

Thoughts About Hell

Text : **Luke 16: 19-31 , Matthew 25: 46**

INTRODUCTION :

A. What do you believe about Hell ?

1. Is it a literal place ?
2. Will the torments be real ?
3. Do people really stay there forever ?

B. Many people do not believe there is a Hell.

1. A Harris poll showed only **60%** of Americans believe in hell. (*some polls less*)
2. Women are **10%** more likely to believe in hell than are men.
3. When polled by religion :
 - a. Protestants ... **15%** believe there is no hell or doubt there is one.
 - b. Catholics ... **21%** believe there is no hell or doubt there is one.
 - c. Jews ... **97%** believe there is no hell or doubt there is one.
 - 1) 45% were certain there is no hell.
 - 2) 52% say there is probably no hell.
 - 3) Not even one in the sample group felt certain there is a hell.

C. Each year more and more people doubt God.

1. Some say they believe in God, but their lives deny their words.

Titus 1: 16 – **They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.**
2. Those raised without regular “church” attendance grow up without faith.
 - a. Any church that claims to be Christian will teach that God exists.
 - b. Faith in God comes ONLY as a result of knowledge of God.

Rom. 10: 17 – **So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.**

D. Those who have no faith in God will not believe in either Heaven or Hell.

1. This erosion of faith will directly affect our civil society as well as God’s kingdom.
2. A godless society can only be controlled / regulated by extreme tyranny.
3. *“Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”* -- John Adams
3. Thus, as man loses his fear of God and of His wrath, our society is unraveled.

Therefore, lest we are unduly influenced by our deteriorating culture by this lesson we want to reinforce three long held beliefs about Hell.

- 1) Hell is real.
- 2) Hell is needed. ** Anyone who truly believes in Hell*
- 3) Hell is a horrible place. *will be to warn others away from it.*

I. Hell is a real place.

A. Jesus taught twice as much about Hell as He did about Heaven.

1. Our text quotes Jesus describing Hell as a real place.
 - a. **Matt. 25: 46** – These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
 - b. **Luke 16: 19f** ... Summarize
2. Jesus presents Hell as a place to be greatly feared.
 - a. Jesus uses hyperbole to emphasize the horror of being in Hell. (*Must fear Hell*)
 - b. **Mark 9: 43** – If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into Hell, into the unquenchable fire,
3. All who did not voluntarily bow to God’s lordship will be ejected to Hell.
 - a. **Rom. 14: 11** – For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God.” (*if forced, be discarded*)
 - b. **Matt. 13: 41-42** The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, ⁴² and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

B. Not only does belief in Jesus require that one believe in Hell, belief in the bible requires it as well.

1. The entire bible teaches the concept of reward and punishment.
 - a. When Adam & Eve sinned, they were driven from the presence of God.
 - b. When the ancient world became so very corrupt God destroyed all but 8 souls.
 - c. When Israel obeyed God He blessed them, but when they disobeyed He punished.
2. The theme of the New Testament is salvation from the consequences of sin.
3. One cannot believe the bible is the word of God and deny that Hell exists.

** We learn about Hell in the same book we learn about Heaven. (more want heaven)*

C. People deny that Hell exists because they don’t want to submit to God. If Hell is real there will be adverse consequences for sin beyond this life.

II. Why did a loving God create Hell ?

A. Many who deny Hell do so because they say, “God is too loving to cast people into Hell.”

1. They love to quote psalms such as Psalms 13: 5.

Psalms 13: 5-6 But I have trusted in Your lovingkindness; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. **6** I will sing to the Lord, because He has dealt bountifully with me.

2. Even many unbelievers can quote John 3: 16.

John 3: 16 – For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

3. Our text gives us the reason why God created hell.

a. **Matt. 25: 46** – These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

b. Love does not imply the absence of punishment. We love our children, but punish them for bad behavior and reward good behavior.

B. Punishment is completely within the nature of God. (*A just Father & a just Ruler*)

1. God describes Himself as one who punishes the guilty.

Exod. 34: 6-7 Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; **7** who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”

2. Even man doesn’t consider a person a good parent if he doesn’t discipline his child.

C. Sin must be punished.

1. When there is no enforcement, there is not law.

a. Idle threats amount to a falsehood. (*God must enforce His law to be truthful, just.*)

b. The unwritten speed limit is 9 miles above what is posted ... **only that is enforced.**

2. Justice demands punishment.

a. Unlike man, God is totally consistent ... *He treats everyone exactly the same.*

b. **Rom. 3:22-33** But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. **23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

c. **Isa. 42: 1-4** .. Jesus, the promised Messiah was to be “faithfully bring forth justice.”

D. Sin is open rebellion against God, against the sovereign ruler of the universe.

1. Most people do not have a proper view of the severity of sin.
 - a. They make jokes about sin and about Hell. (*Asbestos suits, etc.*)
 - b. Satan is portrayed as a cartoon type character with horns, a tail and trident.
2. Sin is serious; it has caused every man on the planet to die.
 - a. What other disease has killed billions of people. (*Would we joke about it ?*)
 - b. Sin put **Jesus** on the cross. (*If you were judge, would you excuse death of your son?*)
Rom. 12: 19 – **Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,**” says the Lord.
3. Jesus is the King or kings; no king can tolerate rebellion in his kingdom.
 - a. In Syria Assad has kill 80K to stop people who are rebelling against his rule. **TYP**
 - b. The ruler of Heaven and earth cannot tolerate rebellion against His authority.
Nah. 1: 3 – **The Lord is slow to anger and great in power,**
And the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.
 - c. God will enforce His rule over His kingdom and all of His creation.
Rom. 14: 11 – **For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me,**
And every tongue shall give praise to God.”

E. Hell is a place to separate the pollution of sin away from the holy God

1. God is absolutely pure and holy. *As in the vision of Isaiah, the seraphim saying :*
 - a. **Isa 6: 3** – **“Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.”**
 - b. Man can’t fully comprehend the holiness of God; we’ve never even seen it.
2. God does not allow Himself to come in contact with sin.
Isa 59: 2 – **But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God,**
And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.
3. God does not even want to look upon sin.
Habakkuk 1: 13 – **You are of purer eyes than to behold evil,**
And cannot look on wickedness. (nkjv)
4. God will never allow the wicked to dwell with Him. (*He banishes the wicked.*)
 - a. **Psa. 5: 4-6** **For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You. 5 The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. 6 You destroy those who speak falsehood; The Lord abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.**
 - b. **Rev. 21: 8** – **“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”** (*Remember, death means separation.*)

5. Hell is an eternal dwelling for those who cannot approach God.
 - a. All will be resurrected with eternal bodies when Jesus returns. **John 5: 25-32**
 - b. The earth will then cease to exist. **II Pet. 3: 10**
 - c. Those who are not cleansed of all sin CANNOT be with God.
II Thes 1: 7-9 when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power
 - d. Thus ... All sinners must be somewhere away from God, but not on the earth .
 - e. **Hell** is the place where all who are polluted by sin will be.

III. What will Hell be like ... worse than terrible !!

A. The most common word for Hell is “gehenna.”

1. This was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem. (cf. **II Chr 28:3, 33:6**)
Jer. 32: 35 – They built the high places of Baal that are in the valley of Ben-hinnom to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I had not commanded them nor had it entered My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. (cf. **19:2-6**)
2. This valley became the city dump, the most polluted place in Judah. (**no EPA**)
 - a. The smell was horrible; garbage and dead animals were rotting. (**insects, rats**)
 - b. There were fires burning constantly.
3. *Those thrown into Hell are, in fact, discarded by God in the universal dump.*

B. Hell is a place of parting.

1. **Matt. 25: 46** – These will go away into eternal punishment, ...
2. The wicked may be mixed in with the righteous on this earth, but in the judgment they will be separated as sheep from goats. **Mat 25: 31f, Jn 5:25ff**
3. Those we loved on the earth who were not cleansed by His blood or who strayed ...
4. Now is the time to weep for the lost, soon it will be too late. **Ibid, Heb. 9: 27, etc.**

C. Hell is a place of indescribable torment ... unending pain.

1. **Matt. 25: 46** – These will go away into eternal punishment, ...
2. Hell is a place that should bring fear to us every time we think of it.
Matt. 10: 28 – Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
3. Hell is described as a furnace of fire. **Matt 13: 41-42, 49-50**

4. Hell is described as a **lake of fire and brimstone**. **Rev. 20: 14-15 , 19: 20, 20: 10**
5. Our text : **Luke 16: 23-24** In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'

D. Hell's torments affect all of our senses.

1. **Feeling** ... Place of fire. Burns are among the most painful of injuries.
2. **Smell** ... Brimstone is sulfur, burns invisible, hot, & terrible order ... burnt flesh
3. **Taste** ... Horrible taste of being parched and dehydrated, but having not water.
4. **Hearing** ... **"weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth"** (*remember gospel pleas*)
5. **Sight** ... See Abraham's bosom ... what you could have had.

CONCLUSION :

A. We don't like to think about Hell because it is so frightening.

1. The very thought of Hell should make us tremble.
 - a. Jesus used the most graphic language possible. (*compared it to the dump*)
 - b. He wanted us to fear the wrath of God.
2. Hell is a place without hope. ... **eternal**
 - a. **"Where the worm never dies."**
 - b. The sinner's resurrected will be like the burning bush .. never consumed. **Ex. 3: 1ff**

B. Hell is real, it is needed and it is horrible, but no one needs to go to Hell. *Choice*

1. God does not want for you, yeah, for anyone to be cast into Hell.
 - a. Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. ... **Matt. 25: 41**
 - b. They were condemned because they would not surrender to God's reign.
 - c. All sin is the rejection of God's reign in one's life. ***You must surrender to God.***
2. God offers everyone a way back to Him ... **The gospel of Jesus the Christ.**
3. Those who remain polluted by sin cannot approach a holy God. **Must be separated.**

INVITATION :

Jesus is inviting you to be cleansed in His blood and live with Him in Heaven.

Lesson Texts :**Matthew 25: 46**

These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

Luke 16: 19-31

19 “Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. **20** And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, **21** and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. **22** Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. **23** In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. **24** And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ **25** But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. **26** ‘And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.’ **27** And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house – **28** for I have five brothers – in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ **29** But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ **30** But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ **31** But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

Matthew 25: 46

These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.