

The Doctrine of Hell: Part 2

Hades is not a polite way to say “hell.” *Hades* is the Greek **α[ιδη]**, a general term meaning “the realm of the dead,” or “the grave.” All who die go to *Hades*. It is the New Testament counterpart to the Old Testament *sheol* (Heb. **שְׁאוֹל**). Jesus revealed that there are two different destinations in *Hades*. One is heaven the other is hell.

1. **There are degrees of punishment in hell.** Jesus revealed that there are degrees of punishment in hell. Consider two passages. In Mt 11:21-24 Jesus condemned Chorazin for rejecting Him after seeing His miracles. He said it would be more tolerable in the judgment for Sodom than them. In Lk 12: 47-48 two servants are presented. One deliberately disobeyed the will of the master and the other disobeyed because he did not know what the master required. The first servant will be beaten with many stripes, while the second will be beaten with few.
2. **Greater knowledge of what God requires, means greater responsibility.** In Luke 12, the meaning of “stripes” is unclear, as well as how the difference in the degrees of punishment shall be exacted. In Romans 2:1ff it is clear is that God judges every person in truth and righteousness (Rom 2:1-2). God’s judgment is universal, consistent and inescapable (Rom 2:3-5). God’s judgment considers all our deeds (Rom 2:6-9). God’s judgment is impartial (Rom 2:10-11). God’s judgment is based on the witness of our conscience (Rom 2:12-15). God’s judgment is based on acceptance of the gospel (Rom 2:16). God’s judgment is based on our knowledge and our inner person (Rom 2:17-29, esp. 28-29).
3. **Hell is the ultimate destiny of those who die the “second death.”** Those who are born twice, once physically and born again spiritually (Jn 3:1-7), will die only once (Heb 9:27). Those only born once, physically, will die twice. They will die physically (Heb 9:27) but also will suffer the “second death,” when death and the grave are cast into the lake of fire. In the second letter to the churches of Revelation, Jesus promised the church at Smyrna they would not be hurt by the “second death” (Rev 2:11). Those who are part of the first resurrection, the resurrection of believers, are blessed (1 Thess 4:13-18) because the second death has no power over them (Rev 20:6). They will be delivered when death and hell are cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:14-15). Finally, all unbelievers shall suffer the “second death” and cast into the lake of fire. (Rev 21:8) and eternally separated from God, heaven, the saved, and the joys of heaven (Lk 16:24-26).

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