

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## The Everlasting Fire

By Harold Fite

Fire in the domestic realm is beneficial, By it we cook our meals and warm ourselves. Fire also destroys our possessions and our lives. Fire can inflict intense pain upon the human body; disfigure and destroy it. One has only to go to the burn center in Galveston, Texas to witness the horrible results of fire on flesh.

God frequently used fire to punish the disobedient. He rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24). He brought hail mingled with fire upon the Egyptians (Exod. 9:23). By fire God destroyed two hundred fifty men who were in rebellion (Num. 16:35). God sent fire upon Nadab and Abihu to devour them because they acted without his authority (Lev. 10:2). Someday the heavens will be dissolved by fire and the elements shall melt with fervent heat (2 Pet. 3:12).

I have observed flaming fire consuming industrial buildings and felt the scorching heat two blocks away. I have seen huge furnaces in which fire generated incredibly high temperatures. In both instances I thought, “This must be, in a small measure, what Hell is like.”

People fear fire, and respect it. Yell “fire!” in a crowded room and people panic and rush madly for the exits. In their hysteria some have crushed others to death fleeing from the searching and searing flames bent on engulfing them. Here we have a paradox: while people will flee from fire, millions are racing toward the fire of hell – actually inviting it!

Hell is a place of fire. The Scriptures describe hell as a *“lake of fire”* (Rev. 20:14); *“furnace of fire”* (Matt. 13:42); and *“hell fire”* (Matt. 18:9). It is into this fire that the ungodly will be cast. How terribly frightening to contemplate being thrown into a lake consumed by fire, or into a suffocating, searing furnace of fire. This is just a hint of what the fire of hell will be like.

Whatever the nature of that fire, God used the word that would best describe hell. If it is a metaphor it is a “likeness or similarity set forth as reality.” The punishment of fire is far worse than anything we have seen, heard, or imagined.

Fire produces pain. Those who go to hell will be tormented by fire. Jesus said, *“There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth”* (Matt. 13:42). The rich man died and was buried, *“and being in torments”* in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Then he cried and said, *“Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame”* (Luke 16:23, 24). He was in agony with no hope of relief.

The nature of this fire is *“everlasting.”* Jesus will ultimately say to those on his left hand, *“Depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels”* (Matt. 25:41). Jude describes it as *“eternal”* (Jude 7).

Jesus warns us that if we place our members at the disposal of sinful desires we shall be cast into hell fire, *“where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For everyone shall be salted by fire”* (Mark 9:48,49). There are two destructive forces: the worm and fire. Both suggest to us the permanence of retribution. The worm dieth not, therefore the “gnawing anguish” never ceases. Those in hell are *“salted with fire”* (preserved), therefore, the results remain constant. *“The smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night”* (Rev. 14:11). Just think, to be in constant agony forever, with no hope of escaping the horrors of hell.

*“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men”* (2 Cor. 5:11). ■

## Seven Fundamental Facts About Hell

By Glendol McClure

The subject of hell is often considered an unpopular subject with some. The fact that very few preachers of our “wise” society ever discuss the subject, suggests its unpopularity, or the false belief on the part of many that hell does not exist. Many people in our society believe, because of their immoral conduct and ungodliness, that hell does not exist and would deny that they or anyone else could go there. Yet in a rage or fit of anger, they would tell someone to go there! How many have you ever heard admit that they believe a relative or loved one or they themselves are going there? Please consider with me, then, Seven Fundamental Facts About Hell:

**First, it is a real place!** The same Bible that teaches of heaven, teaches there is a place called hell. If the Bible says it is a real place, then that settles it! Since God’s *“word is Truth”* (John 17:17), and God *“cannot lie”* (Titus 1:2), and the fact is that Jesus warned His disciples of this place (Luke 12:4-5), without a doubt, there is such a place!

**Second, it is a horrible place!** It is described more in terms of *“fire”* than any other figure of speech. It is described as an *“everlasting fire”* (Matt. 25:41); *“the fire that shall never be quenched”* (Mk. 9:43); *“a lake of fire”* (Rev. 20:15); a place of *“everlasting punishment”* (Matt. 25:46). It is not surprising that in this place *“there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth”* (Matt. 13:42).

**Third, it is a place anyone can go to!** There are many places I cannot go. For example, I cannot go into a Mormon temple because I am not a Mormon, and neither can you if you are not a Mormon. But, anyone can go to the place called hell! Because God is a God of love, many refuse to believe that He will allow anyone to go there (1 John 4:8). But, God is also a God of wrath as well. Paul wrote, *“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off”* (Rom. 11:22). God will deal severely with those who disobey him (Rom. 11:20). Listen to the words of Paul, *“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power”* (2 Thess. 1:7-9). All the disobedient will go there!

**Fourth, it is a place of eternal duration!** This place has no end; time stands still in this place. It is difficult for man to fathom eternity. Why? To everything in this life there is an end. Just as heaven is never ending, hell is never ending – it is eternal (Mark 3:29; Heb. 6:2; Jude 7)!

**Fifth, it is the abode of great classes of people, even angels!** The immoral will be there (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8)! Children of God or unfaithful brethren who become *“again entangled”* in the *“pollutions of the world”* will be there (2 Pet. 2:20-22; Heb. 6:1-6; 10:23-31)! The *“devil and his angels”* and all sinners will be there (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 21:8)! Will you or I be there? We make the choice whether to be with God or Satan!

**Sixth, it is a place of no escape!** In this life, prisoners can escape from a prison to the outside world. But in hell, there is no place to escape; the world and all things therein will be burned up (2 Pet 3:9-12). There will be no way to cross *“the great gulf fixed”* (Luke 16:26). Remember, it is the place of *“everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power”* (2 Thess. 1:9).

**Seventh, it is a place that can be avoided!** God is rich in mercy and grace, in that He sent His Son to die for those lost in sin. Since *“all have sinned”* (Rom. 3:23; 5:12), then all men must believe and obey the saving gospel of Christ to avoid this place (Rom. 1:16; Acts 10:35). The Hebrew writer expressed it well when he wrote, *“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him”* (Heb. 5:9).

Hell is a place everyone should want to avoid! ■

***“And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life”*** (Matt. 24:46, ASV).

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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