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**Monday, May 9**

**Brian McLaren - guest blogging**



This came to me from [Brian McLaren](#) via his publishing company. Brian will be checking in on the comments and answering any questions you have. I am working today and will be offline (it is 6:23 here in Saskatchewan) until later so have fun while I am gone.

Everything below this are Brian's words. Thanks to Brian for stopping by and thanks to all of you for participating.

Hi, everyone - it's an honor to be your guest and have a bit of conversation about my newest book, "[The Last Word and the Word After That.](#)"

For those of you who haven't read the book, here are some of the main ideas:

- A. Our view of hell has a lot to say about our view of God (and vice versa).
- B. For many people, hell means that God torments or tortures people consciously and forever, with no possibility of repentance and no possibility for an end to the tortures.
- C. This view of God, I believe, is unworthy of the God presented to us in Jesus Christ.
- D. The conventional understanding of hell developed over a long period of time. It wasn't revealed in the Old Testament, but arose in the period between Testaments. When Jesus speaks of it, he hasn't invented it, but rather is responding to it as a controversial idea among the Jewish people of his day.
- E. The Sadducees were the conservatives who held to the older view that there was no hell or no afterlife. The Pharisees were, in a sense, the liberals who accepted the idea of hell. Many believe that the idea of hell came into Judaism from Persian religion - and that the name Pharisee may be from Farsi, or Persian.
- F. Jesus does not follow either the Sadducees (who reject any idea of afterlife), nor does he follow the teaching of the Pharisees and their view of hell. Rather, he charts a bold new path and uses the language of hell ("owned" by the Pharisees) to draw attention to his own message - centered in the kingdom of God, and the character of God.
- G. "The kingdom of God" does not mean heaven. Being excluded from the kingdom does not necessarily mean eternal conscious torment after death in hell either.
- H. All people will face judgment. God is always both just and merciful in judgment. Being judged does not necessarily mean "being sent to hell." Nor does being condemned. These words mean being exposed for being disobedient to God, not pleasing God, not

[jordoncooper.com](http://jordoncooper.com)

**who is jordon cooper?**  
 Among other things, I am a pastor at [Lakeland Church](#) in Spiritwood and a leader at the [Worship Freehouse](#) in Saskatoon. and a regional contact person for [Resonate](#) [a network of Canadians striving to love God and our neighbours in a changing culture]. You have probably read enough but if you haven't... click [here](#)



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serving God.

I. Matthew speaks the most about hell, Mark and Luke, less, and John not at all. Paul speaks often of the reality of judgment, but he doesn't talk about hell. The New Testament is not as clear about the subject as many people believe.

K. We need to rethink the message of Jesus and the apostles in terms of the kingdom of God - which is God's will being done on earth, and not be so preoccupied with the issue of hell.

There's a lot more -- but that's a good start. I'm interested in knowing which of these ideas are most exciting, troubling, believable or unbelievable for you, and why.

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Continue to read the other blogs that Brian is stopping in to visit and chat on.

- [Tallskinnykiwi](#)
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posted by Jordon at [6:14 AM](#)

#### 10 Comments:

- hi jordon

lots of good stuff to talk about. i will shoot some readers over there from my blog conversation.

By [andrew jones](#), at [6:33 AM](#)

- Andrew, was just in the process of linking to the other blogs when your comments beat me too it (it's early here in Saskatchewan). Am sending some traffic back to you. Pax.

By [Jordon](#), at [6:40 AM](#)

- Brian,  
Why evangelize then?  
Kevin  
Fort Worth

By Kevin, at [7:21 AM](#)

- Brian, I like your take on all this! The concept of eternal torment has always been troubling to me, too. But, what do you do with the "wailing and gnashing of teeth" language? Was Jesus just kidding or being metaphorical? It's also hard for me to be that dismissive with his words!  
Grace and peace,  
Greg

By [Greg](#), at [8:01 AM](#)

- I'd like to think that we evangelize because Jesus commanded us to, that life with

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- Jesus is far more beautiful than the hopelessness of life without.

By [Wendy](#), at [8:06 AM](#)

- Hey Brian,

First of all, thank you for your time here at the centre of the blog universe - Jordon's place.

"K" is the idea that most excites me.

I know many people (and churches) whose experience of Christianity is not unlike purchasing a ticket and waiting in the airport waiting room for the flight home. Only seldomly sending out a few (usually paid, "specialized") persons to recruit other specially-selected travellers who then "get cleaned up", "close the deal" and "purchase a ticket or else you-know-what" and join in the waiting.

Meanwhile, I think that God and his kingdom have little or nothing to do with waiting rooms, segregation, deal-closing and ticket purchasing. He is outside the airport too... in the city... amidst the people, the culture... doing his thing called Love.

"K" speaks to me of re-thinking:

- deal-closing | journey
- individualism | community
- consumerism | truth
- the separation of "evangelism" and "discipleship"
- how we read and understand the scriptures
- and a whole bunch more

Sorry I rambled a bit. I could go on and on... but I won't.

Thank you for your book and for raising these issues for us to re-think.

Peace.

By [Pernell](#), at [8:15 AM](#)

- This post has been removed by the author.

By [Pernell](#), at [8:17 AM](#)

- Hi, all -

Thanks, Jordon, for the chance to visit! For some reason, I'm unable to log in, so I've asked Greg to post this for me. I'll check back later this afternoon.

OK ... why evangelize?

1. Jesus told me to. That's reason enough.
2. People are like sheep without a shepherd. They aren't living the abundant life. If they follow Jesus, they'll find life.
3. The world is in a mess. Without good news, it's going to self-destruct. Jesus teaches and exemplifies the way to a better life, not only for individuals, but for the planet.

What about "weeping and gnashing of teeth?"

The possibility is real that people (and groups of people) can waste their lives, play on the wrong side, fight against God, frustrate God's grace, get in the way,

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A once in a while dose of news, updates, stories, and whatever else is kicking around my brain.

cause others to suffer, miss out on life's best joys (like the joy of giving). One of the primary meanings of hell language is regret over wasted potential, missed opportunities. I'm NOT a universalist in the sense of saying, "Look, everybody is going to heaven, so it doesn't matter what you believe or how you live." I hope that my line of thinking leads to a greater sense of accountability (especially among those Christians who seem to think because they have the right beliefs it's impossible for them to face regret for how they've lived their lives).

HTH - Brian

By [Greg](#), at [8:18 AM](#)

- Brian you can click on the post a comment and then if blogger won't let you sign in choose 'other' and it will let you sign your name their.

By [wendy](#), at [9:07 AM](#)

- Brian, thanks for the work that you do and sharing your journey with us.

I'm completely with you on being less preoccupied with Hell and a re-examination of the Kingdom of Heaven.

I passionately engage people with the good news that Jesus offers today, having life before death - and not just after, and Jesus saving us not only from our sins, but from a life of meaninglessness...

...however, I am challenged to more tightly integrate this with other Bible basics, ie. sin, atonement, final states... otherwise I get a sense Jesus becomes reduced to a dr. phil, oprah, self-help, make-the-world-a-better-place guru.

How would you articulate the necessity for the work of Christ, beyond his teachings, and its relationship with our response and eternal states? Hope that makes sense.

By [Lon](#), at [9:57 AM](#)

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