



The Doctrine of Hell

Matthew 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

In Conjunction with A Holy Calling Radio Ministry, the radio arm of School of the Called Seminary.

All our authentic information concerning hell comes to us only through the revelation of Scripture, and in this one verse, we have a wealth of information on truths related to the doctrine of hell:

- 1 – There is a difference between the *body* and the *soul*
- 2 – Both the *body and soul* can be punished
- 3 – That both *body* and *soul* can be *cast* into and *suffer* in *hell*, testifies again that the lost/damned will also be bodily raised from the dead)
- 4 – There is a *punishment beyond death for the wicked*
- 5 – To follow Christ, one will be going against the grain of this world (therefore, we should take warning that some may even desire to kill our body)
- 6 – *The enemies of the righteous are limited in what they can do to the righteous* (the maximum they can inflict being *death*)
- 7 – *Physical death is not the end of a person whether they are saved or lost;*
- 8 – It is *God alone who has the power to cast into hell;*
- 9 – (And most important of all) Jesus reveals the way of *escaping such a fate* (that it begins in the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom).

Certainly God has not given more information for us than what is good for us to have; *neither has He given us less information than what we need.*

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Matthew 23:33 (KJV)

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Ezek. 33:11a **Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.**

2 Pet. 3:9 **The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**

1 Tim. 2:3-4 ³ **For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

Even though eternal judgment is listed in Hebrews 6:2 as an elementary doctrine of the faith, the doctrine of hell is little spoken of in this day. Clearly, something is wrong.¹

¹ Some would have us wrongly assume that eternal judgment only refers to a one time sentencing without appeal. That the Day of Judgment manifests such an irreversible judgment is true, but it is not the whole truth. The immortality of the soul (and one day of the body that shall rise) reveals the most sober aspect of what it is to enter into *eternal judgment*.

1.) The Fear of the Lord:

Jude 22-23 And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

Consider how the Bible reveals hell in a variety of words and expressions: (This list is by no means exhaustive)

- “...everlasting fire...” Matt. 18:8 & 25:41
- “...everlasting punishment...” Matt. 25:46
- “...damnation of hell...” Matt. 23:33 KJ
- “...eternal damnation...” Mark 3:29KJ
- “...will be damned...” Mark 16:16 KJ
- “...lake of fire...” Rev.20:14
- “...the lake which burns with fire and brimstone...” Rev. 21:8
- “...the second death...” Rev. 20:14
- “...the furnace of fire...” Matt. 13:42
- “...outer darkness...” Matt. 8:12
- “...wailing and gnashing of teeth...” Matt. 13:50
- “...the blackness of darkness forever...” Jude 13
- “...place of torment...” Luke 16:28
- “...into the fire that shall never be quenched...” Mark 9:43

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Clearly, such expressions reveal punishment that is beyond death, suffering that is eternal, shame and contempt that is everlasting.²

Every believer who has such knowledge of hell, every believer who knows that God is to be feared, every believer who knows that the Lord Jesus spoke much and powerfully upon the subject, should have no other conclusion than this: **“Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord...”** it should naturally follow that **“...we persuade men.”**

2.) Hell, From the New Testament Greek:

There are three Greek words in the New Testament which have been translated as hell in the King James version: **Hades, Gehenna, Tartarus.**

First of the three, Hades:

Hades has been translated in the King James version by the word hell. But Hades, by definition, refers to the unseen world.³ Hades, properly speaking then, contains all the dead; the wicked in hades are in a place of suffering, the righteous in hades are in Paradise. Such may sound shocking to some, since people commonly associate hades as the place of the wicked. But there is solid evidence in Scripture that points to such, so solid that there is near universal agreement on this point.⁴

² Such Scriptures cut off the foolish talk of some that speak of hell being something that is experienced only in this life. Certainly, no one in any sense of the word, “Biblical” scholar, can hold a belief that places hell in this world. But nor should anyone who is in any sense a Biblical scholar deny that great and sober evidence is given for the existence of a fearful, eternal, and punitive place, translated in English as hell, which is a fearful possibility confronting every soul. Furthermore, the reality of the doctrine of hell is too serious for anyone to ever become comfortable with the flippant use of the word “hell” which abounds—*poorly used to express someone’s suffering in this life, or used as if it were an adjective in common speech, or worse yet as a matter of joking.*

³ Strong’s Concordance: G86 [ᾗδης] – from G1[Α] (as a negative particle) and G1492 [εἶδω]; properly *unseen*, that is, “Hades” or the place (state) of departed souls.

⁴ Smith Bible Dictionary concerning Hades: “...in general ‘the unseen world.’ It is in this sense that the creeds say of our Lord, ‘He went down into hell [Hades],’ meaning the state of the dead in general, without any restrictions of happiness or misery. ... consequently it has been the prevalent, almost the universal, notion that Hades is an *intermediate state* between death and the resurrection, divided into two parts one the abode of the blest and the other of the lost.”

Luke 16:22-23 ²² **So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.**

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Luke 23:43 **And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."**

Acts 2:31 **he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.**

See footnote concerning the word "Hades"⁵ See footnote concerning the expression, "Abraham's bosom" - Abraham, the father of the faithful (Rom. 4:9-12).⁶ See footnote concerning Paradise, the third heaven.⁷ [Also, see box note on p-5 with Adam Clarke quote]

⁵ Adam Clarke: The original word is Hades, Ἅδης, from α, not, and ἰδεν, to see; the invisible receptacle or mansion of the dead, answering to שְׁאוֹל sheol, in Hebrew; and implying often, 1st. the grave; 2dly. the state of separate souls, or unseen world of spirits, whether of torment, Luke 16:23, or, in general, Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14. The word hell, used in the common translation [King James], conveys now an improper meaning of the original word; because hell is only used to signify the place of the damned. But, as the word hell comes from the Anglo-Saxon, helan, to cover, or hide, hence the tiling or slating of a house is called, in some parts of England (particularly Cornwall) heling, to this day; and the covers of books (in Lancashire) by the same name: so the literal import of the original word Ἅδης was formerly well expressed by it. – Adam Clarke's Commentary, Matthew 11:23 (public domain).

⁶ Likewise, John leaned on the bosom of our Lord, being in that place of honor at the table with Christ, of which Lazarus is said to have been with Abraham in the place of honor among the dead. The Jews reclined up to the table on couches to eat, and the one next to the guest of honor was placed near his bosom. Likewise, when Jesus expressed the blessedness of the saved, He told the Jews who rejected Him that: "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, and yourselves thrust out. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God" Luke 13:28-29.

⁷ It appears that in 2 Cor. 12:2-4 Paul equates Paradise and the third heaven (where all the saved are with Christ presently, since to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord) – as being one and the same. Consider:

² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. ³ And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— ⁴ how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 2 Corinthians 12:2-4

Some believe that Paul spoke of two different times being caught up, thus indicating the possibility that the third heaven and Paradise are not one and the same place. However, I do not believe that Paul is speaking about two different accounts but rather repeats the fact that he was caught up, as Barns points out in his Notes on the New Testament, "It is not uncommon to repeat a solemn affirmation in order that it may be made more emphatic." Besides this, even if Paul were speaking about two different accounts, that would not demand that we see the third heaven and Paradise as two different places. But beyond this, the fact that he gives but one date of "fourteen years ago" seems to indicate his referring to but one account of being caught up. Furthermore, it appears to me to be simply the natural reading of the text, without looking for some more mysterious information, to see Paul referring to a single occasion. And, though we should refuse to speak as if we are those who have witnessed these things first hand, I cannot help but believe that "third heaven" and "Paradise" are synonymous. By third heaven is meant more than the expanse of the sky, and more than the heavenly bodies. The third heaven refers to where God and angels and holy ones dwell. But even then, the final glory of our ultimate heaven will not be experienced until after the resurrection of the dead (experienced in our new bodies) and after Judgment Day, when all the rewards are revealed.

Second of the Three Greek Words for Hell, Gehenna:

The word Gehenna speaks of the final hell, or hell in the proper sense of the final abode of the damned after the resurrection of the dead and Judgment Day, where even the *bodies* of the damned are spoken of as being cast in. This word expresses the very graphic nature of the place of eternal torment. Gehenna is a Greek word comprised of two Hebrew words, "valley" and "Hinnom", where human sacrifices were offered in the fire to Molech (2 Chron. 28:3, 36:6 Jer. 32:35).

Matt. 10:28 **And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [Gehenna].**

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Matt. 5:30 **And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell [Gehenna].**

Matt. 5:22 **But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell [Gehenna] fire.**

Matt. 23:33 **Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell [Gehenna]?**

Consider the use of Gehenna from the examples (cf. footnote).⁸

Third of the Three New Testament Words, Tartarus:

The last word that is translated as hell in the New Testament is found only in one place, 2 Peter 2:4, it is the Greek word Tartarus.

2 Peter 2:4 **For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [Tartarus] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment . . .**

The reference is clearly to a place of suffering for the wicked. Clearly Tartarus is in the realm of Hades (again, the unseen realm), but we know it is not a reference to the final hell (Gehenna) for these fallen angels, for they are said to be there "reserved for judgment."

The following appear as a logical conclusion from these three Greek words. Either:

1.) Tartarus is a place within Hades [the unseen realm] for these fallen angels alone,

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or,

2.) That Tartarus is a/the name of that portion of Hades that is for the unsaved in the way that Paradise is a/the name of that place in Hades for the saved.

⁸ See also Matt. 5:22, 29; Matt. 18:9; Matt. 23:15; Mark 9:43-48; and Luke 12:5. Also, James used the word Gehenna one time, in James 3:6.

The Grave/Death (keeper of the body, whether through burial at land or sea) and Hades (the keeper of the spirits of the dead) are not the final stops for mankind's souls and bodies. These are the temporary holding places of body and spirit, and they will give up what they hold at the resurrection of the dead on the last day, as all are summoned to stand before God on Judgment Day. The Day will come when Death and Hades will be done away with, and saved and lost will enter into either the full glories of heaven with resurrected glorified bodies, or with resurrected bodies of the damned, be cast into the full torment of the final holding place, Gehenna.

Rev 20:13-15 ¹³ **The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.** ¹⁴ **Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**

Upon verses 13 and 14, Adam Clarke offers the following commentary:

Revelation 20:13

The sea gave up the dead—Those who had been drowned in it, and those millions slain in naval contests, who had no other grave.

And death—All who died by any kind of disease. Death is here personified, and represented as a keeper of defunct human beings; probably no more than earth or the grave is meant, as properly belonging to the empire of death.

And hell— ᾠδης, Hades, the place of separate spirits. The sea and death have the bodies of all human beings; hades has their spirits. That they may be judged, and punished or rewarded according to their works, their bodies and souls must be reunited; hades, therefore, gives up the spirits; and the sea and the earth give up the bodies.

Revelation 20:14

And death and hell were cast into the lake—Death himself is now abolished, and the place for separate spirits no longer needful. All dead bodies and separated souls being rejoined, and no more separation of bodies and souls by death to take place, consequently the existence of these things is no farther necessary.

This is the second death—The first death consisted in the separation of the soul from the body for a season; the second death in the separation of body and soul from God for ever. The first death is that from which there may be a resurrection; the second death is that from which there can be no recovery. By the first the body is destroyed during time; by the second, body and soul are destroyed through eternity.

—Adam Clarke's Commentary, public domain'

3.) How Hell is Revealed in Scripture (Take the warnings of Scripture seriously):

Luke 16:23 **And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.**

Matthew 25:41 **Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels...**

Mark 9:44...**the fire is not quenched.**

Jude 7 ...**vengeance of eternal fire...**"

Matthew 25:46 **And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."**

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Some would make a vain attempt to try and soften the plain warnings and declarations about hell by referring to the account of the rich man in Hades as being nothing but a parable. However, the account has the appearance of a real and actual case rather than being that of a parable. We do not find in our Lord's Parables the use of real people by name. Yet, the account of the rich man and Lazarus refers to people by name, Lazarus, Abraham, and Moses. This evidence is strong in support of it being an actual account that our Lord reveals to us, even if some of it should be expressed in language similar to that of a parable.⁹

Furthermore, it is of no use if someone should try to soften the message of the account by declaring that "...it is merely a hypothetical account." For this would not change the teaching, the message, or the situation one iota. If it is a actual account, it is of what has already actually happened to a man with five brothers. And, if it is a hypothetical case given in a parable, then it is teaching *what will happen* to those who die unsaved, as well as what has already happened to others who have died unsaved. Calling it a hypothetical account doesn't change the fact that the account obviously teaches something! And what does it teach, except that there is torment in the after life for the unrepentant person who does not believe what God has testified throughout the Scriptures? Types and shadows and parables are useful because they deal with realities in language that we can understand.

There was never a shadow cast but that there was first a reality so that the shadow could be cast. There never was a type that did not have its anti-type. And *there has never been a parable that was only a story*. We are told in Scripture that our Lord taught the people nothing without a parable, so obviously what a parable teaches is as important as *any other form of teaching from our Lord*.

The same word that measures the endless existence of God Himself, of His kingdom, dominion, salvation, love, joy, and righteousness, measures the shame and contempt for the wicked. How dare men, in the face of this solemn and awful truth, teach that it will come to an end? The Word everlasting means to all eternity. — H.M. Riggle, *Christ's Second Coming and What Will Follow* (Anderson, IN: Gospel Trumpet Company, 1918) 206.

Scripture warns of:

"...shame and everlasting contempt..." Dan. 12:2

"...of eternal condemnation..." Mark. 3:29

"...everlasting punishment..." Matt. 25:46

Hebrews 2:1-4 ¹ **Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.** ² **For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,** ³ **how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,** ⁴ **God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?**

4.) Beyond the Death of the Body... Or: What ought to be Obvious:

The Immortal Human Soul: Immortality is Revealed in Mankind's Existence Beyond the Death of the Body:

Matthew 10:28, ***"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."***

⁹ Likewise, we commonly refer to the "Sheep and the Goats" as a parable, yet it is really more of an actual description given in a parable/analogy form of expressions; for though it starts out like a parable, it soon is speaking of things that relate clearly to men and women standing without excuse before the throne of Judgment before the Son of Man without any further symbolic reference to sheep or goats at all.

A distinction is made between the spirit which cannot die, and the body which does:

Eccl. 12:7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Acts 7:59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Luke 16:22b-23a The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw...

2 Cor. 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 Cor. 5:8-9 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

2 Pet. 1:13-15 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

Rom. 14:7-9 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Luke 20:38 For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him.

5.) Hell is a Place of Torment:

Luke 16:23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes...

Luke 16:24 ...for I am tormented in this flame.

Luke 16:25 ...now [Lazarus] is comforted and you are tormented.

Luke 16:28 ...lest they also come to this place of torment.

Dan. 7:15 I Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

2 Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

Luke 23:43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

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Matthew 8:29 "Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

Judas Iscariot is not the only one to whom it can be said, ***"It would have been good for that man if he had never been born"***— he is just the most notorious one. All who die unsaved share in such a curse.

6.) Hell is a Place of Loss:

What a blessed hope belongs to the saved, our labor in the Lord is not in vain – indeed, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for even their works follow them – death itself cannot sever us from our blessed hope. However, all the hopes of the wicked are dashed at their death. They suffer the loss of all good things, the loss of their soul’s rest and bliss, and the loss of all opportunities to change their eternity.¹⁰ Yet more than this, it is not just the loss of all good things, but they themselves are lost!

Mark 8:36-37 **For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?**

7.) Hell is a Place of Remorseful Memories:

Luke 16:25 **But Abraham said, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.”**

8.) Degrees of Suffering in Hell:

It is also certain that hell will be torment for all, and there will be varying degrees of suffering in hell. Clearly, not all of hell’s inhabitants will suffer the same intensity. This truth is revealed in several ways.

Luke 12:47-48 **And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.**

Matt. 23:14 **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.**

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Rom. 2:5-6 **But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who "will render to each one according to his deeds":**

Matt. 11:24 **But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.**

James 3:1 **My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.**

¹⁰ The fear of the wicked will come upon him, and the desire of the righteous will be granted.” Prov. 10:24; “The hope of the righteous will be gladness, but the expectation of the wicked will perish.” Prov. 10:28; “Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.” Prov. 11:4; “When a wicked man dies, his expectation will perish, and the hope of the unjust perishes.” Prov. 11:7.

Suffering is proportional to the amount of spiritual light (and truth) they had but rejected:

James 4:17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Romans 7:9 was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

John 9:41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains."

John 19:11 Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.

John 15:22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

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Willfully remaining ignorant through suppressing the truth will never be an excuse:

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Romans 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

John 7:17 If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.

Philippians 3:16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

Ephesians 4:18 ...having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

Acts 17:27 ...they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us...

Romans 1:18-21 ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Acts 17:27 . . .they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us . . .

9.) The Justice in Hell is Not Attainable on Earth:

Eccl. 8:14 There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are just men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked; again, there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.

2 Thess. 1:7-9 ...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power ...

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Matthew 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

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Matthew 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Today many are seeking to redefine the doctrine of hell. Objections to the doctrine of hell as the place where the lost experience punitive suffering in eternal torment, range from emotional arguments to philosophical and intellectual ones. Often times objections come with an air of superior learning, made more appealing to many by coming in a semi-Scriptural wrapping. But the bottom line remains: "What does the Scripture say?" Doctrine is not discovered according to a mere "Scriptural sounding" facade that is popularly applauded. True doctrine is only discovered by the faithful acceptance of the revelation of Scripture, whatever that may be – even when that doctrine crosses one's cherished preconceived ideas.

Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? Galatians 4:30

1.) [Question]: Is The Soul of Man Unconditionally Immortal?

Supporters of annihilation (or, the "no eternal torment" views) would have us imagine that no soul is unconditionally immortal because 1 Timothy 6:16 declares that immortality is the possession of God alone. Therefore, they reason that immortality can only be granted as a gift to *some*. But their reasoning is only a Scriptural facade, and not a correct application of 1 Timothy 6:16. *Consider:*

1 Timothy 6:14-16 ...until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

Three possibilities become immediately evident, none of which are helpful to the annihilationist view:

1.) The text speaks about the Immortality of the *uncreated* Divine Nature that belongs to God alone. If this is the case, then there is nothing stated about angels, demons and man possessing a *created* immortality, i.e., *the inability to cease to exist*. For such a created immortality we know is true of demons and angels, – and as we have seen, Scripture abundantly reveals man also goes on after the death of the mortal body. (Luke 20:36, Rev. 20:10, Luke 16:22-23).

or:

2. The text speaks about the immortality *of the body* which presently belongs to the Man Christ Jesus alone. For Christ only has *immortality of body*, He is the only one to conquer death and rise from it with a glorified immortal body which can no longer die. This is something that *cannot* be said of the others who were resurrected, but instead their mortal bodies were only reanimated (like that of Lazarus, who had to face death again). This then speaks nothing about the nature of the created souls of men.

or:

3. The text speaks about both that uncreated Immortality that belongs to God (Christ) alone, and to that Immortality that is His as the only glorified resurrected Man; the only One *presently* with an *immortal body*. But once again, this states nothing about the nature of the created human soul.

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And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

Concerning mankind, presently Christ alone has *immortality of body* (a resurrected and glorified body). The terms *mortal* and *immortal* need to be understood in relationship to the *body* of man. To claim that 1 Tim. 6:16 reveals anything about the nature of the souls of mankind is an erroneous application.¹

1 Cor. 15:50-58 ⁵⁰ **Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.** ⁵¹ **Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—** ⁵² **in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.** ⁵³ **For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.** ⁵⁴ **So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."** ⁵⁵ **"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"** ⁵⁶ **The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.** ⁵⁷ **But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** ⁵⁸ **Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**

Notes: _____

Clark H. Pinnock, a widely recognized supporter for the conditional immortality of the soul, writes:

I refer to the belief in the immortality of the soul which, when accepted, must necessarily skew exegesis. ... The Bible does not teach the natural immortality of the soul; it points instead to the resurrection of the body as God's gift to believers. God alone has immortality (1 Tim. 6:16) but graciously grants embodied life to his people (1 Cor. 15:21,50-54; 2 Tim. 1:10).²

That's baloney – there is that which is both wrong and very misleading in Pinnock's teaching. The immortality of the soul is clearly revealed in Scripture (*as we have sufficiently observed in last week's lesson*), and it is greatly misleading to speak about "the resurrection of the body as God's gift to believers." The resurrection of the body is not just a gift granted to believers, but Scripture clearly reveals all will physically rise, whether saved or lost. John 5:28-29 **Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.**

Thus, much to the dismay of the annihilationist, not only is the soul of man presently immortal (that is, incapable of non-existence) – but one day every body of all of mankind, whether saved or lost, will rise, and when they are raised, death itself is destroyed!

¹Clearly it is a blatant error to apply the immortality that is Christ's alone, an immortality which presently includes His human body, to an argument against the immortality of the souls of all mankind. As Paul said in Romans 6:9, "...knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him." Presently, Jesus alone has an immortal body. However, Paul continues in verse 12, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your **mortal** body, that you should obey it in its lusts." But one day, our lowly bodies will be transformed like unto Christ own glorious body. (See Php. 3:21) Also, some would claim that 1 Tim. 6:15-16 does not refer to the Son at all, but only to the Father. This is soundly refuted by comparing verse 15 with Revelation 19:16, for clearly Jesus is He who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Furthermore, if any should dispute this, clearly the doctrine of the Trinity reveals their glory is co-equal.

² Clark H. Pinnock [W. Crockett , Gen Ed.], *Four Views On Hell, Conditional View* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996),147-148. It is also misleading for Pinnock to reference 2 Tim.1:10 in support of a conditional immortality. For the text does not say that Christ through the Gospel brought the possibility for immortality to come to pass for some (as annihilationists would like us to believe that it teaches), but that through the Gospel the reality of immortality is clearly revealed – manifest – brought to light! The text cannot be twisted to mean that immortality of the soul didn't exist before the Gospel. And clearly, the immortality that is brought to light is not just that of the soul, but of the body also: "...because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." Acts 17:31 Through Christ's resurrection, He has brought to light – given assurance – manifested to all, the reality of life and immortality through the Gospel.

2.) [Question]: Do the Dead Know Nothing?

Objectors have also raised a feeble attempt to establish their doctrine of annihilation through an unsound interpretation given to Eccl. 9:5, claiming that the dead cannot suffer eternal torment, for they know nothing in the afterlife. It is easy to expose such a weak argument by considering the context of the verse and the book it appears. It is in regards to life “under the sun” – this world, that the dead know nothing about after they leave it. Solomon is not addressing the eternal state of the departed, but rather revealing that in *this life*, after they have died, they never have anything to do with what goes on *under the sun*. Clearly the passage has nothing to do with what takes place in Hades, Paradise, Heaven or Hell, but only concerns that which is “under the sun,” i.e., that which takes place *in this life under the sun*; that the dead will never share in anything again.³

Consider the Fuller Context:

Ecclesiastes 9:5-6 ⁵ For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten. ⁶ Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; Nevermore will they have a share In anything done under the sun.

Eccl. 12:7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Notes: _____

Eccl. 12:13-14 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

Heb. 9:27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

3.) [Question]: Is the Suffering of Hell Redemptive?

Some (unable to escape that hell is clearly revealed in Scripture as an actual place, yet unwilling to see it as the final abode of the lost), would pervert the idea of suffering in hell from being punitive to being redemptive. But this is nothing but heresy and slanderous talk against the true redemptive suffering that could only come through Christ work at the cross! Basic to the Gospel understanding is that only the Blood of Christ cleanses from sin!

³ The following quote comes from F.G. Smith:

This statement that the dead know not anything, however, is qualified in the following verse by the words “anything that is done under the sun.” This agrees perfectly with certain parallel expressions made in the Bible. For example: 2 Sam. 15:11 – “And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they *knew not any thing*.” This text does not signify that they knew absolutely nothing, but simply indicates that they were altogether ignorant concerning the particular thing under consideration – Absalom’s conspiracy. So also 1 Sam. 20:39 – “But the lad *knew not any thing*; only Jonathan and David knew the matter.” So Paul says concerning the false teacher, “He is proud, *knowing nothing*.” (1 Tim. 6:4) — F.G. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches* (Guthrie, OK: Faith Publishing House, 1973 [reprint]), 68.

The Punitive Punishment of Hell Fits the Crime:

Matthew 23:14 **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.** (See also Mark 12:40)

Luke 12:47-48 ⁴⁷ **And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. ⁴⁸ But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.**

Jas. 3:1 **My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.**

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A Christian barely skilled in the Word of God should at once recognize that only the Blood of Christ cleanses from sin. Some relevant text revealing the impossibility of there being any other way: **Gal. 2:21, 3:21; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:20,24,27,28,4:2; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:3-5; 1 Cor. 1:29-31;...**

If the suffering of hell is redemptive (able to bring man back into fellowship with God) then Christ died in vain! If there is any other way possible, any law (any means) which would be able to bring us back into fellowship with God except Christ crucified, then certainly salvation would have been by another way. But, there is no possible way for sin to be removed, except by the Blood of the cross of Christ.

Matthew 26:39-42 **"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me... O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."**

Galatians 3:21 **Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.**

Gal 2:21 **I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.**

The Righteousness of God is *infinitely* opposed to sin—therefore, it will either be taken away through the *infinite sacrifice* of Christ, or the sinner will forever abide under the wrath of God apart from Him in the *infinity of eternity*.

Notes: _____

The Next Page Starts the Lecture Notes for Lecture 3, Beginning at #4.)

4.) The Nature of the Fire of Hell: *There is Torment for the Body*

Matthew 13:41-42 ⁴¹ **The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.**

Notes: _____

I have often remarked that the most wicked men hold the doctrine that there is no torment for the body in hell. ... [Spurgeon then proceeded to describe a conversation he had with a lost man who said to him:] "I suppose you are a believer in hell, then?" ... "Yes, I am," I said, "because I am a believer in the Bible." "I don't think there is any fire for the body, I don't; I think it is the conscience-remorse of conscience, dismay and despair, and such like; I don't think it has anything to do with the body." And strange enough, many other ungodly men with whom I have spoken on the subject, all seem to be partial to the hell that only deals with the conscience. The reason is this. They do not feel for their soul. They are natural men, who have a natural care about their body, but they think that so long as their body gets off, they will not care for hell at all. Hear this, then, ye ungodly men! Ye care not for the torture of the soul. Hear this-and let there be no metaphor or figure; hear it, for I speak God's plain language. For the body, too, there is a hell. It is not merely your soul that is to be tortured. – C.H. Spurgeon, Metropolitan Tabernacle, Vol. 11 (1865), Sermon no. 659.

A popular statement challenged:

Supporters of "no torment for the body" views can commonly be heard to say: "There is no more reason to believe that the fire of hell is literal than to believe that the streets of heaven are literally paved with gold." However, as popular as this saying may be, it is in error. Far to the contrary, we have great reason for seeing the fire of hell as real, even though we should see the streets of heaven as not literally being paved with gold. The idea about the streets in heaven being made of gold comes from a very symbolic book, and therefore, may certainly be no more than a symbol of something much more wonderful (in fact, I believe it is). But it cannot be said that the idea of literal fire in hell comes to us only from a symbolic book. In fact, to the contrary, it can be shown that hell is described as having burning fire when Jesus is speaking literally, which is the exact opposite of symbolic language.

Consider Jesus' literal explanation of the symbolic parable:

Matt. 13:41-42 ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Reality</u>
The "good seed".... represented:	"the sons of the kingdom"
The "field"	represented:
The "tares"	represented:
The "enemy".....	represented:
The "harvest".....	represented:
The "reapers".....	represented:

(Matt. 13:36-43)

Likewise, when Jesus explained the reality of the parable concerning the tares being gathered to be burned, His literal explanation of the symbolic nature of the parable included those who were lawless being cast into the "furnace of fire." The literal explanation for the tares being bound to be burned in an earthly scenario **represented** that "furnace of fire" which the angels will cast the ungodly into at the end of the age. Clearly, "will cast them into the furnace of fire," is not used in Matthew 13:42 as a portion of the parable, but rather is a portion of the explanation of the symbolic language used in the parable. Nor is this the only such time.

The "tares" bound up ... "in bundles" to be burned in an earthly fire	... represented ...	Those practicing lawlessness being gathered by angels and cast into the furnace of fire
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Consider the Parable of the Dragnet and Jesus' Explanation of It: **Matt. 13:47-50**

The Parable: (47-48)

Matthew 13:47-48 ⁴⁷ **Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, ⁴⁸ which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away.**

This was a private time with His disciples in which He explained these things to them, and it is unreasonable to think that He would explain a symbol with another symbol when telling them what the symbol represented:

Matthew 13:51 **Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."**

Mark 4:34 **But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained *all things* to His disciples.**

Since it is literal bodies that are raised, and literal bodies that Jesus said are cast into hell, it is not unreasonable (contrary to the popular thought of the day) to believe that the fire is literal as well. The modern thought says, "Hell is only for the torment of the conscience." But it must be asked, "Will literal bodies be cast in to hell?" Most assuredly! For what reason then if hell does not affect the body? What do these imagine the body will do in hell, find comfort while the mind is tormented? (It is recommended that you get the broadcast on the Resurrection of the Dead.)

Matt. 5:29-30 ²⁹ **If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.**

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28

The Literal Eexplanation:(49-50)

Matthew 13:49-50 ⁴⁹ **So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, ⁵⁰ and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."**

Notes: _____

John 5:28-29 ²⁸ **Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹ and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.**

Acts 24:15...there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

Notes: _____

Many will object, but: **"Nevertheless what does the Scripture say?" Galatians 4:30**

Considering Objections:

Liberal scholarship is ever ready to downgrade the supernatural and the difficult to accept or explain, in order to make the faith supposedly more palatable to the human intellect. Some would wrongly have the Church spiritualize Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden, Noah and the ark and the world wide flood, Jonah being swallowed by a great fish, Job's life and trials, and several other such accounts, in order to fit a more "intellectual clientele," if you will. It is to be feared that some are ready (without investigation of the evidence of Scripture) to accept the downgrading of the fires of hell to a metaphorical burning, simply because today it is popular/easier to believe. However, the following three questions are much more profitable to consider rather than what is popularly believed today: 1.) Will the body be raised when death is destroyed? 2.) Will the body also be cast into hell? 3.) Does Scripture speak of hell in non-symbolic passages as having literal fire? Let us be careful to base our understanding on what Scripture actually says, rather than on what current scholarship accepts.¹

Literal fire does not mean that we must imagine it to be exactly like the fire of earth, but that it must have some real relationship to such fire. Thus, it seems reasonable to view the fire of hell as having as much of a real relationship to fire on earth as the resurrected body shall have to our present mortal bodies. For just as the body is going to be resurrected (the same body, but wonderfully different, no fear of it ever dying again), so it would appear that this fire is related to the fire of earth (except that it does not need to be constantly fed in fear of dying out like natural fire on earth). Once in the natural realm, God had a bush burn without being consumed. It is no stretch of the imagination to believe in the spiritual realm that He has made hell as Scripture describes.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Another objection raised is that, since hell was created for the devil and his angels, which are spirits, then the fire cannot do anything to bodies. But such an objection is groundless! For in the resurrection, we shall have a "spiritual body" (1 Cor.15). It is truly a resurrected body, but adapted to the spirit world rather than like it is now adapted to the natural world. Let no one say that a spiritual body is an oxymoron, for the two words, "spiritual body" in 1 Corinthians 15:44 do not cancel each other out any more than the two words "natural body" in the same verse are not redundant. A natural body is a body for the natural realm, and a spiritual body for the spiritual realm, but it is still a body. For the saved it will be our natural body raised and transformed like unto Christ's own glorious body. For the lost, it is described as a resurrection unto damnation (A.V. John 5:29), capable of enduring eternal torment. It will be a body that is adapted to the spiritual realm, the realm that Satan and demons inhabit, and as such, it is most reasonable to understand that it is capable of receiving a punishment that such spiritual enemies of God will receive.

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¹There was a time when I found myself giving more and more consent to the popular idea concerning hell not having literal fire (common for the age), especially when respected authors were giving credence to such a view of hell. These were authors through whom I had learned much, and they were truly evangelical and considered conservative. Yet, an examination of the evidence of Scripture opened my eyes to see otherwise. And in that I give a charge to every serious student, to not draw their theology first and foremost from various respected scholars (as helpful as they are) but from looking at the evidence of Scripture. I believe it is a common occurrence for our age to rest too heavily on "expert scholarship." I believe that today, the bent of most evangelicals toward a non-literal fire view is based on what the majority of recognized scholars think, rather than on a careful consideration of the evidence of the text. (Cf. course textbook for more.)

Another objection to literal fire that is often heard is that darkness and fire cannot coexist, and since Jude 13 refers to those who go to hell as having “reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” Those who hold this view insist with an air (really an error) of triumph, that this proves there are no such literal flames in hell, for darkness and fire cannot co-exist. Leading recognized advocate of the metaphorical view, William V. Crockett, states that it is the strongest argument for the metaphorical view, stating:

The strongest reason for taking them as metaphors is the conflicting language used in the New Testament to describe hell. How could hell be literal fire when it is also described as darkness? (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; 2 Peter 2:17; Jude 14 [he obviously meant Jude 13])? ... Fire and darkness are mutually exclusive terms... Did the New Testament writers intend their words to be taken literally? Certainly, Jude did not. He describes hell as “eternal fire” in verse 7, and then further depicts it as “blackest darkness” (zophos tou skotous) in verse 13.

Crockett presents this as the strongest argument for the metaphorical fire view. But this argument which is often given, is truly in error and an amazingly shallow one! Consider how the following Scripture *destroys* this cherished argument:

For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest... Heb. 12:18

Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. Deut. 4:11

These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. Deut. 5:22-23

Clearly these Scriptures refute the often repeated objection that blackness, darkness and fire cannot be in one place. Yet, this argument is one upon which many place their greatest weight of evidence against the traditional view. Certainly the Scriptures quoted above destroy this popular objection raised against the traditional view. But we might ask these objectors (who always insist that fire must be interpreted as a symbol): Why they are never heard stressing that the blackness can *only* be a symbol? Or, why should we think it difficult for God to have fire and blackness coexist when He has made a bush burn without being consumed? Or, why could this not be fulfilled (even in the silly sense in which the objector speaks of light and darkness) by those in their resurrected bodies in hell, choosing to close their eyes and abide in darkness rather than to look upon the sufferings of themselves and the damned around them? Let the objector consider that the *literal* description given of Mount Sinai is that of fire, darkness, blackness, and thick darkness all happening at once. Certainly then, hell can burn in a like manner.

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The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever. Psalms 119:160