

CrossRoads Baptist Church
August 13, 2006 10:00 AM
Hebrews 10:26-31
Eternity: Heaven or Hell #4

“What is Hell Like?”

Hell is a place of punishment and terrible punishment, at that. It is terrible because the one who punishes is God. God is seen as “a consuming fire,” Hebrews 12:29. Therefore, “it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Hebrews 10: 31

After mentioning the death penalty for lawbreakers prescribed in the law of Moses, it says, “How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot?” Hebrews 10: 29

This place of eternal punishment has no one word to describe it. But let’s look at the Biblical description :

I. Hell is described as a place.

1. Rubbish heap – Mark 9: 43-48

It speaks of being cast into hell where “the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”

This is in reference to the garbage dump that we spoke of two Sundays ago. Three things come to mind when we think of hell as a garbage dump:

- a. You only throw things away that are no longer of value.

If you mistakenly throw something away of value, you are willing to go through the nasty trash to find it because you only throw things away that are no longer of value.

- b. The dump is now wasteland.

Waste – what a sickening word. To waste something is bad, but to waste a life for eternity is horrible. God made us for relationship with Himself but for all of eternity now man will never be able to reach his potential – what a waster.

- c. God is tossing you aside.

No longer will God deal with you or plead with you.

2. Pit - Psalm 7:15, Luke 8:31; Revelation 9:1-2; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1

“bottomless pit” - you will have the sense of falling for all of eternity but there will never be a bottom to land on – continual falling.

3. Prison Matthew 18:30

Earthly prisons only confine the body – the spirit is still free. But in hell, the spirit is confined.

Matthew 10:28 “Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

4. Darkness Matthew 8:12; 22: 13; 25:30

Hell is darkness. Jesus is the Light and Heaven is the abode of eternal light where there will be no Sun for Jesus will be the light. But Hell will be totally absent of God. I John 1:5 “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”

John 3:19 “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.”

So God will give them what they all their lifetime have loved – darkness.

It’s a place.

5. Eternal separation

This darkness is described as outer – meaning a place of banishment. (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:46)

Luke 16:26 mentions a gulf fixed

II. Hell is described by the people

Look at the company in hell –

Matthew 25:41 “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Revelation 20:10 The Beast and the false prophet are in the lake of fire

All who practice lawlessness – Matthew 13: 41-42 “The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness.”

Revelation 21:8 “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.”

Note, the cowards go to hell. Many believe that the sissies are those who become Christians, but actually the sissies and the cowards are those who go to hell. A coward won't face up to who they are, what they have done and who Jesus is.

III. Hell is described as pain

If there could be one word to describe the pain of hell it would be torment. It is used twice in Revelation (14:10-11 and 20:10) to describe the suffering of Satan, the Antichrist, and his prophet and those who served the antichrist. It is also used in the story of Lazarus and the rich man to describe the suffering of hell (Luke 16: 23, 28).

1. The physical pain

The pain caused by the fire. Fire is mentioned 21 times in the NT alone.

Matt. 5:22 “danger of hell fire”

Matt. 13: 40-42 “Furnace of fire”

Matt. 18:8-9 It's so terrible that it would be better if your hand (anything you do), your foot (anywhere you go) or your eye (anything you look at) offends you, cut it off or pluck it off and go maimed than “to be cast into the everlasting fire.”

The fire of hell is unlike anything we know here. All fire here destroys. But God is able to create a fire that does not destroy. He did it with Moses at the burning bush and He can do it again.

R.G. Lee said if this fire is not physical, then the use of the figurative word makes the reality even worse.

2. The internal pain

But most people know the internal pain is worse than the physical pain. You can get out of the flames, but what happens when the flames can not get out of your head?

The Bible describes three types of internal pain:

A. Weeping and gnashing of teeth

Matthew 8:12

Seven times in two gospels, hell is described as much weeping and gnashing of teeth. What does this mean?

Weeping is more than just tears. Its wailing, not merely with tears, but with every outward expression of grief.

Gnashing of teeth is a way of expressing anger. It was shown at Stephen in Acts 7:54 when they were angry at his message. In hell, the anger will be more intense than any of this world's anger has ever seen. They will be angry at the very things which gave them pleasure here on earth.

Mark 9:48 “Where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.” Notice, “their” worm – not “the” worm. It appears the suffering will be internal rather than external.

As one has said, “Not only will the unbeliever be in hell, but hell will be in him.”

B. Shame and contempt

Daniel 12: 2 “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

This is the pain caused by guilt and the mind accusing conscience which has total recall. Oh what pain when your guilty mind can not be silenced.

It may be that this “worm” that will ever be growing in your soul feeding of all the memories of when the gospel was presented to you but you denied it – all the messages presented to you – all the prayers offered for you.

C. Loneliness

The rich man in hell in Luke 16:24 is alone. He can see Abraham and Lazarus but is unaware or at least uninterested in anyone else that was in hell with him.

Genesis 2:18 says that it is not “good for man to be alone.” But in hell, there will be no companionship, no love, no sympathy, no kindness, no pity, no comfort, no help.

All your friends and family may be there, but you will not know it. A place of total loneliness.

T.S. Elliott's character in *Cocktail's Party* said, “What is hell? Hell is oneself – hell is alone. One is always alone.”

Conclusion:

This message is not intended alone to scare you, but warn you. When severe weather sirens go off, its not to scare you, but to warn you. They do it so you can have the opportunity to change what you are doing and prepare for bad storms.

Charles Spurgeon said over a hundred years ago that “it is shocking to reflect that a change in the weather has more effect on some men’s lives than the dread alternative of heaven or hell.”

You’d better heed the sound and change your ways. Hell is coming!

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