The Doctrine of Hell

"There's no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than the doctrine of hell, if it lay in my power." -- C.S. Lewis

The doctrine of eternal punishment is probably the most unpopular, hated and feared teaching in the entire Bible. The thought of people burning in hell for eternity is most repugnant to the human mind. “It is a doctrine which the natural heart revolts from and struggles against, and to which it submits only under stress of authority. The church believes the doctrine because it must believe it, or renounce faith in the Bible, and give up all the hopes founded upon its promises.” – Charles Hodge

Yet in spite of the terrifying nature of the doctrine, and in spite of the fact that people find the idea of everlasting torment revolting, the strongest support of the doctrine comes from the lips of Jesus Christ. Think of it: the most terrifying imagery and detailed descriptions of hell are found in the discourses of the Redeemer! Jesus continually warned men and women of the danger of going to hell. Jesus Christ, who foretold that He would come again to judge the entire human race, spoke more about hell and its terrors than the prophets and apostles combined. To ignore and disregard the clear teaching of Jesus is to deny Christ. – Brian Schwertley

A. Introduction

1. A Doctrine Under Fire
   a. The doctrine of hell has been so controversial that in the modern era it is rarely even mentioned.
      i. According to the latest poll by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (Aug-09), 59% of Americans believe in hell (compared with 74% who believe in heaven).
      ii. European countries usually poll around 10-20% for belief in hell.
   b. Today, the doctrine of hell is challenged from all sides.
      i. Liberal theologians dismiss the idea as part of the mythological worldview of primitive people.
      ii. Even within evangelical circles, annihilationism has gained support in recent years.
         • According to Wayne Grudem, annihilationism is “a doctrine that says that unbelievers, either immediately upon death, or else after suffering for a period of time, will simply cease to exist – God will annihilate them and they will no longer be”. As we will soon see, this has little Biblical support.

2. A Difficult and Emotionally Disturbing Doctrine
   a. Hell is a place of eternal conscious punishment for the impenitent (Charles Hodge).
   b. The Bible’s descriptions of hell are difficult to read, and they should be deeply disturbing to us.
   c. While we who are truly trusting in Christ should have no fear of hell, we should still think of it only with great sadness. For even God Himself says, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezek. 33:11).
   d. Although it is hard to think about, the doctrine of hell is so clearly taught in Scripture that there does not seem to be any acceptable way to deny it and still be subject to God’s Word.
   e. The whole idea of a hell that involves some kind of eternal punishment at the hands of a just and holy God is so profoundly difficult for us to handle emotionally that the only person who would have enough authority to convince us of the reality of such a place would be Jesus Himself. In fact,
      i. Almost everything we learn biblically about hell comes to us from the lips of Jesus Himself.
      ii. It is because Jesus spoke so frequently about hell that the church has taken the doctrine so seriously through her history.
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iii. John Blanchard states that of 1,870 verses recording words that Jesus spoke, 13 percent are about judgment and hell. Moreover, of the nearly 40 parables that Jesus told, more than half of them relate to God’s eternal judgment of sinners.

f. It is impossible to read the NT in general (and the words of Jesus in particular) without facing the fact that hell is not a figment of religious imagination but a terrifying reality.

B. The Necessity of Hell

1. One must hold to a proper understanding of the atonement to comprehend the full cost of our sin and the necessity of judgment.
   a. Without a Redeemer, all men would be condemned to hell, but God in His undeserved grace immediately revealed a plan to send a blessed Redeemer only moments after the fall of man (Gen. 3:15).
   b. Fortunately, by the sacrifice of Christ that took the punishment for the world’s sin, God is able to accept the man who puts faith in His Son. After a person receives this gift by faith, the benefits of the atonement are then extended to protect that person from hell.
   c. Thus, God is both “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). The work to appease God’s justice has already been accomplished; men must only choose to receive that atonement as a covering for their sins.
   d. However, for those who choose to deny the atonement and trample under foot the Son of God, there awaits a terrifying expectation of deserved judgment (Heb. 10:27). This judgment results in just condemnation to hell, for the unbeliever is guilty of rejecting the only sacrifice capable of covering their sins.

   Heb 10:26-31  If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God… How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

2. To our great good, God promises righteous vengeance and just repayment for sin (2 Thes. 1:6, Heb. 10:30).

3. There is deep and profound evil in the universe that calls for the just wrath of a righteous and holy God. We must realize that evil cannot simply go unpunished. All of God’s judgments are just and right, because “the Lord is upright…there is no unrighteousness in Him” (Ps. 92:15).

4. If there is not a hell, then there is no final victory over evil.
   a. The Hitler’s, Stalin’s and Mao’s of the world, devious murderers of millions would go unpunished.
   b. Blatant rejection and willful rebellion against God by atheists like Bertrand Russell and Friedrich Nietzsche would be ignored.
      i. If these men are not somehow held accountable for their actions, evil would have triumphed over good, and God could not be truly sovereign.
   c. All evil must be totally defeated, or there could not be a heaven. Heaven is the complete absence of evil in the presence of a holy God. Without punishment, evil would be allowed and positively condoned.
5. Judgment – The Great Separation

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world…' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels…' "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." (Matt 25:31-34, 41, 46)

a. At the resurrection, our bodies will be raised and reunited with our souls, and we will stand before God’s throne for final judgment to be pronounced upon us in the body. (Matt 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; and Rev 20:12, 15)

"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. (John 5:28-29)

…and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. (Acts 24:15)

i. For the believer, the Day of Judgment is the day of redemption (Eph 4:30; 1 John 4:17) when they will inherit the kingdom prepared for them by Christ their King (Matt 25:34).

ii. For the unbeliever the appointed Day of Judgment is a day of wrath (Rom 2:5).

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. Rom 2:5

b. The final judgment will take place so that God can display His glory to all mankind by demonstrating his justice and mercy simultaneously (2 Thess 1:3-10).

c. The final judgment will be entirely fair. Each person, whether destined for eternal glory or eternal condemnation, will be dealt with more fairly than at any previous time “for God does not show favoritism.” (Rom. 2:11).

…let them sing before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity. (Ps 98:9)

d. Because there is a final judgment, we are assured that God’s universe is fair. It shows that God is in total control and will eventually bring about a right end to every situation.

For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17:31)

Colossians 3:25 says “Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.”

e. Scripture never encourages us to think that people will have a second chance to trust in Christ after death. In fact, the situation is quite the contrary.

i. Jesus’ story about the rich man and Lazarus gives no hope that people can cross from hell to heaven after they have died.

“...between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' (Luke 16:24-26)
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ii. The book of Hebrews connects death with the consequence of judgment in close sequence:

\[\text{Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, (Heb 9:27)}\]

iii. Scripture never represents the final judgment as depending on anything done \textit{after we die}, but only on what has happened in this life (Matt 25:31-46; Rom 2:5-11; 1 Cor 3:12-15; 2 Cor 5:10).

\[\text{For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. (2 Cor 5:10)}\]

iv. Finally, the idea that people have a second chance to accept Christ after death is not consistent with the intense \textit{missionary zeal} that was displayed by the New Testament church as a whole.

f. Therefore, in light of the final judgment, Christians should be able to \textit{forgive} each other freely, for we know that all accounts will be settled on that day and all wrongs will be made right.

i. Christians should never seek to avenge themselves but instead “leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.” (Rom. 12:19).

ii. When we act this way, we are following the example of Christ

\[\text{When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. 1 Pet. 2:23}\]

iii. Finally, the final judgment also provides us with an \textit{encouragement} to tell others about the good news of Jesus. The delay of the Lord’s return is because God “is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Pet 3:9).

C. Application

1. \textit{The purpose of the Bible teaching about hell is to make us appreciate, thankfully embrace, and rationally prefer the grace of Christ that saves us from it} (Matt. 5:29-30; 13:48-50). \textit{It is really a mercy to mankind that God in Scripture is so explicit about hell. We cannot now say that we have not been warned.} – Concise Theology, p 263.

2. The patience of God in delaying judgment on the unbeliever is an invitation for the Christian to evangelize and for the sinner to repent.

3. This doctrine of eternal hell must motivate us to spread the message of salvation, and so help men decide not to throw away their souls. For, \textit{“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” Rom 10:14-15}

4. \textit{The point of eschatology throughout the Bible is to provide encouragement to believers in their witness for Jesus Christ (Matt 24:14; 1 Cor 15:58). It is not mentioned to encourage idle speculation or controversy. The reason God grants us a view of the future is to encourage us to witness for Christ and serve Him in the present.} (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986)

5. May our attitudes and actions reflect that the desire of our hearts is for the salvation of the world...

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D. The Biblical Language of Hell

1. Before the nature of hell can be examined, it is important to investigate the original language used to describe the afterlife, either the intermediate state or the final state.

a. Sheol (Hebrew) – the primary meaning of this word is “the present state of death,” or “the grave.” The term is used with reference to both the righteous (Ps 16:10; 30:3; Isa 38:10; etc.) and the wicked (Num 16:33; Job 24:19; Ps 9:17; etc.).
   i. The word Sheol occurs 65 times in the Old Testament
      - The KJV renders Sheol as “hell” 31 times, “grave” 31 times, and “pit” 3 times.
      - Sheol can refer either specifically to the abode of the wicked (Ps. 9:17, 55:15), or generally to the grave or death (Isa 38:10, Hos 13:14). It is even used of the belly of the fish in Jonah 2:2, or of a deep pit in Numbers 16:30, 33.

b. Hades (Greek) – The word Hades occurs ten times in the New Testament.
   i. Hades is the New Testament Greek translation of the word Sheol.
   ii. Hades is the abode of the impenitent in the intermediate state – that is the time from when a person dies until their judgment at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15).
   iv. Hades is translated “hell” ten times in the NT and translated “grave” once (1 Cor. 15:55).

c. Tartaros (Greek) – This word occurs only one time in the New Testament (2 Peter 2:4) and is translated as “hell” in the NIV. According to Strong’s, Tartaros means “to incarcerate in eternal torment”.

d. The Valley of Hinnom (a deep, narrow ravine south of Jerusalem)
   i. The Israelites used this valley in order to worship Molech and Baal (2 Kings 16:3; 2 Chr. 28:3).
   ii. The idol of Molech was a large, hollow, metallic statue with a head of a calf wearing a crown and its arms extended in embrace. The parents would build a fire inside the large idol, which was open in the back. A pit beneath the idol was also filled with fire. Once the metallic structure was very hot, the parents would place their small children on the outstretched arms of the figure and watch as the screaming children fell into the burning pit. The screams of the children were so agonizing that the people played instruments and mourned loudly in an attempt to drown out the cries of the children. (2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6; Jer. 7:31-34)
   iii. Later, when the Israelites returned from captivity, they began throwing all the dead carcasses and trash from the city into this valley (2 Kings 23:10).

   Albert Barnes comments on this dreadful place: “It became, therefore, extremely offensive; the sight was terrific; the air was polluted and [deadly]; and to preserve it in any manner pure, it was necessary to keep fires continually burning there. The extreme loathsome ness of the place; the filth and [decay]; the corruption of the atmosphere, and the lurid fires blazing by day and night, made it one of the most appalling and [terrible] objects with which a Jew was acquainted. It was called the “gehenna” of fire, and was the image which our Saviour often employed to denote the future punishment of the wicked.”

e. Gehenna – is the Greek translation of the Hebrew phrase “Valley of Hinnom”. It emphasizes the future destiny of the unsaved and denotes a place of everlasting torment.
   i. The word “Gehenna” occurs twelve times in the New Testament and is each time translated as “hell” in the NIV (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15, 23:33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6). Gehenna is the strongest biblical word for hell and Jesus Christ mentions this word in every instance except one (James 3:6).

The distinction between “Hades” (the intermediate state) and “Gehenna” (eternal hell) is of importance, not only because it is necessary to the understanding of quite a large number of passages in the NT, but it may also prevent misinterpretation and remove uncertainty as to Christ's teaching with regard to the future state of the wicked.

E. The Occupants of Hell

1. The antichrist and the false prophet will be the first occupants of hell. They will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20). The men who had knowingly allied themselves with Satan will precede him to eternal ruin.
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2. Satan and his demons were intended to be the only occupants of hell. Indeed, hell was initially prepared for “the devil and his angels” according to (Matthew 25:41).

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' Matt 25:41

a. One can see from this, that God did not pre-determine for men to sin. It was their free and tragic choice.
b. Satan will be the third being cast into the eternal lake of fire, after his final deception of the nations at the end times (Rev. 20:10). We may infer that the demons are cast in with him or shortly thereafter.

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Rev 20:10

3. The unbelievers of all generations and all nations will be the final occupants of the lake of fire.
a. The dead unbelievers are raised and given bodies with which to stand before the Great White Throne where Christ sits to judge them according to their works (Rev. 20:12).

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Rev 20:12

b. Those whose names are not found in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).

If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Rev 20:15

F. The Biblical Condition of the Lost in Hell

1. Hell represents both the absence and presence of God.
a. God is absent in hell in the sense that all of His grace is removed from those in hell.
b. God is present in hell in the sense of His judgment and punitive wrath.

RC Sproul writes, “A breath of relief is usually heard when someone declares, ‘Hell is a symbol for separation from God.’ To be separated from God for eternity is no great threat to the impenitent person. The ungodly want nothing more than to be separated from God. Their problem in hell will not be separation from God; it will be the presence of God that will torment them. In hell, God will be present in the fullness of His divine wrath. He will be there to exercise His just punishment of the damned. They will know Him as an all-consuming fire...Hell, then, is an eternity before the righteous, ever-burning wrath of God, a suffering torment from which there is no escape and no relief. Understanding this is crucial to our drive to appreciate the work of Christ and to preach His gospel.”

2. The symbols God uses to describe hell are not meant to blur the issue but to make it clearer.
a. Bruce Milne says, “No doubt some of the language used to describe hell is necessarily symbolic, just as the language describing heaven. However, the fact that we are thrown back on symbols does not mean that we can disregar de or devalue them. They are God-given, and while they cannot tell us everything, they will not mislead us.”

3. The lost will be physically tormented in hell.

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Rev. 20:10)

If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Rev 20:15
c. Darkness (Job 10:21-22; Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; 2 Pet. 2:10, 14, 17; Jude 13)

They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. Jude 13

… Blackest darkness is reserved for them. 2 Pet. 2:17
d. The Undying Worm (Isa. 66:24; Mark 9:48)

where "'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.' Mark 9:48

e. No Rest or Peace (Isa. 48:22; 57:20-21; Rev. 14:11)
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And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." Rev 14:11

f. Brimstone (burning sulfur) (Rev. 14:10; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8)

But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. Rev 19:20

g. Thirst (Luke 16:24)

So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' Luke 16:24

4. The lost will be mentally tormented in hell.
   a. Shame and Contempt (Dan.12:22; Isa. 66:24)

   Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Dan 12:2


   But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 8:12

   Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; Rev 22:11

5. The lost will be spiritually tormented in hell.
   a. The greatest agony of the lake of fire may not be physical or mental. The unsaved will be in spiritual agony as they are separated from God’s grace forever and ever – what a dreadful emptiness to be without God forever and without any hope of ever knowing Him.

   b. Jesus Christ experienced this agony on the cross as He took the sins of mankind. A holy God had to turn His back on His only begotten Son.

   About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"-which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Matt 27:46

6. The lost will be justly tormented in hell.
   a. Because “The Lord is righteous in all His ways” (Ps. 145:17), He has never dealt unjustly with a single person in all of human history, and because He “does not change like shifting shadows” (James 1:17), His perfect justice will be revealed in all its glory on the final Day of Judgment.

   b. If eternal punishment seems more terrible than one’s sin deserves, it is because of our low estimate of God’s justice, God’s holiness, and God’s view of sin.

   c. God’s judgment will be greater for some (there will be degrees of punishment).

   i. The longer we sin without repentance, the worse our punishment will be.

   But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. Rom 2:5

   ii. Jesus speaks of those who will be beaten with few stripes and those who will be beaten with many stripes.

   But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. Luke 12:48

   iii. Jesus says the judgment to come upon Bethsaida will be worse than that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 10:13).

   iv. God’s judgment will be double for some (Rev 18:5b-7a).

   v. There will be varying degrees of punishment because hell is a place where perfect justice is exacted.
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7. The following summary, from Basic Theology, presents a concise Scriptural view of hell:
   
a. First and foremost, hell is **eternal** (Isaiah 66:24; Matt. 18:8, 25:41, 25:46; 2 Thes. 1:9; Jude 1:7), **everlasting** (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:46), and **lasts forever and ever** (Jude 1:13; Rev. 14:11, 20:10). There is no other way to state it: **hell will never cease to exist.**

b. Secondly, hell itself is described as a **lake of fire** (Rev. 19:20, 20:10, 14, 15, 21:8), **eternal fire** (Matt. 18:8, 25:41; Jude 1:7), **unquenchable fire** (Mark 9:43), the **second death** (Rev. 20:14), and **darkness** (Matt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30; Jude 1:13). The wicked consigned to hell will **never cease to exist and their body will never be consumed** (Isaiah 66:24; Mark 9:43, 48); they must face **eternal punishment** (Matt. 25:46), **eternal destruction** (Matt. 10:28; 2 Thes. 1:9), and their **torment will last forever and ever** (Rev. 14:11, 20:10). There will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth** (Matt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30), **they will be weak** (Isaiah 14:9-10) and **lack any interaction with those outside of hell** (Eccl. 9:4-6).

c. Thirdly, upon the unbeliever’s death, he will be an **abhorrence** (Isaiah 66:24); **shut out from the fellowship of God** (2 Thess. 1:9); **experiencing God’s wrath** (Rom. 2:8; Heb. 10:27; Rev. 14:10), **anger** (Rev. 14:10), **indignation** (Rom. 2:8), **retribution** (2 Thes. 1:8), **vengeance** (Heb. 10:30), and **judgment** (Matt. 25:31-46; Heb. 9:27, 10:27, 30; Rev. 20:11-15). Hell will be dreadful and painful for all, but **for some it will be worse than others** (Matt. 5:22; Rev. 20:12-14).

d. Finally, there will be **no second chance** for the unbeliever to change his destiny (Matthew 12:32; Mark 3:29; Luke 16:26; Heb. 9:27). All in all, **“It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God”** (Heb. 10:31).

Application

1. “The purpose of the Bible teaching about hell is to make us appreciate, thankfully embrace, and rationally prefer the grace of Christ that saves us from it (Matt. 5:29-30; 13:48-50). It is really a mercy to mankind that God in Scripture is so explicit about hell. We cannot now say that we have not been warned.” – Concise Theology, p 263.

2. The patience of God in delaying judgment on the unbeliever is an invitation for the Christian to evangelize and for the sinner to repent.

3. This doctrine of eternal hell must motivate us to spread the message of salvation, and so help men decide not to throw away their souls. For, **“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” Rom 10:14-15**

4. **The point of eschatology (the study of last things) throughout the Bible is to provide encouragement to believers in their witness for Jesus Christ (Matt 24:14; 1 Cor 15:58). It is not mentioned to encourage idle speculation or controversy. The reason God grants us a view of the future is to encourage us to witness for Christ and serve Him in the present. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)**

5. **May our attitudes and actions reflect that the desire of our hearts is for the salvation of the world…**

6. In closing, if the Holy Spirit has convicted you of your sin and given you the realization that you can no longer “go it alone”, then now is the time to repent in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. As Peter says in Acts 2:36-41:
   
   36 **“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”**
   
   37 **When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?”**
   
   38 **Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”**
   
   39 **The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”**
   
   40 **With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”**
   
   41 **Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.**

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