

## Hell Is Real

Matthew 25:41: 'He (Jesus) will say to those at His left hand, "Begone from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!"

Matthew 5:22: 'Whoever says, "You cursed fool" will be unable to escape the fire of Gehenna'.

Matthew 8:12: 'He will be driven into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'.

Matthew 10:28: 'Be afraid of Him Who can destroy both soul and body in hell'.

Matthew 18:8 & 9: 'It is better for you to enter eternal life maimed than to be thrown into everlasting fire'.

Matthew 22:13 & 14: 'Tie him hand and foot and throw him into outer darkness where there will be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth; for many are called but few are chosen'.

Matthew 24:51: 'God will scourge him and put him with the hypocrites; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'.

Matthew 25:30 & 46: 'Throw the good-for-nothing servant into the outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth ... Then they will go away into eternal punishment ...'

Mark 9:43 to 48: 'It is better for you to go into eternal life maimed than go to hell; into the fire that cannot be put out. It is better to go into eternal life crippled, than to be cast into hell. It is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with one eye than be thrown into hell with two eyes. Hell is where their 'worm' does not die and the fire is not extinguished'. The worm is exceeding anguish.

Luke 13:28: 'There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but you, yourselves, being banished and driven out'.

Jesus said so much about hell, outer darkness, eternal punishment and other phrases for the same place, we cannot write everything He said. Hell is a real place where unsaved souls go to wait for the final judgement of mankind. Hell has not been invented by fundamentalists to frighten people into being 'good'. The subject of hell is so distasteful, many pastors and preachers will not teach on the subject for fear of scaring parishioners away. Many people today feel that 'hell-fire and brimstone' preaching has no place in our modern churches and have 'watered down' the truth and the terrible, terrible reality of eternity without God. That thinking is wrong. Christians forget John the Baptist, Jesus and the apostles all preached about hell and so should we. John the Baptist was not being negative when he called the Pharisees and Sadducees 'vipers'. John encouraged everyone to face up to the truth about themselves, rather than blaming others for their sin.

We, who know the truth, have an obligation to tell the truth to others. God doesn't give us divine revelations so we can enjoy them and sit on them; God gives us revelations so we can share that knowledge with as many people as possible. Christians have the God-given responsibility to tell the unsaved, the consequences of rejecting our Saviour and we should be out there telling everybody we can. It would be a terrible feeling to be safely going into eternity with God, only to have a loved one – a grandparent for example – say to you, "I could have been going with you – if only you had told me – now I'm destined for eternity without God." Stop for a moment and close your eyes. Picture that scenario. A loved one on their way to hell, screaming for mercy because you chose not to tell them! We must open our mouths and speak of the love of God and the only way of salvation – which is through Jesus.

In the Old Testament hell was known as Sheol, which means 'the place of the dead'. Sheol burns with the Lord's anger. 'For a fire is kindled by My anger and it burns to the depths of Sheol' (Deuteronomy 32:22). From the first recorded death of Abel right up to the time of Jesus' resurrection, every adult who died went to Sheol. Children, it seems go straight to be with God because they are too young to be considered sinners. King David had accepted the death of his baby boy and knew he was in heaven, and David said he would one day go to join his baby (2 Samuel 12:23). A person has to make a conscious decision to reject God, before He blots their name out of His book that was written before the foundation of the world (Exodus 32:32 & 33; Psalm 9:5; Revelation 17:8); but they will still fall down and worship Jesus (Revelation 13:8). Once a person repents, their names are re-written into the Lamb's Book of Life where only the righteous people have their names written (Psalm 69:28; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 20:12; 21:27).

The words Hades and Gehenna were only used in the New Testament but mean the same as Sheol. When Jesus was dead for those three days, He went into Hades/Sheol and preached to the people there, and notice Sheol was called prison (1 Peter 3:19 & 20; 4:6). When Jesus walked out of Hades then rose from the dead, He overcame death and Hades (Revelation 1:18). The righteous who had died, rose from their graves and walked around Jerusalem for about a month (Matthew 27:52 & 53). One would think after being in Sheol/Hades everybody would have repented and turned to Jesus out of terror; but just like people on earth – most didn't repent. If there was no chance of repentance then preaching to the dead would have been pointless. They will rise again for the final judgement. 'Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt' (Daniel 12:2). 'If anyone's name was not recorded in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire' (Revelation 20:15).

John the Baptist knew hell was real. 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath of God? Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance ... He (Jesus) will burn the chaff with fire that cannot be extinguished' (Matthew 3:7, 8 & 12). 'Even now, the axe is laid to the root of the trees, so that every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. But the chaff He (Jesus) will burn with fire that cannot be extinguished' (Luke 3:9 & 17).

Jesus told this story of devastation. 'There was a certain rich man who clothed himself in purple and fine linen. He revelled, feasted and made merry in splendour every day. At his gate there was a certain utterly destitute man named Lazarus, covered with sores. He desired to be satisfied with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs even came and licked his sores. It occurred that Lazarus died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus at his side. He cried out and said, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame."

But Abraham said, "Child, remember that you in your lifetime received comforts and delights, and Lazarus in like manner the discomforts and distresses; but now he is comforted here and you are in anguish. Besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who want to pass from heaven to you may not be able, and no one may pass from Hades to us."

The man said, "Then, father, I beseech you to send him to my father's house for I have five brothers, so that he may give testimony and warn them, lest they too come into this place of torment."

But Abraham said, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."

But he answered, "No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent."

Abraham said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe even if someone should rise from the dead" (Luke 16:19 to 31).

These above verses show us that Jesus was serious about the reality of hell and everlasting punishment. Hell is real; it is a waiting place for those who are headed for the lake of fire which is much worse, and eventually, even Hades itself will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10, 14 & 15); hell is torment and suffering; people in hell will see the righteous in heaven and vice versa; it is not possible to move between hell and heaven; hell is full of sadness, regret, pain and anguish; the devil, the beast and the false prophet will be thrown into the lake of fire along with unsaved people and fallen angels (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6) who are already in pits of gloom and darkness while they too wait for the final judgement. When people see the devil in the lake of fire, he will be in the same situation as unsaved people and will therefore not be so scary. People will be amazed at the devil's hopeless situation (Isaiah 14:12 to 19). The lake of fire was designed for the devil and his fallen angels – not for people (Matthew 25:41), but sadly there will be more people in there than in heaven. What is startling and real is the terribleness of the lake of fire. It is so terrible, demons that know they are going there are terrified of the place (Matthew 8:29; Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28; James 2:19). If they are terrified, then so should people be terrified.

The apostles said a lot about hell. We learn from Paul that we have the victory over the fear of death and that there is no fear of damnation. 'Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory?' (1 Corinthians 15:55). The wonderfully great news is: 'If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved' (Romans 10:9). 'Repent therefore and be baptised, every one of you in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38). 'If we confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9). If you have done these things and God has cleansed you from unrighteousness – then you will be righteous and your name is in the Lamb's Book of Life! Hallelujah!!

Amen and God bless you.

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