

Grace Church  
Roanoke, Virginia  
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Elementary Apologetics  
Lesson #18

## WHY I BELIEVE

### The Reality of Judgment and Hell

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Bible teaches that there is a final judgment coming for all men. The wicked will stand before a final court and be judged by an infinitely wise, just and holy God. The whole concept of future judgment should strike terror into the human heart. Yet, the unsaved man, blinded by sin, scoffs at the idea of a future judgment for wicked men. Whether man believes it or not, the Bible does teach future judgment.
- B. Judgment springs from the person of God and the sinfulness of man. Judgment and the punishment of Hell flow out from the justice, holiness and omniscience of God. The Almighty knows all about the sins of men. God's wrath is stirred against sin and because He is holy. His justice demands that sin be judged, and because all men are sinners, God must judge men. NOTE: God is love, but judgment and retribution do not stem from God's love. God's love, mercy and grace are the basis for salvation and not damnation.
- C. The doctrine of judgment and Hell is not popular in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but it is Biblical and God's Word never changes. NOTE: One of the clever tricks of the Devil is to get men to either deny or water down the Biblical teaching of future judgment and a literal Hell.

#### II. THE FACT OF FINAL JUDGMENT FOR ALL MEN

- A. Introduction: Future judgment for all men is a fundamental concept of Biblical Christianity. The Greek word "to judge" (krino) means "to divide, to separate, to make a distinction," and thus, "to come to a decision." God will make a decision as to the fitness or non-fitness of all men for entrance into heaven.
- B. There is a Future Appointed Day of Judgment (Acts 17:31; Matt. 11:22; 12:36; John 5:28-29; Rom. 2:5; II Pet. 2:9; 3:7; I John 4:17): This judgment day is certain because it is part of God's plan.
- C. The Judgment is for All Men (Heb. 9:27): There is one life, one death and one judgment for all men. Judgment is inescapable.

- D. The Judgment Will be by a Righteous God (Gen. 18:25; Psa. 9:8; 50:6; 96:13 cf. Psa. 119:137-144): The God of all the earth always does right. What God does may not always seem right to the human mind but man's best sense of justice is corrupted by sin. God's judgment will be perfect.
- E. The Judgment Will Have Christ as the Agent (John 5:22-23, 27 cf. Acts 17:31): The authority to judge will be placed into the hands of Christ.
- F. The Judgment Will Include the Secrets of Men (Eccl. 12:14; Rom. 2:16): An omniscient God knows all things and secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven.
- G. The Judgment Will be According to Works (Rev. 20:11-14): All human works at the final judgment will be inadequate to save a man, for the best of human works are sinful before a holy God (Isa. 64:6). The works of the unsaved could not save them (Eph 2:8-9) but works may determine the degree of punishment one will experience in hell (Matt. 11:22-24; Luke 12:47-48; 20:17; Rom. 2:5-6). NOTE: What is meant by degrees of punishment we cannot be sure. The only thing we can be sure of is that a righteous God will deal righteously and justly with all men. NOTE: If there are degrees of punishment, then this may explain somewhat the heathen problem. God will certainly judge the man who has heard the gospel and rejected it more than the man who has not heard it. Both are eternally lost because they are sinners. Nevertheless, God's justice will most likely come forth in degrees of punishment for those who have not heard the gospel and those who have rejected it.
- H. The Judgment Will Only be Escaped by Those Who have Trusted Christ (John 3:18; 5:24; 12:48; 3:36; I Cor. 16:22): The special ground of condemnation under the gospel is unbelief – a failure to receive Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior. Only those who have the righteousness of Christ are acceptable to the Father, and only those who have believed in Christ have the righteousness of Christ (II Cor. 5:21).

### III. THE FACT OF HELL FOR WICKED MEN

#### A. Why the Need for Hell?

1. The doctrine of future punishment contends that men exist forever and must, because of God's divine judgment against sin, be forever separated from God in a state of conscious punishment.
2. The reason man goes to a place called Hell is because of sin. If any law is to have authority, there must be

punishment and enforcement of that punishment. All men have broken God's law because of sin, and sin must be punished or God's law has no authority.

3. God never made Hell for men, but for the Devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). The only people who are in Hell are those who choose to cast their lot, life and destiny with the Devil and his angels. God has appointed Christ as the one way for the sinner to escape Hell. NOTE: In eternity men will then know that they willfully chose their own destiny when suffering the pangs of Hell. They will never be able to accuse God of injustice or of forcing them to choose against Christ.

B. Where is Hell?

1. Hell is a real place. Actually, there is no word "hell" in the whole of the Bible. The English word "hell" is related to the Old English helan, meaning "to hide or cover." There are several words used to describe the future place of punishment and the English Bible has translated these words as "hell."
2. Names to show hell is a real place:
  - a. Hades: Sometimes the word Hades refers to the grave or the state of death, but it often refers to the place of the departed wicked dead. Hades is a real place and does have punishment (Luke 16:19-31). NOTE: Apparently Hades is the temporary abode of all those who have no personal Savior for their sins. At the final judgment, Hades will be cast into the Lake of Fire and this will be the eternal abode of wicked men (Rev. 20:14-15).
  - b. Gehenna (Matt. 23:33): The name was originally applied to a valley southwest of Jerusalem. Before Israel was in her land, it was a place where wicked idolaters sacrificed their children to Moloch by causing them to pass through fire. Hence it was considered impure and was called the "valley of spit." It was an utterly despised region. Later it became a dump and fires were continually burning there to consume the refuse of Jerusalem. As a

result, it became a symbol of the place of eternal torment.

- c. Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15): A symbol to tell us about the punishment of Hell.
  - d. Tartarus (II Pet. 2:4): A part of Hell for angels who had sinned.
  - e. Abyss (Rev. 9:1-2, 11): Abode of wicked angels.
  - f. Prison (I Pet. 3:19).
3. Expressions to Show Hell is a Real Place: The Bible speaks of being “cast into Gehenna” (Matt. 5:29), or “cast into the Lake of Fire” (Rev. 20:15), or being “in Gehenna” (Matt. 10:28). NOTE: Hell is a place where people are sent. It may not be “down” in the sense of being in the middle of the earth. It may be another dimension of the spiritual world.
4. Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus Indicates Hell is a Real Place (Luke 16:19-31): This parable definitely shows local relationships.

### C. What Is Hell?

1. Descriptions: Hell is described in figurative terms, so as to give the reader the impact of a real Hell.
- a. Hell is separation. Hell is described as “outer darkness” (Matt. 8:12), “blackness of darkness” (Jude 13), “second death” (Rev. 21:8), and a state of being departed from Christ and outside of His knowledge (Matt. 7:22-23).
  - b. Hell is punishment. The descriptions of Hell as a state of punishment are numerous – “punishment” (Matt. 25:41), “wrath” (Rom. 1:18), “destruction” (II Thess. 1:9), “damnation” (Mark 3:29), “perdition” (I Tim. 6:9) and “torment” (Rev. 14:11). It is also stated that Hell is a place where there is “wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 9:12; 13:42; 22:13).

c. Hell is eternal. The Bible uses the adjective “eternal” many times to describe the duration of Hell – “eternal fire” (Matt. 25:41), “eternal punishment” (Matt. 25:46), “eternal destruction” (II Thess. 1:7-9), “eternal chains” (Jude 6), “smoke of torment for ever and ever” (Rev. 14:11), “blackness of darkness forever” (Jude 13), “everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2). In Mark 9:43-48, Hell is described as a place of unquenchable fire (never goes out) and where the worm never dies. John 3:36 says, “And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth (is abiding) on him. The tense of “abideth” is present and could be translated “is constantly and forever abiding on him.”

2. Symbolic Language: God described Hell for us in figurative language in order that we might understand what Hell is really like. Yet, all figurative language is pointing to a literal truth. Kuehner observes,

Elsewhere in the Gospels, Jesus’ teaching sounds the same deep note of judgment. The terms He employs to warn of that impending crisis are, to be sure, graphic, symbolic, figurative; but they are nonetheless terribly real. He speaks of unquenchable fire, of outer darkness, of the undying worm, of the weeping and gnashing of teeth, of the resurrection of judgment, of the judgment of hell, of perdition, of many stripes.” (Fred Carl Kuehner, Heaven or Hell?)

3. Conclusion: We know that Hell will be (1) total absence of the favor of God; (2) total separation from God; (3) an endless disturbance of life because of sin; and (4) suffering in body and soul. NOTE: Could there be anything worse than this!

#### IV. CONCLUSION

- A. I believe in a real, literal place and state of Hell because the Bible teaches it. To deny Hell is to deny the clear teaching of the Scriptures.
- B. Hell is real but a man does not have to go there because the way of escape is through Jesus Christ (John 3:36).