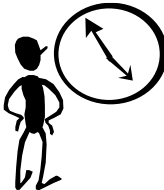


Inside this issue:

<i>Is Hell a Real Place?</i>	1
<i>A Women's Contribution to the Local Congregation</i>	3
<i>P.M. Sermon Outline:</i>	6
Understanding Repentance	
Duty Rosters	7
Announcements & For the Record	8



Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.
(Or every other week)

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.
Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

Is Hell a Real Place?

By Jefferson David Tant

In the Bible, [Matthew 25](#) gives us a picture of the Day of Judgment, where the righteous enter into everlasting joy and peace, while the unrighteous enter into hell, an everlasting torment of fire. Some reject this as repulsive, claiming that the unrighteous will simply cease to exist, while others who reject the thought of eternal suffering claim that the unrighteous will be punished with fire, but that fire will consume them, and they will not suffer eternally. They also claim that God is a loving God, and would not inflict such a penalty for the unrighteous.

But if we believe the Bible is true, then we must admit that it describes hell as an eternal place of suffering and pain. Let us consider what God's Word says about life after death for those who did not accept the salvation offered through Christ's death on the cross by obeying his Word.

We know that sin is in the world, and sin is a violation of God's law. "*Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness*" ([I John 3:4](#)).

Consider the situation in our nation. Why do we have laws, police, courts, and jails? We have them because they are necessary for us to be secure. Those who commit crimes, who go against our nation's laws, suffer penalties. If our system did not provide a penalty for crimes, can you imagine the chaos and evil we would suffer? We must have laws, and there has to be a penalty.

Likewise, God has laws and penalties for breaking them. Jesus gave the story of the Rich man and Lazarus in [Luke 16:22-25](#): "*Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in ag-*

ony in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.' ”

Question: Was Christ telling a fairy tale, or a lie? Who would so contend? This story puts to rest one false teaching about hell, which states that the fire of hell is a one-time event, for you are burned up and cease to exist. But we have the statement in [Jude 6-7](#): *“And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.”*

What is the fate of those ungodly occupants of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament? “The punishment of eternal fire!” Note also that Jude stated that the angels who sinned in their rebellion against God were kept in eternal bonds and had the punishment of eternal fire.

Some claim that such punishment is contrary to the nature of a loving God. But consider that God is also a “just” God as well as loving. If there was no real punishment for evil deeds, then anyone could just “live it up” and enjoy the pleasures sin gives to the fullest, and then they cease to exist at death. So, what’s the harm? But if God is a just God, then justice not only rewards the good but punishes the evil.

The word “eternal” which describes the word “fire” in [Jude 7](#) is from the Greek “*aionios* -- perpetual (also used of past time, or past and future as well):--eternal, forever, everlasting, world (began).” (Strong’s Greek Dictionary) This is the exact same word that Christ used more than once concerning the reward of the righteous. On the night Christ was betrayed, he prayed to the father. Included in his prayer are the following words:

“These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee, even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life. And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” ([John 17:1-3](#)). The word “eternal” in that prayer is the exact same word that Jude used describing hell.

In one of his exhortations, Christ said: *“And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched”* ([Mark 9:43-44](#)). Obviously, Christ is not telling us to mutilate our body, but this is hyperbole, which is an exaggerated statement or claim not meant to be taken literally, but the strong language is used to make a point. In other words, we are encouraged to do all within our power to avoid spending eternity burning in anguish in hell.

Hell is described as a place of darkness, as there is no light there. “*God is light*” ([1 John 1:5](#)) and hell is dark, as it is far removed from God’s light and His love.

Now, my question is for you, dear reader. Are you on the narrow road or the broad pathway? "*Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it*" ([Matthew 7:13-14](#)).

If you have not entered the narrow gate, Christ has given clear instructions through the teaching of the Bible. In some of his last words to his apostles, "*He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned'*" ([Mark 16:15-16](#)).

Many denominations do not teach that baptism is necessary for salvation, and some do not practice baptism in any form. And there are those that practice baptism by sprinkling or pouring water, but these practices did not come into use until hundreds of years after the church was established, and the Bible was written in the first century. The word "baptize" in Biblical Greek means "to dip, plunge or immerse." All Greek scholars agree with that. Paul refers to this in his letter to the Romans: "*Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*" ([Romans 6:4](#)). Should we follow man's creeds or the Bible?

So, what is your eternity? Our God of love has given each one a choice. If you have not entered the "narrow gate," by being baptized into Christ, why not now? If you have done this but have turned aside, Christ, with open arms, waits for your return. Don't risk eternal hell by delaying. There are two things we do not know — our day of death, or the day Christ returns. God pleads with us — "*Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts*" ([Hebrews 4:7](#)). Don't risk an eternity in hell by delaying.

A Woman's Contribution to the Local Congregation

By Carey Scott

More often than not, women are the lifeblood of the congregation. Attention is often given to the limitations placed on women in the assemblies of the church because of what is written in [I Corinthians 14:34-37](#) and because of what is written in [I Timothy 2:11-12](#). Such limitations notwithstanding, the early church benefited greatly from the contributions of many women. Let us see just how valuable the women are to this congregation.

The Role of Women in the Church

In just the church at Rome, we read of...

- The service of Phoebe, a helper of Paul and many others ([Romans 16:1-2](#))
- The help of Priscilla, even risking her life for Paul ([Romans 16:3-4](#))
- One named Mary, who bestowed "much labor" ([Romans 16:6](#))
- Twin sisters, Tryphena and Tryphosa ([Romans 16:12](#))
- The beloved Persis ([Romans 16:12](#))

Even today, the growth of many churches is the result of "much labor" by women. How can that be, if women are limited in what they can do in the public assemblies? Public assemblies are actually a small part of the overall work of a congregation. There is much work outside the assembly that must be done if a church is to grow. Women are often in a position to provide much of this needed work!

What can a woman do? How can she contribute to the growth and success of a local church? Let's answer such questions as we review the work of a local church.

Benevolence Is an Important Work

It is a mark of pure and undefiled religion (James 1:27). Ministering to brethren who are sick, poor, imprisoned, etc., is a service rendered to the Lord Himself (Matthew 25:34-40). All Christians, women no less than men, are to be involved in this work (James 2:14-16; I John 3:17).

Women Are Well-Suited for Benevolence

They bring grace and beauty of which men are normally not capable. The unique attributes of femininity lend themselves well to this work. Mercy and compassion are almost second-nature to women. And mercy is one of the gifts the Lord has given to His church (Romans 12:6-8). They often possess skills through which benevolence can be rendered: making clothes, as Dorcas did for needy widows (Acts 9:36-39), cooking, babysitting, ministering to the sick, extending hospitality, etc. Indeed, women who might later be "taken into the number" were to be known or "well-reported" for the good works she had done in this area (I Timothy 5:9-10). Any work that a woman does in the area of benevolence is a powerful contribution to the work and reputation of a local church! Now let's consider...

Edification Is an Essential Work

It involves building up the body of Christ, through the work of every member (Ephesians 4:15-16). It entails following such instructions like:

- "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).
- "Comfort each other and edify one another" (I Thessalonians 5:11).
- "Comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak" (I Thessalonians 5:14).

Some men were known for their work in this area; e.g., Barnabas (Acts 4:36). Through formal teaching of others are also involved in edification. Grandmothers and mothers can teach children, as Lois and Eunice did in II Timothy 1:5 and II Timothy 3:14-15. Older women can and should teach younger women (Titus 2:3-5).

Especially where there are people who come into the church without the benefit of godly mothers and grandmothers, in which Christian women can be surrogates through informal words of encouragement. Sometimes in trying to teach a woman, a woman would have a much closer relationship to her and she would be more open to a woman than a man. With so many dysfunctional families and emotional problems today, the gift of encouragement and nurturing possessed by many women is essential. Many teachers and preachers have been helped by godly women encouraging them in their work. There is a

special need for women to see themselves as teachers of young people and other women and as encouragers of men in their work of preaching the gospel. When women are involved in the work of edification, their contribution to the work of the local church does not go unnoticed. Finally, let's take a look at a woman's contribution to evangelism.

Evangelism Is an Imperative Work

It is the "Great Commission" given by the Lord to His church (Matthew 28:19-20). The gospel is God's power to save, so it must be shared with everyone (Romans 1:16; Mark 16:15-16). This is a work that can be done by everyone (Acts 8:1,4).

Women Can Do Much in the Area of Evangelism

They can help support those who preach the gospel. As did Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna (Luke 8:1-3). Providing much-needed hospitality, as did Lydia (Acts 16:15). They can tell others about Christ. Consider the example of the Samaritan woman, who was instrumental in converting many people to Christ (John 4: 28-31,39-42). Then there was Priscilla, who with her husband provided a place for Paul to stay during his ministry at Corinth (Acts 18:1-4). They converted Apollos at Ephesus (Acts 18:24-26) and hosted a church in their home (I Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:3-5).

Even without a word, godly women can lead others to Christ, including unbelieving husbands (I Peter 3:1-2). Many souls have been saved, and churches started, through the evangelistic efforts of godly women!

There is certainly much that a woman can contribute to the work of the local church, such as the very act of praying, which is no small thing. Beyond that, there is a wide range of activities women can engage in without going beyond the limitations placed on them in the public assemblies. Getting together for the Ladies Bible Study is to be commended. The true measure of a local church is not defined only by what occurs in the assembly. It includes what the members do day-by-day, in the home, at work, in the world. It involves what benevolence, edification, and evangelism take place on a daily, personal basis.

When godly women are active in the service of the Lord, using the unique talents and opportunities given to them, souls are saved, they are strengthened in the Lord, and cared for in times of need. The Lord's church is made stronger, and the kingdom of God is expanded in the world.

May there always be a surplus of women in the Lord's church like Mary Magdalene, Dorcas, Lydia, Priscilla, Lois, Eunice, and of course, Phoebe.

"I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also" (Romans 16:1-2).

May we never take for granted nor denigrate the valuable service rendered by our sisters in Christ, but receive and encourage them in a way worthy of the saints!