

“Heaven and Hell, Part 2”  
(Revelation 20:11-15)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation. (Review).

1. We've come to the end of our series on the History of Redemption:
  - a. We started where the need for redemption began: the Fall.
  - b. And have come to the end: the consummation – when the Lord makes all things new again.
  - c. At the very end are two things: the New Heavens and the New Earth and the Lake of Fire.
  
2. Last week, we looked at heaven/the New Heavens and Earth.
  - a. The place the Lord prepared for us from the foundation of the world.
  - b. Where He will free us from all sin.
  - c. Where we will see Him face to face.
    - (i) The Beatific Vision: the greatest blessing anyone could receive.
    - (ii) And be filled with His love.
  
  - d. We also saw there are degrees of reward.
    - (i) All do not receive the same.
    - (ii) Some are honored more than others.
    - (iii) Some have a greater capacity to enjoy heaven.
    - (iv) But all are full and satisfied.

B. Preview. (Hook).

1. We now have just one topic left to consider: hell/lake of fire.
  - a. It's not a popular doctrine, but a necessary one.
  - b. Heaven encourages; hell strikes fear in our hearts.
  - c. We need to realize it's there – it's real.
  - d. We need to make sure we're not headed that way.
  - e. If we are we need to wake up to that fact and run to Christ – it's the most effective doctrine in this regard.
  - f. Perhaps it will also move us to reach others headed that way.
  
2. Let's consider three things:
  - a. What hell/lake of fire is.
  - b. What it's like.
  - c. And who will be there.

II. Sermon. (Argue the case).

A. First, what is hell?

1. It's called by various names in the Bible.
  - a. The word hell is derived from a word meaning to cover:

- (i) “The covered or invisible place.”
  - (ii) A place that can’t be seen where spirits are tormented.
- b. In the OT, it’s called Sheol.
- (i) From a word meaning to ask, demand, hence insatiable:
    - (a) “There are three things that will not be satisfied, four that will not say, ‘Enough’: Sheol, and the barren womb, earth that is never satisfied with water, and fire that never says, ‘Enough’” (Prov. 30:15-16).
    - (b) It is the grave, the underworld, a dark and gloomy place, the abode of the dead.
  - (ii) It is the place where both the righteous and wicked go at death:
    - (a) David writes, “Return, O Lord, rescue my soul; save me because of Your lovingkindness. For there is no mention of You in death; in Sheol who will give You thanks?” (Ps. 6:4-5).
    - (b) And “the wicked will return to Sheol, *even* all the nations who forget God” (9:17).
    - (c) This refers to their bodies and doesn’t really address the condition of their souls.
- c. In the NT, it’s called Hades:
- (i) It has the same basic meaning as Sheol: the grave.
  - (ii) But with the clearer light of the NT, we see their souls are not in the same place.
    - (a) When Jesus died, He was placed in the tomb (Sheol), but His soul did not go to hell. “And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat *one* of his descendants on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay” (Acts 2:30-31).
    - (b) We read earlier of the rich man and Lazarus: “Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom” (Luke 16:22-23). These are not two compartments in hell, but heaven and hell.
    - (c) Hades refers generally to the grave, but also to hell.
- d. It’s also called Gehenna (the Valley of Hinnom).
- (i) This was the place the Israelites offered their children to Molech.
  - (ii) It later became the place where the dead bodies of animals, criminals and all filth was dumped and consumed by a continual fire.
  - (iii) This was the image most often pointed to to describe eternal punishment: “Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:44).
- e. And the lake of fire:
- (i) Same idea as Gehenna/hell.

- (ii) But we're introduced to it after judgment, where both soul and body suffer.
2. Hell is the place God prepared for the devil and his angels:
    - a. The Lord prepared a place for His people to dwell with Him (heaven).
    - b. He has also prepared a place where the rebellious will spend eternity with the first rebels: the devil and the fallen angels.
  3. Hell is where God also punishes men for their sins.
    - a. He gives them over to their sins.
    - b. His wrath is the fire that burns.
      - (i) Sometimes we think of Him only in heaven.
      - (ii) But He is everywhere: even in hell, not in blessing, but in wrath.
      - (iii) Edwards: God is the fire that burns in hell.
- B. Second, what is hell like?
1. It's a place of everlasting punishment.
    - a. It burns with a fire that is never extinguished:
      - (i) "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" (Mark 9:43).
      - (ii) It may not be a literal fire – since now souls are burning there.
      - (iii) But the pain it causes is like being burned by fire: "I am in agony in this flame" (Luke 16:24).
      - (iv) That's why those there weep and gnash their teeth: "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" (Matt. 13:41-42).
    - b. The punishment is worsened by the fact it's dark:
      - (i) "Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30).
      - (ii) Light can be comforting; but darkness makes even comfortable situations more difficult; you can't see what's causing the pain.
      - (iii) There are no comforts in hell.
    - c. And it goes on forever: "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night" (Rev. 14:11).
      - (i) If it might end, there would be hope.
      - (ii) But there is no end, only despair: Thomas Watson wrote, "The torments of hell abide forever. . . . If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousandth year a bird should come, and take away one grain of this sand, it would be a long time ere that vast heap of sand were emptied; yet, if after all that time the damned may come out of hell, there were some hope; but this word "ever" breaks the heart" (*Golden Treasury*).

2. What's worse, there are degrees of torment in hell.
  - a. Every sin makes hell hotter: "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, who will render to each person according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:5-6).
  - b. Every sin and aggravation is weighed in the scales and each punished accordingly.
    - (i) "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, but the one who did not know *it*, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more" (Luke 12:47-48).
    - (ii) "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in *the* day of judgment than for you" (Matt. 11:21-22).
    - (iii) More is required of those given much.
    - (iv) The lake of fire will be more severe for the one who sins more.
      - (a) It won't be pleasant for anyone; all will be in excruciating pain.
      - (b) If one sin merits this punishment, how much does a thousand?
      - (c) How much more punishment do the more serious sins deserve?
3. Finally, that torment will increase throughout eternity.
  - a. Every sin in life increases judgment.
  - b. God is still just: every sin in hell increases judgment.
  - c. The lake of fire is bottomless.

C. Finally, who is going to be in hell?

1. The Bible is quite clear on this:
  - a. Those who didn't trust Christ and follow Him: "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).
  - b. Anyone outside of Christ must answer for his own sins against an infinitely holy God.
  - c. This is why you need Christ: only He has made a payment that can satisfy His Father's justice – if you would be saved from hell, you must trust in Him.
2. Why end this series on a negative note?
  - a. Because God showed us these things to awaken us to the danger, and that we might awaken others.
  - b. Because it shows us how indebted we are to the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, for saving us from it. Amen.

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