

GOD IS ABLE...To Condemn!

Matthew 10:28

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Introduction:

- I. The topic of right and wrong in religious faith and practice has long been avoided.
 1. Ancient Israel struggled with those who claimed that it did not make a difference (Jeremiah 23:16-21).
 2. Modern society continues to struggle with those who claim that it does not matter what one believes, or practices, as long as he is "sincere."
 3. Some years ago I was studying with a woman and discussed God's requirements for her. I showed that she had to do certain things that God commended if she was to become a Christian, but she said she was not interested in doing these things. I tried to impress upon her the urgency of obeying and said, "You cannot go to heaven if you do not do what Christ says!" "You mean I'll go to Hell if I don't do this?" "That's what the Bible says." At this point she became angry, "How can YOU tell me I'm going to Hell? YOU have no right to judge me if that is the way it is, then I'll never do what the Bible says!"
 4. When you are rebuffed with such a pluralistic view, you feel miserable. It forced me to reconsider telling anyone they were not following the Bible's way and that if they continued they would never get to heaven but spend eternity in Hell.
 5. Further study, however, convinced me that God does not want us to moderate His commands. God does not want us to show arrogant self-righteousness but He does not want us to compromise His Word (Galatians 4:16).

- II. Probably one of the least preached topics in modern society is "Hell."
 1. The topic is not enjoyable because it highlights the fact that some refuse God's grace.
 2. Some may enjoy "Hell, Fire, and Damnation" sermons, but in

their eagerness they miss the whole emphasis of the gospel message (Matthew 23:37-38; Luke 19:41-44).

3. Our obligation is to accept the whole counsel of God (Matthew 7:24-25). While we must not condemn with self-righteousness, we must understand that a part of God is able to condemn (Matthew 10:28).

Body:

I. Three critical questions asked...

A. **WHO CONDEMNS — God or Satan?**

1. The capitalization of the pronoun does not indicate because the Greek manuscript had no upper or lower cases mixed.
2. It seems that it should refer to God:
 - a. Satan does not have the power (unlimited authority). He operated within God's permission.
 - b. Satan will not reign as King of Hell. He will be just as all others there (Revelation 20:10).
 - c. There is only one Judge able to condemn and this is God (James 4:12). The Greek phrase "able to destroy" is the same in Matthew 10 and James 4.
3. Even with these facts, many are still hesitant to say that God condemns and contend that John 3:16 should be our theme. But John 3:16 also mentions "perish." This is the same word that is translated as "destroy" in Matthew 10.
4. We need to realize that emotionalism leads us to allow people to perish rather than taking the risk of offending them.
5. We can avoid Hell if we know its dangers and are aware of God's way of escape (Acts 2:40).

B. **WHAT DOES CONDEMNATION MEAN?**

1. "Hell" is from the Greek "Gehenna" and means "the valley of Hinnom."
2. This was a place south of Jerusalem where the pagan god

- Moloch was worshiped. It was known for disgusting idolatry which included child sacrifices (2 Chronicles 28:3).
- a. Good King Josiah abolished these pagan acts and made the Valley of Hinnom as public garbage deposit.
 - b. This place was known as the place of garbage and filth. Constant fires were fueled by garbage; waste was everywhere; a filthy stench filled the air and choked anyone near it.
 - c. By comparing Hell to the Valley of Hinnom, our Lord was using an image well-known to His audience. No one liked to be anywhere near it. All tried to avoid it.
3. This “condemnation” will involve both “body” and “soul.”
- a. This indicates that the body and soul are different parts of man.
 - b. Since the body is in Hell, it is a place of literal physical punishment for both the physical (body) and the spiritual and emotional (soul).
 - c. This two-part punishment tells us that suffering will be intense. One may struggle with physical pain but have a strong spirit and thus overcome. One may struggle with emotional distress but endure because a strong physical body helps to work out the pain. But in Hell there is a pain that inflicts both body and soul – it is intense! (Matthew 25:30).
4. This condemnation is ETERNAL!
- a. “Destroy” (Matthew 10:28) defined by the Greek lexicons as “eternal death.”
 - b. When the body and soul are “destroyed” they are not annihilated – they exist in a place where all that is desirable is missing. They have an existence that is miserable and this goes on and on and on – never ending!

C. WHAT SHOULD BE MY RESPONSE TO GOD’S CONDEMNATION?

1. Obviously, we must “fear Him” (Matthew 10:28b). This refers

- to an attitude of utter respect (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).
2. This attitude is critical as we seek to avoid condemnation because –
 - a. It helps to keep us from presumptuous sin (Psalm 19:13). This is an attitude that places man over God (2 Peter 2:10). A proper “fear of God” respects His authority and humbles us so we will not excuse sin in our lives!
 - b. It helps us to realize that our lives are in God’s hands. God is able to do with us as He chooses. “We all must deal with God sooner or later.” A proper “fear of God” will prompt us to get right with God (Isaiah 38:1; Amos 4:12).
 - c. Some fail to do this (Acts 17:32). They mock and ridicule the Word of God. “We may laugh ourselves into Hell, but we will never laugh ourselves out of Hell!” Others admit God’s right to condemn, yet they procrastinate and never obey (Acts 24:25; 26:28).

II. Five personal applications found...

- A. Physical death IS NOT the ultimate tragedy! Matthew 10:28 reminds us that something is far worse. Do not risk your soul's eternal fate!
- B. We should have a great concern about the next life! People want to live forever on earth but it is not possible. We will live forever *after* earthly life. It is absurd to give all our attention to our physical body and non to our spiritual body!
- C. Knowing about God's condemnation should cause us to seek the lost with enthusiasm. Knowledge obligates! It is our duty to tell others (Mark 5:19-20). “The only people who have a right to preach on Hell are those who have tears in their eyes.” (2 Corinthians 5:14).
- D. Those who have not obeyed God should do so now! You need

to secure eternal life. If you were about to fall down a steep cliff, would you wait if someone offered you an escape? (2 Corinthians 5:10-11; 6:2b).

E. Do not forget – God is able to condemn, BUT He died to save! (1 Timothy 2:4). People do not go to Hell because God is eager to send them there. Some say, “If God is so loving, how can He condemn people to Hell?” The only way you can go to Hell is OVER Jesus’ dead body. God condemns people only after sacrificing His Son on the cross! “To be condemned you must reject God’s love, turn a deaf ear to friends, harden your heart to heaven and walk over Jesus’ dead body!” (Hebrews 10:29-31).

Conclusion:

- I. In our modern day it is very unpopular to talk about condemnation because all want to be okay with God yet be free to do whatever they want to do. While remaining silent about wrong religious beliefs is socially polite, it is biblical treason! God is able to condemn and we must recognize this fact!

- II. While God is able to condemn, let us remember Romans 8:1. God is able to CONDEMN but He died to SAVE.