I also believe that imagination is a divine attribute as well. For example, if our traditional theology is correct, evil existed only in the imagination (or foreknowledge) of God until it became a present reality through the fall. I would assert that any argument that leaves out one of these aspects is incomplete. Revelation must inform imagination. And imagination must supplement revelation to conceive hope and give birth to faith which, when full grown, brings about reconciliation to God. For is it not the lack of imagination that makes the cross of Christ "foolishness to those who are perishing" (1Cor 1:18)? Rational thought alone says we are to be pitied of all men for believing in the resurrection (1Cor 15). The self-sacrificial acts of obedience that are produced in the believer make no rational sense without an element of imaginative hope of future things.

Hope is heroic. The entire chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews emphasizes this. Many of the greatest stories ever told are the ones that leave you hoping against all odds for the outcome of the hero.

In the Lord of the Rings movies, I remember Gandalf despairing over the lack of news about Frodo, to the point that he fears the worst. When Aragorn asks him, "What does your heart tell you?" Gandalf smiles. Hope is reborn.

Later on, when the armies of Gondor go up to a final battle against Mordor to buy Frodo a diversion, Sauron sends out an orc to be his mouthpiece. He presents Frodo mithril mail as evidence that Frodo has been tortured and killed and you can see the hearts of the others sink with this news. In one of my favorite scenes of the movie, Aragorn rides by and lops off the head of the foul goblin with a stroke of his sword. Gimli the dwarf says "I guess that concludes negotiations". Aragorn turns to the others and says "I don't believe it, I will not believe it" and the battle goes on with Aragorn leading the charge with the words "for Frodo". That, my friends, is hope. Negotiations are concluded when hope refuses to die.

Hope is not the denial of unfavorable facts. Hope often says, "the story is not over yet, and there is still a chance for the best imaginable outcome here...and therefore every reason to press on in faith".

Scripturally speaking, the doctrine of universal reconciliation indeed has many *prima facie* problems to overcome. However, even with all the arguments in opposition that I've heard given, I'm not convinced that these problems are insurmountable. Hope still has room to breathe. I've recently finished reading Talbott's book (The inescapable love of God) and, to my surprise, I was very impressed with the case he made and I even found myself hoping it is true. There was very little in his arguments I could find fault with (Except one suggestion at the end of chapter 6, which we won't get into at this point).

One of the points Talbott makes in his book (and I think he's right) is that every one of the views has *prima facie* problems to overcome. Every view of hell has to contend with scriptures that, on the surface, seem to contradict it. This is mainly why I am, and may always remain for the most part, undecided on this topic. And I have to admit that I am very grateful that I'm not bound to any view on this topic. I can just leave that in God's hands. Because I believe in the perfection of God, I also think that God has the perfect ultimate plan for the final chapter...a plan that will we all will be in absolute awe of.

But the fact remains that none of the views can claim undeniable truth. And for that reason, I believe that hope remains a valid and rational reason for someone to believe in universal reconciliation. With any of the views being equally possible (yes, I mean equally, for none have been undeniably disproved in my opinion making any of them just as possible as the other), it is hope that tips the scales for the person who believes it. For those of you who have openly declared that you are universalists because of this hope, I tip my hat to you. That takes a lot of guts in a culture of Western thinking, which is still very modernistic.

There is one important point I'd like to make at this time. This "hope to believe" is not sufficient to prove universal reconciliation or any other doctrine to another. It cannot win a debate because hope cannot be transferred. That is probably why the debate will rage on without a final agreement on what is true. I think that, just like the gospel itself, it's a personal thing. Let each man be convinced before God in his own mind, and in his own heart.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that, as beings made in the image of God, our feelings like hope and doubt have a legitimate place along side logic and revelation in formulating sound theological arguments for belief, but not dogma. Of course, we cannot base our beliefs entirely on feelings. That would be absurd. But I don't think we can give a wholesale dismissal of them either lest we cut off an important part of our God given capacity to interpret and believe. If we do not use our whole being to interpret the world around us, I believe we end up with an incomplete picture more often than not.

It is for this reason that I would encourage all of us to value and respect another brother or sister's hope as legitimate, giving it the benefit of the doubt and assuming that it has at least some weight and significance. From there, it is completely legitimate to respectfully use logic and revelation to work towards reaching sound conclusions, or at least educated leanings and opinions. That, I believe, is reasoning with love and it makes for a more agreeable debate in my opinion. It's completely valid to challenge something that is believed by someone else. If it's true, it will stand up to the scrutiny. If it's not, it should be abandoned anyway and the person should be thankful for being set free of it. However, I think there is very little value in belittling the viewpoints of another on the assumption that their "feelings" of hope have no relevance in the debate. I would disagree with that assumption.

1 Cor 13:13

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

NKJV"

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2012/5/13 15:42

you said quote :

the Catholic church invented the idea of eternal torment.

I would want to correct you that they did not, even if you personally do not find eternal hell in scripture, million others do. And the first writings outside the scripture to mention the eternal hell is from the early church fathers a Generation after Christ, so the belief of eternal hell has always been firmly rooted in the Christian belief system. You may disagree with th is view and that is ok, i think you are wrong and effected with a man"uplifting" worldview that humanizes God. But I hope you continue your search for truth and honestly come before the scriptures and se what it says.

God bless you

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2012/5/13 19:16

Quote:
-----TMK's: Eternal punishment for temporal crimes seems unjust even by God's stated standards of justice (an eye for an eye, a tooth f or a tooth).

There is a mistaken notion in this comment that is worth noting. The assumption is that Hell is only punishment for crime s, whereas it is also a quarantine and prison for those that persist in rebellion and enmity against God. It's not as though the people only committed temporal crimes, but they refuse to repent and leave off from the bahavior. In fact, they persis t in it and grow deeper and deeper in a resolute attitude of rebellion and sin. They are enemies of God and upon death a re ratified in that enmity. It is what they are, the want nothing else but to be such. Given that Heaven is a place of holi ness, peace and love a place where the friends of God alone shall forever be found; indeed, those that understand and appreciate the wisdom of the precepts of His Law and governance; knowing that sin is the cause of destruction, pain an d suffering, have willingly bowed the knee to their Creator with a view to agreeing with Him in all that He says and does.

The Damned are not so. For they have chosen their own way in rebelling against God and His precepts. They are His en emy and if given the chance would turn Heaven into the wretched estate of a fallen and cursed Earth where the enemies of all that is good walk around seemingly unthwarted, seeking to destroy all that is contained in the image of God. As we see in the Revelation, these enemies do not bow the knee but would rather knaw their tongues for pain instead. Off all th e foretaste of Hell that comes upon them in the Revelation, spelled out in ultimate earthly judgments, yet they repented n ot of their sins, but became all the more resolute in their rebellion. God shall deal with them not as poor sinners that com mitted a few blunders along lifes way, but as hardened criminals; menaces to all Creation to which the Saints will glorify God for having been delivered from their hands and lies for all eternity.

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who s hall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he sh all come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was b elieved) in that day. (2 Thess. 1:7-10)

The NIBC has this note on 1:9: They will be punished, literally, Â“pay the penalty.Â” Penalty represents the Greek dik&# 275;, from the same root as dikaios, Â“just.Â” Theirs is a just punishment; they get the penalty they deserve. The verb, Â “to pay,Â” (tinō) only occurs here in the NT. In the Greek this verse, together with verse 10, forms a relative clause , adding a further description to those referred to in verse 8. Strictly, the introductory pronoun is the relative of quality: Â “who are of such a kind as to,Â” underlining the fitness of these people to be punished in this way. We cannot be certain, however, that Paul used the pronoun in the strict sense. In apposition with Â“penalty,Â” giving content to their punishme

nt, is the phrase, everlasting destruction (olethron aiōnion, Â“destruction of the age,Â” i.e., destruction in relation to the age to come; cf. 4 Macc. 10:15). This is the counterpart of GodÂ’s gift of eternal life (zōē aiōnios, lif e in relation to the age to come; cf. Rom. 2:7; 5:21; 6:22f.; Gal. 6:8). There is a sense of finality about both the gift and th e punishment. Neither will be revoked (cf. 1 Thess. 5:3). As to what Â“destruction of the ageÂ” means, we are not told e xcept in negative terms that it is from the presence (prosōpon, Â“faceÂ”) of the Lord and from the majesty (doxa, Â“gloryÂ”) of his power. The Lord is Jesus, as the next verse makes plain, whereas in the OT passages echoed here, it is God who is the Lord (cf. Isa. 2:10, 19, 21, and see disc. and note on 1 Thess. 1:1 for the divine status of Jesus). As eter nal life lies in knowing God and of necessity Jesus Christ through whom alone he can be known (Matt. 11:27), so eternal destruction lies in being Â“separate from Christ . . . and (therefore in being) without GodÂ” (Eph. 2:12; cf. Rom. 6:23). It would seem that separation, not annihilation, is intended by this destruction (olethros, see disc. on 1 Thess. 5:3). It is de struction in the sense of deprivation Â“away fromÂ” (apo) the face of the Lord, depicted in NIV as being shut out from his presence. The two expressions, Â“the face of the LordÂ” and Â“his gloryÂ” mean much the same, for glory signifies wha t may be seen of Christ.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2012/5/13 19:33

Quote:
-----Ironically, IÂ’ve often (almost universally) heard those that oppose the doctrine of universal reconciliation say that they could wish it could be true. Even Paul himself wrote that he wished he could trade places with his countrymen (Rom 9:3): Why is that? Could it be that they have co mpassion?

It is not a matter of compassion. It is a matter of the people refusing to agree with God and come under His dominion an d Lordship. They continue in their sins in spite of the many splendored means of God dealing with them. What Paul was saying is that if it were possible he would be cursed from Christ IF it would secure their repentance. But the unbelieving Jews were resolute in their rebellion against God.

Again, it is a mischaracterization of the purpose of Hell to suggest it is a consequence of God not being loving and comp assionate or that man somehow is more compassionate than God because he/she might wish folk did not have to be se nt to Hell. The alternative is that we live a cursed existence for all eternity alongside of devils of men and angels. As awf ul as Hell might be I see the wisdom of Hell. As surely as I see prisons as awful and garbage dumps as awful, yet what i s the choice? Do we allow criminals bent on destruction to roam free? Do we not throw out rotten garbage to keep it fro m causing disease?

If God should take hold of a giant broom and sweep all Creation clean of all that offends, to rid Himself and us of all that would cause us pain and suffering; rather than keeping the rebellious and offenders of all that is good walking the street s of Heaven; indeed, even Satan and his children walking about seeking whom they may devour or be instruments in tha t process, I shall praise Him forever for His wisdom. I am sorry that men will not repent and be saved. We weep for them . We try to reach them. But if they are bent on being enemies of God they have made their decision. They have chosen t heir team. We may weep for them now, but as Edwards has said, we will praise God when He saves us from all that offe nds. It will be no cause of grief in eternity. Why? Because we will see as God sees and understand the wisdom of the pr ocess.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2012/5/13 21:40

quote:

"But I hope you continue your search for truth and honestly come before the scriptures and see what it says."

Did you read what I posted? I have honestly "come before the scriptures." To suggest that I have not done so (because I have not reached the same conclusions as you) seems to be rather condescending.

I could equally ask that you honestly reconsider all the scriptures that seem to discuss hell, without preconceptions. I kn ow that is an extremely difficult and time consuming task. Like I said, this has been a several year process for me. And

once again, I am not insisting that the traditional view is not correct. All I am suggesting is that it MAY not be correct. There is a huge difference.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2012/5/13 23:43

Quote:
-----Did you read what I posted? I have honestly "come before the scriptures." To suggest that I have not done so (because I have not reached the same conclusions as you) seems to be rather condescending.

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The truth of an eternal everlasting hell is sadly confessed by many evangelicals but truly not believed by many in their actions and the way they live their lives. This truth is not preached, believed and peoples lives are therefore not living in light of this. SermonIndex.net the moderators, the speakers on the site all agree in the biblical view of an eternal everlasting punishment for those who are apart from Christ and enemy's of God.

This truth is not just "evangelical" or protestant but a belief throughout all the scriptures and the early church. It is not something up for debate and we do not allow any agenda at all from someone to try and disprove or demean its truth. The opposite is needed to encourage people to realize its truth and have a sober prayerful spirit in response.

You can have fellowship on these forums and discuss other topics but we ask that no agenda would be put forth to try and disprove and debate this.

We posted for 5 months a series of messages, quotes and scriptures on this sobering truth:

MUST READ: Hell and Everlasting Punishment (article series)
https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=6203&forum=45&67

This thread is being locked.