

The Value of a Soul # 10

We Should Value Our Souls to Avoid the Horrors of Hell

The final state of the lost is not annihilation, or oblivion, or some venue of limited punishment. Rather, the Bible teaches that those outside of Christ will “. . . go away to eternal punishment. . .” (Mt. 25:46). This punishment will occur in a place popularly known as hell, but more accurately called Gehenna (Mt. 5:22, 10:28). The name Gehenna is taken from an area south of Jerusalem called the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom (Josh. 15:8).

In Old Testament times the valley was sometimes used as a place of idolatry and human sacrifice (2 Chron. 28:3, 33:6). In Jesus’ day, it was the garbage dump of Jerusalem. All the rubbish, refuse, and waste of Jerusalem was deposited there. That which was flammable was set on fire, and that which was perishable was infested with maggots and vermin. It was a place of ill-repute, of rejection, of unbearable stench, of choking smoke, and of all uncleanness. It was one of the most unpleasant places imaginable.

This is the location that Jesus used as a type or shadow of hell. He used it to convey an impression of just how bad the real hell actually is. Hell is the rubbish dump, not of Jerusalem, but of the entire universe. The refuse and rejects of both the earthly and supernatural realms will be consigned to that spiritual sewer (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

Various expressions are used to describe the awful conditions in hell. It is a place of fire, stench and outer darkness (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10; Mt. 8:12). Jesus said that “. . . their worm does not die . . .” (Mk. 9: 48).

So severe is the punishment of hell that the Bible says that its inhabitants have “. . .no rest day or night. . .” (Rev. 14:11). Jesus also warned that there will be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 13:42). These are the sounds of hell.

The hopeless, lost souls who are cast into everlasting perdition will undoubtedly spend their eternity in burning anguish, unfathomable regret, aching remorse, incessant recrimination, and profound bitterness.

In view of such a prospect, should we not value our souls, and the souls of others?