

Sure Foundations For Christian Maturity

The Reality Of Hell & The Lake Of Fire

Ken Birks, Teacher

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

In this lesson, we are looking into the eternal purposes of God to answer a common question that has arisen from generation to generation. The question is, ***"What happens to someone after death?"*** Just as Heaven is part of God's eternal purposes, so is the reality of Hell and the Lake of Fire.

The Bible teaches that life continues after the physical death of the body. God created man with a natural, temporal body and an eternal soul. The soul of man consists of who we really are. It is the center of our mind, will, and emotions. We discover that the Bible teaches that life is eternal because the soul is eternal, which means we will either spend eternity in Heaven or in Hell.

Daniel 12:1-2 At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Everyone who is found written in the book. ² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.

In this lesson, we are examining what happens to the souls of those who choose the alternative eternal reality of Hell and what that will be like for them. Although this subject is not the most edifying, every Christian should understand its truth. The Bible teaches in Hebrews 6 that we are to understand the doctrine of eternal judgment. We all need to have a healthy dose of the fear of God in this respect. This is what helps us to stay on the straight and the narrow.

Matthew 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

The word *"destroy"* in this setting means to give over to eternal misery literally.¹ It is not talking about the death of the soul but instead giving the soul over to eternal misery.

There are many questions in people's minds concerning hell: Is it a real place? Do all unsaved people go there? Will it continue to exist forever? Will people who are consigned there be tormented forever, or will they be annihilated? The only way to understand this subject and to answer these questions is to look to the

Bible for the answers.

II. THE ETERNAL STATE OF THE SOUL DESTINED FOR HELL.

Before we go too far with this subject, let's deal with questions concerning the eternal state of the souls of the people who are bound for Hell. Hell is the place or state of final punishment of the wicked. It is an actual place, as surely as heaven is. Many like to accept that heaven is a place while rejecting hell as a place. Just as God has a place of happiness for the redeemed who serve Him, so God has a place of punishment for the rebellious who serve the Devil. Jesus, the perfect compassionate One, spoke more on hell than all other Bible writers, because He came to save men from it.

1. Do Some Souls Cease To Exist?

Some believe that the souls of those who do not go to Heaven will be annihilated or cease to exist. The Bible clearly indicates that this is not so. The soul is eternal and will spend eternity in Heaven or in Hell.

Mark 9:47-48 *"And if your eye makes you sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire; "where **their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.**"*

The kind of worm that is spoken of here is the kind that preys upon dead bodies - this speaks of their punishment after death will never cease. It also symbolizes the loathsomeness of the penalty.²

Revelation 20:10,15 *And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are. And **they will be tormented day and night forever and ever...** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

2. What About Purgatory?

Some people believe that the soul of man goes to an intermediate place between Heaven and Hell called purgatory. It is believed that in this place the soul goes through a fiery purging to make it pure enough to enter Heaven later on. There is no evidence of this in the Bible. Besides, we can only enter heaven through the righteousness of Jesus anyway. Our own righteousness will never be good enough. There is only one method for dealing with sins ever mentioned in the Bible.³

1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

Hell is neither annihilation nor a place of temporary punishment. It is not a place of probation or a state of non-existence. An honest consideration of the Scriptures will show that hell is a place of eternal punishment. Hell is a self-chosen and self-inflicted curse, the inevitable outcome of sin.

3. What About Reincarnation?

The Bible absolutely does not teach reincarnation anywhere. It teaches that it is appointed for men to die once, but after this, the judgment.

Hebrews 9:27 *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him, He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

Reincarnation teaches that when a person dies, their soul enters a new body, is born, and that this process repeats itself over and over again. This belief of Hinduism teaches that how we live our lives determines the karmic debt that we must pay off in the next life. The basic idea is that we are stuck on an endless wheel of life, death, and reincarnation until we improve our state through many thousands of lives.⁴

III. WHAT IS HELL GOING TO BE LIKE?

The Bible has a lot to say about Hell. It is a place that the devil and demons inhabit. It is such an awful place to be that Jesus said it would be better to cut off your hand or gouge out your eye rather than to go there. There is crying and total darkness in Hell. It is described as a lake made up of fire and brimstone. Fire in Hell cannot be put out and causes intense pain and agony.

It is true that people can partially experience Hell on earth. Those who live in rebellion against God and His ways do experience to a small degree some of the things that those in Hell are suffering. This experience is, however, only a slight foretaste of the miseries that the occupants of Hell experience forever.

1. Hell Will Be A Place Of Fire And Brimstone.

Revelation 19:20 *Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were **cast***

alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are. And ***they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.***

Revelation 20:14-15 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And ***anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.***

2. Hell Will Be A Fire That Is Never Quenched.

It is a fire that shall never be quenched. It shall go on forever and ever.

Mark 9:43 And if your hand makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go to hell, into ***the fire that shall never be quenched.***

Mark 9:45 And if your foot makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, than having two feet, to be cast into hell, ***into the fire that shall never be quenched.***

3. Hell Will Be A Place Of Intense Torment, Pain & Weeping.

Matthew 13:42 ...and will cast them into the furnace of fire. ***There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*** (Also, Matthew 13:50)

Luke 16:19-28 The story of the rich man and Lazarus illustrates to us the intensity of the pain that will exist in Hell. The rich man speaks of being tormented in the flame and does not wish this place of torment upon anyone.

Hell will be a place where it will be terrible torment to have lusts which cannot be satisfied and a conscience that torments past guilt and rejected grace.

Revelation 14:9-11 This passage of scripture speaks of the torment that shall ascend forever and ever upon all those who follow the beast.

4. Hell Shall Be a Place of Blackness & Darkness.

Jude 1:13 ...raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved forever.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

As we have seen, Hell will be a terrible place separate from the presence of God,

the rejected Lamb, the holy angels and the redeemed. No light, life, peace, joy, righteousness, nor salvation, but only darkness and torment of conscience will be there for those who rejected and despised the grace of God. This is the Hell Jesus Christ died to save us from.⁵

The important thing to keep in mind is that Jesus did not come into the world to condemn it. The world was already condemned. Jesus came so that the world would be saved from this awful place of torment.

John 3:17-19 *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

2 Peter 3:9-11 *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance....*

A great many people will end up in hell. They will come from every background, society, religion, and culture. Among their numbers will include those who the Bible describes as:

1. Those who do not know God. (2 Thessalonians 1:8)
2. Those who do not obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:8)
3. Sinners and hypocrites. (Isaiah 33:14)
4. Those who practiced lawlessness. (Matthew 13:41)
5. Cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sorcerers, sexually immoral, idolaters, and all liars. (Revelation 21:8)
6. Homosexuals, adulterers, thieves, covetous people, drunkards, extortioners. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

The Bible says the road to hell is wide and the road to heaven is narrow. Which road are you traveling on? Which eternal reality do you hope to enter into?

Pray that you will be among the righteous and be a part of the new heaven and the new earth and not a part of the lake of fire and its torment. As long as you continue to follow Jesus, your place in heaven is assured.

If you desire the heavenly reality, now is the time to choose it by accepting Jesus

Christ as your Lord and Savior. By receiving Him as Lord, you are surrendering your life to Jesus Christ by believing in His resurrected life. As a result, you will lead a life of repentance by allowing Him to transform your mind and thoughts, which will produce the fruit of the Spirit in your life. You will be saved from the eternal fires of Hell and have an eternal life that is full of His glory. Your name will be written in LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE.

Romans 10:9 *That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

May God bless you richly as you embrace his righteousness with a life filled with an abundance of grace and life in Him as you commit yourself to Him wholeheartedly.

Endnotes

1. The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament - Joseph Henry Thayer, D.D., page 64, #622.
2. *ibid*, page 580, #4663.
3. Taken from CEI Booklet "Heaven & Hell" by Gary Beasley - page 7.
4. *ibid*, page 10.
5. The Foundations of Christian Doctrine - Kevin Conner, page 307.