



## Whole Body Cast Into Hell

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(Mat 5:29-30) And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. {30} And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Perhaps, the strongest argument for ignoring this as a call to avoid the grips of hell is to understand that Matthew, and the Gospels,



are not written to Christians. Still, many won't accept this as truth, so let's consider another point.

What is the immediate context of this section in Matthew, chapter five? The answer can easily be found a few verses earlier.

(Mat 5:19-20) Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but

whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. {20} For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus taught these people about entering into the kingdom of heaven, something that they eventually rejected. As you probably now know, the Kingdom was announced three times during those early years, and was, three times rejected. Finally, God stopped all movements associated with the Kingdom, and told us that He would announce it and make

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it successful in the future. Take some time to review what Paul taught in the last part of the book of Acts. Jesus taught people how to act and believe if they wanted to enter into the Kingdom. But, we are not able to enter into the Kingdom at this time. We are not even trying to enter into it today. It is simply not available. We, as Christians, have been given access to something far greater. Yes, we will see the Kingdom of God in the future, but we will not be bound by it, for we are bound by a far greater entity, that being, the family of God. We are sons of God by birth, and that is far more amazing than other membership presented in God's Word. So, these teachings of Jesus in Matthew, chapter five, relate to a different people in a different time. They are not written to Christians at all.

And don't ignore what Jesus said about righteousness. Most of

us know little to nothing about the scribes and Pharisees, and especially their righteousness. But, if you want to enter into the kingdom of heaven, your righteousness must exceed theirs. That seems totally impossible except for one small point. As Christians, our righteousness is literally the righteousness of God. Is His righteousness greater than that of those men? I'd say at least a thousand times greater, wouldn't you? Of course you would.

(Rom 3:22) Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

And ...

(2 Cor 5:21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the

righteousness of God in him.

Truly, our righteousness is God's righteousness. Consider this as you read Matthew 5:20 and you should see that these different parts of the Bible are talking to different people in time. I'll take the Christian view, any day. What about you?

Finally, we should consider another point. What does "hell" in these two verses really mean? I'd like to refer back to last month's Artios on Raca and the subject of the eternally burning trash dump – geenna.

"Hell" refers to the gehenna of fire, in the valley of Hinnom. This place is mentioned in other parts of the Bible, as well.

(2 Chr 33:6) And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed

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times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

It is also called Tophet, a place of cremation. Tophet was a place in this valley of Hinnom.

(Isa 30:33) For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

It was here that the refuse of Jerusalem was continually being burnt up by the perpetual fires.

These are several places the Bible refers to Tophet.

(Jer 7:31-33) And they have

built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. {32} Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place. {33} And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away.

(2 Ki 23:10) And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

(Mark 9:48) Where their

worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

(Isa 66:24) And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

The fires were continually burned here for the destruction of the refuse of Jerusalem. From this, it was supposed that it also referred to the judgment of God, but the Bible never really says that. Geenna occurs 19 times, and is always rendered "hell." But it is always talking about this place of refuse.

In my opinion, to leap from the clear cut meaning of a burning trash dump into the arms of hell is just too much of a stretch. Jesus didn't tell people that they

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were standing on the precipitous overhangs of hell itself, and to avoid it, they needed to dismember their body parts. Do you believe that he was? If you do, why haven't you lost an eye, or an arm, or a hand, or your other parts? Because, surely you have committed at least one of the offenses listed in Matthew, chapter five.

We are so willing to jump off a self-righteous bandwagon if it fits our belief, but we often ignore the other parts of related scripture. And, why is that? Well, that's an answer you can provide to God. I'm, honestly, not interested in what it might be.

We've got several important considerations to embrace in order to decide our fate.

1. What is the immediate context of this section of

Matthew, chapter five?

a. Answer: Entering into the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. To whom is Matthew addressed (as well as the other Gospels)?

a. Answer: The Jews, for the most part, but sometimes groups of Gentiles as well. Never Christians.

3. Does the Christian's righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees?

a. The Christian has God's righteousness, which is far greater than anything man could ever produce on his own.

4. What does the word "hell" really mean?

a. Answer: Eternally burning trash dump.

5. Does Jesus really teach that we are standing on the precipitous overhangs of hell

itself and that the only way to avoid falling in is to dismember our bodies?

a. No, he doesn't. He is teaching a far greater truth to those who received the announcement of the Kingdom. All people are expected to live according to God's Word, especially those who were possibly about to enter into God's Kingdom (something that didn't happen, but was put on hold until a fourth, future announcement will be made).

Now, it's time for you to make up your mind. I've made mine up. I accept the Christian teachings from the Church Epistles and the New Testament (the books of the Bible following the Gospels).

**(Rom 5:9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.**

Either it's true or it's a lie. I

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believe that the truth clearly states that we, as Christians, have been saved from wrath through Jesus Christ. What do you believe?

Much love in Christ!

Jerry D. Brown