

### Excursus on Hell – Part I

- **INTRODUCTION:** What is your opinion of Hell? Most people recoil at the thought of a loving God punishing anyone in Hell. But, is this a valid position? Is Hell a reality that must be accepted and addressed, is it an affront to your sensibilities, is it a myth? For the most part, man rejects God's mercy through Christ and then denies the very idea of judgment and punishment, though he himself judges and punishes. The arrogance of man finds fault with God's justice, and yet sees his own judgment as faultless. Jonathan Edwards said, "If we had a true spiritual awareness, we would not be amazed at Hell's severity, but at our own depravity." How should the Christian view Hell? The title of this message is The Reality of Hell.
- **Jesus taught the reality of Hell:**
  - Mt 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
  - Matt 13:41-43 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."
  - Matt 23:29-33 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?"
  - Mark 9:43-48 "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED. If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED. If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED."
    - "worm" - (Gr. - skolex) a worm which preys upon dead bodies - Strong. The idea conveyed here is that there is torment throughout eternity.
  - Luke 13:23-28 And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.' In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth

when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out."

- **The Apostle John taught the reality of Hell:**
  - Rev 20:11-15 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
- **The Apostle Paul taught the reality of Hell:**
  - 2Th 1:7-9 the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,
  - Heb 10:26-31 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has ignored the Law of Moses is put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severe punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
- **The Apostle Peter taught the reality of Hell:**
  - 2Pe 2:4 ...God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into Hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.
- **If there is no Hell, then God is not just** - What justice is there if the wicked have no punishment. God is a worthless judge if every soul, wicked or righteous, receives eternal life. Where is the justice for the millions slaughtered in the holocaust of Adolph Hitler, if there is no Hell? Every time a person sins, he or she is rejecting God. This rebellion against God cannot go unpunished or God is not just. But, God is just. He is pure and cannot tolerate sin. He is the righteous judge.
  - Hab 1:13 Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You cannot look on wickedness with favor...
  - Ps 7:11 God is a righteous judge, And a God who has indignation every day.

- Ro 2:1 Therefore you have no excuse, every one of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. Ro 2:2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. Ro 2:3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Ro 2:4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? Ro 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Ro 2:6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: Ro 2:7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; Ro 2:8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. Ro 2:9 There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, Ro 2:10 but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Ro 2:11 For there is no partiality with God. Ro 2:12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; Ro 2:13 for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. Ro 2:14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, Ro 2:15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, Ro 2:16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.
- **If there is no Hell, then God is not loving** - God's love demands the existence of Hell. True love does not coerce, but persuades. The great Christian scholar C.S. Lewis noted that God does not force us to love Him. rather, He woos us. God does not merely override human will; he draws us to Himself. But, not everyone accepts His calling. God is loving, and God is love. The highly regarded Christian apologist Norman Geisler argues that because it is God's nature to love, He allows people the freedom and choice to not love Him. Those who do not accept His calling, who disobey His command to love Him, who reject the wooing of His Holy Spirit, must be allowed to separate from Him. "Hell allows separation from God."
  - 1Jo 4:16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
  - Mt 22:14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."
  - 2Th 1:7-9 the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

- **If there is no Hell, then man has no dignity or free will** - Man must be allowed the freedom to choose or reject God. If man has no choice, man has no dignity and no free will. But, man is made in the image of God. Man is a free agent with a dignity AND a free will. God has allowed man a measure of sovereignty. In the Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis wrote "There are only two kinds of people in the end, those who say to God 'They will be done' and those to whom God say, 'Thy will be done.'"
  - Ac 7:51 "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.
  - Mt 23:37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.
- **If there is no Hell, then God is not sovereign** - If there is no Hell, God has no victory over evil. If evil is allowed to continue throughout all eternity, with no judgment or punishment, then God is not in ultimate control, and He is not sovereign. But, God is sovereign. He is in control. For good to triumph over evil, there must be a Hell.
  - Ex 15:18 "The LORD shall reign forever and ever."
  - Ne 9:6 "You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them And the heavenly host bows down before You.
  - Ps 93:1 The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. Ps 93:2 Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting.
  - 1Co 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 1Co 15:21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. 1Co 15:23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 1Co 15:24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 1Co 15:25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 1Co 15:26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 1Co 15:27 For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. 1Co 15:28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.
- **If there is no Hell, the crucifixion of Christ was meaningless** - If people are not being saved from something (Hell), there is no need for a crucifixion. The incarnation of Christ was a waste of time if there is no Hell. What would be the purpose of the second person of the Trinity, Christ, coming to earth and taking upon himself human flesh, living a perfect life, and then offering that life as a sacrifice to pay the penalty for man's sins, if there was, in fact, no penalty to be paid? But, the crucifixion was the penalty for our sins. And, that penalty is Hell.
  - Eze 18:4 ...The soul who sins will die.

- Ro 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- **CONCLUSION:** What is your view of Hell? Is it offensive to you? Is it a myth? To reject Hell is to reject the Bible, to deny the sovereignty of God, His justice and His love. To reject Hell is ultimately to reject Christ. Everyone must take a position on Hell. I pray that your position is that Hell is a present reality that must be accepted and addresses by a reconciliation with God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the name by which we must be saved, through faith in His crucifixion and resurrection. Your eternity hangs in the balance.