

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

Hell and The Apostles

Selected Passages

Keywords: Hell, Judgment, Eternity, Wrath, Condemnation

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: Though Jesus spoke the most on the subject of hell, by no means were His Apostles silent on this critical issue. Through use of powerful imagery and clear teaching the Apostles also warned of the wrath to come and the salvation that was found in Jesus, the Messiah.

Dismiss

I. Introduction.

- A. Final sermon on the reality and nature of hell.
- B. The justice of hell.
 - 1. We are all creatures, created by God. More than that, in a sense we are children, for we carry His image.
 - 2. God has revealed himself to all people, making himself known in their hearts.
 - 3. God has revealed himself to all people through the revelation of creation itself.
 - 4. God shall judge man with impartiality.
 - 5. God shall judge man according to what we know.
 - 6. God shall judge man according to what they have done in response to that knowledge.
 - 7. God shall judge man individually.
 - 8. God shall judge man even upon the secret things that belong only to him.
 - 9. This judgment will also be based upon how man has despised God's patience and kindness.
- C. Hell under attack and redefinition.
 - 1. Rejection, Universalism, and Annihilationism.

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2. From there we considered many, not all, of the teachings of Jesus on this issue.
 3. Spoke more on this subject than all of the other writers in the entire bible.
 4. **Destroys the oft thought idea that Jesus would never send a person into hell. In fact, it is He who shall be the final judge where all must appear.**
- D. When we look to the Apostles, who were given the task of bringing the declaration that Jesus is Lord and King to the world, we find that they continue the teaching on hell—but using a different vocabulary.
1. This is the focus of the sermon today.
 2. What is the apostolic teaching on the future judgment of those who reject God?
 3. What immediately stands out is that the use of “hell” is never used by Paul, Jude, or John. James uses it once, the same with Peter.
 4. But this little series is not about the word “hell” it is about the biblical teaching on that subject. There are many other terms that come into play, all of them pointing to a reality that is both comforting and terrifying, if rightly understood.
- II. Hell and The Apostles.
- A. Foundation—Jesus as Messiah.
1. New Testament translate it as “Christ.” But it is often misunderstood.
 - a. Basic sense of it is the ‘anointed one’ and carries the idea “Lord and King.” And Jesus is the gospel that is spoken of over and over in the New Testament.
 - b. Old Testament speaks of One through Whom God would destroy mankind’s great enemies—sin, Satan, and death. This One was the Messiah, He would make all things right.
 - (1) Began at birth, then in miracles, then death, then resurrection, but in its fullest, in His return.
 - (2) That is the gospel.
 - c. And that Messiah, is Jesus.
 2. Revelation 1, the revelation given to Jesus.
 - a. A triune greetings (4-5).

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b. Note the descriptions of Jesus by John:

- (1) The Faithful Witness (5). What He testifies to is true.
- (2) Firstborn (preeminence) of the dead (5).
- (3) Ruler of the kings of the earth (5). Key to understanding the idea of "Christ."
- (4) He loves us (5). Not a vague, undefined love, it is true love, that acts.
- (5) He released us from our sins (5).
 - (a) Literally "in" His blood.
 - (b) The blood of Christ was the instrument by which we are released from the dominion/chains/bondage of sin.
- (6) He is coming again (7). This is part of the gospel and it is here that we begin to consider the final judgment.

c. Then, notice a little later how Jesus describes Himself:

- (1) I am the Alpha and Omega (8). I am the first word and the final word.
- (2) The almighty (8).
- (3) I am the first and the last (17). Reiteration of above.

Notice now how Jesus focuses us upon death and life now.....

- (4) The living One (18).
- (5) I was dead and I am alive forevermore (18).
- (6) I have the keys of death and of Hades (18).

3. In this short section we see the testimony of John and Jesus speaking of Jesus' triumph over death and that he possesses authority over both death and hell. Remember this.

4. It is that issue of death that the Apostles tend to bring out in various ways that deals with hell.

B. A survey of the apostolic teaching on hell.

1. Common terminology.

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- a. **Death. (Keep in mind what we just saw with Jesus)**
 - (1) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)
 - (2) In Romans 5 Paul speaks of the reality of death reigning over mankind.
 - (3) Death, however, is not merely the physical death we all know about. Rather, it is only one aspect of true death.
- b. **Perish/destroy.**
 - (1) John 3:16.
 - (2) 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? (James 4:12)
- c. **Wrath.**
 - (1) Romans 2:5 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, (Romans 2:5)
 - (2) For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience (Ephesians 5:5-6)
- d. **Condemn/Judge.**
 - (1) Romans 2:1 Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. (Romans 2:1-2)
- e. **Vengeance/Retribution.**

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(1) For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed-- for our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10)

f. Trouble and Distress.

(1) Romans 2:9 There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, (Romans 2:9)

g. Utter Darkness.

(1) wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. (Jude 1:13)

h. Hades.

(1) This is the term used in the bible to refer to what we often call 'hell.'

(2) however it is actually more like an intermediate hell, a holding cell, or jail versus prison.

C. Back to Revelation.

1. It this book we have the unfolding of God's final judgment. What the bible speaks of when it is referencing death, perishing, judgment, condemnation and such.

2. Revelation 14 (not part of the chronology of Revelation, part of an interlude giving a "big picture")

a. It is looking to a yet future time when God begins to pour out the wrath that has been building against mankind.

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- b. Starting in vs 6 a series of angels begin to make pronouncements of judgment.
 - (1) First angel has the eternal gospel. His message:
 - (a) Fear God.
 - i) Worship Him.
 - ii) To surrender yourself to Him.
 - (b) Give Him glory.
 - i) This is an idiom of acknowledging Him as God.
 - ii) Why? His hour of judgment has come.
 - iii) All of that 'stuff' we heard earlier about the future time of God's judgment, it is NOW"
 - (c) Worship Him for He is alone the creator.
 - (2) The second angel announces the doom of Babylon.
 - (3) Third angel (9).
 - (a) Here is the judgment warning to those who worship the beast (explain).
 - i) Anti-Christ.
 - ii) Satan is granted to empower him. He does great miracles. Appears to come back to life.
 - iii) A third person, called another beast, and then, the false prophet, make up the unholy trinity.
 - (b) Note the description of hell in vss 10-11.
 - i) The wrath of God.
 - a) It will be full strength. Our disasters of today are but a small glimpse of that strength.

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- b) There will be no mercy in the slightest.
- ii) Torment with fire and brimstone (10).
 - a) The angels will observe this.
 - b) So will Jesus.
 - c) So will those saved, Isaiah 66:24.
- iii) Why is this description being given?
 - a) vs 12 and 13.
 - b) Matthew 10:28 "And 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.
 - c) The call to repent because the Kingdom of God was at hand was because of the wrath of God (cf. Matthew 3:7).
 - d) It was the message Paul gave the people of Athens: "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:30-31)
- c. The harvest (14-20). Oh what a harvest it is.
 - (1) Here he comes back to the wrath of God on the earth.
 - (2) Read.

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- (3) Let the nations be aroused And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, *multitudes in the valley of decision!* For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness. (Joel 3:12-15)
- (4) The destruction and carnage shall be extreme.
 - (a) Vs 20 is hyperbole and has its connection back in Isaiah 63:3-6.

"I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger, And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment. For the day of vengeance was in My heart, And My year of redemption has come. And I looked, and there was no one to help, And I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; So My own arm brought salvation to Me; And My wrath upheld Me. And I trod down the peoples in My anger, And made them drunk in My wrath, And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth." (Isa 63:3-6)

- (b) The blood of mankind shall flow like the juice of grapes in a press.
 - d. This last section symbolically portrays what chapters 15 and 16 will say explicitly.
- 3. Revelation 15:1.
 - a. These are the final vestiges of God's wrath. They will bring it to completion and fulness.
 - b. Comment on vs 8. It was a time for God alone, in His wrath.
- 4. Revelation 16.
 - a. The pouring out of these bowls of wrath, each greater and greater.
 - b. Touch lightly on the first two and give some commentary on 3rd.
 - (1) Note vs 5, not "who is to come" Because He had now come!

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- c. Vss 21 yet no repentance.
5. Revelation 19.
 - a. The hallelujahs are the response to the angel's call for heaven to rejoice (cf. 18:20). (1,3,4,6)
 - (1) The term hallelujah is simply a transliteration. It means "praise YHWH."
 - (2) What do you think when you consider the word 'hallelujah?'
 - (3) It is actually a technical word though and is often used in connection with God punishing the wicked. And so too here.
 - b. Vss 14ff, the return of the King.
6. Revelation 20.
 - a. The reign of the King 1-6.
 - b. The futile attempt to do war against the King (7-9).
 - c. The final judgment (10-15).
 - d. Here we come full circle to Revelation 1, where Jesus has the keys to Hades and death.
 - e. The words of Paul take on a great meaning now, "For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with

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you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.” (1Th 1:9-10)

III. Conclusion.

A. Revelation 21:1-8

Small Group Questions

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