

A Review of
GOD'S JUDGEMENTS AND PUNISHMENTS
Homer Hailey (Nevada Publications, 2003)

Recommendations

The same reverent investigation of Scripture that defined Hailey's teaching and preaching also marks this, his final literary work. Such investigation led him to conclude that hell is a place of total, everlasting destruction – not a place of unending conscious torment. -- Edward Fudge (back cover)

Homer Hailey...dug back into the Word as if for the first time, he was drawn inexorably to the conclusion...that, indeed, God's punishment of the wicked will be as total and complete as the fire which consumed the godless inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. In such a lake of fire, no soul could possibly survive to be consciously tormented.... -- F. LaGard Smith (p. x)

Opinion about History

He [Hailey] had been the victim of unjust vilification for taking unpopular positions -- F. LaGard Smith (Ibid)

Methodology

- Part 1 – God's judgments on the nations of old and warnings for our nation today
- Part 2 – Judgment and eternal punishment of individuals

Contrasting Opening Comments

"After seventy years of studying, preaching, teaching, and writing on books and themes of the Bible, I had never read a book on this subject, or even an in-depth chapter on it. I was limited to a few superficial studies, but nothing more. This fact is true of the brotherhood as a whole and society in general..." (p. xiv)

"However, the Bible speaks today as it did nineteen hundred years ago; and all we know or can know on the subject must be learned from God" (Vanguard, Nov. 1982, p. 1)

"I made this study with no theory or presupposition to prove or sustain. The comment on Revelation 20:10 in my Commentary on Revelation is correct to an extent. But it is not a full exegesis of the verse. Only one point was established in my mind, and that was: there is an eternal punishment in store for the wicked. Whether that eternal punishment is extinction, annihilation, or a continuous consciousness in a lake of fire for ever and ever, was a matter of indifference. I was not interested in proving either" (p. xv)

Commentary Comments

"And now the devil and his former helpers suffer the torment of the lake of fire and brimstone for ever and ever. There are many who question the eternal duration of this torment, but these must explain away biblical teaching. Jesus said that at the judgment those on His left hand would be told, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels...and these shall go away into

eternal punishment; but the righteous into eternal life (Matt. 25:41, 46). Both the punishment and the life are eternal...If there shall be total annihilation of the devil and the wicked it is not revealed" (*Commentary on Revelation*, 1979, p. 398-399).

Additional Comments

"Those who would make Paul's 'eternal destruction' mean annihilation, eliminate the Scriptural teaching on the subject, thus making Jesus and the apostles deceivers or men who were deceived" (*Vanguard*, Dec. 1982, p. 17)

Matter of indifference?

Not interested in proving a position? Or exposing the false teaching of annihilation?

"Introduction"

- "The verdict [of eternal judgment] will be eternal *punishment* itself, or eternal life with God; neither is referred to as simply eternal existence" (p. 134)
 - Can eternal life or eternal punishment be real if there is no continual conscious existence?
 - "Probably the clearest proof of the eternal nature of punishment in the lake of fire may be learned from the parallel between eternal life of the righteous with the eternal torment of the wicked...the duration is the same...the materialists who bring hell and eternal punishment to an end, bring the wicked, the righteous and God to an end. Who can believe it?" (*Vanguard*, Dec. 1982, pp. 17-18).

Chapter 9: Our God – A Consuming Fire

- Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29
- Consume – Ex. 32:10; Num. 16:21
- "These illustrations reveal the meaning of 'consume,' and what the scriptures mean by the phrase, 'Our God is a consuming fire.' It meant total and complete destruction from the face of the earth" (p. 138)
 - Does not teach spiritual annihilation! Did Korah's soul go out of existence?

Chapter 10: Examples of Eternal Punishments

- Sodom and Gomorrah

"Sodom and Gomorrah left the spiritual or moral realm in which God intended man should live, for a lifestyle of lust. God rained brimstone and fire upon them, totally destroying the cities. The destruction was so complete that their location is uncertain, not a vestige of either city has yet been confirmed. Jude says, These 'are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire' (v. 7)...If they serve as an example, what do they teach except that those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire are to exist no more?" (*Ibid.*, pp. 141-142).

 - Hailey confuses the destruction of the physical cities and the eternal judgment of the wicked inhabitants of the cities
 - Jude 7 – "suffering" the punishment of eternal fire
 - "The participle is present, indicating that they are suffering to this day the punishment which came upon them in Lot's time" (Vincent's Word Studies, Vol. 1, p. 715); not physical cities, but wicked inhabitants
- Chaff, tares, dry branches – burned up
 - Descriptions of punishment – ours will be *eternal* punishment

Chapter 11: Jesus: Gehenna – Hell Fire

- “Word ‘destroy’ is from the Greek *apollumi*, and is defined as ruin, destroy, and of Matthew 10:28, ‘eternal death’ (A & G 94)...By being destroyed in hell, he loses his body and soul” (p. 150)
 - No definition includes annihilation – that is Hailey’s interpretation, against other scriptures that describe this destruction as eternal punishment
- “The ‘eternal fire’ is the ‘hell of fire’ (Matt. 18:8, 9). What is not said: That the soul burns eternally” (p. 156)
 - Why fear being thrown into everlasting fire if it is not eternal punishing (Matt. 25:41)? What is the eternal fire burning for an eternity?
 - “Enter into life = eternal life (Matt. 18:8, 9); what is not said: soul lives eternally” – who could believe it?
- “What is the worm that dieth not?”
- Isa. 51:7-8 – “In Isaiah’s metaphor the worm is used metaphorically for ‘the reproach [and] the revilings of men,’ their disposition, the destroying nature and character of the Jewish nation” (p. 155)
 - No, it is because of their reproach and revilings that these evil men will be eaten by the “moth” and the “worm” – divine punishment
 - “The destruction pronounced upon the adversaries of the Servant (50:9) is also pronounced against those who berate the followers of the Servant: they shall be consumed like a garment eaten by moths or wool by a worm” (Commentary on Isaiah, p. 424).
 - “Two figures are employed to stress the transitoriness of the enemies. As a garment is eaten by moths and as worms devour wool, so will the enemies be destroyed” (Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, Vol. 3, p. 312)
- Isa. 66:24 – “the dead bodies...are the spiritually dead” (p. 155)
 - Their worm does *not* die, and their fire is *not* quenched – destiny of ongoing, never-ending punishment
 - “...so fire and worms now depict the end of the transgressors...foreshadows the contrast between the ultimate destiny of the worshipers of Jehovah and the wicked at the end of time” (Commentary on Isaiah, p. 529)

Chapter 12: Paul and Eternal Destruction

- 2 Thessalonians 1:9 – *olethros*
 - “Thayer defined the word to mean, ‘ruin, destruction, death’; and then added his comment, ‘the loss of a life of blessedness after death, future misery’ (443). His opinion is the point at issue...is such a meaning inherent in the Greek word itself?” (p. 160)
 - Inherent in context – see v. 6 “repay with tribulation [affliction]”; no affliction possible if the soul is annihilated
 - No short period of affliction apparent in Paul’s words; “everlasting” is the only time indication given
 - “The ‘destruction’ is not annihilation, but ruin, lack of well-being, an eternal separation from Christ and His glory, in the outer darkness, the lake of fire and brimstone” (*Vanguard*, Dec. 1982, p. 17)

- “Those who would make Paul’s ‘eternal destruction’ mean annihilation, eliminate the Scriptural teaching on the subject, thus making Jesus and the apostles deceivers or men who were deceived” (*Ibid.*)

Chapter 14: Lake of Fire and Brimstone

● Revelation 14:11

- “The ‘day and night’ of the passage would be identifying the time as prior to the passing of the present order (2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1)” (pp. 174-175)
 - But context refers to eternity (forever and ever; v. 13 “from now on”)
- “A distinction was made between the smoke and the fire...It is the smoke of His wrath that continues for ever; He never changes” (p. 175)
 - Where there is smoke, there is fire - no distinction!

● Revelation 20:10

- “This scene was followed by an account of the end of Satan: [quoted Rev. 20:10]. This verse is often quoted to prove the eternal existence, suffering, and torment of wicked humanity. It should be mentioned of whom John spoke: Satan, the beast, and the false prophet. Wicked humans are not mentioned here, but are dealt with in the verses which follow, 20:14-15. The beast and false prophet were cast alive into the lake, as was the devil. It was these three who would be tormented day and night for ever” (p. 177).
 - Wicked humans cast into lake of fire (v. 15)
 - Wicked humans cast into *same* fire as Satan (Matt. 25:41); will share in the *same* punishment (Rev. 14:11)

● Revelation 20:14

- “The first death pertained to the physical life and death; the second pertained to the end of each. Death and Hades and the wicked, those whose names were not written in the book of life, existence came to an end in the lake of fire” (p. 178)
 - This interpretation not supported by immediate context or larger context of scripture concerning the destiny of the wicked
- “Since the second death is the lake of fire (v. 14b), then those whose names were not found written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire, they suffer the same punishment as of death and Hades” (p. 179).
 - And same punishment as devil – “tormented day and night forever and ever” (v. 10)

Chapter 15: Outer Darkness

- “Comprehending outer darkness is facilitated by trying to envision the pre-creation darkness. [quotes Gen. 1:1-2a]. This was darkness of the vast infinity or unlimited empty space before God created light on the first day; it was the darkness of nothingness. Physically it was the darkness of nonexistence” (p. 184).
 - Gen. 1:2 – matter and water existed
 - How can nonexistence be “weeping and gnashing teeth” (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30); Jesus implies consciousness when the wicked are separated from glory of Lord

Who Changed?

- Scripture says the same thing today that it said in 1979 (Commentary on Revelation), 1982-1983 (*Vanguard* articles), and 1985 (Hailey's Comments, Vol. 2).
- Scripture did not change – Hailey changed from truth to error in contending for the annihilation of the wicked
- Let us take heed to ourselves and to the truth of God!

What No Man Dare Do

“All that we know or can know on [the subject of Hell] must be learned from God. The doctrine of the state of the dead and of eternal punishment is pre-eminently a New Testament doctrine. It is a matter of revelation by Jesus Christ, hence to reject the New Testament concept of hell and eternal punishment is to reject the integrity and godhood of Jesus. This no man dare do.”

-- Homer Hailey (*Vanguard*, Nov. 1982, p. 1)

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