

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Hell Summed Up

Selected Passages

Keywords: Hell, Judgment, Eternity, Wrath, Condemnation

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: In this final sermon we see how Jesus, Himself, describes the final judgment and hell. Often the discussion of hell is separated from God in such a way as to diminish God's part in the whole affair. It is seen as a necessary evil but something that makes Jesus sad to have to do. But the gospels portray it very differently. Jesus speaks boldly and clearly about the nature and purpose of hell and He makes it clear that He is central to it all.

I. Introduction.

- A. Today we finish up the small series on hell.
- B. Last week I wanted to show you the words of Jesus on this topic.
- C. When we considered the teachings of Jesus we saw two things:
 - 1. He treats it as real and factual.
 - 2. God is Lord over hell.
- D. For today, we will sum up everything left about hell. This will take place in three parts:
 - 1. Eternal hell or annihilationism?
 - 2. Are there degrees of suffering and punishment?
 - 3. The rejection by Jesus results in hell.

II. Hell Summed Up.

- A. Eternal hell or annihilationism.
 - 1. First, I want to speak to the idea of whether annihilationism is heresy.
 - a. Heresy occurs when a person holds and teaches a doctrine that contradicts Scripture AND in some way undermines the nature of God and the way of salvation through Jesus Christ alone.
 - b. So, universalism is a heresy.
 - c. Annihilationism is different. I think it is wrong. But I can understand how it can be believed.

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- (1) There is a whole spectrum of positions on this idea.
- (2) If you think that a person just disappears right away, I would put you right on the cusp of heresy.
- (3) But if you see that each person is truly punished through suffering fully and properly for their rejection of God and only then are they destroyed. I would have a hard time calling that heresy.
- (4) We need to make room in our minds for bad teaching, as well as false teaching. But there is also weak teaching.
- (5) Paul speaks about this a bit in 1 Timothy 6:3.

- (6) I don't think annihilationism makes for a false teaching. But I don't think it is healthy. I don't think it helpful in moving us toward faith in Jesus and a proper Godward perspective in our lives.

- d. The promise of life eternal and the promise of forgiveness of sin and the rescuing out of hell are NOT the goals of the gospel. They are necessary consequences of the gospel.
- e. And all that is Christ's we are able to then share in.
- f. But what of those do not want God?
 - (1) To reject God is to then choose to be at odds with Him. Which is what the bible says without apology. We are by nature enemies of God.
 - (2) Romans 9:22. Explain.

2. The simple reality is that if eternal life is the reward and blessing for those who believe and follow Jesus Christ, then the opposite would be true for those who reject Jesus.

- a. In Matthew 25:41, 44:

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b. Revelation 14:9-11:

3. So, to sum this up. Annihilationism has a very real potential for error regarding the ultimate end for those who reject. While it is attractive and you can even take some of the verses to support eventual utter destruction. What it fails to do is give a reasonable explanation of the passages that emphasize a state of eternal punishment and suffering.

B. Are there degrees of suffering and punishment?

1. There are a few passages that give an indication of differing punishments. Two specific ones will suffice to answer the question.
 - a. Matthew 11:20-24, (He is angry in vs 16). The key part is in vss 22 and 24.
 - b. Revelation 20:12-13, here the key part is “according to their deeds.”
2. So we have some indication that based on the actions and thoughts and intentions of a person, their judgment shall be given.
3. However, to think this may work out for you is quite foolish. Hell is not like some prison where you are talking with others and comparing punishment.
4. And the details given in the bible in such a way as to caution anyone from reading much into them. What we know is that it is a time of endless torment. That it is outer darkness. It a place of gnashing and wailing. It is dwelling in the presence of God’s wrath without end.

C. The rejection by Jesus results in hell.

1. Matthew 7:23.
 - a. Context is about false teachers but applies to all who reject the gospel. I think we misunderstand how much God despises those who teach falsely about Him and His purposes.

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- b. Vs 14, the way is not broad, but narrow. So where many are on the road, it is likely not the true one.
- c. Vs 15-20, beware/take heed/watch out for the false prophet.
 - (1) How do you know what they are? You look at the fruit of their teaching and ministry.
 - (2) These people always create a stage presence but not an intimate relationship with the people.
- d. Vss 21-22 mark out the difference between true faith (doing the will of God) vs false faith (doing "fancy" things).
- e. So the result is a rejection by Jesus.
- f. Also consider the horror of "on that day." For this is on the day of judgment when all who are in hades right now are raised to stand before Jesus at the White Throne. They believe a cosmic error has occurred. This is the evil of universalism and of purgatory.

2. Matthew 8:11-12.

- a. Understand the context is bound up in the fact that Israel is God's chosen nation and people. But to be part of the nation and ethnicity is not the same as being saved. That comes through faith.
- b. A Roman centurion has a suffering, paralyzed servant. These are people who are hated by the Jews.

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- c. It is here that we see the rejection again by God to unbelievers.
 - (1) They shall be cast out. Now, the description is one of outer darkness.
 - (2) It is an actual place and it is described as a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- 3. Matthew 13:30, 40-43.
 - a. It shall involve great pain. The gathering of the unbelieving, rejecters of God shall be gathered like bundles of weeds/tares. Their only end shall be to be burned.
 - b. In vss 36 they want to better understand the parable of the tares. And Jesus gives the explanation.
 - (1) First, He is the "good seed) in vs 37.
 - (2) Then, there is a switch. The good seed is not the gospel here, but those who believe in the good Seed and now become like Him.
 - (3) The bad seed (weeds) are those who reject Jesus, because they are sons of the evil one. Note that there are no other options.
 - (4) Vs 39 Satan is the one putting false believers into the midst of true believers. And only at the end will these be revealed. You cannot easily discern them all.
 - (5) Vss 40-43 speak of the final judgment. The angels shall do the gathering of the those who talk one thing but live and love another.
 - (6) And notice how hell is now a "furnace of fire" not to be burned up, but to be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Note the way Jesus describe salvation and heaven in the vss that follow.
 - 1. Vs 43. The same people hated, persecuted and mocked shall now shine forth. What a beautiful picture.
 - 2. This is simply a restatement of **Matthew 5** and the beatitudes:

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“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the lowly, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- a. Here and now, the kingdom is like a hidden treasure (vs 44).
- b. It is like a pearl of immense value (vs 45).
- c. It is like a dragnet. This is like the tares and wheat image. Right now gathering in everything. Only at the harvest is the true kept and the false cast away.

Benediction

May the God who gave us the Word sanctify us in it so that we might find ourselves strengthened in the truth, humble of heart, able to encourage one another toward love and good deeds, especially as we see the day of our Lord’s return drawing nearer. Amen.