

**Eternity in Biblical Perspective:  
Heaven & Hell –  
The Final State—The Importance of the Doctrine of Hell**

**Hebrews 9:27-28**

**By [Dr. Harry Reeder III](#)**

*November 14, 2010 – Evening Sermon*

I want to look at Matthew 3. We have a lot of ground to cover here but only a little time to do it. What is actually the doctrine of hell itself? Jesus has delivered us from sin, death, hell and the grave yet many are not delivered from hell because they have not come to Christ. Should we continue to be silent about it? Because we are. When was the last time in the evangelical church at large you heard a series on the doctrine of hell or even the word itself escaping the lips of one preaching? When was the last time that we have presented it? Imagine there is no heaven, it's easy if you try. Imagine no hell below us and above us only sky. Some of you who are my age you recognize the words here of John Lennon which became somewhat of the theme song of my generation – his song called *Imagine*. Obviously that is man's imagination and not God's revelation which is appealed to. God's revelation says there is a heaven to gain and a hell to lose but we have pretty well succeeded since the writing of that song of imagining away the doctrine of hell in the culture.

George Barna shared some statistics recently and in 1978 seventy percent of the people in North America believed in the reality and truth of hell. In 1998, twenty years later, it was down to fifty percent. In 2008 it is now at approximately twenty percent. Imagine there is no hell. That does not amaze me that John Lennon would write that song and the generation would embrace that effort to try to imagine there is no hell but while there is nothing new about that the success of it is new. The reason it has been successful is because the church has complied with that desire to imagine in our silence for we have not brought the reality of hell in our preaching, our teaching, our witnessing, our sharing, our testimonies, for we have not done it at all.

In fact, recently two great evangelical theologians not liberals, I will not mention who they are, compiled a two volume work on Christian theology which is over 800 pages in length. Do you know how much of those 800 pages of the two volume books were devoted to the doctrine of hell? There were eight lines. We are perhaps even giving less attention to it, our books, our journals, our preaching, our teaching, our communication, and we have attempted to dismiss

it. Now there are those who would say to me “Why are you bringing this up? It’s anti-church growth. It’s anti-seeker sensitive (which I don’t agree with). It’s not thoughtful and wise. It’s not smart. Can’t we be more compassionate?” Friends, if you’re an oncologist and you’ve got cancer is it compassion for him not to tell you? He certainly wants to be careful about how he tells you. This morning I spoke about a house on fire. Is it compassionate to pretend that it’s not there? I just won’t see it because I might frighten them. Is it brilliant for us in the name of church growth to dismiss this?

One might say to me “Don’t you realize there are primary doctrines, secondary doctrines, and tertiary doctrines, in other words you don’t have to believe in the doctrine of hell in order to be saved” and I would challenge that. I would challenge that as to whether you have to believe in it or not. Do you have to get it right? Aren’t there some evangelicals that are now teaching annihilation-ism that when an unbeliever dies they are just annihilated and that is their hell as they cease to exist? By the way, can’t we still get that wrong and still be Christians? Yes, I think we can get it wrong but we can’t silent about it in the name of the Gospel. I understand as well as anybody that in connecting to lost people there is primary doctrines, secondary doctrines and tertiary doctrines. I fully realize that and how much water do you use in baptism. What about the doctrine of baptism? You can get that wrong and still be saved. The primary doctrine is the Gospel. There is the doctrine of the Trinity and all of those things but the issue of hell made its way into the Apostles’ Creed.

The issue of hell was not treated as a secondary doctrine either in the great movements of the Holy Spirit or in the great pulpits that preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Most of all Jesus didn’t treat it as a secondary doctrine. In fact everything that I’m going to try and fit into this study really comes from Jesus. Now, the prophets spoke of hell. The Apostles affirmed it and enlarged upon what Jesus taught but the vast majority of the material on the doctrine of hell comes right from the lips of Jesus. So obviously Jesus wasn’t smart enough for church growth, right? And obviously we’re a lot more gracious than Jesus aren’t we? Jesus must have been a very callous man to have spoken about hell as much as He did. We’re much more compassionate than Jesus, aren’t we? I’m speaking with some hopefully sanctified sarcasm here because I find our position silly, maybe well motivated but silly.

We live in an interesting age in which the taste of hell is increasing exponentially in our culture. I have chosen these words carefully. The taste of hell is increasing exponentially in our culture while the belief in the doctrine of hell is decreasing exponentially because the proclamation of the doctrine of hell has evaporated from the church. It’s just like a mist in the morning. Sometimes I’ll wake up early in the morning, go out on our back patio and there will always be a mist. It’s a wonderful time of the day and many times I’ll turn to Cindy and say “Well that mist will be gone in a minute.” That’s about the way it has become for the doctrine of hell. It has disappeared, evaporated.

One might think “Harry, what do you mean by the taste of hell?” Notice I didn’t say ‘hell on earth’ because I don’t use that phrase and the reason I don’t use it is because I don’t want to give anybody any hope that what you have experienced here is anywhere in comparison to what hell is, because hell is the utter separation of the felt presence of God and nobody has ever been in that position. I do believe a taste of hell is here because what is hell? There a number of things that it is that I will identify in a moment but the one thing I know for sure it is, is the absence of the presence of God, the felt presence of God. Again, I’ve chosen my words very carefully because the Bible tells me if I make my bed in Sheol, hell, behold Thou art there. God is omnipresent. He doesn’t create something and then can’t be there. God is a Spirit and He is everywhere but His felt presence will not be experienced in hell. It will be utter isolation from God’s benevolent, kindness, goodness, mercy and grace of which we are all partaking and even His presence.

What do I mean by a taste of hell is increasing exponentially here? Increasingly, I see God removing His presence from my culture. God gave them over. He says “If you don’t want Me and you want this instead” God gave them over. The taste of hell is increasing exponentially in our culture but the proclamation of the doctrine of hell is evaporating even more rapidly. So while we are silent about that particular doctrine, it is obviously leaving the consciousness of people. Now it never leaves it totally because God made us with eternity in view and man knows that he has an eternity to face, but we have now decided that we are smarter than Jesus and more gracious than Jesus so we will be silent and will not proclaim and teach on the doctrine of hell.

The very doctrine of hell introduced the very ministry of Jesus. Who was the introducing, called servant of God to bring Jesus’ ministry to the public? His name was John the Baptist. In Matthew 3 he calls upon the Pharisees to come out for baptism without repentance but they did not come with repentance. Matthew 3:7-10 says

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he (John the Baptist) said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 10 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (the doctrine of hell).

If there is no fruit (which we covered in this morning’s sermon), then what does that tell you? There is no root. Cut it off. Throw it into the fire. Their works bear witness and they do not the One true and living God. Let’s look further. Matthew 3:11-12 says (John the Baptist continues speaking)

11 I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

There it is again, fire. He says "I am preparing the way for the One coming after me, who is the Messiah and I baptize with water but He won't. He will come and baptize with the Spirit and fire."

Recently on cable television I noticed a program that was on about a "holy ghost" revival and baptism of fire. Someone said to me "Harry have you had the baptism with fire?" I said, "No, and I don't want it either." That is what I have been delivered from. This passage also makes clear that there is no such thing as baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never baptizes anyone. Jesus is the baptizer. John is telling you that Jesus will baptize everybody. You are either baptized with the Spirit which are the ones who are saved or you are baptized with fire and that's unquenchable and that's those who are lost. That's why he goes onto explain it to you after he says that He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

He says in Matthew 3:12a "*12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor...*" What will He do with those whom He has baptized with the Spirit, His wheat? He will gather them into the barn and they will be with Him forever. What will He do with those who do not know Him? He will cast them into an unquenchable, unstoppable, irrevocable fire. That is where the lost will be cast. So today Jesus will baptize everyone here and everyone that you know. He will either baptize them with the Holy Spirit for those who know Him as Lord and Savior or He will baptize them with fire that's unquenchable, an eternal condemnation.

So what is this doctrine of hell that we should not be silent about? Here is a brief statement. Hell is both a place and a condition of unspeakable and unalleviated misery and torment, divinely designed and decreed for the impenitent sinner consistent with the heart desire to pursue the empty depravity of sin, while rejecting the joyful glory and majesty of the One true and living God. So what is hell? It's a place and a condition.

That place and condition is one of unspeakable and unalleviated that is no remedy for it, misery and torment. God has designed it and decreed it for one specific category of people including the angels who fell from glory. That is for the sinner. That place will be consistent with the heart desire of that sinner. The sinner doesn't say they want hell but they say that they want sin more than they want God. And hell is the absence of God. So it is consistent with the desires of the depravity of sin. It is actually the answer of the prayer of every idolater. They

say “I want my gods. I don’t want the One true and living God.” It is consistent with the heart desire of the impenitent sinner in the pursuit of the emptiness of depravity. That emptiness of depravity has also pursued rebellion against God but rejected the joyful glory and majesty of the One. So they would say “I don’t want God so why would I want heaven?”

What’s heaven all about? Jesus says “I go to prepare a place for you” a place and a condition. We will talk more about that in our next study. Jesus says “I go to prepare a place for you so that where I am there you may be also.” What is hell? He says “I am not there.” It is unalleviated misery and torment without My presence. So what they don’t want they don’t get. What they do want they do get in their desire for sin. It is not their desire for hell and I will try to bring that out but it is their desire for sin itself.

Next I want to look at Matthew 5. As soon as Jesus is introduced He preaches a thing called the Sermon on the Mount that we have been studying on Sunday mornings. Matthew 5:21-22 says 21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell (a place) of fire (a condition). Now Matthew 5:30 says “And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.” So now we see that it is misery and torment for a soul and body. It’s not just for the soul. In our study a couple of weeks back we said one of the reasons there is the resurrection of everyone is that not only do all stand before the Judgment but all are given a body for eternity. Some will get a transformed body for eternity in the presence of God and some will get a transformed body of eternity in the judgment of hell.

I’m going to hang with Matthew here and I know we could obviously do many texts but I’m not going to do all of them. This is not exhaustive. I’m just touching on Jesus and what He taught. Let’s look at Matthew 13:47-50 which says

47 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. 48 When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. 49 So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the fiery furnace (remember the language from Daniel). In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Weeping and gnashing of teeth is a condition. That is the place of the hell of fire. In Matthew 10 we are told that we stand before the Lord God in judgment. Matthew 10:28 says “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Now I want to go outside of Matthew to how one of the Apostles enlarged upon this for us. This is found in Revelation 21. Revelation 21:8 says “But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.” This is the unending, eternal death in a place of judgment. Now I want to look at a passage we looked at in the last study in Revelation 20:11-15 which says

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Here the doctrine of hell becomes clearly important, expounded upon by Christ and affirmed by the Apostles and developed and continue to develop. I want to give you five declarations about the doctrine of hell. The first declaration is that hell is an actual place and condition for the body and the soul. It is a place of fire and outer darkness. It is a condition of torment and isolation. The fire and outer darkness is speaking of the condition of torment and isolation. Outer darkness is a tough translation and it means darkest darkness. It means the darkness of darkness. In other words it's the total absence of any light. That is communicating with that statement absolute isolation.

In my unbelieving life before I was in Christ, immoral, ungodly, profane, violent and a blasphemer and I can remember trembling even now the many times when I was standing with my friends joking about eternity and hell and making the statement, “Sure I'm headed there, that's pretty obvious and I might as well because that's where all my friends are. I'll just be with them.” There's a lot of stupidity in that statement and it would take me forever to unravel it for you in this study but you can see it pretty quickly. It was so mistaken in so many ways not the least of which is, you won't be with your friends. There are no relationships in hell. It is the ultimate of our idolatry. That's what the outer darkness is speaking of. It is a total disorientation.

I remember a time when one of our deacons was moving and they were only moving five blocks down but we didn't do a very good job packing the borrowed truck. It was an interesting borrowed truck in that it could be sealed up but everything was falling around in it so dumb me volunteered to go back there and

hold all the furniture while we drove the five blocks. So I got into the back of that truck to hold the furniture and when they shut that door there was no light. Thankfully I did have something to hold onto so I wouldn't be totally disoriented but by the time they opened that door I had no idea where I was or if I was on my head or my feet or any other part of my body. Hell is absolute isolation and torment.

Everyone always asks me if I think actual fire and actual darkness are symbolic. Let me give you my bold statement here – I don't know. It could be symbolic. It could be actual fire and darkness. Obviously He is calling upon two metaphors – one being the lake of fire and the word that they are using for hell in the final state, not the intermediate state of Hades, is Ghenna which is the trash dump south of Jerusalem that they just kept burning all the time. That is the way they took care of their trash. They would just set it on fire and it burned all the time. It was an unquenchable fire picture for them. It is that picture of Ghenna and a lake of fire that He uses. Could it be symbolism? Yes but let me tell you what Jonathan Edwards would tell you. If it is symbolism and not the actual factors of concrete experience at that point in time in that condition and place, take no delight from that because the whole idea of symbols is to get some kind of a sense of an idea and whenever you use a symbol the thing you are symbolizing is always more than what the symbol is. It is not less. It's more and that's why you had to reach for a symbol just to get people thinking about it but it's never equal to what it symbolizes. It is always less than what it symbolizes. So take no comfort in the notion that it may be symbolic by any means.

The second declaration of hell is it is inevitable, irrevocable, inescapable and it is inflicted. It is inevitable. You cannot cancel this appointment. It is appointed unto men once to die and then the judgment. You can't cancel this appointment and the judgment has two destinations. One is the presence of the Lord in which it will be a great, wonderful time on the night that we give thanks to the Lord, preparing for Thanksgiving to talk about the new heavens and the new earth. I look forward to speaking with you on that in the next study. If you are apart from Christ it is inevitable that you fall under the judgment of God. It is irrevocable and inescapable. It is that which is ever before us. Do you remember the picture of the passage about the rich man and Lazarus a few studies ago? There is a chasm that is fixed. You cannot escape. You cannot leave there to come here. Hell is not a period of purgatory where we can get you out of it. It is not a period of probation where you pay something for your sins and maybe you can get out of it.

It is also inflicted. It is here that I stand in absolute awe of my dear brother in the faith who was also my professor in seminary, Timothy Keller. I love his book Reason for God and of course he is an echo of one I quoted this morning, C.S. Lewis. I am grateful for all of them but as both Lewis and Keller in their books talk about hell I believe that there is a error that is there that a number of other well meaning theologians make and it might even be incipient in what I gave to you

because what did I say? Hell is the extension of what someone wanted, so the idea is when we defend the doctrine of hell to the skeptic who would say that this is a terrible thing to believe in, we just make the point it's the absence of the presence of God which is what they want anyway, but no, because nobody wants hell. They may want sin but they don't want hell. That's why you and I have to warn them about their decision.

They are willing in their desire for sin to risk eternity. Then we need to give them all the information we can. We can't be silent. Let's give them the information. There is a man in our church that has some problems and I won't mention who he is but I love him dearly in the Lord. He was facing a pretty serious medical issue and I said "What are you going to do about it?" He started naming about five doctors he was going to talk to because he said "I'm probably going to have to have surgery and before I make that decision I'm going to get all the information I need." I understand that sometime you can get too much information sometimes. You and I are in a position to give people the information that they need before they decide they want sin and not Jesus. If you want sin then hell comes with it. There's a wide gate which is an easy way, many are on it but hell is the destination. Do you really want this (hell)? This is your destination and where you are headed.

Every time I have read a passage on hell I have tried to emphasize this. What does it say? It says He hurled them into it. He threw them into it. He consigned them to it. He sent them to it. They don't just say "I got to the end, I guess I was wrong. Where's hell? I didn't want You anyway God." No, it is inescapable. It is inevitable. It is inflicted. They are sent there and that's why you and I need to give them all the information we can. Some will tell you there is no hell and it's only a period that you can kind of make some payments and get out of it. Jesus never teaches that. It is irrevocable. Some would say hell is really not a place and a condition but it's an annihilation and that is gathering a lot of steam in the evangelical church that the believer has a place and a condition but the unbeliever just kind of goes out of existence. The word is *appolomai*, a Greek transliteration. *Appolomai* does not mean to go out of existence. It means to be wrecked, derelict. It means when it says that they're destroyed. It doesn't mean that they go out of existence. Next time you ride by a junk yard look at it because that's the picture of *appolomai*. It is a derelict position. It is something that has existed that is now absolute uselessness and is sitting under all of the destruction that would go on in that place. That's what hell is. It's not going out of existence. It is an unending existence of absolute isolation and torment. We must give people that information. We must communicate it to them that which they are deciding upon.

A third declaration about hell is that we can't be silent because it was taught by Christ, anticipated by the prophets, affirmed and enlarged by the Apostles and it has been prominent in every great Gospel movement, every revival and Great Awakening. If we are silent on it we might as well say we don't want a Gospel



awakening, or a Gospel revival because every time in the Bible or church history or in our own nation's history, with Whitfield, Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Gilbert Tennet, Samuel Davies, when they preached they brought this doctrine to the forefront. Maybe they weren't as smart as us and maybe we're more gracious than them. How about this? Maybe they are following the pattern of Christ. Maybe they understand that Christ is gracious when He warns you of the wrath to come and that He is actually warning you of the wrath to come. So we cannot be silent about it and it is important because it was given to us by Christ. We certainly don't want to be in the arrogant position of thinking that we're more gracious, more brilliant, and more strategically effective than Christ. He really shouldn't have said those things and so we dismiss it from our preaching and our teaching. By the way, the result will be heresy and cults.

The fourth declaration about hell is it is a dereliction of our duty to be silent about it. He called us to preach the whole counsel of God. This is the whole counsel of God. God has called us to give people the information they need as they make decisions about sin and a Savior. God has called us to communicate the truth truthfully. God has given us a stewardship of this doctrine that we can't omit it. We can't obscure it. We can't be silent about it. We need to preach it truthfully. We need to preach it with brokenness and boldness but we can't be silent about it. We must communicate it. It must go forth from our pulpits, in our discipling, and in our communication to men and to women with broken hearts with boldness that people need to know the truth of what is there. Let them not think that maybe they'll get out. Some say "Well when they get to hell they'll repent." No they won't. They'll regret.

When you see weeping and gnashing of teeth that is not remorse. Do you remember when Steven was stoned? What did they do? They gnashed their teeth. That is language of unfettered rage, not remorse. That's the language of a child doing a temper tantrum. They will bow but it will be coerced. They will not bow in repentance at the judgment. There will be the temper tantrum of weeping, the gnashing and gritting of teeth in anger against God. Do you remember Luke 16, the study of the rich man? Was there any repentance with him? No he was still blaming God. He was thinking things like "How come You didn't send somebody back from the dead. I wouldn't be here if You had done a better job." There is no repentance there. What did the rich man do with Lazarus? He used him. What is he doing in hell? He still is using him. He says "Let Lazarus be my water boy. Go get some water for me Lazarus." There is no repentance in hell. No, we are derelict if we do not preach and teach the whole counsel of God.

The fifth declaration of hell is it is impossible to preach the Gospel without preaching the doctrine of hell. The Gospel is deliverance from sin and its consequences and one consequence that Jesus kept bringing to mind on sin was hell. You can't preach about Jesus without preaching about hell because what did Jesus do? This is why I never say 'hell on earth' because there has only been one time that there has been hell on earth and that was 2,000 years ago when

Jesus was on the cross. *"Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?"* which means, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Mark 15:34). So you don't miss it. God put all the pictures there for you. There was darkness for hours. Jesus said, "I thirst" which is torment but those physical declarations were only there to get our attention of the plunging of the soul of Jesus into hell. God sent His Son into the world to send His Son to hell and then on the cross He sent hell upon His Son. There is where as Calvin says in the Apostles' Creed that comment is an editorial comment. He was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilot, was crucified, dead and buried. What did He do on that cross? He descended into hell. There is the one time hell has been on earth. Therefore you can't preach about Jesus and the Gospel if we don't preach about hell because that's the cup of the wrath of God that He drank that you and I might have the cup of Life forever more because He loved us and gave Himself for us. So we must be faithful in its communication. Preach the Gospel with brokenness and clarity.

Here are the takeaways. I'll just enumerate them and then we'll close in prayer. If we refrain from the preaching of the Biblical reality of hell appropriately, how can we make sure we don't refrain from it but we constantly communicate it and we constantly understand it appropriately? Number one we can't be silent about it if we will give ourselves to Biblical preaching and discipleship because the Bible is not silent. If you teach the Bible you are going to have to deal with this. If you teach the words of Jesus you're going to have to deal with this. That's one of the reasons I do expository preaching because I have to come up to doctrines like this that I might skip but then all of a sudden I have to deal with it. I believe there is a place for topical preaching and thematic preaching but one of the reasons I love expository which is a consecutive working through passages of Scriptures is because Jesus keeps bringing up stuff that I would skip if it was just up to me.

Don't be like the lady that came to me one time and said "I have been listening to you on the radio and I'm so glad I found this church." I said, "I'm glad you did too." She said, "I've been looking for one of these suppository preachers." It's not suppository but it's expository. When we disciple if we are faithful to God's Word we won't be silent about this.

The second takeaway the call is not for silence in the doctrine but there is a call for brokenness in the doctrine. In fact, if we have brokenness we won't be silent because we realize the people we're talking to are lost like we were. I was thinking about this, this morning. This morning as I dealt with Jesus' call to avoid the wrath to come, to come to Him, to put your trust in Him, and at the Judgment Seat to be brought into heaven because you have built upon the foundation of Christ, our point is not church growth. Our point is to rescue the perishing. This is where the perishing will take place. It's not how big my ministry is or how many whatever. It is that sinners are lost and headed to this place and condition called hell and you have the only message to deliver them. Of course it is the antidote to many of the heresies, errors and false teachings, by dealing with this subject we deal with those errors.

Sorry this has been so rushed. If you'll just take this material and work through it I'll try to come back to it at a later time. Some of you have asked me about the degrees of punishment and I'd like to give you two passages of Scripture on this – Matthew 10 and Matthew 11. It says it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for them in the Day of Judgment. It didn't say it was going to be tolerable for unbelievers in the Day of Judgment but it will be more tolerable. Why? To whom much is given much is required. With great life comes greater responsibility and with greater responsibility comes greater punishment. The slave that knew the father's will but did not do it received many lashes. The other slave that didn't know what the one did, received lashes but this one many lashes. So with great life comes greater responsibility. Just like heaven has rewards with perfections but yet with perfect joy, also hell has degrees of punishment in terms of responsibility. It's one thing to fall into the judgment of God with creation as your witness but it's another thing to fall into the judgment of God with a preacher that's pleaded with you to come to Christ week after week after week.

Let me put it this way. Do you remember when we were studying the book of Daniel? Nebuchadnezzar threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into the fiery furnace and Jesus now uses that to talk about the doctrine of hell. Why does He do that? It is so you will understand the Gospel. That's why we can't preach the Gospel without the doctrine of hell. Did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego perish in the furnace or were they delivered from it? They were delivered and when they came out you couldn't even smell any smoke on them. Nebuchadnezzar looked in the furnace and said "Wait, did I not throw three men in the furnace and now there are four in the fire? One is like the Son of Man." That is a Christophany as Jesus went into the fire to deliver them. Do you remember what Nebuchadnezzar said after that? He said, "What kind of a God saves His people like this?" Oh he had heard about gods that snuffed out flames and that worked our coincidences but a God who descended into the flame to deliver His people? What kind of God is this? That's what Jesus did on the cross. He descended into hell.

I know Jesus had an agonizing death but He didn't die a model death. He didn't die a martyr's death. There is a model to it and yes in a sense it's a martyr's but He died an atoning death on the cross and the agony was not physically. I actually believe there have been many more believers that died a more physical agonizing death than what Jesus did. The agony of the cross is not a fascination with the physical torture of it but with the words "My God, My God, who has thou forsaken Me" as He was plunged into hell for us. What kind of God saves like that? It is your God, Jesus. He loves you. Praise His Name and He will deliver you from the wrath to come. Don't be silent about what He has delivered you from. Don't be silent but with brokenness and boldness warn others. The choice of sin and the rejection of Christ has an inflicted, irrevocable, inescapable, unstoppable, unquenchable end. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the privilege to walk our way through this and thank You for the patience of my brothers and sisters in the timing element tonight. Father, these are crucial matters, an eternity, not five or six minutes but eternity is in the balance for our loved ones and our friends. Dear kind Jesus, please help us to be bold and broken. Keep us away from the arrogance of thinking that were smarter than Jesus or more gracious by our silence and yet Father, keep us away from the arrogance of speaking without thinking, of speaking without praying, of speaking of this doctrine without pleading, in the Name of Christ our Savior, Amen.

Hebrews 9:23-28 says

23 Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, (Why is He there?) now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. 25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, 26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (So when Jesus comes and goes to the cross, what does that inaugurate? It inaugurates the end of the ages.) 27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

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