

Apostle Paul

Paul never mentioned hell! I repeat: nothing written by Apostle Paul in the New Testament mentions the word "hell" in either the Greek or the English.¹

This is beyond amazing when you consider that Paul claimed he was caught up into heaven and given the Gospel directly by Jesus, that all men would be judged according to his gospel, that he had declared to people the whole counsel of God, that he kept back nothing profitable from the people he taught, and that he was the apostle to the gentiles (meaning all who are not Jews).

Here are the verses to support what the previous paragraph states.

GALATIANS 1:11-12 KJV

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:2 KJV

2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

ROMANS 2:16 KJV

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

ACTS 20:27 KJV

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

ACTS 20:20 KJV

20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

ROMANS 11:13 KJV

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

1 TIMOTHY 2:7 KJV

7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

¹ The one time Paul uses the Greek word "Hades" is 1 Corinthians 15:55, where it is translated "grave."

1 CORINTHIANS 15:55 KJV

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Get the picture? Paul was caught up to Heaven and given the responsibility by Jesus to communicate His message to the world. Yet he never mentions hell to anyone -- let alone everyone. Why would Paul do that?

If the future for those who fail to have faith in Jesus Christ is never-ending torture, don't you think that information should be included if you are going to say you have declared the whole counsel of God and kept back no profitable information? Paul seems to clearly say, "I told you everything you need to know." How could that possibly be -- when he NEVER mentioned hell - - if hell really is a place of never-ending torture for those who do not believe in Jesus?

The only verse in Paul's writings that someone might point to as possibly applying to hell (although the word hell is never mentioned) is found in 2 Thessalonians 1:9.

2 THESSALONIANS 1:9 KJV

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Here is the whole passage, so you can read this verse in context.

2 THESSALONIANS 1:6-10 KJV

6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

What does "everlasting destruction" mean in verse nine? It could mean the kind of "destruction" that will happen to those who reject the Lord, an "eonian type of destruction" -- possibly like saying a "divine destruction." Or, it could mean destruction that will last for an age. Maybe it means both. But we have already proven that *aionios* – the word used in verse nine -- does not mean eternal or everlasting.

Young's Literal Translation of verse nine says, "who shall suffer justice -- destruction age-during -- from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of his strength."

The verse seems to state the type of "destruction" they will experience -- a separation from the glorious presence of the Lord. Certainly the passage warns of judgment. But no mention is made of hell, and everlasting is not an accurate translation for *aionios*.²

² Read the chapter "We Have A Problem With The Translations Of Eternity" for evidence that *aionios* should not be translated as eternal.

Possibly Clarence Jordan got it right in his Cotton Patch Version which reads, "They'll be sentenced to spiritual exile from the presence of the Lord and from the mighty display."

Whoever believes Paul referred to punishment in hell in verse nine should give us a satisfactory reason why Paul never mentioned hell in any other writing. All the other churches should have been warned of hell if Paul was teaching that to the Thessalonians.

If you were Paul writing to different churches, would you not include a warning about hell in each and every letter -- if hell is eternal torment? Paul, who claimed Jesus Christ gave him the responsibility to proclaim the Gospel to all non-Jews, and who said he fully proclaimed everything the Lord gave him to tell us, is strangely silent on the subject of hell. Why? Could it be that our idea about hell has been wrong, and that it was not a part of the teaching and preaching of the apostles in the first century? If they did not preach it, should we?

GALATIANS 1:8 KJV

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

It was not only Apostle Paul who failed to mention hell in his writings. Only one verse in any writing specifically directed to the Church (from the book of Acts through the book of Revelation) mentions hell in relation to punishment or wrong-doing. That is 2 Peter 2:4 and it specifically applies to angels -- not people! Note also that the word translated hell (tartaroo) is found only here in 2 Peter 2:4 and nowhere else in the New Testament.

2 PETER 2:4 KJV

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Nowhere in the entire Gospel of John is the subject of hell mentioned. It is also quite astonishing that not even once in the book of Acts do we find any mention of hell being the destination of those who do not believe. Clearly, those closest to Jesus, His apostles, are not on record as preaching or writing about hell.

If I believed in a hell of eternal torment of fire for all unbelievers, and I was given the responsibility directly by the Lord to tell the Gospel to the nations, I would make sure I warned everyone about hell. In every letter and every message, I would give a clear warning so people would avoid hell. If I failed to give that warning, and it was my responsibility to clearly communicate the Gospel to the world (which Paul said the Lord had given to him), then I would expect to be labeled the greatest criminal of all time because of my failure to mention such a horrible calamity awaiting those who did not believe what I preached.

Failing to warn people about a hell of eternal torment for those who don't believe would be the worst criminal neglect of all time, if one exists, and if you were designated by the Lord to write the Gospel message down for distribution to the whole world, as Paul was! To put it plainly, if

there is a hell of eternal torment and Paul failed to warn us clearly, then he committed the greatest crime in history and deserves to suffer in hell more than anyone.