

# Northeast Church of Christ

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## From the Pen of Paul: *Hell's Inhabitants*

There is far too little concern about Hell in the minds of men today. Yet Jesus warned, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). We are given a warning about upcoming judgment in Hebrews 9:27. And even the rich man of Luke 16 wanted to warn others about the place of torment (Luke 16:27-28). One of the most repulsive thoughts about hell is its inhabitants. There are a number of lists given in scripture detailing its population. One such list is found in Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Other lists may be read in Romans 1:29-32, Galatians 5:19-21 and I Corinthians 6:9-10. If men would only consider hell's inhabitants, it should change their minds about going there.

Hell is a real place. It is not just a made-up idea; it is not a figment of the imagination. It is a place of everlasting fire (Matt. 25:41). It is a place of torment (Luke 16:19-31). Notice that the word in Luke 16:23 is plural, "*torments*". And this torment will last forever (Rev. 14:10-11). Let's take a closer look at its inhabitants.

It will be filled with horrible souls. Among them will be those who satisfy the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8; Rom. 1:28-32). Included will be the drunkard, prostitutes, drug dealers and drug addicts, fornicators, and the list

goes on and on. And along with those will be the dignified unbeliever and the spiritual coward. It is interesting that the first one named in Revelation 21:8 is "the fearful."

Among hell's inhabitants will be the most uncharitable people. Those on the left, in Jesus' picture of the judgment in Matthew 25:42-44, had refused to feed the hungry, relieve the thirsty, provide clothing for the needy, and had lent no assistance to those sick or in prison. These people present selfishness at its zenith. They had nothing to give no matter what the need. It seems that this may have been the rich man's problem in Luke 16. How would you like to spend all your time on earth with skinflints and misers?

Alongside of these vile, morally-corrupt individuals will also be some devoutly religious people. Jesus spoke of them in Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." No one who reads this can deny that these were religious folks while on earth; yet they stand condemned. These are those who have followed their own ways, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7-8). It is obvious that just being religious is not enough. To escape being a part of hell's inhabitants, one

***“Is church attendance necessary to the Christian life? How does this worship period help in living right?”***

Actually, we are dealing with two questions here. Let us consider them as such.

First, is church attendance necessary to the Christian life? There is no doubt about it. If we would please God, we must attend the gatherings of the whole church. The Bible says, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25). So many times people read into this command of God some things which are not there.

Some think that Hebrews 10:25 says Sunday, but it does not. No doubt Sunday worship is included in the passage, but it does not apply to Sunday only. Notice the passage says “assembling.” The Christian is not to forsake any gathering of his home congregation. God says to every child of His, “Be present when the saints meet.”

The Christian is to be zealous of good works (Titus 2:14). All we have to do to know whether we should attend worship or not is to answer the question, “Is worshiping God good?” If we say it is, then we should be zealous for it and attend. If it is not, then why not? We all know that worshiping the Creator is not only good but excellent.

Any person who loves God will want to worship Him every time he can. When we find people arguing about whether to

worship God or not, there is something wrong. In fact, there is something bad wrong. Such people are lacking in their love for the Lord. Folks may talk about how much they love the Lord, but when they will not worship Him as He has commanded, such talk is vain. Their actions prove the sincerity or insincerity of that talk. Yes, church attendance is necessary to the Christian life.

But how does worship help in living right? Worship helps in many ways. The great Christian hymns exhort us to greater heights in serving God (Col. 3:16-17; Eph. 5:19). When the word of God is preached, our souls are fed and this makes us

stronger and more like the Father would have us to be. As we meet with those of like precious faith, we are encouraged to do better and live better. When we pray in the assembly of the saints, God grants us greater strength to live the Christian life. When we take the Lord's Supper, we commune with the Lord. This draws one nearer to His precious side.

Worshiping God is a tremendous blessing and helps us as we strive to live right from day to day. We may rest assured that whatever God demands is for our good in all things.

—Malcolm L. Hill

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must be religiously *right!* No alterations of any kind are allowed (Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19). No doubt there will be those in hell who were good moral people on earth. However, morality *alone* is not enough. Cornelius was a great moral individual; yet he had to obey the gospel in order to be saved. Read Acts 10. The Jews were not good enough. Jesus told them failure to believe in Him would result in their dying in their sins. And to die in sin meant they could not go where Christ is (John 8:21-24).

Among the inhabitants will also be some who were members of the Lord's church on earth; but they were lukewarm members like those at

Laodicea in Revelation 3. Jesus said He would “spue them out” (Rev. 3:14-22). We must remain active in His service (I Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9). Those who go back are condemned (II Pet. 2:20-22). Hypocrites are even called “sons of hell” (Matt. 23:15).

Sound like somewhere you would like to visit? What about a never-ending eternity among this repulsive population? Most are traveling the “broad way” that “leads to destruction” (Matt. 7:13-14). You must determine not to be among them!

—*Paul M. Wilmoth*