



In America, former Arkansas Governor and Christian pastor, Mike Huckabee offered this blunt message after he heard of the death of Osama bin Laden: *"Welcome to hell."* Is this a right response? Should we be delighted that Osama has fallen into the hands of God? No. The Bible says it's a 'dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God' (Hebrews 10:31) and that God takes 'no pleasure in the death of a sinner' (Ezekiel 33:11).

However, when a mass murderer like Osama Bin Laden is killed, it's right to feel relief. He's been stopped from killing any further and we can all feel a little safer. It's also right to thank God that he doesn't let tyrants and murderers continue without check. Death is God's chief method of thwarting every Hitler, Stalin or Genghis Khan.

But people like Osama Bin Laden are a great test to us because it's tempting to think and speak about them as animals, sub-human creatures that are 'pure evil'. Yet Osama Bin Laden was just as human as anyone. Apparently gentle and mild mannered, he was a man of conviction. It's just that his convictions were wrong.

Ironically, Bin Laden may have been more obedient to his convictions than many of us. So did his convictions make him evil? No, he was evil before he gained them. Yet we just assume that he'll go to Hell because he's in an evil class of his own. We mightn't be certain about heaven ourselves, but we're certain that Bin Laden is a lot worse than us.

The Bible tells us clearly and repeatedly that all people are evil. It says this about every person: "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). And Jesus explains the specifics in this inescapable way:

"... What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness."

(Mark 7:20-22)

Since the Bible tells us that 'we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ' (2 Corinthians 5:10) and since all people sin, what hope is there? Perhaps Mike Huckabee's 'Welcome to Hell' applies to all of us?

No, the difference is Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross he was paying for sin. When you ask him for forgiveness his promise is that he will not only forgive you but will send his Holy Spirit to live in you and change you. God's promise is that when you cast yourself on Jesus you will live forever with Him.

Prayer: Dear God, please forgive my sin through Jesus so I am ready to meet you when I die. Amen.

Bible verse: "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)

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