

Hell — Revelation 14:6-20

James Muldoon - Carey Baptist Church – 16 November 2008

At the moment we're looking at the end point of God's plan for the history of the world. **Ephesians 1:11** tells us that God "**works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will**". This morning we are looking at hell.

People in general do not take hell seriously. However, the Bible does. It describes it as a place of real, conscious, eternal torment. Looking at hell means looking at a very sombre subject. Nevertheless, **II Timothy 3:16-17** tells us that "**all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work**". If we want to be thoroughly equipped as Christians, we need to understand what the Bible teaches about this appalling place.

i What is hell?

There are three names used of hell in the Greek New Testament: ᾍδης (Hades), Τάρταρος (Tartarus) and Γέεννα (Gehenna). Generally speaking, Hades and Tartarus are used of hell before the Day of Judgment. Gehenna is used of hell after the Day of Judgment.

Before the Day of Judgment, when a non-Christian dies, his spirit goes to Hades. **Luke 16:23** says (in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus), "**In hell [Greek: Hades], where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.**"

John 5:28-29 tells us what happens when the Day of Judgment arrives. "**Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.**" The man's body will be raised. His spirit will come out from Hades to rejoin it. He will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ. He will be condemned to Gehenna for eternity.

Matthew 25:41 says, "**Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'**" Who else, then, will be present in hell?

ii What is hell like?

What are some of the ways in which the Bible describes hell?

Here are some of the more common descriptions:

α' Here are some verses which describe one aspect of hell. **Matthew 25:41**. "**Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'**" **Mark 9:43**. "**If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.**" **Hebrews 10:26-27**. "**If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.**" **Jude 7**. "In a similar way,

Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.” Revelation 20:15. “If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” What do they teach?

β’ Here is a verse which describes another aspect of hell. Matthew 8:12. ““But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”” What does it teach?

γ’ Here are some verses which describe another aspect of hell. I Thessalonians 1:9b-10. “They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.” Revelation 14:9-10. “A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.”” What do they teach?

δ’ Here is a verse which describes another aspect of hell. Matthew 25:46. ““Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”” What does it teach?

How does Matthew 25:46 illustrate that annihilationism is wrong?

iii What should your response be?

Here are three appropriate responses to the fact that there is a hell:

α’ Here are some verses which illustrate one response. Romans 9:1-4a. “I speak the truth in Christ – I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit – I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel...” Luke 19:41. “As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it.” Ezekiel 33:11. ““As surely as I live,’ declares the Sovereign Lord, ‘I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?”” What do they teach?

β’ What is a second appropriate response and what practical steps can you take to do it?

γ’ What is a third appropriate response if you are a Christian and why? What if you are not a Christian, though?