

If You Go To Hell

Going to hell? - not far fetched! Many are headed to hell. Ask Jesus! "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it"(Mt.7:13ff). Likely many reading this – some sitting on church pews saying "amen" are going to hell! Even you! Hell is real; the threat is not imaginary.

But if you go to hell, it is no accident. It is your choice. I know you do not want hell's miseries; you do not deliberately pick that "lake that burns with fire and brimstone." Yet, when you choose the road, you also, necessarily include its destination. Choose booze – choose fornication - choose the "pleasures of this world" - choose to "just live as you please," and you choose hell! - at the end of that road Your choice! Plain and simple! In the words of Joshua, "Choose for yourselves this day."

If you go to hell, it will be in spite of God. Do not blame God!! "The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). God never forces you, overwhelms you, or makes you a robot. Yet He "works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12). He tries to get you to do right – to listen - to choose the road to heaven. To go to hell, you must reject all God's efforts to the contrary.

If you go to hell, it will be in spite of God's love for you. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (Jno. 3:16ff). To go to hell you have to refuse such love; you must "despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering." Otherwise, the "goodness of God leads you to repentance?"(Rom. 2:4) - and eventually to heaven.

If you go to hell, it will be in spite of Jesus. You, as a sinner, have no sacrifice for sin. There is nothing you can do to free yourself from the guilt and consequence of your sin. It is a hopeless case! Hell looms on the horizon inescapably. Until - until Jesus enters the picture! He volunteers to be that sacrifice for sins. He volunteers to accept your punishment deserved as a sinner.

For you, Jesus was scourged as a criminal. For you, Jesus died on the cross as a criminal. For you, his blood was poured out as a sin sacrifice. He changed your prospects from hopeless despair - from inevitable hell - to an open door into God's favor, blessings, and heaven. To go to hell, you have to ignore such a sacrifice on your behalf.

If you go to hell, it will be in spite of Christians. They are the ones who pester you trying to persuade you to change your life and turn to God. They just will not leave you alone to go quietly off to hell. To go to hell you have to turn a deaf ear to all their warnings and all their appeals.

Christians are the ones who will not give up on you even when you try and fail miserably. They are there to pick you up and encourage you to try again. To go to hell you have to ignore people who care that much about you - or you may have to get angry with them and then refuse their help and concern.

Christians are the ones who pray for you - even when you quit praying. They pray about your difficulties and your trials in life. They pray about your spiritual weaknesses and your sins. To go to hell, you must fight their prayers to God for you.

Christians are the ones who know what you can be - a son of God reflecting His image. They are not satisfied for you to fail to become all that God can make of you. Christians are patient because they were once where you are - and still have problems with spiritual weaknesses. To go to hell, you will have to close the door on these people who love you - who love your soul.

Are you not finding it hard to keep on going to hell with such obstacles in your way? In Jesus' words to Saul, "It is hard for you to kick against the goads" (Acts 9:5). Why not just quit trying to go to hell - quit lashing out against those who try to help you - quit turning your back on God who wants to forgive you? Serving God and going to heaven is a tremendous alternative!

- by Joe Fitch

You NEED To Be A Member Of A Local Church

God's plan for every Christian includes membership in a local church. We are concerned when we see some folks who do not seem to appreciate this fact, and who are apparently unconcerned about identifying themselves with a local congregation.

After Paul's conversion in Damascus, and upon his return to Jerusalem, "he assayed (made effort) to join himself to the disciples" (Acts 9:26). This, of course, was not an easy task. Paul had previously been persecuting those very same Christians. They were justifiably hesitant to take him into their fellowship. It was necessary for Barnabas to speak in his defense before the church received him.

Think about this from Paul's perspective. It certainly would have been easier to simply avoid those brethren. It could not have been a pleasant thing to face them. Their intense scrutiny of him would have been difficult to endure. Yet, Paul was willing to make this effort. Why?

Paul surely understood God's plan for membership in a local church. He saw the advantage of this association in a congregation of believers. He wanted, and needed, this fellowship. So do we.

Consider, briefly, some of the blessings we receive when we identify with a local church:

- 1) We gain constant, daily encouragement from our brethren (Heb. 3:13).
- 2) Our efforts to do good are multiplied, amplified, and made more efficient as we join in cooperation with others who share the same goals. Our weaknesses are assisted by their strengths, and vice-versa (Eph. 4:16).
- 3) We have help carrying the heavy loads of life (Gal. 6:2).
- 4) There is a sense of accountability that comes from being a part of a spiritual family. Others are watching us, and the knowledge of this helps us in time of temptation (Tit. 2:7,8).
- 5) When we fall, they are there to pick us up (Gal. 6:1).

If you are NOT a member of a local church, we simply ask, WHY NOT? You NEED this!

- by Greg Gwin