

# A Study of Eternal Punishment

## INDEX TO STUDY OF THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT:

- [Introduction](#)
- [Digression on Eternal - The Greek Word Aionios](#)
- [Hell Has Fallen on Hard Times](#)
- [Teachings of Jesus Related to Eternal Punishment](#)
- [Effect of the Truth of Eternal Punishment on Our Evangelistic Passion](#)
- [Quotes and Illustrations Related To Eternal Punishment](#)
- [Resources Related to the Doctrine of Eternal Punishment](#)
- [Definition of Terms Used for Eternal Punishment](#)
  1. [Sheol](#)
  2. [Hades](#)
  3. [Gehenna](#)
  4. [Tartarus](#)
  5. [Abys](#)
  6. [Eternal](#)
  7. [Perish](#)
- Steve Lawson's powerful sermon on [The Great White Throne Judgment!](#)
- [Rebuttal of Annihilationism, Universalism, Purgatory](#)
- [Denial of the Doctrine of Hell By The Cults](#)
- [Exposition of Luke 16:19-31](#)
- [Last Words From Saints And Sinners](#)
- [There's No Place Like Hell - Sermon by Ian Paisley](#)
- [The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment - Harry Buis](#)
- [How Shall We Escape if We Neglect so Great a Salvation - W A Criswell](#)
- [Multiple Related Resources on Hell](#) - list at bottom of page
- If you dare - Take a few minutes and watch John Bunyan's [VIDEO](#) The infernal dungeon of Hell
- Jonathan Edwards epic sermon Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God ([watch this video re-enactment](#) or listen to [Max Maclean's version!](#))

## INTRODUCTION: ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

Eternal punishment is the most solemn doctrine in all the Bible and it is subject on which I have never written. I have a dear uncle who was like a father to me and about whom I can hardly bear to think because I have a horror that he may not have accepted Christ before he died, even though the Gospel had been clearly presented to him. Nevertheless, this is doctrine which needs to be expounded because we live in a day when almost everyone thinks they are going to heaven (or some alternative thereof) when they die. So we need to look at what the Bible says about life after death and the doctrine of eternal punishment or Hell.

Solomon's words would be [apropos](#) as we ponder the sobering truths about the eternal destiny of all who reject the gift of eternal life and refuse to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ...

"The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, That one may avoid the snares of death." (Proverbs 14:27)

**J I Packer on preaching hell** - To announce the reality of hell is a testing and grueling task. The compassion and fellow-feeling that should mark all Christian communicators require us to do it, not with gloating and contempt, but **with tears**, if not in our eyes, then in our hearts. Any appearance of off-handedness in our manner will surely discredit our matter, just because it discredits us as human beings. It is hard to take seriously a message from a messenger who does not appear to take it seriously himself, or at any rate not to feel about it as a good man should. R. W. Dale once said that D. L. Moody had a right to preach about hell because he so clearly did so from a weeping heart.

To quote **Francis Chan** "As we roll up our sleeves and dig into the topic of hell, it's important that you don't distance what the Bible

says from reality. In other words, don't forget that the doctrine you are studying may be the destiny of many people. Hell should not be studied without tearful prayer. We must weep, pray, and fast over this issue, begging God to reveal to us through His Word the truth about hell. Because we can't be wrong on this one." ([Erasing Hell](#))

- Watch [Francis Chan's video on Erasing Hell](#)

One of the primary goals of this study is to review the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ regarding eternal punishment for He spoke more about this sobering subject than anyone else in the Bible. Note however that there will no attempt to make this study an all inclusive discussion of Hell which is one reason a [number of other resources](#) are listed.

And since **Eternal Punishment** is such a solemn subject, perhaps a bit of humor might be in order - A business was opening a new store, and a friend of the owner sent flowers for the occasion. The flowers arrived at the new business site, and the owner read the card, inscribed "Rest in Peace." The angry owner called the florist to complain. After he told the florist of the obvious mistake and how angry he was, the florist said, "Sir, I'm really sorry for the mistake, but rather than getting angry, you should imagine this: Somewhere there is a funeral taking place today, and they have flowers with a note that reads, "Congratulations on your new location."

## DIGRESSION ON "ETERNAL" THE GREEK WORD AIONIOS

**ADDENDUM:** Since this article has generated negative critical feedback from [universalists](#), those who hold to the unbiblical belief that every soul ever born will be saved and saved forever, I have been prompted to add a short note at the beginning because a [universalist](#) will not likely read the entire article. Much could be said, but the essence of the truth stands or falls on one word.

What does the word **eternal** ([aionios](#)) mean **as it is used in Scripture, NOT** as it is used by secular writers, including ancient Greek writers? Thankfully, God's Spirit has used the word [aionios](#) numerous times so one may glean an excellent sense of what this word means in the Bible. Can you find Greek "authorities" who say [aionios](#) does not mean eternal? Absolutely, but every man that claims to be an "authority" on this word is also a sinner and his words are not inspired by God, and thus are fallible and subject to error (they are not inerrant)! Only God's Word is [inspired by the Spirit of God](#) (Who is the Spirit of Truth). Only God's Word is [infallible](#). Only God's Word is [inerrant](#). Therefore whatever God says on **ANY** subject is absolute truth, and takes absolute precedence over how the same word was used in the writings of fallen men. That said, here is what the GOD OF TRUTH SAYS about the crucial word **ETERNAL** ([aionios](#)) (And these are only a few examples to make the point).

Matthew 25:41 (WORDS OF JESUS) "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the **eternal** ([aionios](#)) fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

**COMMENT** - Jesus clearly states those on His left are to depart into the **'ETERNAL FIRE.'** So Jesus believes in an **ETERNAL FIRE**. Is that a fair statement based on His own declaration? Secondly, Jesus states this **ETERNAL FIRE** is a place which has been prepared for the DEVIL. So that begs a question -- If **ETERNAL FIRE** is not real, then will the devil be let out of that place at some point in the future? Clearly there is no Scripture that supports that premise. In fact John records the devil's fate in Revelation 20:10+ "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." How long will the devil be tormented according to John? These passages strongly support the premise that eternal fire will last forever, throughout eternity.

Matthew 25:46 (WORDS OF JESUS) "These will go away into **eternal** ([aionios](#)) **punishment**, but the righteous into **eternal** ([aionios](#)) **life.**"

**COMMENT** - What is Jesus contrasting? **Eternal punishment** and **eternal life**. Correct? According to Jesus how long is **life**? **Eternal**. According to Jesus how long is **punishment**? **Eternal**. One can parse Jesus' words or attempt specious, clever word games, but His words are very simple and straightforward and clearly indicate that there are two states of every man ever born, either **eternal punishment** or **eternal life**. There is no middle ground. And if one argues that [aionios](#) does not mean "eternal" than they are painting themselves into a theological corner, because if eternal punishment is not forever, then eternal life is not forever and we are all in a hopeless situation!

**Paul** uses **aionos** to describe the nature of **God** writing

but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the **eternal (aionios) God**, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith. (Ro 16:26)

**COMMENT** - If [aionios](#) does not mean **eternal**, then one is forced to say from this passage that God will not exist forever, which of course is absolutely absurd. [Aionios](#) in this context clearly means eternal, everlasting, forever and ever. Amen!

**Paul** again uses **aionos** in a description of one aspect of **God** writing

Who (GOD) Alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, Whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and **eternal (aionios) dominion!** Amen. (1 Ti 6:16)

**COMMENT** - Paul is blessing God and ascribing to Him **eternal dominion**. **Dominion** is [kratos](#) which refers to inherent strength which displays itself in the rule over others. It follows that if God's [kratos](#) is not eternal, at some point He will not have the strength to rule. Again this is clearly not true or otherwise we are all left without any hope of eternal life. Again, it is clear that [aionios](#) in this context means eternal, everlasting, forever, without end!

The writer of Hebrews uses **aionos** in a description of **God the Spirit** writing

how much more will the blood of Christ, Who through the **eternal (aionios) Spirit** offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14)

**COMMENT** - Once again, if one proposes that [aionios](#) does not mean eternal, then they are forced to conclude that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, will not exist forever. Again such logic is not logic, but lies. Eternal means forever and ever. Amen.

If we let the Bible be our plumbline regarding the meaning of the Greek word [aionios](#), then clearly the Biblical uses of this word indicates the meaning is forever, without end, eternal. And while it is not my favorite theological truth, it is clear from the Word of God that there will be eternal punishment for every soul that does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ while they still have breath in their lungs and a beat in their heart. Do not believe the lie of Satan, "You surely will not die." (Ge 3:4+)! Today is the acceptable time. Today is the day of salvation. (2 Cor 6:2) Believe the truth spoken by Jesus, Who Alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6) and Who Alone has the words of **eternal (aionios) life** (John 6:68)

**Here are a few of the blessed, hope filled words of Jesus regarding ETERNAL LIFE-**

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has **eternal (aionios) life**, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life (John 5:24)

"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have **eternal (aionios) life**, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:40)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has **eternal (aionios) life**. (John 6:47)

"This is **eternal (aionios) life**, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent. (John 17:3)

Finally, here is one example of the use of **aionios** in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#), the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament and a version frequently quoted by the New Testament writers. The passage in question is Genesis 21:33 in which Abraham gives us another glorious Name for God.

Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the **Everlasting God** (see study of [El Olam: Everlasting God](#)).

**COMMENT** - The Hebrew word for **Everlasting** is [olam](#) which is translated by [aionios](#). Once again those who would seek to distort or pervert the Biblical meaning of [aionios](#) as meaning something other than eternal have a major problem! They have to directly refute the inspired Word from God Himself. He is saying that He is the **Eternal God**. There is simply no other way to interpret what He says about Himself. It follows that if "**eternal**" ([aionios](#)) does not mean eternal, then either God is confused or He is a liar, and of course He is neither (1 Cor 14:33, Nu 23:19, Titus 1:2+). He is the absolute Essence of Truth. Beloved, it could not be more clearly stated that God is eternal and hallelujah, those who are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ will experience eternal life with Him in His glorious presence. But tragically and sadly, those who refuse to believe in Jesus will experience eternal death and "**will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.**" (2 Th 1:9) Dear reader, if you have not yet placed your faith in the Messiah, the

Lamb of God Who (Alone) **takes away the sin of the world** (John 1:29+), then do not put off this "decision of a lifetime," one that will immediately result in your being rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred (Col 1:13+) from the prospect of eternal death to the hope and certainty of eternal life in Christ. May the Spirit of God draw you and grant you the grace to believe in Jesus Christ, "the **Everlasting** (Hebrew = [olam](#); [Lxx](#) = [aionios](#)) **God**, the LORD, the Creator (Heb 1:2+, Jn 1:3+, Col 1:16+) of the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 40:28) Amen

## HELL HAS FALLEN ON "HARD TIMES"

The doctrine of eternal punishment, though unpopular and frightening, is part of the Apostles' Creed which said that "He descended into hell [meaning Hades not Gehenna]." Erwin Lutzer writes "**Hell disappeared. And no one noticed.**" With that terse observation, American church historian Martin Marty summarized our attitude toward a vanishing doctrine that received careful attention in previous generations. If you are a churchgoer, ask yourself when you last heard an entire sermon or Sunday school lesson on the topic. An article in Newsweek said, "Today, hell is theology's H-word, a subject too trite for serious scholarship." Gordon Kaufman of Harvard Divinity School believes we have gone through a transformation of ideas, and he says, "I don't think there can be any future for heaven and hell." Admittedly, hell is an unpleasant topic. Unbelievers disbelieve in it; most Christians ignore it. Even the staunchly biblical diehards are often silent out of embarrassment. Hell, more than any doctrine of the Bible, seems to be out of step with our times." (Ibid)

**John Blanchard** in his fascinating book [Whatever Happened to Hell?](#) writes "**Hell** seems to have fallen on hard times. A poll taken in the United States in 1978 revealed that over seventy per cent of those interviewed said they believed in hell. Eleven years later a Newsweek survey, again taken in the United States, produced a figure of just fifty-eight per cent. A poll conducted in Australia in 1988 indicated that only thirty-nine per cent believed in hell, while in 1989 a Gallup Poll taken in Britain for the Sunday Telegraph revealed that no more than twenty-four per cent of those questioned did so."

**Christopher Morgan** - If we believe the message sent by the contemporary media, the "new location" of everyone who dies is heaven. At first glance, popular polls seem to disagree with that conclusion, for they reveal that a large majority of Americans believe in the existence of hell. However, the same polls show that almost no one thinks that he or she is going there. Everyone hopes for heaven. ([Hell Under Fire](#) - see [review from DTS](#))

When the American church historian Martin Marty, a professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School, was preparing a Harvard lecture on the subject, he consulted the indexes of several scholarly journals dating back over a period of a hundred years to 1889, and failed to find a single entry. His conclusion was that '**Hell disappeared and no one noticed.**' (Cited in Newsweek, 27 March 1989.)

**Albert Moehler** - A fixture of Christian theology for over sixteen centuries, hell went away in a hurry. The abandonment of the traditional doctrine of hell came swiftly, with centuries of Christian conviction quickly swept away in a rush of modern thought and doctrinal transformation. Historian Martin Marty reduced the situation down to this: "Hell disappeared. No one noticed." "...The traditional doctrine of hell now bears the mark of [odium theologium](#)—a doctrine retained only by the most stalwart defenders of conservative theology, Catholic and Protestant. Its defenders are seemingly few. The doctrine is routinely dismissed as an embarrassing artifact from an ancient age—a reminder of Christianity's rejected worldview. (From Chapter 1 of the book ["Hell Under Fire"](#) -- I suppose they intended a pun!)

**Christopher Morgan** - On October 24, 2003, the Los Angeles Times ran an article called "Next Stop, the Pearly Gates or Hell?" It reported a survey conducted by the Barna Research Group. The September 2003 survey polled people from every state but Hawaii and Alaska to discover their beliefs about heaven and hell. The poll found that 76 percent of Americans believe in a heaven and that 71 percent believe in a hell. The results were a bit surprising: according to the poll, almost as many Americans said they believe in hell as in heaven. But more telling was the fact that, although more than seven out of ten Americans believe in some sort of hell, fewer than one out of a hundred think they have a good chance of going there! These findings are similar to those described in a 1991 cover story of U.S. News & World Report. Its 1990 poll found that 60 percent of Americans said they believed in some sort of hell, but that only 4 percent considered themselves to have a good chance of going there. What are we to make of this? Polls are difficult to analyze, but if these are accurate, more Americans believed in hell in 2003 than in 1990. Yet fewer of them believed that they themselves might go to hell. Evidently, most Americans conclude that God will punish at least some sinners, but few include themselves in that group. Maybe the idea is that hell exists only for extremely evil people—such as Adolf Hitler, Saddam Hussein, serial killers, and serial rapists. ([What is Hell? - Basics of the Faith](#))

In his sermon entitled [A Forgotten Doctrine: The Wrath of God](#) Ray Pritchard explains that "Sometimes the title tells the whole story. My sermon today is about the wrath of God. It is truly a forgotten doctrine, even in the evangelical church. I'll dare say that many of you have never heard a sermon on God's wrath—that is, not a full sermon devoted to this one topic. The reasons for this apparent neglect are not hard to find. Most of us would rather hear about love and grace. I know I would rather preach about God's grace. After all, to speak of the wrath of God makes us appear narrow-minded, judgmental, and God help us, fundamentalist. In an enlightened community like Oak Park, those aren't popular adjectives. And on another level, God's wrath is difficult to comprehend, so in some ways, this is a doctrine that is easy to overlook. The thought that nice people we know might someday go to eternal hell is so overwhelming—and so disheartening—that we'd much rather not think about it at all. Many Christians feel as if they have to apologize for this doctrine. Some think it a blemish on God's character. Others think that God's wrath is inconsistent with his love. Perhaps if you brought a friend this morning, you feel you need to say a word of apology after the sermon is over. Please don't! There is no need to apologize for God's Word so long as it is fairly and graciously presented. And I intend to be both fair and gracious in what I have to say. Let us then consider the words of **J. I. Packer**: The fact is that the subject of divine wrath has become taboo in modern society, and Christians by and large have accepted the taboo and conditioned themselves never to raise the matter (Borrow [Knowing God](#), p. 149)."

**David Lodge** postulates that "**At some point in the nineteen-sixties, Hell disappeared.** No one could say for certain when this happened. First it was there, then it wasn't. Different people became aware of the disappearance of Hell at different times. Some realized that they had been living for years as though Hell did not exist, without having consciously registered its disappearance. Others realized that they had been behaving, out of habit, as though Hell were still there, though in fact they had ceased to believe in its existence long ago.... On the whole, the disappearance of Hell was a great relief, though it brought new problems." (Souls and Bodies)

Gordon Kaufman, a professor at Harvard Divinity School, says that hell has been in decline for 400 years and is now so diminished that the process is irreversible: '**I don't think there can be any future for hell.**'

Another theologian says, '**Talk of hell started to fall off in western countries about the same time science began to make an impact, about the late nineteenth century.**' (The Bulletin, 24 May 1988.)

Richard Cavendish, author of *Visions of Heaven and Hell*, commented, 'In our century there has been a kind of double development. We have created hells on earth on a bigger scale and perhaps of a more horrible kind than any previous century has done. **Yet there has been a very general retreat from the idea of hell.**'

The question arises as to why has **hell** suffered such a decline in "popularity?"

(1) Of course, the most obvious answer is that hell is not a fun subject on which to preach or teach. The thought of someone we know undergoing eternal punishment is almost too much to bear.

**Rick Holland** - In Sunday sermons, preachers must not neglect preaching on the horrors of hell and the catastrophic consequence of rejecting Christ. When you abandon preaching on hell, you ignore the accent in the Epistles on the coming judgment, you will need to skip large portions of Jesus' teaching in the Gospels, and you might as well rip Revelation out of your Bible. Some neglect to teach on hell, while others minimize the torments of hell. Underestimating the reality of hell leads to a belief in a kind of [purgatory](#) where a second chance after death is expected, thereby making people think that there is plenty of time to "get right with God." Hell is physical pain, loneliness, darkness that accentuates fear, regret, separation from God, and the absence of a second chance. God sends us as His ambassadors to beg people to be reconciled to Him. Do not be misled; the reality of hell is essential to preaching the gospel message. (Quoted in [Evangelism: How to Share the Gospel Faithfully](#)).

(2) Another answer is that some of the decline in preaching and teaching on hell reflects the horrible non-Biblical descriptions by some writers and preachers. For example, Venerable Bede described a man in hell with "flames of fire gushed out from his ears and eyes and nostrils and at every pore." And so because of these type of non-Biblical descriptions of Hell, the tendency is to draw back from even bringing up the subject.

(3) Attacks on the historic doctrine of hell that used to come from outside the church are now coming from within, from such well known evangelical theologians as [Clark Pinnock](#), Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, John Wenham, Basil Atkinson. In 1988, the prominent evangelical John Stott constructed an argument for annihilationism. (Richard Mayhue's rebuttal - [Hell: Never, Forever, or Just for Awhile](#))

It is interesting that the secular world pays far more attention to **hell** than does the church! So while sermons and teaching on **hell** have declined over the past 100 years ([see note below](#)), the use of the word **hell** itself has significantly increased as shown below in the Google chart of the frequency of usage of **hell** over time. And keep in mind that the higher usages in the 1800's reflect a greater

usage in a religious compared to our day. I was very surprised to see the rather striking increase in popularity of the word **hell**, but then I began to understand that clearly this reflects a major decline in the morals of Americans, so that **hell** is used glibly and tritely on shows and literature, and even by a President of the United States who sadly uses the word **Hell** with regularity and seemingly without a hint of [compunction](#)! (cf the effect of "*leaders*" in Jdg 5:2NLT-note) Woe!

**MacArthur** adds that 'Unbelievers [flippantly](#) (idea of inappropriate levity) and frequently tell people **to go to hell**. Unbelievers don't seem to have any hesitation to talk about **hell** and to verbally threaten people with it, but on the other hand the church is reluctant to warn people **NOT to go to hell!** The church avoids **hell** [ostensibly](#) out of love, compassion, concern and a desire to be accepted by unbelievers. So while unbelievers frequently have the word **hell** on their lips, believers rarely have it on theirs, but it is the fearfulness and horror of hell that is exactly the point of its Biblical revelation. God's purpose in telling us about **hell** with such detail and repetition is to produce in sinners a sense of fear, terror, and even panic. In other words, the truth of **hell** is taught in Scripture to frighten and horrify unbelievers, so as to produce in them a fear of spending forever in hell (cf Jesus' words in Mt 10:28), a fear which in turn drives them in the direction of repentance and faith in the Gospel. ([A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#))

**Homer Simpson** said, "I'm not a bad guy! I work hard, and I love my kids. So why should I spend half my Sunday hearing about how I'm going to hell?" (One wonders which church he is referring to as few churches preach on this topic!) [See the Simpson's absurd trivialization of Hell](#) where he says "I'd sell my soul for a donut!" Is it any wonder that our culture laughs away the doctrine of Hell as if it were a joke!

**John Lennon** was sadly mistaken when he wrote a popular song in the 1970's called "[Imagine](#)". What if the Biblical pictures of hell as a place of endless punishment and suffering are true? Sadly I don't think John Lennon has to *imagine* today!

Imagine there's no heaven  
It's easy if you try  
No hell below us  
Above us only sky  
Imagine all the people living for today.

#### USAGE OF THE WORD "HELL" OVER TIME

Our society is now using the word "**Hell**" so frequently and flippantly that the majority of people (even believers) have in effect become "[desensitized](#)" to the true meaning of the word as used in the Bible! The [subterfuge](#) of Satan surely has some part in this "cover up!" This reminds me of Screwtape's advice to his protege "Keep everything hazy in his mind now (in context this refers primarily to the church), and you will have all eternity wherein to amuse yourself by producing in him the peculiar kind of clarity which Hell affords. Keep everything hazy in his mind now, and you will have all eternity wherein to amuse yourself by producing in him the peculiar kind of clarity which Hell affords." Uncle Screwtape in letter 12 to Wormwood adds "Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one — the gentle slope, soft underfoot without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts, Your affectionate uncle Screwtape ." Uncle Screwtape goes on to tell Wormwood "**Your man may be untroubled about the Future, not because he is concerned with the Present, but because he has persuaded himself that the Future is going to be agreeable.** (ED: SURVEYS CONFIRM MOST AMERICANS THINK THEY WILL GO TO HEAVEN WHEN THEY DIE WITH FEW THINKING THEY ARE DOOMED FOR ETERNAL PUNISHMENT! SADLY AND TRAGICALLY UNCLE SCREWTAPE HAS BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL!) As long as that is the real course of his tranquility, his tranquility will do us good, because it is only piling up more disappointment, and therefore more impatience, for him **when his false hopes are dashed**. If, on the other hand, he is aware that horrors may be in store for him (REFERRING TO HELL) and is praying for the virtues, wherewith to meet them, and meanwhile concerning himself with the Present because there, and there alone, all duty, all grace, all knowledge, and all pleasure dwell, his state is very undesirable and should be attacked at once. Here again, our Philological Arm has done good work; try the word "complacency" on him. But, of course, it is most likely that he is "living in the Present" for none of these reasons but simply because his health is good and he is enjoying his work. The phenomenon would then be merely natural. All the same, I should break it up if I were you. No natural phenomenon is really in our favour. And anyway, why should the creature be happy? Your affectionate uncle Screwtape ([C S Lewis - Screwtape Letters](#) or [borrow book](#))

I was shocked when I searched for "Idioms of Hell" and encountered over 100 common phrases that use the word **Hell** in essentially "R rated" idioms ([click here at your own risk](#)) which are now accepted as common parlance in our increasing [amoral](#) ("ethically indifferent") society. This proliferation of idioms undoubtedly contributes to the upward slope in the use of "Hell" in 2010 as depicted above.

An old Puritan writer had a good antidote for modern malaise concerning hell **Meditate** much on hell. Let us go into hell by **contemplation** that we may not go into hell by **condemnation!** (see [complete devotional](#))

In his book [The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment](#), Harry Buis writes "That keen European thinker Berdyaev says, "It is remarkable how little people think about hell or trouble about it. This is the most striking evidence of human frivolity." Schilder makes a similar and more detailed analysis of the situation when he says, "What is hell? When you place this question before the modern cosmopolitan man of our day, who is satiated with hyper-culture, then his answer is ready: Hell is a figment of the imagination! Hell? Well, this shadowy frightfulness which is implied in the word, as man says, can't be anything other than a notion of founders of religions and of priests and lying prophets, wherewith they deceive the masses, and the world which wants to be deluded, in order to fill their empty pockets in this life with the preaching of the total emptying of the sinner in the hereafter...they tell you bluntly, that the world doesn't believe any more in hell." ([Preface](#))

To summarize, this parable is about 2 men, a **poor man** who goes to heaven and a **rich man** who goes to hell. And note that most of the text in Lk 16:19-31 focuses on the fate of the **rich man** with only minimal attention being given to the **poor man**. Clearly, the purpose of this parable is to serve as a warning to the rich Pharisees and all of their [ilk](#) who also are deceived and hold the false belief that they are going to heaven when they die but instead will find themselves in hell! Jesus knows this is not a comfortable subject to address, but He also knows it is absolutely necessary so that men might understand the grave danger they are in when they reject Him and refuse to believe His Gospel. As horrible as this subject is to talk about, it is sorely needed that it might cause all readers to contemplate their eternal destiny and to repent and believe in Jesus while today is still called today (cf Heb 3:13). It is only fitting that the Lord Jesus Christ Who is the Judge of the living (born again believers) and the dead (unregenerate) (2 Ti 4:1), is the One Who to give this parable two men and two destinies.

Jesus employed the most graphic language to describe what hell is like: fire (Mt 5:22; Mt 18:9); eternal fire (Mt 18:8); destruction (Mt 7:13); away from his presence (Mt 7:23); thrown outside (Mt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30); blazing furnace (Mt 13:42); darkness (Mt 22:13; 25:30); eternal punishment (Mt 25:46); weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt 8:12; 13:42; 13:50; 22:13; 24:51). Jesus twice used the word eternal (Mt 18:8; 25:46) to convey that the punishment of nonbelievers would continue forever.

**John MacArthur** says that Luke 16:19-31 "Could be called **"The Great Reversal"**, **"A Reluctant Witness From Hell,"** **"How to Think You're Going to Heaven and End Up In Hell."** Most people in the Western world who have had exposure to Christianity, think they are going to Heaven; and that is largely affirmed by clergymen and religious leaders. **(A recent survey revealed that virtually all the people who believe in heaven also believe they will go there** - Gallup poll survey, 10-13 May 2007) I'm quite sure that hell is populated mostly with people who are shocked to find themselves there. People typically answer the question, "Are you going to Heaven?" with, "Well, I'm a good person. I'm a religious person. I believe in God. I believe in Jesus. I'm going to Heaven. God certainly wouldn't send me to hell." Hell is full of surprised people. That's really what this story is about—a rich man who was shocked to find himself in hell. Equally shocking to those who listened to the story was the idea that the poor man was in Heaven. This was contrary to all expectations.

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Pie Chart surveys on "Who Can Go to Heaven,"](#)
- [Another survey;](#)
- [Survey of belief in God;](#)
- [Heaven and hell;](#)
- [2014 Pew poll on heaven/hell](#)
- [Why is the idea of eternal damnation so repulsive to many people?](#)

**MacArthur** goes on to give a **description of hell** - To live life without this hope would make life excruciating and unbearable. But what if everything in your life was as bad as it could be. Take everything bad that has ever happened in your life, roll it all into one experience, and make it permanent. All the pain, all the disappointment, all the failure, all the hatred, all the bitterness, all the fear, all the anxiety, and experience that to the full, and then add the fact that you have no hope. It will never get better. Such knowledge would compound and exacerbate your suffering exponentially. If you were in the severest torture and the most profound, relentless torment physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally, and you were suffering in all those things at the same time and knew there would never be one moment of relief, and that nothing would ever change....I just described hell. It is the place of the most profound suffering, compounded infinitely by the realization that it lasts forever, and nothing will ever change. ([A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#))

As **Rod Mattoon** says Jesus' "story provides great comfort for those who know Christ as their Savior. It should instill terror in your heart if you have never put your faith in Christ because it describes what will happen to you after your death."

**A recent survey revealed that virtually all the people who believe in heaven also believe they will go there** (Gallup poll

survey, 10-13 May 2007). Such was the case with the rich man in this story. Both to himself and to others, he would have seemed like a lock for heaven. The Jews believed that riches were a sure sign of God's blessing. Therefore the more money a man had the greater his blessing from God. When Jesus said to the disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23), "the disciples were amazed at His words" (Mk 10:24). And when the Lord "answered again and said to them, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God'" (Mk 10:24-25) "they were even more astonished and said to Him, 'Then who can be saved?'" (Mk 10:26), if not the rich. The disciples' response reflected the common belief of the Jewish people—especially the money-loving (Luke 16:14) Pharisees to whom Jesus directed this story. The rich man symbolizes them, both in their love of money, and in their assumption that their wealth was a sign of God's favor. Like him (vv. 27-30), the Pharisees demanded signs from Jesus before they would believe. And like him, they would one day be shocked to find themselves in hell. They are tragic examples of those who gained the world, but lost their souls (Mark 8:36). (See [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Gotquestions** - The doctrine of eternal death is not a popular doctrine to teach or proclaim. To do so often opens one up to scorn and ridicule. However, we must not let that detract us from what the Bible so clearly teaches; namely, that due to our being born in sin and trespasses, we are under the just condemnation of God for our sin. If we do not embrace the saving message of Jesus Christ, we will perish in our sin and trespasses and be under God's just judgment for our sin—eternal death. This is a sobering doctrine and requires the utmost care and compassion in its presentation. ([What is Eternal Death?](#))

[Randy Alcorn](#) answers two questions on Hell -

*They are each thrown  
into solitary confinement*

**Question from a reader:**

In his [Heaven](#) book, Randy describes hell with Scripture quoting Christ as saying, "The unsaved will be thrown outside, into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Then he says, "I don't believe hell is a place where demons take delight in punishing people and where people commiserate over their fate. More likely, each person is in solitary confinement."

These statements seem to be in conflict. Can you shed some light on this, please?

**Answer from Randy Alcorn:**

I see no conflict or inconsistency in the statements. I believe both of them.

I think when the unsaved are thrown outside, they are each thrown into solitary confinement. (The verse does not say they will be together, just that they will all be outside.)

I was speaking against the popular notion that hell is a place where demons torture people. On the contrary, we see no demons in power positions in hell. In fact, they themselves all have been or will be put under the punishment of God.

I say that I don't think they will commiserate, because commiseration requires people being together. I cannot prove it, but I believe isolation is part of hell. One suggestion of this in Luke 16, where Abraham and Lazarus are depicted together in paradise, but there is no mention of anyone else being in the presence of the rich man. I think he was all by himself.

## TEACHINGS OF JESUS RELATED TO ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

**Timothy Phillips** defines **Hell** as the "Place of God's final retributive punishment. Scripture progressively develops this destiny of the wicked: the Old Testament outlines the framework, while the New Testament elaborates on it. Jesus, however, is most responsible for defining hell." ([Hell](#))

The doctrine of eternal punishment in hell is not pleasant, but you cannot accept Jesus and reject hell, because He taught it so plainly and frequently. R. C. Sproul wrote ("Tabletalk [11/90]),

The fact is, however, that virtually every statement in the Bible concerning hell comes from the lips of Jesus Christ. We cannot take Jesus seriously without also taking seriously what He said regarding eternal punishment. There is very little about hell in the Old Testament, and very little in the epistles. It is almost as if



God decided that a teaching this frightening would not be received from any lesser authority than that of His own Son.

**W.T.G. Shedd** agrees that "The strongest support of the doctrine of Endless Punishment is the teaching of Christ, the Redeemer of man. Though the doctrine is plainly taught in the Pauline Epistles (e.g., 2 Th 1:9), and other parts of Scripture, yet without the explicit and reiterated statements of God incarnate, it is doubtful whether so awful a truth would have had such a conspicuous place as it always has had in the creed of Christendom...The apostles enter far less into detailed description and are far less emphatic upon this solemn theme than their divine Lord and master. And well they might be. For as none but God has the right and would dare to sentence a soul to eternal misery for sin and as none but God has the right and would dare to execute the sentence, so none but God has the right and should presume to delineate the nature and consequences of this sentence. This is the reason why most of the awful imagery in which the sufferings of the lost are described is found in the discourses of our Lord and Savior. He took it upon himself to sound the note of warning. He, the Judge of quick (living) and dead, assumed the responsibility of teaching the doctrine of endless retribution: "I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him who after he has killed has power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." "Nothing is more striking to me than our Lord's own description of the judgment. It is so inexpressibly forcible, coming from his very own lips, as descriptive of what he himself would do" (Stanley, *Life of Arnold* 1.176). **Christ could not have warned men so frequently and earnestly as He did against 'the fire that never shall be quenched,' and 'the worm that dieth not,' had He known that there is no future peril to fully correspond to them.** That omniscient Being Who made the statements respecting the Day of Judgment, and the final sentence, that are recorded in Matthew 25:31-46, could neither have believed nor expected that all men without exception will eventually be holy and happy...**Jesus Christ is the Person Who is responsible for the doctrine of Eternal Perdition.** He is the Being with Whom all opponents of this theological tenet are in conflict. Neither the Christian church, nor the Christian ministry are the authors of it." ([Dogmatic Theology - Biblical Argument](#))

**Dorothy Sayers**, gives us a necessary antidote to the tragic abandonment of truth about eternal punishment

There seems to be a kind of conspiracy, especially among middle-aged writers of vaguely liberal tendency, to forget, or to conceal, where the doctrine of Hell comes from. One finds frequent references to the "cruel and abominable mediaeval doctrine of hell," or "the childish and grotesque medieval imagery of physical fire and worms"...But the case is quite otherwise; let us face the facts. The doctrine of hell is not "medieval": it is Christ's. It is not a device of "mediaeval priestcraft" for frightening people into giving money to the church: it is Christ's deliberate judgment on sin. The imagery of the undying worm and the unquenchable fire derives, not from "mediaeval superstition," but originally from the Prophet Isaiah, and it was Christ who emphatically used it. . . . It confronts us in the oldest and least "edited" of the gospels: it is explicit in many of the most familiar parables and implicit in many more: it bulks far larger in the teaching than one realizes, until one reads the Evangelists [gospels] through instead of picking out the most comfortable texts: one cannot get rid of it without tearing the New Testament to tatters. **We cannot repudiate Hell without altogether repudiating Christ.** (Borrow [Dorothy Sayers. A Matter of Eternity](#), ed. Rosamond Kent Sprague [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973], p. 86)

And so to study the doctrine of eternal punishment we must listen carefully and prayerfully to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke about Hell in the New Testament as though He actually believed that Hell was real! So let's look at passages from the lips of our Lord which speak of various aspects of eternal punishment

Mt 5:22-[note](#) "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and **whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell ([gehenna](#))**."

**MacArthur** - To call a person a fool is the same as cursing him and murdering him, and to be guilty of that sin is to be worthy of the eternal punishment of **fiery hell ([gehenna](#))**.. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew 1-7)

**New American Commentary** – Some have seen an increasing severity of judgment as Jesus progresses from the terms "judgment" to "the Sanhedrin" (the Jewish supreme court) to Gehenna ("fire of hell")—a reference to the valley south of Jerusalem in which children were slaughtered in Old Testament times and traditionally associated with a perpetually burning garbage dump in later centuries. But given the close parallelism among the first clauses of each illustration, the entire sentences should probably be taken as largely synonymous. All three metaphorically refer to the danger of eternal judgment.

**See John MacArthur's related sermons -**

- [Matthew 5:21-26: Who is a Murderer? - Study Guide](#) - click dropdown
- [Matthew 5:21-26: Who is a Murderer?](#)

Mt 5:27-[note](#) "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; 28 but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; **for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell ([gehenna](#))**..

**Comment:** Note that Jesus here speaks of the **body** going into hell, and of its condition there being so terrible that the loss of an eye or a hand for life would be far less severe!

**MacDonald:** Are we to take Jesus' words literally? Was He actually advocating self-mutilation? The words are literal to this extent: *if it were necessary* to lose a member rather than one's soul, then we should gladly part with the member. *Fortunately it is never necessary*, since the Holy Spirit empowers the believer to live a holy life. However, there must be cooperation and rigid discipline on the believer's part. (Believer's Bible Commentary)

**See John MacArthur's related sermons -**

- [Matthew 5:27-30: Who is an Adulterer? 1](#)
- [Matthew 5:27-30: Who is an Adulterer? 2 - Study Guide](#) - click dropdown
- [Matthew 5:27-30: Who is an Adulterer? 2](#)

Mt 5:30-[note](#) "If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you;**for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell ([gehenna](#))**..

See [Did Jesus mean we should literally pluck out our eyes and cut off our hands in Matthew 5:29-30 and 18:8-9?](#)

**Tough Choices** - On July 20, 1993, while cutting down oaks in a Pennsylvania forest, Don Wyman got his leg pinned beneath a fallen tree. No one could hear his yells for help. After digging for more than an hour to try to free his bleeding, shattered leg, he hit stone. He would bleed to death unless he did something drastic. Wyman made his decision. Using a wrench and the starter cord from his chain saw as a tourniquet, he cut off the flow of blood to his shin. Somehow he had the fortitude to amputate his own leg below the knee with his pocket knife. He crawled to his vehicle and drove to a farmer's home. The farmer got him the help that saved his life. Like Don Wyman, men who want to follow Christ face tough choices. We have sinful habits we want to keep as badly as our leg. We also have a Lord and Savior who calls us to repent. It takes strength to cut off our wickedness. —Craig Brian Larson

**Kill The Spider!** - We sometimes have mixed feelings about our sins. We are afraid of being hurt by them, and we want to be forgiven. But we aren't sure we want to be rid of them right now. A man told me he has a bad habit that is hindering his fellowship with God and hurting his Christian testimony. He says he prays that God will forgive him for his addiction—but he doesn't stop. He reminds me of the story about the man who often went forward at the end of church services to kneel and pray, "Lord, take the cobwebs out of my life." One Sunday morning his pastor, tired of hearing the same old prayer, knelt beside him and cried out, "Lord, kill the spider!" Yes, sometimes it takes radical action to break a sinful habit. We need to do more than ask God for cleansing each time we succumb to temptation. We must take whatever steps are needed to get the cobwebs out of our life. We must confess our sin and determine to be done with it. Then we must feed our mind with God's Word and do all we can to stay away from the people and places that tempt us to sin. That's what Christ meant when He said, "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out" (Matthew 5:29). Kill the spider and you'll get rid of the cobwebs.

**See John MacArthur's related sermons -** [Matthew 5:29-30: Man's Biggest Problem - Study Guide](#) - click dropdown; [Matthew 5:29-30: Man's Biggest Problem](#)

Matt. 7:21–23-[note](#) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 ([note](#)) "**Many** will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.**'

**Francis Chan** on Matthew 7 "probably the scariest passage on hell in the entire Bible? The most horrific word in this passage isn't hell; it isn't fire, furnace, everlasting, gloom, darkness, worms, or torment. In fact, none of these words occur in this passage. The most frightening word is **many**. Jesus says, "Many

will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' " (Matt. 7:22). This is judgment day. This is the end. There are no second chances. This is the last peaceful breath that "many" will breathe before they spend the rest of their life in hell. Put yourself there for a second. Fast-forward your life to that day. Will you sound like the many who call out in desperation, "Lord, Lord, did I not \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ in Your name?" How will Jesus respond to your laundry list of Christian activities—your Easter services, tithe, Bible studies, church potlucks, and summer-camp conversions? Are you sure you're on the right side? What evidence do you have that you know Jesus? Please understand my heart. I believe I am asking these questions for the same reason that Jesus gives the warning. It's the most loving thing I can do! "Many" will go to hell even though they thought they'd waltz into paradise. Jesus will say, "I never knew you; depart from me" (Matt. 7:23). ([Erasing Hell](#))

**Alan Carr** gives some statistics on how "heavenly minded" America is in his sermon ([Not Everyone Gets to Go to Heaven](#)) - You might not think it, but our world is very heavenly minded. That is a strange statement considering just how wretched and wicked our world is, but in a recent CNN poll, it was discovered that 81% of the people asked believed in a literal heaven where people lived with God after death. 81%! 61% of those polled said that they believed they would go to Heaven immediately when they died. Another 88% believed that they would see departed family and friends when they arrived in Heaven.

Related Resource: [Knowing Jesus vs. knowing about Jesus—what is the difference?](#)

**See John MacArthur's related sermons -**

- [Matthew 7:21-23: Empty Words](#)
- [Matthew 7:21-23: Empty Words](#) - Study Guide - click dropdown
- [Matthew 7:21-27: Saved or Self-Deceived, Part 2](#)
- [Matthew 7:21-27: Unmasking Christmas Hypocrites](#)
- [Matthew 7:21-23: Empty Words and Empty Hearts 1](#)

Mt 8:11-12 "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; 12 but the sons of the kingdom (in context refers to Jews) will be cast out into **the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**"

On **weeping and gnashing of teeth** - [See discussion below on outer darkness](#)

[The Truth About Hell](#) - John MacArthur

**See John MacArthur's related sermon -** [Matthew 8:5-15: Jesus' Power over Disease 2](#)

Mt 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 (gehenna)**..

**Comment:** Be careful **NOT** to misinterpret Jesus' word "**destroy**" as a synonym for **annihilation** (to cause cessation of existence) of one's soul. The false teaching of annihilationism is a fabrication of men who refuse to interpret literally the words of our Lord Jesus. That a soul would be completely obliterated in Gehenna, the Lake of Fire, would surely be the desire of any who end up in that horrible place. However the Greek verb Jesus uses for "**destroy**" is **apollumi**, which **DOES NOT signify total annihilation!** Instead it means not the loss of **being** (of one's soul), but the loss of **well-being**. J I Packer says it is "the regular Greek word for wrecking and ruining something, so making it useless for its intended purpose." **Apollumi** means that the soul originally created in the image of God is subjected in essence to eternal ruin so that he or she can no longer serve the purpose for which they were created (Westminster Shorter Catechism = "*Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.*")! The body and soul of the damned still exists, but tragically, it is rendered eternally useless! **Dear believer, if this doesn't break your heart, I don't know what will!** The Gospel promises everlasting life for the one who believes. The failure to possess this life in Christ will result in utter ruin and eternal uselessness, but not cessation of existence! Dear reader, does not this grave (pun intended) truth impel you to want to share the eternally soul saving Gospel of Jesus Christ with EVERYONE you know, with everyone with whom providence brings you into contact! May God's Spirit take this tragic truth of an unbelieving soul's life outside of Christ and use it to embolden us, setting our hearts ablaze to passionately share Jesus with all who will listen. Amen.

**See John MacArthur's related sermons -**

- [Matthew 10:26-31: The Hallmarks of Discipleship 1](#);
- [Matthew 10:26-31: The Hallmarks of Discipleship 1](#) - click dropdown

Mt. 11:23 “And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? **You will descend to Hades**; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. 24 “Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.”

**Comment:** Jesus uses the term [Hades](#) which was familiar to the Jews. Passages like this one (**exalted...descend**) lead writers to suggest Heaven is above in the sky and Hell is below in the depths of the earth, but in reality the locations of both places are not known with absolute certainty. Notice the phrase "it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you" teaches there will be degrees of judgment in Hell. In determining the degree of punishment in hell, our Lord takes into account the words (Matt. 12:26, 37) and works (Matt. 16:27; Rev. 20:11–15+; Rev 22:12) of sinners. The sin of the Pharisees was made greater by their contact with Christ (John 15:22). While the fact of judgment is determined by what we are, i.e., our nature, the degree of punishment is determined on the basis 'of true knowledge we have received and the quality of life that we live (Rom. 2:3–6). The scriptural teaching of degrees of punishment is a solid argument for eternal, conscious torment, According to Christ, some sinners will receive greater torment than others.

**See John MacArthur's related sermon [Matthew 11:16-24 Treating Christ with Criticism and Indifference](#)**

Mt 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.**

On **weeping and gnashing of teeth** - [See below](#)

Mt 13:49–50 (Context Mt 13:47-48) “So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and will throw them into **the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

On **weeping and gnashing of teeth** - [See below](#)

**MacArthur** - The parable of the dragnet is a frightening warning about what happens to the wicked when they are separated from the righteous in the last days. Here Jesus gives a vivid picture of judgment, a brief explanation of the principle of judgment, and a sobering warning about the peril of judgment....Hell is not merely the fate of forever reliving bad memories or of going out into nothingness, as many people believe and teach. Nor is it a place where sinners will continue their sinning, unrestrained and unrebuked. There will be no pleasure at all in hell, not even the perverted pleasure of sin-only its punishment.

When an interviewer asked a young punk rock singer what she was looking forward to at the end of her career, she replied, “Death. I’m looking forward to death.” When asked why, she said, “I want to go to hell, because hell will be fun.”

Such deception is tragic beyond words. Nothing could less describe hell than fun. The human mind cannot begin to conceive of the eternal horror that is hell. Even the biblical figures related to hell are only suggestive, because the finite mind cannot comprehend infinite pain and torment any more than it can comprehend infinite joy and bliss. But from God’s Word we learn four basic truths about the furnace of fire that will help us to partially grasp its terror.

First, hell is a place of constant torment, misery, pain. The torment is often described as darkness (Matt. 22:13), where no light can penetrate, and nothing can be seen. Throughout the numberless eons of eternity the damned will never again see light or anything that light illumines. Hell’s torment is also described as fire that will never go out and cannot be extinguished (Mark 9:43) and from which the damned will never find relief. Hell could not be other than a place where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Second, hell will involve the torment of both body and soul. Neither the soul nor the body is annihilated at death; nor will they ever be. When an unsaved person dies, his soul goes out from the presence of God into everlasting torment. At the resurrection of all the dead, the bodies of the unsaved will be raised, and those resurrected bodies will join the soul in hell’s torment (Matt. 10:28; cf. John 5:29; Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:11–15+). Just as believers will be fitted with resurrected bodies so they can enjoy the glories of heaven forever, unbelievers will be fitted with resurrected bodies so they can endure the torments of hell without

being destroyed.

Jesus spoke of hell as a place “where their worm does not die” (Mark 9:44). When physical bodies are buried and begin to decay, the worms can attack them only as long as the flesh lasts. Once consumed, the body can experience no more harm. But the resurrected bodies of unbelievers will never be consumed, and the hellish “worms” that feed on them will themselves never die.

Third, the torments of hell will be experienced in varying degrees. For everyone in hell the suffering will be intense and permanent, but some will experience greater torment than others. “Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses,” says the writer of Hebrews. “How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:28–29). Those who willfully reject Jesus Christ and trample, as it were, on the sacrifice He made for them with His own blood will receive much greater punishment than those who had only the light of the Old Covenant. And on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the pagan cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodome than for the Jewish cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum—who not only had the light of the Old Covenant but the opportunity to see and hear the Son of God in person and to witness His miraculous works (Matt. 11:22–23).

In the parable of the slaves who awaited their master’s return from the wedding feast, Jesus explains that “that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of flogging, will receive but few” (Luke 12:47–48). “Hell will have such severe degrees,” writes John Gerstner, “that a sinner, were he able, would give the whole world if his sins could be one less.”

Fourth, the torment of hell will be everlasting. Nothing will be so horrible about hell as its endlessness. Jesus uses the same word to describe the duration of hell as the duration of heaven: “These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matt. 25:46). People in hell will experience the total absence of hope. (Matthew Commentary)

**See John MacArthur’s related sermons on this passage:**

- [Matthew 13:47-52: Hell-the Furnace of Fire - Study Guide](#) - click dropdown
- [Matthew 13:47-52 The Furnace of Fire](#)

Mt 18:6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, **it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea.**

What could be worse than drowning in the depths of the sea? The Father’s wrath over the corruption of a believer would be worse!

**John MacArthur - Heavy millstone** translates *mulos onikos*, which refers to the large upper millstone that was turned in a grinding process by a donkey and often weighed hundreds of pounds. The Romans sometimes practiced this form of execution by tying a heavy stone around a criminal’s neck and dropping him overboard in deep water. Such a pagan form of execution was unimaginably horrible to Jews, perhaps in some respects more fearful even than crucifixion. Yet Jesus said that suffering such a terrifying death would be better than causing even one of His people to sin. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew 16-23)

**See also John MacArthur’s sermon - [Matthew 18:5-9 The Danger of Causing a Christian to Sin](#)**

**CBC on a heavy millstone** - If receiving them hospitably is tantamount to receiving Jesus himself (Mt 10:40-41; John 13:20), causing them to sin is tantamount to rejecting Jesus himself, which brings consequences immeasurably more severe than drowning with a large millstone around one’s neck (cf. Josephus *Antiquities* 14.450). “Heavy millstone” is more literally “millstone for a donkey,” a large millstone turned by a donkey. This detail along with the stress on the depth of the sea vividly portrays the horrible consequences of causing a believer to fall into sin. To cause someone to fall into sin is to corrupt that person morally and spiritually and, as Mt 18:7-9 points out, to render him or her liable to eternal punishment (Mt 5:29-30; 17:27). (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary)

Mt 18:8-9 “If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and **be cast into the eternal fire** 9 “If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than

to have two eyes and **be cast into the fiery hell.**

See [Did Jesus mean we should literally pluck out our eyes and cut off our hands in Matthew 5:29-30 and 18:8-9?](#)

Mt 22:13 “Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into **the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**’

On **weeping and gnashing of teeth** - [See below](#)

See John MacArthur’s sermon - [Matthew 22:1-14 Responding To A Invitation](#)

**Gotquestions** addresses the phrase **the outer darkness** - In the Parable of the Wedding Feast, Jesus tells of a “wedding crasher” of sorts: a man in the wedding hall was discovered to have entered the feast without authorization. Jesus says that the king, the master of the feast, issued a dire command concerning the interloper: “Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness” (ESV). Jesus uses the term “**outer darkness**” in the parable to describe a condition of great sorrow, loss and woe. It stands in vivid contrast to the brightly lit and joyous celebration attended by those who accepted the king’s invitation. Interpreting the wedding feast as heaven, the “outer darkness” must be the place of eternal punishment. Most Bible scholars agree that the phrase “outer darkness” refers to hell or, more properly, the lake of fire (Matthew 8:12; 13:42; 13:50; and 25:23). The outer darkness of Jesus’ parable is called “blackest darkness” in Jude 1:13. Again, a place of judgment is the obvious meaning, since it is reserved for “godless men” (Jude 1:4). Perhaps the place of judgment is pictured as “dark” because of the absence of God’s cheering presence. “When you hide your face, they are terrified” (Psalm 104:29). God is called “light” in 1 John 1:5, and if He withdraws His blessing, only darkness is left. Throughout the Scriptures light symbolizes God’s purity, holiness, and glory. Darkness is used as a symbol of moral depravity (Psalm 82:5; Proverbs 2:13; Romans 3:12). Darkness can also refer to trouble and affliction (Job 5:12; Proverbs 20:20; Isaiah 9:2) and to death and nothingness (1 Samuel 2:9; Ecclesiastes 11:8; Job 3:4-6). **The outer darkness** of judgment is accompanied by “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The “weeping” describes an inner pain of the heart, mind, and soul. The word in the original denotes a bewailing or lamentation by beating the breast in an expression of immense sorrow. The “gnashing of teeth” describes an outward pain of the body. Taken together, the weeping and gnashing of teeth says hell is a place of indescribable spiritual agony and unending physical pain (see Luke 16:23-28). The outer darkness is a place of anguish, heartache, grief, and unspeakable suffering. Such will be the lot of all who reject Christ (John 3:18, 36). Christ is the Light of the World (John 8:12). When one rejects the Light, he will be cast into eternal darkness. Just like the man in the parable, the one who rejects Christ will lose his chance for joy, blessing and fellowship and will be left with nothing but darkness and eternal regret. ([Gotquestions](#))

Mt. 23:15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a **son of hell (gehenna)** as yourselves.

**MacArthur: Of hell** translates a Greek genitive that refers to belonging to or being characterized by **Son of hell** and thus referred to a person who was especially characterized by hellishness. **Twice...a son of hell** would be person who was doubly hellish and doubly damned. Hell is from gehenna, derived from the name of a valley just outside Jerusalem called Hinnom where refuse was burned. It was considered an accursed place because it was the site where ancient worshipers of the pagan deity Moloch offered their children as live burnt sacrifices, a hideous practice taken up even by some Israelites (see 2 Chr 28:3; Jer. 7:31). When King Josiah declared the place unclean (2 Ki 23:10), it became a garbage dump, and because flames and smoke arose from the valley continually, it also became a vivid picture of the eternal fires of hell. How grateful every believer should be that at some time in His life he was confronted by a **spiritual door-opener** rather than a **spiritual door-closer**, someone who shows the way to the kingdom rather than shuts people out of it. And how grateful every believer should be who has the opportunity to hear and study the Word of God in truth. Even a dull presentation of the true gospel is immeasurably superior to the most exciting presentation of a false gospel that damns to hell. **As a citizen of God’s kingdom, every believer ought to be one who opens the door of the kingdom to others.** (See [Matthew 16-23 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Robert Morey** - In this passage Christ delivers one of the most scathing attacks on the Pharisees anywhere recorded in Scripture. In His attack, Christ used the rabbinic phrase “a son of Gehenna” to refer

to their converts. According to A. T. Robertson, the phrase "son of hell" means "one fitted for and so destined for Gehenna." It is synonymous with the "son of perdition" (John 17:12). ([Borrow a copy of Death and the Afterlife](#))

See also John MacArthur's sermon - [Matthew 23:13-15 The Condemnation of False Spiritual Leaders 3](#)

Matt 23:33 (v32 = "Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers.") "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the **sentence of hell** ([gehenna](#)) ?

**Comment:** What a horrible double metaphor - snakes and more snakes! I hate snakes! Note that Jesus' question is rhetorical, because the truth is that they could not escape eternal hell if they carried out the evil intent of their "venomous" hearts. Jesus' epithets recall John the Baptist's description of them in Mt 3:7 where he urged repentance. The Lord had also used this title before (Matt 12:34), making it clear that nothing good could come out of their hearts. The sobering "judgment of hell" recalls Mt 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15. Paul writes "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS" (Ro 2:5-6)

Notice that the word **sentence** is the Greek word [krisis](#) (a decision, judgment, verdict, justice, court) which gives us our English word "[Crisis](#)" which is defined as a crucial stage or turning point in the course of something or "an event that is expected to lead to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting an individual!" Indeed, Jesus uses the language of the courtroom to describe the time of "[Crisis](#)" in every unbeliever's life. When an unrepentant, unregenerate person dies, they immediately find themselves consciously aware that they are in [Hades](#), the temporary holding tank (where all unbelievers are today), a place of agony and torment with [no hope of "pardon."](#) At the future [Great White Throne judgment](#) that comes immediately after the glorious [1000 year Millennial Reign of Christ](#), all occupants of [Hades](#) will be resurrected (the "[Second Resurrection](#)" - see also [Births, Deaths, and Resurrections](#)) and will stand bodily before the Lord Jesus Christ, the Judge of the living (quick) and the dead (Rev 20:11-13+). In that courtroom scene every man or woman who refused and rejected Christ's offer to be their Savior during their life on earth, will now be forced to acknowledge Him as their Judge! This is their time of "[Crisis](#)" for when the Lord Jesus Christ passes judgment based on their deeds (to determine the degree of their punishment), they are thrown alive into [Hell](#) (cf Rev 19:20-[note](#)), which is also known as [Gehenna](#) or the [Lake of fire](#) and which corresponds to the [Second Death](#). Paul says "These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." (2 Th 1:9) The word **eternal** is [aionos](#) which means everlasting or forever with [no second chance, no hope of reprieve or release](#) or rest! A fate so horrible it is honestly difficult to even ponder because it is so disturbing to our senses! The word "destruction" is [olethros](#) which is derived from [ollumi](#) a verb meaning to destroy and the root of [apollumi](#) which as we have discussed means to destroy utterly and has to do with that which is ruined and is no longer usable for its intended purpose. [Olethros](#) then describes a state of utter and hopeless ruin and the end of all that gives worth to human existence! Do not confuse this with a [state of annihilation](#) and non-existence so that there is no longer an actual personal perception, for [olethros](#) signifies an unavoidable, very real experience of distress and torment! The **destruction** Paul warns about begins at the moment of "[Crisis](#)," or final sentencing. This **destruction** will not be a loss of *being* but rather a loss of *well-being*. If these truths do not grip your heart and constrain you to be filled with the Spirit and to boldly, unashamedly tell your co-workers, friends and relatives about the Good News of Jesus Christ then I don't know what will stir your heart. In fact, if you have no desire to share the Good News, it might be possible that you yourself have never actually received the Good News. You may be deceived and still [spiritually dead](#) in your trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-[note](#)) as are many today who call themselves "Christians" but "live like the devil!" Whether you are a *possessor* or *professor* of Jesus Christ, the truth on eternal punishment should cause a "[Crisis](#)" in your life! Redeem the time! Either repent and believe the Gospel or if you are a genuine follower of Jesus begin to actively, zealously share the Gospel with all who are around you who are only one heartbeat away from their ultimate "[Crisis](#)!"

**Expositor's Bible Commentary** – The transition from the preceding verse (Mt 23:32) is clear: if the teachers of the law and Pharisees are filling up the measure of the sin of their forefathers, how can they possibly escape the condemnation of hell

**Quesnel** - "Before sinning, we ought to fear lest it be the *filling up*; after sinning, we should trust in a truly Christian hope that it is not, and repent. This is the only means to escape the *damnation of hell*; but how

rare is this grace after a pharisaical life!" (Pulpit Commentary).

**John Phillips Commentary** – Note that He did not say there was no escape. There was a way of escape, but they would refuse that new and living way into the holiest through the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19-20). How rare it is for a Pharisee of whatever persuasion to accept God's means of grace! The Lord was talking to men who refused the conditions of salvation. The great white throne judgment and the flames of eternal fire are the inevitable end of unrepentant behavior such as theirs.

**What the Bible Teaches** - Heaven would not welcome one man walking a life of such blatant hypocrisy; the serpents would go the way of the serpent—"that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan ... was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:2, 10).

**See also John MacArthur's sermon** - [Matthew 23:16-33 The Condemnation of False Spiritual Leaders 4](#)

Mt 25:30 "Throw out the worthless slave into **the outer darkness**; in that place there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**."

**John MacArthur - Outer darkness** is a common New Testament description of hell. "God is light," John declared, "and in Him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). **Light** signifies God's presence, and **darkness** signifies his absence. **Hell** not only is eternal darkness but eternal torment. In that place **there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth**, signifying the unrelieved agony of separated from God's presence and goodness. (Matthew Commentary)

There is a time I know not when, a place I know not where,  
which marks the destiny of men to heaven or despair.

There is a line by us not seen which crosses every path,  
he hidden boundary between God's patience and His wrath.

To cross that limit is to die, to die as if by stealth;  
it may not pale the beaming eye nor quench the glowing health.

The conscience may be still at ease, the spirit light and gay,  
that which is pleasing still may please and care be thrust away.

But on that forehead God hath set indelibly a mark,  
by man unseen for man as yet is blind and in the dark.

How long may man go on in sin, how long will God forbear,  
where does hope end and where begin the confines of despair?

One answer from the sky is sent, ye who from God depart,  
while it is called `today' repent and harden not your heart.

**See John MacArthur's study guide and sermon**

- [Matthew 25:20-30: Tragedy of Wasted Opportunity 2 - Study Guide](#) - click dropdown
- [Matthew 25:20-30: Tragedy of Wasted Opportunity 2](#)

Mt. 25:31–33 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 "All the **nations** will be gathered before Him; and **He will separate them from one another**, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

**Comment:** This passage does not use the word hell but does set the context for the following verse Mt 25:41. Although we do not know at what precise time in history that event will occur (Matt. 24:36, 42, 44, 50), we know that He will appear "immediately after the tribulation" (Mt 24:29). This judgment of the **Nations** is a Gentile judgment also know as the judgment of the **Sheep and Goats** which will occur when Jesus returns as King of kings and Lord of lords and establishes His **millennial kingdom**. Those on His right will enter His kingdom, but those on His left will be sent away into eternal punishment. In the ancient Near East, as in much of that land still today, **sheep** and **goats** are frequently herded together. But sheep are docile, gentle creatures, whereas goats are unruly and rambunctious and can easily upset the sheep. Because they do not feed or rest well together, the shepherd often separates them for grazing and for sleeping at night.



Notice the concept of **separation** in Mt 25:32 which recalls the effect of the first spiritual death of Adam which was to produce **separation** between God and man (cf Ge 3:7-10-note). Christ came to bridge that gap on the Cross. But for those who do not receive His gift of new life by grace through faith the [Second Death](#) will finalize forever the **separation** of God and man, Paul writing "These (2 Th 1:8 " those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus") will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, **away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power:**" (2 Th 1:9)

**MacArthur** adds "Apparently His judgment will be instantaneous, at the moment He appears, and when that occurs the opportunity for faith in Him will be past. As Jesus makes clear later in this passage, those who are alive on earth when He returns will include both saved and unsaved, represented by the sheep and the goats, respectively. Just as death immediately crystallizes eternity for unbelievers when they die, so will the second coming of Christ crystallize eternity for unbelievers who are then alive. They will be destroyed on the spot and ushered instantaneously into judgment and eternal punishment. But believers who are alive at the Lord's coming in glory will go directly into the earthly kingdom in their earthly bodies. There is no indication in Scripture that those saints will experience any sort of transformation at that time. But mingling with them and ruling over them will be the glorified saints of all ages who will then be reigning with Christ (Rev. 20:4). Although their bodies will be of vastly different orders, those two groups of saints will be able to communicate and interact with each other just as Jesus communicated and interacted with the disciples in His glorified body after the resurrection....Those who reject a literal Millennium must do one or more of three things. The first is to confuse Israel and the church, taking the church to be a spiritualized form of the ancient nation of Israel. In that case, the Old Testament curses were for literal Israel, being already fulfilled, and the promises of blessing to Israel would be fulfilled in the church, but in a spiritual, not literal, way. That kind of divided, inconsistent hermeneutics is unacceptable. The second is to make present or past what is clearly future, assuming that all the promises to the literal nation and people of Israel have already been fulfilled, making the earthly kingdom unnecessary. The third is to arbitrarily spiritualize certain Old Testament prophecies, taking predicted places, events, or persons as being merely symbols of spiritual ideas or truths instead of physical and historical realities. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew 24-28)

**See John MacArthur's sermons -**

- [Matthew 25:31-32a: The Judgment of the Nations 1](#),
- [Matthew 25:32: The Judgment of The Nations 2](#)
- [Matthew 25:32b-46 The Judgment of The Nations 3](#)

Mt 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, **Depart** from Me, accursed ones, into the **eternal fire** which has been prepared for the devil and his angels

**Comment:** It is important to notice that God did not make hell for men, but for the devil. Men chose the **eternal fire** of hell by rejecting Christ. A very bad choice which they will regret throughout eternity!

**MacArthur** - Joining the unredeemable devil and his angels in the eternal fire of hell will be those human beings who refused to believe. It is just as obvious that Christ does not condemn these people because they failed to serve Him (Mt 25:42-43) as it is that He does not save the others because they did serve Him (Mt 25:34-35). These are accursed because they rejected Christ, just as those who enter the kingdom are righteous (Mt 25:37) because they accepted Him. Their rejection of Christ left them in a state where they were not able to do righteous deeds. Jesus is speaking of eternal separation from God and from His goodness, righteousness, truth, joy peace, and every other good thing. He is speaking of eternal association with the devil and his angels in the place of torment God prepared for them. He is speaking of eternal isolation, where there will be no fellowship, no consolation, and no encouragement. He is speaking of eternal duration and of eternal affliction, from which there will be no relief or respite. The evidence that those rejected people never belonged to Christ will be that they did not love and serve His people. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew 24-28).

Mt 25:46 "These (the "goats," those on Jesus' left) will go away into **eternal** ([aionios](#)) punishment ([kolasis](#)), but the righteous into **eternal** ([aionios](#)) life."

**Comment:** We have already discussed the clear logic of Jesus' statement which teaches that if believers will be in heaven with God forever, the lost will be in hell with the devil forever. However they will have no fellowship with the devil and the devil is not the source of torment for John writes "And the devil who

deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." (Rev 20:10+)

As discussed above Daniel 12:2-note makes a very similar statement that speaks of two antithetical eternal destinies and the [Septuagint](#) version uses [aionios](#) twice just as in Mt 25:46 where **eternal punishment** "balances" **eternal life**.

"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life ([Lxx](#) = [zoen aionion](#)), but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt ([Lxx](#) = [aischunen aionion](#))."

**Donald Barnhouse** writes "At all events the doctrine of conscious, eternal torment for impenitent men is clearly revealed in the Word of God. Whether we can defend it on philosophic grounds or not, it is our business to believe it; and to leave it to the clearer light of eternity to explain what we cannot now understand, realizing that God has infinitely wise reasons for doing things for which we in our ignorance can see no sufficient reason at all. It is the most ludicrous conceit for beings so limited and foolish as the wisest of men are, to attempt to dogmatize how a God of infinite wisdom must act. All we know as to how God will act is what God has seen fit to tell us." (Revelation)

Matt. 26:24 "The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! **It would have been good for that man if he had not been born**"

**Comment:** This is similar to Jesus' warning in Mt 18:6. Jesus the omniscient God knew the horror of the eternal punishment that awaited the one who betrayed Him. So horrible is this fate that it would have been better to not ever have been born. We cannot even imagine how horrible is this terrible fate.

Mark 9:43–48 "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 ([gehenna](#)), into the unquenchable fire, 44 [where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.] 45 "If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell ([gehenna](#)), 46 [where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.] 47 "If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell ([gehenna](#)), 48 where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.

**Comment:** As noted above (see [note on Gehenna](#)) the garbage dump of Jerusalem was characterized by a perpetual fire and because of the garbage was a place where worms thrived. This picture would be well known to the hearers of Jesus' words and would help understand His quotation from the very last verse in Isaiah, Isaiah 66:24 ("Then they will go forth and look On the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For **their worm will not die And their fire will not be quenched**; And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind.")

**Robert Morey** - The intertestamental literature is clear that the Jews believed that the departed could feel what was happening to their dead body. Indeed, when the worms start gnawing on the body, "the worms are as painful to the dead as a needle in the flesh of the living" (Bab. Tal. Shah. 777, 778). ([Borrow a copy of Death and the Afterlife](#))

**Lutzer** writes "This picture of an unclean dump where fires and worms never die became to the Jewish mind an appropriate description of the ultimate fate of all idolaters. Thus the word became applied to the ultimate gehenna. The Jews taught, and Christ confirmed, that the wicked would suffer there forever. Body and soul would be in eternal torment." (Borrow [One Minute After You Die](#))

Mark 8:36-37 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

**MacArthur:** What's your soul worth? It will live forever, you consciously will live forever, you're going to live in hell forever in punishment, or in heaven forever in joy. How do you redeem your soul? By coming to Christ, denying yourself, taking up your cross, suffering as He requires for the glory that will be revealed in the future. (See sermon below)

- See **John MacArthur's sermon** - [Mark 8:34-38 Losing Your Life to Save It](#)

Mark 16:16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

See **John MacArthur's sermons** -

- [Mark 16:9-20 The Fitting End to Mark's Gospel](#)
- [Mark 16:9-20 Confidence in God's Word, as It Is Written](#)

Luke 9:25-note "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?"

**Comment:** The parallel passages in Mt 16:26 and Mk 8:36-37 both use the Greek word [psuche](#) meaning soul. The vital principle of this person will suffer eternal loss which is the wages for seeking temporal gain in a world system which is passing away (and even its lusts! - 1 Jn 2:17-[note](#)).

**See John MacArthur's sermon - [Luke 9:23-25 The Gospel: Self-Love or Self-Hate?](#)**

Luke 12:5-note "But I will warn you whom to fear: **fear** ([aorist imperative](#)) the One Who, after He has killed, **has authority to cast into hell** ([gehenna](#)); yes, I tell you, fear Him!

**MacArthur** - The one with the **authority to cast into hell** is not, as some imagine, Satan. Satan is neither the one who sends people to hell, nor is he the ruler of hell. On the contrary he himself will in a sure future day be cast into hell (Rev. 20:10+), where he will be its most notorious prisoner for all eternity. Nowhere in Scripture is there a command to fear Satan....Here is another strong passage in our Lord's teaching that refutes the false idea that there is no hell. To insist that **hell** is a reference to the grave only destroys the contrast here and makes nonsense out of the Lord's statement. If there is no hell, then God would be unable to do anything to a person other than what men could do. Both could kill someone, who then would merely go out of existence. Jesus' whole point is that God is to be feared because He alone has the authority to both kill sinners and after death cast them into eternal torment. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Luke 11-17)

**See John MacArthur's sermon - [Luke 12:1-7 A Certain Cure for Hypocrisy. Part 1](#)**

Luke 12:9–10-note but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. 10 "And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.

**Comment:** Notice the parallel between deny Me/blasphemes against the Holy Spirit and the results of these actions - denied before the angels of God/it will not be forgiven him.

**John MacArthur** - Those who fail to genuinely confess Christ as Lord will one day hear Him say, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matt. 7:23). The sure way to miss out on heaven is to deny Christ, as the scribes and Pharisees had done. But just as sure a way to gain hell is to make an insincere, superficial confession of Christ (Matt. 7:21-22). Heaven belongs only to those who honor the Father by truly honoring the Son....To blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to reject His testimony concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit reveals the truth of salvation in Christ, and those who speak evil of that revelation, as the Pharisees had done (Luke 11:15), reject the testimony of the Holy Spirit to Christ (cf. John 15:26). Having cut themselves off from the only source of divine, saving truth, they cannot be saved. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Luke 11-17.)

**See John MacArthur's sermons -**

- [Luke 12:8-9 A Certain Cure for Hypocrisy. Part 2](#)
- [Luke 12:10-12 A Certain Cure for Hypocrisy. Part 3](#)

**Life Application Bible Commentary** – On the other hand, the person who *denies* his or her relationship to Jesus will, in turn, face denial by Jesus in heaven. These words refer to those whose lack of allegiance will be revealed under pressure. This will amount to apostasy (1 John 2:19). Most likely, this does not refer to an incident where lack of courage might cause a believer not to speak up, but rather to a person who totally rejects Christ and lives a life of denial. The astounding statement is that each person's standing before God is based on his or her relationship to Jesus Christ. He is the advocate whose intercession before God will depend on a person's faithfulness in acknowledging him.

Luke 12:46-note the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and **assign him a place with the unbelievers**

**Comment:** What is the place for unbelievers? Clearly it is separation eternally from God's presence. So if one interprets this passage as referring to a loss of rewards for a believer, they are clearly neglecting this

context.

**MacArthur Study Bible** - **cut him in pieces.** I.e., utterly destroy him. This speaks of the severity of final judgment of unbelievers.

See **John MacArthur's sermon** - [Luke 12:41-48 Reward and Punishment at Christ's Return](#)

**The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible** – The Lord will "cut the unfaithful steward in sunder." This means he will be condemned to death, cut off from among the living, exiled from eternal life. Most tragic, he shall be *cut asunder, cut off* from God's presence. The Lord will appoint the unfaithful steward his portion with the unbelievers. Why? Because he was not genuine. He was a hypocrite.

**John Phillips** - This servant is no servant at all. Whatever profession of faith the man might have made is annulled by his behavior. The Lord numbers him among the unbelievers. Judas was just such a man. (Exploring the Gospel of Luke: An Expository Commentary)

**What the Bible teaches** - Those who want to make this the punishment of a genuine believer who has been unfaithful apply the word figuratively to the cutting with a scourge. "There is no example of the word being used of scourging" (A. Plummer). Even if we could use a figurative meaning here, the problem would remain about the meaning of the words, "appoint him his portion with the unbelievers", which refers to punishment after death. To be cut in sunder is a violent death (1 Chron 20:3), and to be with the unbelievers forever is the correct portion for this false servant. (What the Bible teaches – Luke)

**ESV Study Bible** - **place with the unbelievers**—a metaphorical reference to the punishment that awaits the unbeliever at the return of Christ. The latter description (cf. Luke 13:27-28 and esp. the parallel in Matt. 24:51) indicates **eternal judgment and separation from God** (cf. Luke 8:13).

**Pulpit Commentary** - The expression is, however, used as simply implying that a terrible doom is surely reserved in the life to come for those who have so sadly misused their high opportunities and neglected their great responsibilities.

Luke 13:22-30-note And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem. 23And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" And He said to them, 24 "**Strive** ([present imperative](#) - command to continually strive) to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.' 26 "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; 27 and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; **DEPART** ([aorist imperative](#) - command to do this immediately) FROM ME, ALL YOU **EVILDOERS** (**ED: THIS IS THE KEY - THEIR LIFESTYLE WAS ONE OF EVIL. THEY HAD NEVER EXPERIENCED INNER TRANSFORMATION THAT COMES BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH - THEY MAY HAVE BEEN [PHYSICALLY CIRCUMCISED BUT NOT SPIRITUALLY CIRCUMCISED!](#)).' 28 (NOW JESUS PROCEEDS TO GIVE A DESCRIPTION OF THE HORROR OF THE ETERNAL TORMENTS OF HELL) "**In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth** when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out. 29 "And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. 30 "And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last." (Lk 13:24-30-note)**

**GOTQUESTIONS** on "**weeping and gnashing of teeth.**" The "**weeping**" describes an inner pain of the heart, mind, and soul. The word in the original denotes a bewailing or lamentation by beating the breast in an expression of immense sorrow. The "gnashing of teeth" describes an outward pain of the body. Taken together, the weeping and gnashing of teeth says hell is a place of indescribable spiritual agony and unending physical pain (see Luke 16:23-28-note). (For a full discussion see answer to the question [What does the Bible mean when it refers to the gnashing of teeth?](#))

**John MacArthur** on "**weeping and gnashing of teeth**" - The torment of hell will not be limited to the pain of punishment, but will include the remorse, shock, and surprise of those who ended up there despite thinking they were going to heaven. The more people in hell knew about the gospel, the more profound their remorse will be; their pain will be proportional to their level of rejection. And since their rejection will be eternal and incurable, so will their sin be and the judgment of that sin. (Luke Commentary)

See John MacArthur's sermons -

- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 1](#)
- [Luke 13:22-30 Are Just a Few Being Saved? Part 2](#)

**Stanley Toussaint:** "Invariably throughout Matthew this phrase refers to the retribution of those who are judged before the millennial kingdom is established (Mt 8:12; Mt13:42, Mt 13:50; Mt 22:13; Mt 25:30)." (Behold The King: A Study of Matthew - Portland: Multnomah Press, 1980, p. 282).

**Christopher Morgan** on the **weeping and gnashing of teeth** - this suffering is conscious. If hell did not consist of conscious suffering, it would be hard to see how it could in any meaningful sense be worse than death, be worse than earthly suffering, be filled with weeping and gnashing of teeth, or be a place of misery. These images communicate that people in hell will be aware that they are suffering just punishment. (What Is Hell?)

**Lawrence Richards** - This was why repentance and faith in Jesus are such urgent matters. Individuals who failed to turn to Him will be shut out of the future kingdom, where "there will be weeping ... and gnashing of teeth." (The 365 Day Devotional Commentary. Victor Books)

See Journal article on [The Function of Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth in Matthew's Gospel](#) - Zoltan L. Erdey and Kevin G. Smith

**Billy Graham** - let me be as clear as possible: you don't want to go to Hell. The Bible speaks of Hell as a place of "darkness [where] there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**" Hell is a place of absolute loneliness and hopelessness. But the good news is that God doesn't want you to go there! Jesus paid the price for your sins; He took upon Himself the death and Hell we deserve, through His death on the cross. Trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and thank Him that you will spend all eternity with Him in Heaven.

Luke 16:22–23-[see detailed discussion below](#) "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.

See John MacArthur's sermons -

- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#)
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#)
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#)
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#)
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#)

John 5:28–29 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 29 and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life ("FIRST RESURRECTION"), those who committed the evil deeds to a **resurrection of judgment**

**Comment:** Unbelievers are currently inhabiting their intermediate abode of **Hades**, from which they will actually be "released." This "release" corresponds to the "**Second Resurrection**" (see [Births, Deaths, and Resurrections](#)) at which time they will bodily stand before Jesus the Judge at the Great White Throne judgment and be cast into the **Lake of fire**, which is synonymous with **gehenna** and the **Second Death**. See Rev 20:11-15+. The annihilationists, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, who deny any future resurrection for the wicked are here clearly condemned.

See John MacArthur's sermons -

- [John 5:25–29 The Dead Will Hear Christ](#)
- [John 5:25-29 The Two Resurrections](#)

John 8:21 Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin (AND BY IMPLICATION BE SENT TO HELL); where I am going (HEAVEN), you cannot come."

See [John MacArthur's sermons](#) -

- [John 8:21-25 A Plan for Dying in Your Sins](#)
  - [John 8:21-30 The Simple Gospel](#)
  - [John 8:21-30 How to Die in Your Sins](#)
  - [John 8:21-30 Four Ways to Miss Heaven](#)
- 

**Addendum:** Robert Morey discusses how the **Work of Christ** helps understand eternal punishment:

It is at this point that the vicarious atonement of Christ is crucial to our understanding of divine punishment.

First, the fact of the atonement reveals the necessity of divine punishment for sin.

Second, Christ took the punishment for sin which His people would have suffered.

Third, the nature of Christ's vicarious punishment will be a good indication of the nature of divine punishment of rebel sinners.

Christ experienced divine punishment by

**(1) Alienation and separation from the person and gifts of God:** "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46).

**(2) Conscious pain, suffering, and misery from the alienation and suffering:** "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted...The Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief...as a result of the anguish of His soul" (Isa. 53:4-11). "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer" (Luke 24:46). "Christ also suffered for you" (1 Pet. 2:21). "Christ has suffered in the flesh" (1 Pet. 4:1).

**(3) Death:** "Christ Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3).

His death on the cross illustrates the separation of body and soul which takes place when death occurs. Thus, when He died, His body remained intact in the tomb while in His spirit or soul He went to Hades according to Peter in Acts 2:27 and in 1 Pet. 3:18-20. This is echoed in the Apostles' Creed which said that "he descended into hell [Hades]."

We must pause at this point and emphasize that nonexistence was not the punishment inflicted on the body and soul of Christ. If the annihilationists were right, then Christ should have disintegrated on the cross and would have ceased to exist in body and soul. However, Christ's body was not annihilated but intact in the tomb while His soul was conscious in Hades.

Since the annihilationists believe that the body and soul of sinners pass into nonexistence either at death or the resurrection and that this is the nature of divine judgment, how do they explain the existence of Christ's body in the tomb?

The Jehovah's Witnesses state that Christ's body probably dissolved into gases and ceased to exist. In order for Christ's punishment to parallel the total destruction of body and soul which will happen to sinners, they feel that Christ must be totally destroyed in body and soul. Thus, they go on to deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. They state that Jesus was raised as a spirit creature. The Witnesses fail to realize that the Apostle Peter interpreted Ps. 16:10, 11 as a divine guarantee that the body of Christ would never suffer harm in any way while His soul was in Hades (Acts 2:25-28). The biblical evidence for Christ's bodily resurrection is so overwhelming that only a totally biased mind could possibly deny it.

What can be said of the Adventists and neo-Adventists who also claim that Christ's death meant total annihilation? Fudge's claim that "Jesus' death involved total destruction" is an example of this kind of thinking. How they ignore the existence of Christ's body in the tomb while His soul was in Hades and pretend that Christ was "totally destroyed" stretches the imagination. If they are consistent, they will have to end up denying the bodily resurrection of Christ as do the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Another annihilationist argument is often brought forth at this point: "Since Christ's punishment was not eternal but had an end, then the punishment of sinners will not be eternal, but have an end as well."

First, the annihilationists forget that they have a problem here as well. If Christ's punishment was only temporary and He was restored to life, then they would have to conclude on the basis of the way they were

arguing that the punishment of sinners will only be temporary and will end as they are restored to life. Obviously, Christ experienced neither eternal torment nor eternal nonexistence, because He was resurrected.

Second, both problems are solved by the implications of Christ's divine nature, which is eternal, and the infinite value of Christ's sacrifice. Thus the author to the Hebrews argues from the deity of Christ (Heb. 1:1–13) and the sufficiency of His once-for-all suffering (Heb. 9:25–28) as the basis for the perfection of the atonement.

There is no way to escape the fact that Christ did not experience total annihilation in body and soul on the cross. What He did experience was suffering as a result of moral alienation from God. This is the ultimate fate awaiting rebel sinners. ([Borrow a copy of Death and the Afterlife](#))

---

### What Is Hellfire Preaching? Is Hellfire Preaching Biblical? (from [Gotquestions.org](#))

The term “hellfire preaching” does not appear in the Bible, although the concepts of the fires of hell and the necessity of preaching certainly do. Hellfire preaching means different things to different people and conjures up different images, **mostly negative**. Those who use “hellfire preaching” as a pejorative are generally repulsed by even the mere mention of **hell**, preferring instead to imagine a God whose great love for mankind simply precludes Him from sending people to hell or even allowing them to go to hell, despite their best efforts to do so. On the other extreme are those who see a perpetually angry, wrathful, and vengeful God who condemns people to hell for the sheer enjoyment He gets from it. **Both these views of God's character and of hell are biblically insupportable.**

Although true preachers of the Word of God have always included the reality of hell in their messages, hellfire preaching has come to be associated with preachers of the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe and America. The image of Puritan preachers is often one of bewhiskered, black-frocked theological terrorists pounding their pulpits and continually threatening their congregations with eternal burning. Perhaps the epitome of the image of the hellfire preacher is Jonathan Edwards, whose sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” depicted the realities of hell so clearly that it was said the hearers could smell the sulfur burning. However, it is fair to say that Edwards believed strongly not only in the fearful reality of hell but his duty as a minister to warn people of that reality. “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” when read properly, has a clear emphasis upon the mercy of God. It is nothing but God's mercy that keeps us out of hell, he was saying, and, therefore, we are to ask God for that mercy for salvation.

**Is hellfire preaching biblical?** Clearly, Jesus taught on hell, and He did so to warn people not to go there. Hell is depicted in Scripture as a very nasty place from which there is no escape. The punishment of the wicked dead in hell is described throughout Scripture as “eternal fire” (Matthew 25:41), “unquenchable fire” (Matthew 3:12), “shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2), a place where “the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:44–49), a place of “torment” and “fire” (Luke 16:23–24), a place where “the smoke of torment rises forever and ever” (Revelation 14:10–11), and a “lake of burning sulfur” where the wicked are “tormented day and night forever and ever” (Revelation 20:10+). Surely, a loving and compassionate Savior could not be so described if He failed to warn us about hell. But Jesus is certainly loving and compassionate, and He presented the joys and bliss of heaven and was clear about the only way to attain them. “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” He said. “No one comes to the Father but through me” (John 14:6). The apostle Paul was equally blunt about the fate of those who rejected the gospel of salvation through Christ alone. They are condemned to “everlasting destruction” (2 Thessalonians 1:8–9).

**Is there a place for hellfire preaching today?** Not only is there a place for teaching about the fires of hell and the only way to escape them, but true preaching of the gospel of Christ is not complete without it. If today's pastors and preachers are to be consistent with the Scriptures, **preaching and warning their flocks about the fires of hell must be part of their message** Too often, people are invited to come to Christ so He can ‘fix up’ their lives, make their marriages better, or provide health, wealth, and prosperity. But this is not the message of the Bible. We come to Christ for forgiveness of sin, the very presence of which in all our hearts is a sure one-way ticket to hell. **A balanced, biblical message consists of the reality of hell, a warning to escape it, and the only way to do so—through the shed blood of Christ on the cross for our sins.** ([What is hellfire preaching? Is hellfire preaching biblical?](#))

## EFFECT OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT ON EVANGELISTIC PASSION

**R A Torrey** once said “men who accept a loose doctrine regarding the ultimate penalty of Sin (Universalism or Annihilationism) lose their power for God. They may be very clever at argument and zealous in proselytizing, but they are poor at soul-saving. They are seldom found beseeching men to be reconciled to God. They are more likely to be found trying to upset the faith of those already won by the efforts of others, then winning men who have no faith at all. If you really believe the doctrine of endless, conscious

torment of the impenitent, and the doctrine really gets hold of you, you will work as you never worked before for the salvation of the lost. **If you in any wise abate this doctrine, it will abate your zeal!**"

**Spurgeon** made a similar statement that if you "Think lightly of hell, you will think lightly of the cross. Think little of the sufferings of lost souls, and you will soon think little of the Savior Who delivers you from them." (And I would add "Who sends you to them to share His Gospel.")

Keep in mind that Jesus, Who His disciples are called to imitate (1 Cor 11:1, 1 Peter 2:21, 1 Jn 2:6, etc), repeatedly warned about the "BAD NEWS" in His presentation of the "GOOD NEWS". In fact Jesus spoke more about eternal punishment than any other person in Scripture! He also said more about Hell than He did about Heaven! I fear we have heard John 3:16 so many times, we have missed Jesus' clear presentation of both "GOOD NEWS" and "BAD NEWS."

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

However you must balance this truth as the Scripture does with the fact that God's primary desire is **not to destroy men** but to **save men** as the Scriptures clearly attest...

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing ([boulomai](#) in [present tense](#) = continually not desiring) for any to perish ([apollumi](#)) but for **ALL** to come to repentance ([metanoia](#)). (2 Peter 3:9-[note](#))

(God our Savior) who desires ([thelo](#) in [present tense](#) = continually desires) **ALL** men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Ti 2:4)

And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. (Mt 9:36)

**Alan Carr comments:** Jesus could see the end from the beginning. He knew that apart from Him, they would all be in Hell. (The Rich Man!) No wonder He was moved with compassion! Jesus doesn't want anyone to go to Hell! Christians need the same vision! If we really believe in Hell like we say we do, then why aren't we telling more men about the Savior? Even the people in Hell are concerned about the lost Luke 16:27-31. Look around church! There are people all around you who will die and go to Hell. Will they go without your having told them? Eze. 33:8.

**Robert Morey** makes an interesting observation - The "negative side" of the Gospel in which sinners are warned to "escape" and "flee" from "the wrath to come" (Matt. 23:33; Luke 3:7) is ignored and often downplayed, while the "positive side" of God's love in Christ is overemphasized to the exclusion of anything else. The doctrine of hell is acknowledged to be true but rarely preached. ([Borrow a copy of Death and the Afterlife](#))

Despite that fact, Hell is under fire, pun intended! As we begin this section, we need to understand that preaching on hell is not a popular topic but it is one that is sorely needed in the modern evangelical church. As **Buis** writes "The masses of Christians in the early Church certainly believed in the doctrine of eternal punishment. Gibbon (**ED**: [See Below](#)) considered this to be **one of the five most important reasons why the Gospel spread in such amazing fashion.**" ([The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment](#)) While Luke 16 is just a story, Jesus told it to emphasize truth and one truth that comes out is that the rich man in Hades is now motivated by his suffering to act in a sense as an evangelist to his brothers. I would submit that one of the greatest impacts of the truth about eternal fire of hell, is that one's heart is set on fire to proclaim the Gospel to the lost! I can attest to this in my own experience for spent many hours studying and writing on Lk 16:19-31 and the effect on my heart has been to cause me to have a greater desire than ever before to share the good news in time to those otherwise destined for bad news in eternity. So let me ask you, have you ever heard a sermon series or even one sermon on hell? Have you really studied this doctrine which Jesus spoke more than any other person?

**I would propose a "paradox" that the Church of Jesus Christ is most "on fire" with the Gospel, when the Church fully and truly grasps the horror of the unquenchable fire of Hell! Does this thought not make you want to go and share the Gospel today?!**

What was the effect of Jonathan Edward's ([biography - go to page 30](#)) famous sermon "[Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God](#)"? This sermon on hell was used by the Holy Spirit to set ablaze the fire of revival which is known as the [First Great Awakening](#)! Read about the impact of Edward's sermon on his congregation ([click here](#)). As an aside Edwards in that sermon said "*There is nothing that keeps wicked Men at any one Moment, out of Hell, but the meer Pleasure of GOD!*" Given the fact that America is in desperate need of a God given, Word centered, Spirit empowered, Christ exalting revival, what would be the impact in our land if there was more emphasis on the doctrine of Hell preached by pastors whose hearts were filled with compassion and whose eyes were filled with tears?



Someone has said that "If an indifferent Christian could spend just five minutes in hell, he would come forth as a flaming evangelist seeking the lost." But remember that while hell is true, as followers of Jesus we are called to speak the truth in love. Yes, we are to warn the lost of their destiny if they reject Jesus' offer of the Gospel of salvation, but we must do it with broken hearts, with tender words and yes, even with tears. (See [related devotional below](#)).

**Pastor Ray Pritchard** said "Hell is Hot. Time is Short. This truth ought to speak to our hearts about the urgency of the King's business. Too often Christians say we believe in hell and then act as if we don't." ([Will Everyone Eventually Be Saved?](#))

**J C Ryle** wrote "God knows that I never speak of hell without (myself experiencing) pain and sorrow. I would gladly offer the salvation of the Gospel to the very chief of sinners. I would willingly say to the vilest and most profligate of mankind on his deathbed, "Repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be save." But God forbid that I should ever keep back from mortal man that Scripture reveals a **hell** as well as **heaven**...that men may be lost as well as saved."

**George Sweeting** writes that "One of the greatest paintings of all time is Michelangelo's [The Last Judgment](#). The action of the painting centers on Christ as He raises His arm in a gesture of damnation ([see picture](#)). Though some elements of the painting appear unbiblical, at that time its message reminded people of God's holy presence, which had been forgotten in the humanism of the day. The painting pictures the dead as they are resurrected to be judged (Rev 20:12). As hell releases its captives, the Judge of Heaven reviews their works (Rev 20:13). The entire painting reflects the despair of that generation. When the painting was unveiled, a storm of conviction fell upon the viewers. **All Europe trembled as the story of the power of The Last Judgment traveled from city to city.** (Borrow [Great Quotes & Illustrations](#))

Many years ago the great Southern evangelist [John R. Rice](#) preached in Waxahachie, Texas, just south of Dallas. As was his custom, Dr. Rice preached hard against sin and hell (see Dr Rice's excellent, Biblically based 36 page pamphlet entitled "[Hell What the Bible says About It](#)" - see [reviews](#)), especially against the bootleggers bringing illegal liquor into that small Texas town. Eventually the powers that be decided that this pesky evangelist must be silenced. They sent a message to stop preaching or they would kill him. "You can't threaten me with heaven," he replied. (And all God's people said "Amen!") (**ED: RICE ONCE PREACHED A SERMON ENTITLED "Diseased, Decaying Bodies with Undying Maggots and Unquenched Fire in Hell"! WOE!!!**)

**THE POWER OF "HELL FIRE"** - An old Scottish preacher had to go past a glass factory each day on his way to the church. On one occasion he had a little extra time, and since the factory door was open, he decided to look inside. There before him was a large, blazing furnace. The minister gazed into the white, blue, and purple mass of liquid flame, and the intense heat almost seared his face. As he turned to leave, a workman standing in the shadows nearby overheard him exclaim, "Ho, mon! What shall hell be like!" Several days later, the man came to the pastor at the church. "You don't know me," he said, "but the other day when you stepped into the furnace room I heard what you said. Now every time I open that hot door to stoke the fire, the words ring in my mind, 'What shall hell be like!' I have come to you, sir, to find out how to be saved. I don't ever want to know the reality of that place."

**Melvin Worthington** writes that "Introduction: The doctrine of eternal punishment remains one of the strongest incentives for coming to Christ for salvation. Jesus spoke more about hell than about heaven."

**Dave Branon** writes "When my daughter Lisa arrived for another day of teaching her high school music classes, she found that the students and faculty were grieving. A senior boy had died in a car accident the afternoon before. As Lisa made her way toward her classroom, she saw a student she knew was a Christian, sitting in the cafeteria, crying. When Lisa reached her, the student hugged her and said between her sobs, "Oh, Mrs. Spangler, he's in hell, and I didn't witness to him." She knew that the young man had clearly spoken out about his professed atheism—and she hadn't told him about Jesus. That girl may have been a better witness for the Lord than she realized in the way she lived. Nonetheless, she understood an important concept: It is our job to tell the world about the saving power of Jesus. We see Paul as an example of one who carried out this mission (Acts 20:17-31). Life seems so comfortable at times—so certain—that we move along each day without thinking of the eternal implications for others. And sometimes we bask in the assurance of our own salvation, forgetting that most people we meet do not have the same hope that we have in Christ Jesus. **Is there anyone you need to talk to about Jesus today—before it's too late?**"

**Greg Stier** has some interesting thoughts on the relationship of **eternal punishment** and **evangelistic passion** - Are you cultivating a passion for evangelism in your students? The only way to do that is to do what Jesus did. Paint a picture for them. When Jesus wanted to break the hearts of His disciples for the souls of the lost, He described the reality of the grim darkness of eternal torment in vivid, horrifying detail. Check out the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19–31. In this terrifyingly descriptive passage Jesus pulls back the veil of hell. From that moment on, His followers never viewed the pain of the afterlife the same way. Now they imagined real people suffering real torment for a real eternity. "Real" is the operative word. If we are going to fan the flames of passion in the hearts of our kids, the fire of hell must be real to them. I will never forget the challenge from one of my youth leaders when I was in junior high school. He asked me to go to a local, busy shopping mall and find a place to sit where the crowd would be thick and bustling. Then I was to watch people for thirty minutes. But I was to watch them with an eternal perspective. He wanted me to put an imaginary tag on their foreheads that read, "Bound for hell." At first it seemed kind of weird. But pretty soon I could see

nothing but little "Bound for hell" signs on every forehead. When those thirty minutes were over, my face was wet with tears, and my perspective was transformed forever. It helped me to see people differently. It broke my heart. The Lord used my youth leader to give me a new set of lenses to wear. Those lenses help me to see people not as they are but as they will be someday. The Lord wants to use you to help your teens to see people differently as well. (Borrow [OUTBREAK! Creating a Contagious Youth Ministry Through Viral Evangelism](#))

**George Barna** tells a story of a sermon that he never forgot - Several sermons have attached themselves to my brain tissue. In the early 1980s, my wife and I lived near Chicago and attended Willow Creek Community Church. One winter, our pastor, Bill Hybels, was leading the church through a series on the book of Luke. The series was taught during the midweek service, and I recall arriving at the church one Wednesday evening fatigued from a full day of meetings, negotiations and production. The Chicago winds were typically gusty, the temperature characteristically subzero. We drove eight miles to the church on narrow roads caked with ice, sand and a thin layer of snow. I was not exactly "up" for a night of church, but dutifully I attended. As Bill read Luke 16:19-31, my comatose mind snapped to attention. His passionate retelling of the story of the rich man banished to hell gripped my heart as few stories ever had. Chills ran down my spine as I heard the plaintive cry of the rich man to Abraham: "I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment" (Luke 16:27). To this day, more than a decade later, I recall that lesson and the horror that filled me as I realized, perhaps for the first time, how horrific a life in hell would be, how significant the death of Christ had been for me and **just how imperative it is to use every resource available to share the real truth about life, death, sin and grace with every person I know.** (Evangelism That Works)

**How should we as followers of Christ react to Jesus' words of sober warning?**

Clearly, we who are **stewards** of the Gospel of Christ and filled with His Spirit (and supernatural boldness - Acts 4:31) must "**be found trustworthy**" (1 Cor 4:1-2, cf 1 Pe 4:10) and must not shy away from warning others about the unimaginable terrors of hell, for that is the most loving, compassionate, gracious and Christ-like thing we can do during our short stay on earth. Imagine those who have lived as our neighbors, those who have been our close associates for years, and then die without faith and Christ and find themselves in shock and in hell, wondering "Why didn't my Christian neighbor/associate even warn me about the divine, righteous wrath to come?"

Some want to live within the sound  
Of Church or Chapel bell;  
I want to run a rescue shop  
Within a yard of hell.  
—C.T. Studd

**Fanny Crosby** had a passion for evangelism and her passion comes through loud and clear in her well known hymn entitled "Rescue the Perishing." Let me strongly encourage you to get alone with God and prayerfully ponder Fanny Crosby's words as you listen to and watch the moving video [Rescue the Perishing produced by Billy and Cindy Foote](#).

### **Rescue the Perishing**

**-- Fanny Crosby**

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,  
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;  
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,  
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.

***Refrain***

***Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,  
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.***

Though they are slighting Him, still He is waiting,  
Waiting the penitent child to receive;  
Plead with them earnestly, plead with them gently;  
He will forgive if they only believe.

***Refrain***

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,  
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;  
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,

Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.

**Refrain**

Rescue the perishing, duty demands it;  
Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;  
Back to the narrow way patiently win them;  
Tell the poor wand'rer a Savior has died.

**Refrain**

**Fanny Crosby** tells the story of how she came to write **Rescue the Perishing**...

It was written in the year 1869, when I was forty-nine years old. Many of my hymns were written after experiences in New York mission work. This one was thus written. I was addressing a large company of working men one hot summer evening, when the thought kept forcing itself on my mind that some mother's boy must be rescued that night or not at all. So I made a pressing plea that if there was a boy present who had wandered from his mother's home and teaching, he would come to me at the close of the service. A young man of eighteen came forward and said, 'Did you mean me? I promised my mother to meet her in heaven, but as I am now living that will be impossible.' We prayed for him and he finally arose with a new light in his eyes and exclaimed in triumph, 'Now I can meet my mother in heaven, for I have found God!' (**Ed:** He had entered through the strait gate that leads to heaven. Hallelujah! May his tribe increase. Amen)

A few days before, Mr. Doane had sent me the subject "Rescue the Perishing," and while I sat there that evening the line came to me, "Rescue the perishing, care for the dying." I could think of nothing else that night. When I arrived at my home I went to work on it at once; and before I retired the entire hymn was ready for a melody. The next day my words were written and forwarded to Mr. Doane, who wrote the beautiful and touching music as it now stands.

In November, 1903 (**Ed:** year hymn written = 1869), I went to Lynn, Massachusetts, to speak before the Young Men's Christian Association. I told them the incident that led me to write "Rescue the Perishing," as I have just related it. After the meeting a large number of men shook hands with me, and among them was a man, who seemed to be deeply moved. You may imagine my surprise when he said, "Miss Crosby, I was the boy, who told you more than thirty-five years ago that I had wandered from my mother's God. The evening that you spoke at the mission I sought and found peace, and I have tried to live a consistent Christian life ever since. If we never meet again on earth, we will meet up yonder." As he said this, he raised my hand to his lips (**Ed:** as you doubtless know Fanny was blind); and before I had recovered from my surprise he had gone; and remains to this day a nameless friend, who touched a deep chord of sympathy in my heart. It is these notes of sympathy that vibrate when a voice calls them forth from the dim memories of the past, and the music is celestial. (**Fanny Crosby's personal testimony**)

**Comment:** Please take a moment to watch and listen to the vocal rendition of [Rescue The Perishing](#) based largely on Fanny Crosby's famous hymn (**Hint:** Select Full Screen view for maximum impact). **Beloved I will be amazed if you can watch and listen to this youtube video of Fanny Crosby's classic hymn without weeping.**

**May our hearts break for what breaks our Father's heart and may His Spirit so fill us that His Good News "becomes like a burning fire" (Jer 20:9 23:29) in our bosom and we cannot hold it in for the sake of Jesus Who is [Mighty To Save](#). ([Hillsong version](#)) Amen**

Help me to see the tragic plight  
Of souls far off in sin;  
Help me to love, to pray, and go  
To bring the wandering in.  
—Harrison

---

**Related Resources from Radio Bible Class** (et al sources) to encourage you to be a Spirit-filled, faithful, bold witness of Christ (Acts 1:8-[note](#)):

- [How can a Christian overcome the fear of witnessing?](#)
- [Truth with Love- Sharing the Story of Jesus](#)
- [How Can I Break The Silence? - Strategies for sharing faith in Christ](#)
- [How Can I Share My Faith Without An Argument? - Letting God do the work of evangelism\(Or here\)](#)
- [What If It's True? Examining Four Important Spiritual Questions](#)
- [Life to Come \(Or here\)](#)
- [Beyond Reasonable Doubt: The Truth About the Bible \(Or here\)](#)

- [Why Does It Make Sense To Believe In Christ? - Evidence for the reasonableness of Christian faith\(Or here\)](#)
- [What Is A Personal Relationship With God? - Conditions for knowing God](#)
- [What About Those Who Have Never Heard? - The plight of those without the gospel](#)
- [Why We Believe - Evidences for Christian Faith](#)
- [What Does The Bible Say About Hell?](#)

## QUOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS RELATED TO ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

**Michael Andrus** introduces his sermon on Luke 16:19-31 - There was a cover article in U.S. News and World Report some seven years ago entitled, Farewell to the Rich, the Famous, and the Unforgettable.i The article concerned the key obituaries of 1997: Princess Diana, Mother Teresa, James Michener, Gianni Versace, Paul Tsongas, John Denver, Jacques Cousteau, William Brennan, Ben Hogan, Charles Kuralt, and 2 many others. Following a relatively short time on earth, all of these people tasted death, but all of them are still living somewhere in eternity. The question is, “where?” and how is that destination determined? The author of the article wrestled with these questions as he continued his obituaries for that year of ‘97: “Red Skelton, who used to end his radio and television shows with the sign-off ‘God bless,’ must by now know if he really does. Allen Ginsberg, similarly, must by now know if Buddha is prepared to take a profane Jewish poet to his ample bosom. . . . For Jimmy Stewart, it was a wonderful life, and let’s hope that what he found after death compares well with it.” He then concluded with this comment: “But too lengthy contemplation of the fragility of life cannot be good, either for the complexion or for the appetite. It can only turn us, as we consider the past year’s deaths into the spiritual equivalent of the Chicago Cubs fans, saying, ‘Wait until next year,’ not with hope but with a slight shudder.” ([Rich Man, Poor Man: Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus](#))

---

When **Henry David Thoreau** was on his deathbed, he was visited by a minister who urged his dying friend to be ready for death: “Do you know where you’re going in the next world?” Thoreau waved him away with the words, “**One world at a time.**” His attitude has caused humanists to uphold him as a man of moral courage, resisting a cowardly flight to religion. He was, in fact, the model of a fool. Imagine a man in Florida boarding a plane to Alaska in mid-winter with no baggage, who answers the question, “Do you know where you’re going?” with “One city at a time, my friend.” **Only a fool fails to plan ahead for the inevitable** See also [Last Words From Saints And Sinners](#)

---

**Richard DeHaan** - One of the worst cases of hatred I have ever come across is found in a will written in 1935 by a Mr. Donohoe. It says, “Unto my two daughters, Frances Marie and Denise Victoria, by reason of their unfilial attitude toward a doting father, . . . I leave the sum of \$1.00 to each and a father’s curse. May their lives be fraught with misery, unhappiness, and poignant sorrow. May their deaths be soon and of a lingering malignant and torturous nature.” The last line of the will is so vicious I shudder to quote it. It reads, “May their souls rest in hell and suffer the torments of the condemned for eternity.” (**ED COMMENT: He may said those angry, hate filled words during life, but I seriously doubt if he held the same opinion one minute after he died!** In fact I would go so far as to say he would give anything to take them back and instead to warn his daughters of the terrors of eternal torment! cf Lk 16:24-[note](#); Lk 16: 27-28-[note](#))

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - A dying man once gathered his four children around him. To each of the first three he simply said, “Good night.” But then he turned to his fourth child and said, “Good-bye, Son.” The young man said, “Dad, you told the others good night. Why did you tell me good-bye?” The dying man answered, “Because they are Christians, and I’ll see them in the morning in heaven. But you have not come to Christ, and unless you do I’ll never see you again.”

---

Don’t choose to spend eternity  
Where pain will never dim;  
Instead decide to trust in Christ  
And choose to follow Him.  
—Sper

---

**Erwin Lutzer** - One day I received a call from a distraught family who wanted a minister to do a quick funeral. I say “quick” because they asked me to speak for only a few minutes. “We don’t want anything religious,” the son told me, “and nothing you do will be too short.” I asked him why it was so important for the funeral to be brief. He told me his family was not religious; his father, who had died

suddenly, had never attended church. They did not even believe in God; the only reason I was called was because a relative thought a minister should be present. I made a deal with him. Yes, I would be brief; but I would have to tell the guests what I believed about death in general and Christ in particular. He reluctantly agreed. If there is one word that characterized that funeral, it was hopelessness. Here was a man who had apparently made millions of dollars in the shipping industry, but now he was dead, and his body was to be cremated on that very day, after a rather long eulogy but a very short sermon....the shipping magnate at whose funeral I spoke in Chicago (was like) the rich man in the parable—and millions like them—have discovered too late that their worldly influence could not save them; nor could their wealth and reputation extricate them from this bind. Instead of victors, they were now victims; rather than bragging about their freedom, they now had to confess their enslavement. (Borrow [One Minute After You Die](#))

---

**FIRE INSURANCE** - Caveat - The following story is not Scriptural in all the details - There is an old legend about a man who always looked out for #1—himself. Having lived for pleasure the majority of his life, he began to take note of some loose ends. He thought to himself, “I need to make sure that when judgment day comes, I’ll be on the right side.” His thinking was that by joining a church and getting his name on the roll, he would secure his “fire insurance.”

A few months later he died and found himself in a poorly-lit waiting room that reeked of sulfur. “I always thought heaven would be a little bit nicer than this” he mumbled. “This must be a holding room between heaven and hell. It’s a good thing I’ve got my ‘fire insurance policy.’ ”

After a brief wait, the man was summoned into a large room containing file cabinets, a long table, and a chair. A creature who breathed heavily asked for his insurance policy. “Here it is right here,” the man said confidently as he handed over his paperwork. Glancing at it the creature roared with delight, “Welcome to hell! We’ve been waiting for you.” The man was shocked, “What are you saying? I just gave you my fire insurance policy!” The creature held up the document and pointed to the bottom. “Look, your policy was paid for by Jesus Christ but it was never signed by you! You failed to follow through! Now, this paper is worthless ... and so are you.”

John MacArthur has a more Biblically sound note - When did you last read your fire insurance policy—really read it, from beginning to end? Most of us purchase a policy and then stick it in a file, hoping we will never have to use it. Some people treat salvation like a fire insurance policy. They walk up to an altar or say a prayer and assume they are covered when they die. On that day, they plan to whip out their “fire insurance policy” to avoid going to hell. God’s gift of salvation does save us from an eternity spent apart from Him in hell, but it does so much more. God saves us from hell because He saves us from sin. The salvation we have in Christ breaks the power of sin in our lives and restores us to our holy God. The bonus is that we are also saved from sin’s accompanying penalty. Salvation is a relationship with the Savior, now. We have the privilege of experiencing and savoring our salvation every minute of each day as His Spirit works in us to make us more like Him.

Of course, it does provide great fire insurance too!

><>><>><>

**Russ Blowers** is a minister and active in the Indianapolis Rotary club. Each week at the club meetings a different member gives a brief statement about his job. When it was his turn, Russ said:

"I'm with a global enterprise. We have branches in every country in the world. We have our representatives in nearly every parliament and board room on earth. We're into motivation and behavior alteration.

"We run hospitals, feeding stations, crisis pregnancy centers, universities, publishing houses, and nursing homes. We care for our clients from birth to death.

"We are into **life insurance** and **fire insurance**. We perform spiritual heart transplants. Our original Organizer owns all the real estate on earth plus an assortment of galaxies and constellations. He knows everything and lives everywhere. Our product is free for the asking. (There's not enough money to buy it.)

"Our CEO was born in a hick town, worked as a carpenter, didn't own a home, was misunderstood by his family, hated by enemies, walked on water, was condemned to death without a trial, and arose from the dead—I talk with him every day."

The church is the most amazing organization in the world!

><>><>><>

**David Holwick** - God's goal is to mold us into the likeness of Jesus. Many Christians forget this. We stress making a decision for Jesus, almost like a fire-insurance policy. God wants to see a transformation, not just a signature on a line.

><>><>><>

**Adrian Rogers** - if the only that keeps you from sinning is your fear of going to Hell, I doubt you've ever been saved anyway. It ought to be the love of God that constrains you. It ought to be Christ and the new life in you that keeps you from sinning. So many people simply want **fire insurance**. And thank God we have **fire insurance**. But you see, there's something that Augustus Toplady called "The Double Cure" that I want to speak about tonight. You remember the grand song that we sing, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

let me hide myself in thee. Be of sin the double cure, saved from wrath and make me pure." That's "The Double Cure". Now if He just simply saves you from wrath, but He doesn't make you pure, that is not real salvation. Saving from wrath deals with the penalty of sin. Making you pure deals with the power of sin. Again, we sing this song, "He breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the prisoner free. His blood can make the foulest clean, His blood availed for me." You are to be having victory in the war with sin.

Salvation is not some sort of a cafeteria line where we say, "Well, I believe I'll have a little Savior here today, but no Lordship thank you." No! Jesus is Lord. We have a lot of people who come down church aisles like they're doing God a wild favor so they can have a **little fire insurance** and not go to hell, accepting Christ, "as their Savior." Now, He is Savior and He does save, but, friend, you cannot have what He gives unless you receives what He is. He is Lord. Have you ever taken yourself off the throne and put Jesus Christ on the throne?

And there are a lot of people who want to do this. I mean they want to be saved because they don't want to go to hell but, you know, they're not all that interested in going to heaven either. They're like the little girl who prayed, Lord, make me good-not too good-just good enough not to get a spanking. And there are a lot of people that way. I mean they want a little fire insurance. They want to get out of Egypt alright because they don't want the judgments that are going to fall on Egypt but they sure want to camp just Outside Egypt.

><>><><>

**Alan Carr** - Many come to Him because they are afraid of Hell. They will come to Jesus Christ to get deliverance from the penalty of sin and from the wrath of God, John 3:18, 36. But, when that person exercises faith in Jesus and is saved, they discover they got far more than just a **fire insurance policy**. They discover that they are now children of God, 1 John 3:1-2. They discover that they are promised a home in Heaven, John 14:1-3. They discover that they are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus, Rom. 8:17. They discover that the direction and desires of life have all changed, 2 Cor. 5:17. They discover that they are free from the power of sin to control and dominate them, Rom. 6:14. They discover that they are no longer God's enemies, Rom. 8:7, but that they have been reconciled to Him, Eph. 2:12-19. They discover that all of this took place "by grace through faith", that it didn't cost them a dime, Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17. They soon discover that their battle with the wages of sin has forever ended, Col. 2:13-14. They soon discover that they have been fully and finally forgiven of every sin and transgression, Psa. 103:12; Isa. 38:7; Isa. 43:45; Jer. 50:20; Micah 7:19; 1 John 1:7!

><>><><>

**John Piper** - I urge you, turn from the world and from sin and to Christ. Take him not just as your **fire insurance policy**, but as your eagerly awaited bridegroom and friend and Lord.

><>><><>

**Steven Cole** - There is no such thing as saving faith apart from obedient faith. There is a pernicious error in our day that you can believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, but obedience to Him as Lord is optional. If you want a **fire insurance policy** to protect you from hell, then believe in Jesus as your Savior, but you don't need to go all the way and obey Him as Lord. (**Ed**: Obedience does not save but is the fruit of genuine salvation. Such a person has the Holy Spirit living within and He gives the desire the power to please God in obedience. Php 2:13NLT)

><>><><>

**Wayne Barber** - Salvation is not membership in a church. Salvation is not a **"fire insurance" policy** so you won't go to hell. Salvation! Saved! Rescued! Delivered from what? My helpless condition in Adam, where I was an ungodly sinner and an enemy of God. Nobody could save me, and I couldn't save myself. Only Jesus, the God-man, could do that! He came and died for me, and I place all of myself to Him. I come now to serve a living and holy God.

><>><><>

**Rich Kress** - Growing up, I knew some facts about the gospel-Jesus the Son of God died for sinners and rose from the grave on the third day. I accepted those facts as a sort of **"fire insurance"** against going to hell. I claimed to believe them-but in reality I was completely ignorant of what it really meant to believe. If the gospel is just a story that makes us feel ok about our sin and save our conscience when we habitually and unceasingly live for ourselves-then we have no real understanding of the gospel. (From God in Everyday Life - Ruth Commentary)

><>><><>

**Barry Horner** - Sadly, many professing Christians do not demonstrate this inevitable result. They indicate allegiance to two masters, impossible, in reality, as is such a dual relationship (Luke 16:13). They commune with the world, and identify with its conversation,

fashions, literature, and culture; they attend church and “believe in Jesus as some sort of fire insurance.” Hence this “faith” is merely one compartment in life. In professing to be a Christian, they have obviously failed to grasp the glory and grandeur and wonder of the cross of Christ and the Christ of the cross. They do not disesteem the world because they do not really esteem, or glory in the cross of Christ.

---

## **Are You Ready?**

Read: Luke 16:19-31

**Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**—2 Corinthians 6:2

My daughter Julie was home from college and working at her summer job at RBC Ministries. One day as she was cutting the lawn with a riding mower she noticed some movement in the grass. Hopping down, she discovered a couple of baby rabbits scampering away from her noisy machine. She shooed them out of the path of her tractor to what she thought was sure safety, then out of the sky swooped a hawk. In a second he had one of the bunnies in his talons and was gone.

Julie felt bad. While she was helping the little guys avoid one danger, she had made them vulnerable to another. Despite her efforts, that bunny met his demise. As she told me about it, she said, “It made me think of my own mortality.”

That’s not something college students think much about. But they should, and so should all of us. Many people do not want to admit that life tomorrow is not guaranteed. We don’t know if we’ll live until tomorrow, or for 50 more years.

So, why think about this? Simply because we must be prepared to meet the Lord. The Bible says, “It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). If you have never done so, today by faith receive Christ as your Savior. Make sure you are ready. By Dave Branon

Oh, why not turn while still you may;  
Too late it soon will be—  
A glorious life you can possess  
Throughout eternity.  
—Anon.

**Death could come at any time—  
so we must be ready all the time.**

---

## **A Great Mystery**

Read: Luke 16:19-31

We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. —2 Corinthians 5:8

Many people love mysteries. It’s exciting to put ourselves in the shoes of a detective and try to figure out “whodunit” as we turn the pages of a mystery novel. But there’s a cliffhanger that we’ll never resolve—until we experience it ourselves.

Those of us who have watched in sadness as someone close to us has died may wonder about their new existence. Our hearts ache to know what they are doing or where they are. If they had trusted Jesus Christ as Savior, we know they are in heaven. But, for now, a veil separates us from our loved ones and we cannot see behind it.

We do have a few clues about this mystery, though. We know that our departed loved ones are enjoying God’s presence (2 Corinthians 5:8). We also know that they are recognizable and conscious of their surroundings—just like the rich man and the beggar Jesus spoke of in Luke 16:22-23. And we know that they haven’t yet received the perfect body that will be theirs when Christ returns (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

Beyond that, we are left with this truth: God, in His matchless love and power, is planning a glorious reunion. Then, our eternal rejoicing will begin. The last page of this great mystery has a happy ending. By Dave Branon

The Lord has promised to prepare  
A place in heaven above—  
A home where we will always be  
With Him and those we love.  
—Sper

God’s people never say goodbye for the last time.

---

## Don't Go There!

Read: Luke 16:19-31

Fear Him who . . . has power to cast into hell. —Luke 12:5<sup>note</sup>

Though it's a frequently used word in the English language, it's one of the least talked about. It's used as an exclamation, an interjection, and a noun. What word is it? Hell.

Pollsters tell us that most people who use the word don't believe in the existence of hell. While 90 percent of Americans said they believe in heaven, only 25 percent indicated that they believe in hell. That's because hell is not a nice place. In his book *Inferno*, Dante depicted hell as a place of torment for sin. Above its gate he imagined a sign that said, "Abandon hope all ye who enter here."

The truth about hell is found in the Bible. Jesus described it as a lake of fire, which was prepared for the devil and his helpers (Mt. 25:41). Christ also told about a rich man who was being tormented in hell and who asked a beggar to come and cool his tongue (Lk. 16:19-31). Hell is a place where God demonstrates His justice in dealing with all those who have rebelled against Him.

Hell is real. If you have trusted in Christ, your sins are forgiven and you are headed for heaven. But if you do not believe in Jesus, you are headed for hell. It's a terrible place. You don't want to go there! By David C. Egner

God is so holy, so pure, and so right  
That hell will be justice for sin;  
Yet pardon is found by trusting in Christ,  
And heaven's great joys will begin.  
—K. De Haan

To believe in heaven without hell is like believing in good without evil.

---

## Final Appointment

Read: Luke 16:19-31

It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment. —Hebrews 9:27

The driver of a hearse foolishly tried to warm himself on a rainy Saturday morning by drinking on the job. He didn't get warm (alcohol actually lowers body temperature), but he did get lost on the way to the cemetery. The funeral procession waited in vain at the grave for hours.

Later that evening, police found the driver asleep in the hearse by the side of the road. By then it was too late for burial, and the cemetery wouldn't accept the casket on Sunday.

On Monday, the newspaper reported that the body of the 62-year-old man "was finally laid to rest—2 days late for his final appointment."

Actually, his final appointment was kept right on time. His tardy burial in no way altered the fact that his conscious soul had passed into eternity precisely at God's appointed time.

Until Christ returns, this will be true for every one of us. For the child of God, death immediately lifts the spirit into the presence of the Savior (2 Cor. 5:8). But for the one who rejects Christ (Jn. 3:18), death instantly closes the door to heaven and opens another to a Christless eternity. By Mart DeHaan

We all have an appointment with our Maker.  
Whether we're ready for it or not depends on what we do with Jesus now.  
Are you ready for your final appointment?

At the moment of death, we step into eternal delight or everlasting doom.

---

There are some ministers who never mention anything about hell," Charles Spurgeon once noted. "I heard of a minister who once said to his congregation, 'If you do not love the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be sent to that place which it is not polite to mention.' He ought not to have been allowed to preach again, I am sure, if he could not use plain words. Now, if I saw that house on fire over there, do you think I would stand and say, 'I believe the operation of combustion is proceeding yonder'? No; I would call out, 'Fire!'"



Fire!' and then everybody would know what I meant." C. S. Lewis once heard a young minister bring his sermon to a close by saying, "And now, my friends, if you do not believe these truths, there may be for you grave eschatological consequences." Afterward, Lewis asked the man, "Did you mean that they would be in danger of hell?" "Why, yes," he answered, to which Lewis replied, "Then why in the world didn't you say so?" Evangelist Vance Havner pastored a country church early in his ministry. Once when he preached about hell, an old farmer upbraided him, saying he should preach instead about the meek and lowly Jesus. "That's where I got my information about hell," said Havner. Jesus died to save us from God's righteous wrath, and how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?

---

---

**Tony Evans** defines **Hell** - Hell is the place of eternal exile where the ungodly will experience God's righteous retribution against sin forever....Someone has said that hell is the answer to the sinner's prayer. Jesus taught us to pray to God, "Thy will be done." But a rebellious sinner says to God, "My will be done." And God grants that person's request.

---

---

**Looking Out for Number One** - Several years ago a book was published entitled "Looking Out for Number One." On the dedication page the author wrote, "Dedicated to the hope that somewhere in our universe there exists a civilization where the inhabitants possess sole dominion over their own lives." There is such a place. **It's called Hell.**

---

---

**M. F. Rich**, an atheist, cried, "I would rather lie on a stove and broil for a million years than go into eternity with the eternal horrors that hang over my soul! I have given my immortality for gold, and its weight sinks me into an endless, hopeless, helpless Hell."

---

---

One of the horrors of hell is the undying memory of a misspent life—"Son, remember" (Luke 16:25). ANONYMOUS

---

---

The pastor was talking with the custodian prior to the morning service on a hot Sunday morning. He was preaching a rather unusual sermon for these days in which he was going to bring before his people the terrors of Hell. So he gave the custodian these instructions: "When I get to the part about [hellfire and brimstone](#), shut off the air conditioning."

---

---

The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions.  
- A.W. Tozer

---

---

On an American troopship, the soldiers crowded around their chaplain asking, "Do you believe in hell?" "I do not." "Well, then, will you please resign, for if there is no hell, we do not need you, and if there is a hell, we do not wish to be led astray."

---

---

Some time ago, a man brought forward his strong argument against the Bible, declaring, "I am seventy years of age, and have never seen such a place as hell, after all that has been said about it." His little grandson, of about seven years of age, who was all the while listening, asked him, "Granddaddy, have you ever been dead yet?"

---

---

In The Inferno, Part I of Dante's Divine Comedy ("comedy" here indicates a narrative with a happy ending), Dante and his guide, the Latin poet Virgil, descend into hell. In each of the nine circles of hell, they see sinners being punished for sins they committed during their lives on earth. For example, the second circle contains lustful people, the fifth circle wrathful people, and the eighth circle fraudulent people such as flatterers and hypocrites. While it is a dark journey filled with horrifying scenes and spiritual warnings for the reader, remember that Dante is not always Biblical! Our main source of information about Hell must be the Bible, especially the teaching from the lips of our Lord, Who spoke more about Hell than any other person.

---

---

Sometimes it seems that sin's ignored  
And evil has it's way;  
But don't be fooled,  
God's eye's aren't closed;  
He'll judge us all someday.  
-Sper

God's judgment may not be immediate, but it is inevitable.  
Sooner or later you'll have to face God.

---

---

**Bertrand Russell** became an atheist after he read the words of Jesus about hell. He apparently wanted a God who would never become angry or punish anyone.

Russell wrote, "There is one very serious defect to my mind in Christ's moral character, and that is that He believed in hell. I do not myself feel that any person who is really profoundly humane can believe in everlasting punishment."

---

### **'I Didn't Witness!'**

For three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. —Acts 20:31

When my daughter Lisa arrived for another day of teaching her high school music classes, she found that the students and faculty were grieving. A senior boy had died in a car accident the afternoon before. As Lisa made her way toward her classroom, she saw a student she knew was a Christian, sitting in the cafeteria, crying. When Lisa reached her, the student hugged her and said between her sobs, "Oh, Mrs. Spangler, he's in hell, and I didn't witness to him." She knew that the young man had clearly spoken out about his professed atheism—and she hadn't told him about Jesus. That girl may have been a better witness for the Lord than she realized in the way she lived. Nonetheless, she understood an important concept: It is our job to tell the world about the saving power of Jesus. We see Paul as an example of one who carried out this mission (Acts 20:17-31). Life seems so comfortable at times—so certain—that we move along each day without thinking of the eternal implications for others. And sometimes we bask in the assurance of our own salvation, forgetting that most people we meet do not have the same hope that we have in Christ Jesus. Is there anyone you need to talk to about Jesus today—before it's too late? —J D Branon

Wanted: Messengers to deliver the good news.

---

**Embraced by the Light** - The idea of hell and judgment are nowhere to be found [in Betty Eadie's bestseller, *Embraced By The Light*, on the N.Y. Times bestseller list for more than 40 weeks, including 5 weeks as #1]. In November 1973 Eadie allegedly died after undergoing a hysterectomy, and returned five hours later with the secrets of heaven revealed by Jesus. Eadie says that Jesus "never wanted to do or say anything that would offend me" while she visited heaven. Indeed, Jesus seems to be relegated to the role of a happy tour guide in heaven, not the Savior of the world who died on the cross. (Richard Abanes, in *Christianity Today*)

---

**President Coolidge** - One day, when Vice President Calvin Coolidge was presiding over the Senate, one Senator angrily told another to go "straight to hell." The offended Senator complained to Coolidge as presiding officer, and Cal looked up from the book he had been leafing through while listening to the debate. "I've been looking through the rule book," he said. "you don't have to go."

---

**R.W. Dale**, in his day Britain's leading Congregationalist minister, did not believe in eternal punishment. Yet, before he died, Dale sighed and said, "No one fears God nowadays."

---

**Hell is Necessary** - Non-Christians often ask the Christian, "But how can the God of love allow any of his creatures to suffer unending misery?" The question is, how can he not? The fact that God is love makes hell necessary. "Hell," as E. L. Mascall once said, "is not compatible with God's love; it is a direct consequence of it." That was his way of stressing the fact that the very God who loves us is the one who respects our decisions. He loves us, but he does not force his love on us. To force love is to commit assault. He allows us to decide. He loves us, he encourages our response, he woos us, he pursues us, he urges us, but he does not force us, because he respects us. - *Christian Theology in Plain Language*

---

### **"Fire!" - Richard Baxter**

"Fire is evidently the only word in human language which can suggest the anguish of perdition. It is the only word in the parable of the wheat and the tares which our Lord did not interpret (Matt. 13:36-43)...The only reasonable explanation is that fire is not a symbol. It perfectly describes the reality of the eternal burnings.

As we paid nothing for God's eternal love and nothing for the Son of His love, and nothing for His Spirit and our grace and faith, and nothing for our eternal rest...What an astonishing thought it will be to think of the unmeasurable difference between our deservings and our receivings.

O, how free was all this love, and how free is this enjoyed glory...So then let "Deserved" be written on the floor of hell but on the door of heaven and life, "The Free Gift"

---

**Accidental Deaths** - Many accidental deaths result from taking risks. That's the conclusion of an organization in Canada that is seeking to decrease accidents between cars and trains. Roger Cyr, national director of Operation Lifesaver, puts most of the blame for fatalities on drivers who are risk-takers. "Studies have shown that when people hear a train whistle their minds tell them to

accelerate their speed,” says Cyr. About 43 percent of the accidents occur at crossings equipped with flashing lights and bells or gates. Cyr also said that many drivers “even have the audacity to drive around or under gates.” They take the risk, thinking they can beat the train and somehow miss the collision—but with tragic consequences! Our Daily Bread

---

### Charles Spurgeon

“Those who choose evil shall have their choice. Men who hate divine mercy shall not have it forced upon them, but (unless sovereign grace interpose) shall be left to themselves to aggravate their guilt and ensure their doom.

“They have loved darkness rather than light, and in darkness they shall abide. Eyes which see no beauty in the Lord Jesus, but flash wrath upon Him, may well grow yet more dim, till death which is spiritual leads to death which is eternal.

“What can be too severe a penalty for those who reject the incarnate God, and refuse to obey the commands of His mercy? They deserve to be flooded with wrath, and they shall be; for upon all who rebel against the Savior, ‘wrath has come upon them to the uttermost’ (1 Thessalonians 2:16).

God’s indignation is no trifle. The anger of a holy, just, omnipotent, and infinite Being is above all things to be dreaded; even a drop of it consumes, but to have it poured upon us is inconceivably dreadful.”

---

**Our Daily Bread Devotional** - I saw a sign that said, “The more Son you get, the less likely you are to burn.” The person who created the clever message may have meant well, but the statement is a subtle lie. It suggests that the more we believe in Jesus, the less likely we’ll go to hell.

The Bible, though, repeatedly states that when a person believes in Christ, he possesses eternal life from that point onward. Jesus described salvation in terms of being “born again” by the Spirit of God ([Jn. 3:3-9](#)). He said that whoever believes in Him has everlasting life (v.16). It is not a matter of what is likely but what is assured.

We do not gain deliverance from hell by degrees. When we first trusted Christ as our Savior, He came into our lives and saved us completely. We’ll never be further removed from hell than we are right now. Yes, we will grow in our likeness to Jesus as we live in humble gratitude and submission to Him. But growing in grace adds nothing to our salvation that wasn’t ours the moment we believed.

Many Christians today are longing for some secret formula or exciting experience to make them feel more sure of their eternal destination. But Jesus has provided a full and complete salvation. Our part is to rest in the adequacy of His death on the cross and to live for Him.

I need no other argument,  
I need no other plea;  
It is enough that Jesus died,  
And that He died for me.  
—Edmunds

We are saved by Christ’s dying, not by our doing.  
The cross of Christ—the crossroads to heaven or hell.

---

### Pondering Perpetual Needs

Before British actor Robert Morley died two weeks ago, he asked that his credit cards be buried with him. Since his funeral, the London Times’ letters pages have been filled with the thoughts of readers pondering their perpetual needs.

- Wrote M. L. Evans of Chester “In the unfortunate event of the miscarriage of justice and several thousand years ensuing before my sentence is quashed, I will take a fire extinguisher.”

- Heather Tanner of Woodbridge specified a good map. “I have immense trouble finding my way in this life,” she said, “so am extremely worried about the next.”

- A pair of earplugs would accompany Sir David Wilcocks of Cambridge “in case the heavenly choirs, singing everlastingly, are not in tune.”

- Maurice Godbold of Hindhead would take a crowbar, “in case the affair proved premature.”

Even in the hereafter, there will always be an England.

U. S. News & World Report, June 22, 1992, p. 26.

---

**J I Packer** - We are told in the parable of the sheep and goats (Matt. 25:31–46) that those whom the judge rejects go away into Kolasis (punishment) aionios (a final state). The phrase is balanced by the reference to zoe aionios (eternal life) which is also a fixed and final state. Even if this word aionios is believed to mean only “belonging to the coming aion,” and not to imply endlessness in the

sense of perpetual continuity, the thought of endlessness is certainly bound up in the phrase “eternal life,” and can hardly therefore be excluded from the corresponding and balancing phrase “eternal punishment.” The idea that in this text *aionios* as applied to *kolasis* must imply everlastingness seems to be unbreakable. The New testament always conceives of this eternal punishment as consisting of an agonizing knowledge of one’s own ill desert, of God’s displeasure, of the good that one has lost, and of the irrevocable fixed state in which one now finds oneself. The doctrine of eternal punishment was taught in the synagogue even before our Lord took it up and enforced it in the Gospels. All the language that strikes terror into our hearts—weeping and gnashing of teeth, outer darkness, the worm, the fire, gehenna, the great gulf fixed—is all directly taken from our Lord’s teaching. It is from Jesus Christ that we learn the doctrine of eternal punishment. Study the following Bible passages and any other relevant ones on this topic, and reach your own conclusions, prayerfully: Luke 16:26; John 3:18–19, 36; 5:29; 12:32; Acts 3:21, 23; Rom. 1:16, 5:18–21; 1 Cor. 15:25–28; 2 Cor. 5:10, 19; 6:2; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:25; Phil. 2:9–11; 1 Tim. 2:4; Titus 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 9:27; 1 Pet. 3:19; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 John 1:5; 2:2; 4:8. - Your Father Loves You by James Packer

---

**C S Lewis** - The safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts. (Lewis, C S, *The Screwtape Letters*)

---

**A W Tozer** -The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions.

---

If these truths or the doctrine of hell are troubling you, consider doing additional Bible study on these topics. You might also read one of the books by C. S. Lewis mentioned above. [The Screwtape Letters](#) offer “advice” from a senior devil to a junior one, while [The Great Divorce](#) narrates a “bus tour” from hell to the edges of heaven.

---

Jesus is calling, "Today you must choose!"  
If you delay, you surely will lose;  
Listening now, you can hear the Lord's voice,  
Take His salvation-make heaven your choice! -Hess

---

### **Only One Door**

I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved. —John 10:9

Old Testament scholar Sir George Adam Smith says that when he visited the Holy Land he came upon a shepherd and his sheep standing before a stockade. There was no door in that protective enclosure, only an opening the width of a man’s body. Smith asked the shepherd why there was no door, and he explained: “I am the way in. I stand in the opening, and the sheep pass under me into the stockade. When they are all safely inside, I lie down across that opening. No thief can get in and no sheep can get out except over my body. I am the entrance.”

We are like sheep who need a Shepherd (1 Peter 2:25). For entrance into heaven, a place of eternal bliss, Jesus gave this amazing claim: “I am the door of the sheep. . . . If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved” (John 10:7-9). The people listening to Him that day didn’t think of a wooden gate swinging on hinges. They understood that He was really saying, “I am the entrance into the homeland of God.” He could claim to be the way into that eternal blessedness, the exclusive way into God’s glory, because He is the incarnate Son of God.

Jesus is the only way into heaven (John 14:6). We gain entrance only by putting our faith in Him. By Vernon Grounds

Come to the Savior, make no delay—  
Here in His Word He’s shown us the way;  
Here in our midst He’s standing today,  
Tenderly saying, "Come!"  
—Root

**There are many ways to hell, but only one way to heaven.**

---

### **The Way Out**

Read: Revelation 20:11-15+

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. —Romans 6:23

A prisoner waiting on death row had a deep sense of guilt. He had killed a man in the presence of the victim's two children during a robbery attempt.

The convict was bothered so much that he refused to allow his lawyer to appeal for a stay of execution. For him, departing this life was an escape from his nagging conscience and the reproach of an angry society. He said, **"It's my way out of this living hell."**

**How mistaken he was! Unless he had made his peace with God, death would open the door to something far worse—an eternal hell!**

The Bible says, "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

We may not be murderers, but we all have sinned (Rom. 3:23). As far as God is concerned, that calls for the death penalty (Rom. 6:23), but He has provided a way of escape. He gave His Son to die in our place, and all who believe on Him are delivered from condemnation.

Unlike the convict who was hoping to find release through his execution, we can find true freedom. The Bible assures us, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). He's the only way out of our sinful dilemma. Richard DeHaan

**What you do with Christ now will determine what He will do with you later.**

---

### **Not Likely**

Read: John 3:1-21

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. — John 3:16

I saw a sign that said, "The more Son you get, the less likely you are to burn." The person who created the clever message may have meant well, but the statement is a subtle lie. It suggests that the more we believe in Jesus, the less likely we'll go to hell.

The Bible, though, repeatedly states that when a person believes in Christ, he possesses eternal life from that point onward. Jesus described salvation in terms of being "born again" by the Spirit of God (Jn. 3:3-9). He said that whoever believes in Him has everlasting life (v.16). It is not a matter of what is likely but what is assured.

We do not gain deliverance from hell by degrees. When we first trusted Christ as our Savior, He came into our lives and saved us completely. We'll never be further removed from hell than we are right now. Yes, we will grow in our likeness to Jesus as we live in humble gratitude and submission to Him. But growing in grace adds nothing to our salvation that wasn't ours the moment we believed.

Many Christians today are longing for some secret formula or exciting experience to make them feel more sure of their eternal destination. But Jesus has provided a full and complete salvation. Our part is to rest in the adequacy of His death on the cross and to live for Him.

I need no other argument,  
I need no other plea;  
It is enough that Jesus died,  
And that He died for me. —Edmunds

We are saved by Christ's dying, not by our doing.

---

### **A Vanishing Vapor**

What is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. —James 4:14

Evangelist D. L. Moody told a story about a minister who was preparing a sermon on the urgency of receiving Christ without delay. After studying for some time, the preacher fell asleep in his chair and had a strange dream in which he overheard a conversation among several demons. They were huddled together, trying to devise a scheme for leading people on earth into hell. One of the evil spirits said, "Let's tell people that the Bible is not the Word of God and that it can't be trusted." The others responded, "That isn't enough." Another spoke up, "Let's tell them that God doesn't exist, that Jesus was only a good man, and that there really is no heaven or hell." Again the others responded negatively. Finally, a third demon said, "Let's tell people there is a God, a Savior, and a heaven, and a hell. But let's assure them that they've got all the time in the world to be saved, and encourage them to put off the

decision." "That's it!" the others shouted gleefully.

Many people will spend eternity in hell because they procrastinate, thinking they can receive Christ "tomorrow." But for them tomorrow never comes. Don't be among them. Receive Christ today! By Richard DeHaan

Come to the Savior, make no delay—  
Here in His Word He's shown us the way;  
Here in our midst He's standing today,  
Tenderly saying, "Come!"  
—Root

Satan says, "Procrastinate!" but God says, "Don't wait!"

---

### **Watershed Line**

We ourselves were also once foolish . . . According to His mercy He saved us. —Titus 3:3,5

My wife and I were driving east on a remote ribbon of Canadian highway stretching between Wawa, Ontario, and neighboring Chapleau. The scenic northern road cuts through a forest of red pine, jack pine, aspen, and poplar. In the wooded terrain are lynx, wolves, moose, and lots of rocks.

As we crested a gradual rise we saw a sign that read: Watershed line. All waters falling south of here flow to the Atlantic Ocean. All waters falling north of here flow to the Arctic Ocean. We were right at the dividing line. The point at which a drop of rain fell made all the difference as to its final destination.

Accepting or rejecting Christ can be a kind of "watershed line." The moment we receive Him, we begin to enjoy a new life (Jn. 3:7-16). As new creations of Christ, we are on the path that leads to heaven. If we continue to reject Him, however, we are bound for hell.

If you've asked Jesus to forgive your sins, you can look back to the most important watershed line of all. You are a permanent part of God's family, indwelt by the Spirit, and guided by His Word. Praise God for the difference His Son Jesus Christ makes! By David C. Egner

The great dividing line in life  
Is what we do with Christ, God's Son;  
Rejecting Him will lead to hell—  
Receiving Him is heaven begun.  
—Hess

What you decide about Christ determines your destiny.

---

### **The Blackness Of Midnight**

Read: Revelation 20

They are . . . wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. —Jude 12-13.

When I was a young boy, our family visited an old abandoned copper mine. Having descended into the mine, our guide suddenly turned off his flashlight and we were enveloped by an oppressive blackness. It seemed as though we could feel the darkness.

Through the years, the memory of our descent into that pit has reminded me again and again of Jesus' words concerning the lost, who are "cast out into outer darkness" (Matthew 8:12). As terrifying as it was to be in that cave for just a few moments, imagine what it would be like for eternity!

We don't hear much about hell these days. But that doesn't mean there is no such place.

Have you ever thought about where you will spend eternity? According to the Scriptures, you will spend it in one of two places—either heaven or hell.

If you have never made sure of heaven, why not pray something like this right now: "Lord Jesus, I believe that You died on the cross for my sins and rose again from the dead. I now receive You as my Savior. I don't want to be lost. I want to go to heaven. Save me!"

Jesus promised, "The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37). - Richard DeHaan

Be not afraid of the darkness—  
Even the darkness of night;  
Trusting in Christ brings salvation—  
You will be walking in light. —Hess

Every sinner must be pardoned or punished.

---

### **Bad Choice**

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. - DANIEL 12:2

An elderly TV star was asked by talk-show host Larry King about heaven. King prefaced his question by referring to Billy Graham, who had told King he "knew what would be ahead. It would be paradise. He was going to heaven." King then asked his guest, "What do you believe?" The man replied, "**I'd like a lot of activity. Heaven sounds too placid for me. There's a lot to do in hell**"

Sadly, this man is not alone in thinking that an existence in Satan's realm is a preferred destination. I've heard people say that they'd rather be in hell because all their friends will be there. One person wrote, "If hell was real, I don't think it would be bad. There would be a lot of interesting people."

How can we convince folks who are **deceived** in this way that **hell and its horrors** are to be avoided? Perhaps by telling them of the **realities of hell that are presented in the Scripture**. In Daniel 12:2 hell is described as a place of **'shame and everlasting contempt.'** Luke 16:23 talks about **'torments.'** Matthew 8:12 describes **"weeping and gnashing of teeth."** And Revelation 14:11 says there will be **"no rest."** Biblical truth doesn't allow anyone to think that hell might be a good place to be. Clearly, rejecting Jesus and facing an eternity in Satan's kingdom is a bad choice.—Dave Branon

Don't choose to spend eternity  
Where pain will never dim;  
Instead decide to trust in Christ  
And choose to follow Him.  
—Sper

### **The same Christ who talks about the glories of heaven also describes the horrors of hell.**

---

If a person sees a house on fire and does everything he can to rescue the occupants, he is heralded as a hero. And that's the way it should be. Why is it, then, that a Christian who accepts what God says in the Bible about hell and tries to warn people is ridiculed as an alarmist?

---

At Calvary's cross, we stand at the crossroads to heaven or hell.

---

### **What Kind Of Instrument Are You?**

The love of Christ compels us. —2 Corinthians 5:14

Two men were being considered for the pastorate of a certain church. Both preached on the subject of hell. One preached in a cold and threatening way, the other in a compassionate and caring way. The congregation unanimously called the latter as their pastor. Their reason was that the first man left the impression that he didn't mind if people went to hell, but the second preached as one who was deeply grieved that anyone should miss the love and forgiveness of God.

In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul wrote about the judgment seat of Christ. This sobering truth gave the apostle a proper sense of urgency as he sought to "persuade men" (v.11). Paul testified, however, that the compelling force in his ministry of reconciliation was not judgment but Christ's love. In verse 20, his words pleading and implore are words of intense longing and love.

Years ago, Andrew Bonar told Robert McCheyne that he had just preached from Psalm 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into hell." McCheyne asked, "Were you able to preach it with tenderness?" The same could be asked of us. How do you and I communicate the gospel of Christ to nonbelievers? God longs to soften our hearts and make us into instruments of reconciliation. By Joanie Yoder

As You have loved me, let me love  
Lost souls in darkness dwelling;

To draw the needy ones to You,  
Lord, give a zeal compelling!  
—Bosch

When we know the love of Christ, we'll have a love for the lost.

---

## Right Spirit

Fear Him who . . . has power to cast into hell. . . . Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. —Luke 12:5,7

I once read some theology on the bumper of a car in front of me. It said, "If you go to hell, don't blame Jesus!" The slogan apparently was an attempt by the driver to do some evangelism. I gave him credit for trying, but I wondered if those who saw that warning felt it was put there in love.

Reverend Newman Smith had a doctrinal dispute with Baptist preacher Robert Hall. So Smith wrote a stinging pamphlet denouncing Hall. Unable to select an appropriate title, he sent the pamphlet to a friend and asked him for a suggestion.

Smith had previously written a tract called "Come To Jesus." After his friend read his bitter tirade against Hall, he sent it back with a brief note. "The title I suggest for your pamphlet is this: 'Go to Hell' by the author of 'Come To Jesus.'"

One of the most disturbing assertions in the Bible is that men and women who reject Jesus will spend eternity separated from God. Even more unsettling, virtually everything we know about hell comes from the lips of Jesus. Yet when Jesus spoke of hell, He did so with accents of love.

When we witness to our neighbors, we should ask ourselves these questions: "Is this what God wants me to say?" and "Is this how He wants me to say it?" - Haddon Robinson

Give me a spirit of love today  
In everything that I do and say;  
I would be loving and kind and true,  
Asking myself what Jesus would do.  
—Hess

Difficult truth should be wrapped in the language of love.

---

## Dying Grace

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me. —Psalm 23:4

Several years ago I read a pamphlet that quoted the dying words of various people who did not profess faith in Jesus Christ. The English atheist Thomas Hobbes said, "I am taking a fearful leap into the dark!" The French infidel Voltaire cried out, "I am abandoned by God and man; I shall go to hell!" Sir Francis Newport wailed in anguish, "Oh, eternity, eternity forever and forever! Oh, the unsufferable pangs of hell!" (Ed: See also - [Last Words From Saints And Sinners](#))

What a sobering contrast to the last words of people who knew and loved Christ as their Lord and Savior. Dwight L. Moody said, "This is glorious! Earth recedes; heaven is opening; God is calling me!" Sir David Brewster declared, "I will see Jesus—see Him as He is. I have had the light for many years. Oh, how bright it is! I feel so safe, so satisfied!" And these words from a man being burned at the stake: "Blessed be the time that ever I was born for this day. We shall not lose our lives in this fire," he said to his fellow martyrs, "but only change them for something better."

Child of God, even if physical pain and heartache are a part of our closing days, the heavenly Father will give us dying grace. When we pass through that dark valley, we need not fear. The Great Shepherd will be with us. By Richard DeHaan

Thy rod and staff shall cheer me  
In death's dark vale and shade,  
For Thou wilt then be near me—  
I shall not be afraid. —Ewing

Those who truly fear God need not fear death.

---

**DAISY CHAINS** - I was an adult when I made my first daisy chain. Seated in a meadow with a friend, we crafted delicate necklaces by joining daisies together. It was so absorbing that we momentarily forgot about life's pressing needs. Afterward, however, those



needs were still there, urgent as ever. That experience reminded me of a story I read about a woman who dreamed that she saw a meadow next to a precipice that dropped hundreds of feet to the rocks below. Scores of blind people were walking toward the edge. She tried to warn them, but there were too many. Then she noticed others in the meadow who could see. But instead of warning the crowd, they sat on the grass making daisy chains. There's certainly nothing wrong with harmless pursuits and times of leisure. But are we so absorbed with our own interests that we forget the countless people who are stumbling blindly into hell? Paul understood the urgency of such a situation. His constant focus was Christ. "Him we preach," he wrote, "warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28). What are you absorbed with? Making daisy chains? Or making disciples? – J E Yoder

---

Many years ago in Waterbury, Connecticut, a black evangelist wanted to emphasize the truth that men are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). The overflow crowd at the African Methodist Church one Sunday morning was shocked to see a casket covered with flowers in front of the pulpit. They were even more amazed when the evangelist gave a graphic description of hell and all of its horrors. As he dwelt on the darkness, isolation, pain, and remorse experienced by the soul that is eternally separated from God, **some in the congregation began to weep and tremble**. The preacher said he found it impossible to eulogize the dead person, for he had committed grievous sins that deserved only God's wrath. "The one you will soon view is justly condemned to eternal torment," he said. At the end of his sermon the flowers were removed from the coffin and the audience was asked to walk past the casket, keeping about 10 feet apart. **They were to look once at this horrible sinner and then return to their seats in silence. Each person peered fearfully into the casket, but found it empty. However, a full-length mirror in the bottom reflected his own face as he stared in amazement.** In the closing moments of the service, the solemn and convicted audience was reminded that although sin brings the penalty of death, the gift of God through Christ provides a way of escape.

---

**Jennifer Benson Schuldt** writes "My friend was having a conversation with a man who didn't have much good to say about the Christian faith. My friend knew that if he were to sound too "religious," he would jeopardize any chance to witness. So, in the middle of their discussion, he said, "Hey, Bob, do you know where sinners go?" "That's easy," he replied. "You're going to tell me they go to hell." "No," my friend responded. "They go to church." Bob was speechless. That wasn't what he expected. He wasn't ready to hear from a Christian who realized he wasn't perfect. My friend had a chance to share that Christians understand their sinfulness and their need for continual spiritual restoration. He was able to explain grace—the unmerited favor we have with God despite our sinfulness (Rom. 5:8-9; Eph. 2:8-9)

---

**Lecture on Hell** - On one occasion Col. [Robert G. Ingersoll](#) (See "[Last Words](#)"), the agnostic lecturer of the last century, was announced to give an address on hell. He declared he would prove conclusively that hell was a wild dream of some scheming theologians who invented it to terrify credulous people. As he was launching into his subject, a half-drunken man arose in the audience and exclaimed, "Make it strong, Bob. There's a lot of us poor fellows depending on you. If you are wrong, we are all lost. So be sure you prove it clear and plain." No amount of reasoning can nullify God's sure Word. He has spoken as plainly of a hell for the finally impenitent as of a heaven for those who are saved. Illustrations of Bible Truth by H.A. Ironside,

---

**J I Packer on preaching hell** - To announce the reality of hell is a testing and grueling task. The compassion and fellow-feeling that should mark all Christian communicators require us to do it, not with gloating and contempt, but **with tears**, if not in our eyes, then in our hearts. Any appearance of off-handness in our manner will surely discredit our matter, just because it discredits us as human beings. It is hard to take seriously a message from a messenger who does not appear to take it seriously himself, or at any rate not to feel about it as a good man should. R. W. Dale once said that D. L. Moody had a right to preach about hell because he so clearly did so from a weeping heart.

---

**Alistair Cooke**...The time was the 19th of May 1780. The place was Hartford, Connecticut. The day has gone down in New England history as a terrible foretaste of Judgment Day. For at noon the skies turned from blue to grey and by mid-afternoon had blackened over so densely that, in that religious age, men fell on their knees and begged a final blessing before the end came. The Connecticut House of Representatives was in session. And as some of the men fell down and others clamored for an immediate adjournment, the speaker of the House, one Colonel Davenport, came to his feet. He silenced them and said these words: "The day of judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish therefore that candles may be brought."

---

**C S Lewis** - There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than this (hell) if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture and, especially, of our Lord's own words; it has always been held by Christendom; and has the support of reason.

---

**J I Packer** - Wisdom directs us to admit that there is no biblical alternative to the biblical doctrine of eternal punishment.

---

**John Thomas** - A hard look at this doctrine should first change our view of sin. Most believers do not take sin as seriously as God does.

---

**Billy Graham** - As hell was becoming for many no more than a swear word, sin was also an accepted way of life. . . . If people can ignore what the Bible calls sin, then they can quite logically discount what it says about the reality of hell.

---

**Vance Havner** - Long ago a man said to me, "I don't like sermons on hell. Tell me more about the meek and lowly Jesus." It is the meek and lowly Jesus who gave us most of our information about hell. He took the last verse of Isaiah and the Valley of Hinnom and compounded them into the most fearful picture of future punishment to be found in the Bible.

---

Time/CNN Polling Data from a telephone poll of 1,018 American adults, conducted by Time/CNN by Yankelovich Partners, Inc., asked these questions:

Do you believe in hell, where people are punished forever after they die?

Yes: 63%

No: 30%

Do people get into heaven based mostly on the good things they do or on their faith of God, or both (asked of 809 who believe in heaven):

Good things they do: 6%

Faith in God: 34%

Both: 57%

Immediately after death, which of the following do you think will happen to you? (asked of 809 who believe in heaven):

Go directly to heaven: 61%

Go to purgatory: 15%

Go to hell: 1%

Be reincarnated: 5%

End of existence: 4%

---

### **J C Ryle - False Doctrine**

A flood of false doctrine has lately broken in upon us. Men are beginning to tell us "that God is too merciful to punish souls for ever...that all mankind, however wicked and ungodly...will sooner or later be saved." We are to embrace what is called "kinder theology," and treat hell as a pagan fable...This question lies at the very foundation of the whole Gospel. The moral attributes of God, His justice, His holiness, His purity, are all involved in it. The Scripture has spoken plainly and fully on the subject of hell... If words mean anything, there is such a place as hell. If texts are to be interpreted fairly, there are those who will be cast into it...The same Bible which teaches that God in mercy and compassion sent Christ to die for sinners, does also teach that God hates sin, and must from His very nature punish all who cleave to sin or refuse the salvation He has provided.

God knows that I never speak of hell without pain and sorrow. I would gladly offer the salvation of the Gospel to the very chief of sinners. I would willingly say to the vilest and most profligate of mankind on his deathbed, "Repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be save." But God forbid that I should ever keep back from mortal man that scripture reveals a hell as well as heaven...that men may be lost as well as saved.

---

**Tozer** wrote, "Death fixes the status of the man who loved his sins and he is sent to the place of the rejected where there is for him no further hope. That is hell, and it may be well we know so little about it. What we do know is sufficiently terrifying."

---

**C. S. Lewis** - The safest road to hell is the gradual one - the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.

---

**C.S. Lewis** was told about a gravestone inscription that read: "Here lies an atheist— all dressed up and no place to go." Lewis quietly replied, "I bet he wishes that were so!"

---

**D L Moody** - O THAT we would wake up to the thought of what it is to be lost! The world has been rocked to sleep by Satan, who is going up and down telling people that it doesn't mean anything. I believe in the old-fashioned heaven and hell. Christ came down to save us from a terrible hell, and any man who is cast down to hell from here must go in the full blaze of the gospel, and over the mangled body of the Son of God. We hear of a man who has lost his health, and we sympathize with him, and we say it is very sad. Our hearts are drawn out to sympathy. Here is another man who has lost his wealth, and we say, "That is very sad." Here is another man who has lost his reputation, his standing among men. "That is sadder still," we say. We know what it is to lose health and wealth and reputation, but what is the loss of all these things compared with the loss of the soul?

---

Aaron Burr, the third Vice President of the United States, was reared in a godly home and admonished to accept Christ by his grandfather Jonathan Edwards. But he refused to listen. Instead, he declared that he wanted nothing to do with God and said he wished the Lord would leave him alone. He achieved a measure of political success in spite of repeated disappointments. But he was also involved in continuous strife. When he was forty-eight years old, he killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. He lived for thirty-two more years, but was unhappy and unproductive. During this sad chapter in his life he declared to a group of friends,

"Sixty years ago I told God that if He would let me alone, I would let Him alone, and God has not bothered about me since."

Aaron Burr got what he wanted. —H. V. Lugt

There is a way to stay out of hell, but no way to get out.

---

**D L Moody - Nearer than he Thought** - I was reading, some time ago, of a young man who had just come out of a saloon, and had mounted his horse. As a certain deacon passed on his way to church, he followed and said: "Deacon, can you tell me how far it is to hell?" The deacon's heart was pained to think that a young man like that should talk so lightly; but he passed on and said nothing. When he came round the corner to the church, he found that the horse had thrown that young man, and he was dead. You, too, may be nearer the judgment than you think.

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - A man on an ocean liner was leaning over the ship's rail, tossing something in the air and catching it. An onlooker asked, "What are you tossing?" "A diamond of great value," the man said. "It is all that I have in this world." "Aren't you afraid of losing it, tossing it over the water like that?" "No, I've been doing it for the past half hour, and I've caught it every time," the man casually replied. "But there might come a last time," remarked the onlooker. The man laughed and tossed it again—but this time he missed. For a moment he stood aghast. Then he cried out, "Lost! Lost! Lost!" You say, "That story is not true." But, it is true of many people! The ocean is eternity. They are on the vessel of life. That diamond is their soul. If they do not know Christ as their Savior, they are taking great risk that every day will be their last on this earth. If they should die without Him, they would be eternally lost. How can people be so careless about their eternal destiny? One answer is that they get so caught up with the good things of this life that they neglect thinking about the life to come. The great deceiver, Satan, gets them focused on the here and now. Every once in a while—when a friend dies or when a major catastrophe claims many lives—they think briefly about death. But they figure, "I'm a basically good person. God is loving; He wouldn't condemn a decent person like me." And, they put it out of their minds and get on with pursuing the good life.

---

**ILLUSTRATION** A business was opening a new store, and a friend of the owner sent flowers for the occasion. The flowers arrived at the new business site, and the owner read the card, inscribed "Rest in Peace." The angry owner called the florist to complain. After he told the florist of the obvious mistake and how angry he was, the florist said, "Sir, I'm really sorry for the mistake, but rather than getting angry, you should imagine this: Somewhere there is a funeral taking place today, and they have flowers with a note that reads, "Congratulations on your new location."

---

**Deuteronomy 32:35 AWAKENED BY VISIONS OF HELL** - America's greatest theologian is often identified as Jonathan Edwards, a New England pastor of the 1700s. Edwards was brilliant. At age six he studied Latin. He entered Yale when not quite thirteen and graduated when barely fifteen. He was ordained at age nineteen, taught at Yale by twenty, and later became president of Princeton. Harvard granted him both a bachelor's and a master's degree on the same day. But he is best known for **Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God** ([watch this video re-enactment](#) or listen to [Max Maclean's version! Woe!](#))—the most famous sermon in American history.

He preached it on Sunday, July 8, 1741, while ministering in tiny Enfield, Connecticut. A group of women had spent the previous night praying for revival. When Edwards rose to speak, he quietly announced that his text was Deuteronomy 32:35, "**their foot shall slide in due time.**" This "[hellfire and brimstone](#)" approach was somewhat a departure for Edwards. Of his one thousand written sermons, less than a dozen are of this type. Edwards neither gestured nor raised his voice. He spoke softly and simply, warning the

unconverted that they were dangling over hell like a spider over the fire. O sinner! consider the fearful danger. The unconverted are now walking over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that it will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen.

Edwards' voice was suddenly lost amid cries and commotion from the crowd. He paused, appealing for calm. Then he concluded: Let everyone that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom. Strong men held to pews and posts, feeling they were sliding into hell. Others shook uncontrollably and rolled on the floor. Throughout the night cries of men and women were heard throughout the village, begging God to save them. Five hundred were converted that evening, sparking a revival that swept thousands into the kingdom. The [Great Awakening](#) had come. (Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, and Quotes. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers

---

A church was looking for a pastor, so they invited several candidates to come and preach for them. One minister spoke on the text, "The wicked shall be turned into hell." The head elder was not in favor of him. A few weeks later, another preacher came and used the same Scripture for his sermon. This time the head elder said, "He's good! Let's call him." The other board members were surprised, and one of them asked, "Why did you like him? He used the same text as the other minister." "True," replied the chairman, "but when the second man emphasized that the lost will be turned into hell, he said it with tears in his eyes and with concern in his voice. The first preacher almost seemed to gloat over it."

Recently I heard about a company that had decided to open their stores on Sunday. Because they were located in an area with many churches, the corporation received scores of condemning letters from angry Christians. Some even said they were glad there was an eternal hell for those who had made this decision. Christian and non-Christian employees were offended and embarrassed. Lack of gentleness had harmed Christ's cause.

---

**LIFTED OUT OF SIN AND HELL** - In the early days of the American frontier, an Indian chief heard the message of the gospel and was gloriously saved. Such an indescribable peace flooded his soul that he couldn't keep from talking about the Lord. Another chief visited him and wanted to know who this Jesus was, what He had done, and where He lived. The convert took some chips of wood, made a small circle on the ground, and put a worm in the center. Then he set the wood on fire. The little creature tried to get out of the ring of flame, vainly seeking a way of escape. The converted Indian suddenly lifted the worm out of the place of ever-increasing danger, saying, "That prison of flame is this world, and I was like that worm. The powers of sin and evil surrounded me, and I was helpless to save myself. Then the Great Chief, the Lord Jesus Christ, came down from heaven right into this circle of death, lifted me out of the fire of sin and hell, and made me His child."

---

Grace is receiving what we do not deserve. Mercy is not receiving what we do deserve. We deserve to go to **hell**, but by His mercy we shall never go there. We do not deserve to go to heaven, but by grace we'll spend eternity there. Grace justifies. Mercy pardons. Grace admits us to heaven. Mercy saves us from **hell**. The death of Christ was enough to pardon us in mercy, but it took the resurrection to effect our justification.

---

**John Flavel** wrote, "Conscience becomes the whip that must lash the sinner's soul in hell, the seat and center of all torments." Flavel's point is that the conscience, fully informed, fully activated, fully aware of sin will release its relentless power to condemn on the sinner, who will be tortured endlessly by guilt.

---

Matthew 10:28 All sorts of fears obsess believers. Although some may be legitimate, most are vague, nameless feelings of apprehension. They rob us of confidence and joy, and keep us from spiritual health and effectiveness. The Bible has the solution to this problem. When we learn the fear of God, we will not be controlled by earthly terrors. A young boy living in Holland when it was occupied by the Nazis during World War II, wrote the following in his journal: "Last week three German officers stopped my dad in the hallway. They held him at gunpoint and forced him to open the steel door leading to the basement. One of them ordered Dad to show the crawl space under the hallways. He said if he didn't tell where the hidden weapons are, he will be shot. Dad usually is not a great hero. He's even afraid of the dentist. But this time he is not afraid at all. One of them cocked his Luger and held it against my Dad's temple. Dad recited the Bible verse that was on his mind, '**And fear not them who kill the body, . . . but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.**' The Germans looked at each other, shrugged their shoulders, and then left. The steel heels of their boots made a clanging noise on the iron stairway." This boy's father feared God more than he did the enemy. Having that kind of attitude will help us put all our fears in perspective. —D. C. Egnor (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

---

We need not fear the darkness of Hell, for we have Christ the light.

---

---

A recent survey by the Barna Research Group found that 76 percent of Americans believe in heaven, and nearly the same number believe in hell. Only five percent said there was no life after death. But while 64 percent believe they will go to heaven after they die, only one half of one percent think they are headed for hell. That seems optimistic! Yet it's in line with our human desire to believe only the best about ourselves.

Matthew 13:36-43 PUNISHMENT FOR DISOBEYING GOSPEL - During the Franco-German War of 1870-71, a homeowner found two unexploded shells near his house. He cleaned them up and put them on display near his fireplace. A few weeks later he showed them to a visitor. His friend, an expert in munitions, had a horrible thought. "What if they're still loaded?" After examining the shells, he ex-claimed, "Get them away from the fire immediately! They're as deadly as the day they were made!" Without realizing it, the homeowner had been living in peril.

Likewise, many people unknowingly live in constant jeopardy of something far worse—a Christ-less eternity in hell. Failing to recognize the consequences of unbelief, they risk sealing their doom at any moment. We cannot exaggerate the danger of rejecting Christ and living in unbelief, for what we do with Him and His offer of salvation determines where we will spend eternity.

The words of our text are among the most chilling found in the Bible. They emphasize the truth of Hebrews 10:31 : that it is "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Our Lord describes hell as a terrible place of outer darkness (Matt. 22:13 ) and eternal hopelessness (Matt. 18:8-9) . —H. G. Bosch (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

When it comes to salvation, he who hesitates may be lost!

---

**Vance Havner** - Jesus said that it is better to enter into life crippled than to go to hell whole. Such radical procedure is seldom preached these days and in a very low key if at all. Consequently, we have the frightful tragedy of those who lose everything rather than give up anything, losing all to keep a part.

---

**C. S. Lewis** in his book, *The Problem of Pain* describes hell

The answer to all those who object to the doctrine of hell is a question. "What would you like for God to do?" To wipe out their past sins and, at all costs, to give them a fresh start, smoothing every difficulty and offering every miraculous help? But He has done so, on Calvary. To forgive them? They refuse to be forgiven. To leave them alone? That is hell. For to be in hell simply means to be utterly separated from God, but in such a way that one is compelled to see him, that one must see him as a thirsty man sees a silvery spring from which he dare not drink. This is hell; to be forced to see the glory of God and have no access to it. The opposite of the peace of God is not the silence of extinction . . . but being compelled to endure that state in which everything is forfeited forever, in which the splendor of the eternal majesty no longer lights and warms us, but consumes us. iii

---

A politician awoke after an operation and found the curtains in his hospital room drawn. "Why are the curtains closed?" he asked the nurse. "Is it night time already?" - "No," the nurse replied, "But there's a fire across the street, and we didn't want you to wake and think the operation was unsuccessful."

---

**Dennis Rainey** - Charles Spurgeon, the famous evangelist and theologian, was teaching young men in seminary how to preach. He told them, "Gentlemen, when you speak of heaven, let your face be all aglow and smiling and lifted up and brilliant and let it be unashamed when you speak of heaven. But when you speak of hell, any old face will do." He was on target. It's too bad we don't have one of the great, old Puritan preachers to come visit our churches more often to present some fiery sermons about hell. Here's what one of them wrote about hell:

There is no way to describe hell. Nothing on earth can compare to it. No living person has any real idea of it. No mad man in the wildest flights of insanity ever beheld its horror. No man in delirium ever pictured a place so utterly terrible as this. No nightmare racing across a fevered mind ever produced a terror to match that of the mildest hell. Let the most gifted writer exhaust his skill in describing the roaring caverns of unending flame and he would not even come close to the nearest edge of hell. Hell was originally created for the devil and his demons, not for...man. Little wonder there is great joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. He is saved, redeemed, rescued. It makes the hearts of heaven glad.

I wonder what would happen if we could visit hell for just 10 seconds? I think it would change our perceptions of life, sin and evil. And I think it might just motivate us to share the good news about Jesus Christ's redeeming work on the cross with anyone who would

listen.

---

**Billy Graham** - It isn't fashionable today to talk about Hell—but the Bible is clear: God created us with a soul or a spirit that will live forever—and when we die, we will continue to exist—either in the place the Bible calls Heaven or in the place it calls Hell.

Hell, the Bible says, is reserved for those who reject God and turn their backs on Him. If you want nothing to do with Him in this life, then you will have nothing to do with Him in the next life.

And let me be as clear as possible: you don't want to go to Hell. The Bible speaks of Hell as a place of "darkness [where] there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30). Hell is a place of absolute loneliness and hopelessness.

But the good news is that God doesn't want you to go there! Jesus paid the price for your sins; He took upon Himself the death and Hell we deserve, through His death on the cross. Trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and thank Him that you will spend all eternity with Him in Heaven.

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - A pastor began his Sunday sermon by saying, "I'd like to make three points today. First, there are millions of people around the world who are going to go to hell. Second, most of us sitting here today don't give a damn about that." After a lengthy pause, he continued, "My third point is that you are more concerned that I, your pastor, said the word 'damn' than you are about the millions going to hell" (Reader's Digest [5/79]).

---

*I deserved hell; Jesus took my hell;  
there is nothing left for me but His heaven*

Commenting on Barabbas, Donald Grey Barnhouse wrote, "He was the only man in the world who could say that Jesus Christ took his physical place. But I can say that Jesus Christ took my spiritual place. For it was I who deserved to die. It was I who deserved that the wrath of God should be poured on me. I deserved the eternal punishment of the lake of fire. He was delivered up for my offenses. He was handed over to judgment because of my sins. Christ was my substitute. He was satisfying the debt of divine justice and holiness. That is why I say that Christianity can be expressed in the three phrases: I deserved hell; Jesus took my hell; there is nothing left for me but His heaven."

---

A little girl was standing outside her Sunday School classroom when the pastor noticed she was holding a big storybook entitled, "Jonah and the Whale." The pastor wanted to have some fun with her so he asked her, "Do you really believe that Jonah was swallowed by a whale?" The little girl frowned and declared, "Of course I do!" The pastor pushed her a bit and said, "You really believe that a man can be swallowed by a big whale, stay inside for three days and then come out and still be alive?" The little girl said, "Absolutely. The story is in the Bible and we studied it in Sunday School today." Then the pastor asked, "Can you prove to me that the story is true?" She thought for a moment and then said, "Well, when I get to Heaven, I'll ask Jonah." The pastor was on a roll and asked, "Well, what if Jonah's not in Heaven?" She then put her hands on her little hips and sternly declared, "Then you can ask him!"

---

Duke of Willington - Godfrey Davis, who wrote a biography about the Duke of Willington, said, "I found an old account ledger that showed how the Duke spent his money. It was a far better clue to what he thought was really important than the reading of his letters or speeches." How we handle money reveals much about the depth of our commitment to Christ. That's why Jesus often talked about money. One-sixth of the gospels, including one out of every three parables, touches on stewardship. Jesus wasn't a fundraiser. He dealt with money matters because money matters. For some of us, though, it matters too much.

How we handle money reveals much about our priorities. That's why Jesus often talked about money. One-sixth of the Gospels' content, including one out of every three parables, touches on stewardship. Jesus wasn't a fundraiser. He dealt with money matters because money matters. For some of us, though, it matters too much.

Jesus warned that we can become slaves to money. We may not think that money means more to us than God does. But Jesus did not say we must serve God more than we serve money. The issue isn't what occupies first place in our life, but whether we serve money at all. Pastor and author George Buttrick said, "Of all the masters the soul can choose, there are at last only two—God and money. All choices, however small, however the alternatives may be disguised, are but variants of this choice."

Does your checkbook show that Jesus is the Master in your life? (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

If we pursue mere earthly gain,

We choose a path that ends in pain;  
But joy and peace are in our soul  
When we pursue a heavenly goal. —D. De Haan

For a quick check on your heart, check out your checkbook.

---

**Spurgeon** - Heaven is rest, perfect rest—but there is no rest in hell; it is labour in the fire, but no ease, no peace, no sleep, no calm, no quiet; everlasting storm; eternal hurricane; unceasing tempest. In the worst disease, there are some respites: spasms of agony, but then pauses of repose. There is no pause in hell's torments. The dreadful music of the eternal miserere has not so much as a single stop in it. It is on, on, on, with crash of battle, and dust and blood, and fire and vapour of smoke. Heaven, too, is a place of joy; there happy fingers sweep celestial chords; there joyous spirits sing hosannahs day without night; but there is no joy in hell; for music there is the groan; for joy there is the pang; for sweet fellowship there is the binding up in bundles; for everything that is blissful there is everything that is dolorous. No, I could not exaggerate, that were impossible; I cannot come up to the doleful facts, therefore there I leave them. Nothing of the joy of heaven can ever come to hell. Heaven is the place of sweet communion with God

---

'There they behold his face,  
And never, never sin;  
There from the rivers of his grace,  
Drink endless pleasures in.'

There is no communion with God in hell. There are prayers, but they are unheard; there are tears, but they are unaccepted; there are cries for pity, but they are all an abomination unto the Lord. God wills not the death of any; he had rather that he should turn unto him and live, but if that grace be refused, then eternal vengeance is his portion.

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - Peter Cartwright, a nineteenth-century circuit-riding Methodist preacher, was an uncompromising man. One Sunday morning when he was to preach, he was told that General Andrew Jackson was in the congregation, and warned not to say anything out of line. When Cartwright stood to preach, he said, "I understand that Andrew Jackson is here. I have been requested to be guarded in my remarks. Andrew Jackson will go to Hell if he doesn't repent." The congregation was shocked and wondered how the General would respond. He was known for being a hot-tempered man. After the service, General Jackson shook hands with Peter Cartwright and said, "Sir, if I had a regiment of men like you, I could whip the world." (Commentary on Malachi)

---

### Quotes from Billy Graham on Hell

The Bible says more about hell than about heaven.

No one spoke more about hell than Jesus did,  
and the hell He came to save men from was not only a hell on earth . . .  
it was something to come.

It is unbelief that shuts the door to heaven and opens it to hell.  
It is unbelief that rejects the Word of God and refuses Christ as Savior.  
It is unbelief that causes men to turn a deaf ear to the Gospel.

The subject of heaven is much easier to accept than the subject of hell.  
And yet the Bible teaches both.  
Billy Graham on Hell

Not one word about hell in the Bible would  
ever make you want to go there.

I am conscious of the fact that the subject  
of hell is not a very pleasant one.  
It is very unpopular, controversial, and misunderstood . . .  
As a minister I must deal with it. I cannot ignore it.

Among those Christians to whom hell means little, Calvary means less.

Will a loving God send a man to hell?  
The answer from Jesus and His teachings of the Bible is, clearly, "Yes!"

He does not send man willingly,  
but man condemns himself to eternal hell because . . .  
he refuses God's way of salvation and the hope of eternal life with Him.

The Bible teaches there is hell for every person  
who willingly and knowingly rejects Christ as Lord and Savior.  
Many passages could be quoted to support that fact.

Hell has been cloaked in folklore and disguised in fiction for so long,  
many people deny the reality of such a place.

Some teach "universalism"—that eventually everybody will be  
saved and the God of love will never send anyone to hell.  
They believe the words "eternal" or "everlasting"  
do not actually mean forever.  
However, the same word which speaks of eternal banishment from God  
is also used for the eternity of heaven.

A seminary professor I once knew told his students,  
"Never preach about hell without tears in your eyes."

---

ILLUSTRATION - In Warren Wierbe's "Meet Yourself in the Psalms," he tells about a frontier town where a horse bolted and ran away with a wagon carrying a little boy. Seeing the child in danger, a young man risked his life to catch the horse and stop the wagon.

The child who was saved grew up to become a lawless man, and one day he stood before a judge to be sentenced for a serious crime. The prisoner recognized the judge as the man who, years before, had saved his life; so he pled for mercy on the basis of that experience. But the words from the bench silenced his plea: "Young man, then I was your savior; today I am your judge, and I must sentence you to be hanged."

One day Jesus Christ will say to rebellious sinners, "During that long day of grace, I was your Savior, and I would have forgiven you. But today I am your judge. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!"

---

### **C H Spurgeon** quotes on hell -

You are hanging over the mouth of hell by a single thread, and that thread is breaking. Only a gasp for breath, only a stopping of the heart for a single moment, and you will be in an eternal world, without God, without hope, with-out forgiveness. Oh, can you face it ?

The hell of hells will be the thought that it is forever. You will look up on the throne of God, and it shall be written, "Forever!" When the damned jingle the burning irons of their torments, they shall say, "Forever!" When they howl, echo cries, "Forever!"

What woe it would be to be only an hour in hell! Oh, how you would wish then that you had sought the Savior! But alas, there is no such thing as an hour in hell. Once lost, you are lost forever! Therefore, seek the Lord now.

Do not begin telling me that there is a metaphorical fire in hell. Who worries about that? If a man were to threaten to give me a metaphorical blow on the head, I should worry very little about it. He would be welcome to give me as many as he pleased. And what do the wicked say? "We do not worry about metaphorical fires." But they are real, sir, yes, as real as yourself.

Some have staggered over the doctrine of eternal punishment, because they could not see how that could be consistent with God's goodness. I have only one question to ask concerning that: Does God reveal it in the Scriptures? Then I believe it, and leave to him the vindication of his own consistency. If we do not see it to be so, it will be nonetheless so because we are blind.

When men talk of a little hell, it is because they think they have only a little sin, and they believe in a little Savior. But when you get a great sense of sin, you want a great Savior, and feel that if you do not have him, you will fall into a great destruction, and suffer a great punishment at the hands of the great God.

As every man who is going to be hung finds fault with the gallows, so do many men find fault with hell because they fear they are in danger of it.

Who can tell the hideous shriek of a lost soul? It cannot reach heaven. But if it could, it might well be dreamed that it would suspend the melodies of angels, might make even God's redeemed weep, if they could hear the wailings of a damned soul.

If hell be a fiction, say so, and honestly play the infidel. But if it be real, and you believe it, wake up. You that believe so, leave no



stone unturned, no means untried by which through the power of the Holy Spirit sinners may be saved.

'Shun all views of future punishment that would make it appear less terrible'

As the Lord liveth, sinner, thou standest on a single plank over the mouth of hell, and that plank is rotten. Thou hangedst over the pit by a solitary rope, and the strands of that rope are breaking.

Absence from Christ is hell; but the presence of Jesus is heaven.

I greatly fear that the denial of the eternity of future punishment is one wave of an incoming sea of infidelity.

I do not know if there is a more dreadful word in the English language than that word 'lost'.

I greatly fear that the denial of the eternity of future punishment is one wave of an incoming sea of infidelity.

In hell there is no hope. They have not even the hope of dying.

It will be hell to a man to have his own voluntary choice confirmed, and made unchangeable.

The wrath of God does not end with death.

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.

None used stronger or more alarming language than our dear Redeemer concerning the future of ungodly men. He knew nothing of that pretended sympathy which will rather let men perish than warn them against perishing. Such tenderness is merely selfishness excusing itself from a distasteful duty.

Some say, "I could not rest comfortably if I believed the orthodox doctrine about the ruin of men."

Most true. But what right have we to rest comfortably?

He who does not believe that God will cast unbelievers into hell will not be sure that he will take believers into heaven.

There are some ministers who never mention anything about hell. I heard of a minister who once said to his congregation, "If you do not love the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be sent to that place which it is not polite to mention." He ought not to have been allowed to preach again, I am sure, for he could not use plain words.

Heaven and hell are not places far away. You may be in heaven before the clock ticks again, it is so near. Oh, that we, instead of trifling about such things because they seem so far away, would solemnly realize them, since they are so very near! This very day, before the sun goes down, some hearer now sitting in this place may see the realities of heaven or hell.

---

**FEODOR DOSTOEVSKI** "Totally without hope one cannot live." To live without hope is to cease to live. Hell is hopelessness. It is no accident that above the entrance to Dante's hell is the inscription: "Leave behind all hope, you who enter here."

---

**Puritan Daily Readings - December 28 - Luke 16:23 - Meditate much on hell. Let us go into hell by contemplation that we may not go into hell by condemnation.** How restless and hopeless, is the condition of the damned! The ancients feign of Endymion, that he got permission from Jupiter always to sleep. What would the damned in hell give for such a license! In their pains is neither intermission, nor mitigation. The serious meditation on hell, would make us fear sin as hell. Sin is hell's fuel! Sin, like Samson's foxes, carries devouring fire in its tail. Meditation on hell will cause rejoicing in a child of God. The saint's fear of hell is like the two Marys' fear: "They departed from the sepulchre with fear and great joy" (Matt. 28:8). A believer may fear to think of the place of torment—but rejoice to think he shall never come into that place. When a man stands upon a high rock, he trembles to look down into the sea, yet he rejoices that he is not there struggling with the waves. A child of God, when he thinks of hell, he rejoices with trembling. A prison is not made for the king's son to be put in. **A great naturalist observes that nothing will so soon quench fire as salt and blood; but I am sure of this—the salt brinish tears of repentance, and the blood of Christ will quench the fire of hell to a believer. Christ Himself has felt the pains of hell for you. The Lamb of God being roasted in the fire of God's wrath—by this burnt offering the Lord is now appeased towards His people. O how may the godly rejoice! "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ"** (Rom. 8:1).

---

It is easier to hear of hell than feel it. If your necessities did not require it, we would not gall your tender ears with truths that seem so harsh and grievous. Hell would not be so full if people were but willing to know their case and to hear and think of it. The reason why so few escape it is because they strive not to enter in at the strait gate of conversion, and go the narrow way of holiness while they have time; and they strive not, because they are not awakened to a lively feeling of the danger they are in.

---

In a [Sermon from Hell](#) - It may be said here is the toughest doctrine of them all-**hell**. One may misunderstand tongues, or the timing of the Rapture and not be harmed. But this truth has eternal consequences attached to it. A belief in a literal hell seems to have fallen on hard times. A poll taken in the United States in 1978 revealed that more than 70% of those interviewed said they believed in hell. However 11 years later, a Newsweek Magazine survey produced a figure of just 58%. A poll conducted in Australia in 1988 indicated that only 39% believed in hell, while in 1989 a Gallup Poll taken in Britain revealed that no more than 24% of those questioned believed in hell. (Blanchard, 1995, 15)

---

**James Mason** said "The reason why so many fall into hell is because so few think of it." (or think so lightly and [trite](#)ly of it!)

---

**Quotes on Hell from Complete Gathered Gold - compiled by John Blanchard (highly recommended resource) -**

The most awful fact in the world is the fact of hell and that some of our dearest relations and friends with whom we have lived, worked and worshipped will spend an eternity of anguish, away from God, eternally unforgiven, eternally doomed. Isaac H. A. Ababio

Hell is truth seen too late. H. G. Adams

He shall have hell as a debt who will not have heaven as a gift. Anon.

'Too late' is written on the gates of hell. Anon.

Each man's sin is the instrument of his punishment, and his iniquity is turned into his torment. Augustine

God will give the rebel what he chooses and what he deserves. Simon Austen

All the roads that lead to hell are one way streets. John Blanchard

At the end of the day, hell is anywhere outside of heaven. John Blanchard

In hell, even the gospel is bad news. John Blanchard

It is never true to say that something 'hurts like hell'. Nothing hurts like hell. John Blanchard

The roads to hell are all downhill. John Blanchard

There are no quiet corners in hell. John Blanchard

Those who demand nothing more than a God of justice get precisely what they ask; the Bible calls it hell. John Blanchard

To believe in heaven but not in hell is to declare that there were times when Jesus was telling the truth and times when he was lying. John Blanchard

Could every damned sinner weep a whole ocean, yet all those oceans together would never extinguish one spark of eternal fire. Thomas Brooks

Eternity of eternity is the hell of hell. Thomas Brooks

God has but one hell, and that is for those to whom sin has been commonly a heaven in this world. Thomas Brooks

The damned in hell may weep their eyes out of their heads, but they can never weep sin out of their souls. Thomas Brooks

The damned shall live as long in hell as God himself shall live in heaven. Thomas Brooks

The greatest and the hottest fires that ever were on earth are but ice in comparison of the fire of hell. Thomas Brooks

The truth is, were there the least real joy in sin, there could be no perfect hell, where men shall most perfectly sin, and be most perfectly tormented with their sin. Thomas Brooks

The wicked have the seeds of hell in their own hearts. John Calvin

Sure I am, that if hell can be disproved in any way that is solid and true, and consistent with God's honour and man's good, there is not a trembling sinner in this land that would hail the demonstration with more joy than I would. Robert L. Dabney

To appreciate justly and fully the gospel of eternal salvation we must believe, the doctrine of eternal damnation. J. L. Dagg

Vain are the dreams of infatuated mortals who suppose that the only punishment to be endured for sin is in the present life. J. L. Dagg

There is many a learned head in hell. John Flavel

If there is no belief in hell the concept of judgement also becomes meaningless; and then all that is left of Christianity is a system of ethics. Geoffrey Gorer

Christ needs take no other revenge on a soul for refusing him ... than to condemn such a one to have its own desire. William Gurnall

Were the fire out as to positive torments, yet a hell would be left in the dismal darkness which the soul would sit under for want of God's presence. William Gurnall

Eternal death is not the cessation of existence, but rather the loss of that life of fellowship with God which alone is worthy of the name. D. Edmond Hiebert

If I am afraid of sin I need not be afraid of hell. Rowland Hill

A man who realizes in any measure the awful force of the words eternal hell won't shout about it, but will speak with all tenderness. A. A. Hodge

Men may hasten to perdition with the name of Jesus on their lips. Friedrich W. Krummacher

Would you know what makes heaven heaven? It is communion with God. And would you know what makes hell hell? It is to be forsaken of God. R. B. Kuiper

Men are not in hell because God is angry with them: they are in wrath and darkness because they have done to the light, which infinitely flows forth from God, as that man does to the light who puts out his own eyes. William Law

Exit is not a word found in the vocabulary of hell. Robert G. Lee

I willingly believe that the damned are, in one sense, successful, rebels to the end; that the doors of hell are locked on the inside. C. S. Lewis

The safest road to hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without sign posts. C. S. Lewis

There are no personal relationships in hell. C. S. Lewis

Let not anyone who thinks that fear of hell should be put out of the mind of unregenerate men ever suppose that he has the slightest understanding of what Jesus came into the world to say and do. J. Gresham Machen

When the world dissolves, all places will be hell that are not heaven. Christopher Marlowe

The reason why so many fall into hell is because so few think of it. John Mason

They that will not feel the punishment the threatening shall feel the threatening in the punishment. John Mason

Hell is full of God's glory, as well as heaven, and the sinner shall show it forth in his perdition no less truly than the saint in his salvation. Thomas V. Moore

Sin is but hell in embryo; hell is but sin in fulfilment. Thomas V. Moore

If you are still unconverted, thank God that you are still not in hell. Andrew Murray

The lost will eternally suffer in the satisfaction of justice, but they will never satisfy it. John Murray

You will be a believer some day. If you never believe on earth, you will believe in hell. Brownlow North

An endless hell can no more be removed from the New Testament than an endless heaven can. J. I. Packer

Those who regard the whole idea of hell as completely repulsive betray the fact that they think that their moral sense is more acute than that of Jesus. Edgar Powell

The second death is the continuance of spiritual death in another and timeless existence. E. G. Robinson

As surely as God is eternal, so surely is heaven an endless day without night and hell an endless night without

day. J. C. Ryle

Hell itself would be endurable if after millions of ages there was a hope of freedom and of heaven. But universal salvation will find no foothold in Scripture. J. C. Ryle

Once let the old doctrine about hell be overthrown and the whole system of Christianity is unsettled, unscrewed, unpinned and thrown into disorder. J. C. Ryle

The darkness endured by our blessed Surety on the cross was only for three hours. The chains of darkness which shall bind all who reject his atonement and die in sin shall be for evermore. J. C. Ryle

The saddest road to hell is that which runs under the pulpit, past the Bible and through the midst of warnings and invitations. J. C. Ryle

There are two ways of going to hell; one is to walk into it with your eyes open ... the other is to go down by the steps of little sins. J. C. Ryle

Suffering that is penal can never come to an end, because guilt is the reason for its infliction, and guilt once incurred never ceases to be ... One sin makes guilt, and guilt makes hell. W. G. T. Shedd

The existing demoralization in society and politics ... is due, mainly, to a disbelief of the doctrine of endless punishment. W. G. T. Shedd

Hell is the highest reward that the devil can offer you for being a servant of his. Billy Sunday

If there is no hell, a good many preachers are obtaining money under false pretences! Billy Sunday

Hell is an abiding place, but no resting place. Thomas Watson

Hell is full of hard hearts; there is not one soft heart there. Thomas Watson

The breath of the Lord kindles the infernal lake, and where shall we have engines or buckets to quench that fire? Thomas Watson

The wicked in hell shall be always dying but never dead. Thomas Watson

There are no agnostics in hell. Geoffrey B. Wilson

Hell is the penitentiary of the moral universe. J. S. Wright

## RESOURCES RELATED TO THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

For more on the subject of Hell below is a list of recommended resources:

- [Questions about Heaven, Hell, and Eternity](#) - over 100 separate specific questions related to Hell!
- [Short Study on the Attribute of God - His Wrath](#) (See also God's [Justice](#), [Love](#), [Mercy](#), [Goodness](#), [Holiness](#))
- [The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment](#) - Harry Buis
- [Teaching in the New Testament](#) - Harry Buis
- [A Forgotten Doctrine: The Wrath of God](#) - Ray Pritchard
- [What is hadephobia? \(Fear of Hell\)?](#)
- [Is there an afterlife?](#)
- [How is physical death related to spiritual death?](#)
- [Denials and Their Answers](#) - Rebuttal of Universalism and Annihilationism - Harry Buis
- [Denial by the Cults](#) - Exposes false their false teaching regarding eternal punishment - Harry Buis
- [One Minute After You Die - A Preview of Your final destination](#) - Erwin Lutzer (or borrow his book [One Minute After Your Die](#))
- [Hell: Never, Forever, or Just for Awhile](#) - Richard Mayhue - well-done journal article 162 pages
- [A Kinder, Gentler Theology Of Hell?](#) - Larry Pettegrew -17 pp, conservative, evangelical (doctrine of annihilationism)
- [Hell What the Bible says About It](#) - John Rice - 36 page booklet
- [Jesus' View of Eternal Punishment](#) - Robert Thomas - well done 31 page article from a conservative, evangelical viewpoint
- [Hell in W G T Shedd's Dogmatic Theology](#) - one of the best on the subject of Hell
- [Dorothy Sayers on Why Hell Is Non-Negotiable](#)
- [Is universalism / universal salvation biblical?](#)

- [What is Conditional Immortality?](#)
- [Is annihilationism biblical?](#)
- [Over 4000 mentions of Hell in older writings mainly from Puritans](#)
- [Explaining Hell to Our Children - John Piper](#)
- [The Doctrine of Hell - David Platt \(audio\)](#)
- Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology - [Hell](#), [Descent into Hell \(Hades\)](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Hell](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Hell](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Hell](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Hell](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Hell](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Hell](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Hell Hell Hell \(2\)](#)
- American Church Dictionary [Descent into hell Hell](#)
- American Tract Society [Hell](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Hell](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Hell Hell](#)
- CARM Theological Dictionary [Hell](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Hell](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Hell](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Hell](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Hell](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Hell](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Hell Punishments, Nature Of Hell](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Hell Fire](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Hell](#)
- [What is the difference between Sheol, Hades, Hell, the lake of fire, Paradise, and Abraham's bosom?](#)
- [Did Jesus go to hell between His death and resurrection?](#)
- [What are the gates of hell?](#)
- [Where did Old Testament believers/saints go when they died?](#)
- [Did God create hell?](#)
- [Where was Jesus for the three days between His death and resurrection?](#)
- [What is Tartarus?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about soul sleep?](#)
- [What is Abraham's bosom?](#)
- [What are the keys of death \(Revelation 1:18\)?](#)
- [Questions about Heaven, Hell, and Eternity](#) - a long list of questions
- [Where is hell? What is the location of hell?](#)
- [Does hell exist?](#)
- [Is hell literally a place of fire and brimstone?](#)
- [How is eternity in hell a fair punishment for sin?](#)
- [How is an eternity in hell a just punishment for only a human lifetime of sin?](#)
- [Who will go to hell?](#)
- [Why does God send people to hell?](#)
- [How can a loving God send someone to hell?](#)
- [What does it mean that hell is eternal separation from God?](#)
- [Why is the idea of eternal damnation so repulsive to many people?](#)
- [Does heaven exist?](#)
- [What does hell look like? How hot is hell?](#)
- [Is hell real? Is hell eternal?](#)
- [How can I not go to hell?](#)
- [Is Satan the master of hell? Do Satan and his demons punish people in hell?](#)
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur

- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#)- John MacArthur
- [A Horrible Place Called Hell](#) review of the characteristics of Hell - Alan Carr
- [Luke 16:19-31 An Interview In Hell](#) - Alan Carr
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Glimpse Of A Place Called Hell](#) - Alan Carr
- [Luke 16:19-31 Can God Really Save Your Loved Ones?](#) - Alan Carr
- [Luke 16:19-31 From Here To Eternity](#) - Alan Carr
- [Luke 16:19-31 The Truth About Hell](#) - Alan Carr

## DEFINITION OF TERMS USED FOR ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

1. [Sheol](#)
2. [Hades](#)
3. [Gehenna](#)
4. [Tartarus](#)
5. [Abyss](#)
6. [Eternal](#)

Keep in mind that if you are using the KJV, you may encounter some confusion because the KJV uses the term "**Hell**" both for **Hades**, which is the intermediate state of the unrighteous dead, and **Gehenna**, which is the permanent, final abode of the unrighteous dead. For example, in Mt 11:23 the NAS, ESV and NET versions all transliterate the Greek word Hades. The NLT paraphrases Hades as "the place of the dead." (Mt 11:23NLT, Lk 10:15NLT, Lk 16:23NLT, Ro 10:7NLT).

### 1. SHEOL

**Sheol** ([See related discussion](#)) is the Old Testament Hebrew word for the place of the dead, the underworld, the place to which all men went at the time of death. It was known as the grave, death, the depths, the nether world, the underworld. Sheol is always transliterated in the NAS (65 times) and usually also in the ESV (63/65x). The KJV translates **Sheol** as the grave (31x), hell (31x) and pit (3x).

#### Related Resource:

- [Teaching in the Old Testament](#) - Harry Buis

**Sheol** was used to refer to the abode of the righteous and unrighteous dead. In the OT first use of Sheol, the righteous patriarch Jacob, upon learning that Joseph had probably been killed, declared "Surely I will go down to **Sheol** in mourning for my son." (Ge 37:35, cf similar uses Ge 42:38, 44:29, 44:31) In a Messianic Psalm David writes "You will not abandon my soul to **Sheol**; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay." (Ps 16:10) In Ps 30:3 David writes "O LORD, You have brought up my soul from **Sheol**; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit." Godly King Hezekiah declared "In the middle of my life I am to enter the gates of **Sheol**; I am to be deprived of the rest of my years." (Isaiah 38:10)

On the other hand, David uses **Sheol** to refer to the fate of the wicked writing that "The wicked will return to **Sheol**, even all the nations who forget God." (Ps 9:17). In the rebellion of Korah, not only the rebels led by Korah but "all that belonged to them went down alive to **Sheol**; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly." (Nu 16:33, cf Nu 16:30) Job 24:19 says "Drought and heat consume the snow waters, So does **Sheol** those who have sinned."

**Sheol** was envisioned as a dark region within the earth, the entrance to which was the grave with its steep slopes (cf. Ps 88:4-6). In Job 14:13-22, Job expressed the common view of life beyond death, namely, that in **Sheol** there is no contact with the living, only separation, but in **Sheol** there is a conscious awareness of the dreary existence. In Jonah 2:3 Jonah pictures himself in the belly of **Sheol**, its very center - in other words he is as good as dead. In Ps 22:6 **Sheol**, the underworld, the place of the dead, is personified as David's enemy. **Abaddon** is used as a name for **Sheol** in Ps 88:11. In Ps 143:3 "dark places" is a synonym for Sheol, pictured as a dark place located deep in the ground. In the ancient Israelite view he joined his deceased ancestors in Sheol. In Isaiah 7:11, the phrase "Make it as deep as Sheol or make it high upwards" words suggest that Ahaz can feel free to go beyond the bounds of ordinary human experience. The phrase "path of life" stands in contrast to death/Sheol in Pr 2:18-19; 5:5-6; 15:24. Sheol, the place

of death, is sometimes depicted as a raging sea (see Ps 18:4, 15-16). Sheol is the land of the dead localized in Hebrew thought in the earth's core or the grave. "Sheol" in the Bible can be used four different ways: the grave, the realm of the departed [wicked] spirits or Hell, death in general, or a place of extreme danger (one that will lead to the grave if God does not intervene). In Hebrew thought, Sheol is the proper name of the subterranean world which was regarded as the land of the dead. In ancient Canaanite thought Death was a powerful god whose appetite was never satisfied. In the OT Sheol/Death, though not deified, is personified as greedy and as having a voracious appetite. See Pr 30:15-16; Isa 5:14. According to the OT, those who descend into the realm of death/Sheol are cut off from God's mighty deeds and from the worshiping covenant community that experiences divine intervention (Ps 30:9; 88:10-12; Isa 38:18). The Hebrew term תַּחְטּוֹת (shakhat, "pit" = not same Hebrew word used in Pr 1:12) is often used as a title for Sheol (see Ps 16:10, 49:9 - decay = pit; Ps 55:24; 103:4 = pit of destruction, where our physical body decays).

## 2. HADES

**Hades** - ([Click here for the full discussion](#)) In the NT 8 out of 10 uses of **Hades** refer to the intermediate state of the unrighteous dead. It is the temporary abode of the unrighteous dead until they are resurrected and stand before Jesus, the Judge of the Living and the Dead, on the day of their final judgment at the Great White Throne (Rev 20:11-15+).

**Hades** is to be distinguished from **Gehenna** (and its synonyms the Lake of fire and [the Second Death](#), Rev 20:14-15-[note](#)), which is the permanent and final abode of the unrighteous dead. **Hades** is the Greek word which is used in the Septuagint to translate 61 of the 65 uses of **Sheol** in the OT. As noted elsewhere the KJV does not allow one to clearly distinguish Hades from Gehenna as it translates both as "Hell." Most other translations simply leave it untranslated as "hades," so that it might be properly distinguished from hell. **Hades** and **Hell** in the NT are clearly two distinct entities - **Hades** is temporary (existing now as the destination of all the unrighteous dead in the current church age) while Gehenna is permanent and forever. In Revelation 20:14-[note](#) **Hades** ceases to exist as an entity when it is thrown into the **Lake of fire** or **Gehenna**. **Lutzer** adds that while **Hades** is thrown into the Lake of fire and ceases to exist, "there is no doubt that some of the characteristics of **Hades** continue, or more accurately, that the suffering of **Hades** is intensified in **Hell**."

**Hades** is used 10x in 10 verses in the NT (Matt. 11:23; Matt. 16:18; Lk. 10:15; Lk. 16:23; Acts 2:27; Acts 2:31; Rev. 1:18; Rev. 6:8; Rev. 20:13; Rev. 20:14) and 8/10 uses refer to the abode of unrepentant, unrighteous sinners. Peter uses **Hades** in Acts 2:27, 31 quoting Psalm 16:10 where Hades is used in the more general sense of the abode of the dead. Thus the phrase **WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES** expresses Christ's confidence that He would not remain a captive in the realm of death. The other 8 uses of Hades refer to the abode of the unrighteous dead. Today when a person dies without having placed their faith in Christ, they go to **Hades**, which is the term Jesus used in Luke 16:23ff for the destination of the rich man when he died. As described below in the exposition of this place, Hades is clearly not a place of rest but a place of torment. The description of Hades.

**Robert Morey** has an additional note that "During the intertestamental period, the Jewish concept of Sheol had progressed to the stage where it was believed that Sheol had two distinct compartments, or sections. One section was a place of torment to which the wicked went while the other was a place of conscious bliss, often called "Abraham's bosom" or "paradise," to which the righteous were carried by angels. The rabbis even discussed how many angels it took to carry the righteous to Abraham's bosom (Sources: A. Edersheim, *The Life and Time of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1962), Vol. II, pp. 279–281, 791–796. For further sources in rabbinic literature, see: *Midrash: Gen. 68; Ex. 48; Lev. 405; 55:80; Ecc. 197. Bab. Tal.: Ber. 173; Shah. 589; ER 129.*). The rabbinic understanding of Sheol is the basis for Christ's illustration in Luke 16:19–31. While only the rich man was directly said to be "in Hades" (v. 23), the phrase "Abraham's bosom" to which the angels carried Lazarus (vv. 22, 23) must be interpreted as the section of Hades reserved for the righteous. The dialogue between the rich man and Lazarus is an echo of multiple stories in which such dialogues were described. Thus, initially, the first occurrence of Hades in the New Testament refers to a concept of an afterlife which had evolved beyond the Old Testament concept of Sheol and reflected, the progress of understanding which had been accomplished during the period between Malachi and Matthew." ([Borrow a copy of Death and the Afterlife](#))

## 3. GEHENNA

**Gehenna** - As noted above **Gehenna** (always translated "**Hell**" in NAS and ESV) is the final destination of all the wicked, both great and small, and is distinct from **Hades** (always translated "**Hades**" in NAS and ESV but not in the KJV as discussed above and which creates confusion between these two related but distinct entities) the temporary abode of the wicked during the Church Age. The word **gehenna** was already used by the Jews before the time of Christ as described below.

The Greek word **geenna** from which is derived from the Hebrew phrase "the valley of Ben-hinnom." (Joshua 15:8) The Hebrew

word for **valley** is **gay** and the second word **Hinnom** referred to the deep narrow ravine south of Jerusalem. It was in the valley of Hinnom that the Jews carried out human sacrifices. In 2 Chronicles 28:3 we read of King Ahaz who "burned incense in the **valley of Ben-hinnom** and burned his sons in fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel. In 2 Chr 33:6 King Manasseh "made his sons pass **through the fire in the valley of Ben-hinnom**; and he practiced witchcraft, used divination, practiced sorcery and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger." God says through Jeremiah "They have built the **high places of Topheth** (Hebrew most probably means place of burning - see also [Wikipedia article on Tophet](#)), which is in the **valley of the son of Hinnom**, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind". (Jeremiah 7:31) In 2 Kings 22:8 "the book of the law (THAT HAD BEEN LOST!) in the house of the LORD," was found and when it was read to King Josiah "he tore his clothes" (2 Ki 22:11). Then in 2 Kings 23 the revived King Josiah began a series of radical reforms to root out the false religion that had crept into and corrupted the worship of Israel. One of his acts is described in 2 Kings 23:10 where "He also defiled Topheth, which is in the **valley** of the son of **Hinnom**, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire for Molech." (See also Jer 7:19:5-6, 32:35; Ezekiel 16:20; 23:37; clearly prohibited by God in Lev 18:21, 20:2-5).

**Gehenna** is literally the **valley of Hinnom**, the valley where the filth and dead animals of Jerusalem were cast out and burned, the site of trash fires and perpetually burning rubbish, all of this a fit symbol of the future home of all unrepentant, unregenerate wicked. It was a foul, forbidding place where the fire, smoke, and stench never ceased. Gehenna is the "resting place" for unrepentant sinners where they will find "no rest day or night" (Rev 14:11). In addition the garbage of the city bred worms and may explain why Christ referred to gehenna as the place where "**their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched**" (Mark 9:44, 46, 48).

**Robert Morey** - **Gehenna** as a place of final punishment was a clear rabbinic teaching before Christ was ever born. The Midrash, the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, and apocryphal literature refer to Gehenna hundreds of times. The Midrash alone refers to Gehenna over seventy-five times. The vivid imagery and striking phraseology found in the intertestamental literature, which described Gehenna as the ultimate place of eternal torment for the wicked, was clearly carried over into the New Testament itself by the teaching of Christ and the apostles. ([Borrow a copy of Death and the Afterlife](#))

**Erwin Lutzer** adds "For years, liberal scholars taught (and some sentimentalists still do) that Christ, who stressed the love of God, could never be party to the doctrine of hell. Yet significantly, of the twelve times the word **gehenna** is used in the New Testament, eleven times it came from the mouth of our Lord. Indeed, He spoke more about hell than about heaven." (Borrow [One Minute After You Die](#))

**Gilbrant** - Especially noteworthy is that **aiōnios** refers to the eternal condition of both the just and the unjust. It speaks of the believers who will not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). But, on not less than seven occasions it denotes the eternal fate and condition of the unjust: eternal damnation and torment (Matthew 18:8; 25:41,46; Mark 3:29; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Hebrews 6:2; Jude 7). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Geenna** is essentially synonymous with the **lake of fire**, a God's "cosmic garbage dump," mentioned in the Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20:14-15-[see note](#). Into this place both **death** and **Hades** are cast at the final judgment of all mankind, the Great White Throne judgement. **Gehenna** is the place that was prepared for "**the devil and his angels**" (Mt 25:41), but which will also become the final abode of the unrighteous.

**Gotquestions** adds this note on **Gehenna**:

The word gehenna is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew ge-hinnom, meaning "Valley of [the sons of] Hinnom." This valley south of Jerusalem was where some of the ancient Israelites "passed children through the fire" (sacrificed their children) to the Canaanite god Molech (2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31; 19:2-6). The place is called "Tophet" in Isaiah 30:33. In later years, Gehenna continued to be an unclean place used for burning trash from the city of Jerusalem. Jesus used Gehenna as an illustration of hell. God so despised the false god Molech that He explicitly forbade the Israelites from having anything to do with him in Leviticus 18:21. He even warned them of the impending judgment He would send their way if the Jews didn't keep their attention and worship directed toward Him. In another prophetic warning, God re-named the Valley of Hinnom as the Valley of Slaughter (Jeremiah 19). But the Israelites didn't listen, and evil kings of Judah such as Ahaz used the Valley of Hinnom for their demonic practices (2 Chronicles 28:3). To punish Judah, God brought Babylon against them, and that pagan nation carried out His judgment against Judah's idolatry and rebellion. It wasn't until after 70 years of exile that the Jews were allowed back into Israel to rebuild. Upon their return the Valley of Slaughter was re-purposed from a place of infanticide to an ever-burning rubbish heap (2 Kings 23:10). Child sacrifice and other forms of idol-worship ceased in Israel. Gehenna became a place where corpses of criminals, dead animals, and all manners of refuse were thrown to be destroyed. The Gehenna Valley was thus a place of burning sewage, burning flesh, and garbage. Maggots and worms crawled through



the waste, and the smoke smelled strong and sickening (Isaiah 30:33). It was a place utterly filthy, disgusting and repulsive to the nose and eyes. Gehenna presented such a vivid image that Christ used it as a symbolic depiction of hell: a place of eternal torment and constant uncleanness, where the fires never ceased burning and the worms never stopped crawling (Matthew 10:28; Mark 9:47–48).

Because of Jesus' symbolic use of **Gehenna**, the word **gehenna** is sometimes used as a synonym for **hell**. In fact, that's how the Greek word is translated in Mark 9:47: "**hell**." The occupants of the **lake of fire** or **gehenna** or **hell** are separated from God for all of eternity. ([What is Gehenna?](#))

**Gehenna** is used 12x in the NT and every use in the NAS or ESV is translated **Hell**. It is distinct from Hades, but that distinction is lost in the KJV translation which renders Hades also as "Hell."

Matt. 5:22; Matt. 5:29; Matt. 5:30; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 18:9; Matt. 23:15; Matt. 23:33; Mk. 9:43; Mk. 9:45; Mk. 9:47; Lk. 12:5; Jas. 3:6

Do not miss the fact that 11 of the 12 uses are spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is to judge **the living and the dead** (Acts 10:42, 2 Ti 4:1, 1 Pe 4:5)!

**Robert Morey** sums up the teaching of Christ concerning Gehenna:

First, Gehenna is the place of judgment (Matt. 23:33). He even used the rabbinic expression, "the judgment of Gehenna" (Bab. Tal. ER126).

Second, Gehenna is always placed at the end of the world after the resurrection (Matt. 5:22; 23:33). This was expounded by John in Rev. 20:1–15. This was also the rabbinic position (Mid. Gen. 159).

Third, Gehenna is the place where the body as well as the soul is punished (Matt. 5:22; 10:28; Mark 9:43-48). The rabbis saw that the resurrection of the wicked was necessary in order for them to receive their full punishment in the body (Mid. Gen. 159; 211n4).

Fourth, Gehenna was the place of conscious torment. When Christ used the phrases "unquenchable fire" and "never-dying worms" (Mark 9:47, 48, author's paraphrase), He was utilizing biblical (Isa. 66:24), apocryphal (Judith 16:17), and talmudic (Mid. Gen. 214) images which all meant conscious suffering. ([Borrow a copy of Death and the Afterlife](#))

#### Related Resources on Gehenna:

- [Gehenna - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Hades \(Sheol\) - to be differentiated from Gehenna](#) (See also [Sheol](#))
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Gehenna](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Gehenna](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Gehenna](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Gehenna](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Gehenna Gehenna \(2\)](#)

## 4. TARTARUS

**Tartarus** - The noun does not appear in the Bible but the verb **tartaroo** derived from **Tartarus** does appear in 2 Pe 2:4-[note](#)

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but **cast them into hell** and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

**Cast...into hell** is one word in the Greek, the verb **tartaroo** ([5020](#)), which is from **Tártaros** which describes the subterranean dark abyss of mythology where demigods were punished. Greek mythology taught that **Tártaros** was a place lower than **Hades** reserved for the most wicked of human beings, gods, and demons where divine punishment was meted out. Jewish apocalyptic literature described **Tártaros** as the place where fallen angels were sent as the lowest, darkest, gloomiest hell, the deepest pit and the most terrible place of torture and suffering. This term came later to refer to the region of the lost dead. It is found only once in the NT in its verbal form in this verse.

**Tartarus** is mentioned in the pseudepigraphal book of Enoch as the place where fallen angels are confined. It is found only in its verbal form in 2 Pet. 2:4 meaning to cast into or consign to Tartarus. The

use of the [aorist tense](#) pictures the "casting" as a completed past event. Peter seems to regard **Tártaros** like [Hades](#) is only a temporary place of detention for these wicked angels who in the day of judgment will be thrown "into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the **devil** and **his angels**." (Mt 25:41, cf Rev 20:2,3,10) Although it is difficult to state with absolute certainty, The sinning angels are being held in this netherworld dungeon until the day of final judgment. Peter's usage of this term by no means suggests that Peter believed in the mythological stories about Tartarus but only borrowed the word from their vocabulary.

**NET Note** - "'casting them into [Tartarus \(Wikipedia\)](#)" or "holding them captive in Tartarus." This verb, tartaroō, occurs only here in the NT, but its meaning is clearly established in both Hellenistic and Jewish literature. "**Tartarus** [was] thought of by the Greeks as a subterranean place lower than Hades where divine punishment was meted out, and so regarded in Israelite apocalyptic as well".

## 5. ABYSS

**Abyss** is the Greek word [abussos](#) from **a** = an intensifier + **buthós** = deep) refers to an extremely deep place, a bottomless pit. Transliterated into English ([see English definition](#)). It refers to the abode of the dead (Ro 10:7) and in Luke 8:31, the prison destined for demons. In Rev. 9:1, 2; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3, **abussos** is a prison in which evil powers are confined and out of which they can at times be let loose. Note that the abyss does not equate with the lake of fire (Rev. 20:2, 10). While the abyss is the place where Satan regarded will be cast into for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1, 2), his final destination is "the lake of fire and brimstone" (Rev 20:10+). The abyss is the final destiny of the devil and his angels (cf Matt 25:41; 2 Pet 2:4).

**MacArthur** - The abussos (**abyss**), or bottomless pit (Rev. 9:1-2) is a place where some demons are currently imprisoned. Some of these imprisoned spirits will be released for a brief time during the tribulation (Rev. 9:1-11); others, apparently those who indwelt men who then cohabitated with women before the flood (Gen. 6:1-4; cf. Jude 6), are permanently bound (2 Peter 2:4). They will remain in the abyss until they are cast into the lake of fire. (Ibid)

### Related Resource:

- [What is the Abyss?](#)

**Gilbrant** on **abussos** in Classical Greek - The classical understanding of abussos is as an adjective meaning "bottomless, unfathomed, without limits." There is no classical understanding of abussos as a particular place or region (i.e., "the abyss"); this takes place only later (e.g., Diogenes Laertius Lives of Eminent Philosophers 4.5.27 [Third Century A.D.]) (see Jeremias, "Abussos," *Kittel*, 1:9). Outside of the New Testament (and possibly later rabbinic material) it is common as a substantive only in later papyri (Moulton-Milligan). It is likely that abussos assumed the senses found in the Septuagint and New Testament under the influence of the Akkadian word absu (or apsu). Similarity in concept and sound may have prompted the Greek speakers in the Hellenistic period to make the equation. Absu could refer to the Subterranean waters, the ocean or sea, the netherworld, or the abode of demons (Assyrian Dictionary, "apsu"). Absu was also the name of a primordial god (ibid.). All of these senses for abussos are found in the Septuagint or New Testament yet are entirely absent in the earliest extant occurrences of the word in classical Greek (Fifth Century authors such as Herodotus, Aeschylus, and Euripides). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

## 6. ETERNAL

**Eternal** (everlasting) - This is the Greek word [aionios](#) derive from [aion](#) and which means existing at all times, perpetual, pertaining to an unlimited duration of time (Ro 1:20 - God's power, Mt 18:8 - God's place of judgment, Ro 16:26 - God's attribute). It is interesting that the only use of aionios in the Revelation is to describe the **eternal Gospel** (Rev 14:6).

**Aionos** is used 68x in 67v in the NT and is translated in the **NAS** as eternal (66), eternity (1), forever (1).

Matt. 18:8; Matt. 19:16; Matt. 19:29; Matt. 25:41; Matt. 25:46; Mk. 3:29; Mk. 10:17; Mk. 10:30; Mk. 16:8; Lk. 10:25; Lk. 16:9; Lk. 18:18; Lk. 18:30; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:14; Jn. 4:36; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:54; Jn. 6:68; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 12:50; Jn. 17:2; Jn. 17:3; Acts 13:46; Acts 13:48; Rom. 2:7; Rom. 5:21; Rom. 6:22; Rom. 6:23; Rom. 16:25; Rom. 16:26; 2 Co. 4:17; 2 Co. 4:18; 2 Co. 5:1; Gal. 6:8; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2 Thess. 2:16; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Tim. 6:16; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:10; Tit.

1:2; Tit. 3:7; Phlm. 1:15; Heb. 5:9; Heb. 6:2; Heb. 9:12; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 9:15; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:11; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:25; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 5:11; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:20; Jude 1:7; Jude 1:21; Rev. 14:6

Although Jesus does not use the word **"eternal"** in the description of this **great chasm** in Luke 16:23 [below](#), the word **fixed** clearly points to the fact that this is a permanent state, indeed a state that will endure eternally. Sadly, there are many voices today (even some in the evangelical church) who say that eternity does not mean eternity! They interpret the Bible literally where it suits them, but then attempt to distort clear literal teaching when it does not suit them or even worse offends them!

The first six uses of [aionios](#) in the Gospel of Matthew are from the lips of our Lord Jesus, so it behooves us to carefully observe what He said. And it is no surprise that these uses balance His teaching on eternal punishment with His teaching on eternal life. This should not surprise us, because it was for this purpose that He came, John writing "'For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.'" (Jn 3:17). He came primarily to save and not to destroy! But if His gracious offer of salvation is rejected, the rejecting one in effect chooses the only alternative, eternal punishment. Matthew 25:46 is especially important to observe as here we see Jesus clearly (literally) present the two choices and both choices are clearly modified by the word **eternal**. Simple reasoning leads us to conclude that we can hardly expect **eternal life** to be everlasting if the [antithesis](#), **eternal death** or punishment, is not also everlasting! To disbelieve this clear teaching of Jesus is to refuse to accept His declaration that eternal means eternal not temporal or conditional!

**MacArthur** adds that if you say **hell** is not **eternal** "you have just done it with Heaven, because the same word is used to describe that state! If there is not an everlasting hell, then there is not an everlasting Heaven! The same word **eternal** ([aionios](#)) is used to describe God; and so if there is not an everlasting hell, then there is not an everlasting Heaven, nor is there an everlasting God! It is clear that God is eternal; and, therefore, that Heaven is eternal, and so is hell. This is what is on the heart of the Lord Jesus when He talks to the Pharisees (in Luke 16:19-31)."

#### The first six uses of [aionios](#) in the Gospel of Matthew:

Matthew 18:8 "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the **eternal** ([aionios](#)) fire.

Matthew 19:16 And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain **eternal** ([aionios](#)) life?"

Matthew 19:29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit **eternal** ([aionios](#)) life.

Matthew 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the **eternal** ([aionios](#)) fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

Matthew 25:46 "These will go away into **eternal** ([aionios](#)) punishment, but the righteous into **eternal** ([aionios](#)) life.."

**Comment:** Daniel 12:2-note has a very similar statement that speaks of two antithetical eternal destinies and the [Septuagint](#) version uses [aionios](#) twice just as in Mt 25:46 - "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life ([Lxx](#) = [zoen aionion](#)), but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt ([Lxx](#) = [aischunen aionion](#))."

In summary, passages such as Mt 25:46 from the lips of our Lord Jesus, make it crystal clear that hell is eternal. Jesus directly refutes those who falsely teach that Hell is not eternal, especially those who hold to some form of [annihilationism](#), including such respected men as John Stott!

It is also notable that most of Jesus' uses of the word **eternal** ([aionios](#)) refer to **eternal life** rather than **eternal death**.

**Eternal life** - This glorious phrase occurs 41 times in the NT as shown below. As you look over those passages, observe that not only Jesus but the writers of the epistles place a strong emphasis on the fact that one who is born again will live forever. **Eternal life** is everlasting and without end. Clearly the Spirit Who inspired the writers (2 Pe 1:21) desired that the saints continually be encouraged by this wonderful truth. **Eternal life** is our great and sure hope, where "[hope](#)" is not the world's version of **hope so** but God's version of **hope sure** -- the assurance that God will do good to us in the future! And as alluded to above, it is clear that our Lord Jesus desires that all men attain to eternal life rather than to eternal death (2 Pe 3:9, 1 Ti 2:4)!

Matt. 19:16; Matt. 19:29; Matt. 25:46; Mk. 10:17; Mk. 10:30; Lk. 10:25; Lk. 18:18; Lk. 18:30; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:14; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:54; Jn. 6:68; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 12:50; Jn. 17:2; Jn. 17:3; Acts 13:46; Acts 13:48; Rom. 2:7; Rom. 5:21; Rom. 6:22; Rom. 6:23; Gal. 6:8; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1

## Harry Buis has a discussion of **eternal**

Because there are so many who deny that the word "eternal" means endless, it will be profitable to make a careful study of the meaning of that word. In the Greek, it is the word *aionios* which in the Bible is rendered eternal or, less frequently, everlasting. This word in turn comes from the word *aion* meaning primarily "the age." The classical Greek writers such as Homer used it in reference to the period of a man's life. However, by Plato *aion* was used of the Eternal Being as compared with Time. Aristotle used the word to describe the ultimate principle of existence. The Hellenistic Jewish translators of the Septuagint used the word in both the older classical sense and in the later Platonic sense. Examples of the older usage are Deuteronomy 15:17, "Then take an awl and push it through his ear lobe into the door, and he will become your servant for ever," and 1 Samuel 27:12, "Achish trusted David and said to himself, "He has become so odious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant forever." The later Platonic sense is found in such passages as Micah 4:5, "For all the peoples walk every one in the name of his god; and we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever." And Daniel 12:3, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

The New Testament divides all of history into the present [aiōn](#) and the [aiōn](#) which is to come. The Greek language contains no other word which better describes the concept of endlessness. [Aionios](#) is used in the New Testament sixty-six times: fifty-one times of the happiness of the righteous, two times of the duration of God and his glory, six other times where there is no doubt as to its meaning being endless, and seven times of the punishment of the wicked. [Aionis](#) used ninety-five times: fifty-five times of unlimited duration, thirty-one times of duration that has limits and nine times to denote the duration of future punishment. A clear example of the usage of the word to express endless duration is found in 2 Corinthians 4:18, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are **eternal**." It is true, (especially in the writing of the Apostle John), that the word is often used to describe the quality of existence, rather than as having a quantitative aspect. However, the very nature of this quality presupposes endlessness. **The strongest evidence that the word [aionios](#) is meant to teach the endlessness of the punishment of the wicked is in the fact that the same word is used to describe the blessed life of the godly.** In a number of passages the two uses of the word lie side by side. Only a violent twisting of meaning can lead to any other conclusion than this: if *aionion* describes life which is endless, so must *aionion* describe punishment which is endless. Here the doctrine of heaven and the doctrine of hell stand or fall together. W.R. Inge says, "No sound Greek scholar can pretend that [aionios](#) means anything less than **eternal**." It should also be mentioned that the endless duration of the punishment doesn't depend entirely on the translation of [aionios](#) since there are such statements in the Bible as "**the fire is never quenched**" and the "**worm never dies**." Baron von Hugel states that in the New Testament "There is everywhere an assumption or an implication of man's life here below as a choice between immense alternatives with corresponding abiding consequences." He also says, "If we follow the New Testament the essence of hell lies assuredly above all in its endlessness." ([Hell - The Teaching in the New Testament](#))

## See Related Resources:

- [Is universalism / universal salvation biblical?](#)
- [Is annihilationism biblical?](#)

In his book [Dogmatic Theology](#), W G T Shedd has an excellent study on [aionios](#) as it relates to the **eternal** aspect of **hell**:

The epithet **aiōnios** (everlasting) is of prime importance. In order to determine its meaning when applied to the punishment of the wicked, it is necessary, first, to determine that of the substantive from which the adjective is derived. [Aiōn](#) signifies an "age." It is a time word. It denotes "duration" more or less. Of itself, the word duration or age does not determine the length of the duration or age. God has duration, and angels have duration. The Creator has an [aiōn](#) and the creature has an [aiōn](#), but that of the latter is as nothing compared with that of the former: "Behold you have made my days as a handbreadth; and my age is as nothing before you" (Ps. 39:5).

In reference to man and his existence, the Scriptures speak of two and only two [aiōnes](#) or ages: one finite and one infinite, one limited and one endless, the latter succeeding the former. An indefinite series of limited eons with no final endless eon is a pagan and gnostic, not a biblical conception. The importation of a notion of an endless series of finite cycles, each of which is without finality and immutability, into the Christian system has

introduced error, similarly as the importation of the pagan conception of hades has. The misconceiving of a rhetorical figure in the scriptural use of the plural for the singular, namely, *tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn* for *ton aiōna*, has also contributed to this error.

**The two eons or ages known in Scripture are mentioned together in the following:** “It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world ([aiōn](#)) nor in the world ([aiōn](#)) to come” (Matt. 12:32); “he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time ([kairos](#)), and in the world ([aiōn](#)) to come eternal life” (Mark 10:30); “he shall receive manifold more in this present time ([kairos](#)), and in the world ([aiōn](#)) to come life everlasting” (Luke 18:30); “above every name that is named, not only in this world ([aiōn](#)) but also in that which is to come” (Eph. 1:21). The “things present” and the “things to come” mentioned in Rom. 8:38 and 1 Cor. 3:22 refer to the same two ages. These two eons or ages correspond to the two durations of “time” and “eternity,” in the common use of these terms. The present age or eon is “time”; the future age or eon is “eternity.” (See supplement 7.6.5.)

The present finite and limited age or eon is denominated in Scripture “this world” (*ho aiōn houtos*) or *ōlām ḥzzeh* (in Hebrew) (Matt. 12:32; 13:22; Luke 16:8; 20:34; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 1:20; 2:6). Another designation is “this present world” (*ho nyn aiōn* or *ho enestōs aiōn*) (1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:10; Titus 2:12; Gal. 1:4). Sometimes the present limited age or eon is denoted by *aiōn* without the article: “Which he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began (*ap’ aiōnos*)” (Luke 1:70); “it was not heard since the world began (*ap’ aiōnos*)” (John 9:39).

For rhetorical effect, the present limited age or eon is sometimes represented as composed of a number of lesser ages or cycles, as in modern phrase the sum total of finite earthly time is denominated “the centuries” or “the ages.” The following are examples: “The hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages (*pro tōn aiōnōn*)” (1 Cor. 2:7; cf. Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26). In 1 Tim. 1:17 God is denominated *basileus tōn aiōnōn* (king of the ages of time) and therefore “the king eternal” (Authorized Version). In Rom. 16:25 a “mystery” is said to have been kept secret *chronois aiōniois* (during eonian times; Authorized Version: since the world began). The ages of the limited eon are meant. The secret was withheld from all the past cycles of time. In Titus 1:2 “eternal life” is said to have been promised *pro chronōn aiōniōn* (before eonian times; Authorized Version: before the world began). The ages of the limited eon are meant. God promised eternal life prior to all the periods of time, that is, eternally promised. In these passages, “eonian times” is equivalent to “the centuries” or the “long ages.”<sup>39</sup> This rhetorical plural does not destroy the unity of the limited age or eon. To conceal a mystery from the past “eonian ages” or the past centuries and cycles of finite time is the same as to conceal it from past finite time as a whole. (See supplement 7.6.6.)

The future infinite and endless age or eon is denominated in Scripture “the future world” (Authorized Version and Revised Version: the world to come, *aiōn ho mellōn* or *ōlām habbā’*; Matt. 12:32; Heb. 2:5; 6:5). Another designation is “the world to come” (*aiōn ho erchomenos*; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30). Still another designation is “that world” (*aiōn ekeinos*; Luke 20:35). Frequently, the endless age is denoted by *aiōn* simply, but with the article for emphasis (*ho aiōn*): “Has never forgiveness (*eis ton aiōna*)” (Mark 3:29; cf. Matt. 21:19; John 4:14; 6:51, 58; 8:35, 51–52; 10:28; 11:26; 12:34; 13:8; 14:16; 2 Cor. 9:9; Heb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:17; 2 Pet. 2:17; 1 John 2:17; Jude 13).

The same use of the plural for rhetorical effect employed in the case of the limited eon is also employed in that of the unlimited. The future infinite *aiōn* is represented as made up of lesser *aiōnes*<sup>49</sup> or cycles, as in English “infinity” is sometimes denominated “the infinities,” “eternity,” “the eternities,” “immensity,” and “the immensities.” The rhetorical plural, in this instance as in the other, does not conflict with the unity of the infinite age or eon. The following are examples of this use: “The Creator is blessed forever (*eis tous aiōnas*)” (Rom. 1:25; cf. 9:5; 11:36; 16:27; 2 Cor. 11:31; Phil. 4:20; Gal. 1:5 [*eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*]; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 1:6, 18; 4:9–10; 5:13; 7:12). The phrases *eis tous aiōnas* and *eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*<sup>53</sup> are equivalent to *eis ton aiōna*. All alike denote the one infinite and endless eon or age.

Since the word eon ([aiōn](#)) or age in Scripture may denote either the present finite age or the future endless age, in order to determine the meaning of eonian (*aiōnios*), it is necessary first to determine in which of the two eons—the limited or the endless—the thing exists to which the epithet is applied, because anything in either eon may be denominated “eonian.” The adjective follows its substantive in meaning. Onesimus, as a slave, existed in this world (*aiōn*) of “time,” and when he is called an eonian or “everlasting” (*aiōnios*) servant (Philem. 15), it is meant that his servitude continues as long as the finite eon in which he is a servant; and this is practically at an end for him, when he dies and leaves it. The mountains are denominated eonian or “everlasting” (*aiōnia*) in the sense that they endure as long as the finite world (*aiōn*) of which they are a part endures. God, on the other hand, is a being that exists in the infinite *aiōn* and is therefore *aiōnios* in the

endless signification of the word. The same is true of the spirits of angels and men, because they exist in the future eon as well as in the present one. If anything belongs solely to the present age or eon, it is eonian in the limited signification; if it belongs to the future age or eon, it is eonian in the unlimited signification. If, therefore, the punishment of the wicked occurs in the present eon, it is eonian in the sense of temporal; but if it occurs in the future eon, it is eonian in the sense of endless. The adjective takes its meaning from its noun.<sup>63</sup>

The English word forever has the same twofold meaning both in Scripture and in common use. Sometimes it means as long as a man lives upon earth. The Hebrew servant that had his ear bored with an awl to the door of his master was to be his servant “forever” (Exod. 21:6). Sometimes it means as long as the Jewish state should last. The ceremonial laws were to be statutes “forever” (Lev. 16:34). Sometimes it means as long as the world stands: “One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides forever” (Eccles. 1:4). In all such instances, “forever” refers to the temporal eon and denotes finite duration. But in other instances, and they are the great majority in Scripture, “forever” refers to the endless eon, as when it is said that “God is over all blessed forever.” The limited signification of “forever” in the former cases does not disprove its unlimited signification in the latter. That Onesimus was an “everlasting” (aiōnios) servant and that the hills are “everlasting” (aiōnia) no more disproves the everlastingness of God, the soul, heaven, and hell than the term forever in a title deed disproves it. To hold land “forever” is to hold it “as long as grass grows and water runs,” that is, as long as this world or eon endures.

The objection that, because aiōnios or “eonian” denotes “that which belongs to an age,” it cannot mean endless rests upon the assumption that there is no endless aiōn<sup>67</sup> or age. It postulates an indefinite series of limited eons or ages, no one of which is final and everlasting. But the texts that have been cited disprove this. Scripture speaks of but two eons which cover and include the whole existence of man and his whole duration. If, therefore, he is an immortal being, one of these must be endless. The phrase ages of ages applied to the future endless age does not prove that there is more than one future age, any more than the phrase the eternities proves that there is more than one eternity or the phrase the infinities proves that there is more than one infinity. The plural in these cases is rhetorical and intensive, not arithmetical, in its force.

This examination of the scriptural use of the word aiōnios refutes the assertion that eonian means “spiritual” in distinction from “material” or “sensuous” and has no reference at all to time or duration, that when applied to “death” it merely denotes that the death is mental and spiritual in its nature without saying whether it is long or short, temporary or endless. Beyond dispute, some objects are denominated “eonian” in Scripture which have nothing mental or spiritual in them. The mountains are “eonian.” The truth is that the term aiōn denotes time only—and never denotes the nature and quality of an object. All the passages that have been quoted show that duration, either limited or endless, is intended by the word. Whenever this visible world in the sense of the matter constituting it is meant, the word employed is kosmos, not aiōn. It is only when this world in the sense of the time of its continuance is intended that aiōn<sup>72</sup> is employed. St. Paul combines both meanings in Eph. 2:2: the heathen, he says, “walk according to the course [duration] of this world [of matter] (kata ton aiōna tou kosmou toutou).” In Heb. 1:2 and 11:3, where aiōnes denotes the worlds created by God, it is, as Lewis (“Ecclesiastes” in Lange’s Commentary, 47) remarks in opposition to Winer and Robinson, “the time sense of worlds after worlds,” not “the space sense of worlds beyond or above worlds,” that is intended.

In by far the greater number of instances, aiōn and aiōnios<sup>76</sup> refer to the future infinite age and not to the present finite age, to eternity and not to time. Says Stuart (Exegetical Essays, 13, 16):

Aiōnios is employed 66 times in the New Testament. Of these, 51 relate to the future happiness of the righteous; 7 relate to future punishment (Matt. 18:8; 25:41, 46; Mark 3:29; 1 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 6:2; Jude 6); 2 relate to God; 6 are of a miscellaneous nature (5 relating to confessedly endless things, as covenant, invisibilities; and one, in Philem. 15, to a perpetual service). In all the instances in which aiōnios refers to future duration, it denotes endless duration; saying nothing of the instances in which it refers to future punishment. Hebrew ‘ôlām<sup>79</sup> is translated in the Septuagint by aiōn 308 times. In almost the whole of these instances the meaning is time unlimited: a period without end. In the other instances, it means aiōn<sup>81</sup> in the secondary, limited sense; it is applied to the mountains, the levitical statutes, priesthood, etc.

The younger Edwards (Reply to Chauncy, 14) says that “aiōn, reckoning the reduplications of it, as aiōnes tōn aiōnōn, to be single instances of its use, occurs in the New Testament in 104 instances, in 32 of which it means a limited duration. In 7 instances, it may be taken in either the limited or the endless sense. In 65 instances, including 6 instances in which it is applied to future punishment, it plainly signifies an endless duration.”

An incidental proof that the adjective aiōnios has the unlimited signification when applied to future punishment

is the fact that the destiny of lost men is bound up with that of Satan and his angels: "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). These are represented in Scripture as hopelessly lost: "The devil that deceived them shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10+). The Jews to whom Christ spoke understood the perdition of the lost angels to be absolute. If the positions of the restorationist are true in reference to man, they are also in reference to devils. But Scripture teaches that there is no redemption for the lost angels: "Christ took not on him the nature of angels" (Heb. 2:16).

## 7. PERISH

**Perish** (622) (**apollumi** from **apo** = away from or wholly + **olethros** = state of utter ruin <> **ollumi** = to destroy <> root of **apollyon** [Re 9:11] = destroyer) means to destroy utterly but not to caused to cease to exist. **Apollumi** as it relates to men, is not the loss of being per se, but is more the loss of well-being. It means to ruin so that the person (or thing) ruined can no longer serve the use for which he (it) was designed. To render useless. The gospel promises everlasting life for the one who believes. The failure to possess this life will result in utter ruin and eternal uselessness (but not a cessation of existence). **Apollumi** then has the basic meaning of describing that which is ruined and is no longer usable for its intended purpose.

**John MacArthur** writes that "**Apollumi** (destroy) refers to utter devastation. But as the noted Greek scholar W. E. Vine explains, "The idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of well-being" (An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words [Westwood, N.J.: Revel, 1940]). The term is often used in the New Testament to indicate eternal damnation (see, e.g., Mt 10:28; Lk 13:3; Jn 3:16; Ro. 2:12), which applies to unbelievers. But even with that meaning the word does not connote extinction, as annihilationists claim, but rather spiritual calamity that will continue forever. ([MacArthur, J: Romans 9-16. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Thayer's** Greek-English Lexicon defines **apollumi** as "to be delivered up to eternal misery" (p. 36). Since Thayer himself was a **Unitarian** who did not believe in eternal punishment, his definition could only be the result of his knowledge of the meaning of this Greek word. There is no lexicographical evidence for the annihilationist's position that **apollumi** means "to annihilate" or "to pass into nonexistence."

**Robert Morey** - That **apollumi** cannot mean "nonexistence" is clear from the way it is consistently used in the New Testament (Matt. 9:17; Luke 15:4, 6, 8, 9; John 6:12, 27; 2 Cor. 4:9; etc.). Do people pass into nonexistence when they are killed by a sword (Matt. 26:52) or a snake? (1 Cor. 10:9). Do people become nonexistent when they are hungry? (Luke 15:17). Do wineskins pass into nonexistence when they are destroyed by bursting? (Matt. 9:17). Is food annihilated when it spoils? (John 6:27). In every instance where the word **apollumi** is found in the New Testament, something other than annihilation is being described. Indeed, there isn't a single instance in the New Testament where **apollumi** means annihilation in the strict meaning of the word. ([Borrow a copy of Death and the Afterlife](#))

**Apollumi** is used some 265 times in the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT (the Septuagint). For example in Psalm 1 we read that

the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will **perish** (Lxx = **apollumi**) ([Ps 1:6-see notes](#))

Jesus used **apollumi** to remind His disciples what happened when men "put new wine into old wineskins" for they knew that this would make "the wineskins burst... and the wineskins are **ruined** (**apollumi**)". (Mt 9:17). The point is that these wineskins **did not cease to exist** but **they did cease to fulfill the function for which they were created**. In short they were rendered useless. In a similar way, the noun form, **apoleia**, is used to describe the reaction of the disciples when they saw the woman anointing Jesus' head with "costly perfume" (Mt 26:8). They became "indignant when they saw this and said "Why this **waste** (noun form = **apoleia**)" In essence they were asking Jesus why are You letting the precious oil perish and be rendered useless? The ointment did not go out of existence, but was used for what they judged to be a useless purpose (were they ever wrong!). In a similar way all men and women are created by God for fellowship with Him and for His glory (cf Isa 43:7), but when they individually refuse to come to Him for salvation they lose their opportunity for redemption and for becoming what God originally created them for. Their lives are wasted and useless (eternally)! They are fit only for everlasting condemnation and destruction away from the presence and the glory of the Father. This is the awful picture of what it means to "**perish**". This is not the desire of God for as Peter writes "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to **perish** but for all to come to repentance." (2Pe 3:9-[note](#))

The following uses of **apollumi** relate in some way to eternal punishment:

Matthew 5:29 "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to

lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Matthew 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.

Matthew 10:39 "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

Matthew 16:25 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

Matthew 18:14 "So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.

Mark 8:35 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

Mark 12:9 "What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others.

Luke 9:24 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

Luke 9:25 "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?

Luke 9:56 for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And they went on to another village.

Luke 13:3 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Luke 13:5 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

Luke 17:33 "Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Luke 20:16 "He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others." When they heard it, they said, "May it never be!"

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.

John 10:28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

John 12:25 "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.

John 17:12 "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

Romans 2:12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

2 Corinthians 2:15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;

2 Corinthians 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

James 4:12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

## SUMMARY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HELL



### (1) A Place of Torment

Usually when we think of hell, we think of fire, since Christ spoke of the “fire of hell.” In Revelation we read of “the lake of fire and brimstone.” There is no reason the torments of hell could not include physical fire, since the bodies of those present will have been re-created and made indestructible. Unlike our present bodies, those of the resurrected dead will not burn up or be extinguished. Literal fire is a possibility. However, as we learned earlier, there is another kind of fire that will be in hell, a fire that may be worse than literal fire. That is the fire of unfulfilled passion, of desires that are never satisfied. Perpetually burning lusts never subside, and the tortured conscience burns but is never sated or appeased. There will be increased desire with decreased satisfaction. Hell, then, is the raw soul joined to an indestructible body, exposed to its own sin for eternity. Hell is the place of unquenchable, raging guilt, without painkillers or sedation. Literal fire might be welcomed if only it would cleanse the tormented conscience. Be assured of this: Neither the devil nor his angels will torment people in hell. Satan and his demons will be among the tormented; they will not be tormentors (Revelation 20:10+).

### (2) A Place of Abandonment

In hades there was an unbridgeable chasm between the two men, but at least they could speak to one another. But it is unlikely that there will be the opportunity of such communication in hell. For one thing, “Abraham’s bosom” was transferred directly into the presence of Christ at the ascension. For another, we have no suggestion in the New Testament that those who are in hell will be able to communicate with one another. **C. S. Lewis** believed there would not be communication in hell, because it was a place of solitude. **Jonathan Edwards** believed that if unbelievers are next to one another they will only add to each other’s agony through expressions of hatred, accusations, and curses. Of one thing we can be absolutely certain: No comfort will be derived from the presence of others. Consumed with the torment of raging, unforgiven sin, those in hell will never find comfort again. However, the Scriptures teach that those who are in hell will be tormented in the presence of Christ and the holy angels (Revelation 14:10). Nothing is said about whether other people behold the sufferings of the damned, though God often invites righteous people or angels to behold the judgment He inflicts upon the wicked (Ps 46:8–9; Isa 66:23–24; Rev 19:17–21). The famous British preacher **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** wrote, “If there be one thing in hell worse than another, it will be seeing the saints in heaven....Husband, there is your wife in heaven and you are among the damned. And do you see your father? Your child is before the throne, and you accursed of God and man are in hell!” If believers do witness these events, we can be sure that they will agree completely with the justice displayed by God, for then they shall see all things from His point of view. Thus, the righteous can enjoy the bliss of heaven knowing full well the fate of the wicked in hell. Though Dante added many of his own ideas to the superstitions of his day when he wrote *The Inferno*, the sign he read in the vestibule of hell does portray the biblical teaching of hopelessness and abandonment.

I am the way to the city of woe.  
I am the way to a forsaken people.  
I am the way into eternal sorrow.  
Sacred justice moved my architect.  
I was raised here by divine omnipotence,  
Primordial love and ultimate intellect.

Only those elements time cannot wear  
Were made before me, and beyond time I stand.  
Abandon all hope ye who enter here.  
Canto 3.1–9

**Jonathan Edwards** pointed out that those in hell will have no reason for entertaining any secret hope that after being in the flames many ages God will take pity on them and release them. God, says Edwards, will not be any more inclined to release them after a million ages than He was at the very first moment. Little wonder, Edwards said, that **any description we give of hell can be but a faint representation of the reality!**

### (3) A Place of Eternity

How long is eternity? Visualize a bird coming to earth every million years and taking one grain of sand to a distant planet. At that rate it would take thousands of billions of years before the bird had carried away a single handful of sand. Now let’s expand that illustration and think how long it would take the bird to move the Oak

Street Beach in Chicago and then the other thousands of beaches around the world. After that, the bird could begin on the mountains and the earth's crust. By the time the bird transported the entire earth to the far-off planet, eternity would not have officially begun. Strictly speaking, one cannot begin an infinite series, for a beginning implies an end. In other words, we might say that after the bird has done his work, those in eternity will not be one step closer to having their suffering alleviated. There is no such thing as half an eternity. The most sobering thought that could ever cross our minds is the fact that the rich man in hades referred to above has not yet received the drop of water for which he so desperately longed. Today, as you read this book, he is still there awaiting the final judgment of the lake of fire. Eternity endures, and it endures forever.

#### **(4) A Place of Easy Access but No Exit**

Entering hell is easy enough. All that one has to do is neglect Christ, the only one who can save us.

Jonathan Edwards, whom we have already quoted, gave more consideration to the doctrine of hell than any other theologian. His sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" kept audiences spellbound, stripping from them any objections or excuses they might have had against the doctrine of hell. He made the point that there are some people now living for whom God has more anger than some who are now in hades (he called it hell) who have already died. Therefore, it was only the mercy of God that kept them from plunging into the abyss:

There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God.... There is no want in God's power to cast wicked men into hell at any moment.... They deserve to be cast into hell, so divine justice never stands in the way.... They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath that is expressed in the torments of hell ... yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on the earth, yea doubtless with some who reread this book, who it may be are at ease, than he is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell. Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and those places are not seen.... There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor anything to take hold of, there is nothing between you and hell but air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.... His wrath burns against you like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else than to be thrown into the fire.... You hang by the slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder.

#### **(5) Powerful!**

If reading this chapter has been frightening, the good news is that if God grants you the desire to trust Christ that you might escape hell, you are invited to do so. Indeed, we read, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36). Thankfully, there is a way of escape; we can be forever shielded from the wrath to ["One Minute After You Die - borrow a copy free"](#)

---

See **Alan Carr's** sermon [A Horrible Place Called Hell](#) for a review of the characteristics of Hell. See his related messages:

- [Luke 16:19-31 An Interview In Hell](#)
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Glimpse Of A Place Called Hell](#)
- [Luke 16:19-31 Can God Really Save Your Loved Ones?](#)
- [Luke 16:19-31 From Here To Eternity](#)
- [Luke 16:19-31 The Truth About Hell](#)

---

#### **Rod Mattoon on What Is Hell Like?**

**1. Hell Is a Place of Consciousness**- People in Hell are very aware of what is happening to them. Luke 16:23, 24.

**Norman Geisler comments:** MATTHEW 5:29— Is hell the grave or a place of conscious torment?

**PROBLEM:** Jesus refers here to the "body" being "cast into hell," and the psalmist speaks of "bones" being "scattered at the mouth of hell [sheol]" (Ps. 141:7KJV). Jacob talked about his "gray hairs" being brought down to hell (Ge 42:38KJV; cf. Ge 44:29, 31). However, Jesus referred to hell as a place where the soul goes after one dies and is in conscious torment (Luke 16:22–23). Is "hell" just the grave, as the Jehovah's Witnesses and some other cults claim?

**SOLUTION:** The Hebrew word translated “hell” (sheol) is also translated “grave” or “pit.” It simply means “unseen world,” and can refer either to the grave, where the body is unseen after burial, or to the spirit world, which is invisible to mortal eyes. In the OT, sheol often means **grave**, as indicated by the fact that it is a place where “bones” (Ps. 141:7) and “gray hairs” (Ge 42:38) go at death. Even the resurrection of Jesus’ body is said to be from “hell” (i.e., the grave) where it did not see corruption (Acts 2:30–31). While there may be some allusions to “hell” as a spirit world in the OT (cf. Pr. 9:18; Isa. 14:9), “hell” (Gk., hades) is clearly described as a place of departed spirits (souls) in the NT. Angels are there and they have no bodies (2 Peter 2:4). **Unrepentant human beings are in conscious torment there after they die and their bodies are buried** (Luke 16:22–25). In the end those in hell will be cast into the lake of fire with the devil where they will be “tormented day and night forever” (Rev. 20:10+, 14–15). **Jesus spoke many times of hell as a place of conscious and eternal suffering** (cf. Matt. 10:28; 11:23; 18:9; 23:15; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; 16:23). (Norman Geisler - When Critics Ask)

**2. Hell Is a Place of Torment and No Rest or Peace at All-** There will be no parties in Hell. It will not be fun at all. Luke 16:23, 28, Rev 14:11-[note](#), Rev 20:10+

**3. Hell Is a Place of Darkness-** Matthew 8:12, Mt 22:13, 25:30; Jude 1:13

**Norman Geisler comments:** MATTHEW 8:12—Is hell a place of darkness, or is there light there?

**PROBLEM:** Jesus described hell as a place of “outer darkness” (Matt. 8:12; cf. 22:13 and 25:30). By contrast, the Bible says hell is a place of “fire” (Rev. 20:14) and “unquenchable flames” (Mark 9:48-[note](#)). But, fire and flames give off light. How can hell be utterly dark when there is light there?

**SOLUTION:** Both “fire” and “darkness” are powerful figures of speech which appropriately describe the unthinkable reality of hell. It is **like fire** because it is a place of destruction and torment. Yet, it is **like outer darkness** because people are lost there forever. **While hell is a literal place, not every description of it should be taken literally.** Some powerful figures of speech are used to portray this literal place. **Its horrible reality, wherein body and soul will suffer forever, goes far beyond any mere figure of speech that may be used to describe it.** But, it is a serious mistake to take a figure of speech literally. By doing so, one can conclude that God has feathers, since He is described as having wings (Ps. 91:4)! There are other figures of speech used to describe the eternal destiny of the lost that, if taken literally, contradict each other. For example, hell is depicted as an eternal garbage dump (Mark 9:43–48), which has a bottom. But, it is also portrayed as a bottomless pit (Rev. 20:3). Each is a vivid depiction of a place of everlasting punishment. (Norman Geisler - When Critics Ask)

**COMMENT:** Outer darkness means (1) a place removed and (2) a place that is dark. This is a frightening picture! Some assume that **darkness** is a metaphor for the utter isolation and loneliness of hell. Whether metaphor or literal reality, the use of darkness to describe hell conveys a powerful truth. If you have ever been in a large cavern when the guide turned off the lights, you have a sense of the total isolation that complete darkness brings. A person who is utterly alone needs companionship more than anything else. Mental health professionals call this sense of abandonment “[cosmic loneliness](#)” and give it serious attention. **Jesus’ picture of hell suggests that part of its suffering is total, eternal isolation from God and man--a sense of utter hopelessness that will cause great “weeping and gnashing of teeth”** (Mt 25:30).

**GOTQUESTIONS:** The **outer darkness** is a place of anguish, heartache, grief, and unspeakable suffering. Such will be the lot of all who reject Christ (John 3:18, 36). Christ is the Light of the World (John 8:12). When one rejects the Light, he will be cast into eternal darkness. Just like the man in the parable, the one who rejects Christ will lose his chance for joy, blessing and fellowship and will be left with nothing but darkness and eternal regret. ([What is the Outer Darkness?](#))

**Robert Morey** has an interesting note - The phrase “**the outer darkness**” was a rabbinic expression which referred to Gehenna where the wicked would be “weeping and gnashing their teeth” because of their pain and torment. (Expositor’s Greek Testament, Vol. I, p. 140; Broadus, p. 180; Lenski, p. 332; et al.) The definite article is used to refer to “the outer darkness,” i.e., Gehenna. Notice that the rabbinic phrase “**weeping and gnashing of teeth**” cannot be interpreted in any other way than to say that the lost will suffer excruciating pain and torment. This passage cannot be reduced to annihilation. ([Borrow a copy of Death and the Afterlife](#))

See also discussion of “[Outer Darkness](#)” below

**Note on fire that cannot be seen** - (In discussion of a “black hole”) “This temperature is on the order of billionths of a kelvin for black holes of stellar mass, **making it essentially impossible to observe.**” ([Black](#)

[Hole\)](#)

4. **Hell Is a Place of Sorrow and Eternal Separation From Loved Ones**- Luke 13:28-note; 2 Sa 22:6

5. **Hell Is a Place of Hopelessness with No Way of Escape**- Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:26

6. **Hell Is a Place of Tormenting Memories**- Luke 16:27, 28

7. **Hell Is a Place of Unfulfilled Desires**- Let the evildoer still do evil Rev 22:11-[note](#)

8. **Hell Is a Place of Fire**- Rev 20:14-15; Rev 21:8; Matthew 13:50

9. **Hell Is a Place of Worms** - Mark 9:48 (ED: MOST WRITERS INTERPRET THIS AS FIGURATIVE, NOT LITERAL WORMS).

**EDITORIAL COMMENT ON MARK 9:48**—Why did Jesus say worms would not die in hell? **PROBLEM:** Jesus said that hell is a place “where `their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched’ ” (Mark 9:48). But what do everlasting worms have to do with hell? **SOLUTION:** Jesus is not speaking of earthworms, nor any other kind of animal here. He is speaking about the human body. Notice, He did not say “where the worm does not die” but, rather, “where **their** worm does not die.” The antecedent of “**their**” is a human being who sins and dies without repentance (cf. Mk 9:42–47). “**Worm**” is simply a way to refer to the human “**worm**,” or shell known as the body. This fits with the context where He is speaking of the parts of the body, such as, “hands” and the “foot” (Mk 9:43–45). Jesus said here that we should not fear the one (man) who could destroy our body, but not our soul, but, rather, to fear the One (God) who could send soul and body into the everlasting flames (Luke 12:4–5; cf. Mark 9:43–48). (Norman Geisler - When Critics Ask)

**GOTQUESTIONS ON MARK 9:48**— **Taken at face value, this text is one of the most horrific descriptions of what hell is like.** The thought of eternal torment, likened to maggots eating away at a rotting corpse, is undoubtedly ghastly. Hell is so awful that Christ said, figuratively speaking, it’s better to cut off the hand that causes you to sin than to end up in hell (Matthew 5:30). Mark 9:48 does not mean that there are literal worms in hell or that there are worms that live forever; rather, Jesus is teaching the fact of unending suffering in hell—the “worm” never stops causing torment. Notice that the worm is personal. Both Isaiah 66:24 and Mark 9:48 use the word their to identify the worm’s owner. The sources of torment are attached each to its own host. Some Bible scholars believe the “**worm**” refers to a man’s conscience. Those in hell, being completely cut off from God, exist with a nagging, guilty conscience that, like a persistent worm, gnaws away at its victim with a remorse that can never be mitigated. No matter what the word **worm** refers to, the most important thing to be gained from these words of Christ is that we should do everything in our power to escape the horrors of hell, and there is only one thing to that end—receiving Jesus as the Lord of our lives (John 3:16). ([What is the Worm that Will not Die in Mark 9:48?](#))

10. **Hell Is a Place of Unanswered Prayers**- Luke 16:27-31—... Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: [28] For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. [29] Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. [30] And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. [31] And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

11. **Hell Is a Place of Everlasting Destruction - 2 Thessalonians 1:9**

**What does a person do to go to Hell? Nothing!** You are condemned already because you are a sinner. John 3:18—“He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Your only hope is the Sun of Righteousness, the Son of God. This is the message we are to spread across the world.

## REBUTTAL OF ANNIHILATIONALISM, UNIVERSALISM, PURGATORY

Pastor Steven Cole writes that there are three popular views that we must reject.

The first is **universalism**, the view that everyone will eventually be saved. The universalist says, “A good and loving God could not condemn anyone to hell. There is some good in even the worst of people. God will take that into account, so that no one will be condemned.” But the universalist underestimates both the awful

sinfulness of the human heart and the absolute holiness of God. The rich man in the parable was not an evil man in human terms. He wasn't a mass murderer or child molester. He wasn't deliberately hurting people. He was a just living for himself, oblivious to the poor man at his gate. And yet here he is in the place of eternal torment! Clearly, Jesus did not teach that everyone, let alone everyone who isn't terribly evil, would be in heaven.

The second popular view we must reject is **annihilationism**. This is the view that God will destroy the unrepentant sinner, so that he ceases to exist. In other words, the soul is not immortal. Perhaps God will punish the person for a time, proportionate to his sin. But at some point, God will say, "That's enough," and the person will not suffer eternally. God will annihilate the person's soul. Several professing evangelicals, most notably John Stott, have suggested if not embraced this idea. The Seventh Day Adventists teach this doctrine. Frankly, the idea sounds humane and appealing. But I cannot dodge Mt 25:46, where Jesus uses the same word "eternal" in the same verse to refer to eternal punishment and eternal life. If life is eternal, then so is punishment. Also, Rev 20:10+ states that the devil, the beast, and the false prophet will be tormented in the lake of fire and brimstone "day and night forever and ever." Then, just a few verses later (Re 20:15), it states that all of those whose names are not found written in the book of life are also thrown into the lake of fire. "Day and night forever and ever" sure sounds eternal! The best defense of eternal punishment that I've read is Jonathan Edwards' sermon, "The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners." He argues that since any sin is against the infinite God, it is worthy of infinite punishment.

The third popular view that this parable refutes is the doctrine of **purgatory**. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church teach that when a believer dies, unless he has attained a state of moral perfection on earth, he goes to an intermediate place where he suffers until all sin is purged away. The sufferings vary according to the guilt and impenitence of the sufferer. Gifts and services to the church, prayers on behalf of the deceased, and Masses provided by friends or loved ones, can all shorten the amount of time the person spends in Purgatory. If anyone was a candidate for Purgatory, this rich man was. As I said, he was not a bad man. He called Abraham his father, showing his devotion to the Jewish faith. He had a concern for his five brothers' eternal destiny. But he wasn't in Purgatory, with a chance to get into heaven after he had suffered a while. He was in hell and there was a great chasm fixed so that he could never cross over. The doctrine of Purgatory is not taught in Scripture (it is based on the apocryphal [2Ma 12:39-45](#)). It undermines the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone. It adds human works to His finished work on the cross.

---

Larry D. Pettegrew has an excellent article on **annihilationism** entitled [A Kinder, Gentler Theology Of Hell?](#) Below are quotes from the introduction and the conclusion. If you are someone to whom you are ministering is enraptured by this dangerous, deceptive doctrine, this article is highly recommended:

**INTRODUCTION** - *Annihilationism has, as the Niagara Creed of 1878 foresaw, become a doctrine that plagues the evangelical church of the late twentieth century. It comprises a multifaceted compromise of biblical systematic theology, affecting most major doctrines of the Christian faith, not just the area of eschatology. Its compromise stems from the influence of postmodernism as proponents of annihilationism bring to the text unwarranted theological preunderstandings. Their emphasis on God's nature to love disregards His many other attributes such as holiness, justice, truth, grace, and omnipotence and thereby sentimentalize God's love. Further, their preunderstandings distort biblical teaching about man's immortality of the soul that is derived from God. A third affected area is the doctrine of sin when they assert that God would be vindictive to mete out eternal punishment for finite sin. In addition, the system of annihilationism undervalues Christ's atonement for sin by claiming that His death only paid the price for man's temporary rather than our eternal punishment....*

**CONCLUSION** - It has been the purpose of this essay to demonstrate by a survey of the doctrinal categories that the doctrine of annihilationism as taught by a few contemporary evangelicals is a significant part of a multifaceted compromise of a biblical systematic theology. I have also suggested that annihilationists often come to the Scriptures with cultural and theological preunderstandings that negate the historical-grammatical meaning of the passages. **Carson** is right in his observation:

Despite the sincerity of their motives, one wonders more than a little to what extent the growing popularity of various forms of annihilationism and conditional immortality are a reflection of this age of pluralism. It is getting harder and harder to be faithful to the "hard" lines of Scripture. And in this way, evangelicalism itself may contribute to the gagging of God by silencing the severity of his warnings and by minimizing the awfulness of the punishment that justly awaits those untouched by his redeeming grace. (D A Carson - [The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism](#))

Moreover, the doctrinal compromises of annihilationism have serious consequences. **J. I. Packer** concludes this study with this penetrating question:

Does it matter whether an evangelical is a conditionalist or not? I think it does: for a conditionalist's idea of God will miss out on the glory of divine justice, and his idea of worship will miss out on praise for God's judgments, and his idea of heaven will miss out on the thought that praise for God's judgments goes on (cf. Rev. 16:5–7, 19:1–5), and his idea of man will miss out on the awesome dignity of our having been made to last for eternity, and in his preaching of the gospel he will miss out on telling the unconverted that their prospects without Christ are as bad as they possibly could be—for on the conditionalist view they aren't! These, surely, are sad losses. Conditionalism, logically thought through, cannot but impoverish a Christian man, and limit his usefulness to the Lord. That is why I am concerned about the current trend towards conditionalism. I hope it may soon be reversed. ([J I Packer - The Problem of Eternal Punishment](#)) (from [A Kinder, Gentler Theology Of Hell?](#))

---

**Robert Morey** has an interesting analysis of how the church has responded to the doctrine of eternal punishment over the centuries.

There is a discernible historical cycle to the Christian Church's attitude toward the doctrine of hell. The cycle begins with a long period of time during which it is acknowledged that the Scriptures clearly teach the intermediate and eternal punishment of the wicked. It is assumed by all that this was and always shall be the doctrinal position of historic Christianity.

**After acknowledgment comes indifference.** The "negative side" of the gospel in which sinners are warned to "escape" and "flee" from "the wrath to come" (Matt. 23:33; Luke 3:7) is ignored and often downplayed, while the "positive side" of God's love in Christ is overemphasized to the exclusion of anything else. The doctrine of hell is acknowledged to be true but rarely preached.

**After indifference comes ignorance.** Because the biblical theme of God's judgment is ignored, the people in the pew do not know why they are expected to believe in hell. There is no instruction given on the subject, and the issue is avoided because no one wants to be characterized as a "hell-fire and brimstone" preacher.

**After ignorance comes doubt.** Since no one is told why he should believe that there really is a hell, doubts begin to creep into people's minds. It becomes fashionable to speak of the doctrine of hell as being "unkind," "unloving," or "negative."

**After doubt comes denial.** The cults are quick to put forth either Universalism or annihilationism as the answer to the "horrible" doctrine of hell. Many books are published and distributed which directly attack the orthodox position. Since orthodox teachers have not instructed their people on the subject, the Universalists and annihilationists succeed in convincing many people and generating controversy in many churches.

**After denial comes irritation.** When the pressure from the Universalists and annihilationists is first felt by orthodox theologians, they respond by saying or thinking, "I don't have time to deal with this issue right now," "Wasn't this issue solved one hundred years ago?" or "If we ignore them, maybe they will go away."

**After irritation comes affirmation.** When the Universalists and annihilationists don't go away but multiply drastically, the orthodox theologians take up the defence of historic Christianity and demonstrate that the Bible does indeed teach the doctrine of eternal punishment. God's people are once again instructed as to why they should believe that there is a hell to shun and a heaven to gain. The subject is preached and taught with boldness. The Universalists and annihilationists are thoroughly discredited and refuted.

**After affirmation comes acknowledgment.** The Christian Church reaffirms its historic position, and it is universally acknowledged that the Scriptures do teach the intermediate and eternal, conscious torment of the wicked. The controversy passes and the church returns to its dogmatic slumbers. Then the cycle starts all over again! After a long period of acknowledgment, indifference will set in and the other phases will follow.

In terms of this cycle, Bible-believing Christians have passed through the acknowledgment, indifference, ignorance, doubt, denial and irritation phases and are now entering the affirmation phase. The Universalists and the annihilationists have invaded the Christian Church just as the Philistines invaded Israel. It is once again necessary to defend the gospel truth that unbelief results in God's wrath (John 3:36) and that this wrath is eternal (Matt. 25:46). ([Borrow a copy of Death and the Afterlife](#))

See also [Robert Morey's discussion of Annihilationism in the Work of Christ](#)

---

## Resources to help you defend the faith to those who hold to false teaching on HELL:

- [Related Study of the Word Perish - Apollumi - Not Loss of Being but Well Being](#)
- [Related Study of the Word Eternal - Aionos](#)
- [Denials and Their Answers](#) - 10 pages on Universalism, 4 pages on Annihilationism (Harry Buis - Doctrine of Eternal Punishment)
- [Is annihilationism biblical?](#)
- [Is universalism / universal salvation biblical?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about Purgatory?](#)
- [Hell: Never, Forever, or Just for Awhile](#) - Richard Mayhue

## Denial of the Doctrine of Hell By The Cults by [Harry Buis](#)

One of the common characteristics of the modern cults is their denial of the doctrine of eternal punishment. This is obviously one of the reasons for their popular appeal. Their success is a witness to the dislike of this doctrine on the part of the natural man. Since in the main section of our study we have limited ourselves to beliefs within the main stream of the Christian Church, we here briefly present the viewpoints of the modern cults.

**1. Christian Science.** There is no hell in the traditional sense. Rather hell is "mortal belief; error; lust; remorse; hatred; revenge; sin, sickness, death, suffering, and self-imposed agony, effects of sin, that which worketh abomination or maketh a lie." **1** (NOTE: [CLICK HERE FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY - SCROLL TO BOTTOM OF PAGE](#)) There is no such thing as annihilation, but at death, man passes to another plane of existence where there is further opportunity to overcome erroneous thinking, and thus attain salvation.

**2. Jehovah's Witnesses.** In his early youth Charles Taze Russell was nurtured in the Presbyterian Church. The traditional belief in hell was one reason why he turned against historic Christianity. He became a skeptic, but was later deeply influenced by Seventh-Day Adventism, from which he borrowed the doctrines of soul sleep and the annihilation of the wicked. Russell spoke very strongly against what he called "the nightmare of eternal torture."

Russell's successor, Joseph Franklin Rutherford, was equally vehement in his opposition to hell. "It was written of him that he went to hell. 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell' (Psalm 16:10). If hell is a place of endless torment and Jesus went there, he could not have been released. The fact that he did not remain in hell is proof conclusive that hell is not a place of eternal torment."**2** "Eternal torture is void of the principle of love. 'God is love.' A Creator that would torture his creatures eternally would be a fiend, and not a God of love."**3**

**3. Mormonism.** Mormons believe in hell, but they do not believe that it is everlasting. Braden, who has made a careful study of the cults, says, "Mormonism believes that salvation is universal and that there is still a chance beyond the grave . . . . To the many who have died, having deliberately refused to accept the gospel, must be added innumerable others who died never having heard the gospel. What provision is there for them? The former are not to be punished 'beyond the time requisite to work the needed reformation and to vindicate justice, for which ends alone punishment is imposed.' And it would be blasphemous, Talmadge asserts, to believe that God would condemn a soul under any law not known to him. It becomes plain, then that the gospel must be preached in the spirit world where these dead dwell."**4**

**4. New Thought.** Hell is "the torment of experiencing that which contradicts the truth."**5** Says Braden, "What is perfectly clear is that the older stress upon another worldly heaven and hell of eternal reward or punishment is rejected and this is a pleasing thought to many who grew up under the older orthodoxy, but no longer find it possible to believe it, for many reasons."**6**

**5. Spiritualism.** Braden says, "The Spiritualists completely repudiate the traditional concepts of heaven and hell, and of course all idea of 'everlasting' punishment or reward. In the literature there is frequent report of the surprise of those who have recently passed over at not finding themselves in heaven or hell. Yet there is something approximating the idea of both heaven and hell of a temporary nature. The lower spheres to which those of evil character and a low state of development go at death constitute a sort of purgatory, at least, where they must remain until they have developed to a higher degree. If not punitive it is at least purgative, and the soul remains at this level until it merits promotion to a higher sphere."**7**

The following statements from outstanding spokesmen for Spiritualism give us further understanding of their position.

A. Conan Doyle says, "Hell, I may say, drops out altogether, as it has long dropped out of the thoughts of every reasonable man.

This odious conception, so blasphemous in its view of the Creator, arose from the exaggeration of Oriental phrases, and may perhaps have been of service in a coarse age when men were frightened by fires, as wild beasts are scared by the travelers. Hell as a permanent place does not exist. But the idea of punishment, of purifying chastisement, in fact of Purgatory, is justified by the reports from the other side."**8**

Colville says, "It (the ancient Egyptian view of trans-migration) is immeasurably superior to any view of endless useless torment such as many benighted Christian theologians have proclaimed — a conception for which there is neither rational explanation nor apology."**9**

Sir Oliver Lodge says, "There is nothing that can properly be called Hell in the medieval sense of eternal hopelessness; but yet Hell is very truth in so far as they suffer the pangs of remorse when their rebellious spirit is broken, and when in their felt poverty of soul they begin to long to return to the Father."**10**

**6. Theosophy.** This cult also denies eternal punishment. Annie Besant, one of the leaders of the movement, says, "If this (Luke 13:23-24) be applied in the ordinary protestant way to salvation from everlasting hell-fire, the statement becomes incredible, shocking. No Savior of the world can be supposed to assert that many will seek to avoid hell and enter heaven, but will not be able to do so. But as applied to the narrow gateway of Initiation and to salvation from rebirth, it is perfectly true and natural."**11**

Leadbeater, another leader of the movement, says that the astral life "corresponds to what Christians (Catholic) call purgatory; the lower mental life, which is always entirely happy, is what is called heaven" . . . Hell is "only a figment of the theological imagination."**12**

**7. Unity.** Speaking of Fillmore, the founder of Unity, Braden says, "Nowhere that the writer has discovered, does he enlarge extensively on the idea of heaven, and it will be noted that here only by silent inference is there any reference to any opposite state, corresponding to the distressing dreams of the anxious, troubled sleeper."**13**

Speaking of the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Fillmore himself says, "The material avenues are lost to the outer, and the soul finds itself in a hell of desires without the flesh sensations with which to express itself . . . the body consciousness, the peace of union for all the attributes of man, has been removed, producing in the life consciousness a great gulf or chasm that cannot be crossed, except by incarnation in another body."**14** Unity's official "creed" says, "We believe that the dissolution of spirit, soul and body, caused by death, is annulled by rebirth of the same spirit and soul in another body here on earth. We believe the repeated incarnations of man to be a merciful provision of our loving Father to the end that all may have opportunity to attain immortality through regeneration, as did Jesus."**15**

Thus we see that the cults, in one way or another, deny the doctrine of eternal punishment. Could it be that if all who held the orthodox position had been more careful in their statement of the doctrine, avoiding the excesses which we have noted to have been all too prevalent in past ages, then some of these cults would never have arisen? Certainly if all who propounded the doctrine had not gone beyond a sane interpretation of the Scripture many who have done so would not have turned from orthodox Christianity to the cults. ([Denial by the Cults](#))

## EXPOSITION OF LUKE 16:19-31

**Luke 16:19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.**

KJV Luke 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

- **Now there was a rich man** Luke 12:16-21; 18:24,25; James 5:1-5
- **habitually dressed** Luke 16:1; 15:13; Job 21:11-15; Ps 73:3-7; Ezek 16:49; Amos 6:4-6; Rev 17:4; Rev 18:7,16
- **purple and fine linen** Judges 8:26; Esther 8:15; Ezek 16:13; 27:7; Mark 15:17,20
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Jesus' View of Eternal Punishment \(Mt 25:31-46\)](#) - Robert L. Thomas - 31 pp
- [Hell: Never, Forever, or Just for Awhile](#) - Richard Mayhue - 162 pp
- [Paul's Concept Of Eternal Punishment](#) - James Rosscup - 24 pp



- [Eternal Punishment In John's Revelation](#) - Trevor P Craigen, 13 pp
- [A Kinder, Gentler Theology Of Hell?](#) - Larry D. Pettegrew, 17 pp
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur

Dore's Woodcut  
Rich Man and Lazarus  
Click to enlarge

## TWO MEN, TWO DESTINIES: DIVES AND LAZARUS

**Now there was a rich man** - While he is nameless, many have referred to him as "**Dives**" which derives from the Latin word for "rich" ([Latin Vulgate](#) reads "*homo quidam erat dives*"). Notice that there is no suggestion that he had obtained his wealth in an unrighteous manner as the unrighteous manager discussed earlier in this chapter. There is no "vulgar" sin in his life. He was simply a **rich man**, self-centered, self-indulgent and continually displaying his wealth [ostentatiously](#). It is interesting that living ostentatiously is considered a vice by such major religious groups as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Note however that the Bible does not teach that wealth per se is evil, but to use it only for self-gratification without a genuine, practical concern for the needs of others is evil. As Christians we need to constantly remember that it all belongs to God and we are temporary stewards of His wealth.

It is notable that this rich man's entire temporal life on earth is summed up in a single sentence! Fittingly, most of the description of the rich man deals with his eternal life in hell!

In the ancient Jewish culture, if one was rich, he was viewed as being blessed by God and thus he was envied and honored by those who were not rich. Clearly this man is portrayed as not just rich, but extravagantly rich, "filthy rich" as we would say today, and thus he would be seen by the populace as a man who was extravagantly blessed by God. God's hand was surely on this man's life for good not bad! The Pharisees who were lovers of money would view this man as a "hero," as one "touched by God!"

**Wiersbe** asks "Why is one man wealthy and another man poor? Had the Jewish people obeyed God's commandments concerning the Sabbatical Year and the Year of Jubilee, there would have been little or no poverty in the land, for the wealth and real estate could not have fallen into the hands of a few wealthy people (see Lev. 25, and note Ex. 23:11; Deut. 14:28-29). The Old Testament prophets denounced the rich for amassing great estates and exploiting the widows and the poor (Isa. 3:15; 10:2; Amos 2:6; 4:1; 5:11-12; 8:4-6; Hab. 2:9-13). In Jesus' day, Palestine was under the rule of Rome, and life was very difficult for the common people." (Bible Exposition Commentary)

**Rich** (4145) ([plousios](#) from **ploutos** = wealth, abundance, riches) is an adjective which defines that which exists in a large amount with implication of its being valuable. Literally **plousios** refers to having an abundance of earthly possessions that exceeds normal experience. Luke uses this adjective 3 times in this parable (Lk 16:19, 21, 23) with 7 other uses of rich, most in the context of who does or does not attain to eternal life in heaven (Kingdom of God):

Luke 6:24-note "But woe to you who are **rich**, for you are receiving your comfort in full.

Luke 12:16-note And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of **rich** man was very productive.

Luke 14:12-note And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or **rich** neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment.

Luke 18:23-note But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely **rich**.

Luke 18:25-note "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for **rich** man to enter the kingdom of God."

Luke 19:2-note And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was **rich**.

Luke 21:1-note And He looked up and saw the **rich** putting their gifts into the treasury.

**POSB** on fact that **rich man** was unnamed - The rich man did not know God; therefore, he was unknown to God and God was not able to honor him. He was nameless to God. Lazarus knew God and was known by God. His very name, Lazarus, means God is my

Help or Helper. Paul wrote "if anyone loves God, he is known by Him." (1 Co. 8:3, cf Gal 4:8-9, Jn 10:14, 27)...He was complacent, hoarding and allowing money to lie around making more and more for himself and his estate while needs lay all around him—right at his gate (cf Mt 25:43, 1 Jn 3:17, Mk 4:19, 1 Ti 6:9, Zech 7:6, Dt 15:7).

While in the world's eyes this man was "[filthy rich](#)," in fact he was spiritually poor! As Jesus warned earlier "that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God." (Lk 16:15-[note](#)) Everyday that he lived brought him closer to losing everything he had, including his eternal soul. This rich man's wretched, miserable, poor and blind spiritual condition reminds me of Jesus' [solemn](#) warning to the church at Laodicea

'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are **wretched** and **miserable** and **poor** and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. 20 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.(Rev 3:17-20-[note](#))

The words of Jehovah in Jeremiah's prophecy are apropos to this rich man who glorified in the praise of men rather than God...

Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, **let not a rich man boast of his riches**; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that **he understands and knows Me**, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

**He habitually dressed** is the [imperfect tense](#) pictures him day after day clothing himself with incredibly luxurious garb. Even on his "routine days" he still clothed himself in incredibly luxurious clothes.

**John MacArthur** gives some background, which while not stated directly, is certainly implied - The outer garment that the people wore in those days if they were wealthy enough was made out of...[fulled wool](#). It was placed into a basin, and then it was mingled with clay (**Ed**: And urine!!! [See note](#)), and the time consuming, laborious, hands-on process produced a kind of white that was almost blazing, brilliant, shining white. It was a very expensive process done for the elite who alone could afford it. They had whiter clothes than everybody else, and it wasn't because of their detergent. It was because of this process ([fulling](#)). And if you wanted to really make the outer garment especially luxurious, you would dye it with [Tyrian purple](#). ([A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#))

**He habitually dressed in purple** - Purple was cloth dyed with a very costly dye obtained from the [shellfish murex](#). It would be used for the outer garment and the fine linen for the undergarment. In the Septuagint it was the material used to construct God's Tabernacle and the garments of the priests. The combination of **purple and fine linen** stands for the ultimate in luxury (both were used to construct God's Tabernacle!) This man would have been on the front cover of the Hebrew edition of [GQ](#) ("Gentlemen's Quarterly")!

**Purple (4209)(porphura)** is strictly speaking the [purple mussel](#), a type of shellfish found on the coasts of the Mediterranean which was the source of a reddish–purple dye highly valued in the ancient world and in the last of the last days (cf Rev 18:12). When this shellfish was crushed, it would give off yellow fluid which would turn to a purple or blue color based on the exposure to sunlight. If it was a cloudy day, it would turn purple. If it was a clear, sunny day, it would turn blue.

In the NT **porphura** is used of expensive garments made from cloth dyed purple. Twice used of the purple robe placed on Jesus to mock His royalty (Mk 15:17, 20), once for the rich man (Lk 16:19) and once for the ostentation in the last days, specifically describing the destruction of the great wealth of Babylon and the mourning and lamenting of the world's merchants over their loss! (Rev 18:11-12). Note that in Mt. 27:28, the same robe used to mock the King of kings was described as **scarlet** ([kokkinos](#) - also used in Rev 18:12) derived from a worm whose fluids were the sources of the scarlet dye. See how this ties in with the incredible statement of our Lord in Psalm 22:6 "**I Am a Worm!**"

**NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible** - Although imitation purple dye existed, the dominant source of the dye came from crushing murex shellfish around Tyre. It was necessarily expensive; one source estimates 10,000 shellfish to produce a single gram of the dye (**Ed**: Some write this made the dye more valuable than gold!). Robes so dyed not surprisingly carried a strong odor, but purple's expense made it a status symbol.

**Wikipedia** - The word 'purple' comes from the [Old English](#) word *purpul* which derives from [Latin](#) *purpura*, in turn from the [Greek](#) *porphura*, name of the [Tyrian purple dye](#) manufactured in classical antiquity from a mucus secreted by the [spiny dye-murex](#) snail. This dye was very costly and was used for the upper (outer) garment by the wealthy and princes (royal purple). They had three shades of purple (deep violet, deep scarlet or crimson, deep blue).

**Porphuria** - 4 uses in the NT (cf the derivative word "porphuropolis" used to describe Lydia "a seller of purple fabrics" - Acts 16:14)

Mark 15:17 They \*dressed Him up in purple, and after twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him;

Mark 15:20 After they had mocked Him, they took the purple robe off Him and put His own garments on Him. And they \*led Him out to crucify Him.

Luke 16:19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

Revelation 18:12-note (Context - the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with Babylon, will weep and lament over her fall and the merchants will mourn over the fact that their business is forever gone!) cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and **purple** and silk and scarlet ([kokkinos](#)), and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble

**Comment:** The adjective form of porphura, **porphurous**, is used in Rev 18:16-17a "Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in **fine linen** (bussinous adjective form of **bussos** -see below) and **purple** and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!" Just as the great Dives died in one hour, so too did Babylon the great! And such will be the case with all of the world's rich and riches! As John says the world is "passing away" (1 Jn 2:17). **The question is this - Are you banking on the world or you believing in the Messiah? It will determine your destiny just as it did for Dives and Lazarus!**

**Porphura** - 48x in 48v in the Septuagint - Used especially in the construction of God's Holy Tabernacle and the Holy Garments of the priests.

Exod. 25:4; 26:1,31,36; 27:16; 28:5,8,15,33; 31:4; 35:6,25; 36:35,37; 38:18; 39:1-3,5,8,24,29; 2 Chr. 2:7,14; 3:14; Prov. 31:22; Song. 7:5; Jer. 10:9; Ezek. 27:7; Dan. 5:7,16,29; 6:3;

Ex 25:4 (DESCRIBING THE CONTRIBUTION FROM THE PEOPLE FOR BUILDING GOD'S TABERNACLE) blue, purple and scarlet material, fine linen, goat hair,

Ex 26:1 "Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet material; you shall make them with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman.

Ex 39:1-3 Moreover, from the blue and purple and scarlet material, they made finely woven garments for ministering in the holy place as well as the holy garments which were for Aaron, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 2He made the ephod of gold, and of blue and purple and scarlet material, and fine twisted linen. 3Then they hammered out gold sheets and cut them into threads to be woven in with the blue and the purple and the scarlet material, and the fine linen, the work of a skillful workman.

**Brian Bill on fine linen** - He was not a "Fruit of the Loom" kind of guy! This linen was produced from the flax that grew on the banks of the Nile River. It was white, very soft, and kept him cool in the warm weather. Because it was so expensive, it was only worn by those who were really rich. Often it was just kings and queens who could afford it. This guy had it all and lived in dazzling splendor every day. While some people are quiet about their wealth, this man strutted around like a peacock. While some are able to splurge once in awhile, he lived in opulence every day. He wanted everyone to know how rich he was. He was in love with himself. He had servants galore, bountiful food, and a gorgeous home. ([What Happens When You Die?](#))

**He habitually dressed in...Fine linen** (only here in NT)([1040](#))(**bussos/byssos** from Hebrew word **byssus** = linen) is a shiny white cloth made from bleached flax. Linen was laborious to manufacture, but the fiber was very absorbent and garments made of linen were valued for their exceptional coolness and freshness in the hot weather of Palestine. Linen was so valuable that it was sometimes used as a form of currency in ancient Egypt. Egyptian mummies were wrapped in linen as a symbol of light and purity, and as a display of wealth. Today, linen is usually an expensive textile produced in relatively small quantities. The fine line would have been underneath the outer robe.

**Gene Brooks** - The fine linen refers to his undergarments. He had the best underwear money could buy. (**Ed:** No [humdrum](#) "Fruit of the Loom" for this rich man!)

**Bussos** - 40x in 38v in the Septuagint - Most often describing the fabrics used to construct God's Holy Tabernacle! That tells you how costly is this material!

Ex 25:4; Ex 26:1; Ex 26:31; Ex 26:36; Ex 27:9; Ex 27:16; Ex 27:18; Ex 28:5; Ex 28:6; Ex 28:8; Ex 28:15; Ex 28:33; Ex 28:39; Ex 31:4; Ex 35:6; Ex 35:23; Ex 35:25; Ex 35:35; Ex 36:35; Ex 36:37; Ex 38:9; Ex 38:16; Ex

38:18; Ex 38:23; Ex 39:2; Ex 39:3; Ex 39:5; Ex 39:8; Ex 39:24; Ex 39:28; Ex 39:29; 2 Chr. 2:14; 3:14; Pr. 31:22; Isa. 3:23; 19:9; Ezek. 16:10; 27:7

**Vincent on fine linen (bussos)** - A yellowish flax, and the linen made from it. Herodotus says it was used for enveloping mummies (2:86), a statement confirmed by microscopic examinations. He also speaks of it as a bandage for a wound (7:181). It is the word used by the Septuagint for linen (Ex 25:4; 28:5; 35:6, etc.). Some of the Egyptian linen was so fine that it was called **woven air**. Sir Gardner Wilkinson says that some in his possession was, to the touch, comparable to silk, and not inferior in texture to the finest **cambric**. It was often as transparent as lawn, a fact illustrated by the painted sculptures, where the entire form is often made distinctly visible through the outer garment. Later Greek writers used the word for cotton and for silk. See Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians," first series, iii., 114 sq., and Rawlinson's "History of Ancient Egypt," i., 487, 512. A yellow byssus was used by the Greeks, the material for which grew around Elis, and which was enormously costly. See Aeschylus, "Persae," 127.

**Joyously living in splendor every day** ("who feasted sumptuously **every day**" = NET; Lit., making merry in splendor.) - Not only is he living in luxury but every day is a day of lavish celebration. **NIDNTT** says that "such joy stems largely from those events and situations which give rise to **communal** rejoicing, such as a banquet." It is as if every day was a grand party for this man and his many guests! Think of the best, most costly celebration you might have perhaps one time in your life (e.g., a 50th wedding anniversary), and then picture this man having an even more costly celebration **EVERY DAY** of his life! Jesus is making the point that not only is he wealthy, but he "enjoyed" his wealth daily. As the commercial says "You only go around once. Grab for all the gusto you can!" To accomplish this goal one needs money, and **Dives** had plenty. And so Dives daily dived into decadence with delight! Sadly, like so many souls (contrast "many" in Mt 7:13-note and "few" in Mt 7:14-note), **Dives** traded temporal **GUSTO** for eternal **GEHENNA**! That's a very bad deal and surely those haunting memories (including "What if I had only....." Fill in blank - "listened," "believed," etc) will be part of the "torment" and "agony" every lost soul experiences in hell.

**Joyously** (2165)(**euphraino** from **eu** = well, good + **phren** = mind, intellect, disposition) means in active voice to make someone glad, to cheer someone up, but here it is in the passive voice mean to be glad, to be joyful, to celebrate or be jubilant. Luke uses euphraino 4 times with this sense in story of Prodigal son where it means to celebrate or to feast in token of joy (Lk 15:23, 24, 29, 32).

Luke used **euphraino** to describe another rich man who suffered the same fate as this rich man

'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and **be merry** (**euphraino**)." "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night **your soul is required of you**; and now who will own what you have prepared?' (Lk 12:19-20-note)

**Splendor** (only used here)(2988)(an adverb **lampros** from the noun **lampros** = shining, radiant resplendent, of Herod's robe - Lk 23:11, of angel's shining garment - Acts 10:30) means splendidly, in a sumptuous or opulent manner. It pertains to living in ostentatious luxury, with a desire to show off. Wycliffe, he ate, each day, shiningly. He was flamboyant in his materialistic lifestyle. **Do you know anyone who calls themselves Christian who lives this way? Woe!**

---

## A STUDY OF STRIKING CONTRASTS

**John MacArthur** summarizes fourteen striking contrasts between the **poor man** and the **rich man** in Luke 16:19-31:

1. The poor man then becomes rich; and the rich man becomes poor; and the poor man becomes richer than the rich man ever was; and the rich man becomes poorer than the poor man ever was.
2. You have a poor man on the outside of the house, and you have a rich man on the inside. Then comes death, and you have a poor man on the inside and rich man on the outside.
3. You have a poor man with no food, and a rich man with all the food he can possibly need; and then you have a poor man at the great heavenly banquet, and a rich man with absolutely nothing.
4. You have a poor man with needs, and a rich man with no needs; and then you have a poor man with no needs, and a rich man with needs.
5. You have a poor man who desires everything. You have a rich man who desires nothing, and then you have a rich man who will never have his desires fulfilled, and a poor man who has all his desires fulfilled.
6. You have a poor man who suffers, and a rich man who is satisfied; and then you have a rich man who suffers, and a poor man who's satisfied.
7. You have a poor man who's tormented, and a rich man who's happy; and then you have a poor man who's happy, and a rich man who's tormented.
8. You have a poor man who is humiliated, a rich man who's honored. Then you have a rich man who is humiliated, and a poor

man who is honored.

9. You have a poor man who wants a crumb, a rich man who feasts; and then you have a poor man who's at a feast, and a rich man who wants a drop of water.
10. You have a poor man who seeks help, a rich man who gives none. Then you have a rich man who seeks help, and a poor man who gives none.
11. You have a poor man who is a nobody, a rich man who is well-known; and then you have a poor man who has a name, and a rich man who has none.
12. You have a poor man who has no dignity in death, not even a burial. You have a rich man who has dignity in death.
13. Then you have a poor man who has dignity after death, and a rich man who has no dignity after death, not even a name.
14. You have a poor man with no hope, and a rich man with all hope. Then you have a rich man with no hope, and a poor man who is hope realized.

[\(A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1\)](#)

<b>SUMMARY OF LUKE 16:19-31 THE GREAT REVERSAL</b>	
<b>RICH MAN</b>	<b>LAZARUS</b>
<b>IN LIFE AND IN DEATH</b>	
<b>Nameless</b>	<b>Named Lazarus</b>
<b>Rich</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Healthy</b>	<b>Disabled</b>
<b>Lived in luxury</b>	<b>Lived as a beggar</b>
<b>Clothed in purple</b>	<b>Covered with sores</b>
<b>Died and was buried</b>	<b>Died and escorted to Paradise</b>
<b>His misery just begins</b>	<b>His misery ends forever</b>
<b>LIFE AFTER DEATH IN ETERNITY</b>	
<b>In Hell</b>	<b>In Paradise</b>
<b>Saw glory</b>	<b>Was in glory</b>
<b>Alone</b>	<b>Had fellowship</b>
<b>Burning sensation</b>	<b>Had water</b>
<b>Tormented</b>	<b>Comforted</b>
<b>Remembered former life</b>	<b>Was silent</b>
<b>Was fixed in hell</b>	<b>Was fixed in Paradise</b>
<b>Agonized for loved ones</b>	<b>Was settled in eternity</b>
<b>Begged for another chance</b>	<b>Was silently at peace</b>
<b>Unable to intercede for his family</b>	<b>At rest in God's promises</b>

**Luke 16:20 "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,**

KJV Luke 16:20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

- **And a poor man** Luke 18:35-43; 1 Samuel 2:8; James 1:9; 2:5
- **named Lazarus** Jn 11:1
- **was laid at his gate** laid Acts 3:2

- **covered with sores**, Luke 16:21; Job 2:7; Ps 34:19; 73:14; Isaiah 1:6; Jer 8:22
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hell in W G T Shedd's Dogmatic Theology](#) - one of the best on the subject of Hell
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur

**And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores**- How ironic and fascinating that in life only a relatively "thin" gate separated these two men, the richest of the rich from the poorest of the poor, but in death they were separated by a **great** gulf or **chasm** which could not be traversed (Lk 16:26-note.) What would you do if a poor man were laid at your front door? Or on the corner of your street or cul-de-sac?

Notice that the **poor man** never speaks. Jesus uses him to present the striking contrasts to the main character, the rich man. In other words, this story is not so much about the poor man's experience in Heaven but about the rich man's experience in Hell. The rich man is the one who speaks but not until he has arrived at his eternal destination in Hell. In fact in his speaking the rich man gives us the only testimony from Hell in all of the Bible which is why this story is so important. **This is the only warning from an occupant of Hell in all of Scripture and it needs to be carefully heard and heeded!**

**Poor** (4434) (**ptochos** from **ptosso** = crouch, cringe, cower down or hide oneself for fear, a picture of one crouching and cowering like a beggar with a tin cup to receive the pennies dropped in!) is an adjective which describes one who crouches and cowers and is used as a noun to mean **beggar**. These poor were unable to meet their basic needs and so were forced to depend on others for daily sustenance. Classical Greek used the **ptochos** to refer to a person reduced to total destitution, who crouched in a corner begging. As he held out one hand for alms he often hid his face with the other hand, because he was ashamed of being recognized.

**Lazarus** (2976) (**Lazaros**) from Hebrew **elazar** from **el** = God + **'azar** = help) means "helped of God," "God helps," "whom God helps," "assistance of God." In fact God helped him so much in Luke 16 that He gave this poor man the help every soul needs, eternal life! The Greek is *Lázaros* is an abridged form of the Hebrew name Eleazar, with a Greek termination. In the Septuagint and Josephus we find the forms *Eleazár*, and *Eleázaros*. The name was common among the Jews. Two men are so named in the New Testament. One is the poor beggar in the parable (Luke 16:19ff.), and the other is the citizen of Bethany residing with his two sisters, Mary and Martha, where Christ frequently visited. He was the one whom Jesus raised from the dead (John 11:1ff.).

**MacArthur** comments that "He was the no-name as far as the rich man was concerned; but as far as God was concerned, he had a name; and the rich man had no name. You have to have a name in Heaven. Nobody needs a name in hell."

**Lazarus** - 15x in 15v - not found in the Septuagint.

Lk. 16:20; Lk. 16:23; Lk. 16:24; Lk. 16:25; Jn. 11:1; Jn. 11:2; Jn. 11:5; Jn. 11:11; Jn. 11:14; Jn. 11:43; Jn. 12:1; Jn. 12:2; Jn. 12:9; Jn. 12:10; Jn. 12:17

[The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#) has an interesting note on **Lazarus** commenting that "since in Christ's kingdom of truth names indicate realities, this (name) was probably given because of its significance (**Ed**: Helped of God), suggesting the beggar's faith in God and patient dependence upon Him. It was this faith and not his poverty which at last brought him into Abraham's bosom. Not one word does Lazarus speak in the parable, and this may also be suggestive of patient submission. He does not murmur at his hard lot, nor rail at the rich man, nor after death triumph over him. The parable is related to that of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-21-note). This latter draws the veil over the worldling at death; the other lifts it. It is also a counterpart of that of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-13-note), **which shows how wealth may wisely be used to our advantage**, while this parable **shows what calamities result from failing to make such wise use of riches**. The great lesson is that our condition in Hades depends upon our conduct here (**ED**: CAUTION! OUR CONDUCT PER SE DOES NOT DETERMINE OUR DESTINY. FAITH IN CHRIST DOES. OF COURSE FAITH THAT IS GENUINE AND SAVING SHOWS IT'S "COLORS" BY ONE'S GENERAL CONDUCT - "TOWARD HEAVEN RATHER THAN TOWARD HELL" SO TO SPEAK - SANCTIFICATION IS ABOUT DIRECTION, NOT PERFECTION. WE ARE CREDITED WITH THE PERFECTION OF JESUS AT JUSTIFICATION WHICH IS REALIZED AT OUR GLORIFICATION. IN THE MEANTIME, PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION FOLLOWS HIS EXAMPLE, ALBEIT WITH SLIP-UPS, FOR ALL OF US BECAUSE OUR BODIES STILL HARBOR THAT OLD ADAMIC "REBEL" THE SIN NATURE)...Thus, Lazarus represents the pious indigent who stood at the opposite extreme from the proud, covetous, and luxury-loving Pharisee (JESUS NEVER CALLS HIM A PHARISEE, BUT HE IS SPEAKING TO THE PHARISEES AND SO CLEARLY THESE LOVERS OF MONEY

WERE IN VIEW IN THIS STORY). The parable made a deep impression on the mind of the church, so that the term "lazar," no longer a proper name, has passed into many languages, as in lazar house, lazaretto, also lazzarone, applied to the mendicants of Italian towns. There was even an order, half-military, half-monastic, called the Knights of Lazarus, whose special duty it was to minister to lepers.

Lazarus is the name of two men in the NT and both received **help** from God for both received life from Jesus - The poor man in Lk. 16:20,23-25; Mary and Martha's brother who was brought back to life by Jesus in Jn. 11:1-2,5,11,14,43; 12:1-2,9-10,17.

How interesting that the same adjective **ptochos** is used to describe the first beatitude in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount - clearly not only was Lazarus physically poor but he was **poor** in spirit and thus became far richer in death than the rich man was in life!

"Blessed are the **poor** (**ptochos**) in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Mt 5:3-[note](#))

**Was laid** (better = "was thrown"!)([906](#))(**ballo** - English "ballistics") in all its applications retains the idea of impulse (the idea of force and/or effort). Ballo is in the "Past perfect passive of the common verb ballō. He had been flung there and was still there, "as if contemptuous roughness is implied" (Plummer)" (A T Robertson) **Marvin Vincent** adds he was "cast carelessly down by his bearers and left there."

The verb **ballo** signifies that Lazarus was not gently laid down but was thrown down! Marvin Vincent agrees that he was "cast carelessly down by his bearers and left there." It was as if someone were casting off someone who was disgusting.

**Robertson** adds that the tense of the verb ballo is important because it is "Past perfect passive of the common verb ballō" signifying that "He had been flung there and was still there, "as if contemptuous roughness is implied" (Plummer)!"

**At his gate** - As **Robertson** says this pictures him "Right in front of the large portico or gateway, not necessarily a part of the grand house, porch in Matt. 26:71."

It seems clear that the poor man was dumped at the rich man's gate (where it would be impossible to see his horrible condition) for the express purpose of being seen by the rich man, so that he could have his needs met. As we see this is not come to pass. The rich man inside the gate has everything, while the poor man on the outside has nothing. These "tables" would soon be turned!

It was a large **gate** indicating he had a large house/mansion. However his mansion on earth would pale in comparison with the poor man's mansion in heaven for Jesus said "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:2-3, cf Rev 21:10-27). As an aside **Heaven** is described as a kingdom (2Pe 1:11), an inheritance (1Pe 1:4), a country (Heb 11:16), a city (Heb 11:16), and a home (Jn 14:2).

**Gate** ([4440](#))(**pulon** from **pule** = gate as in the narrow gate in Mt 7:13-[note](#)) is not just any gate but means a gate (or door) marked by impressive construction and stature. **Pulon** as also a gateway, portal, vestibule, the deep arch under which a gate opens (Mt. 26:71; Luke 16:20; Sept.: Jdg. 18:16, 17). In the Septuagint of Ge 43:19 **pulon** describes the gate that enters into Joseph's house, recalling that he was second only to the Pharaoh, so it would have been a magnificent gateway. Thus it is not surprising that **pulon** is used repeatedly in the description of the glorious gates that lead into the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-[note](#). Pulon is distinct from thura which is a common door. Ancient cities often had **gate** towers as part of their walled defenses. This was a conspicuous feature in the design of Solomon's fortress cities such as Megiddo and Hazor.

**Marvin Vincent** - The gateway, often separated from the house or temple. In Matt. 26:71, it is rendered porch.

**Louw-Nida** - doors or gates used to close off entrance ways—'door, gate.' πύλη and πυλῶνα may refer to house doors and gates or to large doors and gates such as were used in a palace, temple, or in a city wall.

**BDAG** - **1. an entrance that contains a gate or gates, gateway, entrance, gate** esp. of the large, impressive gateways at the entrance of temples and palaces (in contrast to **pule**); of Herod's temple=each gateway had two doors) of the entrances of the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21-[note](#)); of the magnificent city gates of Babylon (see [picture of the magnificent Ishtar Gate](#)); of Thebes its entrances shall never be shut Rev 21:25; Of the gates of a temple or of a city Acts 14:13. At the palace of the rich man Lk 16:20; at the apparently elegant residence of Mary the mother of John Mark Acts 12:13: p. (cp. Jos., 5, 202 s. above). Cp. vs. 14ab; also of Simon's house 10:17. The choice of diction contributes to the picture of Mary's and Simon's social status. Of prison gates AcPI Ha 3, 22 and 24 (text restored). **2. a gateway consisting of a forecourt, gateway, entrance separated fr. the house by a court** Peter leaves the court (vs. 69) and enters Mt 26:71, and finally leaves it (Mt 26:75)

**How ironic** that poor Lazarus sits covered with sores by an impressive **gate** and could not enter into the celebration inside those gates, and yet he had spiritually entered through narrow gate (the **pule**), while the rich man failed to humble himself and enter the humble gate described by Jesus in Mt 7:13-[note](#)! **Dear reader, you may have a magnificent entrance to your home, but have you**

bowed down and entered the narrow gate or have you entered the rich man's gate, the gate that "is wide and the way (that) is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it?"

**Pulon** - 18x in 12v - Mt. 26:71; Lk. 16:20; Acts 10:17; Acts 12:13; Acts 12:14; Acts 14:13; Rev. 21:12; Rev. 21:13; Rev. 21:15; Rev. 21:21; Rev. 21:25; Rev. 22:14

In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its **gates** will never be closed (Rev 21:25)

**Pulon** - 25x in 22v in the Septuagint -

Ge. 43:19; Jdg. 18:16; Jdg. 18:17; Jdg. 19:26; 1 Ki. 6:8; 1 Ki. 6:33; 1 Ki. 14:27; 1 Ki. 17:10; 2 Ki. 10:9; 2 Ki. 11:5; 1 Chr. 19:9; 1 Chr. 26:13; 2 Chr. 3:7; 2 Chr. 12:10; Ezek. 33:30; Ezek. 40:9; Ezek. 40:11; Ezek. 41:2; Zeph. 2:14

**MacArthur** - Now, the Pharisees would treat that poor man the same way the rich man treated him, which is another indictment of them; and that's the point of this story. The rich man is wicked, because he is so self-indulgent. He has no love, sympathy, interest, or compassion toward this suffering man. How religious are you if you do not **love your neighbor as yourself**? (Lev 19:18-note, Mt 19:19, 22:39, Mk 12:31, 33, Lk 10:27-note, Ro 13:9, Gal 5:14, James 2:8) He is like the priest in the Levite in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:32-note). Do you remember, the man was all beat up on the road; and the priest came by? Never did a thing for him. Then the Levite came by. Never did a thing for him (see Lk 10:30-37-note). This is another indictment of religious people who are indifferent to those in need, because their hearts have never been transformed by grace. Phony religion is detestable to God. The Pharisees were really into unrighteous mammon (Lk 16:9-note). When you go back into the earlier part of the chapter, at the end of Lk 16:13-note), Jesus said, "You cannot serve God in money." The Pharisees were serving money, not God; and the rich man provides a representative picture of these religious phonies. And so the rich gave Lazarus no help, even though he had to be aware of his suffering.

**Covered with sores** (only used here in Scripture)(1669)(**helkoo** from **helkos** = ulcer, sore in Lk 16:21) means to be afflicted with ulcers and sores. This verb which means to be ulcerated is common in the writings of [Hippocrates](#) and other ancient Greek medical writers.

The [perfect tense](#) signifies that at a point in time he had become afflicted with these ulcerating sores and that this was his present, permanent condition!

How did he become covered with sores? While we cannot be absolutely certain, the fact that he had been thrown there suggests he was paralyzed (see same verb ballo in Mt 8:6 describing the paralyzed servant) and unable to move. This state would have predisposed him to the horrible [decubitus ulcers \("bed sores"\)](#) I remember seeing when I did my Physical Medicine rotation. I saw sores the likes of which I have never seen since!

Did you notice the dramatic contrast? The rich man was "covered" in purple, while the poor man was covered with oozing ulcers! The former is oblivious to the latter who is lying in the very shadow of his fine estate. The implication is that surely the rich man must have seen Lazarus (and we know he did because he uses his name in Lk 16:23-24), but he was simply without any compassion. This reminds me of the famous passage in Micah 6:8-note (Note - These characteristics do not "earn" salvation which no one could do, but they should characterize all who have been saved through faith in Christ.)

He has told you, O man, what is good;  
And what does the LORD require of you  
But to do justice, to love kindness,  
And to walk humbly with your God?

**Luke 16:21 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.**

KJV Luke 16:21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

- **longing to be fed** 1 Cor 4:11; 2 Cor 11:27
- **with the crumbs** Mt 15:27; Mark 7:28; Jn 6:12

**And longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table**- The verb longing is a strong word, a word of passion, desire, even desperation as in the case of Lazarus. We see this same verb used in the story of the prodigal where Jesus



says "he **would have gladly** ([epithumeo](#)) filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. (Luke 15:16-note) "but the pods did not satisfy his hunger." (Vincent)

**The crumbs falling** - No word for "crumbs" but it is implied. The Greek literally reads "**the things falling**." So it refers to whatever fell off of the rich man's table.

**MacArthur** "sets the table" for us giving us some **cultural context** - Now, remember, the ancient world was not a sanitized world. The historian Jeremias writes "Guests at a meal used pieces of bread to clean their hands." In those days they ate with their hands, as most of the world has done for most of its history; and, typically, you took bread and you dipped it in some kind of stew or thick soup and you ate that way. It is a little messy; and they didn't have paper napkins so they used bread that was stale...So they would use the bread to clean their hands and then throw it under the table. You say, "Not at my house, they wouldn't."...They also had a built-in cleanup crew. Mt 15:26, Jesus says this, "'It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.'" What did Jesus mean "Throw it to the dogs"? In Mt 15:27 "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.'" Who's the cleanup crew? Dogs. ([A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#))

"[Beggars can't be choosers](#)" is the old saying that was literally true for Lazarus!

**Longing** (1937)([epithumeo](#) from [epí](#) = upon, used intensively + [thumós](#) = passion; cf [epithumia](#)) the preposition [epi](#) expresses motion toward or upon and thus means to set one's heart upon an object, either good (Mt 13:17, Lk 22:15 used of Jesus) or bad (1 Cor 10:6). **Epithumeo** is a strong impulse toward something so that one's passions are directed toward that object, thing or person, in this case **crumbs**. The [present tense](#) indicates that Lazarus was continually in a state of longing, continually sensing an emptiness in his stomach. Luke's other uses of [epithumeo](#) are found in Lk 15:16, Lk 22:15

**Besides, even** - (alla kai) - " Lit., but even. "**But** (instead of finding compassion), **even** the dogs," etc." (Vincent)

**Even the dogs were coming and licking his sores** - Note the pathetic paradox that the dog outside showed more compassion for Lazarus than did the rich man inside!

**MacArthur on the dogs** - the rich man has this big feast. The people are eating, taking the bread they needed to cleaning, throwing it under there. The dogs were coming and eating it; and the **poor man** would have given anything if he could have moved himself under the table with the dogs ... to get some of that dirty bread. That's how desperate this man was ...Dogs are always pictured as dirty. 2 Pe 2:22 says, "The dogs lick up their own vomit." He wanted to get down there with the dogs and eat the dirty bread. It reminds me of another man in the Luke 15:16, the prodigal son, who ended up eating with pigs. Such a humiliating and destitute situation. The poor man "road kill" so to speak. He's being treated as if he's dead by the rich man. That's how the Pharisees would treat him also. ([Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#))

**Dogs** (2965)([kuon](#)) ([See dictionary articles](#)) in the ancient word **dogs** here were non-domesticated, semi-wild, mangy, flea-bitten, vicious, starved scavengers, that tended to run in packs, dig through garbage and occasionally even attack humans.

**Keener** - The dogs here appear to be the usual kind Palestinian Jews knew: scavengers, viewed as if they were rats or other unhealthy creatures (also in the Old Testament, e.g., 1 Kings 14:11; 16:4; 21:24; 22:38). They were unclean, and their tongues would have stung his sores. (IVP Bible Background Commentary)

**NET Note** - The term **kunes** (plural of [kuon](#)) refers to "wild" dogs (either "street" dogs or watchdogs), not house pets. When the dogs came and licked his sores it meant that he was unclean. See the negative image of Rev 22:15-[note](#) that draws on this picture.

**Brian Bell** says "Listen to the Lord's [pathos](#) here: beggar, full of sores, laid at the gate, crumbs, top it off with dogs licking sores

**Marvin Vincent on licked** - Cyril, cited by Hobart, says: "The only attention, and, so to speak, medical dressing, which his sores received, was from the dogs who came and licked them."

**Licked his sores** - [imperfect tense](#) means over and over - you can see them licking the surface of his sores.

**A T Robertson** - It is not clear whether the licking of the sores by the dogs added to the misery of Lazarus or gave a measure of comfort, as he lay in his helpless condition. "Furrer speaks of witnessing dogs and lepers waiting together for the refuse" (Bruce).

**Sores** (1668)([helkos](#)) strictly means a wound but by [metonymy](#) it can refer to an ulcer or an abscess. In the Septuagint **helkos** of sores in God's plague in Egypt (Ex 9:9-11, God's prophetic punishment on disobedient Israel - Dt 28:27, 35), of boils some related to leprosy (Lev 13:18-20, 22-23) which would be God's judgment. In Job 2:7 "Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore **boils** from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head."

The only other uses describe the punishment of God to those who worship the [Antichrist](#) during the [Great Tribulation](#) and those who steadfastly refuse to repent even in the face of clear judgment.

Rev 16:2-[note](#) So the first angel went and poured out his bowl (FIRST OF THE HORRIBLE FINAL BOWL JUDGMENTS) on the earth; and it became a [loathsome](#) and [malignant sore \(helkos\)](#) on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

Rev 16:11-[note](#) and they [blasphemed](#) the God of heaven because of their pains and their **sores (helkos)**; and they did not [repent](#) of ([active voice](#) = by an act of their will they refused to turn from) their (EVIL) deeds.

**Comment:** Note that (1) they recognized God, (2) they rightly knew He was in heaven, (3) they have a golden opportunity to repent (cf Rev 14:6-7-[note](#)) and yet (4) they refused to repent. Their necks were stiff and their hearts were callous, like stone, and they made a conscious choice ([active voice](#) = a choice of their will!) to blaspheme God instead of turning from their sin and to God. The pain should have driven them to God but they steadfastly refused to turn to Him. Their choice would gain them not just temporal torment they experienced on earth, but eternal torment in hell away from the presence of the One they blasphemed, the very One Who created them in His image. Amazing! And amazingly tragic!

**Helkos** - 14x in 13v in the Septuagint - Ex 9:9; 9:10; 9:11; Lev. 13:18; 13:19; 13:20; 13:22; 13:23; 13:27; Dt. 28:27; 28:35; 2 Ki. 20:7; Job 2:7

**Luke 16:22** "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.

KJV Luke 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

- **the poor man died** Job 3:13-19; Isaiah 57:1,2; Rev 14:13
- **was carried away by the angels** Ps 91:11,12; Mt 13:38-43; 24:31; Heb 2:14
- **Abraham's bosom** Mt 8:11; Jn 13:23; 21:20
- **the rich man also died** Luke 12:20; Job 21:13,30-32; Ps 49:6-12,16-19; 73:18-20; Pr 14:32; Mark 8:36; James 1:11; 1 Pe 2:24
- **and was buried** 2 Kings 9:34,35; Ecclesiastes 8:10; Isaiah 14:18; 22:16
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## TWO DEATHS, TWO DESTINIES: PARADISE OR PEDITON

**Now the poor man died... and the rich man also died and was buried**- This is the beginning of the great reversal! And it is a permanent reversal for where death finds you, eternity binds you, putting every man in his proper place for eternitiy. The poor man is now in Heaven. And notice there is no record of poor man being buried. As a beggar he probably did not have a decent burial but his body may well have been tossed into the Valley of Hinnon where perpetual fire burned the garbage of Jerusalem and anything deemed unclean including the bodies of executed criminals as well as individuals denied a proper burial. On the other hand, the **rich man** was buried. One has to wonder what the rich man's burial cost? But notice the other contrast that Jesus begins to develop - when the poor man died, his suffering was forever finished, but when the rich man died, his torment was just beginning and would last forever! Woe!

**William Barclay** entitles this section "The Punishment of the Man Who Never Noticed."

**Died** (599)([apothnesko](#) from **apo** = marker of dissociation implying a rupture from a former association, separation, departure, cessation + **thnesko** = die) literally means to die off (that is, to die and thus be *away from* this earthly realm). [Apothnesko](#) speaks of literal physical death (Ro 6:9-[note](#))

**Mike Andrus** - "Both men are conscious in the after-life. Is there life after death? You bet there is! Jesus indicates in the story that there are feelings; there are thoughts; there are hopes and aspirations; there is the ability to communicate; and for some there is the bitterest of disappointments." ([Sermon](#))

**Rich man** (4145)([plousios](#) from **ploutos** = wealth, abundance, riches) is an adjective which defines that which exists in a large amount with implication of its being valuable. Literally **plousios** refers to having an abundance of earthly possessions that exceeds normal experience.

**Was carried away by the angels** - Was he carried in bodily form? We cannot say although John MacArthur thinks he was. Remember that one has to be cautious in interpreting every detail of a parable. In any event he was carried away to paradise (Abraham's bosom).

**MacArthur** goes on to add that there is "nothing in the Bible says that angels carry our bodies to Heaven. This is just the story Jesus tells. In fact, when believers die, their spirit goes to Heaven, and their body goes in the ground or into the crematorium. We don't go to Heaven intact, body, soul, and spirit, but in the story, that's what happened for the sake of the point. This man is gathered by the angels and lifted into Heaven to the side of Abraham. There's no Biblical precedent for that being a normal kind of experience. This is Jesus using a story to convey a point."

This passage is where we get the idea that when any person dies the angels transport them through the so-called "pearly gates" (cf Rev 21:21-see interesting [note](#) on the possible symbolism of the pearls) and into the presence of the Lord.

Paul teaches that when we fall asleep in Jesus we are absent from the body and present with the Lord writing that "we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be **absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord**" (2 Cor 5:8-[note](#))

While there is no other Scripture that describes angels carrying believers to heaven, remember that clearly angels help men as shown in the following passages

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you, that **their angels** in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven. (Mt 18:10)

**MacArthur** - the angels that are serving God in the care of believers, always look at the face of God, so they can read His concern for His own children and be dispatched to their aid when necessary.

Are **they** (ANGELS) not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service ([diakonia](#)) for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? (Heb 1:14)

Imagine the shock of the Pharisees as Jesus described this beggar instead of having his body picked up by the garbage collectors and thrown into the Valley of Hinnom, (1) was transported by angels (2) to Abraham's bosom! These two things would be unthinkable in their mind, for as noted they considered the poor to be cursed by God, not blessed (see the question from His own disciples as they passed a man blind from birth - Jn 9:1-2 - they ascribed his condition to sin which is what the Pharisees surely thought explained Lazarus' condition)!

Notice how Jesus does not yet reveal the fate of the **rich man** immediately but simply states **and he was buried** (so far so good). It is as if He is letting the Pharisees be shocked by degrees, so to speak. He knew the next statement would illicit an even greater degree of shock from the Pharisees.

**Keener** writes that "Jewish lore often speaks of the righteous being carried away by angels; Jesus spares his hearers the traditional corresponding image of the wicked being carried away by demons. Every person, no matter how poor, was to receive a burial, and not to be buried was seen as terrible (e.g., 1 Kings 14:13). But Lazarus, having neither relatives nor charitable patron, did not receive one, whereas the rich man would have received great eulogies. True Israelites and especially martyrs were expected to share with Abraham in the world to come." (IVP Background Commentary)

**To Abraham's bosom** - This is the only use of this phrase in the Bible. Some interpret this a figurative language which speaks of where Abraham the believer went after he died. MacArthur on the other hand explains that Jesus is "saying that when this despicable outcast died, he went immediately to the side of Abraham; and Abraham, in the Jewish thinking, was the most elevated person who'd ever lived. The father of the entire Jewish race, and the father of faith and the faithful, the greatest hero in Judaism."

The words of Bliss' hymn "I Will Sing of My Redeemer" ([Play Fernando Ortega's beautiful vocal version](#)) would be apropos to Lazarus...

I will praise my dear Redeemer,  
His triumphant power I'll tell,  
How the victory He giveth  
Over sin and death and hell.

**Vincent** on **Abraham's bosom** - A Rabbinical phrase, equivalent to being with Abraham in Paradise. "To the Israelite Abraham seems the personal centre and meeting-point of Paradise" (Goebel).

**Brian Bill** on **Abraham's bosom** - True Israelites were expected to share with Abraham in the world to come (The Jewish people believed that they were saved by virtue of their descent from Abraham, which constituted them the chosen people.). Abraham is

regarded in Scripture as being not only the great patriarch (Hebrews 7:4) but also the father of all believers (Romans 4:11). To be considered a friend of Abraham was the highest honor possible and true happiness would be to spend eternity at his side. Some of your Bibles indicate that he went to "**Abraham's bosom**." In that culture the most honored seat in a banquet would be nearest to the host, reclining in such a way that one's head was near his chest. The one who had yearned to receive crumbs and scraps is now feasting at Heaven's table. ([What Happens When We Die?](#))

**Gotquestions** says that **Abraham's bosom** means "that Lazarus went to a place of rest, contentment, and peace." ([What is Abraham's Bosom?](#))

**Gary Inrig on Abraham's bosom** - the expression is a vivid way of saying that Lazarus is exalted to a position of the highest honor and intimacy in the heavenly fellowship of the saints. No greater reversal of fortunes can be imagined. Lazarus has been transported from the gutter to heaven's head table. Marvelous as this description is, it pales alongside later revelations about the destiny of believers. We do not depart to be with Abraham and the righteous saints, but to be with the Lord Jesus (Philippians 1:23). We do not enter the home of Abraham, but rather are "at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8) in the Father's house (John 14:2). We share the very highest place a creature can experience

**Bosom** (lap) ([2859](#)) ([kolpos](#)) refers to the front of the body between the arms and so the bosom, breast, or chest (Jn 13:23 = a place of honor and close fellowship at a meal. cf Lk 16:22-23 = a place of honor among the righteous dead and Jn 1:18 = close beside the Father). **Abraham's bosom** is an expression Jews used to refer to God's presence, where the privileged enjoyed God's feast with Abraham. The image also refers to the Jewish custom of reclining at a banquet on couches. Lazarus finally got to enjoy that meal that he had longed for so long (Luke 16:21; John 13:23). Lazarus is next to the host, the place of honor.

**Steven Cole** - Jesus makes it plain that there are two eternal destinies, heaven and hell. Heaven is pictured in the parable in the common Jewish symbolism as a Messianic banquet (Lu 13:28-29). At a banquet in that culture, the guests reclined at the table in such a manner that you could lean back upon the breast of the one near you to engage in intimate conversation. Lazarus is pictured at the banquet next to Abraham, the father of the faith, enjoying rest, comfort, and fellowship, delivered from the trials he had known in this life. While we won't be eating perpetually throughout eternity (although that might be heaven for some!), that is the picture here to show us that it will be a place of eternal rest and enjoyment. Whatever heaven is like, you can be sure that it will not be boring! The idea of sitting on a cloud strumming a harp forever and ever doesn't sound very exciting! But Paul says that we will judge angels (1Co 6:3). While we don't know all that God has prepared for those who love Him, we do know that He will give us meaningful and fulfilling activity. I believe that God has given us the most enjoyable activities on this earth as a little foretaste of what heaven will be like. We will be free from all sin and the devastating consequences of sin, both our own sins and the sins of others against us. God Himself will dwell among us and there will be no mourning or crying or pain (Rev 21:3-4). Heaven will be infinitely better than the best life that you can imagine on this fallen earth!

**Ray Stedman** - There are symbols in this story. "**Abraham's bosom**" is one. Obviously we cannot take that literally. The righteous dead do not go and rest upon Abraham's bosom: There simply is not room for them all there. But the phrase indicates that where Abraham, the father of the faithful, is, there these righteous dead are also.

**Brian Bell** describes **Abraham's bosom** - where there's no more begging, no more sores, no more outside the gate, no more crumbs to fend for, no more hunger! 3.16.1. Note my view! Paradise, Abraham's bosom, heaven, God's throne are all synonymous. "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in **Paradise**." (Luke 23:43 ) Paul was "caught up into Paradise" (2 Cor 12:4). "To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (Rev 2:7)

**The rich man also died and was buried** - The rich received lavish burials. This man would have undoubtedly had long eulogies lauding his "blessed" life at the very time he had passed into his forever cursed life! But he dies as he lived, with no provision for his soul. Money and luxury did not follow him past the grave.

As **Brian Bill** says "When the rich man died he had a fantastic funeral. In that culture, when wealthy people passed away, the family hired mourners, purchased costly spices for the body and used an elaborate tomb for the burial. The whole town turned out for the funeral and listened to the shrieks and lamentations of the professional weepers and the litany of praise heaped upon the rich man by countless eulogies. He learned too late that "he who dies with the most toys...still dies." ([What Happens When We Die?](#))

---

Listen to **Steven Curtis Chapman's** ([read the moving Wikipedia biography about the tragic loss of his daughter](#)) song "**That's Paradise!**"

Jimmy and Mary were quite a pair back in their younger days  
They met a married in six weeks time and  
That was sixty years ago this May  
Four kids made a house a home and a love for Jesus kept them strong

Now every morning at eight A.M. Jimmy takes a drive through town  
He spends his days at Mary's side In a home for the old and broken down  
With a cane in his lap and a Bible in his hand He reads her stories about the promised land  
And with tears in their eyes they dream of a place  
Where everything changes in the light of Jesus' face  
and

**That's paradise...**

**Hey, that's paradise...**

**When the life breaks through and the old's made new**

**And the joy will never die, that's paradise**

In another corner of this world, met another man named Jim  
Told me how twenty years of running from God Had finally gotten the best of him  
He said all hope was gone and he wanted to die 'Cause what could God do with such a messed up guy  
So we talked about Jesus, God's love and His plan And when Jim walked away he was a brand new man

Now listen, Well I know the best remains to be seen  
In a place that's far beyond our wildest dreams  
But until we see heaven we've got Jesus' world  
That He'll never leave us and each prayer will be heard

---

## DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

**Steven Cole** on the doctrine of eternal punishment - Scholars debate whether **Hades** (and the Hebrew **Sheol**) was the abode of all the dead, with separate compartments for the righteous and the wicked, or whether it refers only to the place for the wicked dead. We can't be dogmatic about such specifics, but we can say with certainty that hell is a real place and that you don't want to spend eternity there! Sometimes cartoons picture hell as a place where the wicked party throughout eternity, while the righteous sit around bored on a cloud in heaven. Mark Twain said, "I'll take Heaven for the climate and Hell for society." But there won't be any society in hell!

Jesus uses awful word pictures to teach us that it isn't going to be a fun place. He refers to it as the **outer darkness**, where there is **weeping and gnashing of teeth** (Mt 25:30). He cites Is 66:24, describing hell as a place "**where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched**" (Mk 9:48-[note](#)). He says that it would be better to have a millstone hung around your neck and be thrown into the sea than to go into **the unquenchable** (Greek = [asbestos](#) = inextinguishable - used 4x = Mt 3:12 Mk 9:43 9:45 Lu 3:17; no uses in [Septuagint](#)) **fire** (Mk 9:43) (See ISBE entry [unquenchable fire](#)). The flames of hell may, like the golden streets of heaven, be symbolic. But if so, they are a most frightening symbol to warn us that hell will be a place of awful torment. The rich man in the parable says, "I am in agony in this flame" (Lu 16:24). If it were a fun place, he would want his brothers to join him for the party. But he doesn't want them to "come to this place of torment" (Lu 16:28)...**So while it is a hard doctrine to fathom, both intellectually and emotionally, we cannot say that we believe in Jesus and the Bible and at the same time reject the doctrine of eternal hell. There are two and only two eternal destinies.**

**Luke 16:23 "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.**

KJV Luke 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

- **In Hades he lifted up his eyes** Ps 9:17; 16:10; 49:15; 86:13; Pr 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:24; Isaiah 14:9,15; Mt 5:22,29; 18:9; 23:33; 1 Cor 15:55; \*marg;; 2 Pe 2:4; Rev 20:13,14
- **being in torment** Luke 16:28; 8:28; Mt 8:29; Rev 14:10,11; 20:10+
- **saw Abraham far away** Luke 13:28,29; Mt 8:11,12
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hell in W G T Shedd's Dogmatic Theology](#) - one of the best on the subject of Hell
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur

- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#)- John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#)- John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#)- John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#)- John MacArthur

## SHOCK AND SURPRISE UPON FINDING ONESELF IN HELL

**Erwin Lutzer** comments on the phrase **in Hades** and points out that we need to understand that "the rich man of Luke 16 was not yet in **hell**, but **hades**. Because the King James Version often translated both **sheol** and **hades** as **hell**, this has needlessly confused two different kinds of regions. The Bible seems clear that **no one is yet in (eternal) hell today**. Someday, hades will be thrown into hell, but that has as yet not happened (Revelation 20:14-[note](#)). What about the believer, Lazarus? He was in that region of sheol, or hades, which is called here "Abraham's bosom." But after the Ascension of Christ believers are said to go directly into heaven. In other words, the two regions of hades no longer exist side by side; there is reason to believe that Abraham's bosom is in heaven today. So if you die and your spirit goes to heaven, I believe you will not be able to see those who are suffering in hades as Lazarus did. Perhaps at the ascension, Christ took those who were in Abraham's bosom (located near those who suffered in hades) to heaven with him. So Abraham's bosom, paradise, and heaven all refer to the same abode, namely the place of bliss in the presence of God. As Paul says, "To be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). Hades, as far as we know, now has only one region, and that is where unbelievers enter. I believe it is still an abode for departed spirits, a temporary intermediate state where those who have not received God's forgiveness must wait until further notice. When they hear their names called, the news that awaits them will not be encouraging." (Borrow [One Minute After You Die](#))

**Listen to Erwin Lutzer's message on youtube entitled** - you might let some of your skeptical friends listen to Dr Lutzer's message!

- [One Minute After You Die - A Preview of Your final destination](#)

**In Hades he lifted up his eyes** - Death is the door into eternity for every soul - either into heaven or hell. As someone has said "Hell is truth seen too late!" This rich man had died physically but now saw truth that he was clearly alive in Hades. He was conscious, conscious of self, able to see, to feel, to speak, to remember, with immediate awareness of where he was. There is no Biblical basis for the notion that death is an unconscious state. There is no such thing as **soul sleep** ([see note](#)). In hell there will be immediate and continued consciousness and awareness of where one is. This is a story about a **rich man** who thought he was going to Heaven and ended up in hell. And tragically, this will be the common experience of many if not most of the occupants of hell who find that "Too Late" is written on the gates of Hell! As noted earlier most surveys show that the large majority of people polled think they will go to heaven when they die. As John Blanchard says "To believe in Heaven but not in Hell is to declare that there were times when Jesus was telling the truth and times when He was lying."

**Wiersbe** - Death takes place when the spirit leaves the body (James 2:26). But death is not the end; it is the beginning of a whole new existence in another world. For the Christian, death means to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:21). For the unbeliever, death means to be away from God's presence and in torment. The King James Version uses the word hell in Luke 16:23, but the Greek word is not "hell" but "hades." It is the temporary realm of the dead as they await the judgment. The permanent place of punishment for the lost is "hell," the lake of fire. One day, death will give up the bodies and hades will give up the souls (Rev. 20:13, where "hell" should be "hades"), and the lost will stand before Christ in judgment (Rev. 20:10-15+). From our Lord's description, we learn that hades had two sections: a paradise portion called "Abraham's bosom," and a punishment portion. It is believed by many theologians that our Lord emptied the paradise part of hades when He arose from the dead and returned to the Father (John 20:17; Eph. 4:8-10). We know that today "paradise" is in heaven, where Jesus reigns in glory (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:1-4). There is no indication in Scripture that souls in heaven can communicate with people in hades or with people on earth. (Ibid)

The fact that the rich man saw Lazarus in heaven indicates that this is a story which Jesus used to teach spiritual truth. **MacArthur** explains that there is nothing in the Bible "to indicate that somebody in hell could look into Heaven, find father Abraham, stop him from walking down the golden streets, and ask him a question....No one in hell is omniscient, so they would not be able to see into Heaven and look around until they found Abraham. They would not know who Abraham was. No one in hell can have a conversation with somebody in Heaven. Everything in the experience of a person in hell is confined to hell. Everything in the experience of a person in Heaven is confined to Heaven...But for the sake of the story, Jesus says the rich man sees Abraham; and he knows it is Abraham; and he sees Lazarus beside him."

Note that "**lifted his eyes**" does not indicate a geographic location for Hades. In other words this does not mean that hell is in the heart of the earth and Abraham's bosom is up in the clouds! We simply cannot say from this text for that would be speculation.

**Hades** is more of a "holding cell" for unbelievers until their final judgment at the Great White Throne. That's why in Revelation 20:14, **Hades** as a place that holds condemned sinners is also said to be thrown into the lake of fire.

As the rich man (and all who refuse to repent) discovered

It does not require a decision to go to hell.

**Mark Hitchcock** rightly states that "Hell is what we earn. "For the wages of sin is death" (Ro 6:23a). Heaven is what God gives us as a free gift by His grace. "But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23b). Our admission price to heaven was paid in full by the blood of Jesus Christ. Make sure you have accepted it before it's too late. (55 Questions to Life after Death)

As **John Hannah** says "No one who is ever in hell will be able to say to God, "You put me here," And no one who is in heaven will ever be able to say, "I put myself here."

**Gene Brooks** - Jesus reverses what the Pharisees taught that the rich were loved by God and the poor hated.

**Tony Evans** - Notice that this man's thoughts were clear, his emotions were intact, and his mind was fully functional. The idea of hell as a place where people are out of their minds, screaming insanely with fire bursting out of them, is more of a medieval teaching than an accurate biblical understanding.

**Brian Bell** on **Hades** - The other place, the bad place, "H. E. double toothpicks", Hell, Hades, the underworld, place of punishment, place of perdition.

**Henry Alford** - The most dreadful torment of the lost, in fact that which constitutes their state of torment, will be this coming to themselves, when too late for repentance.

In Luke 13 Jesus describes those separated from God as able to **see** all of the Jewish Patriarchs...

"In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out. (Lk 13:28-note)

Undoubtedly a major component of the torment is the awareness of separation from the presence of God. Paul alludes to this in Second Thessalonians

"For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well 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.** (2 Th 1:6-9)

**Scott Ardavanis** - We have so trivialized the word that we have stripped hell of its Biblical meaning. John Blanchard states, "When fifteen people were killed and 186 injured in a collision involving 75 vehicles in Tennessee, a fireman described the scene as 'three miles of hell.' During the Persian Gulf War in 1991, CNN reporter Bernard Shaw described the bombing of Baghdad by saying, 'This feels like we're in the center of hell.' At a funeral service for millionaire Malcolm Forbes, his son Robert addressed his dead father with the words, 'It's been a hell of a party-thanks for the trip.'" (Blanchard, 16-17) However, others have become exaggerated in their efforts to describe hell's horror. One preacher speaks of the "wicked hanging by their tongues by hooks while the flaming fire torments them from beneath." Another says, "The flames of fire gush from ears, eyes and nostrils and out of every pore"—ridiculous. These kinds of statements go beyond a sobered, Biblical approach. This is a more vivid imagination than what is revealed in Scripture. (Donnelly 1987) ([A Sermon from Hell](#))

**MacArthur** - How do you describe hell? Conscious torment. A believer who dies is immediately in the conscious fellowship and joys of the heavenly experience. The damned are immediately in the conscious experience of pain, torment, torture. That the rich and Lazare are where they are and experiencing what they are is a major point of Jesus' story. This is how it really is!

**Being** (5225) (**huparcho** from **hupó** = under + **árcho** = begin or **arche** = beginning) means literally to begin under and then to exist and in the present tense signifies continually existing in this state of torment!

**Torment** (931) (**basanos** cp "**touchstone**" - basanite, Latin = lapis Lydius) is used only 3x in the NT (Mt 4:24 = "pains" [NAS]; Lk 16:23 16:28) and originally referred to a stone used for testing gold and other metals, and then came to mean applying torture (e.g., [the torture-rack](#)) to question and extort prisoners' confessions. Therefore "**basanos**" must refer to **a most extreme form or degree of human suffering - severe pain associated with torture and torment!**

- See also discussion of the verb form [basanizo](#)

**BDAG** describes **basanos** as "severe pain occasioned by punitive torture" and records an ancient writing from Herodas describing torture ordered by a court to exhort a confession. Specific torments in the Luke passage (Lk 16:19-31) are the flame, in agony, the sight of the righteous, thirst, the victims' memories of their previous lives, and the realization that they are in a hopeless situation.

**NIDNTT** on **basanos** - The noun βάσανος, attested as early as the 6th cent. BC in the poetry of Theognis, is thought to be a loanword (poss. from Egyp. bḥn, "basalt"). It orig. referred to a touchstone, i.e., a hard black stone used to test the quality of gold or silver by inspecting the streak left on the stone surface (Pindar Pyth. 10.67, πειρ νη δ κα χρυσις ν βασάν πρέπει κα νόος ρθός, "gold shows itself [genuine] when tried by a touchstone, and [so does] a right mind"). By metonymy, the word itself came to mean "test, trial," and was used esp. of "questioning, inquiry" (Hdt. 8.110.2, Themistocles sent some men τοσι πίστευε σιγνς πσαν βάσανον, "whom he trusted to remain silent in all interrogation"); and because of the usual procedures in such questioning, it further developed the sense "torture," and thence more generally "torment." The derived vb. βασανίζω ("to test, examine, question by torture, torture"), attested early as well, occurs freq. (for its use with ref. to illness see G. H. R. Horsley, NewDocs 4 [1987]: 142). The noun βασανιστής ("examiner, torturer") is found fewer than 10× in the class. period (only Antiphon, Isocr., Demosth.) 1 In the LXX the noun βάσανος occurs c. 60×, but more than 40 of the occurrences are found in 4 Maccabees, in connection with the **tortures** suffered by the Jewish martyrs under the Seleucids (e.g., 4 Macc 4:26; 5:6; cf. 2 Macc 7:8)...The combined uses of βασανισμός and βασανίζω in the book of Revelation account for half of the NT occurrences of the word group and thus call for special comment. In Rev 9:5, the noun is used twice and the vb. once when describing the torments that were brought about by the locusts after the fifth angel sounded his trumpet (here the sense of the noun may be act., "the act of inflicting torment," but elsewhere pass., "the experience of suffering torment"; cf. BDAG 168). The vb. is used of the torment that the two witnesses or prophets brought on the earth (Rev 11:10), of the pain experienced by the "woman clothed with the sun" when she gave birth (Rev 12:2), and of the eternal torment that comes upon the devil, the beast, the false prophet, and those who worship the beast (Rev 14:10 [with the noun in v. 11, "the smoke of their torment will rise forever"]; Rev 20:10+). Finally, βασανισμός is applied to the punishment for which Babylon the Great is destined (Rev 18:7, 10, 15). (Moses Silva)

**TDNT** on **basanos** - The βάσανος originally belongs to the calling of the inspector of coins. It is linked with the Heb. root יב (to test") and the Egyptian bḥn; ("basalt"). According to K. Sethe. bhn is the word which underlies the Heb. יב and the Gk. βάσανος. βάσανος is generally accepted to be a loan word. βασανίτης is most closely related to it. Βασανίτου λίθου ρος is the mountain of the bḥn stone. R. Herzog thinks that he may deduce from the etymological development that the ars spectandi, the testing of gold and silver as media of exchange by the proving stone, was first developed by the Babylonians, then came to the Aramaeans and Hebrews by way of Lydia (Λυδίαλίθος [Bacchyl. Fr., 14, 1, Blass]; βάσανος, Bacchyl., 8, 58), and from them to the Gks. In non-biblical Gk. βάσανος is a commercial expression, or is used in relation to government. It then acquires the meaning of the checking of calculations, which develops naturally out of the basic sense of βάσανος, βασανίζειν (P. Oxy., 58, 25 [288 A.D.]). In the spiritual sphere it has the figur., sense, which is closely related to the original concrete meaning, of a means of testing (Anth. Pal., VII, 54: νδρ ν κρινομένων ν βασάν σοφίης). The word then undergoes a change in meaning. The original sense fades into the background. βάσανος now comes to denote "torture" or "the rack," espec. used with slaves (P. Lille, I, 29, 22; Ditt. Syll.3, 356, 12). βάσανος occurs in the sense of "torment" in Theocr. Idyll., 13, p. 13, 5, Meineke; Thom. Mag., p. 94, 4, Ritschl; Demetr. Eloc., 201, 4. An inscription from Cyprus (Salamis), BCH, 51 (1927), 148, 18, contains the malediction: ν βασάνοις πόλοισο. Vet. Val., IV, 13, p. 182, 19, Kroll has a reference to torments of soul (ψυχικς βασάνους). **The change in meaning is best explained if we begin with the object of treatment. If we put men instead of metal or a coin, the stone of testing become torture or the rack.** The metal which has survived the testing stone is subjected to harsher treatment. Man is in the same position when severely tested by torture. In the testing of metal an essential role was played by the thought of testing and proving genuineness. The rack is a means of showing the true state of affairs. In its proper sense it is a means of testing and proving, though also of punishment. Finally, even this special meaning was weakened and only the general element of torment remained.

**Wiersbe** - The word **torment** is used four times in this account, and it speaks of definite pain. This is the same word that is used for the doom feared by the evil spirits (Mark 5:7) and the judgments God will send on an unrepentant world (Rev. 9:5; 11:10; 20:10+). If hell is the permanent prison of the damned, then hades is the temporary jail, and the suffering in both is very real. People ask, **"How can a loving God even permit such a place as hell to exist, let alone send people there?"** But in asking that question, they reveal that they do not understand either the love of God or the wickedness of sin. God's love is a *holy* love ("God is light," 1 John 1:5), not a shallow sentiment, and sin is rebellion against a holy and loving God. God does not "send people to hell." They send themselves there by refusing to heed His call and believe on His Son. The "unbelieving" are named second on the list of the people who go to hell, even before the murderers and the liars (Rev. 21:8; also see John 3:18-21, 36). (Ibid)

**Hades** (86)(**hades**) is the transliteration of the Greek word **Hades** (from **a** = negative + **eido** = to see) literally means "not seen" or "unseen". The understanding of Hades is somewhat confusing, as it changes meaning somewhat from as one moves from the uses in the Old Testament into the uses in the New Testament .

That said, in the OT **Hades** was used most often to describe the region of ALL departed souls. Everyone who die, whether righteous



or unrighteous, is described as departing to **Hades**. But as we move into the NT, we see the progressive revelation of the term, so that **Hades** gains a more restricted sense and refers not to the place of ALL who die (believers and unbelievers as in the OT) but only to the abode of unbelievers. In other words, in the NT **Hades** comes to be synonymous with what we refer to as Hell. But to confuse the picture a little, you must realize that even in this sense of meaning "Hell" **Hades** is only a "temporary holding tank" so to speak, because as shown in Rev 20:14 (see below) **Hades** ceases to exist for it is thrown into the Lake of fire. Don't be confused. Hell is permanent and in Scripture is clearly described as such. The unrighteous dead will be resurrected in their bodies (The "Second Resurrection" - see [Births, Deaths, and Resurrections](#)) at the Great White Throne judgment in Revelation 20:11-15+ and after being judged for their deeds in the body (to determine the degree of punishment in Hell), they are thrown into the Lake of fire which is synonymous with [Gehenna](#). And as discussed below, **Hades** is also thrown into the Lake of fire (thus the reason it is referred to as temporary) and is never again described in Scripture.

Other thoughts on Hades - In Homer **hades** is spelled **Haidēs** and means obscure, dark, invisible. **Hades** is used in the Septuagint where it translates the Hebrew words for **Sheol** and for **death**, once for silence (Ps 94:17, 115:17). **Hades** was the name of Greek god of underworld and then the term for the underworld itself. **Hades** is pictured as a prison for which Jesus holds the keys (Rev 1:18-[see note](#)).

Many interpret Luke 16 as supporting the teaching that there are 2 compartments to Hades/Sheol. This may have been the arrangement before the time of the Cross, but note that if that is so in this verse we read "**in Hades**" contrasted with "**far away**". The question is this - is "**far away**" another side of Hades? It could mean that, but one wonders why the Spirit did not inspire Luke to record something like "**far away... on the other side of Hades**"? In other words, the location of "**far away**" is not unequivocally stated. And this is one reason many writers are not dogmatic about the compartmentalization of Hades. See note above for interesting OT uses of **Hades** for Sheol - the question is do these passages suggest that there were 2 compartments to Sheol/Hades? After considerable study on this subject, I cannot offer a dogmatic statement, which can be supported from Scripture.

**Hades** - 10x in 10v - Every use of **Hades** in the Gospels is by Jesus. All 10 NT uses of **Hades** refer to the abode of the damned with the **EXCEPTION** of the the two uses in Acts 2:27 and Acts 2:31 which are quotes from the OT. These two uses in Acts use **Hades** in the same sense as it was most commonly used in the OT. In other words in Acts 2:27, 31 **Hades** refers to the "grave," or to the abode of the departed dead, not the abode of the damned.

Note that if you read the **King James Version**, you may become confused because this version translates all the uses of **hades** as "**Hell**" with one exception (which it translates "grave" - 1 Cor 15:55KJV - but the Greek word Hades is not found in the more modern Greek manuscripts which have "O death" [Greek = thanatos] in place of "O grave" - 1Cor 15:55). So the **KJV** confuses the temporary location of the damned in **Hades** with the permanent location [gehenna](#) which is synonymous with the **Lake of fire**.

Matt. 11:23; Matt. 16:18; Lk. 10:15; Lk. 16:23; Acts 2:27; Acts 2:31; Rev. 1:18; Rev. 6:8; Rev. 20:13; Rev. 20:14

Revelation 20:14-[note](#) Then death and **Hades** were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the [Second Death](#), the lake of fire.

This verse makes it clear that Hades is temporary and is separate and distinct from the Lake of fire which is described as eternal as "**forever and ever**" in Rev 20:10+.

**Tony Garland - Death** (representing the bodies of the dead which had lain in the earth and sea) and **Hades** (the place of torment for soul and spirit of the unrighteous dead between death and the judgment) will be destroyed. Their physical reality vanishes in the fleeing of the earth and heaven—the destruction of the old order: Death and Hades, here viewed as if they were personal beings, share the same fate. They, of course, cease to be. There is nothing more of temporal death or of the place of departed spirits after this. They are not personal beings, hence their casting into "the lake of fire" is the end of them; but, conceived of as persons, they are consigned to exactly the same eternal punishment with the other wicked.

**MacArthur on Hades and Gehenna** - **Hades** is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word sheol. Both words describe the realm of the dead. Sheol, used sixty-seven times in the Old Testament, describes the realm of the dead in general. **Hades** is used ten times in the New Testament, always in reference to the place of punishment (cf. Luke 16:23) where the unrighteous dead are kept pending their sentencing to hell. In this incredible scene (Great White Throne), **Hades** is emptied of its captive (unrighteous) spirits, who are reunited with resurrection bodies before the bar of God's justice. Unbelievers, fitted with resurrection bodies suited for hell, will then be ready for their sentencing to the lake of fire where their punishment, unlike that in **Hades**, will last forever...The clearest and most vivid of the New Testament terms used to describe the final hell, the lake of fire, is [gehenna](#) ([Gehenna](#)). [Gehenna](#) is the New

Testament word for the valley of Ben-Hinnom (also called Topheth; 2 Kings 23:10; Isa. 30:33; Jer. 7:31–32; 19:6), located southwest of Jerusalem. In Old Testament times, idolatrous Israelites burned their children in the fire there as sacrifices to false gods (Jer. 19:2–6). In Jesus' day, it was the site of Jerusalem's garbage dump. The fires kept constantly burning there gave off foul-smelling smoke, and the dump was infested with maggots. Sometimes the bodies of criminals were dumped there. The valley of Ben-Hinnom was thus an apt picture of eternal hell, one used repeatedly by Jesus (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5). Hell will be God's eternal cosmic dump; its inmates will be burning as garbage forever. (MacArthur NT Commentary - Revelation)

See summary of [Births, Deaths, and Resurrections](#).

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the difference between Sheol, Hades, Hell, the lake of fire, Paradise, and Abraham's bosom?](#)
- [Did Jesus go to hell between His death and resurrection?](#)
- [What are the gates of hell?](#)
- [Where did Old Testament believers/saints go when they died?](#)
- [Did God create hell?](#)
- [Where was Jesus for the three days between His death and resurrection?](#)
- [What is Tartarus?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about soul sleep?](#)
- [What is Abraham's bosom?](#)
- [What are the keys of death \(Revelation 1:18\)?](#)

**MacArthur** on **Lazarus in his bosom** - the shock (to the Pharisees listening to this parable) is this man is in Heaven. The next shock is he's not just in Heaven, he's taken by the angels to Heaven. The next shock is he's not just taken by the angels to Heaven, but he's not on the periphery. He's not at the back of the room or the back of the crowd looking over everybody's head and between their heads to see who's sitting up at the main table. He's sitting next to Abraham. Wow ... This is just way out there. A broadside on their theological assumptions! The Pharisees knew where Abraham was, because he was the father of the faithful. They knew Genesis 15:6-note says, "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned (imputed) it to him as righteousness." That truth establishes Abraham, not only as the father of the race physically, but the father of the faithful spiritually. He is the first one of whom it is said he received an imputed righteousness by faith, which is the way salvation always comes. And so Abraham was their hero racially and spiritually; and here goes Lazarus right into the presence of Abraham. The Jews believed then and believe today that Abraham is in Heaven; that if there's a hierarchy in Heaven, then Abraham's at the top. If there's a chief seat at the [great Messianic banquet](#) in the glories of Heaven (**Ed**: See Lk 14:15ff-note), Abraham is in that seat. He is the most honored of all people, of all Jews; and the Jews are most honored in their minds of all people. And to take this wretched, stinking, foul beggar and place him at the table beside Abraham is way beyond comprehension for them. He would've been refused fellowship with any Pharisee. No Pharisee would've gone near that man under any circumstance whatsoever. He was refused even minimal fellowship, even the minutest attention of giving him some crumbs to eat. The religious elite passed by him and never even saw him; and now he is in close, intimate fellowship with the greatest of all Jews, Abraham. One of the tortures of hell is everybody knows they're not in the Kingdom of God.

[See above](#) for similar picture in Luke 13:26-30

**Bosom** (lap) ([2859](#)) See discussion above of [kolpos](#). This picture is similar to that described by John at the Last Supper "There was reclining on Jesus' **bosom** one of His disciples (John), whom Jesus loved." (Jn 13:23)

As **MacArthur** says "Close to the host is the place of honor. They all knew it. They all sought the chief seats (**Ed**: See Lk 14:7-11-note). They knew what that was about. Close to the host is where you want to be; and when the Pharisee threw a dinner, the closer you were to the Pharisee who threw the dinner, the more the honored person you were; and, here, when you go to Heaven, you can't get more honored than to be next to Abraham....Shut out from every table on earth, Lazarus is the guest of honor in the table of God."

Jesus is making the contrast between the rich man's eternal fate and the poor man's eternal fate as striking as possible in an attempt to arrest the attention of His hearers and all who read this parable! He does not anyone to suffer the fate of the rich man! He knows that worldly wealth can deceive a man to such an extent that he fails to sense his desperate need for repentance and belief. The rich man thinks he has heaven on earth and surely will have heaven in heaven, but he will die and immediately realize his tragic mistake. But then it is too late. Paul citing Isaiah 49:8 applies the passage to stress the urgency of accepting God's grace and salvation in Christ without delay (cf Proverbs 27:1; James 4:13,14).

He (God) says, "AT THE [ACCEPTABLE](#) TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I

HELPED ([boetheo](#)) YOU." **Behold**, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," **Behold**, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION". (2 Cor 6:2)

**Comment:** Dear reader, if you have not accepted Christ as your Savior, do so **TODAY**, for you may not have a tomorrow (James 4:14). How tragic for you to read these fearful words of warning and yet still stubbornly refuse to repent and believe! To do so is to be foolish like the rich man in this parable! And you will be tormented in your conscience forever for having made such a foolish choice!

**Life has many choices,  
but eternity has only two!  
Choose wisely!**

**Luke 16:24** "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.'

KJV Luke 16:24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

- **Father Abraham** Luke 16:30; 3:8; Mt 3:9; Jn 8:33-39,53-56; Ro 4:12; 9:7,8
- **have mercy on me** 1 Samuel 28:16; Isaiah 27:11; James 2:13
- **so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water** Isaiah 41:17,18; 65:13,14; Jn 4:10,14; 7:37; Rev 7:16,17; 22:1
- **cool off my tongue** Zechariah 14:12; James 3:6
- **for I am in agony in this flame** Isaiah 66:24; Mt 25:41; Mark 9:43-49; 2 Th 1:8; Rev 14:10,11; 19:20; 20:15
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **ABANDON ALL HOPE ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE**

The title is from Dante's **Inferno** has these words in the sign over Dante's entrance to Hell. Dante's "theology" is surprisingly relatively Biblical at least in the following lines (albeit not always as Biblical in some other lines)...

Through me you pass into the city of woe:  
Through me you pass into eternal pain:  
Through me among the people lost for aye.

Justice the founder of my fabric mov'd:  
To rear me was the task of power divine,  
Supremest wisdom, and primeval love.

Before me things create were none, save things  
Eternal, and eternal I endure.

**All hope abandon ye who enter here.**

Such characters in colour dim I mark'd  
Over a portal's lofty arch inscrib'd:  
Whereat I thus: Master, these words import.

**And he cried out and said** - The laughter and rivalry of wealth had turned to a cry for mercy. The rich man ironically was now the beggar! This is the first of two "prayers" by the rich man. He is **pleading for relief for his body** here. In his second prayer (Lk 16:27-31) he **pleads for redemption for his brothers!**

**MacArthur** emphasizes that in Hell "no one is going to actually have a conversation with any one in Heaven. Nor is any one in Heaven going to have a conversation with any one in hell. That would **mitigate** hell and **pollute** Heaven. But for the sake of the story, Jesus uses this to present a powerful picture."

**Cried out** ([5455](#))([phoneo](#) from **phone** = voice) means to utter in a loud voice (with considerable volume) - cry out, shout, call out, speak loudly. Clearly the belief by some that hell is a party is completely false. Only a fool would be so self-deceived.

**Father Abraham** indicates that the rich man is pleading as a Jew.

**MacArthur** adds that the **rich man** "knows that his lineage is from **Abraham**. The Jews celebrated their lineage (Lk 1:55-note, cf Lk 1:73-note, Lk 13:16-note, Lk 19:9-note). They were the (physical) children of Abraham (**ED**: "We are Abraham's offspring" - Jn 8:33, 37, 39, 40, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58, 59) They claimed their lineage over and over, and they used that as an argument against Jesus to validate their supposed legitimacy before God (Mt 3:9, Lk 3:8-note, Jn 8:33). But Jesus countered by saying, "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see **Abraham** and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out." (Lk 13:28-note)

**Father Abraham** - Abraham was the father of the Jewish people (Lk 3:8; 13:16; 19:9; Ge 12:1–3). This phrase is found 12x in Scripture - Ge. 26:3; 26:18;26:24; 28:13;32:9; Jos. 24:3; Lk. 16:24; 30; Jn. 8:53, 56; Acts 7:2; Ro 4:12.

**Andrus** writes - He calls to **Father Abraham** because he believes, as all Jews did, that being Jewish gave him automatic access to the father of the Jewish faith. Not so, says the Apostle Paul. "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham." (Gal. 3:7-note)

In hell the tormented will experience their great need for God's**mercy**, but throughout eternity they will receive no divine **mercy**! Woe! This was sadly probably the first time in his life that the rich man asked for mercy. He was a perfect picture of the self-righteous Pharisees (cf contrast in Lk 18:10-15-note) who felt that they works merited their righteous standing before God. They, like all who refuse to repent and believe in Messiah, would find themselves utterly and forever shocked when they passed from this life to the next!

**Have mercy** (cf Lk 17:13; 18:38–39)(**arist imperative**)(1653)(**eleeo** from **eleos**) means "to feel sympathy with the misery of another, especially such sympathy which manifests itself in action, less frequently in word." It describes the general sense of one who has compassion or person on someone in need. What tragic irony that the merciless rich man now sought an act of mercy from the very one he ignored during life. As Jesus has already alluded to in Luke 6:24-25, the rich man would not receive mercy, for the day of grace ended when his life ended! Woe! (cf Lk 12:20, 39–40, 58; 13:8–9).

It is worth noting that the rich man does not say "Why am I here? This horrible punishment of this place is unfair. I don't deserve to be here. This punishment is too extreme." No, all the rich man says is **have mercy**.

**Shedd** writes that "The principal deviation from the doctrine of endless retribution was in the Alexandrine school, founded by Clement and Origen. The position taken by them was that "the punishments of the condemned are not eternal, but only **remedial**, the devil himself being capable of amelioration...The strongest support of the doctrine of endless punishment is the teaching of Christ, the Redeemer of man....He took it upon himself to sound the note of warning. He, the judge of quick and dead, assumed the responsibility of teaching the doctrine of endless retribution: "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him (**ED**: WHO? HIM WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY = JESUS HIMSELF. THE IRONY IS THE JUDGE WARNS OF THE HORRIBLE PENALTY. READ John 5:26-27)!" (Lk 12:5-note) "Nothing," says Dr. Arnold, "is more striking to me than our Lord's own description of the judgment. It is so inexpressibly forcible, coming from His very own lips, as descriptive of what He Himself would do" Christ could not have warned men so frequently and earnestly as he did against "the fire that never shall be quenched" and "the worm that dies not" (Mk 9:48-note) had he known that there is no future peril fully corresponding to them. That omniscient being who made the statements respecting the day of judgment and the final sentence that are recorded in Matt. 25:31–46 could neither have believed nor expected that all men without exception will eventually be holy and happy." ([Systematic Theology](#))

**MacArthur** makes the point that "Hell is not **remedial**. It's **punitive**. Hell does not fix anybody. It doesn't purge anybody. It doesn't make anybody better. It has no **remedial** function. It is pure punishment....The **rich man** is not asking anything from God. Sometimes people think that when you got to hell, all of a sudden you want to love and serve God. No, there's no interest in God, no interest in Christ. The merciless one now wants mercy, and he wants the mercy at the hands of the one to whom he was merciless! (**ED**: IN OTHER WORDS HE STILL VIEWS THINGS AS HE DID DURING LIFE. LAZARUS WAS HIS SERVANT...EVEN THOUGH HE IS IN HELL! TALK ABOUT SELF-DECEPTION!)...There's no remorse in hell. There's no humility in hell. There's no brokenness in hell. All he wants is one thing. He's not even asking to get out. His conscience would never release him from that. He knows he cannot. He knows he doesn't deserve it. He only wants one thing. "Send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame. Couldn't you send him to give me just a little relief?"...He wouldn't give Lazarus a crumb, but he wants Lazarus to give him a drip....The souls of the damned know they're doomed to suffer. They know they are suffering justly. All they ask for in the lips of this man are small moments of relief in this eternal, unending horror.... Real water is not going to sooth an eternally tortured soul. That is not the point. The message is the desperation of the damned for just the smallest moment of **relief**. This is the image of hell." ([A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#))

This rich man was the same wretched, sinful man in hell that he had been during life! He had definitely not been **remediated**!

**Send** is also in the [aorist imperative](#), a command. Notice there is no apology to Lazarus for his neglect. He is still making demands or commands, "**Send Lazarus**," but it would be to no avail.

## UNRELIEVED TORMENT

Not even one drip from a fingertip of relief will ever hit the tongue of a soul eternally tormented in hell. This is not about a real drop of water, but is about real relief. There will be no relief from the eternal torment of Hell!

**So that he may send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue** - So the rich man knew Lazarus as did his brothers. Note the dramatic shift regarding the way the rich lived during his life and now lived after his death (but still "alive", still conscious)! During life he could have anything he wanted to eat or drink but now he says he would be satisfied with just a single drop of water! I would call that a major shift in his perspective! But isn't that what death does to every soul? It forces us to shift our perspective from the temporal to the eternal, for all are either eternally in hell or eternally in heaven. There is no in between. There is no such thing as "**Purgatory**." ([see note](#)) Notice also how the rich man who had disregarded and failed to significantly help Lazarus in life, now confined to hell sought Lazarus' help (recall his name means "God helps")! Since the rich man knew Lazarus' name, it implies he was aware of his plight.

**Stedman on water and cool off my tongue** - The **water**, of course, is a symbol of relief. His desiring to have Lazarus touch the tip of his tongue with a finger dipped in water is a symbol of some kind of relief for which he hopes. ([The Main Thing](#)) But in hell all hope is lost, for hope speaks of a present assurance that God will do good to one in the future. That will not come to pass in hell where their torment is forever and ever.

**Tongue** ([100](#)) ([glossa](#)) means the literal tongue, the organ of the body. While we recognize that this is a parable and one must be cautious interpreting details, the fact that Jesus describes the rich man's **tongue** supports the idea that the lost in hell will present in bodily form and will have full sensation, for otherwise how could they perceive torment and agony. We know that at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15+)

While some interpret flame as literal, most commentators take it as a figure of speech. They say how can Jesus say **outer darkness** in a place that has fire which would suggest it has light? We can argue over literal or non-literal fire and totally miss Jesus' main point here and that is that Hell is a place of torment. And if the symbol (fire, darkness, etc) is so terrible, **how awful must be the real thing?**

**For I am in agony in this flame** - Note that the rich man was in real torment even though his body had died. While it is not likely that this refers to a literal drop of water, Jesus' use of this figure of speech does point to the reality that the horror of hell is so terrible that this portrayal of even licking water from a fingertip would bring relief. And yet no true relief will ever be found in hell. That's a horrible thought!

**Fire** is frequently associated with final judgment of the unsaved

Isaiah 66:24 "Then they will go forth and look On the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die And their **fire** will not be quenched (Lxx = [geenna](#)); And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind."

**Tony Garland:** Isaiah speaks of a time when all flesh shall come to worship before the LORD, but also go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who transgressed against God. Somehow, these who are "**cast into outer darkness**" (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30) are visible to the redeemed throughout eternity (Isa. 66:24). (ED: NOT EVERYONE WOULD AGREE WITH THIS INTERPRETATION - SEE GARY SMITH BELOW)

**Thomas Constable:** The worshippers would be able to view the corpses of those whom the Lord will judge. This probably includes those killed in the battle of Armageddon and those sentenced to eternal damnation. The picture is of Jerusalem dwellers going outside the city to the Hinnom Valley where garbage and corpses burned constantly, where worms (corruption) and fire (holy wrath) were always working (cf. Matt. 5:22; Mark 9:43; Luke 12:5). As those who worship God rejoice before Him perpetually, so those who rebel against Him will die perpetually (cf. Matt. 25:46).

**John MacArthur:** In referring to this verse, Jesus referred to the Valley of Hinnom—i.e., Gehenna—where a continually burning trash-heap pictured the never-ending pain of the lost (Mk 9:47, 48). (Study Bible)

**Gary Smith:** The servants of God will know “what has happened” to the wicked, but there is no morbid fascination with those who suffer God’s severe judgment. The text does not say that the righteous will repeatedly watch these people suffer or laugh and mock them. Neither would the righteous Israelite of Isaiah’s day go down to look at or mock the dead bodies of the children sacrificed to the pagan gods Baal or Molech in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, but they knew what had happened to those who rebelled against God and followed these pagan practices. Even today many churches have cemeteries beside them which function as a silent reminder that every individual needs to make the right choices before their end comes. This final verse has the rhetorical effect of causing the readers, who may be enthralled with the glorious thoughts of being in the new earth where God will dwell among his servants, to focus their attention on the diametrically opposite destinies that God has prepared for the evil people on this earth. Every reader must decide what destiny is most desired: (a) the joy of living in the wonderful kingdom of God before the very presence of his glory or (b) enduring the sword, fire, and worm of God’s judgment. The first choice comes with life-changing challenges and requires a complete commitment to trust God. Only those who love and serve God are able to enter his kingdom. (New American Commentary)

Matthew 5:22 "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the **fiery** hell ([geenna](#)).

Matthew 18:8-9 "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal **fire**. 9 "If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the **fiery** hell ([geenna](#)).

Matthew 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal **fire** which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

**Comment:** Note that God did not originally prepare Hell for mankind but for the fallen angels.

Mark 9:48-[note](#) where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE **FIRE** IS NOT QUENCHED ([sbennumi](#)).

Luke 3:17-note "His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with **unquenchable** ([asbestos](#)) **fire**."

Revelation 14:9-11-[note](#) Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented ([basanizo](#)) with **fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 "And the smoke of their torment ([basanos](#)) goes up forever and ever; **they have no rest day and night**, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

Whether the **flame** is literal or figurative is debated by commentators. One question we might ask is can a flame burn without consuming? Moses writes "the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with **fire**, yet the bush was not consumed." (Ex 3:2, of the 3 Jewish boys where "the **fire** had no effect on the bodies" - Da 3:27-note) Of course in this context, even a "figurative flame" speaks of intense suffering and pain for those who refuse to repent and believe in Jesus!

**Keener** - Jewish literature often portrayed hell as involving burning. The formerly rich man hopes for mercy because he is a descendant of Abraham, but the judgment here is based on a future inversion of status. Jewish people expected an inversion of status, where the oppressed righteous (especially Israel) would be exalted above the oppressing wicked (especially the Gentiles), and also believed that charitable persons would be greatly rewarded in the world to come. But this parable specifies only economic inversion, and its starkness would have been as offensive to most first-century hearers of means as it would be to most middle-class Western Christians today if they heard it in its original force. (IVP Background Commentary)

## **HELL IS THE EXPERIENCE OF REAL AND ETERNAL AGONY!**

**I am in agony** (torment) ([3600](#))([odunao](#) from [odune](#) = sorrow, torment, grief, pain) means actively to cause intense pain but is used only in the passive in the NT meaning to be in severe or great pain. The other meaning is to experience mental and/or spiritual pain manifest by being grieved, anxious, very worried, deeply distressed). (Lk 2:48)

**TDNT** on the root noun *odune* - a. of "physical pain," Hom. Od.,9, 440; common in Il.: 11, 268, 398, esp. of severe sudden pains due

to a wound or fracture, and felt as stabbing, piercing, or cutting.<sup>2</sup> δὴν is common in the plur., since pains of this kind are often felt individually, ll., 5, 397, 399; 4, 117. The physical sensation then affects the soul and fills it with great anguish, ll., 15, 60, hence b. "mental distress," "grief" etc., Hom. Od., 1, 242; 2, 79, esp. in the plur., which is also common after Hom.

**Friberg** says **odunao** has two main senses (1) of violent physical torment feel pain, suffer torment, be in agony ( Lk 16.24); (2) of spiritual or mental distress be grieved, be pained, be anxious, be very worried (Lk 2.48)

**Odunao** was used particularly to describe the pain inflicted by the ancients in order to induce men to make confession of their crimes. These torments or tortures were the keenest that they could inflict, such as the rack, scourging, or burning. The [present tense](#) depicts agony is his continual state. This could be physical and/or mental suffering but either way it is unrelenting for all of eternity! No wonder some evangelical theologians try to do away with the Biblical concept of hell! **What this truth should do to Spirit filled believers is not cause us to minimize it, but to motivate us to passionately share the Gospel! Does this horrible truth not make you want to tell everyone you know about Jesus?!**

The great dividing line in life  
Is what we do with Christ, God's Son;  
Rejecting Him will lead to hell--  
Receiving Him is heaven begun.  
--Hess

What you decide about Christ determines your destiny.

While there is **agony** in hell, the question arises as to what is the nature of the agony? **Daniel Wallace** writes "On the one hand, I would emphatically insist that the fundamental nature of hell is separation from God and his goodness. 2 Thessalonians 1:9 refers to it as "exclusion from the face of God." It is as if God turned his back on non-believers. Just as we only know about God on earth by what he reveals, hell makes a theological statement: only the justice of God is revealed there. That is its fundamental nature....Although it is an intriguing notion to think that hell is a place merely of spiritual separation from God, we must reckon with the biblical teaching that this is the fundamental nature of hell, but that such a description does not account for all the particulars. Further, one has to answer the question: Why, then, are non-believers resurrected if hell is only spiritual? The whole point of the resurrection is to reunite body and soul. God could easily send souls directly to hell. But he does not. He raises all people from the dead and then sends that person to hell." ([Hell: Spiritual or Physical or Both?](#))

**Brian Bell** has an interesting note on **flame** (fire) as to whether or not it is real flames - Well, it seems it is **areal** torment, thus a **real** thirst, which desires **real** water, from a **real** finger, to touch his **real** tongue. So I believe **real** flames. Is the fire spoken of literal fire? It is an accepted law of language that a figure of speech is less intense than the reality. If "**fire**" is merely a figurative expression, it must stand for some great reality, and if the reality is more intense than the figure, what an awful thing the punishment symbolized by fire must be. (William Evans)

On the other hand **Ray Stedman** takes the position that **flame** is symbolic but quickly agrees that "We must face is that these symbols mean something. They are not mere empty expressions, mere words used only for effect, but they convey a deeper reality. The **flames**, though they do not mean literal flames, do refer to something that is *like literal flames*, perhaps a consuming, burning experience -- probably that of memory or of desire unfulfilled (**ED**: THESE COMMENTS OF COURSE ARE [SUPPOSITIONAL](#), SOMETHING THAT IS [SUPPOSED](#)). We all know that in our inner life we can have a sense of being burned, consumed by some burning passion within. The only thing we can compare it to is being burned with physical flames, but, though it is not the same thing, it is often more real....**Many people say they are going to go to hell because their friends are all there. They will never see one if they do. Hell is a lonely place a place of utter aloneness. There is no one in view here but the rich man. He sees no one but himself.** ([The Main Thing](#))

Hell is presented as a place of endless torment, agony, separation, with no hope and no relief.

---

**J C Ryle** - The parable we have now read, in one respect stands alone in the Bible. **It is the only passage of Scripture which describes the feelings of the unconverted after death. For this reason, as well as for many others, the parable deserves especial attention.**

(1) We learn, firstly, from this parable, that a **man's worldly condition is no test of his state in the sight of God.**

The Lord Jesus describes to us two men, of whom one was very rich, and the other very poor. The one "fared sumptuously every day." The other was a mere "beggar," who had nothing that he could call his own. And yet of these two the poor man had grace, and the rich had none. The poor man lived by faith, and walked in the steps of Abraham. The rich man was a thoughtless, selfish worldling, dead in trespasses and sins.

Let us never give way to the common idea that men are to be valued according to their income, and that the man who has most money is the one who ought to be the most highly esteemed. There is no authority for this notion in the Bible. The general teaching of Scripture is flatly opposed to it. "Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called." (1 Cor. 1:26.) "Let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glories glory in this, that he knows and understands me." (Jer. 9:24.) *Wealth is no mark of God's favor. Poverty is no mark of God's displeasure.* Those whom God justifies and glorifies are seldom the rich of this world. If we would measure men as God measures them, we must value them according to their grace.

(2) We learn, secondly, from this parable, **that death is the common end to which all classes of mankind must come.**

The trials of the "beggar," and the sumptuous faring of the "rich man," alike ceased at last. There came a time when both of them died. "All go to one place." (Eccles. 3:20.) Death is a great fact that all acknowledge, but very few seem to realize. Most men eat, and drink, and talk, and plan, as if they were going to live upon earth forever. The true Christian must be on his guard against this spirit. "He that would live well," said a great divine, "should often think of his last day, and make it his company-keeper." Against murmuring, and discontent, and envy, in the state of poverty — against pride, and self-sufficiency, and arrogance, in the possession of wealth, there are few better antidotes than the remembrance of death. "The beggar died," and his bodily wants were at an end. "The rich man died," and his feasting was stopped for evermore.

(3) We learn, thirdly, from this parable, **that the souls of believers are specially cared for by God in the hour of death.**

The Lord Jesus tells us that when the beggar died he "was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom." There is something very comforting in this expression. We know little or nothing of the state and feelings of the dead. When our own last hour comes, and we lie down to die, we shall be like those who journey into an unknown country. But it may satisfy us to know that all who fall asleep in Jesus are in good keeping. They are not houseless, homeless wanderers between the hour of death and the day of resurrection. They are at rest in the midst of friends, with all who have had like faith with Abraham. They have no lack of anything. And, best of all, Paul tells us they are "with Christ." (Phil. 1:23.)

(4) We learn, fourthly, from this parable, **the reality and eternity of hell.**

The Lord Jesus tells us plainly, that after death the rich man was "in hell — tormented with fire." He gives us a fearful picture of his longing for a drop of "water to cool his tongue," and of "the gulf" between him and Abraham, which could not be passed. **There are few more dreadful passages perhaps in the whole Bible than this.** And He from whose lips it came, be it remembered, was one who delighted in mercy!

The certainty and endlessness of the future punishment of the wicked, are truths which we must hold fast and never let go. From the day when Satan said to Eve, "You shall not surely die," there never have been lacking men who have denied them. Let us not be deceived. There is a hell for the impenitent, as well as a heaven for believers. There is a wrath to come for all who "obey not the Gospel of Christ." (2 Thess. 1:8.) From that wrath let us flee betimes to the great hiding-place, Jesus Christ the Lord. If men find themselves "in torment" at last, it will not be because there was no way to escape.

(5) We learn, fifthly, from this parable, **that unconverted men find out the value of a soul, after death, when it is too late.**

We read that the rich man desired Lazarus might be sent to his five brethren who were yet alive, "lest they also should come to the place of torment." While he lived he had never done anything for their spiritual good. They had probably been his companions in worldliness, and, like him, had neglected their souls entirely. When he is dead he finds out too late the folly of which they had all been guilty, and desires that, if possible, they might be called to repentance.

The change that will come over the minds of unconverted men after death is one of the most fearful points in their future condition. They will see, and know, and understand a hundred things to which they were obstinately blind while they were alive. They will discover that, like Esau, they have bartered away eternal happiness for a mere mess of pottage. **There is no infidelity, or skepticism, or unbelief after death. It is a wise saying of an old divine, that "hell is nothing more than truth known too late."**

(6) We learn, lastly, from this parable, **that the greatest miracles would have no effect on men's hearts, if they will not believe God's Word.**

The rich man thought that "if one went to his brethren from the dead they would repent." He argued that the sight of one who came from another world must surely make them feel, though the old familiar words of Moses



and the prophets had been heard in vain. The reply of Abraham is solemn and instructive — "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

The principle laid down in these words is of deep importance. **The Scriptures contain all that we need to know in order to be saved, and a messenger from the world beyond the grave could add nothing to them. It is not 'more evidence' that is needed in order to make men repent, but more heart and will to make use of what they already know.**

The 'dead' could tell us nothing more than the Bible contains, if they rose from their graves to instruct us. After the first novelty of their testimony was worn away, we would care no more for their words than the words of any other.

This wretched waiting for something which we have not, and neglect of what we already have, is the ruin of thousands of souls. Faith, simple faith in the Scriptures which we already possess, is the first thing needful to salvation. The man who has the Bible, and can read it, and yet waits for more evidence before he becomes a decided Christian, is deceiving himself. Except he awakens from his delusion he will die in his sins. ([Luke 16 Commentary](#))

---

**Ian Paisley** in "A Text a Day Keeps the Devil Away" - Mt 5:22 "Hell Fire"

### **The Danger of Hell Fire**

Hell is real. Its reality rests on the absolute authority of the Word of God and the absolute infallibility of our Lord Jesus Christ. It rests on the same foundation as the reality of heaven. If you don't believe in hell you can't believe in heaven. All of us, born of Adam's race are in danger of hell fire.

### **The Damnation of Hell Fire**

"how shall ye escape the damnation of hell" (Matthew 23:33)

How awful is the damnation of hell fire. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard neither hath it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who spurn His Beloved Son.

### **The Duration of Hell Fire**

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:40)

Hell is forever. Its fires cannot be quenched nor its torments abated. Once in hell the damned soul is in hell forever.

### **The Deliverance From Hell Fire**

Christ endured hell for us that we might escape its fires. Hell's bitter cup, He drank it up. Take now the cup of His salvation and you will be delivered from hell forever.

---

## **2 Peter 2:4 Hell's Horrors by Melvin Worthington**

Introduction: The doctrine of eternal punishment remains one of the strongest incentives for coming to Christ for salvation. Jesus spoke more about hell than about heaven.

**1. A Place.** The Bible identifies hell as a place (Luke 16:27–28; 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 20:13–15). Hell is a place of punishment, partition, and permanence.

**2. A Population.** A comprehensive list of the inhabitants in hell is found in 1 Corinthians 6:9–12 and Revelation 21:8.

**3. A Portrait.** Luke 16:19–31 provides a detailed account of a man in hell. Careful attention should be given to his dying moment, described misery, desired mercy, disturbing memory, deadly mistake, and the divine message.

**Conclusion:** What about you? Are you a believer? Have you placed your faith in the finished work of Christ for salvation? God has given His Son, the Scriptures, and His Spirit to bring men to Christ. He will give nothing else. (Morgan, R. J. Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes Page 97. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

---

**Tony Evans** on the **physical, mental and spiritual torment of Hell** - Hell involves horrible **physical torment**...I would compare this to a person trapped in a burning desert with the sun beating down unmercifully twenty-four hours a day with no relief at all—not even

a drop of water or an aspirin to dull the pain. The sufferer can't just lie down and die, and there's no escape from the desert. The only choice is to keep on going and functioning every day, despite the agonizing suffering and hopelessness of the situation. Imagine being in that environment, without one second's relief from the sun, never any water or a breeze to cool you off, and the knowledge that it will be like this forever. And what's worse, you still have all your faculties working all the time so you can't even "tune out," or just quit thinking about it, and perhaps gain one second's worth of peace. Make no mistake. The rich man was in immediate, intense, and unrelieved torment from the fire of God's wrath the moment he opened his eyes in hell. We have a hard time imagining this because we have never seen the fullness of God's wrath unleashed on sin. Here on earth, His wrath is tempered by His mercy. But there is nothing to protect or insulate people in hell from the fierce, unrestrained judgment of God against sin. The Bible teaches that the suffering of hell will also include the **mental torment of memory and regret**. When the rich man of Luke 16 asked for a drop of water to cool his tongue, Abraham gave him this answer. "Child, remember that during your life you received your good things" (v. 25, italics added). Much of the agony of hell will be the remorse of knowing things could have been different, because people in hell will have perfect memories. All of us know the tremendous power of regret. Some people allow themselves to be eaten up by the mental anguish of what might have been if only they had or hadn't done this or that. John Greenleaf Whittier wrote that the saddest of all human words are "**It might have been.**" In hell, every regret will be eternally remembered. Jesus said hell is a place where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48-note). What did He mean by the worm that doesn't die? This was a reference to gehenna, the smoldering garbage dump outside Jerusalem that became a synonym for hell. We said earlier that this place constantly bred worms because new garbage was always being dumped there. So the worms never died. How does this apply to hell? Notice that Jesus used the pronoun "their" in identifying the worm. In other words, this worm belongs to somebody. We might call it a "personalized worm." Jesus also used the singular word worm, not worms. Just as worms or maggots on earth gnaw away on a dead body until it is gone, so the worm of hell gnaws away at the life of the condemned person. But the difference is that this gnawing never stops because the life it is gnawing on is never consumed. And the gnawing is highly personalized, "their worm," because each person's level of regret will be unique to that person's life. This is the unending mental torment of hell—the churning of regret over lost opportunities for salvation, poor choices made in life, and the condemnation of others whom the lost person loved. The rich man agonized for his brothers. I believe the mental suffering of hell will be so intense the person will be able to recall specific occasions when he or she heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and rejected it. Those times will not only be vivid, but it will seem like it all happened yesterday. It's impossible to imagine having eternity to remember the things you would give anything to forget. When Abraham told the rich man to remember the way life was for him, nothing more needed to be said. For Lazarus and the rich man, hell was the great reversal (Luke 16:25). This suggests another element to the **mental suffering of hell**. Presumably, the rich man had the same rich tastes and desires, but he would never be able to satisfy them. Part of the suffering of hell will be the eternal desire for sin without any possibility of fulfillment. For instance, a drug addict or sex addict in hell will experience intense, burning desires for illicit drugs and illicit sex that can never be met. Why is this so? Because the Bible indicates that when Jesus returns, not only will righteous people be confirmed in their righteousness, wicked people will be confirmed in their wickedness (see Revelation 22:11). So a morally filthy person on earth will be morally filthy for eternity in hell....The angry person who could not control his anger on earth will be an eternally angry person in hell. Hell will be the full expression of the sin nature that corrupted the human race and caused mankind to become alienated from God. The sin nature of those in hell will cry out eternally for fulfillment—only there will be none. The worm will not die....**the worst suffering in hell is the knowledge that the lost person is cut off from God forever, with no hope of forgiveness or restoration....**People in hell will not find any solace from other sufferers. All the jokes people make about wanting to go to hell to be with their friends and enjoy the parties are just so much foolishness. **There will be lots of people in hell, but they won't be any company to anyone**(Tony Evans Speaks Out on Heaven and Hell)

**Luke 16:25 "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.**

KJV Luke 16:25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

- **Child, remember** Luke 16:23; Lamentations 1:7; Daniel 5:22,23,30; Mark 9:46
- **your good things** Luke 6:24; Job 21:13,14; 22:18; Ps 17:14; 37:35,36; 49:11; 73:7,12-19; Ro 8:7; Philippians 3:19; 1 Jn 2:15
- **likewise Lazarus bad things** Luke 16:20; Jn 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1 Th 3:3; Heb 11:25; Rev 7:14
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**THE TABLES ARE  
TURNED!**

**But Abraham said, `Child, remember that during your life** - Notice he does not say "because during your life" but "that during your life." So what? If he had said "because" it would have implied he was in Hades BECAUSE he was rich, which is categorically not the case! Indeed, one might think that he wound up in hell because he was selfish, utterly lacking compassion, and concern for the poor Lazarus who lay at his gate. But had he even been compassionate and generous during life that would not have saved him. Salvation has always been by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone! There is no other way into the Father's presence (Jn 14:6).

**Andrus** adds "On the other hand, to say that a person's economic station in life is totally unrelated to his eternal destiny would not be quite right either, for this parable does appear in a chapter devoted to a discussion of riches—and the man's riches do seem to have something to do with his predicament, namely the fact that his attention to wealth seems to have kept him from giving attention to God and to his fellow man." (Ibid)

**Child** (5043)(**teknon** from **tikto** = bring forth, bear children, be born) is strictly a child produced, male or female, son or daughter. **Teknon** is thus a child as viewed in relation to his family. In this context it can only be speaking of racial relationship, a physical son of Abraham, a Jew by descent. There is a touch of compassion in this answer, but there is no evidence that any in hell will experience compassion. Remember this is a parable and some of the details are not literally true.

Abraham's response reminds us of the loving response of the prodigal's father to his elder son when he declared "**Son**, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours." (Lk 15:31-note)

**James Smith** - In Greek mythology we read of a river in hell called **lethe**. Its waters were said to cause forgetfulness of the past to all who drank. The rich man in Luke 16 would have been glad to have drunk such water. The river of forgetfulness is not in hell, but in Heaven. It comes from the very heart of God. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 10:17). Blessed lethe!

**Remember that during your life** - This speaks of hell as a place of remembrance, a place where the lost person has memory of events during their life. In fact we see that the rich man remembered **Lazarus**. (cf **send Lazarus** in Lk 16:24) So clearly during life the **rich man** was aware of this **poor man** and yet he failed to help him in his suffering.

One of the horrors of hell is the undying memory of a misspent life, of Gospel presentations that were rejected—"Son, remember" (Luke 16:25).

**Remember** (aorist imperative)(3403)(**mimnesko**) means to bring to mind or think of again. It means to keep in mind for attention or consideration. Most of the NT uses convey this sense of recalling information from memory.

**Wiersbe** - Abraham gave two reasons why Lazarus could not bring the comfort that was requested: the character of the rich man and the character of the eternal state. The rich man had lived for the "good things" of earth, and had experienced abundant temporal blessings. He had his reward (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16). He had determined his own destiny by leaving God out of his life, and now neither his character nor his destiny could be changed. Lazarus could not leave his place of comfort and make even a brief visit to the place of torment. (Ibid)

**You received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony** - The point is that the fortunes of the two are inverted. Life for the rich man was as good as it would ever get. Life for Lazarus was as bad as it would ever be! And if you are a believer going through great trials or afflictions, know that this is as bad as it gets for you! The best is yet to come!

**You received** (618) (**apolambano** from **apo** = from + **lambáno** = to receive, take) means to receive fully, receive in full what is one's due, get back, recover fully what is promised or even to receive by way of retribution.

This radical reversal of the fates of Lazarus and the rich man is a fulfillment of Jesus' words in Lk 13:30note "And behold, some are last (Lazarus) who will be first and some are first (rich man) who will be last."

**Good things** (18)(**agathos**) means intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful. Sadly the rich man did not use his good things to aid the poor man.

**Bad things** (2556)(**kakos**) is a word which basically denotes a lack of something so that it is "bad" or "not as it ought to be. **Kakos** means not meeting accepted standards of behavior, and thus worthless, bad or inferior.

**Being comforted** (3870)(**parakaleo** from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** = call) means literally to call one alongside, and includes the idea of giving help or aid or relieving sorrow or distress. The **present tense** is used for **being comforted** and **are in agony** - both are eternal states! This is the **great reversal** Jesus described in Luke 6:20-25

(**Lazarus**) And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say, "Blessed are you who are **poor**, for

yours is the kingdom of God. 21 "Blessed are you who **hunger now**, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who **weep now**, for you shall laugh. 22 "Blessed are you when men **hate** you, and **ostracize** you, and **insult** you, and **scorn** your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.(Lk 6:20-22-note)

(**Rich Man**) "But woe to you who are **rich**, for you are receiving your comfort in full. 25 "Woe to you who are **well-fed** now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who **laugh** now, for you shall mourn and weep." (Lk 6:24-25-note)

**MacArthur** - Lazarus is being comforted in the presence of God, and you are in agony, a fire that burns forever, but never consumes. A fire that burns forever, but never purifies. A fire that burns forever in an everlasting darkness that only punishes. What Lazarus was, you are, miserable. What you did not provide Lazarus, he cannot provide you—relief.

Don't choose to spend eternity  
Where pain will never dim;  
Instead decide to trust in Christ  
And choose to follow Him.  
—Sper

**You are in agony** (torment) ([3600](#)) see discussion above on [odunao](#) . To be in severe or great pain, suffer greatly, suffer anguish

As **John Blanchard** says "It is never true to say that something 'hurts like hell'. Nothing hurts like hell." And this "hurt" is forever!

**Thomas Brooks** - The damned in hell may weep their eyes out of their heads, but they can never weep sin out of their souls....Could every damned sinner weep a whole ocean, yet all those oceans together would never extinguish one spark of eternal fire.

**Vance Havner** - The most gruesome details about the future state of the wicked come from the lips of our Lord Himself. Call it imagery, symbolism, what you will, it is a fearful picture and we dare not tone it down or call it an accommodation to the prevailing ideas of the time. Dives in hell was a personality in torment and anguish with memory intact. The word lost has almost disappeared from our vocabulary and any mention of eternal punishment is smiled away as a leftover from a dark theological past. There will be tears throughout eternity in remorse and regret for the lost opportunity to have been in heaven instead of hell.

**Brian Bell** - The world measures people by how much they get, but God measures them by how much they give. The rich man didn't go to Hades because he was rich; he went there because riches were his god. Abraham was a wealthy man, yet he was in paradise. What was this man's sin? – It's clear; he was selfish with his wealth. Origen said, "in fullness of bread and overflowing of abundance he had not pity for the man who lay at this gate wasted by sores." "He never took account of either the suffering of his inferiors or the common rights of humanity."

**Brian Bill** - Abraham tells this rich guy to remember how he lived his life. His mind fills with images of poor Lazarus lying by his door with stray dogs licking his wounds. He remembers those who tried to tell him about God. He recalls sermons he heard. He remembers those who warned him about the coming judgment. Memories come swimming out of the oblivion. There is no torment greater than an accusing memory. It is impossible to forget when you're in Hell. The rich man could not take his money, but he did take his memory. ([What Happens When You Die?](#))

**Brian Bell's** lessons on this section -

- Money can help send people to heaven (cf Lk 16:9-note) or it can help send people to hell.
- Money and possessions are gifts and trusts from God. God loans us these with the expectation that we'll use them to help others.
- Again, Jesus teaches us about important principles on Stewardship. As Christians, we are stewards, not owners responsible to God for what we do with His gifts put in our charge!

**Luke 16:26** `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.'

KJV Luke 16:26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

- between 1 Samuel 25:36; Ps 49:14; Ezek 28:24; Mal 3:18; 2 Th 1:4-10; James 1:11,12; James 5:1-7
- they pass Luke 12:59; Ps 50:22; Mt 25:46; Jn 3:36; 2 Th 1:9; Rev 20:10+; Rev 22:11

- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FATES FIXED FOREVER!

**And besides all this** - literally "and in all these things." In other words, not only was the rich man's request in Lk 16:24 not granted, Lazarus could not have carried it out because of the great chasm.

**There is a great chasm fixed** - Sadly, there are no "exit signs" in Hell! Or as R E Lee said "Exit is not a word found in the vocabulary of hell." There is no escape hatches, no second chances! There is gulf that is fixed forever and separates unregenerate rebels from the regenerate redeemed. As **John Blanchard** says "In hell, the sinner's situation is quite literally hopeless. As one writer (John Donne) has put it, 'Despair is the [damp](#) of hell, as joy is the serenity of heaven.'" ([Whatever Happened to Hell?](#))

**Andrus** writes "The message here is clear: one's eternal destiny is established at the time of death and there is no possibility of change. The notion is pure fiction that after death one can negotiate with St. Peter to get into heaven. It can't be done." ([Sermon](#))

This passage teaches that Hell is one's eternal abode and is literally inescapable. No one leaves. The only ones who enter are the unrepentant unbelievers.

**Crawford** - The great gulf formed in Eden that separated man from God because of sin, and bridged at Calvary (1 Tim 2:5, 6) is here eternally fixed so that it can never be bridged or crossed. The soul in hell is beyond salvation, beyond mercy; there is no second chance; no verse in the Bible makes this more clear. (What the Bible Teaches)

**Chasm** ([5490](#))(**chasma** from **chasko** = to yawn) is literally a yawning, hence a gaping opening, a chasm, a gulf, a deep open pit, a ravine, an unbridgeable space between two parts of a place, in this case between Abraham and the place of eternal torture. In English a [chasm](#) is a deep opening in the earth's surface. As Robert E Lee said "Exit is not a word found in the vocabulary of hell." There is a single use of chasma in the Septuagint in 2 Sa 18:17 where two words are used with reference to Absalom's body - "cast him into a great cavern (chasma) in the wood, into a deep pit (bothynos as in Mt 12:11)." (English Translation of Septuagint)

**Fixed** ([4741](#))(**sterizo** from **histemi** = to stand) means to fix firmly in place and in the [perfect tense](#) signifies this **chasm** is a permanent "fix" which will last forever! There are no "Exit" signs in Hell. No one in hell will ever go to Heaven, and no one in Heaven will ever visit hell. A chasm is set fast for the very purpose of keeping the tormented in the place of torment, and keeping the blessed in the place of blessing. It can never change. No relief will ever be sent to assuage the ongoing, everlasting torment! No escape! No relief! Fixed forever! Woe! If this horrible picture does not motivate you to preach and share the Gospel with the lost, then I don't know what will! There should be a deep soberness in our soul, a gnawing ache in our heart, as we encounter people every day who are headed for this horrible destiny! And then to realize that hell will people most of whom did not think that they would end up there!

**Stedman on chasm** - The **chasm** indicates the impossibility of change. It is not a literal chasm or a great gulf fixed. We make a mistake in trying to visualize hell as a place where all the lost are in flames below, while above, in heaven, are the redeemed and there is a great gulf between them. The chasm simply indicates the impossibility of a change in either condition. No one can pass from the one to the other. If we recoil from this, then let us remember that we do not recoil any more than God does. This is not what God wills for human beings. This is what the prophet Isaiah refers to as "To do His task, His **peculiar** task, and to work His work, His **strange** work." (Isaiah 28:21NET = "God's judgment of His own people is called '**His peculiar work**' and '**His strange task**,' because he must deal with them the way he treated their enemies in the past."). **It is necessary because of human choice, but it is unwanted by God and veiled in mystery.** ([The Main Thing](#)) (Bolding added)

As **John Blanchard** rightly remarked "After death, all men are **eternally secure**—the righteous in heaven and the unrighteous in hell!" (cf Mt 25:46).

When Jesus described this great chasm undoubtedly many in his audience were reminded of the literal picture of the many great, yawning [wadis](#) ([see picture](#)) in Palestine that were impossible to cross.

---

**Steven Cole** - The basis for a person's eternal destiny is fixed in the present life. The fact of a fixed destiny: A great chasm fixed (Lk 16:26).

Abraham says to the rich man in hell that there is a **great chasm fixed** between those in heaven and those in hell, so that none can cross from one side to the other. Not only does this mean that there is **no Purgatory** (See [What does the Bible say about Purgatory?](#)), it also means that there is **no second chance** after death. Heb 9:27-note states, "**It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.**" (ED: THIS VERSE ALSO RULES OUT THE POPULAR TEACHING OF [REINCARNATION](#)) As someone has said, **there are no unbelievers in hell.** They just believed too late! In the parable, Lazarus died and the angels

carried him to heaven. The rich man died, was buried, and was in hell in the flames. Since it was a parable, designed to illustrate a central truth, Jesus pictures the final outcome without spelling out details about future resurrections of the body. Paul says (2Cor 5:8-[note](#)) that for believers, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. There is no such thing as "[soul sleep](#)" while we wait for the resurrection of our bodies at His second coming. The souls of unbelievers go immediately at death into a place of conscious torment to await the Great White Throne judgment when their bodies are raised (John 5:29, cf Da 12:2-note) and thrown into the [Lake of Fire](#) (Rev 20:11-15+). Before death, a person can move from spiritual death to eternal life. But once a person dies, his eternal destiny is fixed. He goes either to heaven or to hell and there is no crossing over from one place to the other after that. **There is a great chasm fixed.** ([Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#)) (Bolding added)

**Luke 16:27 "And he said, `Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house--**

- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE SECOND PRAYER

**And he said, `Then** - When? When Abraham had just declared there was a great divide across which no one could traverse. This stimulates his second petition.

**Wiersbe** - Then the rich man prayed for his brothers (Luke 16:27-31). He did not say, "I'm glad my brothers will also come here. We'll have a wonderful time together!" Occasionally you hear a lost person say, "Well, I don't mind if I go to hell. I'll have a lot of company!" *But there is no friendship or "company" in hell!* Hell is a place of torment and loneliness. It is not an eternal New Year's Eve party at which sinners have a good time doing what they used to do on earth. (Ibid)

**I beg you, father** - Remember that this is a parable and Jesus describes this conversation for the purpose of the story but there are no other Scriptural passages that would support conversations between those in Heaven and those in Hell. Calling Abraham **father** indicates the **rich man** is pleading on the basis of his Jewish heritage.

**I beg** ([2065](#))([erotao](#) from [éromai](#) = ask, inquire) means to ask for, usually with implication of an underlying question. The verb does not carry the note of an authoritative command but rather that of a friend making an urgent appeal to a friend. The term suggests that those making the request stand in a position of familiarity with those being entreated. **Erotao** has the added nuance of "to plead," "implore," or "to beg." To beg means to ask for as charity or as a gift. It was too late for such a request as we shall see.

**People in hades have a concern for the lost, but they cannot do anything about it!**

**Father** ([3962](#))([pater](#)) is one who imparts life, bringing into being to pass on the potential for likeness. Sadly, the rich man was only alike Abraham in physical origin (Abraham being the father of the Jews), but in his unrepentant, unregenerate state he was unlike him spiritually and thus unlike him in eternal destinies. Notice that the rich man refers to Abraham 3 times as **father** (Lk 16:24, 27, 30), emphasizing his Jewish ancestry. The point is that being a Jew doesn't guarantee Heaven anymore than being a non-Jew guarantees hell.

**That you send him to my father's house--** The rich man now in heaven became interested in evangelism and missions (so to speak)! It was as if he had not had a fair warning and ample opportunity to warn his brothers on earth! But sadly he was too focused on earthly matters to consider heavenly things. **One wonders how many believers have a similar vertically oriented (earthly) rather than horizontal (heavenly) mindset and are content to see souls of those they have met, are related to or work with drop off interminably into eternal torment? If we as believers had a more vivid picture of the eternal tortures of the damned, would it not serve to motivate a more urgent style of evangelism? I think it would and can attest that is what has happened to me as I compose these notes on hell. We must remember that once we get to heaven there is no more evangelism. Today is our opportunity of this one lifetime! Are you redeeming the time? **Beg the Father** to fill you with Holy Spirit boldness so that you let the Bad News motivate you to begin to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with many people with you have never had a spiritual conversation! Amen!**

**A T Robertson** on **send him** - The Roman Catholics probably justify prayer to saints from this petition from the Rich Man to Abraham, but both are in Hades (the other world). It is to be observed besides, that Abraham makes no effort to communicate with the five brothers. But heavenly recognition is clearly assumed. Dante has a famous description of his visit to the damned (Purg. iii, 114).

**MacArthur** makes the point that "This is both a complaint and a request (**ED: THE REQUEST IS OBVIOUS - "SEND LAZARUS")**). The complaint is, "You know, the reason I came here, and the reason my brothers are going to come here, is because we have

insufficient data. If someone had come back from the dead to warn us, if I had had a sufficient sign, if somebody had come who has been on the other side of death, this would have been sufficient. I wouldn't be here, and my brothers won't come.

**Erwin Lutzer** writes - We might think this man would have preferred to have his brothers join him in Hades for the sake of the companionship. But he was more than willing to never see them again if he only knew that they would be on the other side of the gulf where Lazarus and Abraham were meeting for the first time. Apparently, even in Hades there is compassion, a natural human concern about the fate of those who are loved! (Borrow [One Minute After You Die](#))

**Stedman** - Here in hell, for the first time, this rich man feels something akin to love: concern for his brothers. Yet it only adds to his torment for he can do nothing about it. Some of you have seen the [musical Carousel \(see this unbiblical scene at time = 1:38:47\)](#). Its theme is that a father returns from heaven to warn his daughter who has grown to teenage since he was killed. But this can never be. Much as we would like to have it happen, the dead do not come back to warn us. In reading Dr. Helmut Thielicke's commentary on this parable, I was struck by one sentence. He says "**The torment of the dead is that they cannot warn the living, just as it is the torment of the mature that the erring young will not listen to them.**" If you have felt that torment then you know something of what the torment of the dead is -- **a desire to warn but an inability to do so**. There are many who in reading this story feel this is quite unfair. Why should God not grant this man his request to warn his brothers: If God really does not want men to go to hell, then why does he not allow the utmost of warning in order that any might be kept from hell? But if that is the way we feel then we have missed the point of Abraham's words. This rich man is not denied his request because God is unwilling to give as much opportunity as possible; he is denied it because it is useless, **because it will not work**. As Abraham points out, if they do not hear Moses and the prophets neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead. ([The Main Thing](#))

**Brian Bill** - The rich guy then tries one more plea. This time he begs Abraham to send Lazarus to his family members. He's beginning to understand the mission of the church. He didn't want any company in Hell and especially did not want his brothers to join him there. He now knows the absolute critical importance of repentance before its too late. He's hoping that if Lazarus could just go back and warn them that they would change. **If his brothers, who no doubt had seen Lazarus by the front gate on many occasions, would suddenly reappear they would change their ways and get right with God.** Abraham tells him that his brothers have everything they need. They have their Bibles. They can listen to believers who can explain the way to Heaven. The rich man doesn't like this answer because he knows his brothers. He knows they've just tuned out God and are chasing materialism just like he was. He says if someone would come back from the dead then they would repent. Abraham responds by saying that even a resurrection will not convince them. They are not open to spiritual matters.

**Luke 16:28 for I have five brothers--in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'**

KJV Luke 16:28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.  
lest

- Ps 49:12,13
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## REDEMPTION FOR HIS BROTHERS

**For** - [term of explanation](#). He is explaining why he wants Lazarus to be sent to his father's house.

**I have five brothers** - While we are not to judge the hearts of others regarding the state of their salvation, apparently the rich man reasoned that they were like him in life (focused on the things of this world, material wealth, riches, etc) and also destined to be sent to Hades when they died.

**In order that** - [term of purpose or result](#)

**He may warn them** - The irony is that the despised, lowly Lazarus is sent on a missionary journey to the rich man's brothers!

**NET Note** - The warning would consist of a call to act differently than their dead brother had, or else meet his current terrible fate.

**Hendriksen** - note that even now he is not asking that anything be done for people in general, only for *his* five brothers. And even now he seems not to be able to get rid of the notion that Lazarus is his messenger boy! (Baker New Testament Commentary –

Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

**He may warn** ([present tense](#))(1263) ([diamarturomai](#) from **diá** = intensifies meaning conveying idea of "thoroughly" + [marturomai](#) = witness, bear witness) means to bear witness, testify earnestly or repeatedly, to charge as if before witnesses, to exhort earnestly and with authority in matters of extraordinary importance. It carries the idea of giving a forceful order or directive.

The implication is clear that in all our witnessing, there is also an element of warning to the hearers. In other words, when we speak of the Good News to others, it is implicit that there is bad news, even if we don't directly speak of hell. Otherwise, why would they need to hear the Good News? And so in all of our "witnessing" there is always a negative side that "warns."

**A T Robertson** writes that "The Rich Man labours under the delusion that his five brothers will believe the testimony of Lazarus as a man from the dead."

**So that** - [term of purpose or result](#) - He explains the purpose of his warning below. .

**They will not also come** - He is deceived in believing that just a warning (even a man returning from the dead) would impede his brothers arrival in Hell when they died. How many times I have clearly warned people and their reaction has been to ignore, scoff at or disbelieve the message.

**This place of torment** - This is now the rich man's name for "Hades." Notice also that Hell is **aplace** and not a figment of one's imagination!

The rich man was now a believer in the truth of the Gospel! As **Brownlow North** said "You will be a believer some day. If you never believe on earth, you will believe in hell." To state it another way, there are no agnostics in hell!

**Torment** ([931](#))([basanos](#)) a touchstone (a dark stone used in testing metals), hence examination by torture. It describes severe bodily affliction, tormenting pain, painful affliction (Lk 16:23, Mt 4.24)

**Luke 16:29 "But Abraham said, `They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'**

KJV Luke 16:29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.  
have

- Luke 16:16; Isaiah 8:20; 34:16; Mal 4:2-4; Jn 5:39-45; Acts 15:21; 17:11,12; 2 Ti 3:15-17; 2 Pe 1:19-21
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **A COMMAND TO HEAR AND HEED THE "GOSPEL"**

**But** - [term of contrast](#)

**Abraham said, `They have Moses and the Prophets;let them hear them.'** - **Let them hear** is a command in the [aorist imperative](#) which calls for a sense of urgency! Let them hear clearly! Do this today, for now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION" (2 Cor 6:2 cf Heb 3:7-8-[note](#))! Don't delay (tomorrow may be too late! cf James 4:14). The rich man was in Hell because he did not hear the Word of God in the Old Testament.

**Gary Inrig** - God needs to do nothing greater than He has done in giving men written Scripture. His Word is clear, sufficient, and powerful. The brothers' need is not to hear a messenger risen from the grave, but to listen to the Word of God given from heaven. They do not require an added experience to validate Scripture or to demonstrate God's veracity. They need to listen to the Word. (The Parables)

**Stein** adds that **hear** "carries the sense of [heed](#). (Luke 8:8; 9:35; 10:16; 14:35; 16:31)"

Notice the verb **"they have"** (have at their disposal) which is in the [present tense](#) signifying the brothers continually had access to the Old Testament Scriptures (**Moses and the Prophets**). They are without **"excuse"** (Ro 2:1-[note](#)) They were like the other Jews who thought **"lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance."** (Ro 2:4-[note](#)) They could not claim that they did not have enough revelation from God to be saved! The NLT paraphrases it "'Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.'" Their problem was not in not having the truth but of having a **stubborn and unrepentant heart** (Ro 2:5-[note](#)). They had access to the Word but refused to humble themselves and **"receive the Word implanted, which is able to save (their) souls.:** (James 1:21-[note](#)).



**Moses and the Prophets** - This phrase refers to the 39 OT books of the OT, the Scriptures written and "**inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness**" (2 Ti 3:16-note, where "**Scriptures**" refers especially to the Old Testament.). **Moses** is synonymous with the Law about which Jesus spoke in Lk 16:16-note declaring that "**The Law and the Prophets** were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it." **The Law and the Prophets** are a description of the Old Testament Scriptures. Abraham is saying that to hear and heed the message of the OT is all they need to receive salvation. In fact Abraham spoke from personal experience for he himself "**he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness**" (Ge 15:6-note) Not only that but Paul teaches that what Abraham believed was the Gospel writing that

The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham**, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU." (Gal 3:8-note)

Even as far back as the original sin of Adam in Genesis 3 we see that God provided a way of escaping Hell in giving a promise that would be fulfilled by the Messiah...

And I will put enmity Between you (Satan) and the woman, And between your seed and her seed (Messiah); He (Messiah) shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." (Ge 3:15-note; see [the protoevangelium](#))

In short, Abraham is calling the rich man's brothers (and all who read these words of warning from Hell) not to procrastinate, but to believe in the Gospel! And I can testify that the Good News is present in the Old Testament for I was born again some 30+ years ago in a study of the Minor Prophets in [Bible Study Fellowship](#) (See [My Personal Testimony of God's Grace](#)).

#### Related Resource:

- [Messianic Prophecies in the Old Testament](#)

**Andrus** writes "There was not a Jewish family anywhere without access to the Torah, just as there is no one in our country who does not have access to a Bible. The message of salvation is clear in the OT and in the NT. It's clear in the Catholic Bible and the Protestant Bible. It's clear in the KJV and the NIV. It's clear in the Greek and the English and the native language spoken by 99% of the people on earth."

**Luke 16:30 "But he said, `No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!"**

KJV Luke 16:30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

- Luke 13:3,5; Rev 16:9-11
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **THE RICH MAN'S WARNING FROM HELL FOR ALL WHO HAVE EARS TO HEAR!**

**But** - [term of contrast](#). The rich man is not satisfied. A voice from the grave will make all the difference.

**He said, `No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead** He puts in faith in the signs not the Scriptures. In a sense this rich man was a "prophet" for in fact 2 men did rise from the dead and still the majority of those is Israel did not repent. Lazarus rose from the dead (John 11:43-44) and the sought to kill him (John 12:10) to obliterate the evidence of his resurrection from the dead. Jesus rose from the dead and they bribed the soldier to cover it up by spreading the lie that Jesus' disciples had stolen His body (Mt 28:12-15).

What is the rich man doing by asking Abraham to send Lazarus (from the dead, from Heaven)? Clearly he is asking for a sign just as the religious leaders had asked of Jesus

Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven. (Lk 11:16)

Now put this in perspective - all the miracles Jesus had already performed were not enough to convince them. The **rich man** was representative of the Jewish religious leaders who asked for another sign from heaven. Ultimately, Jesus did give the religious leaders **the sign of Jonah the prophet** (Mt 12:39-41) which was the sign of His own death and resurrection. And yet they rejected

this greatest of all signs!

**Marshall** notes that "Miracles will not convince those whose hearts are morally blind and unrepentant." (NIGTC)

**MacArthur** adds that "The implication is that he and his brothers had insufficient data; that they lacked a sufficiently convincing sign. The Pharisees did exactly that: they repeatedly demanded a sign from the Lord (Matt. 12:38; 16:1; Luke 11:16; John 2:18), which He refused to give them (Matt. 12:39; 16:4)."

**NET Note** - The irony and joy of the story is that what is denied the rich man's brothers, a word of warning from beyond the grave, is given to the reader of the Gospel in this exchange.

The rich man has sinned according to Isaiah 58:6-7

"Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke? "Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry And bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"

**Inrig** writes "His sin is clear. But ultimately the rich man is in hell because he has not listened to the Word of God and repented before it. He has not believed God's truth. It is not wealth that excludes from heaven, but unbelief. And, although we are not explicitly told so here, it is not Lazarus's poverty that has qualified him for "Abraham's side." The clear, consistent witness of Scripture is that salvation is by faith alone."

**They will repent!** - It is passages like this which literally demolish the arguments of some evangelical writers who claim that repentance is not an integral part of salvation.

**A T Robertson on repentance** - The **Rich Man** had failed to do this and he now sees that it is the one thing lacking. It is not wealth, not poverty, not alms, not influence, but repentance that is needed. He had thought repentance was for others, not for all.

**They will repent** (3340) ([metanoeo](#) from **meta** = with, among + **noeo** = to think, exercise the mind <> from **nous** = mind - see study = [metanoia](#)) means to have another mind. **Metanoeo** means to change one's mind in respect to sin, God, and self. To turn to God and from sin (Luke 15:7-note = "one sinner who **repents**", 10, cf 1Th 1:9-note). Beware that repentance is not an intellectual decision but a change of mind that results in a clear change of behavior (cf "bear fruits in keeping with repentance" Lk 3:8-note). If there is no change in behavior, there is no genuine repentance and there is no salvation.

**Garry Inrig** - There are millions who are imitators of the rich man at this point. "I'll believe, if God makes it clear enough. If I don't believe, that's God's fault." Such an attitude betrays profound ignorance about ourselves and deep blasphemy against God. In one of his movies, Woody Allen has his character say to his beloved Laura, "If only God would speak to me—just once. If he would only cough. If I could just see a miracle. If I could see a burning bush or the seas part. Or my uncle Sasha pick up the check." The humor is typical of Allen; so is the unbelief. God has spoken in His creation. He has spoken in history. He has spoken in His Word. Above all, He has spoken in His Son, and no one is without responsibility or has a valid excuse.

**Luke 16:31 "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.'"**

KJV Luke 16:31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

- **they will not** Jn 11:43-53; 12:10,11; 2 Cor 4:3
- **be persuaded** Ge 9:27; Acts 19:8; 26:28; 28:23; 2 Cor 5:11
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE FOR SALVATION!

**But** - [term of contrast](#)

**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** - Notice that Abraham speaks of **Moses and the Prophets** as if they were living voices. Indeed, they are for they are the Word of God and "**the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the**

**division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."** (Heb 4:12-13-[note](#)).

**Inrig** writes that "People who are not changed by Scripture will not be changed by a miracle. That is why Abraham refuses the request—not because he does not care about the fate of the rich man's brothers, but because the request is futile. It does not address the need. Miracles do not melt stony hearts. This fact is demonstrated consistently through the Scriptures.

- At the Exodus, Israel is miraculously delivered from Egypt, sees God's power in the desert, and yet persists in unbelief, so that God asks, "How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them?" (Numbers 14:11).
- Elijah and Elisha perform undeniable and evident miracles, yet the northern kingdom persists in its rebellion, resulting in God's exile of the nation (cf. 1 Kings 18:16-46; 2 Kings 2:19-22).
- The Lord's miracles are met by unbelief and blasphemous denial of who He is (e.g., Matthew 11:20-24).
- The raising of Lazarus from the dead results in some believing (John 11:45), but only intensifies the unbelief and antagonism of the Jewish leaders (John 11:46-53; 12:10-11).
- When the Jewish leaders admit that the apostles "have done an outstanding miracle" (Acts 4:16), they intensify their persecution.
- The empty tomb does not lead the unbelieving to come in faith, but to concoct a false story, to explain away the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 28:11-15).

All this confirms the Lord's words. The primary use of miracles in Scripture was not to convince people of the truth by replacing the Bible, but rather to confirm the truth of Scripture. People are responsible for hearing and repenting before what God has said in the Word. The Lord's story warns us about two destinies—heaven and hell. It also reminds us of the one great, inescapable responsibility—to take God at His word. **The parable of the rich man and Lazarus forces us to think seriously about our eternal destiny.** There is no immortality that comes by "not dying." Rich or poor, powerful or powerless, healthy or ill, we will all face not only death but eternal destiny. The grave works no miracles. Our present relation to God through His Word determines our eternal relationship with Him. **This parable also clarifies our present responsibility if we are believers.** It is to make it clear to all that God has spoken in His Word and calls everyone to hear and repent. Some Christians have suggested that true evangelism is "power evangelism," in which resistance to the gospel is overcome by the demonstration of God's power in supernatural events. This, we are told, makes "receptivity to Christ's claims very high." In fact, it has even been suggested that people who do not experience such power are less likely not only to believe but to move on to a mature faith. But the Lord's words suggest something very different. True power evangelism involves not the doing of miracles but the proclamation of God's truth in Scripture, which is able to make people "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). **The power that is needed is the power of Spirit-filled people sharing the Spirit-given truths of Scripture.** (See [A Spirit Filled Church](#); [Ephesians 5:18 Commentary](#), [Spirit-Filled Believers Are Like Artesian Wells](#)) God's Word is sufficient not only to meet believers' needs, but also to meet the needs of unbelievers. As we are confident in the inherent truth and power of Scripture, we will bring to the "rich men" of our time that which they need most, and to the hurting Lazaruses that which will help them longest. We must not leave the Lazaruses of our time needy and helpless at the gate, but, in our concern to minister to their desperate present needs, we must not neglect their deepest, eternal needs (The Parables)

**Wiersbe - Moses and the Prophets** tell sinners how to repent and be saved, and the Jews heard them read every Sabbath in the synagogue. Though miracles can attest to the authority of the preacher, they cannot produce either conviction or conversion in the hearts of the lost. Faith that is based solely on miracles is not saving faith (John 2:23-25). A man named Lazarus did come back from the dead, and some of the people wanted to kill him! (see John 11:43-57; 12:10) Those who claim that there can be no effective evangelism without "signs and wonders" need to ponder this passage and also John 10:41-42. In the rich man's lifetime, God had spoken to him in many ways. God had permitted him to have riches, yet he did not repent (Ro 2:4-5). Lazarus had witnessed to the rich man, and so had the Old Testament Scriptures that were familiar to the Jews, but his heart remained unbelieving. The fact that Lazarus died first was a strong witness to the rich man, a reminder that one day he would also die, but even a death at his very doorstep did not melt the man's heart. In spite of the fact that he was in torment in hades, the rich man did not change; he was still self-centered. He prayed, but it was for his comfort and the safety of his family. He was not concerned about other lost sinners; his only concern was his five brothers. He argued with God instead of submitting to His will. This indicates that the punishment of lost sinners is not remedial; it does not improve them. Hades and hell are not hospitals for the sick; they are prisons for the condemned. Dr. Luke does not tell us how the covetous Pharisees responded to this account. They certainly knew Moses and the Prophets, and this meant even greater responsibility—and greater condemnation (John 12:35-41). We must remind ourselves that the rich man was not condemned because he was rich, nor was Lazarus saved because he was poor. Abraham was a very wealthy man, yet he was not in torment in hades. The rich man trusted in his riches and did not trust in the Lord. (Ibid)

**MacArthur** writes "I hear it frequently said, "You can't just preach the Bible. You can't just explain the Bible. You can't just do

expositional preaching. You can't just go verse by verse through Scripture. People don't understand that. They don't live in a paradigm to apprehend that. We've got to get beyond that. We are not going to reach them. We have to figure out ways to get to their felt needs. We've got to come up with other methodologies." The Bible knows nothing of any methodologies. All the Bible knows about is the message."

**Not listen** - The negative "ouk" signifies absolute negation. They absolutely will not listen! This picture reminds me of the response of the Jews to Stephen's sermon when he declared of them "You men who are stiff-necked and **uncircumcised in heart and ears** are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did." (Acts 7:51). And when Stephen said "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."...they cried out with a loud voice, and **covered their ears** and rushed at him with one impulse."(Acts 7:56-57) Not only did they not listen, but they stoned Stephen to death!

Don't miss what Jesus is teaching in this parable. The reason people go to hell is because they do not listen to the Scripture! Scripture alone tells us the way to Heaven. What sends people to hell? How they respond to Scripture. Heaven is for those who believe the Gospel, who believe the Good News that Jesus saves penitent sinners who believe in Him. That is why it is so important to preach the **Word of God**. As Paul explains "**faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ**." (Ro 10:17-note). Peter explains "you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through **the living and enduring Word of God**." (1 Pe 1:23-note) James adds that "**In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the Word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures**.(James 1:18-note)

**Erwin Lutzer on if they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets** - How true! When Christ told this story, He had not yet been put to death and resurrected. Yet He taught that His resurrection was the only sign that He would give to the world. But today, even though the evidence for His resurrection is overwhelming, many men and women still do not believe. As the saying goes, "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." (Borrow [One Minute After You Die](#))

**They will not be persuaded** (3982)(**peitho**) means literally to persuade or induce by words to believe (Acts 19:26, Mt 27:20, Ro 14:14). In Greek the negative "not" is **ouk** which signifies absolute negation. The point is clear, if they don't believe the witness of the Word, they absolutely won't believe a witness who rises from the dead.

**MacArthur** explains that "Since unbelief is at heart a moral, not an intellectual issue, no amount of evidence alone can turn unbelief to faith. The Word of God has the power to do so (Heb. 4:12-note; 1 Peter 1:23-note, cf "The Gospel is the **power** of God for salvation" = Ro 1:16-note)...Like the rich man, as noted above, the Jews demanded signs from the Lord. But they rejected the convincing signs that they did receive (John 12:37)—including the resurrection of a dead person...For the rich man, Israel, and all who arrive in hell, the issue is not lack of information, but rejection of the truth: "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

**ESV Study Bible** - the refusal to repent and the corresponding refusal to believe the Gospel is not primarily due to lack of evidence but to a hardened heart (cf. Mark 8:17; John 11:37–40; Heb. 3:7–11, 15; 4:7).

**Brian Bell on they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead**- Life which is not affected by moral considerations will not be affected by the miraculous. A little later another Lazarus died, and Jesus raised him from the dead, and we are told specifically that these same men tried to kill him. Then came the day when they put Jesus to death, and He rose from the dead, but His resurrection from the dead made no appeal to men who lacked moral sense which puts God

Acts 10:40,41 "God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible,not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead."

**If someone rises from the dead** - Abraham is referring to Lazarus who would return from the dead. If the living Word did not convince them, neither would a living being!

**Arises** (450)(**anistemi** from **ana** = up, again + **histemi** = stand, to cause to stand) means literally to get up, to stand up, to stand again, to cause to rise (thus "to raise"). The most important use of **anistemi** is to raise up from the dead or to bring back to life. Here are Luke's many uses of **anistemi** that refer to **resurrection** - Lk 9:8, 19, 16:31, 18:33, Lk 24:7, 46, Acts 2:24, 32, Acts 9:40, 9:41, 10:41, 13:16, 34, Acts 13:33.

**J C Ryle said** "The saddest road to hell is that which runs under the pulpit, past the Bible and through the midst of warnings and invitations."

**Ian Paisley - The saddest road to Hell is to pass by the Word of God.**The saddest road to Hell is to close your ears to the warning of the blessed Holy Spirit, your eyes to the Son of God, and pass from the Gospel message to the blackness of darkness forever. It will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for a man or a woman who reads

this Gospel tract and said, "NO" to Jesus Christ. These are my final words to you, and I say to you, as we gaze out into the darkness of Hell, into the loneliness of Hell, into the restlessness of Hell, and into the endlessness of Hell, "Make haste to Calvary, wash in the Saviour's Blood, come this night to the Saviour and in God's Name be in time."

**Michael Andrus** - this parable teaches that everyone has had sufficient revelation and sufficient evidence to make a responsible decision about his or her relationship to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ. I won't address this morning the case of the pagan who has never heard the name of Jesus (ED: SEE RELATED RESOURCES BELOW); clearly no one in this story or in this room fits that category. The rich man had been exposed to Scripture; his predicament was due to his neglect of God's Word. And everyone in this room has heard enough to be held accountable. And Jesus seems to imply that anyone who does not respond to the truth he has will not be convinced even by a miracle. Sometimes we tend to think, "If only they could prove that Noah's ark is really on Ararat, or the Shroud of Turin was the actual burial cloth of Jesus, then people would flock to church." Hogwash! Jesus says it wouldn't make a hill of beans difference. ([Sermon](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [What happens to those who have never heard about Jesus?](#)
- [Can a person be saved through general revelation?](#)

**I Howard Marshall** - the law and the prophets are insufficient to call the rich to repentance, even the return of someone resurrected from the dead will not achieve the desired effect. Miracles in themselves cannot melt stony hearts. Here again there is a link with the earlier part of the chapter in which the validity of the law and the prophets during the era of the gospel is upheld. (NIGTC)

**Michael Andrus** - The rich man is not denied his request because God is unwilling to give his brothers as much opportunity as possible. The request is denied because it will not work. You want proof? Not long after Jesus told this story the other Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, died, and Jesus raised him from the dead. Did the religious leaders of Israel fall on their faces in repentance? No, they renewed their conspiracy to kill Jesus. A very short time later Jesus Himself died for the sins of the world, was buried in a guarded tomb, but was raised by God, appearing to hundreds in His resurrection body. Did the religious leaders of Israel, or even the common people, fall on their faces in repentance? No. Oh a few did. But most went right along with their everyday lives ignoring the clear message that what we do with Christ in this life determines where and how we spend the next.

**Ray Stedman** - How accurately this parable portrays our human desire for the spectacular, the dramatic, the shocking to occur! We have all felt this way at times. We ask, "Why is it so hard to believe? Why doesn't God do more? Why doesn't he open the heavens and speak to us? Why doesn't he perform miracles again, as in the days of our Lord, or send an angel to speak to us?" Many feel that if they could only see a miracle, or be spoken to by an angel, then they would believe. But we need to ask ourselves: How many who saw the miracles in our Lord's day still believed in him at the end of his life? How many stayed with him who believed because of the miracles? We know there were very few. Only a handful of people stood around the cross. And what did men do when, shortly after this, another man named Lazarus was actually raised from the dead? What did men do? Did they believe? According to the record, they simply took counsel together to put him to death again! Even when Jesus himself returned from the dead (and that story has been flung around the world since) men do not believe. No, Abraham is right. The most convincing proof is "**Moses and the prophets**," the Word of God, especially that Word made flesh (John 1:14), come to dwell among us. **The rich man was in hell because he refused to heed Moses and the prophets, not because he was rich.** His activities as a rich man grew out of his refusal to hear Moses and the prophets. His self-centered, self-indulgent life is a reflection of that refusal, but he is not in hell because he was rich. **Lazarus, on the other hand, is in heaven because he believed Moses and the prophets, because he believed them he made God his helper and trusted in him.** He is not in heaven merely to give him compensation for what he went through on earth. There will be many a poor man in hell, as there will be rich men in heaven. No, he is there simply because he believed **Moses and the prophets**. So, what our Lord is saying here is: **The main thing in life is to give heed to what God has said, to heed Moses and the prophets. The point of this story is that you and I are the five brothers that are left behind. This is the whole point. You may be young, sauntering your way through life with life all ahead of you, thinking, as these five brothers undoubtedly thought, "I'll take one world at a time. I'll enjoy life now, and when the next life comes along I'll handle it then."** But the point of this whole story is that **THEN** is determined by **NOW**. That is the whole issue. You are put here **NOW** to learn reality, to distinguish good and evil, and to appropriate God's method of deliverance. That is why you are here. **Unless you learn these things now, there will not be any glorious life to come.** (cf Acts 16:31) Thus the main thing is **Moses and the prophets**, especially this last and greatest of the prophets, the One who tells us this story (cf Dt 18:15)! What do you know about him? What do you know about the death of the Lord Jesus, and what that death meant in relation to your sin? What do you know about what he plans to do as a result of your acceptance of that death on your behalf, of his ability to come and live within you (by His Spirit), and to impart to you all the glory of his own life that you might live, not in your own strength, but in the power and strength which He gives (through His Spirit), living through you in this 20th century hour, in the midst of the pressure and excitement of these days -- to re-live again the life that He once lived 1900 years ago (cf 1 Cor 11:1, 1 Pe 2:21, 1 Jn 2:6). What do you know about that? That is

the point to life. That is what our Lord is saying. Anything that misses **THAT** is a purposeless, pointless, meaningless life. The important thing is to begin now, while you are young. "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come" (Ecclesiastes 12:1), says the book of Ecclesiastes. To learn to fear God and to walk in obedience to his commandments -- this is the whole of man. I know the text reads, "This is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13), but in the Hebrew the word *DUTY* does not occur. What it says is, "**This is the wholeness of man.**" This is what makes man **whole**: To fear God and to walk in fellowship with Him, in obedience to His commandments and especially those commandments that bring one into the knowledge of and relationship to the Son of God, that His life may be in you to change your whole life (cf Col 1:27b, Col 3:4), from beginning to end and from inside out. That is living. That is what God intends. That is the purpose of this story. See how our Lord brings it right to the point? **The reason for your earthly existence is that you might learn, through Moses and the prophets, the realities of life: What it is all about, and the realities which lie beyond, what this life is heading toward, what its final expression will be.** Everything else must relate, somehow, to that to have any meaning at all. ([The Main Thing](#))

[Brian Bell](#) sums up Luke 16:19-31 - Jesus drew the curtain back where we were permitted to look behind the veil, past **he died** to see, some are "**carried by angels**", others "**awaking** in anguish". Which will be yours? A life that constantly keeps God in view or one that doesn't? Is your motive in doing things the sight of man, or for God? (**ILLUSTRATION**) One day, when Vice President Calvin Coolidge was presiding over the Senate, one Senator angrily told another to go "straight to hell." The offended Senator complained to Coolidge as presiding officer, and Coolidge looked up from the book he had been leafing through while listening to the debate. "I've been looking through the rule book," he said. "you don't have to go." 3.35.1. Good News... You don't either!

**When all is said and done, the question that needed to be pondered and answered by the Pharisees who were lovers of money and by every rich man (and every poor beggar) is the question from the lips of our loving Lord Jesus in Mark 8:36...**

## **“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?”**

---

**Michael Andrus** - In conclusion I would share with you that perhaps the most important concept conveyed in this parable is the tremendous seriousness of life on this side of the grave. If you are one of the five brothers, sauntering down life's road with great plans and prospects, do not expect that God will send you a messenger from the other side. Nor is He likely to perform some miracle to bring you to your knees. He is no shock therapist. You have the Word of God in which Jesus says, "I am the way, the Truth and the Life. No man comes to the Father except through me." You see, the Great Chasm is still there. The world's religions are all designed to help you build a bridge across that Chasm. It may be a bridge of good works or one of religious ritual. But there's no way you can build a bridge across. The good news is that God has already done it. It's a narrow bridge. It's as narrow as a cross, and only those who come by way of the Cross can come to the Father. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Those who are born twice only have to die once. But those born only once have to die twice. If your only birth is a physical birth you will someday die physically and also spiritually, as the rich man did. But if you are born twice—physically and spiritually—the only death you will ever die is, like Lazarus, physical death. Eternal life has been offered to you. Don't neglect it. Don't delay. ([Sermon](#))

---

**Steven Cole** - The basis of a fixed destiny: Repentance and faith in the testimony of God's Word. A superficial reading of the story might lead you to conclude that a person who is rich and comfortable in this life goes to hell, while a person who is poor and miserable goes to heaven, to even things out. But that would contradict other Scriptures, and even in the story itself, the wealthy Abraham is in heaven. The rich man's problem was not that he was rich, but that he did not repent of his sin of squandering his riches on himself and begin to use them as God would have him to do, to make friends for eternity.

The rich man knew that his brothers needed to do what he had not done, namely, to repent and to be persuaded to believe the message of Moses and the Prophets (= Scripture; Lu 16:30-31). The apostle Paul summarized his preaching as "solemnly testifying both to Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ac 20:21). Repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin. You cannot have one without the other. Repentance is a change of mind that results in a turning of the whole person from sin to God. Saving faith is to trust the testimony that God has borne concerning His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who offered Himself as the penalty for our sins. A person who has truly believed in Christ as Savior will live a life of repentance and growth in godliness. The fact that this rich man never showed concern for Lazarus, even though he had to walk past him every day, is ample evidence that his faith was an empty profession. He had never repented of his selfishness.

The rich man may have protested: "How was I to know that I should take care of this poor man at my gate?"

### **(1). God's Word is a sufficient witness to lead a person to repentance.**

When the rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, Abraham replies that they have what they need to repent, namely, Moses and the Prophets. But the rich man protests, saying in effect, "That's not enough. They need something more spectacular, something miraculous. Send them a man risen from the dead to preach to them and then they will repent." But Abraham insists that Scripture is a sufficient witness. If they won't believe Scripture, they won't believe if someone rises from the dead. Sometimes when you're witnessing, the person will say, "If I could just see a miracle, I'd believe." That is just a smokescreen. The Bible bears witness of many miracles, first and foremost the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. There is sufficient evidence to believe the apostolic witness of the resurrection. If a person won't read and believe the Bible, then he has a deeper problem, namely, a moral problem.

### **(2). Repentance is a moral issue, not an intellectual one.**

The rich man had known what God's Word says about concern for the poor and needy. But he chose to ignore this hurting man on his doorstep. In effect, he is blaming God for not giving him sufficient witness: "If You had just sent someone from the dead to warn me, I wouldn't be in this place!" But the fact is, he did not want to inconvenience his comfortable lifestyle in order to care about this poor man. Invariably, when you're sharing the gospel and a person raises an intellectual problem, it is not the true problem. One way I deal with this is to ask the person, "Are you saying that if I can provide a reasonable answer to that problem, you will repent of your sins and trust in Christ as Savior and Lord?" The answer almost always is, "Well, there are other issues, too." I'll say, "Great, make me a list and I'll see if I can find reasonable answers. Then will you become a Christian?" Repentance isn't the result of having all your intellectual questions answered. Repentance and faith in Christ hinge on the recognition that you are a sinner and that you need a Savior. We need to make it clear to people that if they die without repenting of their sins and trusting in Christ, they are fixing their eternal destiny in hell, not in heaven.

Thus, there are two and only two eternal destinies. The basis for a person's eternal destiny is fixed by his choices in this life.

### **3. It is possible to be deceived about our eternal destiny by present outward appearances.**

One key to understanding this parable is Lu 16:15, "that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God." In the eyes of men, the rich man was successful and Lazarus was a loser. The rich man lived well and enjoyed the finest things in life. Lazarus was a miserable wretch, with the dogs licking his sores. But the irony is, Lazarus was eternally rich and the rich man was eternally bankrupt.

It is interesting that the rich man is left unnamed (sometimes he is called **Dives**, but that is the Latin word for rich man). In this world, he was probably well-known, renowned for his wealth like the Kennedy family or Bill Gates. But nobody would have known the poor man's name, much less cared about it. But in God's sight, the rich man is left unnamed and the poor beggar is named. Lazarus means, "God has helped," and truly God had helped him because he had come to salvation.

The point is, it's easy to be deceived by present outward appearances into thinking that you or someone else is well-off because of career success. But if you are not rich before God, laying up eternal riches in heaven, you are really bankrupt in the worst sense of the word. Don't be deceived into pursuing financial success at the expense of your soul! Those who believe God's Word live in light of eternity as stewards who will give account to God, using the wealth God provides to make friends for eternity.

### **Conclusion**

**ILLUSTRATION:** A Sunday school teacher told his class the story of the rich man and Lazarus and then asked, "Now, which would you rather be, boys—the rich man or Lazarus?" One boy replied, "I'd like to be the rich man while I'm living and Lazarus when I die."

Wouldn't we all! But, of course, it doesn't work that way. You can't live for selfish pleasure in this life, disobeying God's Word, and expect to live with God in heaven when you die. But, the good news is, when you repent of your sins and live in obedience to Jesus Christ, you find great pleasure, both for time and eternity, no matter what your earthly circumstances. As Jesus said, "Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it" (Lu 9:25). Two very different destinies lie before you, with a great chasm fixed between them. I urge you, choose life by choosing to follow Jesus Christ.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Have we reacted against hellfire preachers by under-emphasizing the terrors of hell?
2. How would you refute biblically: Universalism? Annihilationism? Purgatory?
3. How would you answer a person who said, "I think that God is cruel if He torments people for eternity in hell"?
4. A person might argue that Jesus is teaching here that we are saved by our good deeds. How would you refute this biblically?
5. What are the implications for witnessing of the fact that repentance is a moral issue, not an intellectual one?

### [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#)

---

**Brian Bill** on **Playing With Fire** (from his sermon [What Happens When We Die?](#))

A recent poll reveals that 89% of Americans believe in Heaven while 73% believe in Hell. When asked where they think they will go when they die, 3 out of 4 think they will go to Heaven while only 2% believe they will end up in Hell. Why is it that most of us think we'll go to Heaven when we die? The rich man was surprised and shocked that he ended up in a place of torment. I'm afraid that he won't be alone.

Let me summarize what we can learn about the afterlife from Luke 16.

**1. The dead are still alive.** Both Lazarus and the rich man survived their own funerals. We think this is the land of the living but it's really not. This is the land of the dying. When we die, we wake up to spend eternity in either Heaven or Hell.

**2. The dead retain their personalities and their essential character.** Lazarus is still Lazarus and the rich man is still the rich man. Even in Hell the rich man could see, hear, feel, recognize, remember, speak, reflect, plead, suffer, and think ahead. There was only one thing he couldn't do. He couldn't get out.

**3. Death marks the final separation between the saved and the lost.** Once in Heaven, always in Heaven; once in Hell, always in Hell. No one can pass from one place to another.

**4. Hell is a place of personal suffering.** Three times Jesus mentions the torment, suffering, and agony of the rich man. Hell is where God's wrath is poured out. The Bible speaks of a fire that never burns out, a place where the worm does not die, a place of darkness and gloom where there is continual weeping and gnashing of teeth. That reminds me of the evangelist who was exhorting people to flee from the wrath to come. "I warn you," he thundered, "that there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth!" Suddenly an old woman in the gallery stood up and said, "Sir," she shouted, "I have no teeth!" To which he replied, "Madam, teeth will be provided!"

**5. Those in Hell cry out for help that will never come** Contrary to popular opinion, Hell is not a place of one big long party with all of your buddies. None of the rich man's "prayers" were answered nor could they be. The rich man who is still in Hell today knows at least three things:

- There is no way out for him.
- People can avoid Hell if they put their faith in Jesus.
- Someone needs to warn people about the danger they are in.

If what I have just said is true, then you must do whatever it takes to make sure you go to Heaven and you must make sure at all costs that you do not go to Hell. I should go to Hell because that is where I belong. But, I am going to Heaven because Jesus Christ died on a cross for me. He took my punishment so that I could go free. Friend, God has done everything necessary for you go to Heaven. His creation reflects His handiwork. He's given you the Bible, Christian friends, and multiple opportunities to get on the road to Heaven. God has posted an enormous stop sign on the road to Hell and the sign is in the shape of a cross. If the road to Hell is paved with good intentions, the road to Heaven is paved with the blood of Christ. Let me say it clearly. You don't have to go to Hell. God has provided a way of escape for you. But even God's way of escape will do you no good unless you reach out and take it. If you ignore Jesus, there is no hope for you. God doesn't have a Plan B for those who reject his Son.

### **The Road to Heaven Illustrated**

In a recent interview with Fidel Castro, he was asked if he spends time pondering his own death. Here's how he answered that question: "I have never thought much about that because I don't attach much importance to what happens after I die" (WORLD, 3/31/01). This sounds exactly like something the rich man would have said before he died.

In an effort to be as clear as I possibly can be, I want to conclude this morning by walking you through some action steps from Luke 16.

I've always liked new inventions. I read about a new product recently that sounds fascinating. The LifeClock ticks off your remaining



time on earth in hours, minutes, seconds -- and even tenths of seconds. All you have to do is enter in some data and the clock begins the countdown. I went on their web site this week and found out that based on my age and lifestyle, I'm going to live until I'm 84! I don't think this invention will be a best-seller because most of us don't want to be reminded of how much time we have left. It's even hard for us to say the word, "death" or "dead." Have you ever noticed that instead we use phrases like "passed away," "departed," "no longer with us," or "passed on"? Death is an ugly word, isn't it? I know some of you have experienced death recently. Perhaps someone close to you has died and you're still reeling from the impact. Like an unwelcome intruder, death has made a rude entrance into your family or friendships. I hurt with you this morning -- and God certainly feels your pain. The problem with death is that it's almost always unexpected. Even when a doctor says that someone is about to die, death still has a way of ambushing us. I've been in a few hospital rooms when someone has died -- and it's always abrupt, even when a family is somewhat prepared for it. Death was certainly a surprise for those 25 people who were dancing at a wedding reception in Jerusalem when the floor suddenly gave way and they all died.

Job 18:14 refers to death as the "king of terrors." I don't think the rich man in our story thought much about dying. He was too busy with life, too caught up in this world to even think about the next one. Lazarus, on the other hand, probably thought about death every day. He wondered if he would even wake up the next morning. The clock was ticking for both of them. Even though only one of them was cognizant of the seconds slipping away, they both were moving closer to eternity each day. I've been to quite a few funerals in my life -- in fact, I'm doing one this afternoon. It might surprise you to know that the Bible says that it's actually a good thing to go to a funeral. Ecclesiastes 7:2 says, "It's better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart." In other words, it's more profitable to go to a funeral than to go to a party. At least when we're at a funeral, we're forced to think about what will happen to us when we die. If the truth were known, many of us unconsciously think that we can beat the odds. **This verse is teaching that it's better to read the Obituary section of the paper than it is to read the Sports page. God says that it's more profitable to be reminded of death's reality than it is to just fill our lives with entertainment.** I don't know about you, but I now read the Obituary page. My dad always says that he reads it to see if his picture is there! I sometimes read about people to see what they accomplished in life. Now that I'm middle aged, I always look to see how old people are when they died.

There are a lot of people on this page who were over the age of 70 when they died. Others died in the prime of their life. Man, I wonder if they were ready to go... As I've talked to people, I've discovered that most of us have different ideas -- or different plans we're following that we think will get us to Heaven. The first plan is the Good Works plan. If you just do a lot of good things, if you help enough people, then God will let you into Heaven, right?

The problem with this approach is that it's never good enough. No matter how hard you try, you're still going to come up short. It's important to try to live a good life, but God says that it's not enough. Even when we try to do good, Isaiah 64:6 says, "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags." Being good is never good enough.

The other plan is called the "Why Worry?" plan. I know that some of you believe that everyone goes to Heaven when they die. I've heard it at almost every funeral I've been to. It goes something like this: "Well, this was too bad but at least we know she's in a better place now." I certainly understand the sentiment and can appreciate the grief that people experience, but this statement reveals an underlying belief that many of us have -- that when people die, they just go to Heaven. Let me ask you a question: how do you know someone goes to Heaven when they die?

Jesus made it very clear that there is a place called Heaven and a place called Hell. And, most people avoid the narrow road that leads to Heaven. Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

Many are on the road that leads to destruction. After we die we'll have to give an account for our life. When we stand before God, there will be no secrets. Everything will be made known. Those who have lived only for themselves, and had no room for God in their life will be like the rich man who is in torment in Hell. Only those who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ will go to Heaven when they die.

A payment has to be made for sin. A sentence must be carried out. Because of our sins we all deserve to go to Hell. But, Jesus died in our place on the Cross. He died to bridge the gap between a holy God and sinful people. Those who admit their sinfulness and transfer their trust to Christ by receiving Him into their life, will go to Heaven. Those who do not, will spend eternity in torment.

The Bible is clear. Hebrews 9:27 says that, "...Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." There's no getting around the fact that judgment follows death.

Friends, the "Why Worry?" plan and the "Good Works" plan are both fraught with problems. There will be a time of judgment [hold up gavel]. And because of this, some of you do need to worry because your good works aren't good enough.

The rich man was not only suffering the pain of Hell, he was devastated by the fact that his family members were going to end up in the same place. He wanted the former beggar to go and warn his loved ones about the reality of Hell.

What the Bible is saying is that there are no free rides to Heaven. You don't get there automatically or by cashing in your frequent flyer miles. It's not easy to get into Heaven because you need to have the right paperwork.

When we first went to Mexico five years ago we had to have our passports or a valid birth certificate to cross the border. We needed proof of our nationality and of our birth. In order to get into heaven, we need a certificate that declares that we've been born...again.

Jesus has already filled out the paperwork when He died on the cross as payment for your sins. In order to have your certificate validated you need to receive what Jesus has done on your behalf.

Don't be like the family of this rich man. They were busy with their lives and their own concerns. They were too wound up to slow down and listen to what God has to say in the Bible. They were too preoccupied to receive their birth certificate to Heaven.

When Beethoven was on his deathbed, he shook his fist at Heaven and reportedly said, "I need more time. I need more time!" Friend, when it's time to go, it's time to go.

Let me ask you a personal question. What will happen to you when you die? You only have two options -- if you have a second birth, you'll go to Heaven. If you don't, you'll have to face the judgment of God, and you'll then spend eternity in Hell. There's no halfway house. No second chances. If you don't take steps in this life to get ready to die, it will be too late once you die.

I remember seeing a tract once with the title, "What you have to do to go to Hell." When you open it up, the inside was totally blank. You don't have to do anything to go to Hell...just continue as you are.

What must I do to go to Heaven? Acts 16:31 is clear: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." Do nothing and be lost. Trust Christ and be saved.

Once you receive your birth certificate, your name will be recorded in God's book of life. Then, you can await that glorious day when your name will be called -- and you'll cross the border to Heaven.

### **In the Twinkling of an Eye – Jeff Williams**

Three weeks ago I was invited to go to the hospital and talk to a man who wanted to get himself ready to die. He had been fighting some serious health problems and he knew that he was at the end of his life. He wanted to get right with God before it was too late.

As I sat next to him I shared the story of the two thieves on the cross. When they were first hung on the cross the Bible says that they both were hurling insults and blasphemies at Jesus. As the day went on however, one of them stopped and began to talk to Jesus. He recognized that Jesus had done nothing wrong and he wanted Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom. Jesus then spoke words of grace and love to this criminal when he tenderly replied, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

I told my friend that it didn't matter how he had been living. It didn't matter how many times he had been to church. What mattered was what he was going to do with Jesus. I then explained how I became a Christian and then walked him through what he needed to do if he wanted to be cross the border into heaven.

With tears in his eyes he prayed and asked Jesus to save him from his sins as he put his faith and trust in Him for salvation. By the time he was done, we were both crying. I'll never forget what happened next. After I shared some Scripture with him to let him know that he was now ready to die and gave him assurance that he would be in Heaven, I went out into the hallway to talk to his daughter.

While we were talking a lullaby starting playing over the hospital sound system. They do that whenever a baby is born to let everyone know that a new life has come into the world. I turned to this man's daughter and said, "They're playing that song for your dad in celebration of his new birth!"

My friend died early Thursday morning and I can tell you with full assurance today that he's now in heaven with Abraham and Lazarus, worshipping the one who alone is worthy of our praise.

### **What will happen when you die?**

## SAINTS AND SINNERS

**ALTAMONT**, renowned writer and agnostic of a past century, was an ingenious and accomplished infidel whose fascinating brilliance captivated the youth of his time and destroyed any religious faith they had. At his end, his smitten conscience cried:

"It is fit Thou shouldst thus strike this murderer to the heart. As for a Deity, nothing less than an Almighty could inflict what I now feel. Remorse for the past throws my thoughts on the future; worse dread of the future strikes them back on the past. I turn and turn, and find no ray. Didst Thou fell half the mountain that is on me, Thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flame that is not an ever-lasting flame, that is not an unquenchable fire. My principles have poisoned my friends; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness has murdered my wife!; And is there an-other hell? Thou blasphemed yet indulgent God, hell is a refuge if it hide me from Thy frown."

**ANTITHEUS**, another infidel whose last words were so laden with remorse and despair, gave this despairing, final cry:

"You must not let me die! I dare not die! Oh, doctor, save me if you can! My mind is full of horror, and I am incapable of preparing for death. As I was lying sleepless in my bed this night, the apparition of my friend presented itself before me, and unfolding the curtain of my bed, stood at my feet looking earnestly upon me for a considerable space of time. My heart sank within me, for his face was ghastly, full of horror, with an expression of such anguish as I can never describe. His eyes were fixed upon me, and at length, with a mournful motion of his head, 'Alas! Alas!' he cried, 'we are in a fatal error,' and taking hold of the curtain with his hand shook them violently and disappeared. This, I protest to you, I both saw and heard. And look! Where the print of his hand is left is blood upon the curtains."

**EDWARD GIBBON** (1737-1794), the noted English historian whose *Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire* remains the greatest history of all times, was unfortunately another infidel who died without the consolations of the Gospel. What a bleak end was his as he said to those at his bedside:

"This day may be my last. I will agree that the immortality of the soul is at times a very comfortable doctrine. All this is now lost, finally, irrevocably lost. All is dark and doubtful."

**THOMAS HOBBS** (1588-1674), was a noted English political philosopher whose most famous work was *Leviathan*. This cultured, clever skeptic corrupted many of the great men of his time. But what regret was his at the end of the road! What hopelessness permeated his last word:

"If I had the whole world, I would give it to live one day. I shall be glad to find a hole to creep out of the world at. About to take a leap in the dark!"

**CAPTAIN JOHN LEE**, who was executed for forgery, was an-other who sought to do away with God, yet in death longed for the assurance and hope of faith:

"I leave to the world this mournful memento, that however much a man may be favored by personal qualifications or distinguished mental endowments, genius will be useless, and abilities avail little, unless accompanied by religion and at-tended by virtue. Oh, that I had possession of the meanest place in heaven, and could but creep into one corner of it."

**OLIVER**, a doctor of philosophy, lived the life of an infidel but **shortly before his death repented and turned to the Saviour**. His final word was one of deep regret:

"Would that I could undo the mischief I have done! I was more ardent to poison men with infidel principles than any Christian is to spread the doctrines of Christ." (ED: ARE YOU AS CONVICTED AS I AM?)

**THOMAS PAINE**, the renowned American author and infidel, exerted considerable influence against belief in God and in the Scriptures. He came to his last hour in 1809, a most disillusioned and unhappy man. During his final moments on earth he said:

"I would give worlds, if I had them, that Age of Reason had not been published. O Lord, help me! Christ, help me! O God what have I done to suffer so much? But there is no God! But if there should be, what will become of me hereafter? Stay with me, for God's sake! Send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be alone. If ever the devil had an agent, I have been that one."

**WILLIAM POPE**, who died in 1797, is said to have been the leader of a company of infidels who ridiculed everything religious. One of their exercises was to kick the Bible about the floor or tear it up. Friends who were present in his death-chamber spoke of it as a scene of terror as he died crying:

"I have no contrition. I cannot repent. God will damn me. I know the day of grace is past . . . You see one who is damned forever . . . Oh, Eternity! Eternity! . . . Nothing for me but hell. Come, eternal torments . . . I hate everything God has made, only I have no hatred for the devil — I wish to be with him (ED: THERE IS NO PARTY WITH THE DEVIL, NO SENSE OF COMPANIONSHIP! HE IS AS DECEIVED IN DEATH AS HE WAS IN LIFE!). I long to be in hell. Do you not see? Do you not see him? He is coming for me."

#### **ANOTHER VERSION ON WILLIAM POPE:**

William Pope was a member of the Methodist Church in England for most of his life. He made a pretense of knowing Christ and served in many capacities. Meanwhile, his wife died a genuine believer.

Soon, however, he began to drift from Christ. He had companions who believed in the redemption of demons. He began going with them to a house of prostitution. In time he became a drunkard.

He admired the skeptic Thomas Paine, and on Sundays he and his friends assembled to confirm one another in their infidelity. They amused themselves by throwing the Bible on the floor and kicking it around.

Eventually Pope contracted tuberculosis. Someone visited him and told him of the great Redeemer. He told Pope he could be saved from being punished for his sins.

But Pope replied, "I have no contrition; I cannot repent. God will damn me! I know the day of grace is lost. God has said to such as me, 'I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.' I have denied Him; my heart is hardened."

Then he cried, "Oh, the hell, the pain I feel! I have chosen my way. I have done the horrible damnable deed: I have crucified the Son of God afresh; I have counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing! Oh that wicked and horrible thing of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, which I know that I have committed; I want nothing but hell! Come, oh devil and take me!" (recounted in *Voices from the Edge of Eternity*, John Myers, ed. [Old Tappan, N.J.: Spire, 1972], pp. 147–49)

He spent most of his life in the church, but his end was infinitely worse than his beginning. Every man and woman has the same choice. You can abide in the vine and receive all of God's blessings, or you can be burned.

It doesn't seem like a difficult choice, does it? Yet millions of people resist God's gift of salvation, preferring the superficial relationship of the false branch. (MacArthur: *Saved Beyond a Doubt*)

**PERIGOOD-TALLEYRAND** (1754-1838), the renowned French statesman, best remembered as Foreign Minister under Napoleon and later Foreign Minister to Louis XVIII, was likewise known for his infidel leanings. At his deathbed, King Louis asked Talleyrand how he felt and he replied:

"I am suffering, Sire, the pangs of the damned."

**VOLTAIRE**, ([Wikipedia](#)) the noted French infidel and one of the most fertile and talented writers of his time, used his pen to retard and demolish Christianity. Of Christ, Voltaire said: "Curse the wretch!" He once boasted, "In twenty years Christianity will be no more. My single hand shall destroy the edifice it took twelve apostles to rear." Shortly after his death the very house in which he printed his foul literature became the depot of the Geneva Bible Society. The nurse who attended Voltaire said: "For all the wealth in Europe I would not see another infidel die." The physician, Trochim, waiting up with Voltaire at his death said that he cried out most desperately:

"I am abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life. Then I shall go to hell; and you will go with me. O Christ! O Jesus Christ!"

**ROBERT GREEN INGERSOLL** ([Wikipedia](#)) (1833-1899), famous American lawyer and prominent agnostic, lectured on Biblical inaccuracies and contradictions. His famed lecture *The Mistakes Of Moses* led one defender of the Bible to say that he would like to hear Moses speak for five minutes on *The Mistakes Of Ingersoll*. Standing by his graveside, his brother exclaimed:

"Life is a narrow vale between the narrow peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailings."

**JOHN WILMOT**, who became the second Earl of Rochester, lived a life of sin and infidelity. But God met and saved him from his sin and skepticism. When he came to die in 1680, he laid his hand upon the Bible and said with solemnity and earnestness:

"The only objection against this Book is a bad life! I shall die now, but oh what unspeakable glories do I see! What joys beyond thought or expression am I sensible of! I am assured of God's mercy to me through Jesus Christ. Oh, how I long to die!"

**COLONEL CHARTERIS**, another infidel who at the end was not so blatant in his denial of an after life, said as he died,

"I would gladly give £30,000 to have it proved to my satisfaction that there is no such place as hell."

**KAY**, the infidel was the one who cried at the end: "Hell! Hell! Hell!" His family could not stand his groans and oaths and fled from the room until he was dead.

**FRANCIS SPIRA** (Read the extended account of ["The Fearful Estate of Francis Spira"](#)) was the Venetian lawyer, an Italian of wealth, learning and eloquence who, attracted by the fame of Martin Luther and the principles of the Reformation, became a preacher and for six years proclaimed the evangelical doctrines represented by the Reformation. The persecutions of the time, directed against Christians, frightened him and he became an apostate. In the presence of two thousand people he recanted and acknowledged once more the Roman Catholic doctrines. As soon as this public recantation was over, Spira took seriously ill and implored some-one to kill him. Friends came to bid him farewell and were horrified at his cursing and blasphemy against God. In his last hour he confessed in a somewhat lengthy fashion:

"I have denied Christ voluntarily and against my convictions. I feel that He hardens me, and will allow me no hope. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God! I feel the weight of His wrath burning like the pains of hell within me. I am one of those whom God has threatened to tear asunder. Oh, the cursed day! Would I had never been at Venice. I am like the rich man, who though he was in hell was anxious that his brethren should escape torment. Judas, after betraying his Master, was compelled to own his sin and to declare the innocence of Christ, and it is neither new nor singular that I do the same. The mercy of Christ is a strong rampart against the wrath of God; but I have demolished that bulwark with my own hands. Take heed of relying on that faith which works not a holy and unblameable life, worthy of a believer. It will fail. I have tried. I presumed I had the right faith, I preached it to others. I had all places in Scripture in memory that might support it. I thought myself sure, and in the meantime lived impiously and carelessly. Now the judgment of God hath overtaken me, not to correction, but to damnation."

**CASANOVA**, renowned for his self-indulgence, ended his life in self-deception. On his death bed at the age of 73, he said:

"I have lived as a philosopher and die as a Christian."

**JOSEPH BELLAMY** (1719-1790), who received his theological training from Jonathan Edwards and who became lifelong pastor of the Congregational Church in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, at the age of 21, was a man of commanding presence and remarkable preaching ability. When dying, he was somewhat depressed, and a friend visiting him said, "If God should send you to hell, what would you do there?" Bellamy replied "I will tell them there forever Jesus is precious."

**WILLIAM LAUD** (1573-1645), the notorious Archbishop of Canterbury who became Chief Minister to Charles I, was active for many years in repressing Puritanism. The means he adopted to force Christians to deny their faith — cropping the ears, slitting noses and branding foreheads with hot irons — were not only unchristian but cruel and detestable, but Laud reaped what he had sown. At the age of 72, he was found guilty of religious intolerance, stripped of all his honors and beheaded. It is said that at the end he repented and prayed:

"I am coming, Oh Lord! as quickly as I can. I know I must pass through death before I come to Thee, but it is only a mere shadow — a little darkness upon nature: Thou hast broken the jaws of death." (**Ed**: We hope he was genuine and for his eternal sake not one who cried "Lord, Lord" - Mt 7:21-23!)

## There's No Place Like Hell! A Sermon by Ian Paisley

**A SERMON PREACHED IN 1988 IN THE MARTYRS MEMORIAL CHURCH ON THE OCCASION OF THE RESURGENCE OF THE "NO HELL THEOLOGY" AMONGST SO-CALLED EVANGELICALS. THE TEXT WAS LUKE 16:24 "AND IN HELL HE LIFT UP HIS EYES."**

**ILLUSTRATION** - ON AN AMERICAN TROOPSHIP during World War II a new Chaplain came aboard. The rank and file of the sailors met him and they put to him this question, "Do you believe in Hell?" The Chaplain was a modernist and an unbeliever, and he said, "Men, certainly not." The men looked at him and said, "Sir, we would like you to resign as Chaplain of this troopship. If there is no Hell we do not require your services, but if there is a Hell we are not going to be deceived by the like of you."

Those sailors were speaking solemn truth. If there is no Hell, then there is no need for you to come to the House of God, there is no need for you to read the Bible, there is no need for you to be concerned about your soul's Eternity. But if there is a Hell then you need to ask yourself one solemn question, "Is that where I am going to be forever? How can I escape from its worm which never

dieth, and its fire which is never quenched?\*

### **Five Lies About Hell**

In Luke's Gospel chapter sixteen, I want you to notice how in a few short sentences the Lord Jesus Christ demolished the devil's lies and man's falsehoods concerning Hell.

**(1) The first great lie and the first great falsehood that the devil propagates and man accepts is this, that Hell is what you make of life down here.** Hell is in this life. The Lord Jesus demolished that lie, for He said, (and look carefully at it,) "The rich man" verse 22, "also died and was buried, and in Hell he lifted up his eyes..." So Hell is not what you make in this life. It is the after-life.

**(2) The second lie of the devil and the second falsehood that men embrace is, "Hell is annihilation. When you die that is the finish."**

I remember hearing the late Lord Brookeborough interviewed about his beliefs, and he said, "When I die that is the end." What a fool he was! When he died he unlearned that lie very speedily in Eternity. God says in His Book that After death in Hell the rich man lifted up his eyes, being in torments. Hell is not annihilation.

**(3) The third lie of the devil and the third falsehood men embrace is, "Hell is soul-sleep in absolute unconsciousness."**

The Lord Jesus Christ demolished that lie as well, for He shewed the consciousness of the rich man in Hell. He said he was in torments. He was totally and absolutely conscious.

**(4) The fourth lie of the devil and the fifth falsehood believed by men is, "Hell is a purgatory that fits the soul for Heaven."**

The Lord Jesus demolished that lie. He said that between Heaven and Hell there is a great gulf fixed, and no one ever passed from Hell to Heaven.

The unbridgeable gulf between Heaven and Hell! So Hell is not a purgatory from which sin is cleansed from the soul, and the soul is prepared for Heaven.

**(5) The fifth lie of the devil and the fifth falsehood believed by man is, "Hell is a place where departed souls can communicate with their loved ones on earth."**

In the rising tide of demonism and witchcraft today we are told by so-called spiritualists, who are not spiritual at all but are spiritists, that the dead can communicate with the living. If this rich man could have communicated with his living brethren then he would not have asked Abraham to send Lazarus to talk to them.

The Lord demolished those five colossal lies propagated by the devil and accepted by men, and those five lies form the basis of all anti-Hell theology and the beliefs of all those who oppose the plain teaching of the Bible about the doctrine of Hell.

### **There's No Place Like Hell... For There Is No Darkness Like the Darkness of Hell**

Firstly, there is no place like Hell, for there is no darkness like the darkness of Hell. Hear it, there is no place like Hell, for there is no darkness like the darkness of Hell. The Lord Jesus Christ issued three solemn warnings about the darkness of Hell.

He spoke, first of all, in Matthew 8:12 and said, "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." Notice the words, "outer darkness".

In Matthew 22:13 he said, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away and cast him into outer darkness." In Matthew 25:30 He said, "Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness."

It is darkness which is completely beyond any ray of light. Outer darkness! It is outside all light, all natural light, all man-made light, all spiritual light, all God-given light, all the light of the gospel, all the light of hope, all the light of peace and all the light of pardon. It is outer darkness. It is outside all light.

In Jude 13 we read of the "blackness of darkness forever". That is where the ungodly go. Not only into outer darkness but into the blackness of darkness forever.

As I sat in my study I thought of the darkness into which my readers would most certainly go if they died outside Jesus Christ. I said to myself, "Did the shadow of that darkness ever fall upon this world? Did ever the darkness of Hell overshadow this world?"

As the darkness of Hell is the result of God's inflexible and God's unchangeable and God's Holy judgment, I thought upon judgment days.

If you go back to a time of judgments in the Book of Exodus you will remember that one of the judgments in Egypt was **darkness**. For three days, God decided to allow the darkness of Hell to rest upon Egypt. In Exodus 10:20 we read of that darkness "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days, but all the children of Israel had light in their

dwellings." **It was a darkness that could be felt.** It was such a blanket of intense outer black darkness that they could see absolutely nothing. All they could do was lie in terror upon their beds for nothing could be seen. God permitted the darkness of Hell for three days to settle upon Egypt.

Then I thought of that place called Calvary. I thought of that day when God judged His Well Beloved Son. Luke records it in his Gospel Lk 23:44, "And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a **darkness** over all the earth until the ninth hour." The darkness of Hell into which Jesus went at Calvary, was so intense and widespread that it spread over all the world. There was not a country, there was not a village, there was not a people not overshadowed in that terrible darkness. It was a warning to the world and it was a warning to sinners that there is no darkness like the darkness of Hell, for there's no place like Hell.

Your unsaved soul will be cut off from light forever, never again to see anything. You will be in a blind darkness, wrapped up in the impenetrable folds of God's doom and damnation forever. There is no darkness like the darkness of Hell.

### **There Is No Place Like Hell... For There Is No Loneliness Like the Loneliness of Hell**

Secondly, there is no place like Hell for there is no loneliness like the loneliness of Hell. The lost soul, Christ says, will be bound hand and foot, and then cast into the outer darkness, the blackness of darkness in his lonely eternal prison cell forever.

***Hell is a place of eternal isolation.***

***Hell is a place of everlasting separation.***

***Hell is a place of never ending unrelieved and unrelievable loneliness.***

The fool laughs and says, "Oh, I will have plenty of good company in Hell. All my sinful companions will be there. All the people I have lived in sin with and enjoyed the pleasures of earth with, preacher, will all be there. So I will have plenty of company in Hell." Friend, Hell does not want you, and Hell will not welcome you. There will be no reception committee of your old companions at Hell's gates to welcome you when you arrive in the place of the damned. Every damned soul is so tormented in the flames of Hell and in the agony of the torments of eternal doom, that he or she cannot spare a moment to think of others in Hell, to speak to others in Hell, or to communicate with others in Hell. Like in the darkness of Egypt the lost cannot see one solitary thing. Every cell in Hell is built for eternal solitary confinement. Just think about that. The bars on the cell of Hell shut out all prisoners and the prisoner does his eternal sentence alone, alone, alone! The only thought for others which enters the mind, the memory and the heart of the damned is a cry for their loved one still on earth. Who did that damned rich man cry for? He cried for his brothers at home. He cried for his family. He cried for his relations that they would not come to this place of torment. He had not one word to speak of any who were already in Hell, for Hell is a place of loneliness.

We do not like to be alone. There are some things that cheer our hearts. There is nothing so happy as to take a little one upon your knees and hear the childish prattle and the childish talk. There are no children in Hell for you to talk to, for Hell is a place of loneliness. The only children in Hell are the children of the devil and the children of everlasting wrath. When we want to tell someone we are thinking about them to cheer them in their loneliness, we send them flowers. Flowers are beautiful things. We live in a day of imitation. Men try to make flowers. Did you ever put a man-made rose beside the real thing? You take an imitation rose, anoint it with the scent or perfume of the rose and then take the real thing and smell the scent of that beautiful rose, and you will exclaim, How poor and hopeless the imitation is! The only flowers in Hell are the ashes of lost hope, lost joy and lost opportunities of Gospel pardon. The only flowers you will have in Hell, will be such ashes. There is loneliness in Hell. There is nothing relieves loneliness like music. We all have our choices in music. To hear someone sing or to hear some particular instrument chases away loneliness and brings back thoughts of society and friends, and pleasantly stirs the memory. There is no music in Hell. The only thing you will hear in Hell will be the signs and the groans of damned souls (**ED: I DO NOT KNOW OF A REFERENCE THAT SUPPORTS THIS STATEMENT**). There is loneliness in Hell.

I like the mountains. I like the valleys. I like the rivers. I like the lakes and the seas and the oceans. The only mountains in Hell are mountains of everlasting flames. The only valleys in Hell are the troughs of the [brimstone fire](#). The only lake is Hell itself for Hell is a lake of fire. The only sea in Hell is the sea of the everlasting burning. In Hell there is not one drop of water. It is a place of intense loneliness, and all they have to drink is the wine of God's wrath.

To that Loneliness unconverted one, you are most certainly headed. "Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men," II Cor. 5:11.

### **There Is No Place Like Hell... For There Is No Restlessness Like the Restlessness of Hell**

Thirdly, there is no place like Hell, for there is no restlessness like the restlessness of Hell. Hell is a place of darkness, yes, of loneliness, yes, and of restlessness.

Revelation 14:10-11 is a solemn word. It is the Word of the Living God. We read there "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with [fire and brimstone](#) in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and

they have no rest day nor night."

Young people do not appreciate what a wonderful thing it is to rest. Young people never want to go to bed, and then when they go to bed they never want to get up. They do not appreciate rest. But when you are busy, especially in the service of God, you thank God for the blessing of rest.

Jesus said to His hard worked disciples, "Come ye apart and rest awhile." "He giveth His beloved sleep."

Oh, how sweet is the rest of God! Heaven is described in the words, "There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God."

The great Puritan Richard Baxter wrote about this and called it "[The Saints' Everlasting Rest](#)."

**There is no rest in Hell.** You know why there is no rest in Hell?

**Because Hell is the place of Separation from God, and the only place man can find rest is in God.**

As David Brainerd rode the bridle trails of the forest seeking the Indians to whom God had called him to preach the Gospel, he used to cry as he rode his horse, "There is no rest but in God." What a message! Thank God there is rest in Him. Hell is the place of separation from God, and there cannot be any rest. The only Person that can give you rest is Christ. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." If you have not got rest in Christ, some day you will witness and experience the restlessness of Hell.

**There is no rest in Hell because of the Sin in Hell, and sin breeds restlessness**

Where sin is there is no peace. Where sin is there is no rest. Where sin is there cannot be any stillness. There cannot be any rest where sin is. Isaiah verses 20 and 21, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, There is no peace," saith my God, "to the wicked." Over Hell God has said, There is no peace to the wicked. There is no rest in Hell because of the Shame of Hell. In Revelation 21:8 we read of the Shame of Hell. Hell is a shameful place, "The fearful, the unbelieving the abominable, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with [fire and brimstone](#), which is the [Second Death](#)."

**There is no rest in Hell because of the Sufferings of Hell.**

You say to me, "Do you believe in literal fire in Hell?" Yes, I do! "Why do you believe that?" Because that is exactly what Jesus Christ taught, and He is the only One that knew and could tell us. In Matthew 13:3-23, He told the story of the tares of the field and He gave the interpretation thereof.

He interpreted who the sower was and What the field was, "the field is the world".

What the good seed were, "the children of the kingdom".

Who the tares were, "the children of the wicked one."

Who the enemy was, "the enemy was the devil."

When the harvest was, "it is the end of the world."

Who the reapers were, "they were the angels."

Then He said, "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world."

My friend, if that fire was not fire, Jesus was duty bound to have finished the interpretation and told us what it was. But there is fire in Hell, and forever, lost soul, you will be tormented in that flame. You ask, "How could there be darkness in Hell if there is a flame of fire?" The hottest flame known to man, scientifically, is a flame that is dark. How dark is that flame that will scourge lost souls and take away their rest in Hell.

**There Is No Place Like Hell... For There Is No Endlessness Like the Endlessness of Hell**

We sing the hymn concerning grace,

"When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise,  
Than when we first begun!"

**What is true of Heaven is true of Hell. When you have been in Hell ten trillion years in the darkness, the torments will have just begun. There is endlessness in Hell. It never ends.**

If we could say to the damned, "After ten million, trillion years these doors will open, this burning and this darkness will give place to light, this loneliness to society, this endlessness will have its end," then hope would spring eternal even in the breast of the damned. But there is no such thing as this torment having an end.



Every century there is always controversy about Hell. In the last century the controversy was in Scotland about the doctrine of Hell. At that time there was a great scholar and a great Evangelical minister called Dr James Morison. He said, "I'm going to find out, I'm going to find out if there is any hope for a soul who goes to Hell." He made a thorough study from Matthew to Revelation, and one day he got up and closed his Greek Testament, and said, "There is no hope, for Hell has no ending."

**The saddest road to Hell is to pass by the Word of God.** The saddest road to Hell is to close your ears to the warning of the blessed Holy Spirit, your eyes to the Son of God, and pass from the Gospel message to the blackness of darkness forever. It will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for a man or a woman who reads this Gospel tract and said, "NO" to Jesus Christ. These are my final words to you, and I say to you, as we gaze out into the darkness of Hell, into the loneliness of Hell, into the restlessness of Hell, and into the endlessness of Hell, "Make haste to Calvary, wash in the Saviour's Blood, come this night to the Saviour and in God's Name be in time."

---

#### RELATED RESOURCES:

- [How can I not go to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Jesus' View of Eternal Punishment](#) - Robert L. Thomas - 31 pp
- [Hell: Never, Forever, or Just for Awhile](#) - Richard Mayhue - 162 pages
- [Paul's Concept Of Eternal Punishment](#) - James Rosscup - 24 pp
- [Eternal Punishment In John's Revelation](#) - Trevor P Craigen, 13 pp
- [Wrath That Endures Forever](#) William V. Crockett - JETS 34.2 (1991): 195-202
- [A Kinder, Gentler Theology Of Hell?](#) - Larry D. Pettegrew, 17 pp
- [The Horrors and Habitat of Hell](#) - Chris Gee (short, pithy, painful read)
- [A Horrible Place Called Hell](#) - Alan Carr
- [Eternal Punishment](#) - Eryl Davies, Foundations 13 (Autumn 1984): 34-44
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Who will go to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Does hell exist? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is hell real? Is hell eternal? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Where is hell? What is the location of hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does hell look like? How hot is hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Are there different levels of punishment in hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What kind of bodies will people have in hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Did God create hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How is eternity in hell a fair punishment for sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How is an eternity in hell a just punishment for only a human lifetime of sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can a loving God send someone to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is hell literally a place of fire and brimstone? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does it mean that hell is referred to as a lake of fire? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Does God love the people who are in hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why does God send people to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Questions about Heaven, Hell, and Eternity \(All\) | GotQuestions.org](#)

**BELOW ARE ARTICLES FROM GRACEGEMS.ORG** - Most written prior to 1900 (many by Puritan writers)...

1. [The infernal dungeon of Hell](#) John Bunyan [VIDEO](#) [Play Audio!](#)
2. [One Hour After Death!](#) - James Smith
3. [The biggest problem for those in Hell](#) R.C. Sproul
4. [Yes, I tell you, fear Him!](#) Paul Washer
5. [No way](#)
6. [From burning to burning](#) Thomas Brooks,
7. [This is the 'Hell' of Hell](#) Samuel Davies
8. [Eight Myths about Hell](#) Sam Storms (very interesting)
9. [Darkness, fire, and chains](#) Thomas Watson
10. [The sea of damnation](#) William Dyer
11. [Why must there be a Hell?](#) Thomas Watson
12. [The hell of Hell](#) Thomas Brooks

13. [The annals of Hell—or the biography of devils](#) Samuel Davies,
14. [Sinners in Hell are not the fools they were on earth](#) Charles Spurgeon
15. [HELL](#) James Smith Luke 16:22-24
16. [The most unpopular, hated and feared teaching in the entire Bible](#)
17. [The Restless Bed](#) - James Smith
18. [A misery beyond all expression](#) Thomas Brooks
19. [If you dare](#) Samuel Davies
20. [They will not believe it until they feel it](#) Thomas Brook
21. [The road to Hell](#)
22. [God has three hands](#) Matthew Mead
23. [All will be pure, unmingled happiness—or pure, unmingled misery](#) A funeral sermon by Samuel Davies ([play audio](#))
24. [Let us often go to Hell while we live](#) Thomas Adams - short but pithy and worth pondering!
25. [Perpetual fuel to the flames of Hell](#) Thomas Brooks
26. [Your case is sad—very sad](#) James Smith,
27. [Get out of My sight](#) Thomas Brooks
28. [I might have escaped all this misery](#)
29. [The wrath of God](#)
30. [A house without light](#)
31. [There would be a jubilee in Hell at the very thought of it](#)
32. [Sudden destruction, and that without remedy](#)
33. [Sweeter morsels both for worms and devils](#)
34. [Sin](#)
35. [Enough to put them into a cold sweat](#)
36. [Fanning the inextinguishable fire, and sharpening the tooth of the immortal worm](#)
37. [God's prison](#)
38. [Meditate upon JUDGMENT](#)
39. [Meditate on HELL](#)
40. [You fool](#)
41. [That immortal bird](#)
42. [Could every damned sinner weep a whole ocean](#)
43. [Who can fairly represent the horrors of that horrible place?](#)
44. [The day of judgment is coming, burning like a furnace](#)
45. [Tell them that their poor brother is in flames, tormenting flames, inextinguishable flames](#)
46. [5 Myths about Hell](#)
47. [The Misery of the Lost](#)
48. [The Lost Souls First Day in Eternity](#)
49. [O lay your ear to the door of Hell](#)
50. [They are preaching up the devil's old, favorite doctrine](#)
51. [The eternal duration of Hell's torments](#)
52. [A bugbear to frighten children and fools](#)
53. [The great day of His wrath has come](#)
54. [It is His groans, His tears, His cries—which best tell what Hell means](#)
55. [What shall the swearer say?](#)
56. [The sure conclusion of a godless life](#)
57. [The fire, the worm, the prison are eternal](#)
58. [Lost, lost, lost and lost for nothing](#)
59. [Another stick to heat Hell](#)
60. [O, it was one word that I saw in your book which troubles me](#)
61. [The bitterest ingredient in the 'cup of divine displeasure'](#)
62. [Nothing but the brittle thread of life, supported by the hand of an angry God, now holds the sinner from dropping into the flames of Hell](#)
63. [What do you now think of the delights of sin?](#)
64. [O what a dwelling](#)
65. [No one can escape from that prison](#)
66. [No one really desires to go to Hell](#)
67. [A never-dying appetite for sin](#)
68. [It would make a man to tremble](#)

69. [Jesus Christ went into the furnace of His Father's wrath](#)
70. [What would the damned in Hell give, for one hour's sleep](#)
71. [O, eternity! eternity!](#)
72. [Judgment](#)
73. [Though sought with an ocean of tears](#)
74. [A vast den of poisonous hissing serpents](#)
75. [How did those poor scorched Sodomites run](#)
76. [To help your conception of what Hell is](#)
77. [No way](#)
78. [Perish What is that?](#)
79. [It would be a kind of Heaven to the damned](#)
80. [O think of eternal fire](#)
81. [Distress in heaven?](#)
82. [A voyage to Hell](#)
83. [But woe and alas](#)
84. [Hallelujah](#)
85. [The damnation of one soul](#)
86. [The most common way to Hell?](#)
87. [It is true—I do love my sins, my lusts and pleasures](#)
88. [I have often been shocked with the thought](#)
89. [We have but added fuel to those burning coals](#)
90. [Only fully understood in Hell](#)
91. [Such likeness between men and swine](#)
92. [The state of the lost...](#)
93. [Wrath to come](#)
94. [Ah who can grasp the thought](#)
95. [Viewing Hell from heaven?](#)
96. [You may as well throw your Bible away at once](#)
97. [O, my son, my son](#)
98. [He would be double-damned](#)
99. [That terrible day](#)
100. [Hanging over the brink of the bottomless pit](#)
101. [THE CHAIN](#)
102. [The agonizing lesson](#)
103. [An eyesore to the damned in Hell](#)
104. [Your conscience will not always sleep](#)
105. [The very thought is horror](#)
106. [God is too kind to punish the ungodly](#)
107. [The best way to be preserved from falling into Hell](#)
108. [The conflagration of the world](#)
109. [What have I done?](#)
110. [I am in agony in this fire](#)
111. [Miserable suicide of my own soul?](#)
112. [The saints' Hell—and the sinners' heaven](#)
113. [The sword](#)
114. [The way to Hell looks pleasant](#)
115. [The hell of Hell](#)
116. [Without a rag on his back, or a penny in his purse](#)
117. [They are not too young to go to Hell](#)
118. [The torments in Hell are manifold](#)
119. [What must his wrath be?](#)
120. [How terrible it will be](#)
121. [The very place in which the wicked shall lodge](#)
122. [Tomorrow comes—and they are in Hell](#)
123. [Now I am accursed indeed](#)
124. [Two signs](#)

125. [Who knows the power of God's anger?](#)
126. [These are the words which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself employs](#)
127. [Hell is full of the Divine holiness](#)
128. [If God would take the covering off the mouth of Hell](#)
129. [O sinner](#)
130. [Viewing Hell from Heaven](#)
131. [A prayer from Hell](#)
132. [Imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven](#)
133. [It is the wrath of the Lamb](#)
134. [O eternity](#)
135. [Turned into beasts, birds, stones, trees, or air](#)
136. [The wheels of divine justice?](#)
137. [By the fire which burnt down our city](#)
138. [The end of the world](#)
139. [Twin Hells?](#)
140. [Many sorrows](#)
141. [Once in Hell](#)
142. [Matthew 25:41](#)
143. [The Keys of Hell and Death](#)
144. [O what a Hell will it be](#)
145. [CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE](#)
146. [A lost soul speaks](#)
147. [The hell of Hell!](#)
148. [The weepings and wailings of the damned](#)
149. [Some who read these lines](#)
150. [Some of the preachers say that there is no Hell](#)
151. [It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God](#)
152. [WITHOUT CHRIST, UTTERLY LOST](#)
153. [Matchless, easeless, and endless torments](#)
154. [Truly, this is a most painful thought to us](#)
155. [CHARACTER AND DOOM OF THE WICKED](#)
156. [All the ravishments of His presence and love](#)
157. [The base cares & the petty enjoyments of the present world](#)
158. [The heart of an unbeliever](#)
159. [He awoke with everlasting flames about his ears](#)
160. [If you do not turn...](#)
161. [For a moment of sinful pleasure](#)
162. [What a contrast](#)
163. [Hell is terrible](#)
164. [What an amazing word](#)
165. [Where the lost soul must go?](#)
166. [The most awful sight](#)
167. [We cannot fathom the horrors of that dismal dungeon of lost souls](#)
168. [That day](#)
169. [The devil's old delusion](#)
170. [What would we think?](#)
171. [Endeavor to realize the solemn scene](#)
172. [To die in your sins...](#)
173. [What a difference](#)
174. [Vessels of His wrath](#)
175. [CHAFF](#)
176. [Self-damnation](#)
177. [Right or left?](#)
178. [The open gate to damnation](#)
179. [Sinners in the hands of an angry God](#)
180. [HELL](#)
181. [He will go on sinning and suffering forever](#)

182. [Grapple with Omnipotence?](#)
183. [The day is come](#)
184. [Thousands of preachers who would not dare cut Hell out of their Bibles](#)
185. [Imagine all the depths of Hell](#)
186. [Who can describe?](#)
187. [Spurgeon's choice excerpts on Hell #1](#)
188. [Spurgeon's choice excerpts on Hell #2](#)