

*As churches become more concerned about being less threatening places for non-believers and their image in their own cultures, Christians have become careful in how they use "harsh sounding" words like lost, sin and repentance... It is awkward for many Christians to come to terms with the stark reality that people could be forever lost. I'm afraid many Christians just don't believe that those who have not heard or do not know Christ are lost." David Mays APMC*

**8 Current Beliefs**

1. Materialism Life after death is unlikely Bertrand Russell
2. Skepticism Certainty is arrogance; the gospel is about *now* for postmoderns
3. Universalism Everyone goes to heaven John Hick
4. Inclusivism People saved by Christ without knowing Him, based on available light
5. Postmortem Encounter Unbelievers get a chance after death Clark Pinnock
6. Ameliorationism Unbelievers suffer some negative consequence for some time
7. Annihilationism Unbelievers are ultimately annihilated John Stott
8. Literalism Unbelievers suffer eternal, conscious torment in lake of fire

**6 Arguments posed against Hell**

1. Good God versus sadistic God . hell is abhorrent and offensive
2. All things will eventually and ultimately be restored in Christ - Universalism
3. Eternal punishment for temporal disobedience . Unfair
4. Consuming Fire . annihilation; fire and smoke are eternal, not the soul
5. Sheol = grave Old Testament Doctrine without New Testament Revelation
6. Symbolic Language . serious, but symbolic, not actual,  
authors used human terms to describe the indescribable

**Four Foundational Questions**

- É Is biblical revelation, in a didactic context, without error in all its affirmations?
- É Were writers of scripture recounting prevailing, erroneous beliefs of their age or writing Divine truth?
- É Can definite theological conclusions be made when based on accurate exegesis of scripture?
- É Can prophecy be correctly interpreted literally when describing events or things?

*Does human opinion change a situation? (Either) there is, or is not a future of eternal punishment. Whether we agree with it or not has very little bearing on the issue. The vote against it could be unanimous, and still hell might be a reality. God did not consult us when planning His righteous judgment of the sinful human race. The ultimate question is whether the bible, which is our only source of information about what happens after death, teaches a doctrine of eternal, conscious punishment. % John Walvoord (Four views of Hell Pg 167)*

**Old Testament Witness of Judgment**

- Flood
- Sodom
- Egypt's Plagues & Red Sea
- Korah; Nadab & Abihu
- Captivities to Assyria and Babylon

**Old Testament Passages on Eternal Punishment**

- Isaiah 66:22-24
- Daniel 12:1-2

**Jesus on Hell Gospel of Matthew Only**

- Hell is Real Matt 5:21-22, 27-30; 23:15, 33
- Hell is Ruled by God Matt 10:28; 25:41, 46
- Hell Involves Rejection Matt 7:23; 8:11-12; 22:13; 25:30
- Hell Involves Pain Matt 13:30, 40-43, 49-50; 18:6-9

**Jesus on Hell – Mark, Luke, John**

- Hell and Demons Mark 1:24; 3:11; 5:7
- Hell and Eternity Mark 9:42-48
- Hell and Scripture Luke 16:19-31
- Hell and the Present John 3:16-21; 3:36
- Hell and the Future John 5:28-29; 8:21, 24

## Paul

- Romans 2:5
- 2 Thess 1:5-10

**General Letters** Hebrews 6:1-3 Jude 7, 13

**Revelation** 14:9-11 20:10-15 21:8 22:15

## Bill Hybels

### Hell involves emotional anguish.

- Hell is like *gehenna*, the smoldering trash dump outside Jerusalem, and in hell, people will be consciously aware that they have been deemed irredeemable.
- Hell involves gnashing of teeth-like when we say, "Arrgh!" over a stupid mistake or regret
- Hell involves continual self-reproach: "I knew better; I had the opportunity; I rejected him. I was self-willed. Arrrgh!" But what's awful is there is no next time to do better.

### Hell involves physical anguish.

- Hell is described as fire, flames, furnace-a pain so intense that in Luke 16, a man begs for a few drops of water.

### Hell involves relational anguish.

- The idea there will be fun in hell--poker games, orgies--is a flat-out lie.
- Hell means solitary suffering interrupted by the terror that someone you love is following you

### Hell involves spiritual anguish.

- In hell God is conspicuous by his absence, which brings spiritual terror.
- "Utter darkness": is absolute chaos, hopelessness, futility; morning never comes,
- "The bottomless pit": you're falling, and every moment you fall further and further away from the only source of help and truth and love.

### We end up in hell if we reject the person and work of Jesus.

- We are defiant in sin; we know what we're violating, but forget who we're violating. *Heb 10:29*
- We are continually confronted with truth we reject and increase our coming anguish

### The truth about hell has three implications.

- For unbelievers: fall to your knees and repent.
- For believers: rejoice over what you have been spared from.
- For the church: what we do matters, because we're a rescue operation for humanity.

*“The awkward fact is that the church, for nineteen hundred years, has believed in the uniqueness of Christ, the truth of His word, and the necessity of God’s judgment of the impenitent: and we have to ask why...some or all of these beliefs now seem to have become so unbelievable. Is it that new exegetical discoveries now cast doubt upon what the church has always believed? Has the church misread the bible consistently over so long a period of time? ...It is not new light from the bible but because of new darkness from the culture...”*

## David Wells

We are so unrighteous and sin so normal that the very notion of absolute justice punishing sinners in eternal fire offends us. Our concept of holiness and justice is so warped by our own ungodiness that sin does not bother us but the punishment of it does! We are not offended by sin; we are offended by holiness and labor to excuse or eliminate its reality lest other sinners take issue with it. We fear men more than God. The heart of gospel compassion demands that we spread not only the reality of eternal fire but also the universal invitation to escape certain judgment and find righteousness, peace and forgiveness in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not be ashamed of the gospel. Do not be ashamed of the necessity of it, the subject of it or the offer of it. Teach the doctrine of hell with tears. (rsb)