



Articles and Sermons :: Are We Known & Feared In Hell?

Are We Known & Feared In Hell? - posted by docseth1 (), on: 2010/8/27 12:45

Are We Known & Feared In Hell?

You may recall a rather humorous story from the book of Acts about seven men who claimed to be exorcists. This story makes me chuckle every time I read it. If there was ever a perfect example on how not to cast out a demon, this would be it. Notice how Luke describes this amazing story:

"And God did works of power through the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons from his skin being brought onto the sick, the diseases were released, and the evil spirits went out of them. And certain from the strolling Jews, exorcists, undertook to name the name of the Lord Jesus over those having evil spirits, saying, 'We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.' And there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. But answering the evil spirit said, 'Jesus I know, and I comprehend Paul, but who are you?' And the man in whom the evil spirit resided leaped on them, and overcoming them he was strong against them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks who lived at Ephesus, and fear fell on all of them, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified." Acts 19:11-17

This story is humorous for a couple of reasons: First, the fact that they are running out of the house not only wounded but naked, for some odd reason that's just funny to me. Secondly, there is a sort of self satisfying smile that comes to my face when spiritual phonies are revealed for what they really are. I'm not talking about sincere men and women of God who due to some spiritual weakness have fallen morally, but phonies. Phonies! That's what these men were. In this case, these men may have had the title but they lacked the power. As one author noted, these men "soon discovered that a second-hand relationship with Jesus not enough" when it came to battling forces of darkness. The last words that you want to hear from a demon possessed person are, "Jesus I know, Paul I know, but who are you?" Quick words of advice, if that ever happens to you don't hang around for him to finish the sentence. Run and don't look back! You will save yourself from a beating and the embarrassment of finding yourself disrobed.

What was it that brought on the devils acquaintance with the apostle Paul? First, it was the nature of Paul's calling. Notice as Paul gives his testimony to King Agrippa, how his calling immediately put him on the front line in the battle against hell. Jesus said to Paul:

"I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of what you saw, and in what I shall appear to you; delivering you from the people and the nations, to whom I now send you in order to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the authority of Satan to God, so that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." Acts 26:16-18

Everywhere the apostle Paul went, he was snatching souls out of the hands of the enemy. This would have immediately put Paul in conflict with Satan and his forces. He would have immediately become a target of the devil. "Paul I know! I know him because I have suffered much loss by his hands" Satan might have said. In contrast, the seven sons of Sceva had never done anything to advance the kingdom of Christ. In fact, they did not even know who Jesus was. Notice again their terminology as they tried to exorcise the devil: "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." Casting out demons takes more than spouting of some religious formula or the casual mention of Jesus' name; the devils must fear you. They will only fear those in whom they perceive the power of God, as well as those who are committed and close relationally to the Lord Jesus.

In his book *Why Revival Tarries*, Leonard Ravenhill noted what he believed to be at least eight reasons why Paul was kn

own in hell.

"He had no ambitions – and so he had nothing to be jealous about. He had no reputation – and so had nothing to fight about. He had no possession – and therefore nothing to worry about. He had no "rights" – so therefore he could not suffer wrong. He was already broken – so no one could break him. He was "dead" – so none could kill him. He was less than the least of the least – so who could humble him? He had suffered the loss of all things – so who could defraud him? Does this throw any light on why the demon said "Paul I know"? Over this God intoxicated man, hell suffered headaches." (Emphasis mine)

In Dave Earley & Ben Gutierrez's book called Ministry Is..., they give their commentary on what the demons might have meant when they stated "Jesus I know, Paul I know, but who are you."

"The demons asked the sons of Sceva a revealing question, "Who are you?" Hell was unfamiliar with the sons of Sceva. None of them had distinguished themselves by their commitment or their courage. They were saying, "We have never heard of you." Your faces do not hang on the walls of Hell's post office as: 'Most wanted! Most feared! Approach carefully, considered armed and very dangerous.'"

"Oh that God would make us dangerous," was the words found in the personal journal of Jim Elliot after he and four friends were speared to death trying to bring the gospel to the Waodani people of Equador. "We are harmless" he wrote, "and therefore unharmed." It is only those who are in the service and battle of the Lord that Hell has to fear. C.T. Studd once quipped, "I pray that when I die, all of hell will rejoice that I am no longer in the fight."

It seems to me that we only have two options: We can be known in Hell; in result, we will be known in Heaven as well. Or we can be unknown in Hell. In this case, both the devil and the Lord will say, I never knew you. Paul was known in three worlds: Heaven, Earth, and Hell. May the same be said of us as well.

Re: Are We Known & Feared In Hell? - posted by enid, on: 2010/8/27 13:44

With the state of today's Christians, I think right now, it's the demons who are chuckling.

Sad, but when we are not fervent concerning prayer etc, then we are losing out.

That is, here in the west. In other nations, where persecution for the Lord is taking place, souls are getting saved.

Would to God we could see that here.

Re: Are We Known & Feared In Hell? - posted by fromtheold (), on: 2010/8/27 14:15

Indeed! May the same be said of us.

Re: - posted by docseth1 (), on: 2010/8/27 15:20

I think you are right.