

## Did Paul Teach that There is a Hell? – Part 2

### Introduction:

1. In our series on hell, we learned why God created such a gruesome and terrible place. Why did God create hell?
  - God's original intention was for hell to be a place of punishment for Satan, and the evil angels that followed Satan. Matthew 25:41
  - Satan took his deceptive lies and carried them on earth to the Garden of Eden. He was able to deceive Eve, but Adam knowingly rebelled against God's authority.
  - Through Adam, judgment had now entered into humanity.
2. We also learned that hell is a literal place, with a definite geographic location in the center of the earth. We studied and saw clearly that hell is, in fact, an undeniable reality.
3. But did the apostle Paul teach that there is a place called hell? God used Paul to write half of the New Testament (13 of the 26 books). Paul is our apostle for this dispensation. He is the apostle to the body of Christ.
4. People have asked this question about Paul, because the word “hell” is used 54 times in the Bible, 23 of those in the New Testament. Yet, this word “hell” does not show up in any of Paul’s writings, nor do we see it during any of his travels in the book of Acts.
5. We know that Paul called the time period we are living in the “*dispensation of the grace of God.*” We know that Paul called his gospel “*the gospel of the grace of God.*”
6. With Paul’s emphasis on grace, did he not teach the doctrine of eternal judgment, divine wrath against sin, or eternal punishment for sin? Did he simply preach God’s grace, and avoid these topics? These are very pertinent questions, because Paul was established as a pattern for the believer today. 1 Timothy 1:16
7. Just because we do not see the **word** “hell,” does that mean that Paul did not teach the principle and concept of hell (judgment against sin and sinners)?
8. In this lesson, we will examine Paul’s teaching concerning these matters. What did Paul teach?

### Paul taught the concept of wrath delayed.

1. Notice in Romans 1:18 that “...*the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...*”
  - This simply means that the world has been deserving of God’s wrath for the past 2,000 years, since they crucified Christ and rejected God’s Spirit.
  - Jesus ascended to heaven, and was exalted at the right hand of the Father. This is a signal and sign to this world that the wrath of God is coming.
2. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven. How? Jesus ascended there as the rejected and exiled King who has been exalted, and given all power and authority. Prophecy called for the wrath to come after Christ’s exaltation in heaven.

3. But yet, the wrath has been held back. Why is this? God saved by grace his chief enemy, Saul of Tarsus, and revealed to him that He would offer to the world a grace period. Of course, we know Saul of Tarsus as the apostle Paul.
4. The wrath is being held be held back temporarily while every person in the world is given an opportunity to repent and turn in faith to Jesus Christ. Paul called it the dispensation of the grace of God. The wrath is ready to fall but is being held back and delayed.
5. So the wrath of God is revealed because Christ is ascended and is exalted at the right hand of the Father. Christ's exaltation reveals and assures the wrath of God. But while it is revealed, it is not being poured out as of yet. God is still offering this grace period.

### **Paul taught the concept of future wrath.**

1. So, God's wrath has been delayed. But will the wrath of God **ever** come? What did Paul teach? Look at Romans 2:4-5.
  - The word "*treasurest*" means "to amass; reserve; to lay up in store."
  - People may think that they are getting away with their sins in this grace period, but Paul taught that payday is coming. He taught that people are storing up wrath which will be executed against them in the future.
  - We are living in a time of "wrath delayed."
2. God's wrath and judgment against sin is a key element in the gospel of grace that Christ gave to Paul.
3. We know that Paul thoroughly lays out his gospel in Romans 1-5. But, where does Paul begin?
  - He begins in the first two-and-a-half chapters with a thorough explanation of the coming and sure wrath and judgment of God against sin. Romans 1:18-32, 2:1-6, 8-9
  - In 3:1-8, we see these words: judged, vengeance, judge the world, judged as a sinner, damnation.
  - Like a brilliant attorney, Paul establishes and proves the sin and guilt of mankind. Romans 3:9-10, 19-20, 23
4. Why does Paul do this? Because you cannot understand and appreciate grace in its fullness until you first understand wrath and judgment. People won't get saved until they first know they are lost. There is no need for salvation unless there is a real danger.
  - The doctrine of wrath and judgment against sin magnifies the grace of God.
  - After dealing with these rather negative issues and realities, Paul then goes on to explain the cross work of Christ, and the grace that is freely offered because of His sacrifice (3:24-25). He explains that anybody in the world can be justified by faith without the deeds of the law (3:28), and be at peace with God. 5:1

### **Paul taught the concept of eternal judgment.**

1. As we have learned, Paul did not simply preach grace to the exclusion of divine wrath and judgment. He preached wrath delayed, and grace offered, but never did he give people the idea that divine wrath and judgment were a non-issue.
2. In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, we see this principle once again of wrath delayed, but also of future judgment.
3. The Thessalonian believers were enduring great afflictions and persecution from unbelievers because of their faith in Christ. 1:4
4. Never does Paul indicate that they could expect the suffering to stop, but he does indicate that a judgment day is coming to their persecutors. vs. 5-9
5. Notice that God is going to “*take vengeance on them that know not God.*” vs. 8
  - Paul never gave the idea that because of God’s grace, He will overlook people’s rebellion and disobedience. The vengeance against sin is presently delayed, but it is definitely coming. Romans 12:19
6. Not only this, they will be punished with “*everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord...*” (vs. 9) This word “*everlasting*” means “perpetual; eternal; forever.”
  - Did you notice that this destruction takes place “*from the presence of the Lord?*” This indicates that the people being destroyed are somewhere. They are not annihilated and nonexistent.
  - If I am banished **from** His presence, then I am somewhere else. Paul is teaching that unbelievers can expect an eternal destruction that takes place somewhere else.
  - What place in the Bible fits the description of eternal destruction whereby you are banished from the presence of the Lord? This is a perfect definition of hell, or the lake of fire. Matthew 25:41, 46
7. As we said earlier in this lesson, just because Paul does not use the word “hell” or the phrase “lake of fire” does not mean that he did not teach the principle. Hell is eternal judgment and Paul clearly taught the concept of eternal judgment.
8. In Romans 1:32, Paul affirms the future judgment of God against wickedness and sin, and teaches that the penalty is death. When we cross-reference with this Revelation 20:14-15, we learn that God’s judgment is not just physical death, but also a spiritual death of the soul and spirit. cf. Romans 2:2-5
  - This death is not annihilation, but separation from the Lord’s presence as Paul taught in 2 Thessalonians 1:9.

### **In Conclusion:**

1. When asking the question, “Did Paul teach that there is a hell?” - we have to look beyond the mere use of the word and ask ourselves, “Did Paul teach the principles of divine wrath and judgment, divine vengeance against sin, and eternal destruction?”
2. We have seen clearly in this lesson that Paul taught all of these principles. Paul taught that divine judgment is coming, so you’d better prepare. Acts 17:30-31, 24:24-25

3. Why didn't Paul use the actual word "hell" when preaching and teaching? To be quite frank, I do not know. Obviously, if he did use the word "hell," the Holy Spirit did not allow it to be recorded. There must be a reason, but I do not know why.
- Here is a thought to ponder. Hell is mentioned all throughout Israel's Old Testament law and prophets. Hell is referred to 31 times, with its first mention in the Bible in Israel's law, in Deuteronomy 32:22. God is issuing warning to Israel in the passage.
  - Of course, we know that Paul's ministry was to the Gentiles. Paul traveled to Gentile lands and started Gentile churches. He called himself the apostle of the Gentiles.
  - Because Gentiles would not have been acquainted with Israel's law and prophets, the word "hell" would not have computed with them.
  - But, the phrases "*the wrath of God,*" or "*everlasting destruction,*" or "*judgment of God*" would have been clearly understood.
  - Could this be why we still see "hell" mentioned throughout the gospels (Christ's earthly ministry to Israel), in the early portion of Acts (still Israel), but then it doesn't show up again until the book of James (written to the 12 tribes of Israel), and then in Peter, Jude, and Revelation?
4. But, the important thing to understand is that Paul did, in fact, teach the concept and principle of hell and eternal judgment.