

06/23/24 Message

Part of Heaven vs Hell

June 22, 2024

Message: Punishment After Judgment

Series: Heaven vs Hell

This series is focused on two places, two destinations, heaven and hell. The dichotomy is polarizing, and the distinction is relevant. In reality, one can choose the journey and the destination. Beliefs in the afterlife and its destinations should be based on our source of truth, the Bible, God's Holy Word.

Introduction

- Beliefs on the afterlife, heaven, and hell should be BIBLICAL
 - We should read Scripture praying, "God, speak to me"
- MANY AREN'T going to heaven and that means...
 - MANY ARE going to hell

When An Unbeliever Dies

An unbeliever is an unbeliever not because God wants or willed them to be... an unbeliever is an unbeliever because they choose to be. The option was on the table, choose Jesus or not - and they picked not!

—Pastor Chad

Hell is punishment after judgment!

Who will be judged? Unbelievers.

Unbelievers have everything to be judged because they haven't been forgiven.

Matthew 25:31-32 (NLT)

31 "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne.

32 All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”

The scene is a courtroom, the judge is Jesus. Jesus gives His judgment... hands out the verdict – believers are innocent, and unbelievers are guilty. Then He announces the sentence – believers are awarded everlasting life while unbelievers are awarded everlasting punishment. Not because how Jesus feels about them...

The Bible makes it very clear; Jesus loves everyone regardless of their beliefs. He died on a cross for sinners. Sinners, people who sin against Him. Sinners, people who are living a lifestyle incompatible with God. Yet, Jesus loves sinners so much, He gave up His life, so they wouldn't have to give up theirs!

What is Hell Like

Matthew 25:41,46 (NLT)

41 “Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.

46 “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”

Look at the words used in this passage to describe hell.

Hell is:

- ETERNAL
- FIRE

Malachi 3:2-3 (NLT)

2 “But who will be able to endure it when he comes? Who will be able to stand and face him when he appears? For he will be like a blazing fire that refines metal, or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes.

3 He will sit like a refiner of silver, burning away the dross. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold and silver, so that they may once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the LORD.

A refiner's fire removes dross. The fire doesn't destroy the metal, it allows the junk to be removed so the metal can be strengthened. After going through the refiner's fire,

the metal will be strong, and pure. That's righteousness!

—Pastor Chad

The fire of hell is different because the opportunity for refinement is gone. It's too late to remove the junk, the rubbish, the impurities, the sin. But the fire doesn't consume either. It doesn't destroy.

When steel is overheated, something unique happens. It loses both hardness and strength, making it softer, weaker, and pliable... in the metal world the steel would have no consideration for reuse. That's hell!

In Matthew 13 starting in v36, Jesus isn't talking about the sheep and goats anymore. Now He's talking about wheat and weeds - wheat being believers and weed being unbelievers. Jesus says the weeds will be removed...

Matthew 13:42 (NLT)

And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- There will be WEEPING
- There will be GNASHING OF TEETH

Four things stand out about this phrase.

- Jesus speaks of the agony being in utter darkness in Matthew 8:12 and 22:13
- He speaks of the agony being in a furnace of fire in Matthew 13:42 and 13:50
- The agony is alongside hypocrites in Matthew 24:51 and
- It's out of the presence of the Lord in Luke 13:28.

Questions About Hell

Is hell a real place?

- The Bible teaches it's a real place created for Satan, his demons, and for punishment of sinners who never enter into a life changing relationship with Jesus Christ.

What will it be like?

- The Bible describes it as eternal fire. A place where there will be

crying and regret, a place of agony and punishment.

Will people be consumed by fire?

- Consumed, yes. Destroyed, yes. Incinerated, no. Burned to the point where someone thinks they can no longer stand it, and it never stops.

Will people in hell retain their senses?

- Will they smell the terrible scent of burning flesh, absolutely. Will they feel the pain, they will. In fact, I think senses will be heightened in hell, to a point of taking an unbearable place and maximizing the torment to unimaginable levels.

Is hell at the center of the earth?

- We don't know the geographical location. What we do know is it's better to put your mind on escaping it instead of where it is.

What about the person who has never heard about God?

- To that I'd ask a counter question. How can someone look at the world around them and see His Creation, and not believe in God. On some level, I think everyone on the face of this earth has a choice to make. Believing He exists or believing He doesn't. Then if someone believes He exists, that's not an automatic ticket to escape hell... The one who believes in God has another choice to make. Do I trust Him enough to turn my life over to Him? Do I love Him and want a relationship with Him? The answer to that question ultimately determines a person's eternity.

See, I think that's why the Bible tells us many who think they're going to heaven, won't be in heaven. Which means, many who didn't think they would go to hell, are headed to hell. The key... the compass... a real, radical relationship with Jesus. You can't fake it. You can't pretend or imitate. It's either real or it's not and if it's not, then you are making the choice to not follow Jesus. You are choosing hell over heaven, whether you realize it or not.

—Pastor Chad

Children who are too young to know the difference, are protected under God's amazing grace. We'll see them in heaven. Children and adults who don't make the right choice and know the difference, their

choice whether intentional or unintentional – will direct their path.

Choose heaven over hell. Choose Jesus today!