

## Studies on Hell – Part 2 – No One is Good

Hi everyone and welcome to “Grain of Wheat Publishing” and “Studies in Scripture.” My name is Jack Marshall and thank you for joining me today.

Before I get started, let me remind you that this is Part 2 of my series, “Studies on Hell.” If you haven’t had a chance to view Part 1, I would encourage you to do so.

Our topic today is “No One is Good.” Let’s get started.

In my first video about “Studies on Hell,” I spoke about the strength of tradition and gave you two examples of how a particular concept forms like that of “Christmas” or “Lucifer” and over the centuries, becomes a widely accepted belief that millions embrace, due not to the fact that it’s truth, but because we ignorantly or willfully disregard the commandments and Word of God in order to keep and hold to our traditional beliefs. See Mark, Chapter 7, verses 6 through 13.

I cannot help but believe that there are other traditions which we have accepted, concepts if you will, that may appear right on the surface, but once examined, fall apart in the light of scripture. Our belief in “hell” as a place of “eternal torment” is definitely one of them. Consider what’s recorded in Mark, Chapter 10, verse 17, the English Standard Version:

**And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."**

Let’s take a moment to examine the current belief about hell in light of these passages. First of all, and according to tradition, it’s a place where “sinners” go, a place of unimaginable “torment,” so much so that it lies beyond our ability to even comprehend it. Think about it. “Eternal” torment. Not just unimaginable pain and suffering for a few minutes, days, or weeks, but for “eternity,” neverending in intensity or in time! If this is true, then how do we support this idea with the following passages from 1<sup>st</sup> John, Chapter 4, verses 8 and 16?

**He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.**

**And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.**

“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” “He who does not love.” So answer me this. Would “eternal torment,” which would be considered no less than torture, be the result of someone who loves? Right now, if you knew someone that was torturing one of your family members or friends, would you equate this to love, regardless of the reason why they were being tortured? Being raw and honest, I don’t think so.

Beloved, John tells us in no uncertain terms that “God is love,” not “does” love (although He does), but is the very essence of love itself. Look at what John went on to say just a couple of verses later in 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:18:

**There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.**

“There is no fear in love,” beloved, none whatsoever, for “perfect love casts out fear” and “fear involves torment.” In the King James Bible, our phrase “fear involves torment” is translated as “fear hath torment.” In Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament, he tells us that, quote, “Torment is a faulty translation. The word means punishment, penalty. It occurs in the New Testament only here and Matthew 25:46. The kindred

verb (which means, “To punish”), is found in Acts 4:21 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2:9. Note the present tense, hath. **The punishment is present. Fear by anticipating punishment has it even now.** End quote.

Do I believe in punishment? I most certainly do! Does God punish us? He most certainly does! How do I know? Because my father punished me when I was a child whenever I acted out in disobedience. Would our “heavenly Father” do any less? I don’t think so, and the writer of Hebrews confirms this for us in Chapter 12, verses 5 through 11.

**And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**

No doubt about it, these passages make it clear. God does discipline us, just like our “earthly fathers” have “as it seemed best to them.” But God’s “punishment” is always FOR OUR GOOD. It’s *remedial*, that is, “corrective,” and our passages show us that. “He disciplines us FOR OUR GOOD, that we may share his holiness.” And His discipline, though “painful,” leads to “the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” And what is “righteousness”? It basically means “right behavior.” And that’s the point of discipline, is it not? To correct our behavior?

At this point, let me take a moment to talk about “free will,” a question that many have wrangled with and disagreed on many times over. Do we, that is, humankind at large, have “free will”? If our passages in Hebrews, Chapter 12, have anything to say about it, we most certainly do! After all, why would we need to be corrected if not for the fact that we make our own decisions which lead to actions which sometimes requires punishment? And, I will go so far as to say that this is one of the biggest problems that we face in society today, which is the idea of “personal responsibility.” I am truly amazed at how many today “paint” themselves as “victims,” and this despite the fact of their own lawless actions! “Do not be deceived,” my friends, “God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.” No one can dispute this universal truth! (see Galatians, Chapter 6, verses 7 through 10).

Now, let’s return to our passages from 1<sup>st</sup> John for a moment. Look at verses 19 through 21:

**We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.**

Now, look at what Jesus said in Matthew, Chapter 5, verses 43 through 45:

**"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

Finally, consider the following from Matthew 22:

**"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."**

In all of these passages, we are commanded to love our "God," our "brother," our "neighbor," and even our "enemies." And our word "neighbor"? It means, "Close by." Would you agree with me when I say that this leaves no one out? So, let's return to our passage from Mark, Chapter 10, verse 17:

**And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."**

Here, beloved, is one of the main reasons why I don't believe in "hell" as "eternal torment" in some netherworld somewhere. When this man came up to Jesus and called him "Good Teacher," Jesus Himself responded, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone." If Jesus himself said this, who am I to say that I, or anyone else I know, is inherently good enough to bypass "eternal torment" if it's real? Consider what Paul recorded concerning his brethren in Romans, Chapter 3, verses 9 through 12, the New International Version:

**What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles, "i.e. all other nations," alike are all under sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."**

Wow! What powerful words Paul wrote! "There is NO ONE righteous, not even one; there is NO ONE who understands, NO ONE who seeks God. ALL have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is NO ONE WHO DOES GOOD, NOT EVEN ONE"! This pretty much makes the playing field level, does it not? And if this is true, who of us qualifies as one to say that anyone should be subjected to "eternal torment"?

Does God judge us? Yes He does! But does He judge or discipline us "eternally"? If so, where in this idea do we find any "corrective" action? Once "corrected," shouldn't the punishment end? If it doesn't, wouldn't we equate this to unreasonable TORTURE? I would! And believe me when I say that God knows how to get our attention and to correct us accordingly. And He will correct us for as long as it takes for "God is love." But, once corrected, He stops, He doesn't continue to correct us because there is no longer any need to do so! Consider what Jesus said to His disciples in Luke, Chapter 12:

**And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.**

Perhaps Jesus had this in mind when He spoke these words recorded in Luke 12. They're found in Deuteronomy, Chapter 25, verses 1 through 3.

**If there is a dispute between men and they come into court and the judges decide between them, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty, then if the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence with a number of stripes in proportion to his offense. Forty stripes may be given him, but not more, lest, if one should go on to beat him with more stripes than these, your brother be degraded in your sight.**

Do you see it? Yes, God judges, and so do we in our own system of law, however, THERE IS AND SHOULD BE A LIMIT to our punishment! Our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ are not in the business of TORTURE. If so, then they are both the most narcissistic and masochistic beings that exist! Am I blaspheming when I say this? Not at all, BECAUSE I DON'T BELIEVE THIS FOR EVEN A SECOND!

Now, allow me to give you the final component that is the number one reason why I don't believe in "eternal torment." What is it? It is the component of PRIDE. And what do the scriptures have to say about it? Consider the following from Proverbs 8:13:

**The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.**

Here's Proverbs 11:2:

**When pride comes, then comes shame...**

And from Proverbs 13:10:

**By pride comes nothing but strife...**

Finally, here's Proverbs 16:18:

**Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.**

So what do we mean by pride? Paul defines it for us in Romans 12:3:

**For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.**

Beloved, any way you slice it, the idea of "eternal torment" is a teaching birthed out of pride, out of the arrogance of thinking that we, in light of our faith, are "just a little bit better" than those around us! But remember, "There is NO ONE righteous, not even one; there is NO ONE who understands, NO ONE who seeks God... there is NO ONE WHO DOES GOOD, NOT EVEN ONE"!

Now, in light of the fact that "NO ONE seeks God," consider what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman in John, Chapter 4, verses 21 through 24:

**Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."**

The "true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth," Jesus said, and "the Father is seeking such people to worship him." You see, beloved, it is the Father who seeks, not we ourselves! In confirmation, Jesus said the following in Matthew 11:27:

**All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.**

Also consider John 6:44:

**No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...**

Did Jesus say, "No one"? Yes He did, and this is what the Lord followed with a few verses later in John 6:64:

**But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."**

In light of what Jesus said, does this not change our idea of "accepting" the Lord? Is it not obvious that absolutely no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws him?

Finally, God seeks those who will worship him "in spirit and truth." If "God is love," then "in spirit" means "in the spirit of love," not human love, but divine love, a love that transcends the human and unpredictable love with which we are all familiar. Look at what Paul told Timothy in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:7:

**For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.**

May I say it? The idea of "eternal torment" or TORTURE issues from "a spirit of fear" and not from "a sound mind." The idea of "torture" is a product of the carnal mind, an unstable mind, a mind that Paul declared "is death" in Romans 8:6. Brothers and sisters, Paul tells us that the ministry of the Spirit is the ministry of reconciliation which means, "The restoration of friendly relations" (see 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, Chapter 3, verses 6 through 11 as well as Chapter 5, verses 18 and 19).

Think about it. Is it more noble to defeat your enemy or to restore him to a harmonious relationship? Is it more noble to destroy or to heal, to forgive or not forgive, to love or to hate? The idea of "eternal torment" is an extremely HATEFUL teaching, one that has risen out of the extreme pride and arrogance of religious self-righteousness, AND NOT out of the spirit of "power and of love and of a sound mind." Understand beloved, Jesus was not forced to die, HE DIED WILLINGLY, laying down His life for all of us because He loves us unconditionally. And He died for all, no exceptions. See 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5, verses 14 and 15.

Finally, let me say this. Nowhere in scripture will you find that God ever "tortured" anyone; not in the Old Testament, and certainly not in the New. Despite the severity of God's judgments as recorded in the Old Testament, never at any time did He ever command Moses or Israel to "torture" anyone; not their enemies nor their brethren, even when they were guilty of the most grievous of sins. Punishment? Yes! Torture? No! Understand, brothers and sisters, that torture is man's doing, not God's, and never has it been more exemplified than by those who put Christ to death so long ago. And the Lord Jesus, who is the "brightness of His glory" and the "express image of His person," showed us in no uncertain terms that God's love for us has never and will never incorporate any form of "eternal torment" or "torture." God's wisdom and love, as expressed through His Son's death on the cross, is far above this! Understand that He is more than able, and has purposed through the power of His Spirit and Word, to save every soul on this planet! The Apostle Paul understood this quite well, telling Timothy in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:10, that God "is the savior of ALL MEN, especially of those who believe."

That's it for today's video and I sincerely hope that it has helped you. Please keep in mind that I will be continuing this series on "hell," so be sure to subscribe to my channel. Also, feel free to leave your comments and questions below and visit my Facebook page at Grain of Wheat Publishing or my website at [www.grainofwheatpublishing.org](http://www.grainofwheatpublishing.org). In my next video, we will discuss the "Fire of God," so be sure to check back! Thank you so much for joining me today and may God bless you in your walk with Christ.